Naturally Birmingham
Birmingham Future Parks Accelerator
Engagement Analysis Report

July 2020

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1 Introduction

Throughout June and July 2020, the Naturally Birmingham Programme has undertaken some proactive communication about the project in order to look at, develop and plan to test the proposals with as many people as possible. The process was promoted through a campaign of street advertising and social media which has been reported separately but briefly this was comprised of;

- Two x 10 second promotions (per minute) on Ocean Outdoors’ D6 Roadside Collection 15 - 28 June 2020
- Campaign appeared on 97 digital displays across Birmingham
- Campaign supported by social media video’s on Birmingham City Council’s Facebook, Twitter and Instagram pages.

Due to taking place during the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic this communication has taken place online in the form of;

- 6 one-hour Community Conversations- session held on Zoom which residents of Birmingham could book to attend on the theme Introduction and all themes
- 4 one-hour Community Conversations- session held on Zoom which residents of Birmingham could book to attend, one for each pilot area for the project- Health and Well-being, Jobs and Skills, Children and Housing
- An online survey in which residents were invited to share views on the proposals
- Online session with Birmingham Aspiring Youth Council and, separately Children in Care Council meeting in which proposals were presented and views and reflections gathered
- Written feedback from People’s Park Friends a group linked in Cannon Hill Park Birmingham

The process has been supported by the Naturally Birmingham team and delivered in partnership with BOSF. As evaluation consultants for Naturally Birmingham. CFP are writing this report to bring together the findings of the engagement from an objective standpoint and help the project move forward while taking these into account.
2 Engagement

The level of engagement with each engagement method is recorded below;

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Engagement Method</th>
<th>Participant numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6 one-hour Community Conversations- session held on Zoom which residents of Birmingham could book to attend on the theme Introduction and all themes</td>
<td>A total of 75 participants, including staff and facilitators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 one-hour Community Conversations- session held on Zoom which residents of Birmingham could book to attend, one for each pilot area for the project-Health and Well-being, Jobs and Skills, Children and Housing</td>
<td>A total of 42 participants, including staff and facilitators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An online survey in which residents were invited to share views on the proposals</td>
<td>157 responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online session with Birmingham Aspiring Youth Council and, separately Children in Care Council meeting in which proposals were presented and views and reflections gathered</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written feedback from People’s Park Friends a group linked in Cannon Hill Park Birmingham</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Use of a variety of engagement methods was necessary to reach a broad audience. The Community Conversations which attracted people who were already engaged with public life in Birmingham, many were already engaged with its green spaces or other key areas of interest for the Naturally Birmingham programme.

A total of 157 online surveys were completed. The majority of respondents (69.1%) were aged over 45, while this age group makes up around a third of the population (33.6%) within Birmingham as a whole (Table 1). There was also a significant underrepresentation of young people in the survey respondents; only 5.2% of respondents were aged under 24, compared with over a third of Birmingham (37.6%). Those aged...
35-44 were well represented within the sample (13.8%) compared with Birmingham (13.4%). Four respondents did not answer.

Table 1 Age Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Survey Respondents</th>
<th>Birmingham</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 18</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-24</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-44</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-54</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-64</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>23.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>20.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>152</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Two thirds (66.9%) of survey respondents identified as female. This is a significant overrepresentation compared with Birmingham overall, where there is more or less an even gender split, with 50.8% of residents identifying as female. Four respondents did not answer.

Four fifths (81.8%) of survey respondents were English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British, with 4.1% respondents from other White backgrounds (Table 2). This is a significant overrepresentation compared with Birmingham overall where 55.8% of residents are White: British or Irish. The second largest ethnic group represented in the survey respondents were Pakistani (4.1%), compared with 13.5% of Birmingham residents. Seven respondents did not answer.

Table 2 Ethnic Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Group</th>
<th>Survey Respondents</th>
<th>Birmingham</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White: English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>81.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White: Irish</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White: Other White</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed/multiple ethnic group: White and Black Caribbean</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed/multiple ethnic group: White and Black African</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed/multiple ethnic group: White and Asian</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed/multiple ethnic group: Other Mixed</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Asian British: Indian</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Asian British: Pakistani</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Asian British: Bangladeshi</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Asian British: Chinese</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Asian British: Other Asian</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: African</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: Caribbean</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: Other Black</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Respondents were asked to supply their postcodes. 149 respondents supplied their postcodes, which have been analysed and plotted, as shown in Figure 1 overleaf. Overall, there were 128 respondents from within Birmingham, with respondents living in 48 of the 69 Birmingham wards (69.6%). The ward with the highest representation was Moseley, with ten respondents, followed by Northfield, with seven.
All engagement has been recorded and filed separately. The below analysis brings together all forms of engagement to produce an overview of responses to each set of proposals.

3 Jobs and Skills

The proposals as presented were;

1. A Skills Showcase – Should we provide a skill a showcase? This would be a chance to learn all about the skills required and jobs available within parks, green spaces and the surrounding areas including engineering, leisure, horticulture, business and more. This could involve opportunities in apprenticeships, work experience and volunteering - something for everybody.

2. Schools & Young People – should we endorse the learning of ‘green’ skills and support those that have an interest through our Park Ambassadors Roles and Green Academies Programme?

3. Business Engagement – should we encourage businesses to get involved through park activities, staff engagement days and recommend corporate social responsibility activities such as looking after local green spaces or having wildlife friendly workplaces?

4. Joining forces – should we be building on the amazing community activity and events in the park, supporting more improvements and activities as well as group action and joint ownership?

3.1 Approval

Respondents were asked to what extent they agreed with the above proposals on a scale of 0 to 100, with 0 being strongly agree and 100 being strongly disagree. It is worth noting that some respondents may have responded incorrectly, placing their response at the wrong end of the slider.

Overall, there was a lot of variation in the responses which ranged from 0 to 100. On average, respondents rated their level of agreement as 22.2 out of 100, indicating that most respondents agreed with the proposals (Chart 1). As Chart 1 shows, only 18.5% of respondents disagreed (interpreted as rating their level of agreement between 50-100)
Respondents were also asked if they would consider being part of any of the proposals if they were in a green space near them. The majority of respondents were interested in joining in, with 98 of the 124 respondents (79.0%) who answered the question saying they would consider being part of the proposals.

### 3.2 Word Cloud

Respondents were asked what three words came to mind when they thought of the proposals. In total, 110 respondents listed three words which are shown in the word cloud below.

The top ten words used were: community, positive, environment, exciting, essential, ambitious, challenging, engagement, future, good, inclusive and nature.

### 3.3 SWOT analysis

The SWOT analysis format has been adopted for use in the analysis of responses to proposals collected from the online survey and all other sessions as outlined in the introduction. The responses contained in the main
table reflect the perceived strengths and weaknesses of the proposals, perceived opportunities in delivering or expanding the proposals and any external factors or contexts which might threaten successful delivery of proposals. Wherever possible the language used by the participant has been retained in the main table so a true sense of the contribution is reflected, a summary of emerging themes is then included below the table.
STRENGTHS
Long term funding for careers is important (1).
Particularly like proposal #1, as a way to draw in a more diverse and professionally skilled group to shaping and managing green space into the future (1).
Already some good apprenticeships which could be promoted for e.g. BCC is one of the partners working with the Wildlife Trust and National Trust on Green academies Project and its successor to provide training for south Birmingham (3).
Opportunity to promote green skills focus on young people and diverse people - to change the spectrum of our workforce in green spaces (1).
Working with businesses to broaden our routes into green spaces (1).
Change perception of who does and can work in green spaces (1).
Great re-encouraging skills in schools (2).
Very commendable and it's important to start young with school programmes (2).
I like the idea about supporting young people. I think it would be a great opportunity to encourage the right behaviours in parks early on (2).
Using green spaces for outdoor schools is great and engages young people early on with nature, ensure that local events can be organise free of fees and charges (2).
I like the emphasis on social justice underpinning the proposals (All).
A city commitment to value green spaces and use them productively (All).

WEAKNESSES
Need to create a tangible link between your activities and improved employment prospects in the environmental services sector (1).
The skills showcase would only be relevant if there are immediate vacancies in those areas and positions showcased (1).
I am against privatisation of our parks they should be properly funded through government (3).
Further clarity is needed on the type of roles and skills, which will be endorsed through the FPA Pilot (1).
On-going training and accreditation should be made available after FPA (1).
Don’t want to see parks further commercialised by businesses (3).
Who and how will the joining forces elements of the proposals be funded? (4).
Not enough mention of Sports activities. Facilities should be provided and maintained by the Council (All).
The proposals should not just work within the current system but focus on the green and circular economy and how these can be promoted (All).

THREATS
Closing of relevant training facilities - the Kings Heath school of horticulture (1).
Lack of interest from young people to join green skills platform, not very trendy (1).
Will businesses be able to see beyond their immediate door - especially with the challenges posed by COVID-19 (3).

OPPORTUNITIES
We have identified need for training and job opportunities for land management, green space maintenance and development roles within local communities, very much local residents working in their own communities. With opportunities for young people as well as adults wishing to retrain or as a route out of unemployment (1).
Horticulture and landscaping industries are keen to attract more young people, and don’t always have great diversity, talk to the BALI (trade association) schemes (1).
Landscape maintenance would be good for the skills showcase - there is a new green roof course that has just been developed by LLANTRA as well. I can see opportunities for ecology, sports maintenance, and maybe health & wellbeing/exercise projects (1).
Nature conservation, horticulture, construction, landscape design, volunteer management, community engagement officer, web design, app design, marketing, promotion, PR (1).
Whilst there are only a small number of jobs involved in physical care of green spaces, there is a wide sector of jobs in the environment - landscape architecture, planning, ecology, arboriculture, forestry, biophilic architecture etc (1).
The new metro hospital is planning a community garden (2).
Schools and pupils could be engaged through maintaining school grounds. As a head in the past this was an expense on the budget that could be reduced by helping pupils learn about the grounds. Pupils could chair the committees for their own school grounds... just a little more supported (2).
Focus on youth groups (2).
Doing more activities for children in these green spaces and parks, e.g gardening (2).
Many schools do the Duke of Edinburgh award (junior and senior versions) which lends itself to outdoor activity and learning that is accredited already (2).
Great to build future interest with the younger generation, but older people are vital part of the community, can activities be intergenerational (2).
All of the proposals should build on what’s already there e.g. forest schools, eco schools, thrive, tai chi in the park (2).
Business offer 'PE' to employees, using their local green space (3).
Business Sustainability. Forest Commission Scotland undertake this to reduce their waste, ie recycling everything, reduce their carbon footprint etc (3).
Can we incentivise businesses to get involved through procurement processes and impact assessments - corporate social procurement and environmental impact assessments (3).
In some area’s companies sponsor motorways, companies get advertisement from that in which turn builds a relationship. Could this happen in parks, through BID? (3).
Corporates sponsorship of projects... wetlands, bags, brooks, flower meadows, trees (3).
Remove barriers for schools. An allotment of community land was offered to a nearby school but they felt there were too many legal and maintenance responsibilities to take it on. There needs to be a way of making community groups easily access and take ownership of these spaces or they’ll be incentivised to take ownership (4).
As a conservation group in Mosley... if training opportunities were available (to us), we could include social prescribing into our activities. These groups need additional support and resources or a shared space to borrow tools (4).
Be good to include music/arts in parks - especially with venues closed/closing (4).
Utilise old hilltop golf course 15 acres and use as Birmingham amenity project (4).
The proposals should focus on supporting the green and circular economy and relevant initiatives which are happening in Birmingham including but not limited to: Friends of Edgbaston Reservoir helping to develop a raised bed which is self-sufficient, using water and soil using chip technologies. People looking at collecting food waste and turning it into a compost and turning it into salad crop. People are making beer out of waste bread. John Christopher circular house that needs minimal energy because of the way the installation. There should be support for social enterprises which often have more local benefits than large corporations. (All).
Aston University and Birmingham City University have green economy initiatives (All).
The SWOT analysis has shown that participants saw the strengths of the proposals being that they would engage young people early in life with parks and greenspace, increasing nature connectedness, and encouraging the younger generation to value and care for them. People were keen to see action to diversify the range of people working in green spaces, increase learning of associated skills and facilitate a new productive use of spaces. They saw potential weaknesses around resources delivery, and ensuring continuity, commercialisation of parks through new links with businesses and a focus on proposals which work within the current system rather than showing support for a greener or more circular economy. Participants saw threats as being a lack of interest from young people in green skills, as reflected by closure of relevant local training facilities, and the context of COVID-19 which might cause businesses to be inward looking as they adapt to a changed situation. Opportunities identified were many including specific skill areas or training courses of relevance, ways to involve schools and businesses, specific sites at which projects could be developed and ideas of local projects relating to the green and circular economy which could link into the project.

4 Health and Wellbeing

The proposals as presented were;

5. Health and Wellbeing Activities – should we increase activities in the park to enable greater participation and connection to nature e.g. ‘nature walk’ around the park or ‘sensory gardens’ as taster sessions?

6. Participation in the community- should we encourage community groups to lead and share on this, through community allotments, photography, drawing, poetry, singing, cooking and more...?

7. Provide greater education & training – should we provide training to Healthcare Professionals (including those in GP practices) to ensure they understand the importance of greenspaces and the activities that are available?

8. Joining forces – should we build on the amazing community activity and events in the park, supporting more improvements, activities, and group action into the future?

4.1 Approval

Respondents were asked to what extent they agreed with above the proposals on a scale of 0 to 100, with 0 being strongly agree and 100 being strongly disagree. Again, it is worth noting that some respondents may
have answered incorrectly. Responses ranged from 0 to 100, with the average level of agreement 21.3 (Chart 2). The level of agreement was very high, similar to the level of agreement with the jobs and skills proposals; only 20 respondents (18.7%) disagreed with the proposals (Chart 2).

![Level of agreement with Health and Wellbeing Proposals](chart2]

Respondents were also asked if they would consider being part of any of the proposals if they were in a green space near them. In total, 96 of the 115 respondents (83.5%) said they would consider participating in the proposals.

4.2 Word Cloud

Respondents were asked what three words came to mind when they thought of the proposals. In total, 88 respondents listed three words which are shown in the word cloud below. The top ten words used were: community, health, wellbeing, exciting, healthy, engagement, good, green, needed, nature, people, space and together.

4.3 SWOT Analysis
STRENGTHS

Safety plays a big role in the perception of park, the activities which happen. A well-used park is a safe park. (5)

Focus on nature (5)

Like parks as incentive for other uses other than play (5)

Getting people involved in more activities at parks (5)

I like the use of nature to help with health issues (7)

Link to wider health system (7)

This is what, in my view, parks and green space should be for and focused on. A means of supporting communities and public health (3)

Community focused (All)

WEAKNESSES

A park should be for rest and relaxation, for people to walk and enjoy nature, not to be filled with events in a park! That sounds very town/city mentality (5)

We need paid staff with community and communication skills (6)

Funding for involvement of organisations will be needed - not everything can be done via individuals and volunteers if we are really going to have a positive impact on health and wellbeing (6)

Many medical professionals already know the benefits so don’t spend too much time on item 7 - eg a reminder article in local health newsletter? (7)

Need to promote health as a coproduction between GP and patient. Also health as a culturally transmitted notion. Health has a community dimension rather than a medical dimension. (7)

Welcome proposals, but question long term sustainability of staffing due to costs - been here before (All)

Sustainability of proposals i.e. measures to address mental health through use of parks should be able to continue (All)

Will it be another experiment and then nothing changes? (All)

You seem to be wanting to do it all rather than finding out what’s already out there in the community. What about BCC’s Pioneer Places initiative and Soc SS Neighbourhood networks (All)

THREATS

Maintenance of parks can impact sports participation. For community groups to use parks for training / participation in sports, open spaces need as a minimum a G7M programme. e.g. Needs grass cutting for an area to enable football/cricket/rugby training to take place. As a minimum, if courts for other activities are already there, need to be maintained e.g. tennis nets repaired/replaced & court surfaces safe /fit for purpose.

People do and will use them if fit for purpose and safe (5)

Little response from the community (5)

Worry about feeling ok to leave their safe home spaces especially if being shielded or in isolation (5)

It’s hard to reach the wider community, e.g. people not on the system or not already involved in community groups (6)

Re proposal #7, need to reach healthcare professionals and policy on a national scale to shift healthcare professionals’ incentives for green space prescriptions (if the value for money is not recognised in policy, it is hard for healthcare professionals to recommend treatments which will earn them higher fees) (7)

Link workers have been heavily redirected towards COVID and the social prescribing activities have been limited. There are a limited number of link workers in primary care network (7)

Hard to get GPS on board (7)

Think the main priority for the green space I use (Handsworth Park) is to reduce littering and anti-social behaviour (e.g. drunkenness, setting fires, public urination) (All)

We need to protect parks from further budget cuts (All)

Some of these initiatives would only work in e.g. Bournville, Morely, Harborne or Sutton Coldfield. Other areas don’t have the access to green space and have issues with Anti-Social Behaviour that would end activities (All)

Wellbeing is very important re Green Space, however, to have an effective strategy, we have to develop greater principles of inclusion so all people (regardless of background can access safe outdoor spaces) (All)

Feeling unsafe in parks, e.g. antisocial behaviour (All)

OPPORTUNITIES

Run an inclusive cycling project in Sutton Coldfield and get families to engage with nature more. Wotten Lakes could be a good space to take that but there’s barriers to access there. (5)

Engagement activities also don’t factor people with disabilities. Will the planning reflect this for people with additional needs and disabilities? (5)

I would very much support village fetes being put together to attract people out, and close to food and nature ie. prize for largest vegetable grown etc (5)

Think about ways that individuals can engage – not everyone is comfortable with being part of a group (5)

For example outside the park, and in some cases poorer neighbourhoods there are no green spaces in easy walking distance, the spread of parks is inequitable - one approach - green the streets where people live - displace some vehicle space - parklets in streets to link with the main parks (5)

Focus should be on developing wildlife friendly streets, gardens and public spaces. This should include the planting of pocket meadows in grass verges, on roundabouts, in people’s gardens, in parks and on the roofs of bus shelters (as in precincts) (5)

Yes, Do them, but make sure everyone gets a chance to join in e.g. those that work full time and on weekends (5)

Green gyms and idea originally developed by BTCC (5)

Please include a focus on mental health, include disabled people in the design to make them accessible and also consider how to include young people who can’t easily get to a green space. (5)

I used to live in Liverpool, there is a couple of good projects there such as Squash - http://squashliverpool.co.uk/ and the Granby Winter Gardens (5)

How to we ensure that local communities, the vulnerable and individuals not only feel safe but have a positive perception of parks being safe and welcoming spaces.

1. Police, park rangers and community-watch volunteers co-ordinating patrols and incident reports.

2. Support the elderly, vulnerable and disabled to use the space by providing guided park walks and nature-based activities.

3. Make contact details available and identify key staff to the local community to promote co production in keeping the park a safe space. (5)

Inclusion (Diversity) and accessibility need to set front and centre if parks are to become a resource for all communities (5)

1. Provide risk assessment reports to local organisations to facilitate access and use of whole of the park.

2. Create an ‘access to parks’ disability, vulnerable person and carer forum.

3. Think about the use of embedded grass mats for designated paths across grass spaces. This will provide access to independent wheelchair users (young and old to community events and activities).

4. Street to Park engagement events.

5. Small targeted activities where relationships can be developed. (5)

Positive green spaces for women, incorporating gender into green spaces and how to make parks safer for women and giving women’s organisations ownership over community spaces (5)

Buy in from Birmingham City Council to remove barriers to community groups accessing, using, growing in and otherwise utilising green spaces in their areas would be hugely beneficial for all.

There are groups of skilled and dedicated people who can help look after growing sites and the like if given the opportunity to show what they can do and get through all the red tape of council processes to do so (6)

Needs to be community led, with their input into which activities should happen close to them (6)

Teach people or training skills to grow their fruit and veg. Community plots to grow and take advantage of crops (6)

Kitchen gardens could be linked with the cooking, pls see what the Eden Project are doing in Cornwall (6)

Finding out what has been done before and what other cities have done, did it work? Why? Why not? (6)

Any projects which encourage volunteers, encourage and enable engagement (6)

We have an active patient participation group that links the health professionals with their local community projects. Every surgery has a pgp. (7)

At Warm Earth - a gardening project, we work closely with local surgeries and get them to install raised beds on their premises. We give plants to patients to cultivate and bring to the surgery (7)

Non-medical interventions for mental health are done really well by Martineau Gardens on Priory Road in Egggeston (7)

Social prescribing takes place via GP link workers whose training is not yet formalised. They are employed by the voluntary sector or NHS etc not one employer. It would be good if BCC employed some to promote green space use (7)

I think you could also link up with existing charities for example I think of some of the events the LGBT group in Birmingham did were poetry recitals outside. So maybe figuring out a way to build community resources like states or like benches/coves/strehl theatres would be really positive (8)

Art forms should be an integral part of green spaces. Theatre and theatres, tourism, community shared space, workshops, etc. Let’s bring Birmingham together, and welcome visitors to the town. (8)
The SWOT analysis has shown that participants saw the strengths of the proposals being that they would use nature, parks and green spaces to support public health, make parks safer places by activating them and broaden use of parks beyond play, bringing in new groups and users. Participants saw potential weaknesses being the need for staff to deliver events and activities and the long-term funding of this, duplication of other existing initiatives and the need to retain space for quiet enjoyment of parks and greenspaces. They saw threats as being the existing condition or behaviour in some spaces which make communities reluctant to use them, barriers to some people get involved (hard to reach, no local greenspace, have no spare time) and busy healthcare professionals making the health care system hard to engage with, especially in the context of COVID 19. However, participants saw the opportunities as being extensive including the specific proposals (inclusive cycling, food projects, ‘village fetes’ and outdoor performances) and broader principles such as making sure activities are community led, accessible for all, focussed on disadvantaged communities and using parklets and other less conventional ‘green spaces’ where parks not available. Ways to link better into the health system included growing projects at GP surgeries, funding link workers for social prescribing, linking to PPGs and existing initiatives such as at Martineau Gardens.

5 Children’s

The proposals as presented were;

9. Bringing the park to life – should we showcase greenspaces as part of children’s education, through daily use of the parks to enhance learning? Should we trial a ‘Wildlife Wellbeing Week’ across nearby schools? Should we help you get to school by setting up a walking bus or a cycling group?

10. Mentoring & Park Ambassadors – should we work with young people to encourage others to learn about our parks & green spaces by becoming Park Ambassadors and learning life skills through our mentoring programme?

11. Increased community involvement – should we encourage communities to set up a Friends of Park group to increase community involvement and build sustainability for both children and their families?

12. Provide a menu of opportunities – should we make available a menu of opportunities for young people to engage through work experience, possible routes into future employment or training, volunteering around how to look after a park, growing food and more?
5.1 Approval

Respondents were asked to what extent they agreed with the above proposals on a scale of 0 to 100, with 0 being strongly agree and 100 being strongly disagree. However, some respondents may have answered incorrectly, placing their answer at the wrong end of the scale. Overall, responses ranged from 0 to 100. On average, respondents rated their level of agreement at 18.5, indicating a very high level of agreement.

![Chart 3: Level of agreement with Children’s Proposals](image)

Despite the high levels of agreement with the proposals, only 57 of the 105 respondents (54.3%) said yes when asked if they would consider being part of any of the proposals if they were in a green space near them.

5.2 Word Cloud

Respondents were asked what three words came to mind when they thought of the proposals. In total, 77 respondents listed three words which are shown in the word cloud below. The top ten words used were: future, education, community, sustainability, youth, fun, important, involvement, healthy, challenging, engagement, exciting, good, health, inclusive, nature and positive.

5.3 SWOT analysis
STRENGTHS

- Helping kids to school in a green way and exercise is a great idea (9)
- Something like this could give hope and direction if it is of good quality and is sustainable over many years. Young people mentoring younger children would be a really positive thing (10)
- Giving an opportunity to young children/adults often forgotten (10)
- Getting children into green spaces (All)
- Finding productive ways for young people to engage with open spaces (All)
- Addressing a range of children's and young people's needs (All)
- Young people need to have nature in their lives for their future health and mental stability (All)

WEAKNESSES

- Schools are so constrained due to safeguarding and time - priority should be given to weekend and holiday engagement (9)
- There is no mention of swimming spots - Sutton Park, Edgbaston Reservoir could provide safe environments for older kids (eg Swan Pool, Sandwell) (9)
- Mentors might not have enthusiasm and knowledge of greenspaces/nature (10)
- Will the mentoring activities provide a lasting positive effect on the young people (rather than being tokenism) (10)
- Will the mentoring activities be structured in a way to encourage the young people to spend time in green spaces after the mentoring sessions have finished? (10)
- How long will the mentors be signing up for? Another temporary person who leaves them? (10)
- What is the connection between mentoring and green spaces? (10)
- Capacity to deliver and meet expectations (All)
- Who is going to be doing the work to make it happen? (All)

THREATS

- Child have lower awareness of nature. Environmental and wildlife matters should be a big part of the curriculum and that needs to happen now because time is running out (9)
- Engaged with various organisations with parks, general low-level antisocial behaviour when formal activities are taking place. Secondary school children ruin the activities which discourages parents. Sparkbrook and Balsall Heath - issues with drugs and antisocial behaviour in parks. Concerns about women being verbally assaulted or intimidated whilst doing physical activity in parks. Areas with prolonged periods of antisocial behaviour from a specific age/year group. (9)
- Concerns about parks in general - Astor, ASB - drug dealing, no one to mentor and support, no youth workers to support them. Then parks can't be used by others as lots of negative influences (All)
- Quality of the chosen green space (All)

OPPORTUNITIES

- Educating adults/teachers/carers that getting dirty is good (9)
- Starting with a less loved park (9)
- Teaching Mindfulness in a greenspace would be absolutely wonderful (my sister is currently piloting mindfulness in a progressive school in Brom) I could put you in touch (9)
- Can we ask at teacher training as a way of engaging children? (9)
- For environmental education talk to National Association for Environmental education – contact in Birmingham is Juliette Garden, working at Martineau Gardens (9)
- How about an outdoor Youth Club (9)
- Walking buses would be good, particularly if the route could be ‘greened up’, preferably with pocket meadows. (9)
- Maybe spread this beyond children and involve local care homes etc WITH children’s groups or schools to have inter-generational activities in the park at the same time. (9)
- Link to Climate Change education (9)
- Birmingham Trees for Life. We have planted over 90,000 trees in Birmingham parks over the last 14 years involving nearly 7,000 children and over 6,000 adults including some from local businesses. We have planted at Witton Lake several times. Tree-planting is a brilliant way to involve children and adults in nature at their local park. Our children planting usually walk from their local school. (9)
- Health and Wellbeing lead at Clifton Primary. Interested in using Sparkhill/Balsall Heath parks for improving families physical and mental health, particularly for women. (9)
- Working with specialists in the field, like National Association for Environmental Education (9)
- Structured, Free and supported play requires safe and welcoming spaces in parks.
  1. Co-production with play projects, parents and volunteers to create ‘play pods’ (secure small containers) in parks where they can be accessed and resourced with co-operative management.
  2. Create a ‘play and parks’ forum.
  3. Share best practice from international, national and regional park and open spaces. (9)
- Providing an award or accreditation to the mentees as recognition for their involvement (10)
- Improve sports and fitness equipment in parks which is a big draw for young people (All)
- Bring technology into parks to engage young people (All)
- I work in Early Years and remember the days we had play in the parks. We need to go back to having youth and community services in all parks to encourage all ages of our communities back into using parks. (All)
- Participants post BLOGs on what they think experience through the pilot (All)
The SWOT analysis has shown that participants saw the strengths of the proposals being that they would engage children with parks and green spaces early on and use green spaces in a way which was supported them and was beneficial to their physical and mental wellbeing. Perceived weaknesses were the capacity for schools to get involved in new initiatives and the need for a very long-term plan for mentoring to ensure that mentors could become a long-term fixture in the life of young people, and also have enthusiasm and knowledge to create the link to greenspace. Barriers to success were seen as being quality of green spaces and anti-social behaviour which deters communities from using them. Opportunities were seen in linking to mindfulness, environmental education, tree planting and climate change education and using sports and technology as a way of engaging young people with parks. It was suggested the project could work through teacher training, existing initiatives and intergenerational events to achieve aims of engaging young people with spaces.

6 Housing

The proposals as presented were;

13. Residents at the heart of design – should we create residents ‘Friends of Parks’ type groups for housing green spaces (parks) before and after it has been created? Would residents want support in finding different ways to fund looking after the green space around their homes? This could include money for shared tools to look after green space through to building a space for the community to come together.

14. Related to housing, there is the question of wider development - There is currently a lot of policy and guidance that planning, and housing need to understand for putting green spaces into homes and all development sites. Should we find a simpler way to pull all this guidance and policy together to help design even better green spaces for Birmingham homes and other developments?

6.1 Approval

Respondents were asked to what extent they agreed with above proposals on a scale of 0 to 100, with 0 being strongly agree and 100 being strongly disagree. However, some respondents may have answered incorrectly, placing their answer at the wrong end of the scale.

There was a wide variation in the level of agreement, with answers varying from 0 to 100. On average, respondents rated their level of agreement was 23.1, indicating a generally high level of agreement (Chart 4). One fifth (21.2%) of respondents disagreed with the proposals (Chart 4).
When asked if they would consider being part of any of the proposals if they were in a green space near them, 41 of the 99 respondents (41.4%) said yes.

6.2 Word Cloud

Respondents were asked what three words came to mind when they thought of the proposals. In total, 73 respondents listed three words which are shown in the word cloud below.

The top ten words used were: community, green, wellbeing, essential, environmental, forward, health, hopeful, ownership, planning, responsibility and thinking.

6.3 SWOT analysis
STRENGTHS
I have been looking for something like this to get involved with as I love nature but have no garden myself. It would also be a great way to get to know other like-minded people in the community as I don’t have any way to connect with people around me at the moment (13).

Paying attention to local intelligence (13)

Clear consistent application of planning conditions relating to green space provision (14)

Including the local community at the start of the process (13)

The collaborative approach to achieve the best outcome for everyone (13)

Potential for building community cohesion (13)

Bournville & Moor Pool are excellent examples of building for the community in the Birmingham area (14)

A communal place with greenery would have many benefits: exercise, socialisation, sunlight, fresh air, a safe space (14)

Streamlining the docs and policies will really help developers etc (14)

Addressing the problem of putting policy into action - importantly making it easy to do this (14)

Keeping the community onboard through every stage (All)

This is for the long term, not short term box ticking (All)

WEAKNESSES
That there are already processes existing that FPA can join onto to achieve these instead of creating new processes (13)

Depending on the demographic of the area, the residents may or may not be interested in helping due to existing responsibilities that they need to focus on instead (13)

OK if lead by Council employed Park Warden or Keeper (13)

Too much focus on voluntary work yet again, when BCC is happy to waste money in other less valuable areas (13)

We already have friends of the parks groups but these rely on the commitment of a very few volunteers, need to grow capacity (13)

Is planning policy too complex to achieve what we are hoping to? (14)

I was hoping there would be more about legislation ensuring new estates having to have parks and green spaces open to them (14)

Will housing residents really want to be part of a positive group or just a pain in the neck (13)

Producing “guides” don’t normally engender change as private developers just ignore them. Maybe producing a guide for residents on the planning and development process and how/where they can get involved in protecting their local spaces would be useful (14)

We need to ensure spaces are left across the City NOW. Once land is built on by housing developers then it is lost forever (14)

Issues about including green space in development is who pays. Is the maintenance of communal areas is taken out of the rent? Or paid for my residents. This will be unattractive at point of sale

We need to think about the role of parks and greenspace in the context of COVID. COVID is the first of many epidemics! (All)

THREATS

OPPORTUNITIES

Important not to let local control stray into the effective private control of public space/gated communities and exclusion of others, even if these are nominally controlled by “social” rather than “commercial” enterprises (13)

Short term lets make you less likely to engage with neighbours or garden (13)

I think housing developments should have to include much more green space but current financial drivers mean this will be fought against (13)

Green space without the funding for maintenance leading to unloved areas (14)

A garden bank where people with gardens but unable to tend them offer them to people with a love of gardening (13)

Demystifying gardening (13)

Some residents are not ‘necessarily ‘green fingered’, training/guidance might be useful. Also, tool hire or recycle schemes (13)

Would love to be part of further discussions about how ‘The Patchwork Meadow’ could be part of the project (13)

A way of avoiding perversification is to consider ownership models (13)

A problem that could look at community land trusts etc. (13)

Perhaps, if a friend of group can’t be created then a park co-ordinator - a living breathing advertising board, who is charged with all the money from the park, linking people to opportunities, and perhaps reaching out to those who don’t engage with the green space (13)

In the Stechford area of East Birmingham, there is a small green space (roughly 3 acres) called Stechford Recreation Ground / Yardley Fields - gifted to the community a long time ago. The local community cannot use it to do anything practical due to inadequate maintenance. The village forum in the local area wants to work with the council to redevelop that space into its recreational role in the community. There is a local scous’ group and football group that are looking to use this space for and for that location to be used by others. We have started communication with the council to start the lease but it’s a tricky process to start and go through. (13)

The City Council should implement an ‘adoption’ scheme enabling local people to take responsibility for local pieces of council-owned land, including grass verges, roundabouts etc. (13)

Open green space in Camoran What should be listed for its historical importance, and the trees protected. What is currently signposted as ‘private grounds’ should be changed to a public city centre park, and put on the map as such (13)

Advice and help with turning abandoned lots / wasted scrapyards / concrete patches into shared community gardens would be great - needs working with council to help them understand not to cut down the plants flowers when mowing for example (13)

You could maybe create guides for local parks that include a description and activities going on as well as contact information for relevant people and distribute them to nearby houses (13)

The gardeners at Blacksweet outside Norton Tower are also still looking for a space to store all the gardening tools, since all the storage sheds were claimed back by Birmingham Housing Departments, with no alternative solution implemented (13)

In housing developments where there are communal gardens in disrepair there is huge opportunity to open up green space to local residents. Giving the go ahead to local groups to develop these spaces where not being used by the residents in the housing they adjoin. E.g. communal garden spaces where the accommodation is primarily temporary or short term and so there is lack of ability, time, interest for residents to look after the gardens. Where they can be brought into use as community garden small parks or growing sites. (13)

I think making people aware of funding that may be available is really important, as a lot of people lack funds to spend on improving green spaces when they aren’t their own (13)

I think our local councillors can show leadership here in using ward meetings to discuss planning issues and also creating a 10-year comprehensive ward plan to use as a guide listing all the community assets and green spaces as they have done in castle vale (13)

I think making a guide for residents on the planning and development process and how/where they can get involved in protecting their local spaces would be useful (14)

Planning Planning Planning. As this would have immediate effect on ALL housing developments across Birmingham in every aspect (14)

Celebrate the work of BMHT (14)

BCC policies to be recreated into a WPPF equivalent (14)

Planning proposals should only be approved if they include a % of green space (ideally a meadow to attract pollinators). Guidance, policy and processes should be straightforward. Checks should take place post-development to ensure that all requirements have been met. (14)

Prioritising green space and simplifying planning/development are great goals but involve complex system change - happy to help if its possible! There are some great initiatives nationwide which may help (e.g. RNG) (14)

Urban planning has to have the environment at the forefront, not the car, communities have to be built for communities not developers or social order (14)

City Park for Birmingham campaign has 10,000 supporters. Smethwick has a potentially a good opportunity as a blank space can be a development that could be tweaked from the masterplan to incorporate green space and a new city park. Would tie in well for people living in flats in the city centre, access to park space in the city crucial. (14)

Inserted into new developments, I feel, needs further direction, guidance and engagement to make it useful, accessible, appropriate and open to the local community but is also connected to other places (14)
The SWOT analysis has shown that participants saw the strengths of the proposals being that they could involve the local community in development, foster social cohesion, and ensure long term that green spaces are available near to where people live with all the associated benefits of that. The identified weaknesses came around capacity to engage people, that this was harder to do in disadvantaged areas and reliance on volunteers, many of whom already feel overstretched. There were concerns that developers do not follow guidance and that regulation was needed to protect and ensure provision of green space, alongside provision to maintain new any spaces that might be created. Threats were seen as socio-economic including some areas having high rates of short term letting making engagement less likely and a post COVID 19 economic situation which will mean developers oppose inclusion of green spaces. Opportunities were seen as providing access to basic garden tools and training, removing barriers to adoption of spaces by local people, supporting and creating Friends groups or equivalent digital forums and making groups aware of funding available to them. Opportunities around planning including guidance for residents about their rights and routes to involvement, and looking at best practice locally and nationally both around good development and simplifying planning and development.

7 Conclusion and Next Steps

The engagement around the proposals has been a positive process which has seen a high rate of approval relating to existing proposals and some thoughtful input as to how proposals could further be developed and linked to other existing initiatives in the city. It is clear that respondents appreciated the open and consultative approach being taken and want to remain involved. Through the Community Conversations new relationships have been formed, the team have already made individual contact with new individuals which came forward through that process. The process has also led more people to engage with the project on social media - in June the Twitter account gained 97 new followers and had 28,900 Tweet Impressions over the same period.

In the online survey respondents were asked if they wanted any more information about any of the project themes. In total 29 respondents commented, asking for more information, or offering suggestions. Many of the respondents wanted to be kept informed of the project progress, as well as how they themselves or local groups could get involved. Several also wanted to know more specific information, such as where the funding for the projects was coming from, who the project partners were and who would be making decisions relating to the project. Other queries included where the projects were planned to take place, what the timescales were, and more detailed information on the project proposals and objectives. A minority of comments also related to the sustainability of the projects; how the impacts would be maintained and whether additional costs would be accounted for, such as from vandalism, over-use or additional cars. When asked if they would like to hear more about the plans, over three quarters of respondents (77.3%) said they would. 75 respondents went onto give contact details.
Birmingham FPA

Engagement Analysis

campaign promoted on digital displays across the city

97

28.9K tweets impressions and 97 new followers

10 community conversations with 117 participants

consultation with friends groups, Birmingham Aspiring Youth Council, children in care council and more...

157 responses to online survey