Heritage Lottery Fund and National Trust join forces to save our precious parks



The National Trust has joined with HLF to help save our precious parks

The National Lottery funding body, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), and the National Trust have joined forces to find and back ambitious and sustainable solutions to protect and enhance public parks and green spaces.

The Future Parks Accelerator (FPA) is a UK-wide £10m strategic initiative to enable up to eight local authorities and communities to develop and implement bold and innovative funding and management solutions for all their green spaces across their place, against a challenging backdrop of financial uncertainty.

The FPA will support places to grow the contribution parks make to civic life whilst becoming financially sustainable. It will involve discovering how parks and green spaces could be better used, managed and funded to serve community needs and aspirations now and over the next generation.

With grant funding and support from a team of experts, the places chosen to be FPA pioneers will work as a cohort to catalyse and share innovation, learn rapidly together and build their capacity to lead for ambitious change both in their place and to benefit the rest of the UK. It will encourage new partnerships whilst supporting the role of local authorities as vital owners, funders and co-managers of green spaces. It will promote an holistic approach, ensuring that all parks and green spaces in an area are protected and enhanced to deliver quality and fair access to green spaces for free for everyone.

The initiative will run over two years and combine £5m in HLF grant funding with £5m in value of National Trust expertise. It opens for expressions of interest today, with a deadline of midday Monday 19 November. A number of places will then be invited to submit a full application later this year with decisions on which places will receive support made in February 2019.

Ros Kerslake, HLF CEO, said: “Our ambition is simple - we want to grow and secure the future of our public parks so generations in times to come will have access to the wide range of benefits they provide. There are big challenges facing parks but equally big opportunities. This strategic initiative will help everyone invested in parks to take action and find new ways to ensure they are safeguarded so they are able to fulfil their potential to deliver health and wellbeing. These insights stem from over £950m of National Lottery investment in 900 park projects over 20 years and our recent combined investment of over £3m in parks innovation.”

Hilary McGrady, Director-General of National Trust, said: “The National Trust was founded in the late 19th century to protect urban green space from development for everyone in the local community to enjoy. Those founding principles remain as relevant today as public parks and green spaces are again under significant pressure, this time from budget cuts. That’s why we are committed to offering our expertise and experience to help councils and communities to find long-term solutions which will not only safeguard their public green spaces, but allow them to thrive. There’s no one size fits all approach and different places will have different opportunities and challenges. We look forward to working with ambitious local authorities to find a way to look after these wonderful places that bring millions of people together to enjoy nature, the outdoors and a sense of freedom.”

Notes to Editors

Background to the Future Parks Accelerator

The FPA builds on four years of NT and HLF working together on the future of public green spaces. Our Boards and Executives are committed to growing our partnership at a national level through this joint venture to further our shared cause of promoting access to natural and cultural heritage for everyone. This is a priority in NT’s strategy Playing our Part.

The call for an initiative like the FPA came originally from local authorities at a conference in October 2016 that NT co-hosted with Social Finance and Winckworth Sherwood, attended by Directors of Culture and Communities and Parks Managers from over 60 Local Authorities, chaired by Lord Kerslake.

The FPA concept was co-created in 2017 with a number of national funding and finance organisations who have strong expertise and experience in helping places innovate and invest for public benefit long term. These included Social Finance, Environmental Finance, Big Lottery Fund, Sport England and Newcastle City Council.

NT and HLF have also been inspired to set up the FPA by Newcastle, who has blazed a trail developing a new model unique to their city, its greenspaces and communities to protect and enhance all of the city’s parks long term. NT and HLF have partnered Newcastle on this journey and appreciate Newcastle City Council and its partners have invaluable learning and experience that will benefit other councils and communities whatever distinctive solution they develop to protect the future of their parks.

FPA will work with and incorporate the learning from HLF’s Rethinking Parks programme which aims to explore and scale-up new ways to generate income and new management approaches for parks. Thirteen Rethinking Park projects

are now underway supported by HLF, Big Lottery Fund and Nesta.

Further information

For more information on Future Parks Accelerator visit our website

For further press information please contact Natasha Ley at HLF's press office on 020 7591 6143 / 07973 613820