

Birmingham City Council Open Spaces Assessment Stakeholder Consultation Report



FINAL – AUGUST 2022

Ecology | Green Space | Community | GIS

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Glossary of Terms

Term	Meaning
ANGSt	Accessible Natural Green Space Standard
BAP	Biodiversity Action Plan
BCC	Birmingham City Council
BDP	Birmingham Development Plan
BCAC	Birmingham & District Allotment Confederation
EA	Environment Agency
eNGO	Environmental Non-Governmental Organisation
FPA	Future Parks Accelerator
GI	Green Infrastructure
LNR	Local Nature Reserve
NICE	National Institute for Health and Care Excellence
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
NRN	Nature Recovery Network
RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
SINC	Site of Importance for Nature Conservation
SLINC	Site of Local Importance for Nature Conservation
SPD	Supplementary Planning Document
SUDS	Sustainable Drainage System
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
WASt	Woodland Access Standard
WMCA	West Midlands Combined Authority

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Ethos Environmental Planning conducted stakeholder consultation on behalf of Birmingham City Council to support the open space assessment.

A four-week period of consultation was conducted with a range of stakeholders including:

- Council officers
- Strategic stakeholders
- Neighbouring local authorities
- Community groups

The questions posed to each type of stakeholder were slightly different, but focussed on the quantity, quality, and accessibility of open spaces within Birmingham. The following typologies of open spaces were discussed with stakeholders:

- Parks and recreation grounds
- Informal green spaces
- Children's play spaces
- Youth play space
- Accessible natural green spaces, wildlife areas and woodlands
- Allotments
- Water recreation – canals, rivers, and lakes
- Rights of way – footpaths, cycling and bridleways

This report takes each stakeholder and looks at the unique questions asked to these groups before analysing the response of all stakeholders by the typologies based on quantity, quality, and accessibility. The report also looks the links between public health and open space along with current council policies which promote the protection, enhancement, and development of open spaces within Birmingham. Under each section a summary is provided outlining the key findings.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This is one of two reports provided within the overall Open Space Assessment 2022. It is a supporting document to the main report. It provides consultation findings from various stakeholders and feeds into other aspects of the assessment as explained below:

1.1 Study Overview

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires local planning authorities to set out policies to help enable communities to access high quality open spaces and opportunities for recreation. These policies need to be based on a thorough understanding of local needs for such facilities and opportunities available for new provision.

In view of the above, in 2021 Birmingham City Council appointed Ethos Environmental Planning to provide an audit of the quality of, and demand for, open space within the city. The assessment will be used to help inform the Local Plan and will support the development of an up-to-date policy on developer contributions.

In summary the aim of the assessment is to provide:

- A robust assessment of the quality, quantity, and accessibility of publicly accessible open space with Birmingham City.
- To consider future requirements for open space.
- To set out a framework for both on-site provision and off-site financial contributions from developers.

1.2 The Stakeholder Needs Assessment

This report contributes to the overall assessment in providing evidence that will be used in the main report. The consultation findings will be combined with other evidence, findings, and assessments such as that completed in the audit, mapping, and analysis process.

Undertaking comprehensive consultation and engagement with all relevant stakeholders is an essential part of the overall process. It is an expectation of the National Planning Policy Framework and is needed to ensure that the study is robust in relation to recommended national guidance.

The report examines the local need for a wide range of different kinds of open space and recreation facilities. It has drawn upon a range of survey and analytical techniques including a review of consultation findings from relevant leisure and open space studies and consultation. It outlines the stakeholder consultation and research process that has been undertaken as part of the study as well as the main findings.

The report is made up of 3 sections:

- Public Health

- Neighbouring local authorities
- Parks, green spaces, countryside, and rights of way

Each section provides additional detail on the consultation process relevant to that section and at the end of each section there is a short summary of the key findings.

The consultation programme was undertaken during January - February 2022. The extent of the research reflects the breadth and diversity of the assessment and a consequent need to engage with a wide cross section of stakeholders as possible¹.

In summary, questionnaire surveys and pro-formas were undertaken as below:

- Neighbouring local authorities
- Council officers
- Strategic organisations
- Community groups and organisations with an interest in open space and recreation

The result of this consultation and other analyses will help amongst other things to inform the content of the recommended local standards as appropriate. This will be explained further in the main report.

The consultation report also helps the assessment to understand stakeholder's appreciation of open space and recreation facilities, the wider green infrastructure and the values attached by the community to the various forms of open spaces and facilities. This appreciation will have clear implications for the way in which open space and recreation facilities are considered as part of plan making as well as dealing with planning applications.

¹ It should be noted that this report provides consultation evidence in the form of the observations and views/opinions sourced from many different organisations, individuals, and studies. On occasion the views and observations expressed by individuals and groups may not be consistent with each other, nor are such individual contributions necessarily accurate or up to date.

2.0 PUBLIC HEALTH

2.1 Stakeholder Views – Public Health

2.1.1 Introduction

This section highlights stakeholder views on the value of open space to the wider public health agenda. This includes national perspectives from organisations such as the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) and Public Health England.

2.1.2 National perspectives on the value of open spaces and physical activity to health and wellbeing

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) have highlighted that “physical activity is not only fun and enjoyable, it is essential for good health, helping to prevent or manage over 20 conditions and diseases. This includes heart disease, diabetes, some cancers, and obesity. It can also help improve people’s mental health and wellbeing².”

NICE Local Authority Briefing – Public Health

Supporting people of all ages to be more physically active can help local authorities meet their public health responsibilities. Specifically, it will impact on a range of indicators identified in the public health and the adult social care outcomes frameworks including:

- Use of green space for exercise/health reasons.
- Child development.
- Excess weight in children and health.
- Proportion of physically active and inactive adults.
- Self-reported wellbeing and health-related quality of life.
- Fall and injuries in the over-65s.
- Mortality from cardiovascular diseases (including heart disease and stroke), cancer and respiratory diseases.

² NICE Local government briefing (LGB3) – April 2013

More specifically in relation to Open Space Assessments, Public Health England has provided updated guidance on: *Improving access to greenspace: A new review for 2020*³.

Public Health England – Improving access to greenspace: A new review for 2020.

Summary of key points:

- Evidence shows that living in a greener environment can promote and protect good health and aid recovery from illness and poor health. People who have greater exposure to greenspace have more favourable physiological outcomes.
- Greenspaces can help to bring communities together and mitigate the negative effects of air pollution, excessive noise, heat, and flooding.
- Population growth and urbanisation combined with demands for land use and budgetary constraints are putting existing local accessible greenspaces under threat.
- Local authorities play a vital role in providing new, good quality greenspace that is inclusive and equitable; improving, maintaining, and protecting existing greenspace; increasing GI within public space and promoting healthy streets and improving transport links and pathways to greenspaces.

Providing opportunities for physical activity by developing and maintaining appropriate facilities such as parks and open spaces is therefore very important in relation to promoting better public health. Public Health services nationally therefore tend to have an interest in all aspects of active recreation facility provision.

The COVID-19 pandemic led to open spaces becoming the only outlet for public exercise during lockdown. This heightened the issue of lack of access to open spaces in some urban areas especially in deprived areas. A report by Vivid Economics⁴ found that 295 deprived urban neighbourhoods across Britain had no trees or accessible green spaces and were defined as “grey deserts”.

Natural England conducted a survey to understand how adults and children in England have engaged with nature since the coronavirus pandemic. It builds on the previous Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment (MENE) survey. The survey polled 2,000 people during April 2020, during the first lockdown in England. The results showed that it is important for our wellbeing to spend time in nature. The survey also revealed that a smaller proportion of adults spent time outside in April 2020 than their reported average over 12 months, which suggests that lockdown restrictions impacted people using green spaces.

Other findings of the survey included:

- 26% of adults reported that they had not visited any green and natural space in April.
- 86% of adults with access to a private garden or allotment felt that these spaces are important to them.

³ Improving Access to Greenspace: A new review for 2020

⁴ Levelling Up and Building Back Better Through Urban Green Infrastructure: An Investment Options Appraisal. Vivid Economics and Barton Willmore (June 2020)

- 89% of adults agreed or strongly agreed that green and natural spaces should be good places for mental health and wellbeing.
- 87% of adults agreed that 'being in nature makes me happy'.

2.1.3 Birmingham City

Overview – Birmingham City Health Profile

The health profile in Birmingham is generally poor compared to the rest of England. Life expectancy for both men and women are lower than the England average (2018 – 20). For men average life expectancy of 77.1 and for women 79 (England average male – 79.4, female – 83.1).

In terms of adult health based on 2019 – 20 data, Birmingham has 58.7% of physically actives which is worse than the England average of 62.8%. Also 65.2% of adults in Birmingham are classified as overweight or obese which is again worse than the England average of 62.8%. Child rates of obesity (2019 – 20 data) are also worse than the England with 25.5% of year 6 children classed as obese compared to the England average of 21%. The Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy emphasises that there are significant inequalities between different groups of children.

Birmingham Health and Wellbeing Board

The Health and Wellbeing Board is a statutory committee of the Cabinet, and focuses on five sub-forums across the city:

1. Creating an Active City
2. Creating a Healthy Food City
3. Creating a Mentally Healthy City
4. Creating a City Without Inequality
5. Health Protection Forum

Each sub-forum has a set of aims and visions along with key programmes of work to support and deliver the aims and visions. Key programmes of work related to open space include the development of a citywide physical activity action plan and implementing an active mobility intervention to promote active travel.

The Board produced their Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 'Creating a Bolder, Healthier City 2022 – 2030' in 2021. The strategy aims to address the challenges Birmingham faces including tackling health inequalities and mitigating the legacy of the COVID-19 pandemic. The framework has five core themes which cover wider determinants, health protection and environmental public health and these align with the sub forums, the five themes are:

1. Healthy and Affordable Food (sub-forum - Creating a Healthy Food City)
2. Mental Wellness and Balance (sub-forum - Creating a Mentally Healthy City)
3. Active at Every Age and Ability (sub-forum - Creating an Active City)
4. Contributing to a Green and Sustainable Future
5. Protect and Detect (Health Protection Forum)

These themes are run through the life course approach adopted by the strategy which is getting the best start in life, working well and ageing and dying well. Targets in relation to open space are included within theme 4, and these are:

- Increase the utilisation of outdoor space for exercise/health reasons to over 25% by 2028.
- Increase the daily utilisation of green and blue spaces to 25% of the population by 2030.
- Increase volunteering and in green and blue spaces to at least 10% of the population by 2027.

Measuring the success of the targets of each theme will be done through key indications including mortality rates, healthy life expectancy, life expectancy at birth and inequality at life expectancy at birth.

Active Wellbeing Society

The Active Wellbeing Society was established in 2017 from Birmingham City Council's Wellbeing Service. It is a community benefit society and cooperate working to build healthy, happy communities living active and connected lives in Birmingham. There is a focus on communities where inequalities are highest to tackle inequalities and promote community development. The society provides free activities aimed at improving wellbeing for both individuals and communities. Examples of these include Active Parks promoting physical activities such as Zumba, walks and tennis, Big Bike Project giving out free bikes to citizens to encourage sustainable travel and Active Streets helping to create safe and inclusive streets and communities.

Environmental Justice Mapping

The Future Parks Accelerator Programme has produced an Environmental Justice Assessment for Birmingham. The city categorises each ward based on 4 datasets (which are overlain with the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) which is how cities universally measure equity). The 4 datasets are:

- Access to green space (2ha per 1,000 population; derived from ONS Green Space data)
- Urban Heat Island (derived freely from UK Space Agency maps)
- Flood Risk (derived from Birmingham City Council Flood Risk Assessment)
- Excess Years Life Lost (Derived from Birmingham City Council Public Health, standard dataset)

The 35 worst wards for environmental justice (i.e., those wards with the largest gaps in access to open space, highest urban temperatures, highest flood risk, highest levels of deprivation and lowest life expectancy (Excess Years Life Lost) are considered to be the priorities for improving the quality of open space. The analysis showed that there are vast inequalities to Environmental Justice across the city as can be seen from the map below.

Combined Index by Ward - Mean Value

0.12 - Sutton Roughley	0.28 - Brandwood & King's Heath	0.32 - Frankley Great Park	0.37 - Garretts Green
0.12 - Sutton Four Oaks	0.28 - King's Norton North	0.32 - Acocks Green	0.38 - Shard End
0.15 - Sutton Vesey	0.29 - Northfield	0.32 - North Edgbaston	0.38 - Handsworth
0.16 - Sutton Wyde Green	0.30 - Rubery & Rednal	0.33 - Ladywood	0.38 - Ward End
0.16 - Sutton Mere Green	0.30 - Bournbrook & Selly Park	0.34 - Erdington	0.39 - Sparkbrook & Balsall Heath East
0.18 - Sutton Trinity	0.30 - Hall Green North	0.34 - Holyhead	0.39 - Alum Rock
0.21 - Edgbaston	0.30 - King's Norton South	0.34 - Yardley West & Stechford	0.39 - Birchfield
0.22 - Sutton Walmley & Minworth	0.30 - Yardley East	0.34 - Small Heath	0.39 - Heartlands
0.22 - Sutton Reddick	0.30 - Weoley & Selly Oak	0.35 - Tyseley & Hay Mills	0.39 - Bordesley Green
0.24 - Hall Green South	0.30 - Longbridge & West Heath	0.35 - Sparkhill	0.39 - Pype Hayes
0.26 - Harborne	0.30 - Oscott	0.36 - Perry Barr	0.40 - Bordesley & Highgate
0.26 - Bournville & Cotteridge	0.31 - Bartley Green	0.36 - Soho & Jewellery Quarter	0.40 - Lozells
0.26 - Moseley	0.31 - Sheldon	0.36 - Perry Common	0.41 - Gravelly Hill
0.26 - Handsworth Wood	0.31 - Billesley	0.36 - Bromford & Hodge Hill	0.41 - Newtown
0.27 - Quinton	0.31 - Stirchley	0.37 - Stockland Green	0.42 - Aston
0.28 - Highter's Heath	0.32 - South Yardley	0.37 - Kingstanding	0.42 - Nechells
0.28 - Allens Cross	0.32 - Druids Heath & Moryhull	0.37 - Gleebe Farm & Tile Cross	0.43 - Castle Vale
			0.43 - Balsall Heath West



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 Ordnance Survey Open Greenspace layer derived information.
 Ordnance Survey 100021326.
 2014 daily mean urban heat island intensity (°C) at 1 km resolution
 derived from the relationship between the BULC urban
 observation network and QHS-built data, R. Bassett et al 2020
 Environ. Res. Lett. 15 114014 <https://doi.org/10.1088/1748-9326/abbb51>.
 You are not permitted to copy, sub-licence, distribute or sell any of this data
 to third parties in any form.
 Produced by the Birmingham City Council Geospatial Team.

2.2 Public Health – Observations and Key Issues

- The health profile of Birmingham is generally poor in comparison with the England average for both adult and child health.
- There are large health inequalities within the city, as highlighted by the Future Parks Accelerator (FPA) Environmental Justice Mapping.
- Birmingham Health and Wellbeing Board has primary responsibility for public health focussing on five main areas of creating an active city, healthy food city, mentally healthy city, a city without inequality and a health protection forum.
- The Joint Health and Wellbeing strategy recognises that open spaces play a role in contributing to a green and sustainable future to tackle health inequalities and mitigate the impact against the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The Active Wellbeing Society focusses on building health, happy and active communities providing programmes and events in the community to achieve this especially in areas of inequality.

3.0 NEIGHBOURING AUTHORITIES

3.1 Introduction

This section provides information and feedback from neighbouring local authorities, ward members and town councils. It is important to consult with neighbouring local authorities under the “duty to co-operate” requirement. This places a legal duty on local planning authorities, county councils in England and public bodies to “engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis to maximise the effectiveness of Local Plan preparation in the context of strategic cross boundary matters”⁵.

3.2 Cross Boundary and Strategic Issues

3.2.1 Overview – Birmingham City

Birmingham City Council shares borders with Bromsgrove District Council, Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council, Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council, Walsall Council, Lichfield District Council, North Warwickshire Borough Council and Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council. Responses were received from 3 out of 7 neighbouring local authorities.

Bromsgrove District Council

⁵ See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/duty-to-cooperate>

Type of Study	Notes/updates on relevant studies	Comments and observations – cross border and strategic issues
Open Space/PPG17	Currently being prepared as part of the leisure and cultural strategy.	Open Space observations relating to the Egg Hill Open Space which is currently under consideration with Strategic planning team.
Playing Pitch Strategy	Currently being prepared as part of the leisure and cultural strategy.	Leagues do cross boundaries and should be considered in the strategy outcomes.
Green Infrastructure Strategy	Don't currently have one and under consideration if whether one is necessary.	N/A
Parks/Greenspace Strategy	Currently being prepared as part of the leisure and cultural strategy.	Cofton Park and Lickey Hills Country Park are included as key off site provision sites for Bromsgrove Planning Applications in Cofton and surrounding areas. Offsite contributions for these sites have been allocated to Birmingham City Council.
Play/Youth Facility Strategy	Currently being prepared as part of the leisure and cultural strategy.	N/A

Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council

Type of Study	Notes/updates on relevant studies	Comments and observations – cross border and strategic issues
Playing Pitch Strategy and Open Space/PPG17	Black Country authorities are undertaking a joint PPS and Open Spaces Strategy.	Unknown at this stage as the strategy is not yet complete.
Parks/Greenspace Strategy	Completed April 2020.	N/A
Nature Recovery Strategy	Ongoing strategy with the Wildlife Trust to produce a NRN to inform the emerging Black Country Plan.	N/A

Solihull Borough Council

Type of Study	Notes/updates on relevant studies	Comments and observations – cross border and strategic issues
Open Space/PPG17	Completed September 2019.	N/A
Playing Pitch Strategy	Update completed in 2019 and scheduled for review in 2022.	No surplus of pitches, and a shortfall is likely in the future.

Type of Study	Notes/updates on relevant studies	Comments and observations – cross border and strategic issues
Green Infrastructure Strategy	Joint study with Coventry and Warwickshire completed in 2012 with a sub-regional strategy in 2013 and opportunities mapping in 2016.	N/A
Parks/Greenspace Strategy	Completed in 2014 with action plan till 2019.	N/A
Nature Recovery Strategy	Under discussion.	<p>Biodiversity Net Gain and Green Infrastructure SPD planned and would feed into Local Nature Recovery Strategy (once Natural England have confirmed the boundaries and responsible authorities).</p> <p>We understand that the Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull Local Nature Partnership propose to write to the WMCA to ask for clarity/state of play on discussions with Natural England about WMCA area being the basis for one - Follow up to WMCA Environment Board December 2021.</p> <p>This could cause some issues re data management and connectivity aspects re Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire.</p>

4.0 PARKS, GREEN SPACE, COUNTRYSIDE AND RIGHTS OF WAY

4.1 Introduction

This section covers consultation responses and findings in relation to non-sporting recreational spaces, including parks and recreation grounds, allotments, natural green spaces, water recreation and rights of way.

Consultation undertaken from this section included stakeholder's and community groups/organisations surveys. The information and findings from this section will be taken forward in the main report.

This section is comprised of the following main sections:

- Review of policy and strategy
- Key stakeholders -strategic context and overview
- Parks and recreation grounds
- Play Spaces
- Allotments

- Natural green space, wildlife areas and woodlands
- Water recreation – Canals, Rivers, and Lakes
- Rights of Way – Footpaths, Cycling and Bridleways

There is a summary of key points at the end of the section.

4.2 Review of Policy and Strategy

This section provides a brief overview of relevant council policy and strategy documents and other recently conducted consultation, helping provide a well-established framework and context for further open space planning.

Our Future City Plan – Central Birmingham 2040

Our Future City Plan was developed to kick-start the future development of Central Birmingham over the next 20 years. The vision is framed to achieve the three objectives of sustainable development – delivering social, economic, and environmental gains to the city's people. City themes have been developed to allow actions to be grouped together. The City of Nature theme focusses on open spaces with Birmingham. The plan highlights that Birmingham has a significant amount of green spaces but there are gaps in provision within the central part of the city, which is leading to a negative impact on people's health. The 2040 goals for the city of nature theme include:

- Creating a connected and diverse network of green and open spaces.
- Encouraging children and young people to be connect to nature and provide opportunities for all to take part in sport and exercise.
- Delivery of nature-based solutions to support environmental, social, and economic outcomes.
- Deliver biodiverse landscapes that create new opportunities, protect, and enhance existing habitats and support vulnerable species.
- Restore urban waterways.

The Future of Birmingham's Parks and Open Spaces SPD (November 2006)

This strategy was developed as part of the Local Development Framework and was complimentary to the (now replaced) Unitary Development Plan before being adopted as an SPD. It aims to protect and guide the planning, design, management, maintenance and provision of parks and public open spaces.

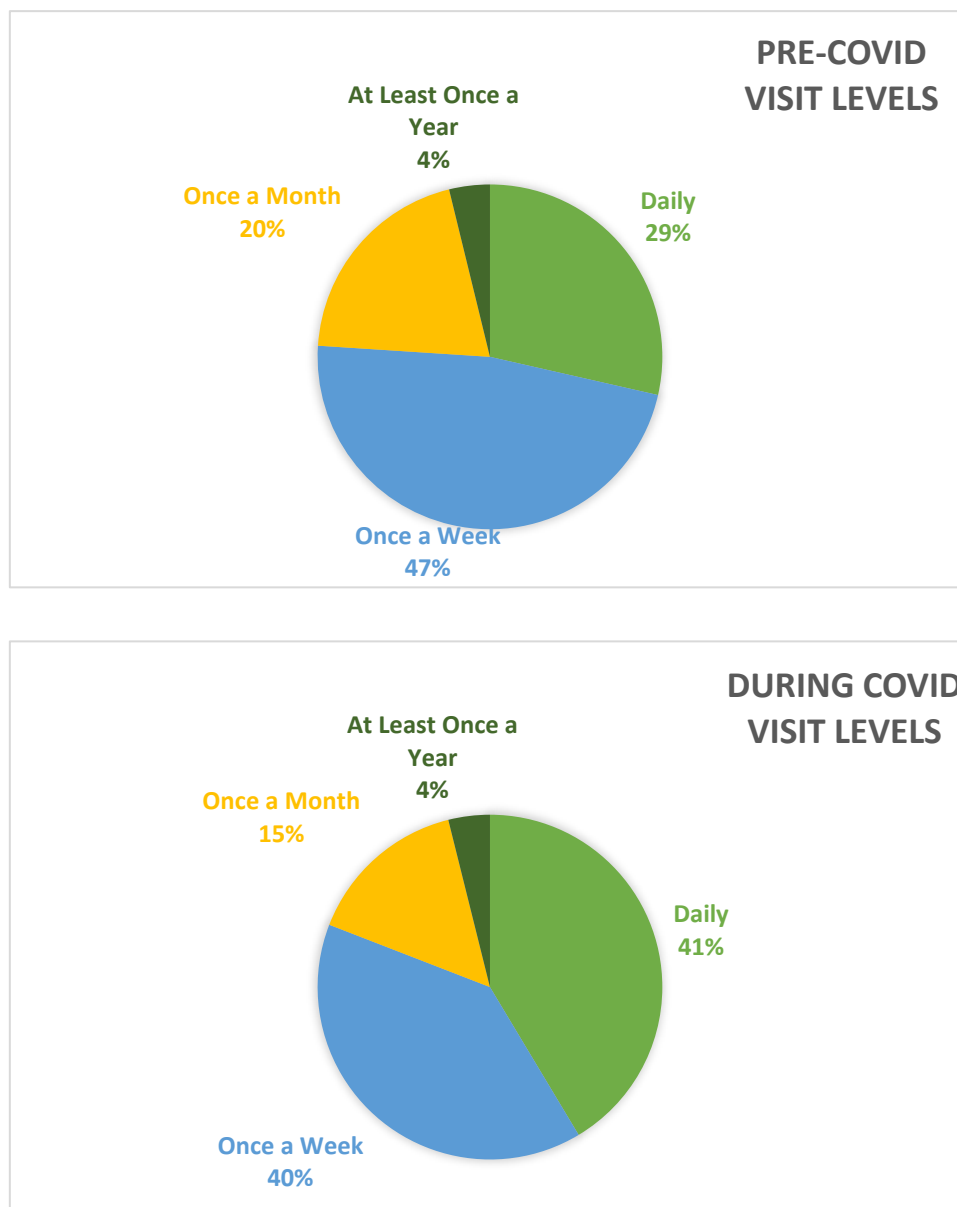
It sets a minimum standard of 2ha per 1,000 population of open space (this includes traditional parks and gardens, grassed areas, and woods but also cemeteries, allotments and civic spaces). All residents should also have access to an area of open space within 400m (5-to-10-minute walk time) which should be at least 0.2ha in size and have grass and trees.

Birmingham Parks Survey 2020

The Birmingham Parks survey is carried out every 2 years by the Parks team to understand satisfaction levels with local parks and what improvements users would like to see.

The last parks survey was carried out in 2020 and received a good response rate of 1,304 respondents with 82% saying they were satisfied with their visit to parks in Birmingham.

This survey was carried out during the covid-19 pandemic, therefore when asking about the attendance to parks, the survey looked at both pre-covid and during covid levels.



As can be seen, there was an increase in daily users by 11.89% during the covid-19 pandemic.

Users were also asked what they identified as “extremely important” in parks:

1. Provision of public parks (78.22%)
2. Feeling personally safe (73.76%)

3. Litter clearance in horticultural area (65.8%)
4. Keeping parks clear of dog fouling (62.58%)
5. Maintenance of children's play areas (59.59%)
6. Ensuring dogs are kept under control (57.52%)

4.3 Key Stakeholders – strategic context and overview

This section includes general comments from key stakeholders consulted. Responses specific to individual typologies from stakeholders consulted will be noted under each of the focus topic headings.

4.3.1 Birmingham City Council Officers

11 council officers were contacted from a range of departments who have a responsibility for open space and recreational facilities. 4 responses were received which are summarised below.

Green City Manager (part of Future Parks Accelerator)

Birmingham City became part of the Future Parks Accelerator in 2019. The initiative aims to help councils find sustainable ways to manage and fund parks and open spaces. The vision of Naturally Birmingham (name given to the Birmingham specific Future Parks Accelerator Project) are:

1. Promoting a step-change in how people engage with their parks to maximise public benefit, local potential, and innovation.
2. Enabling new cross-sector partnerships that bring together knowledge and expertise from outside the traditional parks sector, embedding new skills.
3. Catalysing and blending new sources of funding to enable diversified and sustainable business models that are attractive to new donors, funders, and investors.
4. Adopting a systemic approach so that a whole place's portfolio of public green space is protected and enhanced, delivering a fair, quality, and free service to all.

The project produced the City of Nature Plan in February 2022 which sets out a plan for the next 25 years to change the way parks and open spaces are managed for environmental health recovery. The plan looks at unequal access to green spaces across the city and develops a measurement tool for Environmental Justice, which is defined as *"the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, colour, national origin or income, with respect to the development, implementation and enforcements of environmental laws, regulations and policies"*. When analysed across Birmingham this shows that Balsall Heath West, Bordesley and Highgate, Nechells, Gravelly Hill, Pype Hayes and Castle Vale had the least environmental justice for citizens living there and this is where efforts of Naturally Birmingham will be focussed until 2027.

Principal Ecologist and Principal Arboriculturist

The principal ecologist and principal arboriculturist roles are interlinked with both roles leading on all ecology matters for the city, biodiversity policies, biodiversity net gain, the local nature recovery strategy, and the City of Nature Plan. The principal arboriculturist also leads of the city's tree strategy and is responsible for highways tree management.

Allotment Officer

Across Birmingham there are 113 allotments with 6490 plot holders. The majority of allotments are managed by volunteer allotment associations. 6 sites remain as departmental sites and are managed on behalf of BCC by the Birmingham District Allocation Confederation, and 11 will soon be moving to the management of Sutton Coldfield Town Council.

4.3.2 Strategic Organisations

A semi-structured pro-forma was circulated to all relevant strategic organisations considered to have a bearing on the assessment. The organisation consulted were (✓ indicates response received):

- Natural England
- Canal & Rivers Trust ✓
- Environment Agency
- Royal Sutton Coldfield Town Council
- Birmingham and Black Country Wildlife Trust
- Woodland Trust
- West Midlands Friends of the Earth
- Fields in Trust
- Birmingham & District Allotment Confederation
- RSPB ✓

Where responses have not been received additional desk-based investigation have been conducted to gain insight into policies of organisations as they relate to the Birmingham District.

Natural England

Standards of Provision

Natural England has proposed standards for provision of natural green spaces, the Accessible Natural Green Space (ANGSt) standard⁶. These standards recommend that everyone, wherever they live, should have accessible natural green space:

- Of at least 2 hectares in size, no more than 300 metres (5 minutes' walk) from home.
- At least one accessible 20-hectre site within two kilometres of home.
- One accessible 100-hectare site within five kilometres of home and;
- One accessible 500-hectare site within ten kilometres of home; plus

⁶ Understanding the relevance and application of the Access to Natural Green Spaces Standard – May 2008

- Statutory local nature reserve at a minimum level of one hectare per thousand population.

Natural England suggest that these standards should be a target to achieve; and particularly that everyone, wherever they live, should have an accessible natural green space of at least two hectares in size, no more than 300 metres (5 minutes from home).

Canal and Rivers Trust

The Canal and Rivers Trust is a charity which manages 2,000 miles of canals and rivers across the country. These assets form part of the strategic and local green/blue infrastructure network linking both people and wildlife.

The canal network is identified in the BDP 2017 as part of the linear open space network. The network passes within 500m of over 40% of households within the city. The Canal and Rivers Trust maintain the canal network along with promoting the network for outdoor recreation activities. A range of community groups and volunteers use the water space and land for activities such as angling, rambling groups, boating, and water-based sports.

This network forms the wider part of provision across the city for open space and recreation, and the connectivity between them is key. A strategic approach to ensure that routes and open spaces are connected, identifiable, attractive, and safe to use is also important. Once this strategic network is identified, specific points of access, wayfinding and signage can be identified alongside guidance on improvements.

Environment Agency

The Environment Agency (EA) protects and improves the environment and promotes sustainable development. It plays a central role in implementing the government's environmental strategy in England. The Environment Agency plays a lead role in managing flood risk and works to minimise the impact of flooding.

The EA note the importance of biodiversity and multi-functional open space through Green Infrastructure (GI)⁷. GI is a term which describes a network of interconnected and green and blue spaces such as: parks and gardens, playing fields and allotment, towpaths and wildlife corridors, beaches, watercourses, wetland, woodland, trees, grasslands, green roofs and swales. GI lies between cities, towns and villages and can include both private and public spaces. A well planned and managed GI network can and should perform multiple functions and provide multiple benefits and services for communities such as:

- managing surface water and flood risk
- improving water quality
- helping communities to address and adapt to climate change
- providing opportunities for recreation and improving wellbeing
- enhancing biodiversity

⁷ Guidance is available <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/natural-environment>.

- promoting community interaction

Royal Sutton Coldfield Town Council

Royal Sutton Coldfield Town Council was established in 2015, and set out its Town's Strategic Plan 2020 – 2023, which outlines the towns aims over the next four years:

- Regenerating the town centre
- Planning a sustainable future for the town
- Enhancing Sutton Park as a vital community asset
- Preserving and promoting local arts, heritage, and culture
- Delivering more services locally to meet the needs and aspirations of the community for a better and safe environment
- Supporting people, groups and organisations to help create and maintain thriving local communities
- Continuing to develop and learn as an organisation

The Town Council currently own and manage the Walmley War Memorial site and are in the process of transferring Vesey Gardens from BCC. Also ongoing is the transfer of 10 allotment sites in Sutton.

Birmingham and Black Country Wildlife Trust

The Birmingham and Black Country Wildlife Trust is a conservation charity working to conserve biodiversity, improve the environment and raise awareness and understanding of wildlife issues across Birmingham, Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall, and Wolverhampton. In Birmingham the Trust own and manage 3 sites : Moseley Bog & Joy's Wood, Hill Hook and Deer's Leap Wood.

Woodland Trust

The Woodland Trust is the country's largest woodland conservation charity with over 500,000 members and supporters and more than 1,000 sites, covering over 26,000 hectares across the country. The Trust protect and campaign, plant trees and restore ancient woodland for the benefit of wildlife and people. It states that "Trees and wood filter out air, cool our cities, purify our water, and enrich our soil. Yet the damage done to them has now reached catastrophic levels, and our plant and animal species are declining at an alarming rate".

The Woodland Trust has researched and developed the Woodland Access Standard (WAS^t) for local authorities to aim for which is written in the Space for People publication⁸. They believe that the WAS^t can be an important policy tool complementing other access standards using in delivering green infrastructure for health benefits.

The WAS^t is complimentary to Natural England's ANGST and is endorsed by Natural England. The Woodland Access Standard recommends:

⁸ Space for People: targeting action for woodland access – May 2017

- that no person should live more than 500m from at least one area of accessible natural woodland of no less than 2ha in size.
- that there should be at least one area of accessible natural woodland of no less than 20ha within 4km (8km round-trip) of people's homes.

Birmingham Friends of the Earth

Birmingham Friends of the Earths is one of the largest local groups in the country and has been running since 1973. They campaign for climate justice, clean air, thriving nature and a responsible approach to waste. Current campaigns include: more trees please (planting more trees to tackle climate change, increase biodiversity and improve mental and physical wellbeing), a breath of fresh air (reducing air pollution) and waste isn't rubbish (encouraging more recycling).

Fields in Trust

Fields in Trust is an independent charity who protect parks and green spaces across the UK. They work with landowners, community groups and policy makers to champion the value of park and green space to achieve better protection for their future.

Fields in Trust protect 9 sites which are:

- King George Playing Field
- Walkers Heath Park
- Holders Lane Playing Fields
- Calthorpe Park
- Oaklands Recreation Ground
- King George V Playing Field
- Perry Hall Playing Fields
- Kingstanding King George Playing Field
- Rectory Park

Birmingham & District Allotment Confederation

Birmingham & District Allotment Confederation (BDAC) was established over 60 years ago and consists of an association of volunteers who are committed to promoting, preserving, and supporting allotments in Birmingham. All allotment tenants across Birmingham (6,500 in total) who pay rent to Birmingham City Council are members of the confederation. The confederation has a formal management role with the Council to oversee the management of 115 sites across Birmingham. An executive committee oversees confederation and provides a link between allotment holders and the Council. BDAC work includes:

- Protecting allotment provision across the city.
- Providing allotment associations advice and information.

- Encouraging and supporting sites without associations to form committees and take on management responsibilities.
- Support the Council in the management of directly managed sites.
- Playing an active role in influencing allotment policy.
- Advising plot holders on tenancy issues.
- Consulting on allotment renovation and development.
- Providing mediation in disputes between plot holders, associations and Council Allotment Department should any disputes arise.

RSPB

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) is a charitable organisation which promotes the conservation and protection of birds and the wider environment. Sandwell Valley Nature Reserve sits on the boundary of Birmingham District. It provides a hub for community engagement, visitor experience and education and gives opportunities for people to connect with nature. Over 44,000 people a year visit the site, many of whom travel from Birmingham.

4.4 Community Groups/Organisations

An online survey was set up for local organisations with an interest in open space and recreation facilities (non-sporting)⁹. Emails were sent out to 124 community groups and organisations, with 28 responses received. Responses were received from:

- | | |
|--|---|
| • Walsall Road Allotments | • Friends of Queens Park |
| • Friends of Balaam's Wood | • Friends of Pitts Woods |
| • The Fields Millennium Green | • Friends of Perry Hall Country Park |
| • St Agnes Residents Association | • Friends of Muntz Park and Selly Park Rec |
| • National Highways | • Friends of Mosely Bog and Joy's Wood |
| • Moor Pool Wildlife Group | • Friends of Manor Farm Park |
| • Moor Pool Heritage Trust | • Friends of Kings Norton Park and Playing Field |
| • Kings Heath and Brandwood Litter Pickers | • Friends of Key Hill Cemetery and Warstone Lane Cemetery |
| • Holders Wood Conservation | • Friends of Handsworth Park |
| • Friends of Trittiford Mill Pool and Park | • Friends of Dawberry Fields Park |
| • Friends of the Harborne Walkway | • Friends of Cotteridge Park |
| • Friends of the Green | |
| • Friends of Swanshurst Park | |
| • Friends of Rubery Station | |

⁹ The survey was sent a groups identified through Birmingham City Council and Birmingham Open Spaces Forum. Responses were received from a range of groups with a wide range of interests. There may be additional organisations with an interest in open space that were not identified. The general findings may not therefore be entirely representative of all such groups across Birmingham.

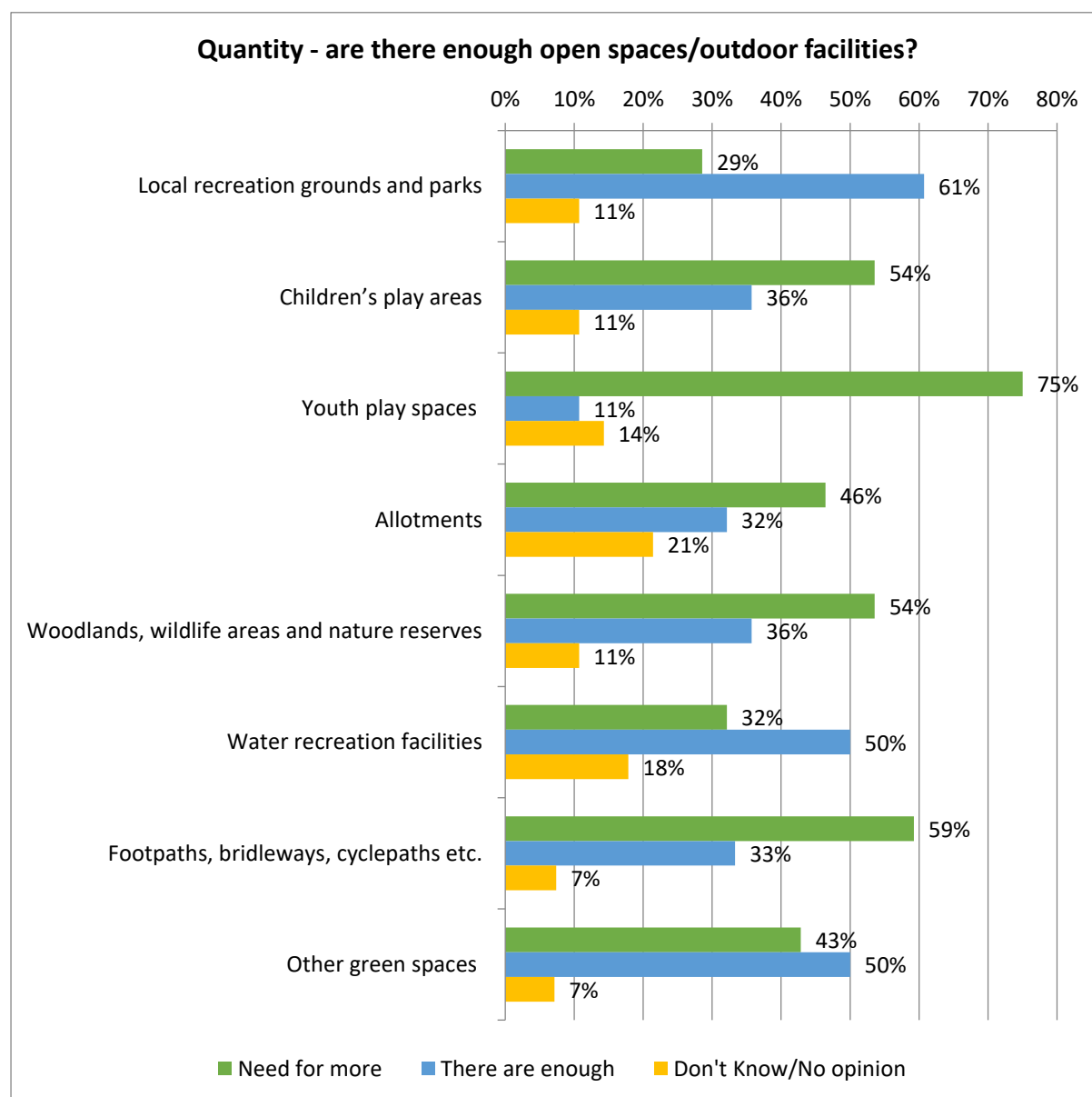
- The organisations/groups were asked to provide a description of their organisation/group, which is summarised below:



conservation work
forest school
tennis court
tai chi
open day
litter pick
nature trail
bowling green
dog walker
football club
coffee morning social
dawn chorus walk
easter bunny hunt
commuting purpose
overgrown area
language group
freshwater invertebrate
easter egg hunt
practice session
lovell & eyemore
plantation spurs
fresh air
small group
heritage trail
variety of gardening
walker & family
basketball court
annual bat walk
regular open day
moor pool
forest school course
free tai chi
community events
heritage events
volunteer conservation work
tai chi session
family fun session
social prescribers volunteer
large allotment site
personal training
remembrance activities
top meadows
species of riverfly
health & population
swing fit
regular litter pick
water quality monitoring
play area
nature trail
football pitch
dog walker
dawn chorus walk
coffee morning social
easter bunny hunt
commuting purpose
overgrown area
language group
freshwater invertebrate
easter egg hunt
practice session
lovell & eyemore
plantation spurs
fresh air
small group
heritage trail
variety of gardening
walker & family
basketball court
annual bat walk
regular open day
moor pool
forest school course
free tai chi
community events
heritage events
volunteer conservation work
tai chi session
family fun session
social prescribers volunteer
large allotment site
personal training
remembrance activities
top meadows
species of riverfly
health & population
swing fit
regular litter pick
water quality monitoring
play area

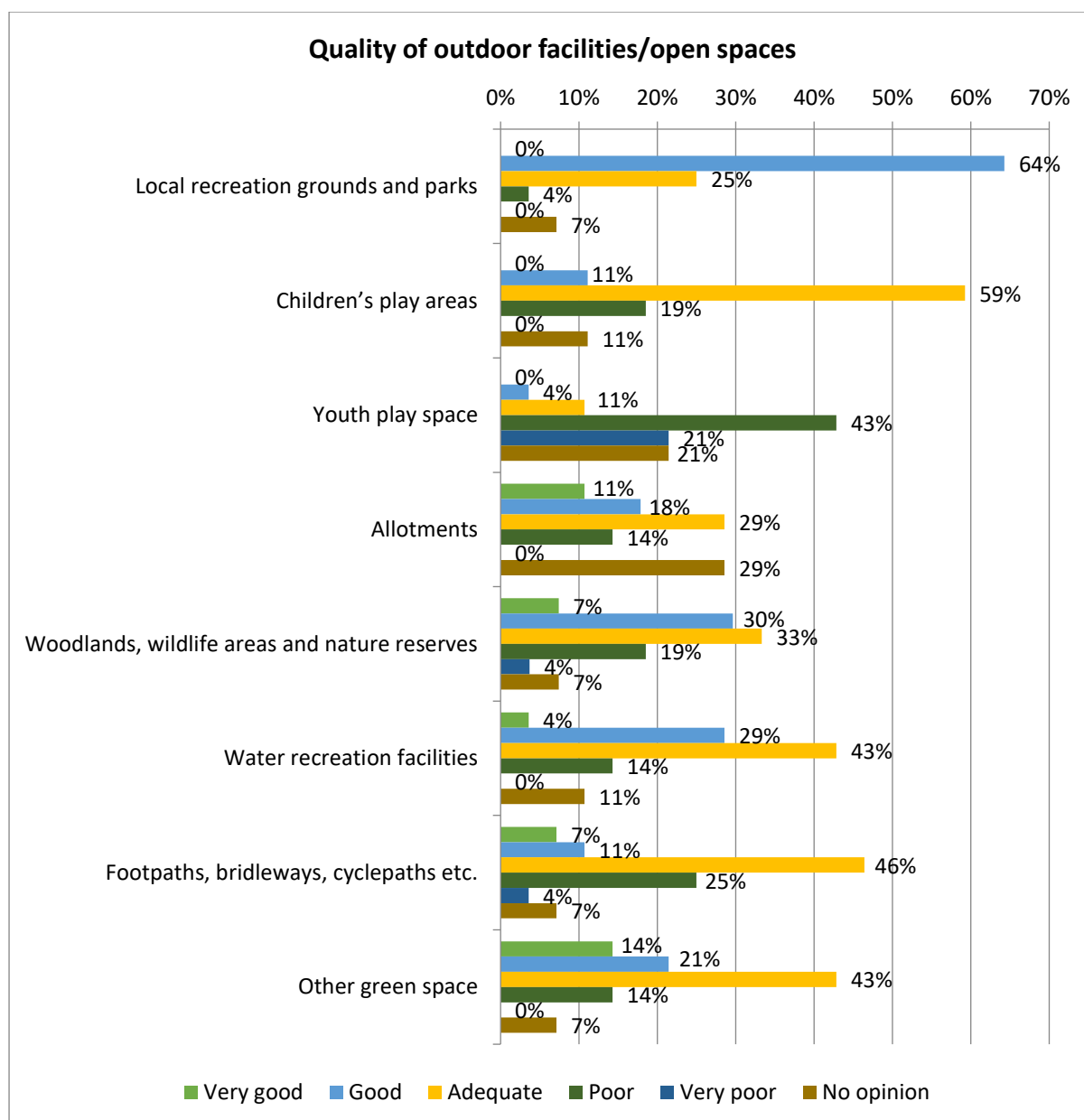
18 out of 28 organisations/groups thought there were enough open spaces and recreational facilities to meet the needs of their organisations/ groups with 8 thinking that there weren't enough and 2 didn't know.

Respondents were then asked if they thought there were enough types of open spaces by typology, results can be seen below:



Quality

The general view of local organisations/groups who expressed an opinion as regards the overall quality of the different types of outdoor recreation provision in Birmingham are summarised in the chart and information below:

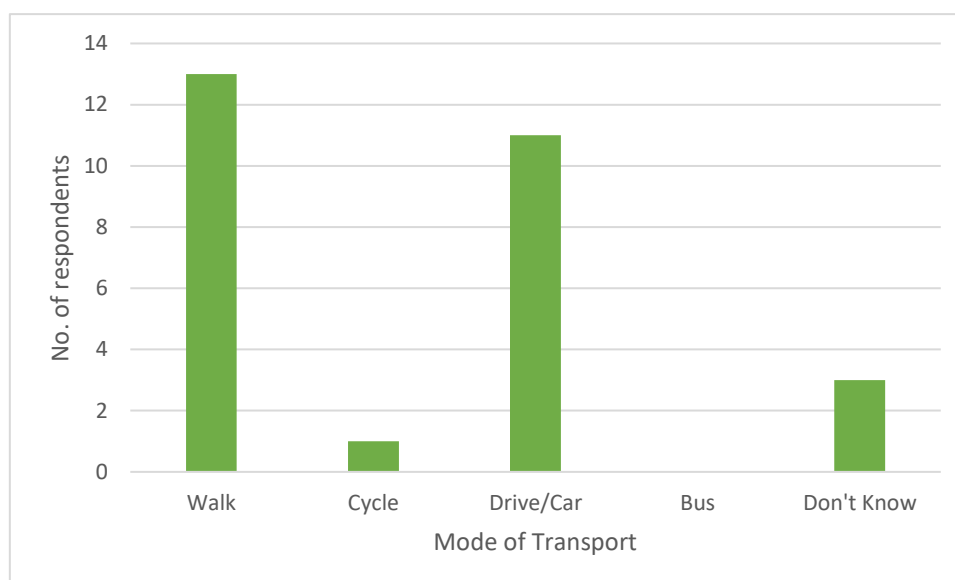


Access

17 out of 27 organisations/groups said that they don't face any issues with accessing open space and recreational facilities that they use. 9 organisations/groups said they did face issues, and this includes:

- Car park is often full.
- No bike racks to safely lock up bikes.
- Insufficient signage causes other users of nearby open space to use allotment parking.
- Clear Air Zone charges has impacted number of visitors.
- Some entrances are not usable for wheelchair users or pushchairs.
- Damaged pathways make it difficult for wheelchair users or pushchairs.

Organisations/groups were then asked what mode of travel your group uses to reach open spaces. The majority of respondents thought that walking was the main mode of transport used with a large proportion also using cars/driving.



4.5 Parks and Recreation Grounds

4.5.1 Council Officers

FPA environmental justice mapping highlights the under provision of parks and recreation grounds in some wards/neighbourhoods. There is high demand for a large strategic park within the city centre area which is currently has significant under provision of open space. Quality of parks varies across the city. Accessible natural sites have seen a lack of or inappropriate management which has caused degradation of biodiversity and recreational value. Access points and internal pathways have become lost or overgrown in some parks along with developments truncating access and hiding sites from view.

The City of Nature Plan produced by Naturally Birmingham sets out the Birmingham Fair Parks Standard which aims to level-up environmental justice for the city's parks. The aim is that all parks in Birmingham are assessed against the standard with 5 themes:

- **Fair** (is it welcoming, accessible, clean and safe?)
- **Green** (are you there different trees and plants, are there habitats for wildlife, is it managed sustainably?)
- **Healthy** (are there walking routes, quiet areas, activities, is the park used for social prescriptions, and play value?)
- **Involved** (can you find out what's happening in your park, can you influence what is happening?)
- **Valued** (do we know the worth of what the park provides, is that shared, are there ways to raise extra funds?)

The score for the standard is a score between 31 – 44%. If this standard isn't met, an action plan is created to show what can be done to raise the standard.

4.5.2 Strategic Organisations

Parks and recreation grounds should be designed and managed to provide benefits for both people and wildlife including having good quality habitats and nature rich green spaces. They should also be engaging for young people in a way that connects them with nature. Where parks and recreation grounds meet the waterways network, access and connectivity should be improved so that people can use them to reach other open spaces without having to use a car.

The Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards (ANGSt) guidance is aimed at parks and greenspace practitioners and their partners, particularly decision makers, planners, and managers of green space. It describes the amount, quality, and visitor services of accessible natural green spaces that we believe everyone is entitled to and provides advice on how they can be delivered.

The Woodland Trust encourage trees and small areas of woodland within parks and recreation grounds. The report "Trees or Turf"¹⁰ provides evidence that by adding woodland and replacing short mown grass it can provide a range of benefits for people and wildlife whilst also reduce ongoing maintenance costs and mitigating the effects of climate change.

4.5.3 Community Groups/Organisations

Many groups commented on how Birmingham is a great green city with many of the larger flagship parks being managed well. Overall, it is thought that provision of parks is good in some areas (the south of the Birmingham), but many commented on how there is an uneven distribution of parks throughout the city. A key theme across many groups was the reduction in park rangers, leading to many friends of groups undertaking lots of the management and maintenance of parks. Other issues highlighted including high levels of littering and fly tipping, damaged and overgrown paths, broken bins, and a lack of facilities in some park such as toilets and seating.

4.6 Children's Play Areas and Youth Facilities

4.6.1 Council Officers

Of the council officers that responded, children's play areas and youth facilities were not included within the role. However, there were a couple of observations that included there being a lack of spaces that have imaginative, natural, and risky play, and that spaces are often defined by boundaries and equipment. The play standards associated with new development are too structured towards formalised/structured play.

The Parks team updated the Birmingham Outdoor Play Facilities Policy in 2020. The vision for the strategy is;

¹⁰ Trees or turf? Best value in managing urban green space. The Woodland Trust – May 2011.

“Birmingham will be an inspiring place where all children and young people can enjoy living, learning, developing and achieving, and where they can feel secure in a child and family friendly city, with its diverse communities and neighbourhoods”.

The Parks team manage 256 public play facilities across the city as of 2018. Their role is to improve the efficiency of its management and maintenance responsibilities. This includes ensuring that play areas are in a safe and clean condition, replacing condemned and/or outdated play equipment, ensuring sites have safety surfacing and periodically reviewing accessibility to sites (including making sites accessible for all).

The policy sets out a number of objectives moving forward for play:

- **Location:** a play area should be a maximum walking distance of 800m from all households. Assessing areas for new play should consider if there is an existing play area within 400m of the proposed site.
- **Size and content:** to provide different types of play provision for children in all age groups.
- **Consultation:** ensuring that consultation is undertaken with a variety of stakeholders when making decisions about parks that will impact the local community.
- **Surveillance:** play areas should have natural surveillance and not within 30m of a dwelling.
- **Accessibility:** ensure that play areas are safely accessible by all potential users by a cycleway or footpath.
- **Social factors:** provide measures to protect children’s safety such as ensuring sites are not obscured by dense planting or located by a road.

4.6.2 Community Groups/Organisations

Overall, the majority of groups thought that children’s play areas are well used within the city, however, they thought that there are some parts of the city where there aren’t enough children’s play areas. Key themes on quality of children’s play spaces included the need to update the play areas, provide more imaginative spaces and safer spaces for children. There was an overwhelming view that there are not enough youth facilities across Birmingham.

4.7 Allotments

4.7.1 Council Officers

Allotment occupancy across the city is currently around 88%. Officers thought that there is a good amount of provision across the city but there is demand for urban community growing spaces, which could be potentially done through land allocation prior to and at development/re-development stages. The majority of sites require improvement works including making sites more accessible. It was highlighted that there is limited scope to improve the quality allotments due to no capital grants being available with the available budget being made up from plot holders rent which tends to limit improvements to repairs only.

The City of Nature plan has also set an aim to have at least one community garden in every ward of this city. This is currently being jointly pursued and adopted with the Housing & Community Groups.

4.7.2 Community groups/organisations

Community groups/organisations had varying views on allotments, with half of respondents stating that there are enough, and half stating that there aren't enough. Despite this, many thought that some sites were oversubscribed especially since the covid-19 pandemic.

Respondents thought that some sites were well maintained by the friends' groups managing them, but some of the council sites required more maintenance. It was also noted that theft is an issue across some sites.

4.8 Natural Green Space, Wildlife Areas, and Woodlands

4.8.1 Council Officers

Officers highlighted that there is a mixture of SINC, SLINC and LNR designated sites within Birmingham but there are still gaps in provision. Currently work is being undertaken as part of the local nature recovery strategy to identify those gaps in provision and where there are opportunities for the creation of new spaces.

The FPA environmental justice maps highlights that there are gaps in access and provision to woodland, although the data used within this study is out of date. There is a pressure on privately owned woodland and potential sites of interest for developments, and with the lack of data on these sites it has led to poor decisions being made on these sites.

The City of Nature Plan sets out a 25-year nature recovery vision map which highlights the strategic objectives over the next 25 years. The NRN core habitat zones aims are protection, restoration and enhancement with the core expansion zones aims for restoration, enhancement, and creation. Finally, the urban matrix recovery zones aims for the protection, enhancement, and creation of green infrastructure as a priority¹¹.

Finally, it was noted that access to natural green spaces is poor with the lack of management leading to access points and paths becoming lost or overgrown.

4.8.2 Strategic Stakeholders

The RSPB report "Recovering Together" found that in the West Midlands 87% of respondents agreed that living close to spaces that are rich in wildlife and nature is/would be an advantage during a pandemic. 79% respondents also said that the Government should increase the number of accessible nature-rich green areas in the UK. This research also highlighted inequalities in access to nature between high and low income households.

The canal network in Birmingham provides a form of natural green space as well as connecting to other natural green spaces. It provides softer edges with hard urban

¹¹ <https://naturallybirmingham.org/birmingham-city-of-nature-delivery-framework/>

landscapes, and landscaping/planting can help discourage graffiti. Access to natural green spaces could be improved through formalising desire lines, enhancing existing access points, and adding wayfinding signage.

Priority habitats and species are those listed under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Communities Act, 2006 and UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP). Larger areas of priority habitat will usually be mapped either as Sites of Special Scientific Interest on the Magic website or as Local Wildlife Sites or Local Geological Sites. Local Environmental Record Centres and local wildlife groups are also a source of information on Local Sites.

The SSSIs in the Birmingham District are currently in the following conditions:

Site Name	Condition
Edgbaston Pool	20.4% in a favourable condition. 79.6% is an unfavourable condition – no change
Sutton Park	38.7% in an unfavourable condition – recovering and 61.4% in an unfavourable condition – declining.

The Woodland Trust highlight that woodlands provide a range of social, economic, and environmental benefits and woodland has been shown to contribute to 10 of the 20 quality of life indicators in the UK. Accessible woods close to residential areas encourage people to exercise, help mental health, improve air quality, and reduce respiratory disease. Presently 85% of the population do not have a good woodland within easy walking distance.

Woods make outstanding greenspaces for public access because of the experience of nature they provide, their visual prominence alongside buildings offers balance between the built and natural worlds. They also have low maintenance costs and they can accommodate large numbers of visitors.

However, woodlands are facing several challenges as outlined in the Woodland Trust's 10-year strategy¹² including inappropriate development, climate change and attacks from deadly tree diseases and pests. The Trust has ambitious aims to plant a tree for everyone in the UK, more engagement with people in urban areas to help them appreciate the value and benefits of trees where they live, work, and relax and to improve the protection of ancient woodlands.

4.8.3 Community groups/organisations

Groups highlighted that there are lots of engaging friends of groups that are associated with natural green spaces, wildlife areas and woodlands. These groups tend to do most of the maintenance on sites due to the budgetary constraints on the council and the lack of rangers on site. It was noted that provision is uneven across the sites with different part of the city having sufficient spaces and other a deficiency. A few groups also noted that some sites aren't advertised or signposted well.

¹² Join us on the journey to 2025. The Woodland Trust – 2015.

4.9 Water Recreation – Canals, Rivers, and Lakes

4.9.1 Council Officers

Officers thought that there is a good level of water recreation provision through Birmingham including on the canals and lakes, but rivers were too constrained or small to provide much recreational value. There has been a decrease in the provision of pool lakes, and there is a lack of fishing opportunities due to low stock and poor management. Officers did note that canals and rivers across Birmingham provide good levels of towpaths and informal routes/cycleways associated with them.

In terms of water quality, officers thought that it is variable but mainly seen as low/poor due to levels of pollution, but it has seen improvement over the past few years. Blue green algae blooms have been appearing due to surface water run off taking high nutrients rich materials. Integration of nature based SUDS within development would bring benefits to water quality.

Access to water recreation must be carefully balanced between water users and the impact on aquatic life and nesting wildfowl.

4.9.2 Strategic Stakeholders

Waterways in Birmingham provide an important wildlife corridor along with a means to commute. However, the waterways face many challenges including fly tipping, invasive non-native species making these blue spaces poor in quality. The most recent water framework directive indicates that a number of waterways in Birmingham are in a bad or poor condition. There are a number of organisations including the Canal & Rivers Trust, Birmingham City Council and other eNGOs in Birmingham that are currently working on improving the water quality.

The Canal & Rivers Trust has an aspiration to bring its network within Birmingham up to Green Flag standard. By improving the quality of the canal and river network it is hoped that it will lead to greater usage. It will also require greater maintenance so it should be important to ensure that any policy and strategy documents seek capture contributions for this from future development proposals.

4.9.3 Community groups/organisations

There were conflicting views between groups about the maintenance of footpaths and towpaths, with some stating they were in good condition, and others stating there was a need for improvement. Many highlighted that there is a lot of littering and fly tipping within the canals, lakes, ponds, and rivers.

4.10 Rights of Way – Footpaths, Cycling and Bridleways

4.10.1 Council Officers

Officers noted that there is a good quantity of rights of way within the urban fringe, but it is important to ensure that any new developments incorporate these in their designs. Bridleways are not required within Birmingham except for within the three main country parks of Sutton Park, Woodgate Valley Country Park, and Lickey Hills Country Park. They rated the quality of the network as fairly good, but stressed that parts can lack routine maintenance which in turns leads to a lower level of usage. In terms of access, both rights of way and cycleways require lighting especially along commuting routes.

4.10.2 Strategic Stakeholders

The canal network in Birmingham has a surfaced towpath along at least one side of the canal, with some sections having towpaths on both providing routes for active travel. There is a lack of access points to the rights of way network and making this network accessible for all is tricky in built up areas. Footpaths, bridleways, and cycle paths should be used to maximise connectivity for both people and wildlife.

4.10.4 Community groups/organisations

The key theme raised by community groups was that there is a need for more cycleways. Although there are good links between green spaces and rivers and canals, there seems to be a lack of green links across the whole city. A large proportion of respondents also thought that there needs to be better maintenance of footpaths as many are overgrown and damaged.

4.11 Parks, Natural Green Space and Rights of Way: Key Findings

Overview

- Birmingham City Council is part of the Future Parks Accelerator programme, and its City of Nature plan aims to change the way parks and open spaces are managed for environmental health recovery.
- Natural England suggests that the ANGSt standard should be a starting point for developing a standard for natural and semi natural green space.
- The importance of biodiversity, ecological networks and the health and wellbeing benefits (especially after the COVID-19 pandemic) associated with access to good quality open spaces were key issues highlighted throughout.

Quantity

- It was highlighted by consultees that there are shortfalls in parks, children's play spaces, youth facilities and cycle ways.
- Across a large proportion of typologies, it was highlighted that there is an uneven distribution of provision, notably in parks, allotments, and natural green spaces.
- It was emphasised that it may not be possible or suitable to increase provision in certain typologies due to the built-up nature of the city, such as footpaths and water recreation.

Quality

- Across all groups of consultees, parks were rated as good quality in particular the flagship parks and those with associated groups.
- A large proportion of community groups/organisations rated youth play spaces as poor in quality. It was also highlighted that children's play spaces should be more imaginative.
- Littering and fly-tipping was mentioned as an issue across most of the typologies in terms of quality.
- Access points have become lost into many open spaces with development truncating access or paths/entrances becoming overgrown.

Access

- It was noted by the majority consultees that spaces were accessed mainly by foot or bikes.
- Community groups and organisations, however, did think that a large proportion did use a car/drive to open spaces.
- Access is restricted by overgrown access points and lack of directional signage.

5.0 CONCLUDING REMARKS

The survey work, stakeholder consultation, and desk-based research have highlighted a wide range of issues of value to the Open Space Assessment.

Response levels from council officers and strategic organisations have been low despite sending remind to chase responses. A large amount of desk-based research has been undertaken to ensure that a wide and diverse range of views have influenced the findings of the study. The key issues have been identified which will be further considered in the main report.

There is a good degree of consistency across the various sources of key areas of local and strategic need/aspirations, from which we can be confident that the findings are robust and reliable.

The information and findings from the consultation report are further considered and analysed in the Open Space Assessment report in relation to the various typologies of the open space being analysed. In particular the findings provide evidence to support the spatial planning standards recommended for the different categories of open space.