

QUESTIONS FOR CCHC CALL FOR EVIDENCE – RESPONSE FROM BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

The Commission on Creating Healthy Cities is seeking evidence to assist it in putting together its recommendations aimed particularly at city leaders and citizens.

We are especially interested in evidence from research but hope to also elicit input from those with direct experiences as practitioners and citizens/users of services.

This evidence will supplement work by the Commission's Research Fellows, Dr Georgia Richards and Dr Juliet Carpenter, at the Global Centre on Healthcare and Urbanisation.

While we greatly welcome evidence from other countries, our focus is on the UK. We are hoping for material that will inform and shape policy and practice that is practical, viable and achievable.

The questions set out here cover some overarching issues and some more detailed, evidence-based questions. The Commission would appreciate responses to any or all of the questions but would also welcome input on other matters relating to the creation of healthy cities.

1. Governance/decision making processes

Overarching Questions:

1.A - How best can City leaders ensure that the voices of citizens/users of services shape their policymaking and keep the public genuinely engaged with the process of policymaking as it proceeds from consultation to decision?

There is no single answer to this question. Ensuring that policy and delivery is steered by the interests and priorities of citizens and service users is inevitably complex, given the myriad of diverse interests and identities that make up any large city. It is important to develop a culture of listening to and respecting the voice of the citizen (as distinct from a culture of delivering service to passive users) and to genuinely take on the belief that citizens and service users understand their own needs and priorities best. Inclusive governance is about relationships not transactions.

From that foundation, there are a range of methods and techniques for engagement and consultation, from responsive customer service, through inclusive consultation to more deliberative and participatory approaches. Engagement can be through communities of place or identity or at the individual level – all levels and types of relationship are important, and none should be prioritised at the expense of others.

When we issued our white paper [Working Together in Birmingham's Neighbourhoods](#), we found the work of an organisation called Locality particularly useful in capturing the commitment to community empowerment we wished to achieve. Their report [People Power: Findings from the Commission on the Future of Localism](#) is particularly useful.

1.B - What are the methods that work, and that don't work, in engaging the wider public in the task of creating a healthy city?

Birmingham City Council has been developing a multi-dimensional approach to engaging citizen voice in shaping and co-producing a healthy city. Prior to the pandemic this included:

- Using ethnographic research to provide deeper narratives from citizens to shape and inform policy, for example in the Annual Director of Public Health 2019/2020 on Adults with Multiple and Complex needs, and in the creating of a new approach to tackling infant mortality in Birmingham.
- Collaboration with citizens to challenge us to address 'wicked issues' that underpin the inequalities affecting our City through the Birmingham Poverty Truth Commission.
- Digital engagement through the BeHeard consultation surveys, supplemented by focus groups with targeted communities to close the digital divide and recognising that engagement through purely digital formats has limitations.
- Commissioned focus groups to explore with citizens public health issues such as food and physical inactivity and draw on their lived experience to shape our emerging Creating a Health Food City Strategy and our co-produced physical activity campaign 'Tola time'.
- Creating of the multi-agency partnership Forums that sit underneath the Health and Wellbeing Board, these include young people supported to be active participants of shaping the City's response to issues like Creating a Mentally Healthy City.

Through Covid we have developed new approaches to deepen engagement, information dissemination and co-production approaches, this has included:

- Recruiting over 850 covid community champions and 55 youth covid champions, these local citizens representing our City who work with us to share information on covid risk reduction, case rates, vaccine and health information. The champions are two-way engagement and working with them we have co-produced resources to support isolation compliance and vaccination uptake toolkits.
- Commissioning 19 community engagement partners to work with 31 different targeted communities. These partners collaborated with us to provide both insight as well as information tailoring and dissemination to specific communities of identity, language and interest.
- Collaborating with partners to undertake bi-lingual translated engagement, including BSL, to allow citizens from different communities of language to ask senior officers and clinicians their questions and engage in discussions about the way forward. This has been particularly powerful in deepening our engagement and partnership with our deaf communities.
- Regular meetings between senior officers and local faith leaders, both as interfaith forums and specific regular meetings with black-led faith churches and with the mosques of the City. These forums allowed us to coproduce funeral guidelines for Islamic faith ahead of national guidelines.
- Utilising cultural and arts-based interventions to engage different groups of citizens into discussions about health and wellbeing issues in different ways. This approach has engaged different citizens and demonstrated a positive impact on participants as well as generating new lines of enquiry and engagement.
- Utilisation of social media interactive techniques to engage citizens and discuss with them issues and concerns, including several Instagram live sessions with the Director of Public Health co-facilitated with youth influencers.

We have reflected on less successful approaches, particularly the limitations of online surveys for consultation which haven't had good citizen engagement or participation and survey response numbers remain low, despite significant promotion activity.

Evidence-based Questions:

1.1 - Are any of the current ways of engaging citizens – Citizens Juries, Assemblies, Youth Parliaments, use of deliberative panels, focus groups et al - proven to be effective?

- Focus Groups on Food and Physical Activity – see above.
- Work with young people on our [Breaking Down the Barriers](#) report on youth employment. Working with BeatFreeks and One Black Bear through qualitative and quantitative methodologies to engage over 2000 young people.
- The [Young Combined Authority](#)

Birmingham Poverty Truth Commission

The council has recently commissioned a Birmingham Poverty Truth Commission (BTPC#2) to develop a new rolling engagement model to strengthen the connection between the council, city partners and our citizens capturing lived experience and sharing of stories on poverty. It is a citizen engagement approach to hold a mirror up to the council and our strategic partners on the impact of poverty on citizens lives and starts with the people who really know what the sharp end of poverty looks like because they live it daily.

Integral to this is the development of relationships with people and those in positions of power and influence over a length of time; these being Community commissioners (people with lived experience of poverty) and Civic Commissioners (those in positions of power and influence).

The overall aim is to enact change across systems and develop not just a set of recommendations but a set of relationships, with the intention that those relationships will encourage and enable those with influence to operate differently in their sphere as well. The work is at phase one of active recruitment of Commissioners; with the intention of having regular commissioner representation at our *Creating a City without Inequality Forum*; the work of which is aligned closely with Marmot policy areas.

1.2 - What is the evidence of success or failure for neighbourhood forums in England, and Community Councils in Scotland, bridging the community/municipality divide?

Neighbourhood Forums have existed in Birmingham for a long time before the government formalised them in law. In the 1990s there existed a network of dozens of forums, supported by the Birmingham Association of Neighbourhood Forums, funded by the City Council. This was an effective, if somewhat structured movement. However, support for BANF was withdrawn from 2005 and the number of forums declined rapidly. The strength of this bottom-up forums was their diversity – they were able to organise to meet differing needs and campaigning priorities in different neighbourhoods. A weakness was the lack of secure funding and the emergence of politics, such as boundary disputes from time to time. There were often tensions between forums and the city council and an antagonistic relationship, probably caused by inflexible attitudes in both parties. Some forums organised elections to their committees or worked closely with residents associations to get down to a street level.

Some forums, such as Balsall Heath, the “3Bs” in Perry Barr and recently the Jewellery Quarter, have pursued neighbourhood plans, using the new statutory status. This has been a positive exercise in bringing communities together and setting Planning priorities from the bottom-up. However, there are frustrations about how seriously NPs are taken within the rest of the formal Planning system and about the lack of resources to implement them (example lack of local control of land and other assets).

1.3 - What is the evidence of success or failure of resourcing local government to take decisions locally produces for health and wellbeing?

We have not had time to compile the evidence, but it is self-evident that integrated, prevention-focused services with a focus on the needs of citizens, communities and places cannot be designed from the centre. Local government must be empowered to in turn empower local communities.

1.4 - Can a value-for-money case be made for encouraging and sustaining the enhanced community spirit generated by the pandemic (increased volunteering, extended neighbourliness and more charitable/community activity)?

Definitely. Where communities have strong social capital and mutual support mechanisms it undoubtedly helps produce better outcomes with less use of acute (or any public) services. We have not had time to compile specific evidence on this, but it undoubtedly exists. The power of the response to COVID was partly in the process of forging new relationships between public sector bodies and local community and voluntary activity. The urgency of collaborating effectively produced many examples of good practice which for whatever reason were less common before the crisis.

The [Neighbourhood Networks](#) initiative is showing how a joined up, locally focused approach to social care can shift the focus to prevention and produce better outcomes with less top-down intervention.

1.5 - Do suggested proposals for action on governance/decision-making pass the tests of being realistic, useable, specific, deliverable and affordable?

2. The Built Environment, Design and Placemaking (Housing, Planning and Urban Design and Regeneration)

Overarching Questions:

2.A - Is there evidence that changes to urban design and housing quality – including energy efficiency, security, affordability – for both new development and neighbourhood regeneration, will lead to healthier cities?

Evidence from the Healthier City Planning Toolkit ([Draft HCP toolkit Nov 2020](#))

2.B - Can a case be made for the property industry and investors to reset real estate value to include health and wellbeing?

2.C - What evidence is available to support the case for changes to local and national policies for housing and the built environment in the light of the Covid experience?

Evidence-based Questions:

2.1 - Is there evidence that the integration of housing and health in the same government Ministry and/or at the local level, achieves better outcomes?

2.2 - What is the evidence that poor quality housing leads to physical and mental ill health, excess (winter) deaths, accidents in the home, increased hospital admissions and readmissions, premature moves into residential care and fuel poverty?

Housing and health

The relationship between housing and health is complex and interacting. Housing is a source of social determinants of health and wellbeing, as well as an important part of productive, healthy, and meaningful lives. Household health is influenced by the physical state of homes, their design, structure, and maintenance as well as the existence of safety devices, all have an impact on household health.¹

Continuing exposures to hazards such as low indoor temperature (cold homes), damp/mould or poor ventilation can impact health and functioning. The evidence^{2 3 4} suggests that both physical and mental ill-health stems from living in substandard housing

Fuel Poverty, Cold and damp homes

The direct and indirect effects of fuel poverty and chilly homes were emphasised in the Marmot review⁵. Excessive winter fatalities were linked to respiratory diseases, poor nutrition, other chronic health problems, and home accidents, according to the findings. Low interior temperatures can lead to moisture and mildew in the home, which can wreak havoc on air quality.

The impacts of living in a home with insufficient heating extend beyond physical health. Cold home-related health problems include cardiovascular and respiratory conditions (asthma, COPD), physical pain (rheumatoid arthritis), and migraines.^{6 7 8} Respiratory conditions according to the ONS were the leading cause of excess winter deaths in 2018/19.⁹ Geddes et al., (2011) suggest that over 21% of excess winter deaths could be attributed to cold housing.¹⁰

A review of evidence identified a direct correlation between cold housing and psychological wellbeing.^{11 12} Thermal discomfort, constant worry about the affordability of heating and debt, and the possible damage of belongings from living in a home with insufficient heating were found to contribute to poorer mental health outcomes.¹³

Physical hazards

Certain groups and communities are more likely to live in poor housing with physical risks, and they must choose between spending limited cash on housing needs and food. A home in the poor physical condition is linked to a higher risk of injury and impaired mobility, bone, and joint diseases, as well as mental health issues.^{14 15 16 17}

The private rental sector has the worst dwelling quality.¹⁸ Additionally, renters may have limited control over house maintenance and improvement.¹⁹ National estimates of poor housing quality have found that around 20% of residences with inhabitants over the age of 65 contain none of the basic accessibility features.²⁰ Only 7% of all homes satisfy the basic accessibility requirements.²¹

In England, 4.3 million households, or about 10 million people, live in what the government defines as a "non-decent" home, putting their health and welfare in jeopardy.²²

2.3 - Can the gains from improved housing be quantified financially?

2.4 - What lessons can be learned from 'post-occupancy evaluations' that obtain feedback and gauge the satisfaction of the homes' occupiers?

2.5 - Does the evidence from the pandemic show links between susceptibility to the Covid

The full effect the COVID-19 epidemic has had on the relationship between housing and health is yet to be seen. However, certain conclusions may be taken from the current literature. Health disparities, such as housing quality, indoor air pollution, and overcrowding, are important variables in COVID-19 viral exposure.^{23 24}

COVID-19 has heightened the link between housing and health in two ways: some poor housing conditions, such as overcrowding and poor indoor air quality have resulted in increased virus transmission; and thus, the lockdown measures used to control the virus have resulted in those living in poor housing being exposed to conditions that worsen their health.^{25 26}

For some, the measures adopted to control the virus have meant spending more time in wet, mould-infested, physically dangerous, and inappropriate dwellings.²⁷ Cold, damp homes can cause or worsen a series of health conditions linked to coronavirus.²⁸ It is often assumed that these poor internal environments will have a significant influence on mental wellbeing in the short term.

These experiences aren't equally shared; the research is obvious that some groups are more likely to measure poor-quality housing than others. The disproportionate number of deaths from COVID-19 in BAME communities are often explained partially by the conditions in which people live and work.²⁹

Less visible aspects include whether the house has access to a garden or outdoor area, a concern that was brought to the fore during the lockdown. Trip hazards, little space, poor internet connection, a scarcity of access to green space – these and lots of other issues have consequences for people's health.³⁰

Overcrowding

Overcrowding is one aspect of housing that is increasingly being identified as impacting the unequal outcomes of COVID-19 and therefore the experiences of lockdown.

According to the English Housing Survey, the proportion of overcrowded homes hit an all-time high of 3.4 per cent in 2018/19.³¹ Overcrowded houses have a variety of causes. Living with many generations in the same home may provide social benefits for a select home. For many, however, overcrowding is a result of a lack of affordable options and a desire to save money.³² Studies^{33 34 35 36 37 38} have shown robust evidence for crowded housing, worsening health conditions and COVID-19.

Ethnic minorities are more likely to live in multigenerational households, which accounts for the variation in the number of COVID-19 cases across England.^{39 40 41 42} Delays in housing repairs can increase the danger of trips and falls.⁴³ Social determinants of health including IMD for housing quality and COVID-19 hospitalization.⁴⁴

2.6 - How best can Local Planning Authorities play a positive, proactive role in creating the healthy city?

Evidence from the Healthier City Planning Toolkit ([Draft HCP toolkit Nov 2020](#))

2.7 - What changes to mandatory Building Regulations (eg. in relation to standards for accessibility) can be shown to improve health and wellbeing?

Building regulations framework has not managed to keep pace with changes at the rate required for its end goals to stay relevant. There has been a recent amendment to building regulations ([Part F and L changes to building regulations](#)). Part L sets minimum energy performance, Architects Climate Action Network ([Acan](#)), deemed the amendment as a loosening of regulations saying it disregards “the performance of a building’s fabric to ignoring the embodied energy of materials.”

The notion that buildings (sick buildings) have an impact on the health, well-being, and productivity of their occupants is not new to architects and designers. However, most design is still unaffected by this way of thinking. The practical ways in which architectural design may promote wellness are well-documented.

There are existing laws in place to guarantee that appropriate indoor air quality is maintained in areas like ventilation and hazardous chemicals. However, a rising body of data has demonstrated that the design of a building may have a considerably more subtle influence on the general welfare of individuals who use it during the previous few decades. According to studies, hospital patients who enjoy views of nature heal faster, office employees who have a window seat sleep 46 minutes longer each night and increasing the amount of outside air to a workplace lowers short-term illness.⁴⁵

Research on building regulations and health are largely focused on the workplace.^{46 47} No data was found on Room sizes (building standard regulations) and the effects of the new regulation on homes.

The impact of buildings on our health and wellbeing [the impact of buildings on our health and wellbeing](#).

BREAM- [Newcastle case study](#)

2.8 - Are there exemplar toolkits created by any UK cities which could be disseminated for use elsewhere?

See evidence from Healthier City Planning Toolkit ([Draft HCP toolkit Nov 2020](#))

2.9 - Do any robust studies demonstrate the benefits of land value capture and make the case for replication of past examples of new settlements and urban extensions that create strong communities?

2.10 - What is the evidence of benefits from achieving a mix of incomes and housing types, for young and old, and an absence of segregation?

2.11 - Is there evidence that outcomes are unsatisfactory for occupiers of high-rise flats? Or of out-of-town estates with no community facilities?

2.12 - Is there evidence that changing patterns of work and retail during the pandemic – with implications for new development and neighbourhood regeneration - will be sustained afterwards? How can emerging opportunities for regenerating high streets and reviving town centres be achieved post-Covid?

2.13 - Is there evidence that Home Improvement Agencies, providing advice and support for home retrofitting for older owners, are enhancing health and wellbeing for those living in poor conditions?

3. Transport and movement, infrastructure and technology (smart cities) [Phil, all]

Overarching Questions:

3.A - Could the transport and mobility sectors lead the way, after the pandemic, in offering evidence-based solutions to issues of air quality, energy consumption, improved productivity, 'levelling up' and helping create the healthy city?

Green transport planning is one way the transport sector can offer solutions to reduce air pollution ⁴⁸ this includes the introduction of green fuel and less polluting vehicles (electric, hydrogen, hybrids), green buses and taxis. ⁴⁹

London's Transport plans for green transport ([green transport](#)) and ([TfL future streets](#)).

According to the Climate Change Committee (CCC, 2020), transport is now the highest emitting sector of the UK economy, accounting for 22% of total greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in 2019. Cars comprise 13% of the UK's GHG emissions, vans 4%, and Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) 4%. Urgent action is required to drive down transport emissions, as they have remained largely flat since 1990. Although vehicles have become more fuel efficient, this has been offset by increasing travel demand and the sharp increase in the uptake of SUVs. Emissions from transport – and from passenger vehicles – will need to be

cut by over 70% to meet the UK's Sixth Carbon Budget, which sets a limit on UK emissions in the mid-2030s in order to stay on track to meeting Net Zero by 2050 (CCC, 2020). The challenge is even greater if transport is to achieve more ambitious decarbonisation targets, such as Birmingham's net zero by 2030. New evidence and commitments made at COP26 are also expected to mean that the scale of the challenge and required pace of decarbonisation are even greater.

Issues of air quality, energy consumption, improved productivity, 'levelling up' and healthy cities are interconnected and directly related to the challenge of decarbonisation. In order for transport to deliver solutions that help address these issues it is imperative that action is taken urgently across all levels of government to support a drastic reduction in emissions from transport. This requires a shift away from vehicles running on fossil fuels but, most importantly, a reduction in demand for travel.

To do so, interventions in transport alone are not sufficient. In order to reduce vehicle kilometres travelled, a coordinated approach across different policy areas is needed so that people need to travel less by car. This can be achieved through digital connectivity and substitution of some trips, and by changing where people travel to and how. Modifications in land use, so that more amenities are available to more people without the need to travel by car, will play a key role in transforming how people travel. In addition, transport infrastructure and available modes need to be planned so they increase accessibility to different amenities without the need to travel by a car. At the same time, travel by car needs to be limited to only essential purposes and for citizens who cannot use an alternative.

Work carried out by Transport for West Midlands estimates that a 60-80% reduction in all vehicle kilometres travelled is necessary to deliver local transport decarbonisation targets. This signifies a dramatic shift in how people move and for which purposes, and a broader shift in lifestyles, which also needs to be delivered urgently in order to meet the local transport budget. As such, although changes in transport need to be drastic and transformative, transport and mobility alone are unlikely to lead the way without coordinated action across different policy areas.

3.B - What are likely to be the long-term effects of the pandemic on use of public and private transport and, in particular, changed working/commuting behaviour?

It is still difficult to estimate the long-term effects of the pandemic on the use of public and private transport. However, the shifts in travel demand observed since March 2020 show that despite the drastic reduction in traffic during the first lockdown, most travel has returned to pre-pandemic levels, with the exception of peak hours. This seems to suggest that the pandemic may result in changed commuting behaviour and therefore a shift in the established AM and PM peaks. According to Docherty and Marsden (2021) "[t]his is particularly important to thinking about future infrastructure decisions. The economic case, previously based on the time savings from people who travel, may look quite different given the productivity benefits of non-travel now being recognised in some parts of the economy." In addition, such shifts will potentially impact the long-term viability of public transport operations.

Of course, the implications of such a shift go beyond transport. Especially for cities, a large-scale shift to home working, has broader implications for city centres and local centres, where there will be associated shifts in economic activity. Land-use planning will also need to respond to these shifts in order to support both the local economies and strategic priorities including levelling up, cleaner air and decarbonisation.

Evidence-based Questions:

Digital Divides

3.1 - Is there evidence available to help our understanding of how the digital divide – both physical and social – may be excluding:

- those without any or adequate broadband, preventing access to online shopping, studying, work and recreation;
- those unable to afford the necessary IT equipment and monthly costs;
- those lacking the knowledge/skills to use broadband/internet.

Patterns of working

3.2 - Is there evidence of the effects relating to working practices adopted during the Covid pandemic:

- flexible working,
- hybrid working at home and in an office,
- working in office hubs close to home

3.3 - Is there evidence on likely impacts for mobility, following the pandemic, relating to:

- the demand for travel,
- the viability of public transport,
- reductions in congestion

The impact of COVID-19 on transport and travel behaviour has been significant and varied over 2020.

This response is based on research carried out by Transport for West Midlands between April and September 2020, which focused on how travel behaviour and attitudes changed in the region in response to COVID-19. In early May, during the first lockdown, one in five respondents (22%) had self-isolated and not travelled at all in the complete two months since the start of lockdown in March. At the same time, 71% had been shopping (essentials only) whilst 22% had travelled to work.

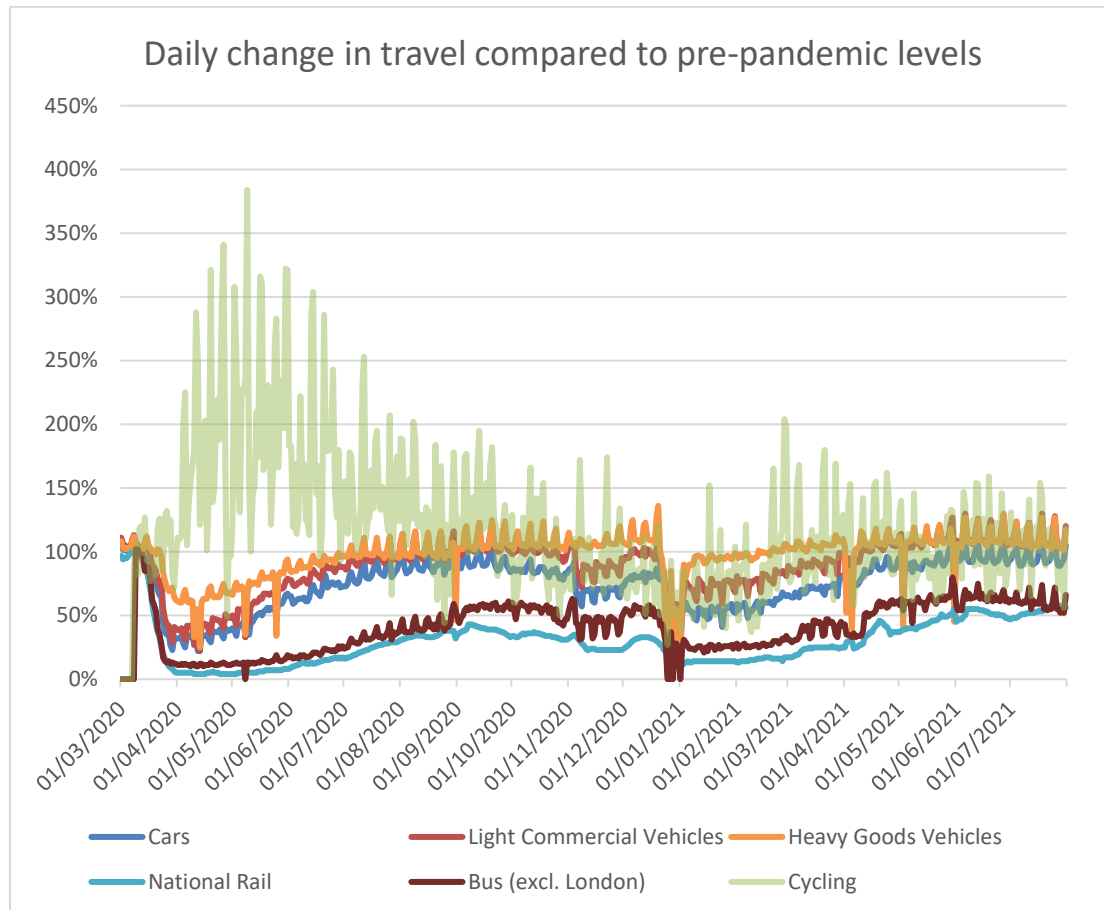
By mid-June, travel demand was still subdued as 21% had not travelled in the week before the survey. However, people had started people visiting friends and relatives (20%) and making leisure trips (17%). By late August, there was a noticeable increase in travel rates, and this was across all journey purposes – with leisure trips (37%) seeing some of the biggest increases, followed by trips to see friends and relatives (up to 35% from 20%) and work trips (up from 23% in mid-June to 33%).

A major 'travel-suppressing' factor during this period has been the seismic movement towards home working. Even by September, only a third of workers were mainly working from their usual/pre-Covid-19 work location. However, it should be stressed that the pandemic has exacerbated existing inequalities within the region, worsened by the significant disruption to public transport, on which lower impact groups often rely heavily. In the period between March and September 2020, at their lowest car travel dropped to 32% of normal, rail to 4% and bus outside London to 10% (TfWM, 2020).

The graph below shows how demand for different modes has fluctuated since the start of the pandemic and demonstrates that rail and bus remain significantly lower than pre-pandemic

levels, but all other modes have generally recovered. Commercial vehicles and cycling are slightly above pre-pandemic levels and so is cycling. This shows that, for most purposes, the effects of the pandemic on the use of private cars cannot be sustained without appropriate steering and policy interventions.

Source: Department for Transport <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/transport-use-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-pandemic>



Modes of transport

3.4 - Is there evidence of changing attitudes toward, and expectations for:

- the role of the car (in particular the role of SUVs)
- public transport and continuing need for social distancing
- novel forms of transport – mobility as a service, sharing, Uber etc.
- walking and cycling – and health – risks, safety etc.

The response to this question is based on the research carried out by Transport for West Midlands between April and September 2020 to understand how travel behaviour and attitudes changed in the region in response to COVID-19. In May 2020, during lockdown, respondents were aspirational for the future, they wanted lessons to be learned and wanted cleaner air (81%) and reduced traffic (75%), they wanted a better work life balance (67%) and to be fitter/healthier (65%). Thereafter, they wanted stronger community ties (59%), more wildlife and busy local shops and high streets (both 58%).

By summer, fuelled perhaps by the increasing media attention on the economic impact of the pandemic and changes to furlough scheme, when respondents were asked to rank priority areas for recovery post pandemic, jobs was the top priority area (44% top priority) followed by Health (35% top priority) and Education (9% top priority), while Environment was ranked a fourth. As such, it is hard to pinpoint how attitudes have changed during the pandemic and whether the public now have different priorities compared to pre-pandemic levels.

Public transport has been significantly impacted as a result of the lockdowns, and this is likely to continue; evidence demonstrates that modal shift to walking, cycling and driving, along with more working from home, is likely to result in fewer trips being taken by public transport in the future. This will potentially impact the long-term viability of public transport operations. However, the research by TfWM illustrates how when comparing levels of concern regarding public transport use by actual use, those who had used public transport in the last 7 days had the lowest level of extreme concern. In addition, over the survey timeline, extreme concern levels seem to be subsiding even amongst non-users of public transport (TfWM, 2020).

Increased active travel has also been hailed as a positive trend to emerge and much attention has been placed on creating an opportunity to lock in this positive travel behaviour with the roll out of temporary and permanent measures to support walking and cycling. As the graph below shows, cycling increased significantly in the period during and between lockdowns, but its share has almost returned to their pre-pandemic levels now.

There is limited evidence on the attitude of the public towards new forms of transport. In the West Midlands the e-scooter trial that was launched in September 2020, has shown that a significant share of users (approximately two thirds) are under the age of 35 and male, which shows that uptake is not consistent across all social groups.

Technology

3.5 - What evidence exists to help us to assess the impact of electric vehicles and the outcomes from less air pollution?

Electric vehicles do reduce negative impacts on air quality at the local level, as they have zero tailpipe emissions (if fully electric). According to the CCC (2020), the link between EVs and air quality is clear. Air pollution is the top environmental risk to human health in the UK, and in the UK alone in 2016 was responsible for 40,000 premature deaths. Poor air quality has also been linked to increased deaths from COVID-19. A full shift to EVs by 2050 will have one of the highest impacts particularly on reducing nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and non-methane volatile organic compounds (NMVOC), responsible for asthma, inflammation and other lung problems. A further study conducted for the CCC indicated that air quality and noise impacts from the electrification of transport could result in annual benefits close to 0.1% GDP in 2030.

It should be noted however that particulate matter emissions (PM) from tyres remain a problem and they are still unregulated. Research has shown that these emissions can be significantly higher than tailpipe PM emissions, which are strongly regulated. Increased popularity of SUVs, larger and heavier than standard vehicles, exacerbates this problem, and so do the growing sales of heavy EVs and widespread use of budget tyres (Emissions Analytics, 2020).

Regarding the role EVs play in tackling climate change, according to the CCC, “[d]espite the recent Government announcement to phase out sales of new petrol and diesel vehicles by 2030, the UK is currently not on track to switch all new vehicles to fully battery-electric by 2030. Beyond 2030, significant questions remain that need to be addressed – such as the increased demand for electricity and where this will come from, sourcing and supply of rare

earth materials for battery production and capacity for battery recycling. Policies and strategies are needed to overcome these challenges longer-term, but short-term, several key barriers must be overcome in order to reach the 2030 transition date.”

In addition, electric vehicles are not a completely emission-free option. Electric vehicles also require a fully decarbonised electric grid to be carbon-free, which is not currently the case. In addition, as electric vehicles cost considerably less per kilometre to operate than petrol and diesel vehicles, the electrification of the fleet has the potential to lead to a rebound effect and an increase in the amount of travel, especially by car (and therefore a reduction in emissions savings). Finally, the whole life emissions of electric vehicles need to be carefully considered, including the embedded footprint of vehicle production.

3.6 - Is there evidence of benefits of use of technology/apps for travel planning and seamless door to door journeys?

Digital integration of services could satisfy people’s mobility needs at the same or lower cost than their current travel choices, whilst providing added benefits such as reduced or more useful/enjoyable travel time, trips eliminated completely, and other services made available to users during their travel time (Rye, 2017). Additional benefits such as seamless and on-demand travel, access to improved user and demand information and new opportunities to serve an unmet need are also widely promoted by MaaS providers. In addition, digital integration can promote alternatives to using the private car that may be as convenient and more sustainable and help reduce congestion and constraints in transport network capacity (MaaS Alliance, 2021).

However, despite the hype around integration of travel planning and ticketing across modes, there are few examples of large-scale integration, especially in cases where different modes are provided by many different operators. Across the country, multi-operator ticketing for buses remains a significant challenge in a deregulated environment. In the West Midlands, there is capped multi-operator ticketing, which is generally considered a success. However, integration beyond public transport, for example including shared mobility and micro-mobility, is very limited in the UK and has generally been tested only as part of trials. It is key that regardless of the level of digital integration, affordable and safe services are accessible to people. For example, if buses are infrequent and unreliable, integrated ticketing is not the only factor affecting the quality of the service, customer satisfaction, and, ultimately, modal shift to buses.

Indeed, there is research suggesting that applications such as Mobility as a Service (MaaS) can have unanticipated negative impacts if not designed and steered purposefully.

According to Pangbourne et al (2020), “the commodification of mobility through the product service package approach requires customers who buy services. Profitability for private businesses inevitably requires growth in the use of their services. Under MaaS, there is strong potential for increased mobility only among those who can pay for it. This runs counter to the need to reduce overall vehicle kilometres travelled and does not address the needs of those experiencing transport poverty.

Whilst it is not inconceivable that the less well-off could be supported through subsidies in the MaaS system, this requires strong public-sector input if they are to avoid further transport-related social exclusion. The promise of freedom and seamless journeys could fail to acknowledge that current problems of traffic congestion, urban air pollution, noise and greenhouse gas emissions are large-scale emergent phenomena arising from the aggregate impact of our small-scale individual activities and is thus in conflict with the efficiency promise. These larger phenomena in turn have real negative impacts on individuals and

communities now, and for future generations. Whilst MaaS could be designed to influence behaviours to be more sustainable, this must be designed in from the start, particularly as the bundling process will obscure the true costs of individual journeys.”

Green spaces

3.7 - Is there evidence of benefit to health and wellbeing from access for citizens to green space facilities, parks, allotments, etc?

[Health benefits of green spaces](#)

Greenspace has been shown to have a positive impact on one's health and wellbeing however there is more evidence on the mental health benefits.⁵⁰

The following health advantages have been discovered through research:

- Improved mental and cognitive function
- Reduced cardiovascular mortality
- Reduced prevalence of type 2 diabetes
- Life satisfaction is associated with access to green space
- Reduced noise pollution
- Self-reported health

Medical doctors often prescribe time spent in green spaces as part of therapeutic interventions for individuals suffering from mental ill-health (social prescribing).⁵¹

Gardening efforts to forest bathing are some examples of green environment-based therapies utilized in several countries to improve health and well-being. For example, doctors in the Shetland Islands Scotland have been able to prescribe nature-based activities such as beach walks and birdwatching to treat both physical and mental health conditions.⁵² Similarly, a review into 2019 identified more than 28 green environment based interventions used in several countries to improve health and well-being, ranging from gardening initiatives to forest bathing.⁵³

See also the Birmingham well-being Guide and Future Parks Accelerator Rapid Review

[Nature as a Tailored Treatment for Mental Ill Health and other Health Conditions](#)

[Psychological responses to green spaces](#)

Complimentary theories that focus on psychological responses to green spaces. [Attention restoration theory](#) proposes that the green environment contains essential stimuli that help individuals to recover from the mental fatigue of daily life.⁵⁴ [Stress reduction theory](#) suggests that exposure to green spaces produce a relaxed psychological state indicated by lower levels of stress.

Recent evidence suggests that living in or near a greener environment reduces mortality rates and improve mental health and wellbeing. One study reported that merely having a view of greenery from your home can reduce the perception of noise and the closer green space, the bigger the effect.^{55 56}

A study in Scotland measured cortisol samples over a day and determined that people living in neighbourhoods with parks, forests and other green environments not only report less stress but also had healthier cortisol slope profiles.⁵⁷

Further highlighting the importance of the perception of green space access. A national cross-sectional study in Scotland found that individuals who reported the greatest lack of green spaces in their neighbourhoods were twice as likely to report anxiety and depression compared to residents not so deprived.⁵⁸

Health Inequalities and Green Spaces

The pandemic has shown us that people don't have enough access to green infrastructure (nature), this is especially true for people in lower-income areas. For example, findings from a recent survey by [Natural England](#) observed that children from low-income families spent less time outside in green spaces during the pandemic than children from higher-income families.

Urban Greening and Health

Urban vegetation helps to absorb airborne particles and other pollutants. Emerging evidence indicates that exposure to these pollutants can damage the [central nervous system](#) and is linked with certain [mental health conditions](#) such as depression.

Urban vegetation also helps mitigate noise pollution, which causes stress and sleep disturbance.⁵⁹

A recent study concludes that what urbanites, at least in the UK, most value in their encounters with [nature](#) is variety.

Another study of urban meadows in the south of England found that people responded more positively to the [more-biodiverse meadows](#) than to mowed grassland.

A study by Berman and colleagues in Toronto, Canada, found that adding just [10 trees](#) to a city block has a massive effect on people's perceptions of their health and well-being, equal to the result of earning an additional \$10,000 more per household.

Examples of urban greening from the US include the [Million Trees Los Angeles initiative](#) and the large-scale [greening programme](#) in New York City.

4. Health & Wellbeing (public health, social prescribing, food and exercise, health creation)

Overarching Questions:

4.A - Is the Commission right to see health as the prism through which to consider the full spectrum of a city's social and public policies?

Yes

4.B - How can our highly centralised and illness-orientated health service be transformed to achieve more responsive, more preventative, more holistic and more personalised outcomes?

4.C - What data have been found to be the most useful in measuring the health of cities?

Evidence-based Questions:

4.1 - What evidence supports the case for investment in public health and prevention?

4.2 - Does the evidence suggest the most cost-effective improvements in health and wellbeing will come from encouragement of healthier lifestyles and diets, combatting obesity, inactivity and tobacco/alcohol/substance abuse? How big a part can education play – from early years throughout the life course – to make a significant difference?

4.3 - Are there further fiscal incentives (eg. like the sugar tax) that have been shown to affect behaviour positively?

4.4 - Is there evidence of the success of the social prescribing route to achieving health and wellbeing?

4.5 - How can citizens and local employers be involved in co-production and co-ownership of local solutions to improve health and wellbeing? Should the CCHC use surveys and opinion polls to establish how users of services can best engage in creating healthier cities?

4.6 - Does research indicate that the long-term future of the NHS model is financially unsustainable, requiring investment in prevention research and implementation?

4.7 - Is there evidence on what health-related activities are best done at a national scale and what should be further devolved to local (or regional) government?

4.8 - What has the Covid pandemic taught us in terms of health inequalities? What are the lessons in respect of residential care homes and the need for age-friendly, independent accommodation within the community?

The health of people in Birmingham and the wider UK was inequitable before COVID-19, and the pandemic has made these more apparent resulting in a higher incidence of coronavirus infections and mortality among the most disadvantaged people. ([perfect-storm-health-inequalities-and-impact-covid-19;Understanding the impact of COVID-19 on BAME communities](#))

The pandemic highlighted the following inequalities:

- Spaces characterized by crowding and enclosed spaces with limited ventilation
- Limited access to open spaces and green environments particularly in poorer communities.

Older people and COVID-19 <https://www.ageing-better.org.uk/publications/experience-people-approaching-later-life-lockdown-impact-covid-19-50-70-year-olds>

Learning from the pandemic

- Planning can be a tool for fast-paced adaptation (Melbourne developed a set of planning guidelines and application processes for outdoor dining).⁶⁰ Further adaptations including new bike lanes (Dublin) and open streets (New York)
- Better uses of green spaces (Urban Design)⁶¹ example from Singapore
- A paradigm shift in several industries including engineering, architecture etc.⁶²

4.9 - Do the data from international comparisons show good/poor performance of the UK on measures of life expectancy, years of life free from impairments, infant mortality, violent deaths and the health of poorer communities? Are there clear lessons from other countries to guide UK practice?

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Midpoint Review	
Workstream:	Health and Wellbeing
Lead:	Rob Netherway
Park Site:	Witton Lakes
FPA Board Member:	Justin Varney, Director of Public Health

Aims:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active and connected citizens in the natural environment for improved wellbeing. • Celebrate people's deep cultural connections to food, landscape and nature. • Connect Health & Social Care Services to the natural environment. • Redesigning for a Health & Wellbeing Park • Healthy active neighbourhoods and Park Connectors • Training pack for health workers • Service Network upskilling local people
Proposals being tested:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop 'nature based' virtual sessions. • Parks At Home – Developing activities such as home planting sessions and Patchwork Meadow to spread the benefits of green spaces. • Walking – Supported Walks, Sensory Walks & Meditation Walks for Health & Wellbeing. • Outdoor & physical activities – Bringing new activities such as arts and exercise to Witton Lakes. • Volunteer Development – Supporting residents to develop skills and confidence to lead activities. • Engagement & Support of Primary Care Networks and Social Prescribing Link Workers – Developing training, resources and tools to get them more involved such as 'how to' guides and benefits of green spaces. • Engage community members around landscape design at Witton Lakes Eco Hub.
What has been achieved to date:
<p>The initial focus of the pilot was on building productive partnerships with a number of organisations and groups in the immediate area and further afield in order to grow the work of our pilot at Witton Lakes. This has included a particular focus on working with social prescribing link workers, GP practices and Adult Social Care to share the work of Naturally Birmingham. We have also successfully engaged the Parks Department, several supported living sites and churches to get them involved in the project. Additionally, we engaged local residents to get them interested in the services available.</p>

Throughout the testing phase we have delivered a range of activities, collected impact data with residents, and built productive partnerships locally and further afield in order to grow the pilot work at Witton Lakes. The following proposals were identified, developed and tested, with data tracking the benefits for health and wellbeing:

- Virtual 'Active In Nature' sessions that have helped to discuss the wellbeing benefits of using green spaces, connecting residents to nature through photos, videos, quizzes and discussions about green spaces, and more specific sessions around outdoor exercise, volunteering and opportunities in green spaces.
- Walking Buddies – Taking residents on supported walks with an added benefit of social contact, these have focused predominantly on individuals who have been shielding from Covid-19 in order to build confidence to get them outside. Additionally we have connected up with existing walking groups in order to make the most of local services and activities.
- Parks At Home & Patchwork Meadow – These helped vulnerable residents stay busy in their homes, working with three supported living sites and several residents in their own homes to help them to grow their own plants and brighten up their living space. This has included a winter planting activity to keep people busy as days get shorter. Greenery has also been spread to homes and neighbourhoods that don't have much access to green space.
- Sensory Walks & Meditation Walks to connect individuals to nature and to practice mindfulness techniques that impact on their health and wellbeing. We have so far trained local volunteers in methods that they can deliver themselves in the new year, supporting skill sharing across the community.
- Community co-creation workshop – Residents have been involved in the initial landscape design of the Eco Hub @ Witton Lakes so they can contribute to the final layout and have ownership over this community space.
- Social Prescribing – Connected to social prescribing link workers to share the benefits of green spaces with health practitioners, showing them what is available near their practices and how these can benefit their patients. This has taken significant investment, but a small number of link workers are now on board with Naturally Birmingham.
- Engagement How To – Using learning so far to create a resource on how to engage with communities around green spaces.
- Christmas – Community participation activities that get people outside and enjoying green spaces together, using them to come together, share and have fun.

Feedback from projects has been positive and data tracking has shown an increase in wellbeing measures following interventions.

We have also worked with The Active Wellbeing Society (TAWS) to start to embed green spaces into their social prescribing (SP) programme. Patients require trust to be built before using green spaces if it's not something they are used to, meaning it is a long process at times. TAWS have produced a video to explain their SP work, as well as highlighting the impact it has on local

residents. See <https://theaws.co.uk/social-prescribing/about-us/>

Challenges:

Covid-19 has continue to be a huge challenge with engagement, predominantly because many organisations such as health providers and schools have been focusing on running their organisations/activities safely, and secondly because less people have been coming out and actively participating in services. We have had limited success engaging schools, and Covid-19 has proven a barrier to expanding our engagement further afield.

The second challenge has been getting 'buy in' from partners. We have worked with a range of partners, many of which are incredibly busy and focused on their core services, so the challenge has been getting their attention, helping them to understand the benefits of green spaces, and gaining their interest in the project. Below we have presented our learning from this and 'top tips' on engaging partners.

Key Learning:

What we have seen far is the proposals with the most traction are those where community members are involved and that come from the community. We have identified a series of new activity areas to explore, and feel the focus should be on those that have the strongest connection to residents, building in the opportunities for upskilling residents to lead sessions themselves in the future where possible. Focusing on locals residents and the green spaces accessible to them is crucial to ensure they can access services available to them ('15 minute neighbourhood').

Working with partners such as Primary Care Networks (PCNs) and social prescribing link workers requires a clear and simple offer that can be communicated so that they understand what is available and how to access them. We have found that offering specific dates and times of services that can be referred into is more beneficial than getting partners on board with the 'ethos' of Future Parks Accelerator. Working with partners such as supported living sites, faith groups and children's centres has been beneficial. There has also been a wealth of existing groups utilising parks such as volunteer groups we have been able to build into delivery.

Often 'micro support' is really beneficial. This includes small, regular sharing such as posting photos of green spaces on Facebook. It also includes building green spaces into established activities such as quizzes or volunteering activities. This is relatively easy, but the feedback from residents has also been very positive and highlighted improved wellbeing.

A lot of focus has been on older adults and this has highlighted concerns around safety, fear and confidence. This has been associated with Covid-19, but also traditional fears such as of anti-

social behaviour from green spaces. We have found volunteers have helped to address this so that vulnerable individuals are supported to go out with others rather than their own.

For further information see:

- Learning report – December 2020
- How to guide

How will this be taken forward:

We have identified a series of new activity areas to explore, and feel the focus should be on those that have the strongest connection to residents, building in the opportunities for upskilling residents to lead sessions themselves in the future where possible. We can continue to develop these at the pilot site and further afield, and some specific areas include:

- Sensory Walks & Meditation Walks to connect individuals to nature and to practice mindfulness techniques that impact on their health and wellbeing.
- Community co-creation workshop – There is potential to involve residents in the landscape design of Eco Hub @ Witton Lakes.
- Social Prescribing – Sharing the benefits of green spaces with health practitioners including social prescribing link workers, showing them what is available near their practices and how these can benefit their patients.

Further more, there are opportunities to share this more widely, to other areas of the city, for example social prescribing link workers, primary care networks, adult social care, neighbourhood network scheme and voluntary sector partners who have a city wide remit. WLCA are working with one organisation to help support them use green spaces as part of increasing their health and wellbeing offer. We are also working with Neighbourhood Network Schemes to promote our work and see if other local organisations make use of our how to guides.

We are also working with the local wellbeing service (council run leisure centres) to incorporate green spaces into their physical activity offer. The service is due to have their contract renewed by the Public Health Service Lead for Physical Activity and the FPA Director is working closely with them to ensure this is achieved. What is important to know here is that the Public Health team came to FPA for their support, showing the impact FPA is having.

The Public Health team has also been redesigned to include an Assistant Director which has responsibility for the Built Environment – the legacy of FPA in Public Health will fall under this team.



Future Parks Accelerator

The Active Wellbeing Society's mission has always been to see a society where people have the autonomy, capacity, resources and skills to feel empowered as agents of social change - whether at an individual level or more widely. The pandemic has presented many significant challenges to the lives of people we support and has led to a reduction in outdoor activity for those with certain health conditions who would benefit from exercise.

With regular changes to legislation around recreation, travel and social activity this has also had an inevitable impact on the way people relate to communal places and to the people living around them. Usage of Outdoor greenspaces and parks has not necessarily declined in all areas, however the way people use those spaces has certainly changed. The Future Parks Accelerator programme (FPA) was designed to increase the contribution that green spaces make to civic life. The following update in this report reflects on key learning from the work being carried out to explore solutions that enable communities to make best use of green spaces.

In light of the current challenges, we believe enabling While adapting and innovating to offer different methods of patient support has been essential, we are still firmly of the view that where patients can be supported to get out and be active, this is key to good mental

and physical health. More than ever, patients need to be supported to be active and develop support networks and TAWS has developed a number of solutions link worker-led walking and social groups, where patients can meet the link worker and each other, developing a peer-to-peer support infrastructure. Link Workers have worked with wider TAWS staff to design safe, support mechanisms for patients to access opportunities to be active for free. This is something TAWS recognises as essential and is committed to continuing.

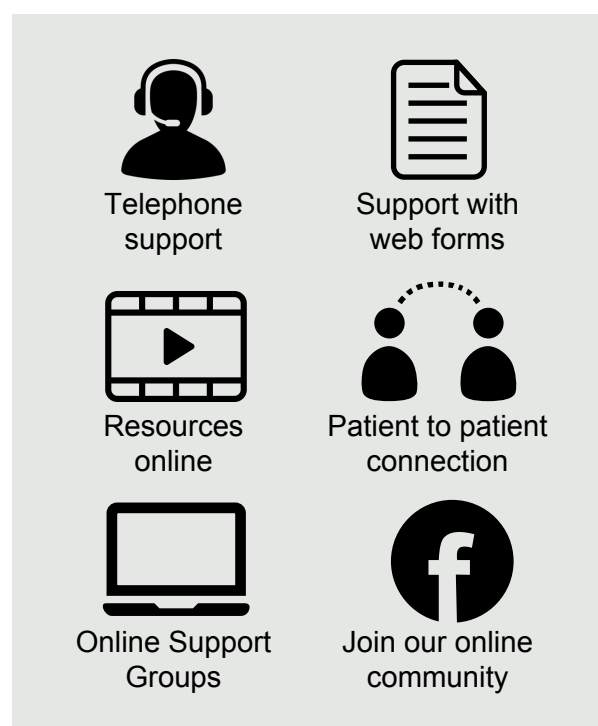


Fig. 1. Various forms of digital and online support to encourage use of outdoor green spaces

Key Learnings

Key Outputs since September



60 x online sessions where use of green space is encouraged



96 x facilitated walks in 9 different green spaces accross Birmingham



3 x support bubbles set up for isolated patients to walk together

Fig. 2. shows three main areas where we are able to capture insight and key learning from participants

Connecting with nature has been proven to improve health and wellbeing: managing weight, improving mental health and reducing stress and anxiety are just some of the many positive outcomes of spending more time outdoors in green spaces. However, it is often those who have the most to gain from green social prescribing: patients with mental health issues, physical ailments, high levels of deprivation etc. who have the most obstacles to overcome before they can reap these rewards. Social prescribers are helping to change attitudes towards patient wellbeing and their compassionate, supportive approach is getting more people out of their homes so they can experience the benefits for themselves

One of the main learnings we have observed since running these outdoor groups, is the importance of trust and the relationship built between TAWS social prescribers and the patients they support. At the point of referral, patients with complex issues may not be ready to engage in a group setting, or to even consider factoring physical activity into their lives. One patient, Margaret*, who was referred by Weoley Park Surgery had been feeling very upset and had been suffering with anxiety when she was referred to TAWS. After self-isolating for 6 months with only the support of one friend who didn't live locally, she started receiving regular befriending calls.



The calls were something for Margaret to look forward to and assured her that someone cared and was looking out for her. After building up a trusting relationship with her social prescriber (Junior Christie) through a series of conversations, she then jumped at the chance to be part of a small walking group. This journey perfectly illustrates the kind of multi-pronged approach that TAWS applies to wellbeing, to not only encourage patients to engage with green social

Next Steps: Adapting our to COVID-19

prescribing but to ensure they get the most out of it. The telephone conversations between Junior and Maureen reduced her anxiety which in turn enabled her to get outside again and connect with green spaces.



“It’s great that The Active Wellbeing Society can continue these walks despite lockdown as I am struggling during these colder days and dark mornings, gives me something to look forward to.”

– Margaret, Selly Oak Park group

It has become clear that green social prescribing has more to offer than just physical activity. The social aspect is equally important and we have found that since running these outdoor groups, the prospect of social interaction is a key motivator to encourage patients to exercise. Often participants had reported feeling lonely and/or isolated prior to joining the groups, so their main incentive to join the group was not necessarily to improve physical fitness, but to meet new people and socialise safely. All the walking groups had a relatively small number of patients, which turned out to be a great advantage as it allowed everyone to participate equally in the conversation and lowered the risk of any one person being left out. We have utilised parks across the city to give patients a space to open up to one another and discuss issues relevant to them. By giving participants this autonomy and freedom to shape their green social prescribing experience, they were able to connect with each other in a meaningful way.



Engagement/Consultation

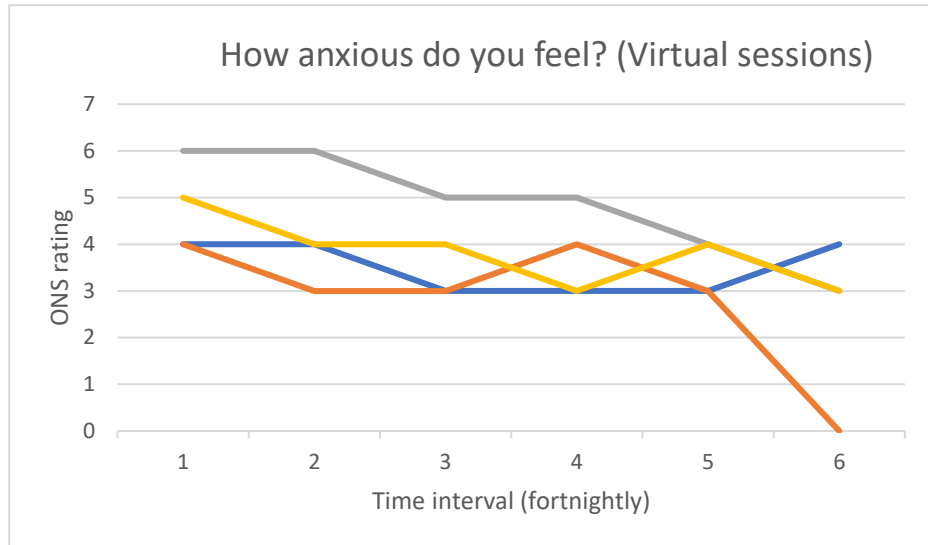
<u>Activity</u>	<u>Progress To Date</u>
1st engagement session – Barriers to using parks	<p>First virtual engagement session 16/06/2020 completed attended by 24 residents.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initially engaged the group around physiotherapy and discussing mobility, bone health, etc. The session was attended by older adults including some living in supported accommodation Discussed outdoor exercise. 18/24 (75%) used green spaces for physical activity pre-lock down, but this has now fallen significantly. Discussed barriers to using green spaces for physical activity. Key themes included: Fears of going back outside and lack of confidence to visit green and open spaces alone. Fears of Covid-19 were also raised and lack of PPE.
2nd engagement session – Testing activity proposal	<p>Presented range of ideas and options to residents, the following were raised as popular ideas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walking – Accessibility, different ages, disability Tai chi Yoga Painting/Arts project – E.g. mural Water activities on the Lakes <p>Participants asked WLCA to consider factors such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accessibility – Age/Disability Facilities – Toilets Signage How communicated to wider range of people

Activity Delivery

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Progress To Date</u>
Virtual nature sessions	<p>Virtual sessions have been a useful way to engage residents around green spaces and connect to nature. They are particularly beneficial for those who are unable to attend parks (e.g. due to shielding or physical disability) and feedback has been overall positive, although many residents have also indicated they want to attend in person rather than virtually as soon as possible.</p>
'Active In Nature' Virtual Session	<p>This virtual session focused on using the '5 Relationships With Nature' approach to connect individuals to nature, explore their memories of nature and show them virtual activities (e.g. videos with bird song from Witton Lakes) to connect them to nature. Attended by 20 individuals.</p> <p>Impacts of being at home "Boring being away from places" "Anxious and confused" "Like being in solitary confinement"</p> <p>Memories from visiting parks "Fresh air, relaxing, happy to unwind at the end of the day"</p>

	<p>"Feeling free, feeling part of a group when visiting" "I live by Witton Lakes and missing nature" "I haven't been back since I was mugged in one"</p> <p>Showing video of virtual walk in Witton Lakes including woods and bird song "I know Witton Lakes, I always go by my mobility snooker" "We can't see the lake yet! Where is the lake?"</p> <p>Several viewers were heard laughing with joy at seeing the birds.</p> <p>How does watching this video make you feel? "This gives you an energy and drive that makes you motivated to do more things" "Seeing the wildlife and greenery gives a sense of enjoyment to continue" "Fresh air does a lot of good to people" "It's a pity I can't be there myself – But watching it is the next best thing" "I feel happier" "I feel revived, energised" "Best parts of my day are when I go to a park" "Cows in the field around you, swans in the lake, I love when nature is all around you"</p> <p>A member of the Public Health team presented some of the benefits of using green spaces towards health and wellbeing</p> <p>Activity proposals for FPA were presented to the group and feedback was generally supportive. One person said "Some people need a bit of a reason to go out, what will get people back out?"</p>
<p>'Using Green Spaces' Virtual Session (Facebook Live)</p>	<p>This session talked to residents about different ways to use green spaces in daily life.</p> <p>Participant ONE feedback POSITIVES 'I enjoy green spaces for exercising, and going for a walk helps to clear my mind. It also improves my wellbeing, and de-stresses my mind' 'Outdoor spaces are especially nice if it has a variety of nice landscape and sculptured gardens' NEGATIVES 'Sometimes I avoid green spaces due to a lack of covered areas if the weather is bad and a lack of toilet facilities'</p> <p>Participant TWO feedback POSITIVES 'I like the look of parks and the peacefulness but I avoid them as I suffer badly from hay-fever'. NEGATIVES 'I don't feel comfortable taking my children out to the parks due to their age. I can't sit on the benches sometimes due to the mess and untidiness and I feel uneasy about what has been on the benches.</p>

Impact of regular attendance at virtual sessions




Tracking 4 participants on the ONS measure "anxiety" over 6 weeks showed a general decrease in anxiety for those regularly participating in virtual sessions to connect to nature (other participants did not attend regularly enough in order to track over time).

Regular social media updates to connect people to nature

Sharing photos of new ducklings at Witton Lakes engaged 40 people on Facebook with many positive comments.



A new flower species was discovered at Witton Lakes. After appealing to the public it was identified as a 'Prince Charming Blue Chicory'. Its seeds have been harvested by volunteers and it'll be sown in the park to preserve it.

	
<p>Parks At Home 'Sunflower Project'</p>	<p>SCHOOLS</p> <p>Tried unsuccessfully to engage the local schools to participate in a 'grow your own sunflower' project during the summer holidays.</p> <p>SUPPORTED LIVING ACCOMMODATION</p> <p>Successfully engaged with Sycamore Court, Perry Tree Centre and Ralph Barlow Gardens to 'grow your own sunflower(s)' on their sites.</p> <p>16 residents from Perry Tree and Sycamore Court are currently participating and have been growing sunflowers.</p> <p>Unfortunately Ralph Barlow Gardens decided not to participate.</p> <p>Feedback</p> <p>"We have used the Sunflower seeds that you have provided and our citizens were delighted to own an individual plant pot with their names on! There is an element of healthy competition in terms of who's Sunflower will take off first and which will grow the tallest."</p>



Impact on health and wellbeing (ONS) to follow.

Walks / Walking Buddies

Recent discussions taken place with Aston Villa 'Generation Gains' to start a walking programme to encourage vulnerable adults to enjoy green spaces post COVID-19 lockdown.

Discussions taken place with Red Hot Chilli Steppers Walking Group to encourage other local residents to participate.

Commenced Walking Buddies programme, supporting residents to become more confident to walk outside;

Participant ONE feedback:

BEFORE 'I felt a bit scared driving over as I had not been out of my house since March, and the main contact had been by either telephone or Zoom (online)'

AFTER 'I could only walk a short distance as I hadn't had any exercise for a few months, but I enjoyed the fresh air and the chance to talk to other people, and I am looking forward to the next walk'

Participant TWO feedback:

BEFORE 'I have been recovering from a fall and had not been out of my sheltered accommodation since March, and I don't use the telephone or Zoom (online)'

AFTER 'I could only walk a short distance using a walking frame, but I enjoyed the fresh air on my skin, I look forward to the next walk'

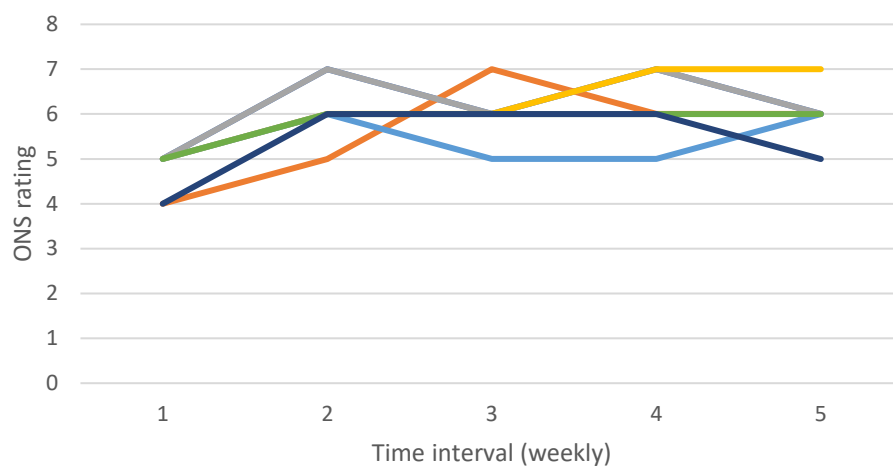
Participant THREE feedback:

BEFORE 'I haven't left my house in over 6 months. My world has become a very small and dark place.'

AFTER 'Just seeing and talking to people has been a real breath of fresh air after so long'

Commenced recruitment for Walking Buddies volunteers.

How happy do you feel? (Walking activities)



Tracking 7 participants on the ONS measure "happiness" over 5 weeks showed a general slight increase in happiness for those joining supported walks.

Future Parks Accelerator – Witton Lodge Community Association

Evidence, Learning and Reflections – 22/12/2020




Engagement/Consultation

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Progress To Date</u>
1st engagement session – Barriers to using parks	<p>First virtual engagement session 16/06/2020 completed attended by 24 residents.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initially engaged the group around physiotherapy and discussing mobility, bone health, etc. The session was attended by older adults including some living in supported accommodation Discussed outdoor exercise. 18/24 (75%) used green spaces for physical activity pre-lock down, but this has now fallen significantly. Discussed barriers to using green spaces for physical activity. Key themes included: Fears of going back outside and lack of confidence to visit green and open spaces alone. Fears of Covid-19 were also raised and lack of PPE.
2nd engagement session – Testing activity proposal	<p>Presented range of ideas and options to residents, the following were raised as popular ideas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walking – Accessibility, different ages, disability Tai chi Yoga Painting/Arts project – E.g. mural Water activities on the Lakes <p>Participants asked WLCA to consider factors such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accessibility – Age/Disability Facilities – Toilets Signage How communicated to wider range of people

Activity Delivery

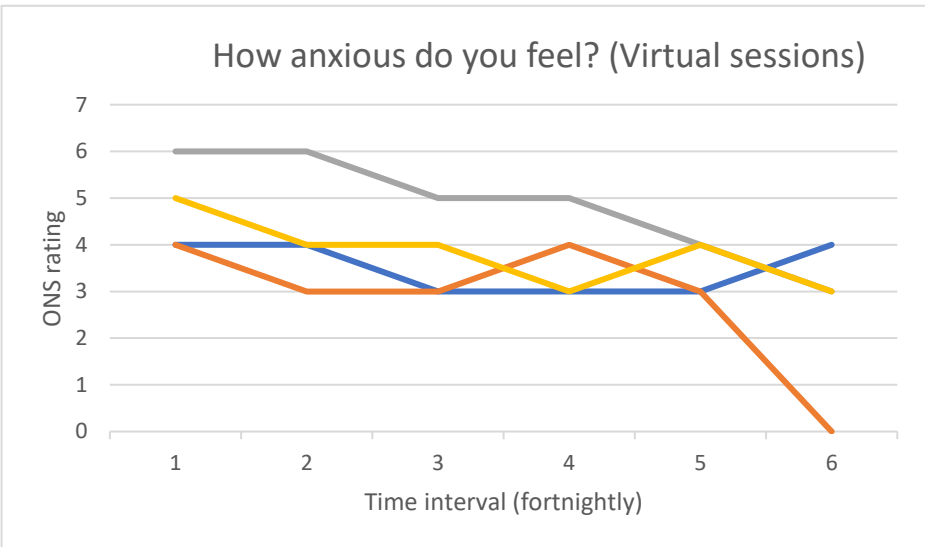
<u>Activity</u>	<u>Progress To Date</u>
Virtual nature sessions	<p>Virtual sessions have been a useful way to engage residents around green spaces and connect to nature. They are particularly beneficial for those who are unable to attend parks (e.g. due to shielding or physical disability) and feedback has been overall positive, although many residents have also indicated they want to attend in person rather than virtually as soon as possible.</p>
'Active In Nature' Virtual Session	<p>This virtual session focused on using the '5 Relationships With Nature' approach to connect individuals to nature, explore their memories of nature and show them virtual activities (e.g. videos with bird song from Witton Lakes) to connect them to nature. Attended by 20 individuals.</p> <p>Impacts of being at home</p> <p>"Boring being away from places"</p> <p>"Anxious and confused"</p> <p>"Like being in solitary confinement"</p> <p>Memories from visiting parks</p> <p>"Fresh air, relaxing, happy to unwind at the end of the day"</p> <p>"Feeling free, feeling part of a group when visiting"</p> <p>"I live by Witton Lakes and missing nature"</p>

	<p>"I haven't been back since I was mugged in one"</p> <p>Showing video of virtual walk in Witton Lakes including woods and bird song</p> <p>"I know Witton Lakes, I always go by my mobility snooker"</p> <p>"We can't see the lake yet! Where is the lake?"</p> <p>Several viewers were heard laughing with joy at seeing the birds.</p> <p>How does watching this video make you feel?</p> <p>"This gives you an energy and drive that makes you motivated to do more things"</p> <p>"Seeing the wildlife and greenery gives a sense of enjoyment to continue"</p> <p>"Fresh air does a lot of good to people"</p> <p>"It's a pity I can't be there myself – But watching it is the next best thing"</p> <p>"I feel happier"</p> <p>"I feel revived, energised"</p> <p>"Best parts of my day are when I go to a park"</p> <p>"Cows in the field around you, swans in the lake, I love when nature is all around you"</p> <p>A member of the Public Health team presented some of the benefits of using green spaces towards health and wellbeing</p> <p>Activity proposals for FPA were presented to the group and feedback was generally supportive. One person said "Some people need a bit of a reason to go out, what will get people back out?"</p> <div data-bbox="295 1048 1508 1727">  <p>The image features a word cloud on the left with terms like 'Beautiful', 'Peaceful', 'Relaxing', 'Interesting', 'Enjoyable', 'Stunning', 'Natural', 'Exercise', 'Tranquil', 'Lovely', 'Healthy', 'Safe', 'Community', 'Wildlife', 'Space', 'Accessible', 'Freedom', 'Good', 'Great', 'Refreshing', 'Pleasant', 'Amusing', 'Exciting', 'Vibrant', 'Regenerative', 'Local', 'Family', 'Natural', 'Enjoyment', 'Quiet', 'Universal', 'Convenient', 'Peace', 'OK', 'Community', 'Wildlife', 'Space', 'Accessible', 'Freedom', 'Good', 'Great', 'Refreshing', 'Pleasant', 'Amusing', 'Exciting', 'Vibrant', 'Regenerative', 'Local', 'Family', 'Natural', 'Enjoyment', 'Quiet', 'Universal', 'Convenient', 'Peace', 'OK'. To the right of the word cloud, the text 'Active in Nature' is written in a large, green, sans-serif font. The entire graphic is framed by green geometric shapes on the left and right sides.</p> </div>
<p>'Using Green Spaces' Virtual Session (Facebook Live)</p>	<p>This session talked to residents about different ways to use green spaces in daily life.</p> <p>Participant ONE feedback</p> <p>POSITIVES</p> <p>'I enjoy green spaces for exercising, and going for a walk helps to clear my mind. It also improves my wellbeing, and de-stresses my mind'</p> <p>'Outdoor spaces are especially nice if it has a variety of nice landscape and sculptured gardens'</p> <p>NEGATIVES</p>

	<p>'Sometimes I avoid green spaces due to a lack of covered areas if the weather is bad and a lack of toilet facilities'</p> <p>Participant TWO feedback</p> <p>POSITIVES</p> <p>'I like the look of parks and the peacefulness but I avoid them as I suffer badly from hay-fever'.</p> <p>NEGATIVES</p> <p>'I don't feel comfortable taking my children out to the parks due to their age. I can't sit on the benches sometimes due to the mess and untidiness and I feel uneasy about what has been on the benches.'</p>
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Impact of
regular
attendance
at virtual
sessions

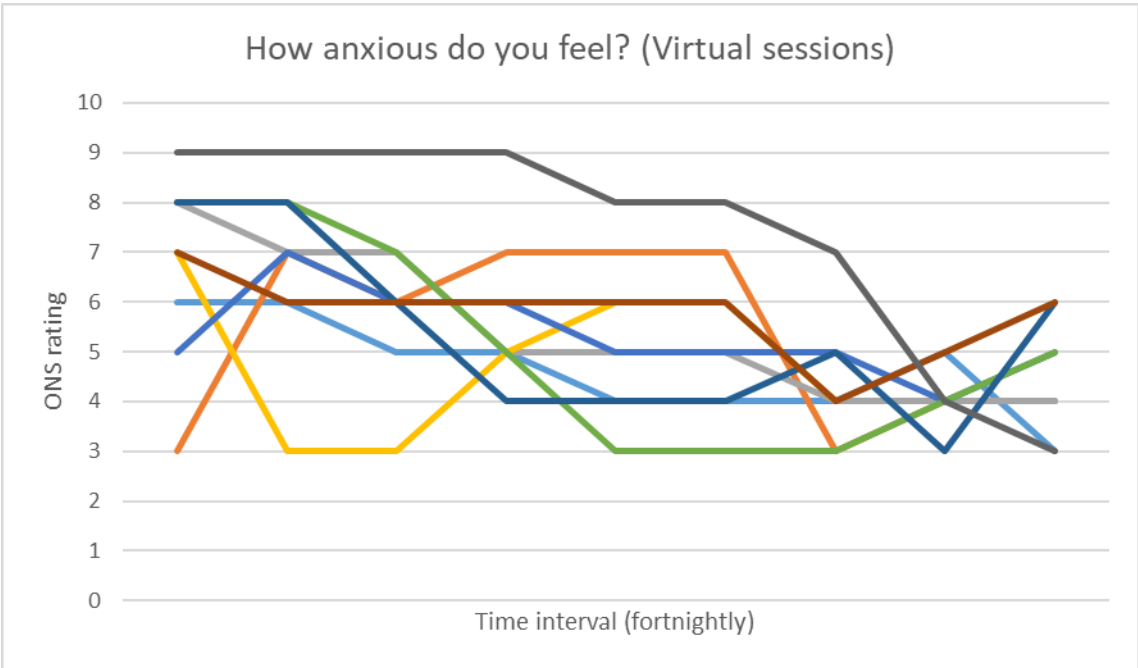
How anxious do you feel? (Virtual sessions)



Time interval (fortnightly)	Grey	Yellow	Blue	Orange
1	6	5	4	4
2	6	4	4	3
3	5	4	3	3
4	5	3	3	4
5	4	4	3	3
6	4	3	4	0

Tracking 4 participants on the ONS measure “anxiety” over 6 weeks showed a general decrease in anxiety for those regularly participating in virtual sessions to connect to nature (other participants did not attend regularly enough in order to track over time).

How anxious do you feel? (Virtual sessions)



Time interval (fortnightly)	Grey	Dark Blue	Light Blue	Yellow	Orange	Brown	Green	Dark Green	Black
1	9	8	6	7	3	7	5	8	8
2	9	8	6	3	6	6	7	8	8
3	9	8	5	3	6	6	7	8	8
4	9	8	5	4	7	6	5	8	8
5	9	8	5	5	7	6	3	8	8
6	9	8	5	4	7	6	3	8	8
7	9	8	5	4	7	6	3	8	8
8	7	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
9	4	3	3	6	6	6	5	3	3

Tracking 9 participants in a subsequent series of sessions on the ONS measure “anxiety” over 9 weeks also showed general decrease in anxiety following regular participation in sessions.

Regular social media updates to connect people to nature

Sharing photos of new ducklings at Witton Lakes engaged 40 people on Facebook with many positive comments.




A new flower species was discovered at Witton Lakes. After appealing to the public it was identified as a 'Prince Charming Blue Chicory'. Its seeds have been harvested by volunteers and it'll be sown in the park to preserve it.



Parks At Home

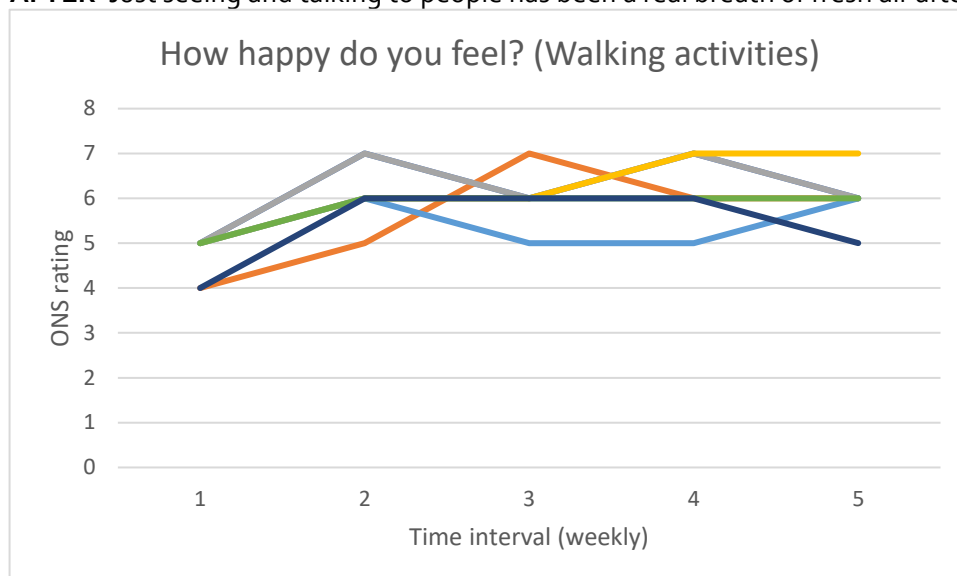
SCHOOLS

<p>'Sunflower Project'</p>	<p>Tried unsuccessfully to engage the local schools to participate in a 'grow your own sunflower' project during the summer holidays.</p> <p>SUPPORTED LIVING ACCOMMODATION</p> <p>Successfully engaged with Sycamore Court, Perry Tree Centre and Ralph Barlow Gardens to 'grow your own sunflower(s)' on their sites.</p> <p>16 residents from Perry Tree and Sycamore Court are currently participating and have been growing sunflowers.</p> <p>Unfortunately Ralph Barlow Gardens decided not to participate.</p> <p>Feedback "We have used the Sunflower seeds that you have provided and our citizens were delighted to own an individual plant pot with their names on! There is an element of healthy competition in terms of who's Sunflower will take off first and which will grow the tallest."</p>  <p>Winter Plants</p> <p>Successfully engaged with local residents in Perry Common and Erdington to grow winter plants on their sites. Residents have said how nice it feels to see some of the plants they have been growing over the last few weeks already starting to flower.</p>
<p>Walks / Walking Buddies</p>	<p>Commenced Walking Buddies programme, supporting residents to become more confident to walk outside, focusing on supported walks for those who don't currently feel confident.</p> <p>Participant ONE feedback: BEFORE 'I felt a bit scared driving over as I had not been out of my house since March, and the main contact had been by either telephone or Zoom (online)' AFTER 'I could only walk a short distance as I hadn't had any exercise for a few months, but I enjoyed the fresh air and the chance to talk to other people, and I am looking forward to the next walk'</p> <p>Participant TWO feedback: BEFORE 'I have been recovering from a fall and had not been out of my sheltered accommodation since March, and I don't use the telephone or Zoom (online)' AFTER 'I could only walk a short distance using a walking frame, but I enjoyed the fresh air on my skin, I look forward to the next walk'</p>

Participant THREE feedback:

BEFORE 'I haven't left my house in over 6 months. My world has become a very small and dark place.'

AFTER 'Just seeing and talking to people has been a real breath of fresh air after so long'



Tracking 7 participants on the ONS measure "happiness" over 5 weeks showed a general slight increase in happiness for those joining supported walks.

Over time residents who have joined supported walks have begun taking independent walks, after they feel more confident to go outside again.

Witton Lakes Landscape Design

Discussion and consultation took place between the Future Parks Accelerator Landscape Architect and the Health & Wellbeing Group on the types of flowers and plants the group would like to nurture and grow in one of the planters in the Orchard compound at Witton Lakes.

The group expressed a wish to grow a combination of flowers, plants and fruits in the early part of 2021 and to be able to go to Witton Lakes during the growing season. Participants talked about how therapeutic it is to be able to go to a park, get some exercise and 'feel connected to nature'.





Sensory Walks

RED HOT CHILLI STEPPERS

Red Hot Chilli Steppers is a local voluntary walking group. The Red Hot Chilli Steppers Walk Leader undertook training to become a Sensory Walks Leader, now feeling more confident on this topic she is looking to enable other Red Hot Chilli Steppers to become Sensory Walks Leaders in the future.



SENSORY WALKS

Participant feedback:

BEFORE: "I was nervous about driving out to the park and going for a 'sensory walk' on my own but

wanted to conquer my own fears that had built up during the first lockdown. I have also enjoyed taking part in the Walking Buddies activity as I have been able to leave my house and meet new people and get some fresh air. It was also very important for my own mental health. Although I use Zoom and take part in the online sessions, nothing can beat the feelings of taking part in actual physical activity and getting some vitamin D."

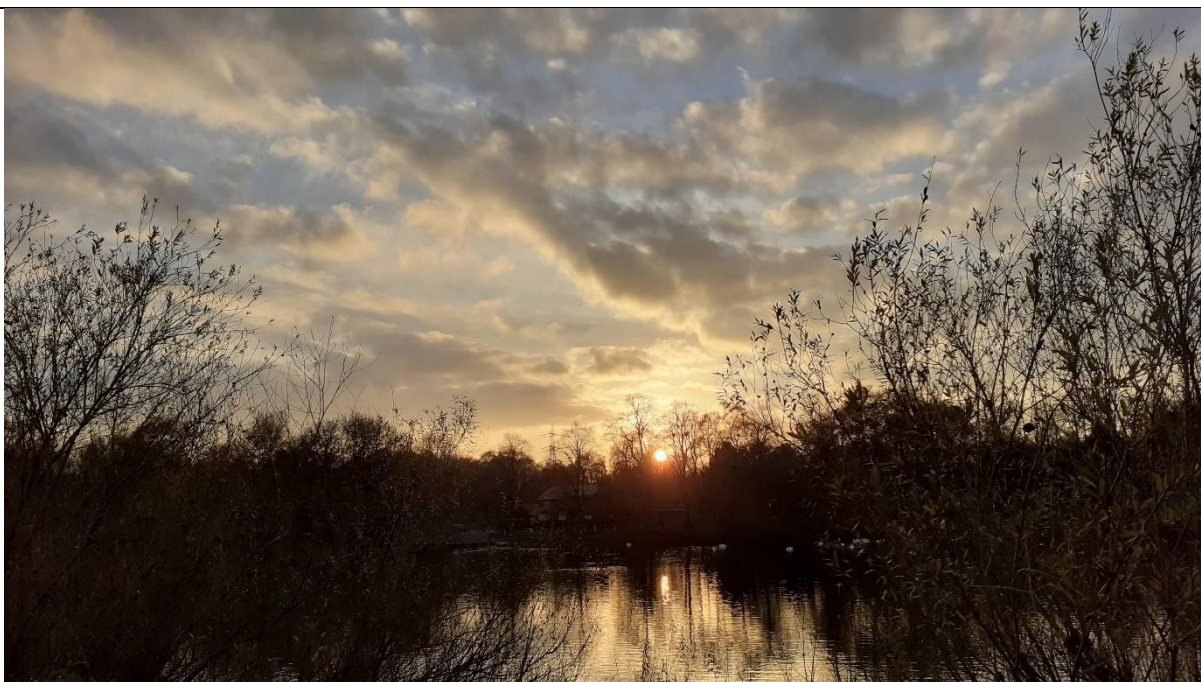
"I go there as it is the most beautiful place for views and walks nearest to my house. Also, it gives me a chance to be close to nature, to have some fresh air, vitamin D and exercise which my body so badly needs. It is also an opportunity to look at some beautiful sights including various types of birds, squirrels etc and there is also a chance to say hello to some passer byes or to have a little chat. All these things are missing when you are stuck at home on your own. It is easy to forget what life should be like."

"Finally, I feel very happy while I am walking to think I am out in a lovely place and I try to go as far as I can without having to stop too many times or sit down. I feel content if I complete the circle with minimum breaks. There is another mixed feeling at the back of my mind, happy for getting the vital physical movements and exercise which are necessary to keep me alive, at the same time a sad feeling knowing that I won't be able to do it as often as I should due to my health issues".

AFTER: "I took some photographs during my walk (attached) so that I could enjoy the feeling and smell of fresh air and nature after I got back home."



"I took this photograph as I love nature, the water, and seeing animals in their natural environment."



"I took this photograph because I love to see the sunset, the reflection of the sun on the lake and I just happened to be in the park at the right time."

Making the World's Largest Wreath on The Ring in Perry Common

Local residents, partners and volunteers came together to make the World's Largest Wreath using holly, ivy and greenery on The Ring, Witton Lodge Road, giving them the opportunity to get their hands dirty, sensory experience from crafting with the holly and using a small green space to come together with others and celebrate community spirit.

Participant 1 feedback:

BEFORE: "I was unsure and a bit nervous about coming over because of the coronavirus."

AFTER: "I'm glad that I came over to help out. As it was outdoors, I was able to stand safely away from other people and take part in making the wreath."

Participant 2 feedback:

BEFORE: "I have been able to take short walks from my flat over to The Ring as a way to relieve boredom over the last few months. I find it peaceful being able to sit and relax on The Ring. Being able to go out has helped to reduce my anxiety."

AFTER: "I'm happy that I was able to come over to help out. As it was on The Ring and not indoors, I didn't feel that nervous or too anxious about making the wreath as I was able to stand safely away from other people."



Midpoint Review	
Workstream:	Housing
Lead:	Gill Beveridge
Park Site:	Birmingham Municipal Housing Trust Sites (BMHT) & Housing Service Estates
FPA Board Member:	Colette McCann, Head of Service, BMHT

Aims:
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. For Birmingham's parks and green space to be an integral part of our homes, play areas, schools and workplaces. 2. To support all residents in making the best of use of green space in and around their homes to maximise wellbeing benefits. 3. To embed the principles of the Future Parks Accelerator (integration of health and wellbeing, children's, employment and housing) in the approach to the strategic design of new parks and public open space proposed within housing and neighbourhood development schemes at an early stage.
Proposals being tested:
<p>1) Residents at the heart of design – This proposal looked to create resident 'Friends of Parks' type groups for housing green spaces (parks) before and after it has been created, and to further support these groups to seek funding and ways to share ideas, material and tools to develop and look after their local green space. Whilst the main focus is on new developments, the proposal has evolved to include existing housing estates to achieve the same outcomes, with 3 tangible proposals to deliver this as set out below;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Engagement</u> - Through initial conversations, it was found that measures for a consistent form of engagement with the residents would benefit new developments. BMHT will be looking at standardising this further. Additionally, Housing Service/Housing Associations are keen to identify existing sites, to enable retrofitting co-designed GI through resident engagement. • <u>Green User Guide</u> - It was also recognised that many residents may not have the skills or are unaware of how to maintain their own gardens (where they have access to one) and that information about local greenspaces is not shared with new residents and tenants. This reduces the opportunities for the creation of Friends groups and so forth. The introduction of a Green User Guide (GUG), within the new resident/tenant 'moving in' handbook will close this gap. The Housing Service are looking at opportunities to extend this proposal to existing tenants, via tenancy agreements and revisions to the tenant's handbook. • <u>Communal Gardens</u> - This part of the proposal has evolved into looking at retrofitting communal garden spaces within Birmingham City Council's (BCC) existing housing estates portfolio. Also looking at opportunities to adopt

communal gardens principles for BMHT new flats/bungalow developments where the site layout includes communal/shared green space.

- 2) Built Environment GI Policy and Strategic Change** – There is currently a lot of policy and guidance that Planning, and housing developers need to follow for putting green spaces into homes and all development sites. This proposal is to look at simple ways to pull all this guidance and policy together to help design even better green spaces for Birmingham homes and other developments.

What has been achieved to date:

1) Residents at the heart of design:

- Engagement
 - The Housing Service been approached by tenants who are keen to develop or enhance part of their immediate ground into useable communal gardens, through engaging with area housing teams responsible for their estate.
- GUG
 - The team mocked up a draft GUG pro-forma detailing how residents can look after their garden, as well as what other greenspaces they can access for BMHT's Home User Guide (HUG). The mock-up was used to gain feedback from residents, BMHT and housing associations, results of which have been extremely positive and see it as a great tool to increase resident confidence in gardening and use of local greenspaces.
 - A developer who has completed the construction of 6 new BMHT homes in February 2021, for private sale, has agreed to include the draft GUG within their Home User Guide. Feedback on the GUG will be requested from the purchasers.
 - Planting palette – A meeting to establish the need for a BMHT planting palette has taken place.
 - Witton Lodge Community Association and Longhurst Group are looking to adopt the GUG in future developments.
- Communal gardens
 - Research into Communal Gardens was presented at the October workshop
 - Identified existing communal gardens within BCC Housing stock– site visits to three BCC Housing sites to meet residents interested in establishing a communal garden have identified two sites where consultation with the residents can be progressed to develop a work schedule to develop the site, this is being led by the BCC Housing Service with support from BMHT who are requesting BMHT contractors to carry out works as part of their social responsibility obligation.



Birmingham City Council



Bmht

Birmingham municipal housing trust



- Survey work has been undertaken at Cornerway Sheltered Scheme, to begin the co-design phase with tenants in March 2021 (Covid dependent)
- Discussions have begun with the wider Housing Service, including Repairs Contractors, and BOSF to begin developing a framework that sets out a long-term sustainable process for future communal garden projects in Housing's existing estates portfolio.
- Longhurst Group is considering a communal garden scheme for one of their sites where there is a disused garage area.

2) Built Environment GI Policy and Strategic Change:

- Planning Policy Review has been completed by Andy Lindop, Principal Planning Officer, assessing over 40 development applications in terms of their use of green space policies. Key findings were that there needs to be more formal guidelines on the practical application of the design aspects of green space policy to ensure that within a planning application, green space policy is used and applied appropriately. Green space policy needs to be simplified and made more tangible to aid use, and parks should be supported to better use planning monies as part of section 106 for enhancing green space.
- This report has been endorsed by Simon Delahunty Forrest and Ian McCleod
- Support from external consultants and architects has been secured to help BCC examine its green space policies from an independent external perspective. We have 2 detailed reports from Planning Students looking at good practice from international examples of housing developments and other places that have incorporated the Biophilic framework into their developments
- Public Open Space (POS) Workshop 1 consisted of a review of the GI at an existing BMHT site, and aspirations for how far we could go with Green Infrastructure
- POS Workshop 2 reviewed wider development across the City and to establish definition of place-making principles
- A follow up workshop in January 2021 took place, where we examined place-making principles & design measures to ensure we get maximal benefit from the master-planning of public open spaces (POS) and private green spaces. Feedback from this workshop led to a FPA formal response, in the form of a position statement, to Birmingham City Councils Draft Design Guide 2020, during its consultation period.

Challenges:

1) Residents at the heart of design:

- GUG maybe too onerous and expensive for the Housing Service, Housing Associations and Developer/Contractor to adopt in their handbooks and there is the prospect of not having up-to-date info and latest activities in the area, including maps etc. Putting a framework in place to monitor this is essential.

Need to decide on an effective method; paper copy and/or online - many tenants do not have access to internet, possibility of GUG being ignored because of poor marketing/distribution

- Some feedback from partners suggests consulting diverse members of the communities regarding the GUG, but Covid pandemic has prevented the letter-drop engagement that was planned for November 2020.
- For communal gardens, if tenants lose interest then these green spaces will not work, but many have fears about being a constituted group, with a bank account, etc. but if we can support them directly or signpost them this may take some of the apprehension away. Need to consider mitigation of anti-social behaviour.
- Some risk of failure - avoidable with intervention. There needs to be more buy-in from within the housing service, and the gardens will only be a success with the input and empowerment of tenants. However once successes have been shared it's likely that the programme will grow, and benefits will be realised. These gardens could attract a sponsorship opportunity which would potentially make them more sustainable in the long term.
- Below average costs - can mostly utilise existing resources and time commitments. Housing resources can be utilised to consult with tenants, and social charter in repairs contracts can be activated to support building costs. Support is available in terms of sustaining gardens. Missing link is the technical knowledge to make best use of space from a landscape architecture capacity until programme is built and knowledge transferred to the housing service. We may be able to source this via the Procurement "matching" process, or even with meaningful work placements from local universities and organisations. Alternatively looking at funding model.

2) Built Environment GI Policy and Strategic Change:

- Officer time in reviewing documents and our validation requirements. Working with the city design team connecting dos and don'ts to specific guidance and then exploring a checklist that would sit underneath the city design guide to be used by all planning officers for issues to be considered of importance. Training would also be required to allow planning officers to understand the design guide and any resulting checklist. Other work that is more strategic will need to be considered through the local plan review process.
- Time to develop the evidence base such as the environmental justice audit to support new policies relating to GI and Open Space in the local plan review.

Key Learning:

1) Residents at the heart of design:

- Retaining good relationships with partners and showing the benefits of the GUG through a presentation really helped sell this, innovate idea which we found, does not exist nationally. Covid has highlighted how important the greenspaces are for health and mental wellbeing and partners agree the GUG could sustain this.
- Allow partners to pick and choose from the GUG pro-forma headings, and make it their own to suit their tenant/resident needs.
- From completing further research, we have also found several, existing organisations that support tenant engagement in green spaces, and the feedback from these individuals/groups is that they will support the establishment of new groups to aid their sustainability.

2) Built Environment GI Policy and Strategic Change:

- Understanding what a range of partners see as good quality green space from the last 3 workshops and collating this into an FPA position statement that represents this. However its also clear that some times good design, maintenance, and cost requirements conflict.

How will this be taken forward:

1) Residents at the heart of design:

- Progress design and work schedule for the two communal gardens identified and engage with contractor
- Progress and distribute GUG with the HUG for the 6 new BMHT homes A GUG will be added to the HUG for 6 new BMHT homes – these 6 new homes will be completed and sold by end of March 21. The purchasers will be asked to comment on the GUG. Further consultation will take place when Covid restrictions are lifted.
- Establish a BMHT Planting Palette that would support biodiversity net gain Develop a process for how local residents could start up a communal garden wherever they are in the City
- Agreement by BMHT to embed this as BAU for the team.

2) Built Environment GI Policy and Strategic Change:

- Develop a process that test how parks can better spend relevant planning monies
- Work with City Design team to embed dos and don'ts from the FPA position statement into the BCC Design Guide.
- Set up Healthy City Framework Steering group (cross system), chaired by Cabinet Member for HWB, with agreement to have develop a health focussed approach to

'20 minute Neighbourhoods', which will overlap with other pilot proposals such as Social Prescribing

- We have been invited to be part of the development of Our Future City Plan 2040, which includes a theme of City of Nature – a huge opportunity for FPA to embed it's legacy
- Deliver a workshop for internal council departments and partner organisations to examine BCC green space policies and practices that create barriers to well designed and balanced green infrastructure in developments.

Future Parks Accelerator Programme: Directorate “embedding” Action Plan

	Proposal	Timescales	Resources	Owner
Action	Commitment to setup Built Environment Steering within inclusive growth to work collaboratively on implementing these recommendations in planning and housing. Also use as a practical delivery vehicle for R20 actions.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff Time • Planning Policy • BMHT • DM • City Design Team • Development Plans 	Simon DF Andrew Lindop (AL)
1	Work with City Design Team to embed draft “do’s” and “don’ts” from FPA’s position statement into City Design Guide and how they link to UN Sustainability Goals	IN PROGRESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff Time • City Design Team 	Andrew Fuller (AF) Andrew Lindop (AL)
2	Consultation/ implementation on an internal checklist to be used by Development Management (DM) and landscape officers, simplifying and emphasising sections of the design guide and FPA’s “dos” and “dents” to ensure uniform and consistent response across DM teams and professional advice services – (ensure link up with public health checklist)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff Time • City Design Team • DM Focus Groups • DM Training on Design Guide and Checklist 	Andrew Fuller (AF) Stuart Wiltshire (SW) Andrew Lindop (AL)
3	Develop a pre application stage checklist based on design guide. Varied by scale of development and assessment need, to ensure minimum standards met and consistency of approach, based on the internal checklist developed in Action 2 to use as a conversation starter with developers.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff Time • City Design Team • DM Focus Groups • DM Training on Design Guide and Checklist 	Andrew Fuller (AF) Stuart Wiltshire (SW) Andrew Lindop (AL)
4	Ensure Development Plans Teams receive weekly application lists and pre apps in order to pick up on delivery of open space through residential	COMPLETED		Andrew Lindop (AL)

	applications that are less than the planning policy trigger threshold of 50 dwellings			
5	Ensure that non statutory framework boundaries are uploaded onto local view in order to ensure that DM, Park and policy officers are aware when they are relevant to an application or strategy development process	IN PROGRESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff Time • GIS Team 	Andrew Lindop (AL) Sally Forest? (SF)
6	Investigate whether the areas of open space action plans can be uploaded onto local view to ensure consistency and a joined up approach between parks and planning when new frameworks and strategies are being developed		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff Time • GIS Team • Parks Team 	Andrew Lindop (AL)
7	<p>Review of Planning Validation Guidance and Documents to check requirements meet external checklist. May include;</p> <p>a) Expanded guidance in Design and Access Statement referencing need to meet above referenced checklist criteria to be valid</p> <p>b) A compulsory equality impact/"mini" health assessment on majors demonstrating how development will meet the needs of those with a range of health conditions.</p> <p>c) Review of statement of community involvement guidance to include a requirement to explore development of "friends of" groups where new POS is to be delivered, and to state why community aspirations could not be delivered if they choose not to take them forward</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff time • Planning Policy • Development Management • Parks/LPG/maintenance team • City Design Team • Council Ecologist 	Andy Fuller (AF) Stuart Wiltshire? (SW) DM Officer?

	d) A Maintenance strategy at full application, including proof the strategy has already been approved by our maintenance team, and ecologists, or the relevant private management company. any revisions during the planning process would require a further amended strategy. – (Accept amendments may be needed when negotiating S106 and Biodiversity Net Gain Requirements over 30 years and reporting during that time)			
8	Developing a draft “greening policy” for tall buildings to feed into the local plan review process.	Local Plan Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff time • City Design Team • Landscape Team • Maintenance Team • External Support 	Andy Fuller (AF) Andrew Lindop (AL)
9	Ensure all new GI and POS policy reflects FPA position statement, and that this is embedded holistically in non GI and POS policies. Eg transport	Local Plan Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Design Team • Landscape Team • Council Ecologist • Highways Staff 	Simon Needle (SN)
10	Support the creation of an environmental justice audit to provide the evidence base to support future policy making in regard to GI and POS	Local Plan Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff Time • Development Plans Team • Parks 	Andrew Lindop (AL)
11	Include within Landscape/ Ecological enhancements plans the requirement for a bi annual statement on the progress of a developing POS or GI space to be submitted to the Council City Design Team. Done by pre commencement, commencement and phased conditions for reporting		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff Time • City Design Team 	Simon Needle

12	Commit to a test and development of a 15 minute neighbourhood concept within the East Birmingham Corridor through the East Birmingham Board as part of the East Birmingham Inclusive Growth Strategy. – this will address POS and GI deficits		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff Time • Development Plans Team 	Mark Gamble (MG) Andrew Lindop (AL)
13	Work with BMHT to embed FPA “dos” and “don’ts” into its development processes and “pinch points”		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff time • BMHT staff 	Gill Beveridge (GB) Simon Felton (SF)
14	Explore working with BMHT on self-build plots as part of larger schemes that could test biophilic designs	IN PROGRESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff time • BMHT Staff 	Gill Beveridge (GB) Simon Felton (SF)
15	Ensure representative from each of the development plans teams are part of the Route To Zero Taskforce to ensure link between strategic aims, wider communication of progress, and on the ground development projects.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff time • Development Plans 	Maria Dunn (DM)
16	Commit to the development of the “Green Web” concept within Our Future City Plan: Central Birmingham 2040 document, including identifying options for routes to delivery of new and improved green spaces	IN PROGRESS & LOCAL PLAN REVIEW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council Ecologist • Landscape/City Design Team • Development Plans Teams 	Gary Woodward (GW)
17	Develop consistent process where the right individuals are invited to pre application meetings or are able to provide comments in lieu. This would include reviewing the current application screening process		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council Ecologist • Application Registration Team 	Simon Needle (SN) Andrew Lindop (AL)
18	Design Review Panel to have greater representation from green sector, and transparency with Council staff to ensure consistent message and advice. Also link to			Andy Fuller (AF)

	new plan policy as per NPPF advice on design panels to give greater weight to discussions at the panel			
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DRAFT

OUR GREEN SPACES



MOST POPULAR REASONS FOR USING PARKS

- To walk the dog (57.6%)
- For peace and quiet and to relax (54.1%)
- To experience nature and wildlife (48.6%)



LEAST POPULAR REASONS FOR USING PARKS

- Volunteering (3.3%)
- To play sports and/or games (9%)
- Other e.g. photography (2.9%)

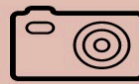
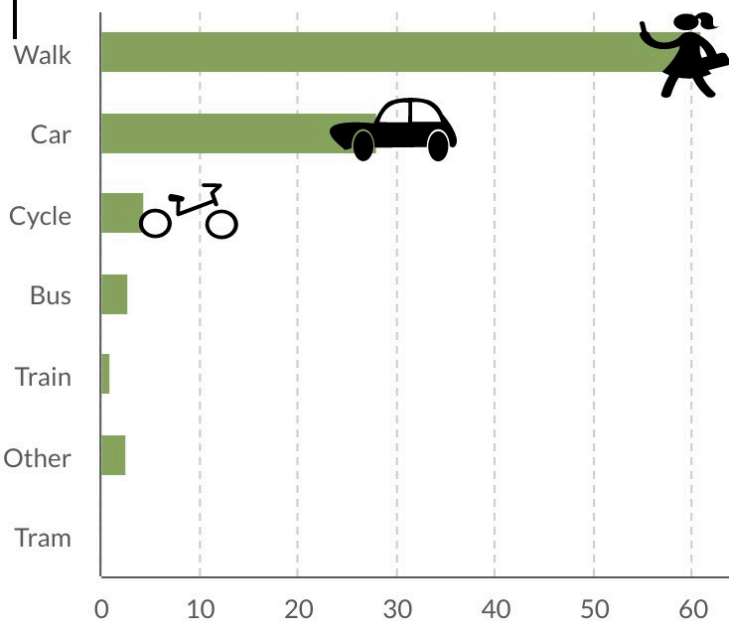


72%
OF RESPONDENTS
visit the green
space closest to
home



DOING THINGS IN GREEN SPACES

TRAVELLING TO GREEN SPACES



10.1%
always take
photos of nature



25.5%
always listen to
birdsong



22.6%
always take time
to notice
butterflies/bees

45.9%

NOT aware of volunteering opportunities

Around a third were interested in being able to 'dip in and out' of scheduled volunteering opportunities

Lack of time most common reason for not being able to volunteer

82.5%
satisfied
with green
space
accessibility

- FOOD by Your Brand

64.3%
rate green
spaces as
very
valuable

- FOOD by Your Brand

59.9%
visit green
spaces at
least once a
week

- FOOD by Your Brand

**NATURALLY
BIRMINGHAM:
FUTURE PARKS
ACCELERATOR**

OUR GREEN SPACES

611
RESPONDENTS

FROM BIRMINGHAM

74.7%

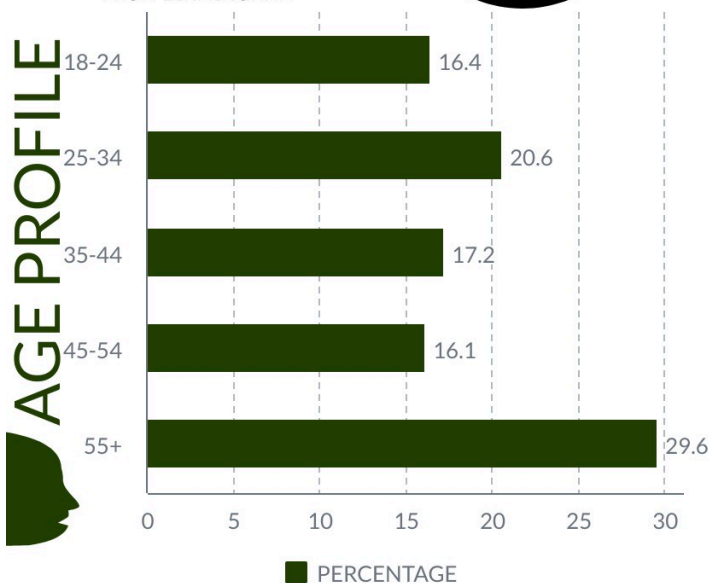
WHITE
BRITISH

18.6%

BAME

MORE MEN VISITED
GREEN SPACES PRIOR
TO LOCKDOWN

AGE PROFILE



LESS
SIGNIFICANT
GENDER
DIFFERENCE
AFTER
LOCKDOWN



FEMALES
REPORT
FEELING LESS
SAFE IN GREEN
SPACES,
COMPARED TO
MEN

HOWEVER, FEMALES
MORE LIKELY TO
VALUE GREEN
SPACES AS SPACES
FOR LEARNING AND
VOLUNTEERING,
COMPARED TO MEN



RESPONDENTS OF ALL ETHNICITIES
VALUED GREEN SPACES AS INCREASING THE
VALUE OF NEARBY HOUSE PRICES & A
PLACE FOR COMMUNITY EVENTS AND
ACTIVITIES



NATURALLY
BIRMINGHAM:
FUTURE PARKS
ACCELERATOR

NBFPA MPR initial analysis of qualitative research

Pilot Projects

Provided a mandate to work across silos with other service areas and teams. Success is evident in that scope now extended beyond the pilots.

Reaffirmation that approaches work, and that there are now new partners delivering this. Pilots have led to other service areas becoming champions for green space.

Despite Covid, there has been success in engaging local communities and there is evidence through the programme of the benefit of friends groups, adding value and generating activity and community support.

Pilot Projects have been part of the process to help establish the evidence base that will form the foundations for future change.

FPA is taking a less risk averse approach to trying things than BCC normally would.

Initially there was a soft / human approach to change through the Housing Pilot which is incompatible with influencing development which is hard and process driven.

There have been some changes within Birmingham City Council with respect to green space. The pilot projects to involve children and young people and housing provision have been successful here in terms of changing attitudes and beliefs.

However, there is also a need for further attitudinal change by those involved in social housing and looking at how high quality landscapes can be delivered using processes that engage residents.

Project Management

Stronger, more effective project management with appointment of FPA Director and more recently Project Officer. There were comments that early in the programme there was a lack of capacity and lack of direction.

Additional resources, in the short-term, through the FPA team with dedicated resources to deliver the programme. However, approaches need to be mainstreamed and adopted by service areas.

Leadership

FPA has been successful in widening the influence of parks within the city. Senior managers have been attending meetings through FPA and in particular contributing to the delivery of the pilot projects.

“The FPA Director has been very successful in opening doors and potentially she has done more in the last one or two years in setting strategic direction that has been achieved in a long long time”. This is a combination of her skills and passion for green space but has also been helped by her background in public health.

Significant progress can be demonstrated in building and maintaining new relationships which has secured additional resources to develop new initiatives.

Political Support

Politicians can help set ambition through policy and encourage more joined up approaches breaking down traditional silo working.

There is political support at a senior level and Portfolio holders are positive about the changes delivered so far. There was discussion about providing evidence on an ongoing basis so that Portfolio holder could continue to champion green spaces.

Cllr O'Shea and Cllr Zaffar have shown good leadership and understand FPA. Arguably the buy in and commitment from assistant directors and directors has not been on the scale that is needed for long-term change. Engagement and participation has typically been from less senior members of the organisation and this hampers the ability to influence policy and have decisions backed by reallocation of resources.

The engagement of cultural services has been less successful which is a little surprising given the crossover and opportunities around the arts and green spaces.

Governance

The parks board has the potential to be a really important outcome and structure that will need to be embedded within the organisation. Potentially it will provide a new structure to ensure that parks greet spaces are considered across service areas and participation and buy in from assistant directors will be critical. This could be the solution to a sustainable way forward.

Positive approach to developing Green Champions and developing a future service structure to respond to new challenges and opportunities through the wider policy agenda (environmental justice, route to zero, biodiversity etc).

Policy Agenda

FPA Greenspace Design Principles have been developed that can sit as guidance within the Planning Policy Framework. The principles will be consulted on and then need to be tested to ensure they are workable and effective. There is a degree of confidence that this is a way in which FPA can tangibly impact green space around new developments in the city delivered through BMHT. These should be exemplar schemes which then influence other development outside the Council.

FPA has been able to influence large scale planning and development proposals, for example the Edgbaston Reservoir masterplan.

FPA has provided a mechanism to co-ordinate a joined up approach (including BoSF) to responding to the consultation on the draft citywide Design Guide.

Being successful in changing the language around parks and green spaces from cost to benefit.

Good timing to exploit rush of enthusiasm for parks which COVID has bought.

The timing of the FPA programme with COVID has helped as lots of value is being placed on outdoor spaces and people wanting and needing to use them more due to restrictions. If there was a threat to a green space for example there would now be more voices supporting the value of retaining spaces.

The FPA team have been good to work with, have made valuable interjections to influence long term strategy.

Joined up approaches

“More dealing with colleagues in different departments in the last 12 months than the whole of my career previously”

Greater understanding within BCC of how green space can contribute to other policy agendas.

FPA very successful in allowing a cross-cutting approach, achieved by a dedicated team. Not just a parks project. FPA programme structure, with new staff, has created credibility and provided the foundation for conversations to happen.

More collaborative working to shared aims moving away from ‘client’ and ‘contractor’ roles.

FPA has been very successful in identifying people who are passionate about green spaces. It has brought together people from a wide range of service areas including planning, housing, children services, employment and skills, and procurement. There is

sense now that there are greater numbers of people championing green space within the organisation. Some of the people who now see themselves as green space champions would not have taken this view prior to FPA starting.

There is a sense that the FPA programme is starting to 'join the dots' and overcome an initial instinct to reinvent the wheel. It's now starting to see that other departments or organisations are already delivering things they were envisaging.

Resources and Funding

FPA has achieved a significant outcome where sponsorship income will now be ring fenced for the service (at least in part). Previously all sponsorship income would go into the central corporate budgets so there was no real incentive to secure this income

Through FPA resources from the Corporate Sponsorship Team have been secured to help develop sponsorship packages for green spaces. This is now on a larger scale than would have been achieved through just the Parks Team.

Increased use of parks as a consequence of COVID-19 has been recognised by the authority and as a consequence in the current round of cost savings the park service has escaped significant budget reductions. Revenue budgets for staffing have not been cut. Parks employees have been recognised as key workers.

Providing the context for service review and realignment and the aspiration to look at broadening the workforce profile.

New opportunities such as crowdfunding now being explored (e.g. Dawberry Fields).

Challenges

Getting initial buy-in and starting engagement. But this has now been overcome and there is a sense of momentum. Challenge is now managing the scope and ensuring the programme is deliverable.

Workstreams and pilots developed at different paces. Some were slower to start but now progressing well. There were initial barriers to getting engagement with Housing and Inclusive Growth but progress has started to be made in this area.

Organisational capacity- does the FPA team have enough capacity to make change at an organisation level- need someone in every department!

The programme delivery has had to respond to change, generally and specifically in relation to Covid. The programme extension has provided the opportunity to review progress and to set out a new road map.

The programme has needed to be responsive to opportunities. In constant questioning about whether to follow or not to follow an opportunity in part the decision depends on the level of resource available. There has been a degree of readjustment as the programme progresses. The key question is always will it help or will it hinder. In the programme has been a learning curve but generally has it work it has worked well.

The breadth of the programme has been a challenge. It took a long time to get a grasp all areas of the programme and be confident in knowing what was happening at any one time. It also means the small core team are spread quite thin in terms of delivery. There are lots of differences in scale - some work very high level strategic and lots quite low level and on the ground delivery.

The breadth of the Birmingham FPA programme has also raised some challenges about how this is communicated. Even summaries of the project are quite lengthy and complex. Compared to other FPA programmes Naturally Birmingham feels more wide ranging and complex. However, there has recently been a renewed focus on communication of the programme ambitions.

The project has at times been quite inward looking within the Council and it hasn't helped that the complexity of the project makes it hard to communicate. If external partners are needed to ensure sustainability after the project they need to be engaged now.

There are four areas of the council currently writing transformation policies - this was not apparent or expected when FPA was first started. This means that there could be emerging policy agendas in opposition to our aims or links that are otherwise missed.

The timeframes have been a useful constraint and it has helped reinforce the need for focus. The parks / environment service restructure needs something that is accepted within the Council policy context and to provide something to work to. Getting the frameworks through the political approval process is therefore critical. Hence the timeframe to get the frameworks drafted and finalised by December 21 and to then get the council to formally adopted in April 2022.

Sometimes the approaches by the Birmingham FPA programme have been relatively narrow in focus and linear in nature. A whole systems approach has not always been adopted. Some parties are still concerned with how new funding can be brought in to adopt or improve maintenance rather than dealing with some of the bigger questions about whether the existing spaces are in the right places or the right type or accessible. FPA should be focusing on this broader systems thinking.

Has Birmingham FPA taken on too much? Probably not and there is a balance to be struck between high-level policy changes and needing to deliver concrete examples locally to point to in order to affect that strategic change.

Through the co-design phase the project has been exploring options, carrying out research and trying to understand what works. In the transition or delivery phase it now needs to focus on simplifying what it does and systemising approaches. This needs to be underpinned by robust and reliable data which at times is absent.

There has been significant progress in terms of testing options but in terms of agreeing the model more work needs to be done very quickly. There has been some excellent activity and really good participation from some good organisations but the project is now at the phase where this additional work needs to be turned into roadmap that can be delivered over the last 12 months of the programme.

Unexpected Outcomes

Work being delivered through FPA means that there is now greater engagement with initiatives such as 15-minute neighbourhoods. This was initially led by Transport Planning but has now passed to the FPA team to develop and will then be implemented by Housing and Inclusive Growth.

The site audit tool has evolved and changed from the initial planning and thinking. This will now be a broader tool that looks at Environmental Justice.

The programme is becoming a network for positive action around parks and green space, lots of people and organisations getting in touch to see what they can do. Networking, signposting. Seems to be viewed with less of the suspicion than other Councils initiatives- could be due to trying to take a more open and less bureaucratic approach

Good feedback that just bringing people together and talking can increase confidence and give permission to try new things. Many other respondents reported an increase in confidence which FPA has helped nurture.

BCT feel that working with FPA will change the way they offer their work. They are seeing through the pilot projects lots of benefits of getting families outside, often children being indoors and having no new experiences compounds existing issues. More experience of doing new things as an organisation builds confidence. There is a need to cement this cultural change and are exploring a 'Kitemark' system whereby organisations can sign up to taking approaches which incorporate use of greenspaces etc. This would be of interest to the Trust and many of their 90 or so local partner organisations.

The FPA Director will be a member of the Rapid Policy Unit which has been created with councillors and the combined authority to drive innovation across policy areas. This is recognition of the achievements that FPA are starting to deliver.

The FPA Director has been invited to attend the All Party Parliamentary Committee to present evidence about the value of green spaces and public health.

What has not worked so well

GreenKeeper – some disappointment that this has not been able to be tailored to local circumstances and that data driving the analysis has not been shared.

Covid presented some challenges in delivering things face-to-face and to a certain extent we've had to deal with different audiences than originally anticipated. Online virtual delivery has probably meant that we've dealt with people that chose to opt in rather than those encounters we would have had, if we delivered some of the activities in green spaces where there were natural / wider incidental audiences.

There was an expectation that there would be significant face-to-face engagement taking the messages of the project out into the community. This was changed due to COVID and the extent and channels through which the team are able to engage. Inevitably communication is now with a smaller group who are self-selected as those who can engage online.

Covid has clearly presented some challenges in terms of project delivery and particularly in engaging communities. Work in this area has clearly not been done to the same degree that was originally anticipated.

Progress on the housing side at times has been painfully slow. There has not been any great investment in social capacity and any exploration of more innovative land ownership models such as community land trusts. (Other stakeholders noted the slow start for some projects and recognised that progress was now better).

There have been challenges in terms of engaging health professionals around social prescribing and to a certain extent the COVID-19 pandemic has added further barriers or challenges here. Identifying link workers has been challenging. There was an expectation that there would be an element of codesign in terms of developing the social prescribing proposals. However maybe this is due to limited resources the response has typically been that those responsible for social prescribing delivery have wanted to see packages produced before they get engaged.

Long term Impact

There is support for the proposed approaches to developing the Frameworks and this is seen as the legacy of the programme that will contribute to sustained, longer term change.

The ultimate outcome will be the Frameworks that are not parks frameworks but Council wide frameworks that will bring large-scale change. There is a degree of confidence due to the level of engagement and support across the Council. There will be a nominated Cabinet member to lead each Framework.