

Elizabeth Park
Submitted by Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council

Awards category
Regeneration and retrofit – small scale (less than one hectare)



Lead or collaborating organisation(s)	Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council - Lead United Utilities
Location of SuDS	371510, 408965

1. SuDS overview

SuDS components used	<p>Rain gardens</p> <p>Tree pits</p> <p>Innovative permeable paving solution</p>
Size of the scheme and its local context	<p>2220m² of new park and events space situated in the heart of the town providing a space for recreation with green biodiverse planting aimed at achieving positive health benefits for the local community, bridging the gap between the popular market and the shopping areas.</p>
Approximate age of scheme (years)	<p>0 – completed March 2024 and officially opened by the mayor</p>
Benefits of the scheme	<p>Built on a site that’s been derelict since 2007</p> <p>Enhanced biodiversity through diverse planting supporting the environment and forming the start of a green corridor within the town centre</p> <p>Design to be accessible by all for inclusivity</p> <p>Involvement of local schools to provide investment in the scheme for education purposes</p> <p>Public open green space in urban environment aimed at achieving health benefits</p> <p>Events space available for booking outdoor events in the town centre, supporting the local economy</p> <p>92m³ volume removed from the public sewer during 1/100 year storm event</p> <p>Supporting climate resilience within the sewer network</p> <p>Natural Capital valued benefit of £2.77M</p>

<p>Briefly describe the scheme</p>	<p>Elizabeth Park is the first park to be built in Bolton in over 100 years. Constructed on a neglected derelict site on the edge of Bolton Town Centre adjacent to the existing historic buildings and the newly constructed commercial/housing developments, it sits across from Bolton Market newly built food hall. Designed to be accessible by including level access footways throughout the park and incorporates a flexible event space providing standalone and supplementary space for events.</p> <p>Bolton demonstrates the most risk of both surface water flooding in Greater Manchester. During the 19th century large-scale culverting of natural watercourses was undertaken to enable development. Consequentially, Bolton is almost exclusively drained by combined sewers, limiting opportunities to discharge surface water sustainably. Bolton is susceptible to sewer flooding, particularly from short intense rainfall. Site investigation highlighted the site was not suitable for infiltration, so rain gardens and tree pits were included as part of significant drainage design to incorporate SuDS enabling attenuation ahead of the existing drainage network.</p> <p>The pallet of materials and street furniture used is consistent with existing works within Bolton Town Centre. Wayfinding and information boards having been provided to show the history, purpose and concept of the park.</p>
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2. SuDS details



No	Question	Answer
1	<p>What difference has this scheme made to the local community or area?</p>	<p>A neglected derelict site has been developed providing the new park. Alongside the soft landscaping which is designed to provide visual interest all year round the hard landscaping provides a flexible and accessible event space. Local school children have been involved in the planting so are invested in the project and will be encouraged to see how it progresses, with the potential to use the events space for educational purposes. Adjacent to new housing developments providing outdoor public space designed to be accessible by all, the scheme compliments the newly constructed market food hall providing additional outside space for consumers.</p>





2	What is exceptional about this scheme beyond a standard approach?	Post demolition of the cinema the site was earmarked for development but instead has been used to create a new public open space within an urban environment. Opportunities were identified to incorporate SuDs in an urban environment along with trialling a drainage product supplied by Hardscape called 'Drainjoint' which has enabled us to specify the same paving product in permeable and impermeable surfaced areas rather than using a proprietary permeable paving product. This reduced the number of different materials used within the scheme and thereby reducing the maintenance liability all while providing the desired aesthetic.
3	How much work went into getting this scheme realised?	The site was originally earmarked for development, but was left in a derelict state and in the intervening period was used as an ad-hoc car park, material storage facility and compound. Initially the scheme was to be a temporary minimal improvement but developed into a more substantial scheme with eventually the decision being taken to construct a permanent park. The site required planning permission for a change of use and the approval of the design of the park was required from Bolton Council. A successful submission was made for a funding contribution from the United Utilities Green Recovery scheme.
4	Is this scheme part of a masterplan or integrated into other initiatives?	Bolton's Town Centre regeneration includes plans for sites at the Market, Central Library and Aquarium see improvements through the Towns Fund grant alongside significant public realm projects creating a greener town centre and improve the leisure and recreation offer. Elizabeth Park is part of this regeneration and has used materials consistent with those on adjacent schemes to produce a cohesive environment. Wayfinding signage is provided in the park directing visitors to other areas of interest in the town centre. With a focus on providing green spaces and SuDS, this park marks the path to a biodiversity corridor across the town.
5	What value does this scheme provide to the local area and beyond?	The availability of a park and flexible event space in the middle of significant new housing and commercial developments and adjacent to the market food hall should encourage adjacent residents, visitors and vendors from within and outside of the town to visit, use the facilities and attend organised events such as the Iron Man and the Food and Drink Festival. The positive health benefits for visitors attributed to the green environment created by the Elizabeth park is calculated in excess of £1M via the HEAT tool.

6	What challenges/problems needed to be addressed to realise this scheme?	Post demolition the site was used as an ad-hoc car park and storage facility and during use the site didn't appear to hold or cause significant surface water run-off which we knew may change if we paved over at least part of the area with impermeable paving. The decision was to address this issue by incorporating rain gardens and tree pits. To serve the rain gardens areas of impermeable paving and drainage have been included. The site retained significant amounts of the structure of the cinema which weren't visible at the surface level and weren't uncovered during site investigation works.
7	How does the scheme address related issues such as water scarcity, nutrient neutrality, or biodiversity net gain?	The area is susceptible to surface water run off issues during storm events. A detailed drainage design for the park has been undertaken to enable the SuDs elements to be included. The scheme provides soft landscaping with a diverse variety of planting which has been designed with an all-year-round mixture of flowering and non-flowering species to improve biodiversity in the area. The scheme achieves 92m ³ surface water volume removed from the public sewer during 1/100 year storm event supporting climate resilience within the sewer network. Flows back into the sewer are throttled to maximise the attenuation the park can offer.
8	Is learning from the scheme continually captured and communicated? Please give examples.	<p>Lessons learned sessions between Council and United Utilities were initiated to improve better design and implementation of schemes between the partners. The sessions enabled us to better understand what can be achieved particularly in urban environments using SuDs.</p> <p>Lessons around simplifying the bidding process for any future external funding opportunities have been implemented for the next funding scheme. This will help any funding participants that don't have the same levels of resources to call on that the larger Councils do. The use of the park will also be monitored particularly its use as an event space via the booking system.</p>
9	What approaches/measures are taken to ensure the scheme is properly managed and maintained?	Being able to specify the same products in not only both permeable and impermeable surfaced areas but use ones that we had used elsewhere in the town and surrounding districts has reduced the maintenance liability whilst providing the desired aesthetic. The scheme has immediately been incorporated into the overall maintenance regime for the town centre ensuring long term ongoing maintenance of the site. Smart design has incorporated drain rodding points to ensure ease of maintenance. The use of rain gardens has removed some of the need for landscape maintenance. Use of the event space will be managed by Bolton Council.

10	<p>Have you collected any feedback on your scheme? What do people say about it? Can you provide any quotes?</p>	<p>The opening ceremony of the park took place on 22nd March 2024 which was attended by local MPs, councillors, contractors and adjacent businesses.</p> <p>There was an article in the local paper, The Bolton News, which included quotes from Yasmin Qureshi MP, Chris Green MP, the Mayor of Bolton and councillors.</p> <p>https://www.theboltonnews.co.uk/news/24205199.boltons-new-elizabeth-park-opens-look-food-hall/.</p> <p>Following the opening Chris Green MP uploaded a video to his facebook page https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=284207348056263.</p> <p>United Utilities is promoting internally the innovative use of Drain Joint to aid with pervious paving schemes across the region both with the water company delivery partners.</p>
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3. Supporting materials

Image (low resolution)	Caption	Image credit
	<p>Derelict cinema site prior to construction showing remnants of the existing building including an underground heating chamber and temporary hoardings erected to provided security.</p>	<p>Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council</p>
	<p>Site investigation works to determine if ground filtration was an option for the works. The background of the photo illustrates the derelict nature of the site</p>	<p>Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council</p>

	<p>Works commenced on site to remove the hoardings and the remaining structure of the cinema</p>	<p>Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council</p>
	<p>Rain garden under construction</p>	<p>Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council</p>
	<p>Installation of attenuation tank</p>	<p>Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council</p>
	<p>Drone photo of the finished park</p>	<p>Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council</p>