

FPA NEWSLETTER - FEBRUARY 2022

A WELCOME FROM COUNCILLOR JOHN O'SHEA

As Cabinet Member for Street Scene and Parks for Birmingham City Council (BCC) I am delighted to introduce the February 2022 edition of our FPA newsletter. The big news is that Cabinet met on 8th February and approved the 25 year City of Nature Plan developed by the FPA team and gave permission to consult on it with the public. This marks a huge moment for the Council, formally recognising the vital role that nature and green spaces play in the health and wellbeing of our citizens, as well as helping to tackle the climate challenge currently facing us. We need to be driven by the evidence showing where the need is greatest to drive improvements in both the quality and quantity

of local green spaces – the Environmental Justice map that the FPA team has produced does exactly that. Being a keen user of Millennium Green in my ward, Acocks Green, I see first-hand how important green spaces are to local residents. I look forward to seeing how we move forward on this agenda, and would like to congratulate the team on their achievements to date.



INTRODUCING FINN - OUR NEW CITY OF NATURE OFFICER

Hi Everyone!

I am Finn O'Donoghue, the new City of Nature Officer in the wider FPA and Parks team. Although strictly I come from a planning background, I have long had an interest in climate change adaption in cities, which is a strong focus of the Spatial Planning MSc I am currently studying part time. I am strongly passionate about sustainability and volunteer as a Sustainability Ambassador at my university UCL. Outside of work I am a food obsessive, love keeping fit and hiking with my pals.

As soon as I read about the City of Nature Plan I knew that I wanted to be involved. Improving the quantity, quality and accessibility of Birmingham's green spaces has so many . benefits. As well as storing carbon, improving air quality, mitigating flood risk and so on, the project has a real social and community focus with the most targeted wards being some of the most challenged in the city. The opportunity to work with a whole host of charities and community partners to bring equitable access to high quality green space for all of Birmingham's citizens, potentially for generations, will be the most exciting job I have ever had.

My focus across my first 12 months in the team will be delivering on the ground results for the Bordesley and Highgate Ward. Since 2019 the Future Parks Accelerator team have worked so hard to create a meticulously thought out framework for delivering real change. As the City of Nature of Plan passes through cabinet I aim to begin to fulfil the potential for change, with grants, actions and coordination across the ward's partners to start achieving real sustainable improvements for residents, building a deeper, more fruitful relationship with their enriched green spaces.

OUR CITY OF NATURE PLAN - CONSULTATION LAUNCH

On 15th February 2022 the consultation for Our City of Nature Plan for Birmingham was launched, starting the exciting conversation on the way in which the city treats its natural environment and how it thinks about the future of its parks and green spaces over the next 25 years.

The Council has outlined a vision for change opening up more equal access by ensuring all of its green spaces achieve the Birmingham Fair Standard, a way of assessing green spaces that is a direct response to the issue of environmental justice.

In 2019, Birmingham declared a Climate Emergency and, with a pandemic in between, in 2021 the UK hosted a UN Climate Conference COP 26 in Glasgow - 30 years on from the Rio Summit the world is a very different place and it is now racing to catch up with the science.

This City of Nature Plan captures this urgency and converts it into a practicable plan of action and suggests delivery mechanisms for the city to become a Bolder Greener Birmingham. All relevant material will be made available on our website at the appropriate time for you to get involved. You can also [find more information and videos](#) covering the key themes in the consultation document.

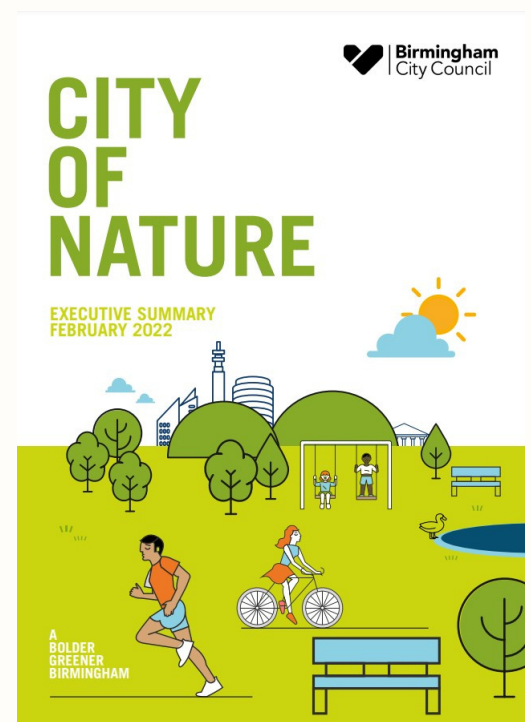
You can view the City of Nature Plan here:

<https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/futurenaturecityplan>.

We are really interested in hearing your views on the plan, which you can provide via our [Be Heard Survey](#). The consultation will run from the **15 February 2022** to **17 March 2022**.

We are also holding online webinars, which you can register for [here](#).

For more information, please contact Debbie Needle on futureparks@bosf.org.uk



CITY OF NATURE ENGAGEMENT SESSIONS

Prior to Cabinet, we took part in a number of engagement sessions (in person and virtual) with various groups to outline the steps we will take to achieve the 25-year City of Nature Plan for the City. These sessions were used to highlight many of the wonderful benefits the natural environment brings to our lives, and to explain how we will embrace the opportunities available to us as part of our work. The sessions also detailed the changes that will be needed at Birmingham City Council and beyond in order to achieve our vision for a City of Nature, and how we will give citizens, elected members, and wider stakeholders the confidence that we will deliver on what we promise.

Over the course of our engagement work, we hosted over 30 sessions, including multiple online sessions, in person talks at our park depots, and an engagement session at the MAC centre in Birmingham. We really valued the feedback from these sessions, much of which went on to help shape the City of Nature Plan itself.

Alongside these sessions, we also hosted content online for people to view a summary version of our document. Our work received over 64,000 impressions online, and 67 people completed our online survey on the City of Nature Plan document. A whopping 92% of respondents agreed with our approach, and again, we received a huge amount of feedback that helped us ensure the plan was relevant to the needs and wants of the wider public.



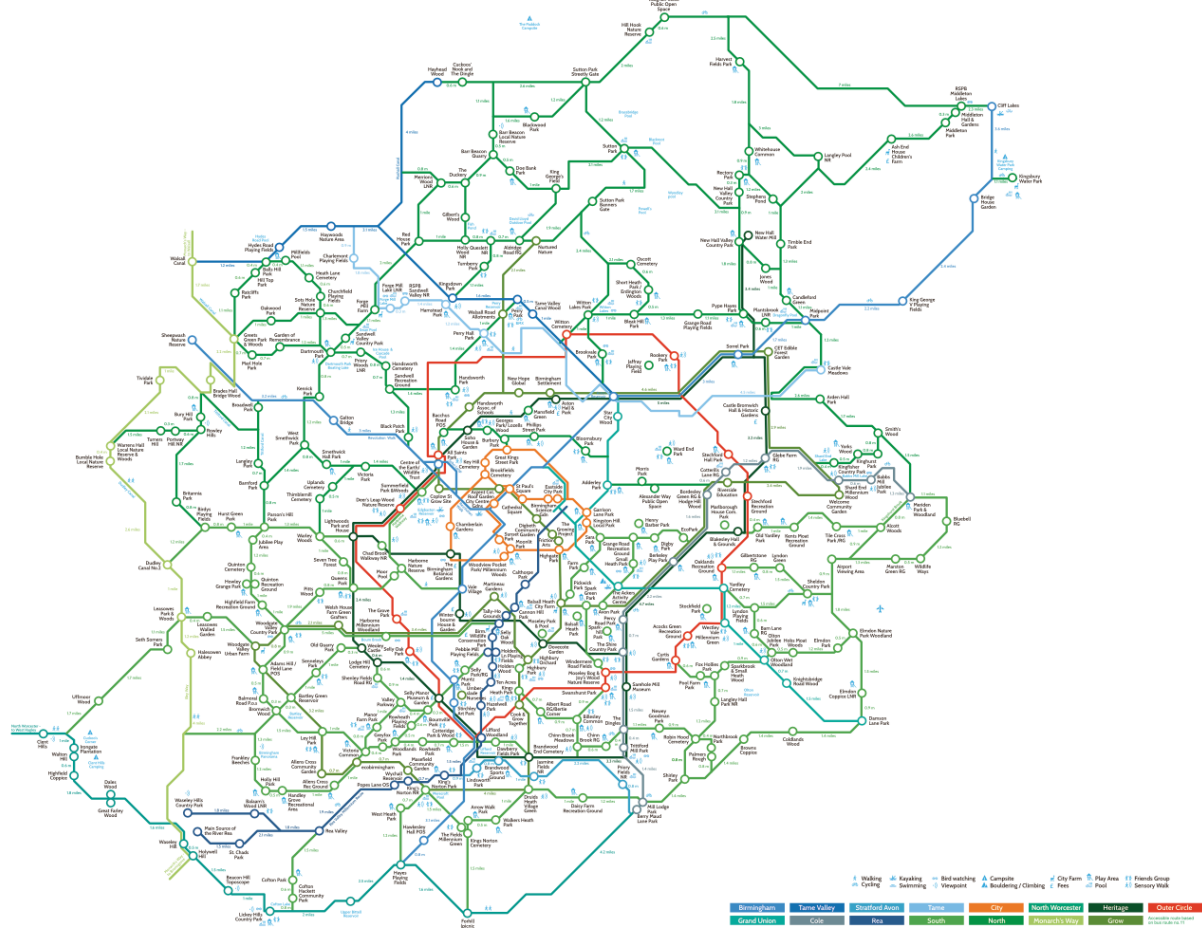
Sutton Park, Sutton Coldfield

THE BIRMINGHAM GREENGROUND MAP – FREE PRINT COPIES AVAILABLE NOW

The ‘Greenground Map’ is a design project by Helen Illus in collaboration with Birmingham City Council and the Naturally Birmingham Project to map Birmingham’s green spaces into a creative schematic walking network. The map includes parks, open spaces, nature reserves and woods – connected by waterways, canals and walking/cycling routes to promote the use of active travel. Naturally there was no way to include all 600+ green spaces on the map, but we have tried to showcase a broad range of spaces across all of Birmingham and its surrounding areas. As well as the parks themselves, the map also includes information on a range of outdoor activities located nearby, including bouldering, bird watching, kayaking and much more!

Our Communications Support Officer, Hayat, recently had a go at using the Greenground map to explore green spaces near her home, and was surprised to see just how many were within easy reach! You can read about her journey on our website: <https://naturallybirmingham.org/2022/01/28/birminghams-greenground-map/>. We would love to hear about your own experiences of using the map, so if you would like to submit a blog to us, please get in touch with Debbie at futureparks@bosf.org.uk.

We’re also very excited to announce that copies of the Greenground Map can be ordered on our website if you’d rather view the map up close! You can download a digital copy of the map, or order your physical version [here](#).



NATURALLY BIRMINGHAM EVALUATION SURVEYS

SURVEYS LIVE NOW!

As our Naturally Birmingham Project comes to an end, we are currently undertaking the end of project evaluation for the project, and would be grateful if you could complete one of our evaluation surveys. There are two surveys, one for those currently volunteering in green spaces, and another for staff and partners – you may take part in both if you wish. The closing date for both is the **6th March 2022**.

Both surveys are confidential and are being carried out on behalf of Birmingham City Council by our consultants, CFP, who have been commissioned to carry out this work to help us measure the impact of the Naturally Birmingham FPA project. This evidence will be vital for us in reporting the impact of the project and securing funding for further investment.

An outline of both surveys can be found below:

Volunteer survey

Birmingham City Council and its partners would like to learn more about the ongoing volunteer activity that is delivered in parks and green spaces across the city. We would like to hear the views of people currently engaged in volunteers' activity, those that have volunteered in the past and people with an interest in parks and green spaces who have not volunteered their time before.

Where we refer to volunteering in this survey we mean as any activity that involves spending time, unpaid, doing something that aims to benefit parks and green spaces and surrounding neighbourhoods. We would be grateful if you could take the time to complete our survey at:

<https://bit.ly/NBFPAEvalVolunteers>.

Staff Survey

This survey has been designed to gain responses from staff and volunteers across a range of organisations who worked to deliver the Naturally Birmingham FPA project and the City of Nature Plan. More information is available at <https://naturallybirmingham.org/birmingham-city-of-nature-delivery-framework/>

We are keen to hear your views about how the project partners worked together and to help us measure the impact of the project and the development of the City of Nature framework. Your responses will help the team evaluate the Naturally Birmingham Future Parks Accelerator project. This evidence will be vital for us in reporting the impact of the project and securing funding for further investment. We would be grateful if you could complete the following survey at: <https://bit.ly/NBFPAEvalStaffPartners>.



@NaturallyBirmi1



<https://naturallybirmingham.org/>

Still not had enough of FPA? You can visit our website here:

<https://naturallybirmingham.org/>