

Insight from our FPA team

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A warm welcome to our first newsletter! [Our FPA programme](#) has been on an incredible journey. For me personally, I feel very lucky and privileged to not only be part of it, but to lead our team in moving forward with our goals. I've never had a job before that has impacted me so personally as FPA – the way in which I spend my free time with my 3 year old son, Esa, has completely changed. Green space is a daily feature of our lives be it in our local park (which he calls 'my Park'), or in our garden or along the River Cole.

I am excited to see how all our workstreams develop – embedding the value of green space into people's lives is vital if we are to secure a future for nature in our City. What our programme has concluded so far is the need to change the city's Governance framework for the natural and green environment. This will be under-pinned by 4 other cross-cutting frameworks.

We will be updating you every month on the progress we are making against our 5 frameworks for the FPA programme – you can find more information about these on [page 4](#). I hope you find this useful.

If you have any suggestions for our newsletter or items to include, please contact Daniel Lloyd, our FPA Project Officer at Daniel.Lloyd@birmingham.gov.uk



A New Governance Model for Birmingham's Green Space

Under Joseph Chamberlain, Birmingham was seen as the birthplace for modern municipal government, it was at this time that the city's parks took pride of place amongst its newest city assets. 150 years later we are living in very different times and the city's green spaces now need to respond to global climate and ecological emergencies and the current Covid pandemic. To do this effectively Birmingham now needs to take the lead again and change its current governance approach to put nature at the centre of its decision-making; this is why our FPA programme is called '*Naturally Birmingham*'.

We are making progress in helping other parts of the Council see the value of green space - take a look at a short video we have put together. <https://youtu.be/1YWuzdXzqbk>



Environmental Justice Framework

We know that people living in more deprived areas have poorer health and wellbeing, poorer educational outcomes, poorer access to work, and suffer more from the impact of climate change. These are the same groups of people who are struggling more from Covid 19 and also have less access to good quality green space. This thread connects the impacts from climate change, ecological decline and the Covid-19 pandemic to environmental justice. We know that green space offers huge benefits to health and wellbeing and by making sure those in more need of it, can access it, we will go some way to achieving environmental justice.

Our progress to date:-

- We have identified key data sets in the Local Authority that can be mapped against green space to help us score how well particular areas do with regards to green space access.
- During August we ran a social media campaign, showcasing a few of the many green sector jobs available. We asked those working in the industry to discuss the best thing about their job, the courses they studied and advice they'd give to those considering the industry.
- To support our Green Jobs Skills Showcase we are working with colleges, training providers and businesses to deliver webinars to those interested in the industry to learn all about the opportunities available through education, training and job experiences - To find out more please do not hesitate to contact us: sophie.j.green@birmingham.gov.uk
- We have developed a virtual skills showcase which tells people all about the kind of work they can do related to nature – find out more [here](#).

Healthy City Framework

Birmingham aspires to be a healthy city as well as a green city. In the great Victorian era, city parks came out of the 1848 Public Health Act. This recognised the overwhelming health benefits of the natural environment on all peoples lives. Our Healthy City Framework will re-connect these agendas once again in Birmingham so that we clearly link health and wellbeing to green space nature, helping our residents to live healthier lives.

Our progress to date:-

Through Witton Lodge Association, we have run:

- 4 Virtual sessions to connect people to nature when they can't be in green spaces themselves – this has helped people grow in confidence to go outdoors as lockdown eased.
- Parks At Home has brought parks and nature indoors to people who have been unable to leave their homes – getting residents to grow sunflowers together has been a positive experience and let people enjoy nature more.
- Supported walks to help people feel confident going back outside.
- We are also working with Heartlands Hospital to help their staff use more green spaces as part of their daily lives.
- Currently, we are recruiting social prescribing link workers to help them better understand our green space offer so that we can embed green spaces into their non medical offer of help to patients.



Finance Framework

Any change or improvement we make to parks and green spaces has to be financially viable. Our new finance framework will re-calculate all the benefits green space brings to the whole City. We will look at ways to bring extra money in where possible. By focussing on money and budgets, we will grow a greener future with confidence.

Our progress to date:-

- We have developed a financial steering group with key officers and Members from the Council and academics with technical expertise in this area to help us explore different ways to finance green spaces.
- We have agreed to develop a [Parks Foundation](#) model using our existing partner, Birmingham Open Spaces Forum. This will expand it's remit from supporting local people to volunteer in their local parks to support fundraising for green spaces, advocate for green space, and develop the volunteer offer.

Citizen Involvement Framework

The world's greenest cities make it very easy for their citizens to make a difference through contributing their ideas, their endeavour, and their time. Birmingham needs such a support system for its citizens and under FPA we intend to create such a platform - where everybody's voice can be heard.

Our progress to date:-

- Making sure our residents are involved in this process and can access quality information about green spaces is key. We have undertaken some engagement work as part of [our proposals](#) for our 4 pilot themes – the results of which are on [pages 5 & 6](#). We're really pleased to see such enthusiasm for our approach and have looked closely at feedback to ensure we are taking into account this feedback.
- We are supporting health mentors (working with and as part of the Birmingham Children's Trust) to use green space with 50 young mentees who are children in care. We have designed a green space quiz to help our mentors understand green space better and are now supporting them in using local green spaces to engage their mentees.
- We recorded at least 70,000 hours of volunteering in green spaces last year. We have just finished launching a volunteer survey to understand what drives people to support our green spaces and importantly what stops them.

OUR FRAMEWORKS AND OBJECTIVES



Environmental Justice Framework	Healthy City Framework	Governance Model for Natural Environment	Sustainable Finance Framework	Citizen Involvement Framework
1. New workforce and community skills	2. Integrated green neighbourhood and well-being plans	4. Better managed parks and greenspaces	7. Review of corporate financial mechanisms and land valuation formula	11. A Peoples Movement and Civic Voice for the (Natural) Environment
	3. Draft Outcomes Framework for Health & Parks	5. Organisational capacity	8. Preparation for Natural Capital Investment Strategy	12. New cohort of people and young generation engaged in parks
		6. 25 year Nature Recovery and Green Infrastructure Strategy (A new place and parks strategy and 25 year environment plan)	9. Preparation for a Corporate Value Capture Framework	
			10. Re-alignment of base budgets	
13. Future Parks Board				

Birmingham FPA

ENGAGEMENT ANALYSIS

CAMPAIGN
PROMOTED ON

97 DIGITAL
DISPLAYS
ACROSS
THE CITY

10

COMMUNITY
CONVERSATIONS
WITH

117

PARTICIPANTS

28.9K

TWEETS
IMPRESSIONS
AND **97** NEW
FOLLOWERS

CONSULTATION
WITH FRIENDS
GROUPS,
BIRMINGHAM
ASPIRING YOUTH
COUNCIL,
CHILDREN IN CARE
COUNCIL AND
MORE...

157

RESPONSES TO
ONLINE SURVEY



