

# New Parks People Zone Research Report



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## Foreword

People Zones is an initiative designed and funded by the Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner to build on the positivity and skills of communities. The Police & Crime Commissioner believes that communities play a vital role in creating safe and cohesive neighbourhoods and are well placed to understand and address local issues of concern. The Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner is committed to supporting People Zones with a dedicated team working with our communities and partners. This research report will be key to driving forward connections and continuing to build on the community spirit in New Parks.



## Executive Summary

The People Zones Vision is to grow safer communities by building on strengths, creating connections and empowering everyone to play a role. Adopting an Asset Based Community Development approach based on the communities' strengths and potentials is seen as key to maximising the impact and sustainability of People Zones. To underpin this, Mapping for Change (MfC), a social enterprise part-owned by University College London, conducted research within New Parks People Zone to uncover existing assets, identify current challenges, and gain insights into the community's aspirations. The findings in this report will inform the development of the New Parks People Zone and ensure that support is targeted to meet the priorities of the residents and the networks of organisations that make up the community and support the community.

A mixed methods approach was adopted to conduct the research over three months which included surveys, workshops, meetings, pop-up events and semi-structured interviews.

The overwhelming assets of the New Parks People Zone are its residents, the community spirit and the local organisations that nurture this. The local organisations play a pivotal role in community cohesion and the residents' sense of place and therefore they are key to engage even more residents, and a broader demographic, in their activities. Although resources are very limited, some of the physical assets could be better utilised through collaborative working and harnessing the passion and potential of individuals to develop community led projects.

People are mainly concerned about crime and anti-social behaviour, and many feel unsafe at night-time, especially around Aikman Avenue. Speeding motorbikes and scooters contribute to this feeling across the whole People Zone. Drugs are an issue in the area, which is connected to mental health, grooming for county lines and leads to anti-social behaviour and knife crime. Increased police presence and more activities to engage young people over 16 years old could help to improve the perception of personal safety and encourage young people to stay on the right track.

Multicultural activities could also help to create a stronger more cohesive community as currently, there is little crossover between the services and spaces accessed by the black and Asian residents accessed compared to the white residents.

There is a need for investment in the area to develop longer term projects as there is a perception of previous projects being abandoned or becoming box ticking exercises for external agencies. Therefore, while People Zones and the input of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) is very much welcomed, ongoing proof will need to be seen to maintain and increase the momentum already built.



## Introduction

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner's (OPCC) overall vision for People Zones is: To grow safer communities by building on strengths, creating connections and empowering everyone to play a role.

People Zones is an initiative that was created by the OPCC in 2018. People Zones are areas in Leicestershire and Rutland which have been identified through crime, public health and census data to benefit from extra direct and financial support from the OPCC. Although launched in 2018, upon review, it was agreed that the People Zones would be much more likely to achieve a greater and more sustainable impact if it was to take the approach of asset-based community development (ABCD). ABCD aims to build on existing assets and address local needs through community driven efforts. To ensure the direction and outputs would benefit the community, baseline research was needed to uncover some of these assets and underpin the future strategy of the People Zones. Mapping for Change was commissioned, via a tendering process, to undertake this research.

Mapping for Change (MfC) is a social enterprise part-owned by University College London specialising in community and stakeholder engagement. MfC aims to empower individuals and communities to make a difference to their local area through the use of mapping and geographical information to co-design solutions. With over fifteen years' experience providing bespoke solutions to public, private and third sector organisations, they have delivered multiple projects on environmental and social issues, across the UK and further afield.



## Scope of Work

This report will focus solely on the New Parks People Zone (Figure 1). Further reports are available for the two other People Zones – Bell Foundry and Thringstone & Whitwick as part of this six-month research project.

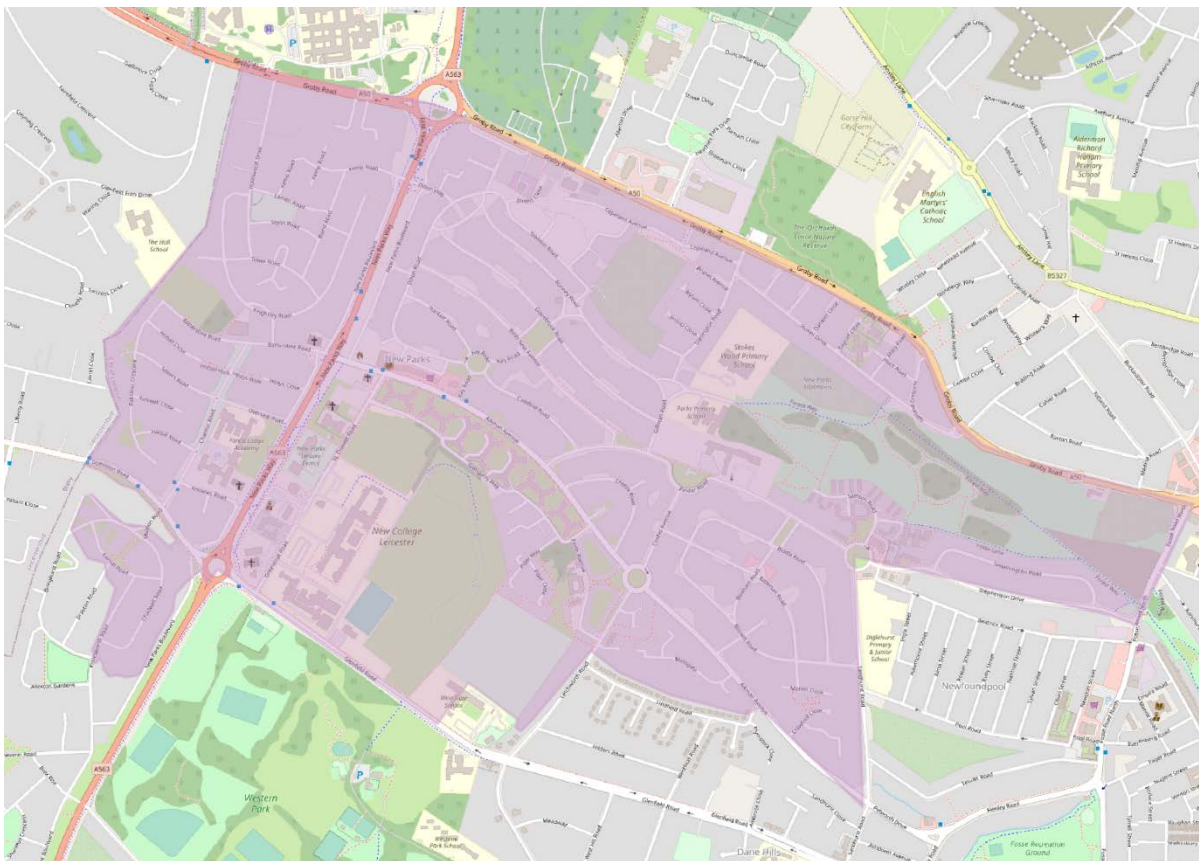


Figure 1 The total area of the New Parks People Zone highlighted in pink

The New Parks People Zone is a mainly residential suburb which sits to the west of Leicester City. It is within a reachable distance of Leicester City Centre using public transport or by car for work or accessing services and goods. It falls under the governance of Leicester City Council and is part of the Safer Leicester Partnership. The New Parks Ward is one of the most deprived in Leicester with its residents suffering poorer health than the national average, in particular premature death from cardiovascular problems or cancer and unhealthy lifestyle factors such as smoking and obesity. The physical activity levels however are above the Leicester average (*Leicester Ward Health Profile 2013 – New Parks, NHS Leicester City and Leicester City Council*).

The objective of the research was to engage the New Parks community to uncover and map existing assets; identify the main challenges that residents and service providers face; and co-develop ideas to address these challenges. To be as inclusive and thorough





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as possible, a mixed methods approach was taken, including surveys, workshops, pop-up events, and interviews.

An online asset map was built from the findings of this research which will continue as a living resource for the community to contribute to and use as an information source.

The findings in this report will inform the New Parks People Zone development and direction. A New Parks People Zone Steering Group will be set up as a final element of the research to ensure the momentum and awareness generated during the engagement and research is maintained and built upon. Moving forward it is expected that the steering group, which comprises representatives of the community and local support organisations, will help to drive the programme forward for the benefit of the community and offer support to local residents who would like to initiate community led projects. The Steering Group will also be responsible for promoting and moderating the online asset map. The initial meeting will be held by the end of the year (2022) to review the findings of this report, establish the Terms of Reference for the group, agree on a mission and roadmap for the New Parks People Zone and introduce the online Community Asset Map.



## Approach

Mapping for Change began by conducting a thorough stakeholder mapping exercise. A list of stakeholders was initially provided by the OPCC and was supplemented with desktop research, conversations with the community, mentions on surveys and information from a previous asset mapping exercise undertaken by Jo Randall at Team Hub.

Various research methods were employed to uncover the assets, challenges and opportunities in the New Parks People Zone. These included desk-based research, on-the-ground familiarisation, meetings with local organisations, paper and online surveys, pop-up stalls, an informal workshop and five in-depth semi-structured interviews with community leaders and support providers.

Finding the people to engage with was the first step of the research process. To hear the views of as much of the community as possible and from the different sub-communities, Mapping for Change reached out to local organisations in the neighbourhood identified through the stakeholder research. This provided a good starting point as it offered opportunities to distribute and complete surveys, hold pop-up events and promote the workshops to a wider demographic.

Other ways of promoting the surveys and workshop included online promotion via social media and Neighbourhood Link; posters (Image 1) in prominent positions around the neighbourhood; and flyers distributed through foodbanks and other services.

To supplement the survey data and gather more views, a pop-up stand was set up, in the New Parks Library and outside the Cooperative supermarket on Aikman Avenue, to map the local residents' and workers' perceptions and wishes for the area. The two locations were selected as having a high footfall, especially during the lunch club at the library and range of visitors at the Cooperative who did not necessarily access the other local services.

Using a large map of the People Zone, people were asked three questions about the area:

1. What would you keep?
2. What would you change?
3. What could you give?



Image 1 Poster advertising residents' survey



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A workshop was organised in September at the New Parks Club for Young People to build on the information already gathered where all members of the community were welcome to join. In order to be as inclusive as possible, the session was held late afternoon, was very informal by nature and no booking was required as this could be a potential barrier to participants. Free food was provided as an incentive to encourage more of the community to join. In keeping with utilising local assets, the catering was provided by the local community organisation – Team Hub. The session began with an introduction to People Zones and a summary of what research had been carried out so far. The activities within the session included: The Tale of Two hands and Prototyping. Both activities did not require any literacy and were designed to draw out people's skills and needs on an individual level and the challenges and potential solutions at a community level.

The Tale of Two Hands was an individual exercise which required participants to use a template of an outline of two hands and sketch or write what they were good at on the one hand and what they would like help with on the other. Participants were asked to share their 'hands' with the rest of the group so the wealth of communal assets could be appreciated. These were displayed on the wall to highlight the array of available local talents and to help feed into the next exercise.

After a short break for food, the group were introduced to the Prototyping exercise. In groups, the participants were provided with a printed map of New Parks, a template form with prompts to complete and a range of craft materials. The aim was to come to a consensus between the group on the most pressing challenge in the area and then create a model of a potential solution using any of the materials available. Participants were encouraged to think about who would be involved in the solution, who might lead it and how might it be funded and realised.

In depth interviews were conducted online with five community representatives. The interviewees were selected to cover a range of community roles and perspectives, from community policing to service providers. Interviewees were able to draw from their years of first-hand experience interacting and working with different residents in the People Zone in their various roles. Each interview asked the same 13 questions (Appendix A) in a semi-structured manner to gather deeper insights into the issues and assets already identified by the other research methods. The interviews were recorded, and answers were transcribed and compared for commonalities and variations. All interviewees gave their free, prior, informed consent to take part and for their anonymised answers to be used for research and open publication.



## Final Stakeholder map

The results of the stakeholder identification research can be seen in Figure 2 which shows the main stakeholders of New Parks.



Figure 2 Stakeholder Map for New Parks People Zone

## Survey Responses

The survey was available to complete both online and offline. In total 246 surveys were completed, 186 respondents lived in the People Zone, 13 worked in the People Zone, 18 lived and worked in the People Zone and 29 were visiting. Not every respondent answered every question in the survey and so numbers vary throughout the results.

To encourage the completion of the surveys, promotion via local organisations was incentivised by a £1 donation to the organisation nominated on each form. The breakdown of this incentivisation is as follows (Table 1).

*Table 1 List of organisations incentivised to promote the survey with the tally of nominations each*

Organisation	Number of surveys completed
Allexton Football Club	2
GNR8	1
Mother of God Church	1
New Parks Club for Young People	5
New Parks Community Mission	68
New Parks Methodist Church	7
Salvation Army	3
Team Hub	78
The Venny	27

An optional section of the survey collected data on the protected characteristics of the respondent to assess whether the sample surveyed represented the demographics of the area and to identify any differences in responses between the different demographic groups. Figures 3 to 8 present the detailed breakdowns and can be summarised as:

- A spread across all age groups, with the majority (56%) falling between 25 and 54 and the younger groups being less represented.
- Almost a fifth, 19%, of respondents had a disability.
- The majority (92%) of responders were White, with the remaining 8% split between Asian, Black, Mixed Heritage and 'Other'. According to the local demographic statistics (UK census data 2011) for the New Parks Ward, White residents accounted for 82% of the population, Black residents 7%, Asian residents 6%, 4% having Mixed Heritage and 1% Other.
- Religion among the respondents is slightly more diverse. Christianity is the most represented with 41% followed by 26% in total identifying as Atheist, agnostic or no religion and 19% preferred not to say. No other religion was selected by more than 2% of respondents.
- The majority of responders described themselves heterosexual (67%). Two respondents described themselves as gay male, four as gay female/lesbian and 11 as bisexual, totalling 7% which is higher than the national average of 3.1% of the



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population identifying as gay, lesbian or bisexual in 2020 (Office of National Statistics online report accessed October 2022 using data from the Annual Population Survey (APS). 26% preferred not to answer or self-describe.

- The gender split was biased with 69% of respondents identifying as female compared to 26% male. Nobody identified as non-binary and the remainder preferred not to answer or self-describe.

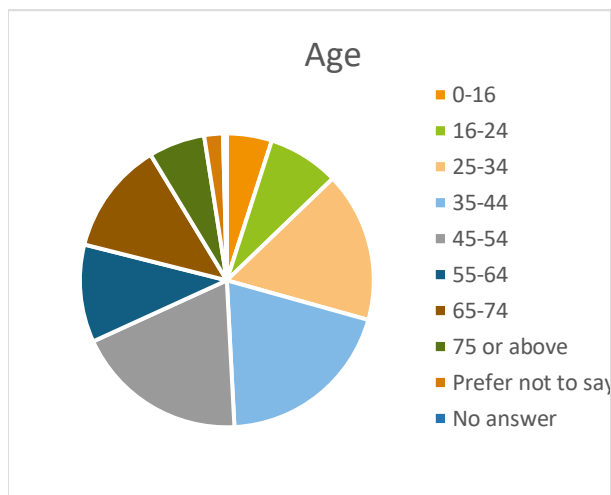


Figure 3 Age breakdown of respondents

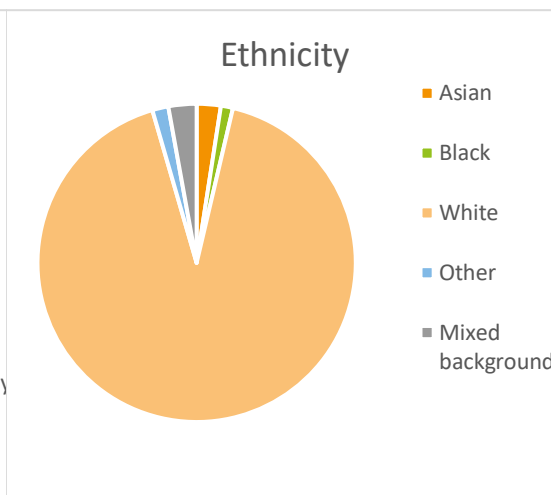


Figure 4 Ethnic breakdown of respondents

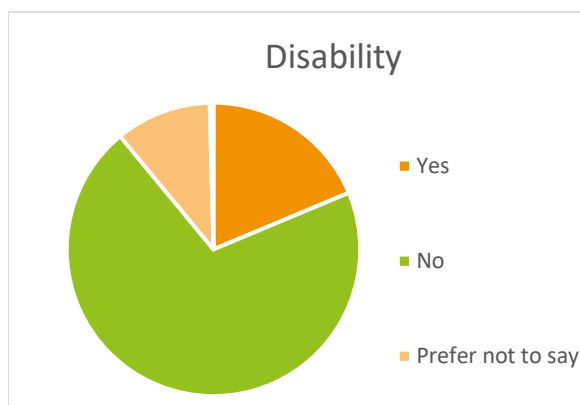


Figure 5 Disability breakdown of respondents

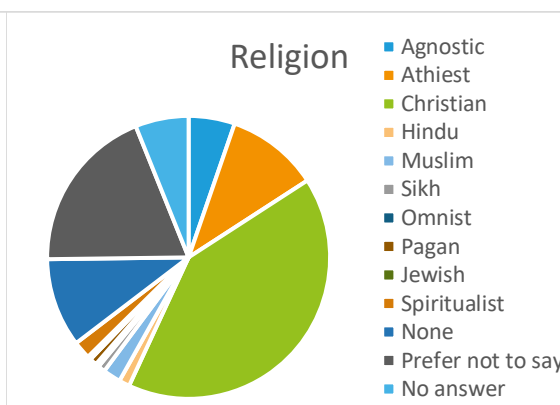


Figure 6 Religious breakdown of respondents

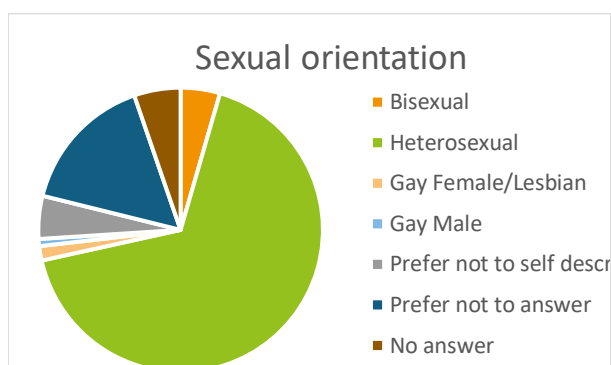


Figure 7 Sexual orientation of respondents

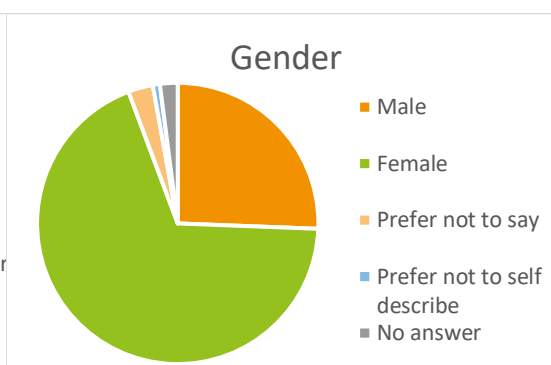


Figure 8 Gender breakdown of respondents

For each of the questions in the survey, the data was analysed against the demographic data to identify any differences in responses between the groups. Due to the low

representation of the ethnicities other than white, not all groups were included in every analysis as the sample size was too small to discount the possibility of the differences being down to an individual level.

Respondents were asked to describe the New Parks People Zone in three words. The word cloud (Figure 9) shows the different words answered, reported verbatim.



Figure 9 Word cloud how respondents described New Parks

As a free text answer, the responses were grouped into themes as shown in Figure 10. The results show a mixture of positive (48.5%), negative (34%) and neutral or mixed (17.5%) sentiments. The most used words for positive responses were 'community' and 'friendly' whereas the negative words included 'run-down', 'messy' and 'unsafe'. There were differing opinions of the area with 12 describing New Parks as noisy and eight as quiet; 17 as busy/lively and seven as calm; six people used the word 'clean' in contrast to the 46 who said it was dirty or untidy. Not all responses adhered to the request of *three* words, some using more and some less, and so full quantitative analysis cannot be applied to the data. However, the qualitative data provides insights nonetheless.



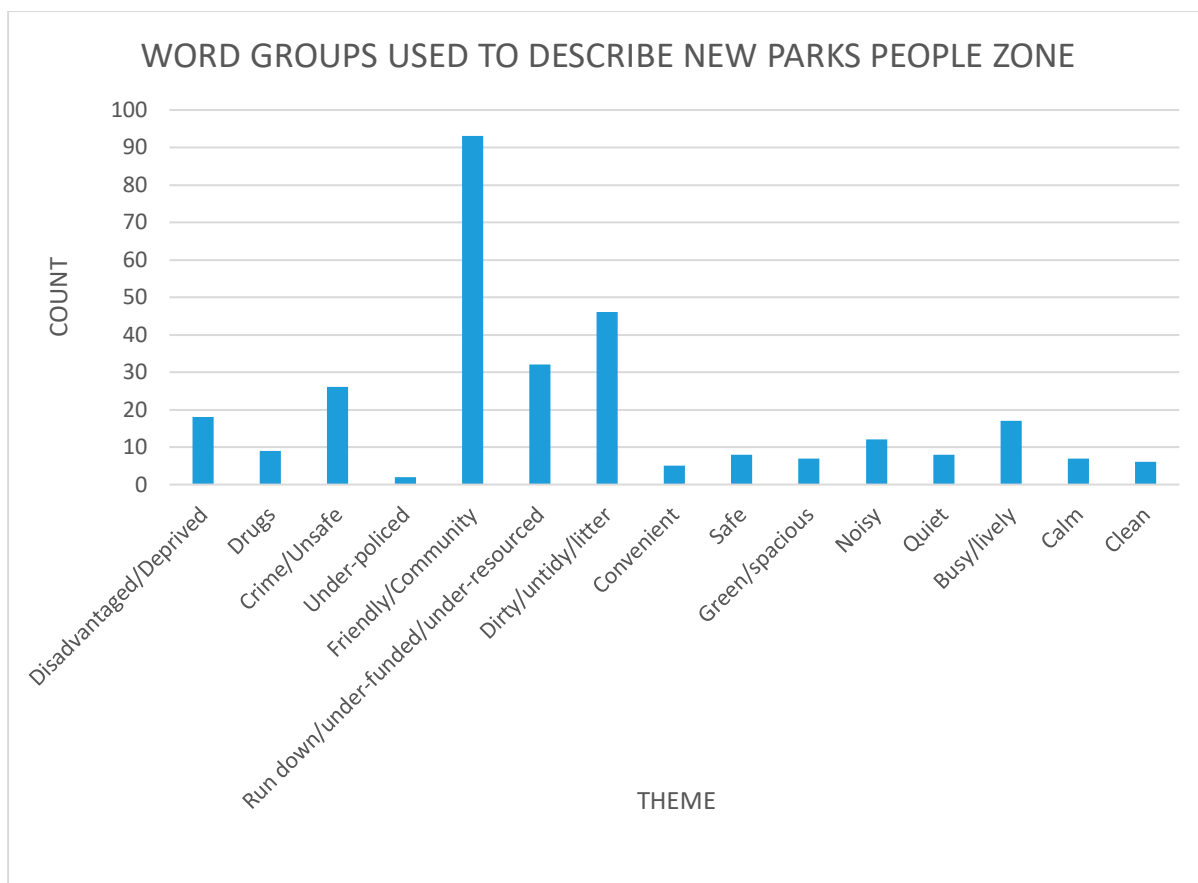


Figure 10 Chart of the responses of the words used to describe New Parks, grouped into themes

The respondents were asked what they liked most and least about living in the area, again, as free text answers the responses were grouped into themes (Figure 11 and Figure 12 respectively). The responses from those who were visiting or only working the area were removed before analysis so as not to detract from lived experience of residents.

Further analysis of what people like shows some difference in responses between the different age ranges. Residents representing all age groups said they like the community the most. Most of the age groups specified convenience and access to amenities except the 25–34-year-old age group. The ages of respondents who liked community organisations most were the under 16s and 35–54 age groups.



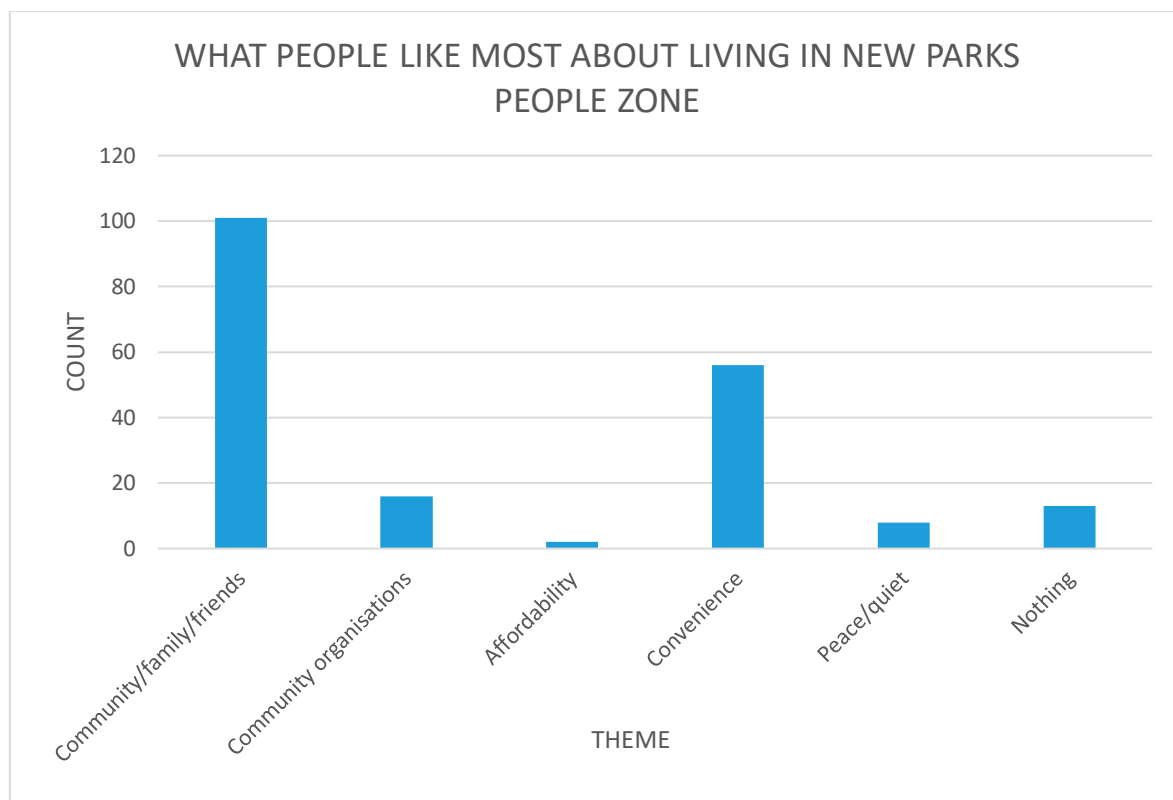


Figure 11 Chart of what respondents liked most about living in New Parks, grouped into themes

When asked what they liked least about the area, the greatest concern for the majority was crime and antisocial behaviour followed by litter and mess, the latter count did not include references to unkempt or 'scruffy' housing. The 16–24-year-old age group was more likely to say that there was *nothing* they liked least (proportionate to the total number of 16–24-year-old respondents). Litter and mess were quoted more often among the over 45s and dangerous traffic mainly concerned the over 35s.

A couple of comments that didn't fit easily into the themes but contained some interesting opinions are quoted below:

*"Other organisations parachuting into the area using funding for projects that haven't asked the community what they want. Money being wasted on projects for short periods of time we need long term projects. Funding needs to be spent on making community groups more sustainable."*

*"Local authority need to work more in partnership with community, need to improve leisure centre; youth centre needs to support young people more and have more open access; community groups need to be recognised more; more funding is needed and given to local organisations; more support in schools for children and young people; community voice needs to be listened to."*

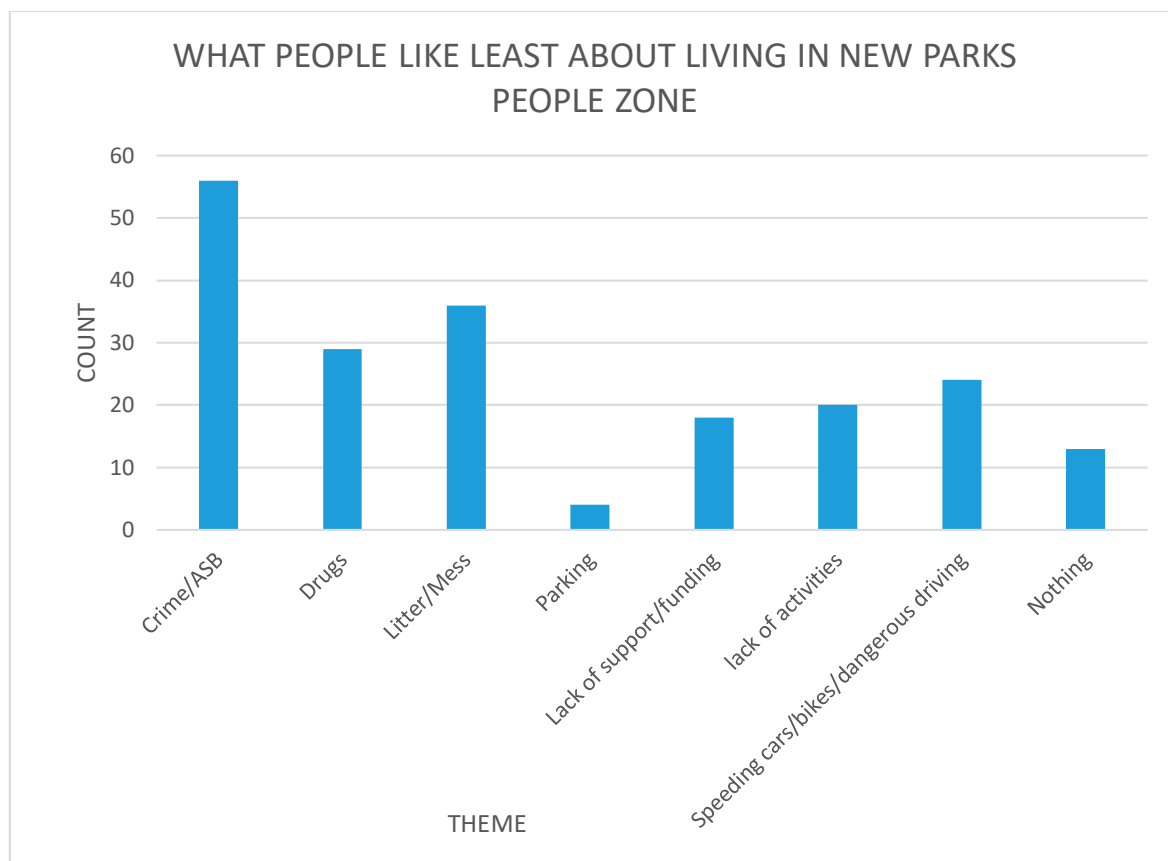


Figure 12 Chart of what respondents liked least about living in New Parks, grouped into themes

The survey asked respondents to select the local organisations, from a predefined list, that they used or visited for support. These are shown in Table 2, ordered by popularity, and split between the different genders and whether the visitors have a disability. The figures in orange highlight where the proportion of that particular demographic group is higher than the proportion of the total respondents, for example, where the gender split does not mirror the overall gender split shown in Figure 8.

Proportionately more females than males said that they visit New Parks Leisure Centre, Salvation Army and GNR8. New Parks Community Mission, New Parks Methodist Church and GNR8 had fewer respondents with a disability (proportionately to the total respondents) whereas the Salvation Army and New Parks Club for Young People had proportionately more.

Table 3 lists the local organisations visited by different age groups, with the figures in orange showing a higher proportion of that age group than the overall survey responses and the figures in blue a lower proportion, i.e. those in orange are over-represented and those in blue are under-represented. The under 16s appear to access fewer services of all the age groups, being under-represented in 10 of the 12 service providers and only accessing four services in total. Conversely, proportionately more 35–44-year-olds said

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they accessed services, being over-represented in eight of the 12 services. The 45–54-year-old age group accessed the most services in total (11 of the 12 listed).

Several organisations were manually added under the ‘other’ option as follows: Step by Step Childcare, Glenfield Road Allotment, Stokes Wood Allotment Society, White House Allotment Society, New Parks Social Club and Lunch Club. The data analysis included those who were visiting or working in the area to gain a fuller picture of the use of local services.

Overall, the mean average of organisations visited was 2.7 per respondent. There were 15 respondents who lived in the People Zone who said that they did not access or visit any of the organisations/services. Only three of these mentioned ‘community’ or ‘people’ as what they liked most about living in New Parks, i.e. 20% compared with 60% of respondents who accessed at least one organisation.

Table 2 The local organisations that respondents visit for support split by gender and disability

	Total	Gender			Disability		
		Female	Male	No answer	Yes	No	No answer
<b>Team Hub</b>	100	72	23	5	21	69	10
<b>New Parks Library</b>	89	64	20	5	18	56	15
<b>New Parks Community Mission</b>	72	49	17	6	11	53	8
<b>New Parks Leisure Centre</b>	66	51	12	3	13	50	3
<b>The Venny</b>	43	33	10	0			
<b>New Parks Methodist Church/ New Parks New Friends</b>	25	18	5	2	3	16	6
<b>Salvation Army</b>	30	23	3	4	7	18	5
<b>New Parks Club for Young People</b>	29	23	6	0	8	20	1
<b>New Parks Health Centre</b>	27	19	6	2	6	18	3
<b>GNR8</b>	11	10	0	1	1	9	1
<b>Mother of God Church</b>	8	3	3	2	1	3	4
<b>St Aiden's CofE Church</b>	3	1	1	1	1	0	2



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Table 3 The local organisations that respondents visit for support, split by age group

	Total	Age group							
		0-15	16-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+
<b>Team Hub</b>	100	7	13	18	22	18	6	11	3
<b>New Parks Library</b>	89	1	6	11	17	18	11	14	6
<b>New Parks Community Mission</b>	72	5	8	11	10	14	9	6	4
<b>New Parks Leisure Centre</b>	66	2	7	14	21	14	4	3	0
<b>The Venny</b>	43	0	3	11	15	8	3	2	1
<b>Salvation Army</b>	30	0	2	1	3	8	5	7	2
<b>New Parks Club for Young People</b>	29	0	3	5	9	7	2	2	1
<b>New Parks Health Centre</b>	27	0	2	1	8	5	3	6	2
<b>New Parks Methodist Church/ New Parks New Friends</b>	25	0	2	0	4	3	0	10	4
<b>GNR8</b>	11	0	0	3	6	2	0	0	0
<b>Mother of God Church</b>	8	0	0	0	0	0	4	2	0
<b>St Aiden's CoffE Church</b>	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0

Respondents were asked if they ever ask other members of the community for support, such as help with their shopping or emotional support. Using the answers from those living in the area only, 32% of respondents said they did. However, when asked if they ever offered informal support to members of the community, including dog walking, child minding etc, 48% said they did, with 12 of these 97 respondents specifying that they only help friends and family. 31% of respondents said that they volunteered or contributed more formally to organised activities and well over half (59%) said they would like more opportunities to volunteer, which was seen across genders and ages with the 35–44-year-olds proportionately being slightly more willing.

Following the Asset Based Community Development approach, the survey aimed to uncover any hidden assets within the People Zone, and therefore asked respondents to list their top three talents or skills. Answers from those respondents who were visiting, working or living in area were included to present a holistic picture of the potential. The



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free text responses were grouped into themes to analyse the data and can be seen in Figure 13. Overwhelmingly the responses centred around being friendly, having good listening skills and caring. Other answers included life skills such as cooking, organising and parenting or more creative skills such as sewing and drawing. A number of responses described character traits like honest, polite and punctual which could be transferred to many skills and therefore weren't coded and included in Figure 13. Character traits along with less common skills can be seen in the Word Cloud (Figure 14).

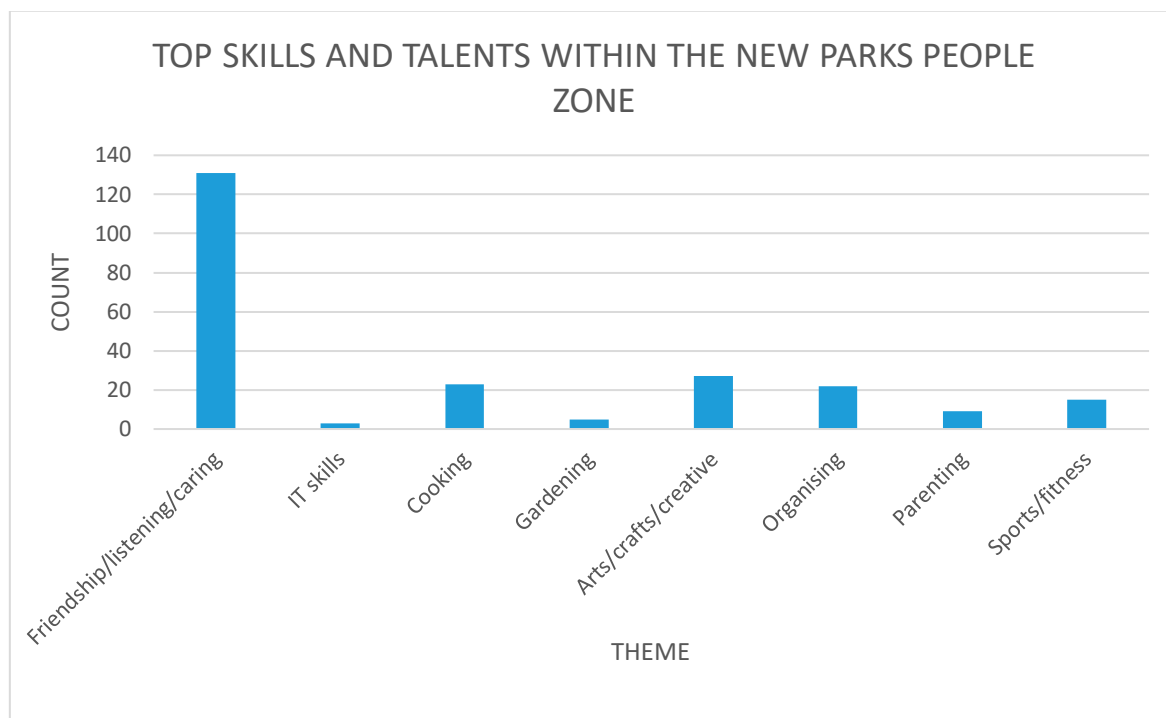


Figure 13 The skills and talents of respondents grouped into themes



Figure 14 Word cloud of respondents' talents and skills in the New Parks People Zone

To assess perceptions of personal safety, the survey asked respondents when/if they felt safe travelling around the New Parks People Zone. The graphs in Figure 15 show how the different demographic groups consider their personal safety at different times of the day. Over 4/5 of respondents agreed that they felt safe during the day or always, however almost two thirds (65%) of total respondents didn't feel safe at night (i.e. only during the day or never). Those who work but don't live in the area are proportionately most likely to *always* feel safe. The under 16s are proportionately most likely to *never* feel safe. Males are proportionately more likely than females to either *always* or *never* feel safe whereas females are most likely to feel safe during the day. The sample size of respondents whose sexual orientation was not heterosexual was too small to draw any conclusions.





## HOW SAFE DO PEOPLE FEEL IN THE NEW PARKS PEOPLE ZONE



Figure 15 Perceptions of safety according to whether respondents live, work, or are visiting; proportion of responses according to their age and gender

The map below (Figure 16) highlights the locations where people said they were most concerned for their personal safety. Aikman Avenue was clearly the greatest area for concern with 42 people mentioning it compared to the second most mentioned area,

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Western Park with 16 mentions. Although Western Park falls just outside the People Zone Boundary, it was still included in the analysis as respondents within the People Zone were concerned about their safety there. Many of the responses were no more specific than the street name and therefore the map may be misleading when it is highlighting a whole road instead of one section. Other answers which could not be accurately mapped without further clarification or using subjectivity were responses such as 'flats', 'parks', 'behind shop' etc.

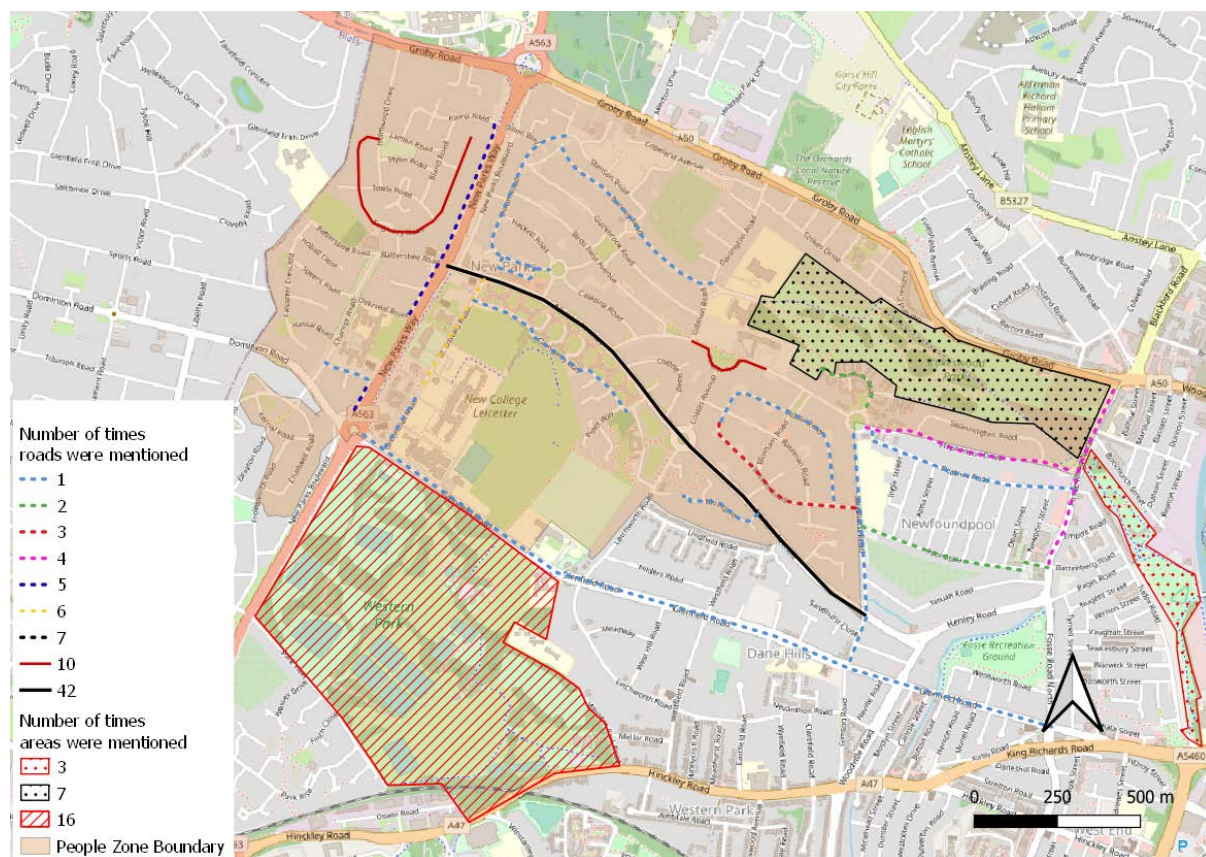


Figure 16 Map of New Parks People Zone highlighting the respondents' areas of concern for personal safety

The survey gained an understanding of how likely residents, works and visitors were to report a crime by asking respondents directly to choose from one of four options. Figure 17 expresses the responses broken down into the different demographic groups. More respondents agreed that it would *depend on the situation* than any other option, closely followed by those selecting *likely to report a crime*. The under 24s were the least likely to report a crime and the 65-74 year olds were most likely. Females were more inclined to tell someone else or assess the situation than males were, while males were more likely than females to either report a crime directly or not at all. Both male and female respondents were most likely to agree that it depends on the situation.

## HOW LIKELY ARE PEOPLE IN THE NEW PARKS PEOPLE ZONE TO REPORT A CRIME?

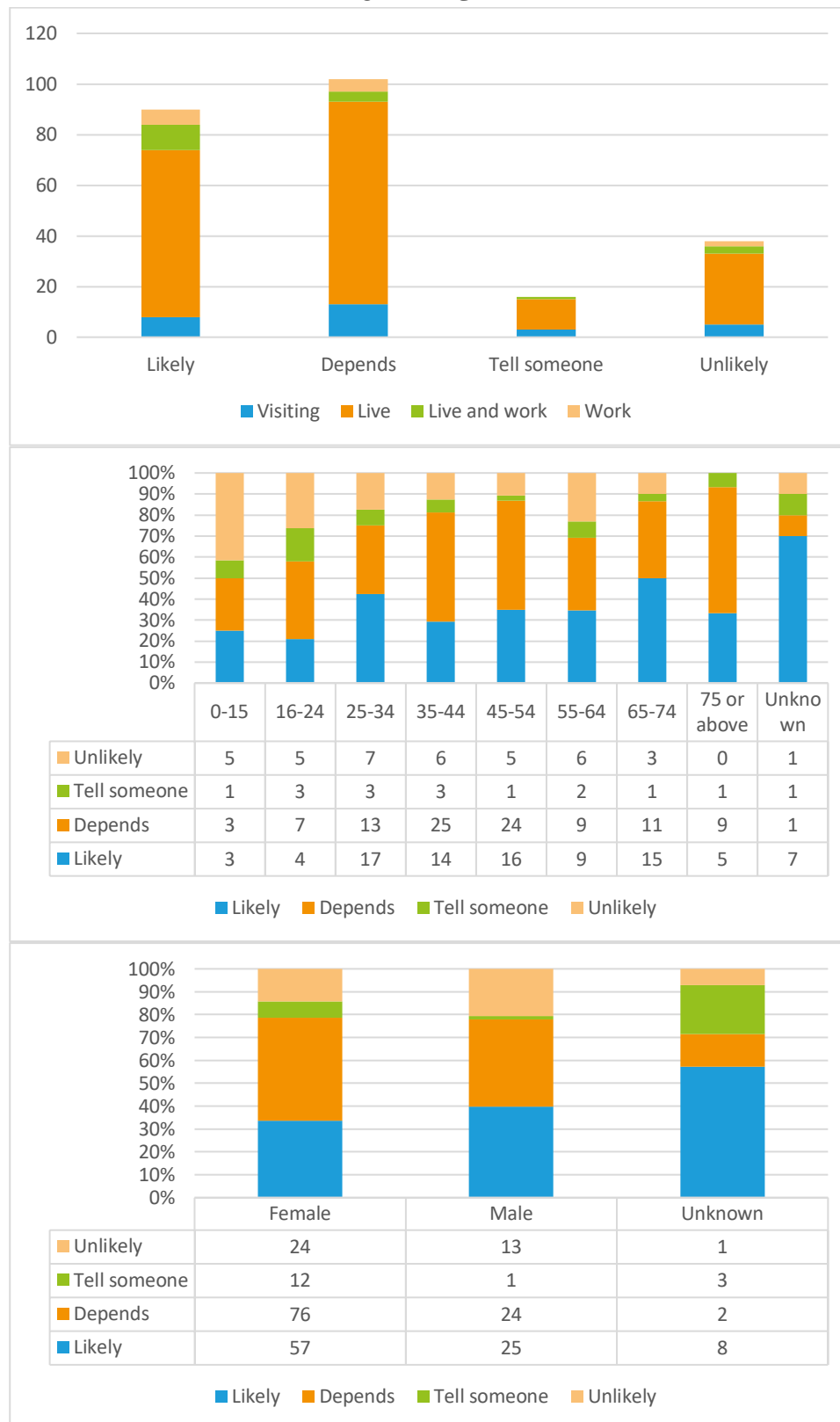


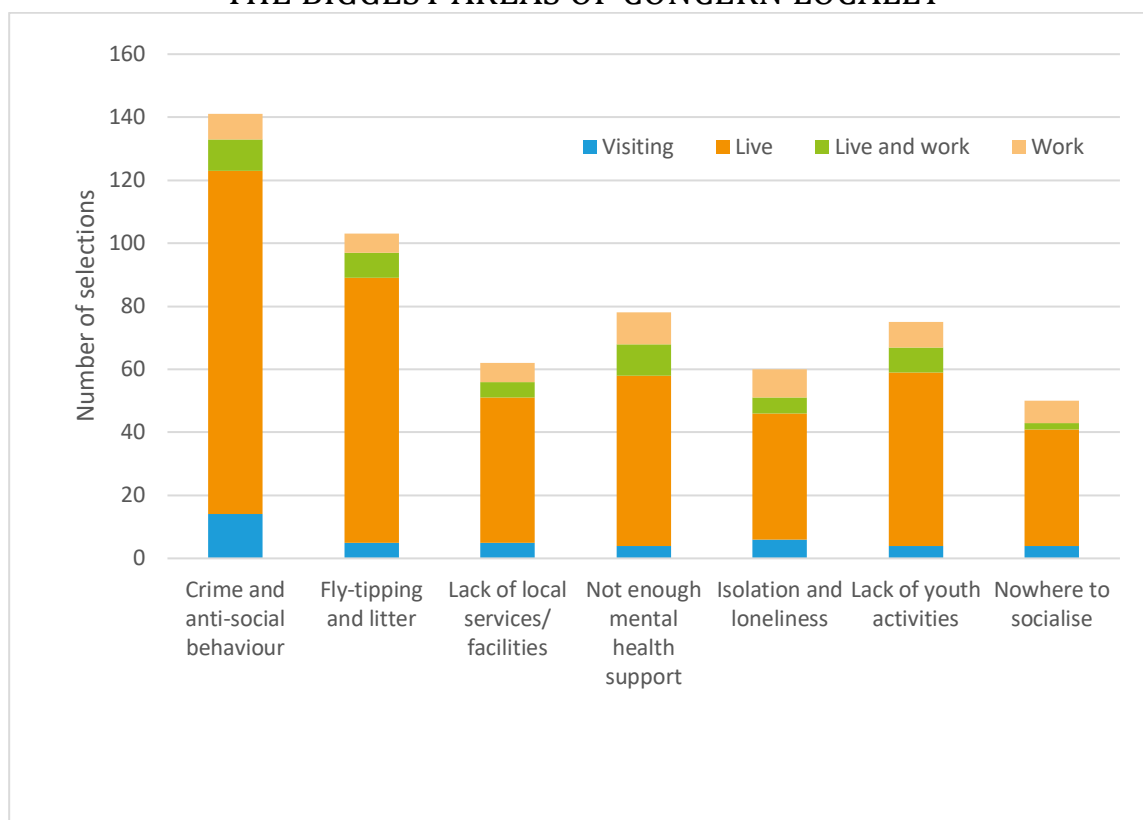
Figure 17 Likelihood of reporting a crime according to whether respondents live, work, or are visiting; proportion of responses according to their gender and their age

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The biggest areas of concern that the survey data shows are crime and anti-social behaviour followed by fly-tipping and litter. The respondents selected these from a predefined list with the option to add other suggestions. Figure 18 shows that regardless of whether respondents worked, lived or were visiting the area, all were of a similar opinion across the board. There were some differences observed between the age groups with having *nowhere to socialise* being a bigger issue for the under 24 year-olds and over 75s compared to the other age groups. The under 16s were the only group that felt fly-tipping and litter was a bigger concern than crime and anti-social behaviour. The over 65-year-olds were least concerned about mental health support.

There was little difference between the genders other than proportionately more males than females considered crime and anti-social behaviour the greatest issue and a higher proportion of females selected not enough mental health support.

### THE BIGGEST AREAS OF CONCERN LOCALLY



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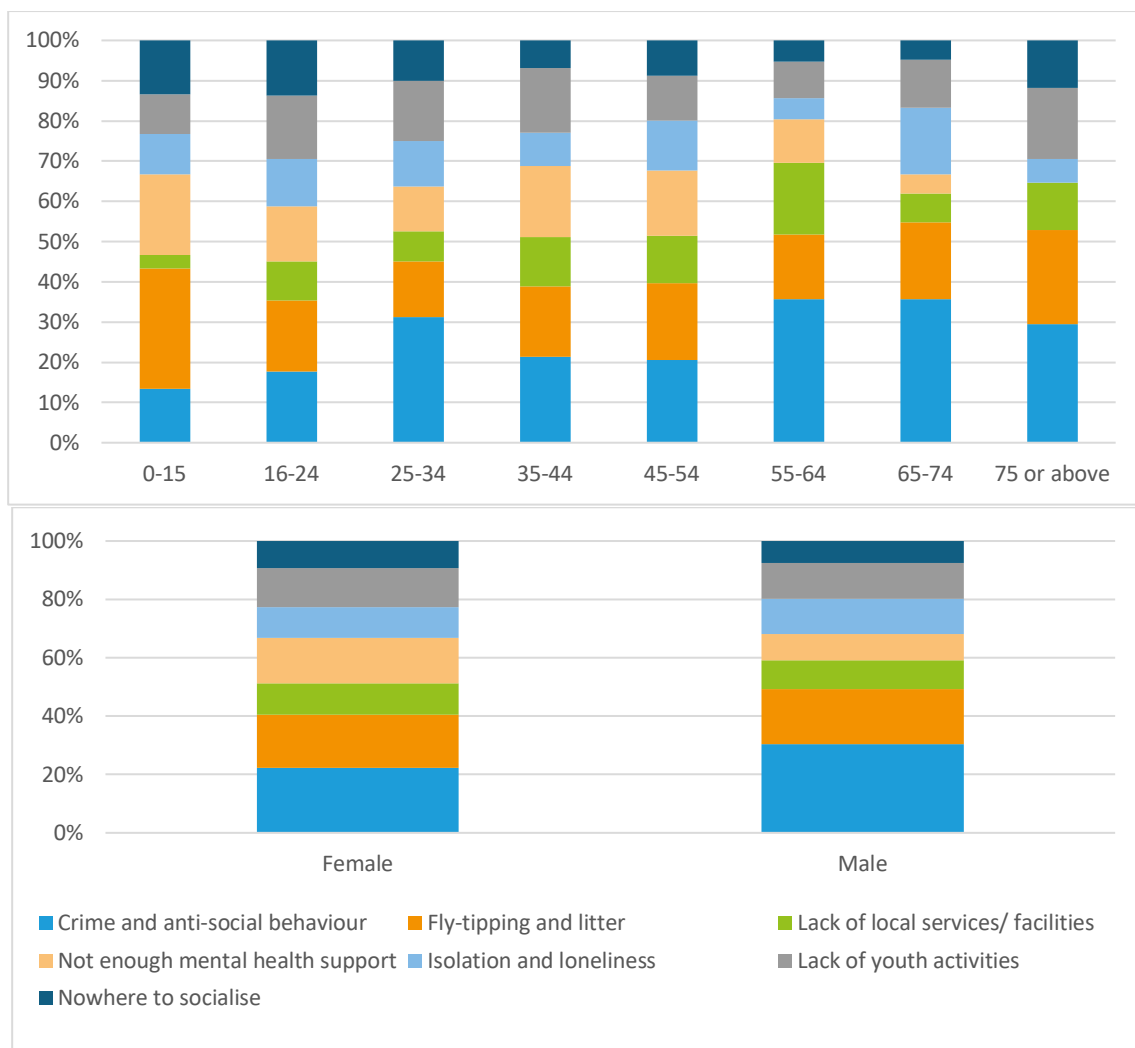


Figure 18 The biggest areas of concern locally, according to whether respondents live, work, or are visiting; proportion of responses according to their age and gender

## Results of workshops and pop-ups

In September, pop-up stands at the New Parks Library and outside the Cooperative Supermarket collected further qualitative data. Passers-by were encouraged to add post-it notes to a large map of the People Zone addressing the three different questions: What would you keep; what would you change and what could you give? Table 4 lists the contributions made. No post-it notes were added in relation to what could be given.



Image 2 Map of ideas gathered at the pop-up stands

Table 4 Results of the pop-up stands per category

What would you keep?	What would you change?
<b>FACILITIES</b>	
Team Hub is fantastic, and the kids are not frightened to talk to the police	Swimming pool more accessible, open more
Team Hub	Better gym facilities
Friday breakfast club	More parks
The astro	New play areas for kids in parks as there's not enough and the equipment is run down
Astro	Don't like the fact that they took Davies, the shop away
Football	Cheap Afro Caribbean food shops
Football	Affordable supermarkets
Football pitch	To see a Tesco's
Leisure centre	More cycle lanes
Plenty of religious places close by	An open-air dog training facility
Lots of green spaces	New College
Nice green spaces	
Western Park	
<b>COMMUNITY</b>	
The young people who are not all bad; some saved my dad when he broke down on his mobility scooter one evening	Police are chasing the wrong people – Braunstone are good for police
Community police were marvellous but don't see them so much anymore	More security so you can walk at night
Co-op staff are rude to me because I'm black	Public toilets are vandalised
The sense of community	Stop dumping rubbish in Tournament Road
Friendly area	Fly-tipping
	Litter problem
	Clean up area and loud
	A bit of a drug problem
	Drug issues
	More community police presence
	Don't like the racism



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	Silver canisters
	Ghetto
	Bad reputation crime
	Motorbikes driving fast on Dillon Road and Birds Nest Ave.
	Corner of Birds Nest Ave. and Kay Rd parking and kids getting run over
	Trim some of the trees around Liberty Rd. and more attention to gardens.
	Undiagnosed learning difficulties
<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	
Residents' walking group	Menopause club for women and men
Thursday morning litter ladies	Cheerleading clubs
Reading group on Wednesday mornings at the library	Music clubs
Library craft fair	Afro Caribbean dance clubs
Tuesday club discussions at Team Hub	Stuff to keep the kids busy and out of trouble
Community at Team Hub, football sessions and social groups	More sports activity
Exercising in the park	More support for early years and single mums
	A band in the park

A total of 20 participants attended the workshop at The New Parks Club for Young People and included representatives from Team Hub, New Parks Community Mission, New Parks Club for Young People, GNR8, New Parks Methodist Church and Active Together as well as other local residents.

The responses from the Tale of Two Hands exercise are listed in Table 5. In total 63 skills or assets were documented compared with 73 requests for improvement. There was a range of different skills identified among the participants including cooking, mentoring, listening and general volunteering. There was an even more diverse response to what the participants wanted for New Parks and for themselves but the more common responses were activities for young people, support for mental health, and increased educational services and less knife crime.



Image 3 New Parks workshop

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Table 5 The responses from the Tale of Two Hands exercise

GENERAL	
To Give	Wanted
Writing letters*2	Funding/financial support*4
Advice for organisations	Admin support
Funding support	
Bookkeeping help	
Connecting core services from Leicester City Council and LPT NHS Trust and sharing knowledge	
FACILITIES	
To Give	Wanted
Local venue	More football pitches
	More bike/skate parks
	More parks
	Basketball court
	More housing
	Purpose built facility for sport/community events*2
ACTIVITIES	
To Give	Wanted
Support young adults into sport employment/ volunteering opportunities	Educational support for young people not in school. Help with careers, partnership with somewhere that appeals to young people through consultation with young people
New project to teach skills e.g. refurbish old tools	More activities for children with additional needs*3
Crafts	More services for younger children
Cooking skills*3	Free training for working people*2
Gardening	Practical help to set up new projects – Men's Shed. i.e. DIY, Gardening
Teaching	Support from local trades
Promoting physical /mental /social well-being	More awareness of opportunities available
Sports sessions for kids/adults	Know how on Windows 11
Judo/boxing for kids	Help gardening *2
Adult fitness	More youth activities
Help with well-being, mental health	Free swim sessions for families
	Swimming baths need upgrading
Organising	Free/low-cost access to gym
Use car to fetch shopping	Adult education
Help with youth	More activities for 16+*3
Support individuals with learning difficulties	Cleanliness and hygiene



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Volunteering*6	NVQ level 2 Health and Social Care
	Football
	Carpentry
	Vocal
	Musical
	Skills on how to do beauty or what you like doing
	Support with schools
	Volunteers
<b>COMMUNITY</b>	
<b>To Give</b>	<b>Wanted</b>
Provide access to partners and relationships with different staff members	For residents of New Parks to feel valued*2
Relationships with community groups	Long term support for the community
Local knowledge	Local publicity for local businesses
Donate to foodbanks	Help attracting new members
Partnership working	To recruit local workforce
Creating newsletters	Community voice
Supporting groups to establish over time	Effective support from statutory services
Getting people to get involved*2	Help to spruce up the New Parks Methodist Church
Friendship*2	Volunteers for foodbank
Listening*4	More support for Team Hub and youth services
Chatting*2	Help in Young People Club
My voice on the community	How to find where the lonely, isolated people are
Partners and connections	Good networking and communications
Role model/ inspirational athlete	Less knife crime*3
Reaching out	Services working together
Cut isolation	No more PCSOs
Sense of community	Safer streets
Fight for my community	More help for working families*3
Food	Young People Services relationship
Advice	Mental health intervention (to fill gap for patients waiting for NHS)
Family advice	More mental health support*3
Logistical/strategic/business planning and mentality	Someone that actually listens to our opinions and actually makes a difference
Knowledge	Community leadership
Support for families	
Mentoring	
Help other people	



The second exercise of Prototyping yielded some interesting ideas from the different groups. The three groups in total tackled three different themes: men's mental health; lack of youth activities and unsafe traffic (Image 4).

### Men's mental health

To tackle mental health issues, suicide and isolation among men, setting up a 'Men's Shed' in the New Parks Methodist Church Garden was presented by the first group. This would encourage men to socialise and open up about any problems or feelings they may be experiencing whilst learning new skills such as refurbishing tools and gardening. Further benefits would include reducing waste by mending rather than replacing tools and providing gardening services to other residents. The project would require volunteers with DIY and gardening skills; help from local trades; and funding for running costs, equipment and a shed. Links with The Hub's Community Garden and the Men's Shed Association could increase reach and sustainability.

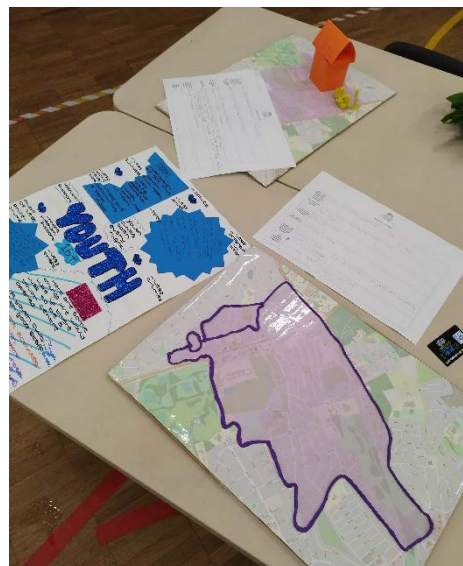


Image 4 Results of Prototyping session

### Lack of activities for young people

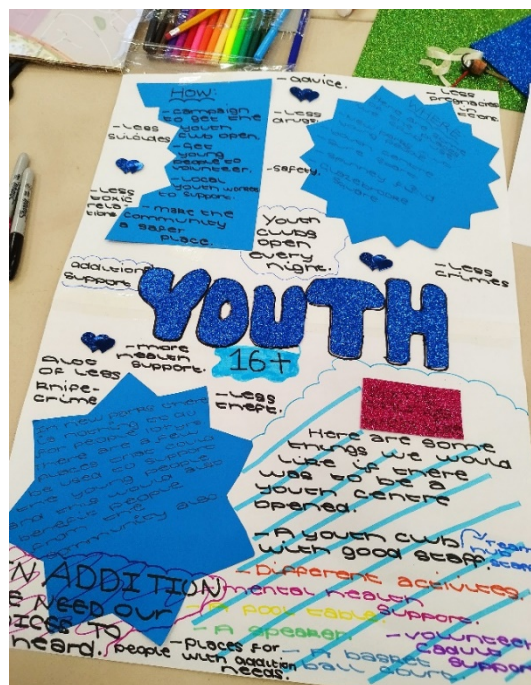


Image 5 Poster of Youth Club Prototype

It was agreed that there were activities for younger children around New Parks, but the second group thought that there was very little for teenagers to do, in a safe and interesting environment. It was suggested that some of the older youths, 16+ years could organise and self-manage the activities with some adult support. The group created a poster of their ideas (Image 5). The overall aim was to have a Youth Club that was open every evening to provide a safe place with different activities, a pool table, a basketball court and a speaker for music. The Youth Club could be run by volunteers and youth workers and also offer advice, mental health support and provide a place and activities for people with additional needs. This provision in turn could reduce suicide, teenage pregnancies, toxic relationships, crime, drugs, knife crime etc. Several locations were listed as possible venues:

New Parks Club for Young People, Youth Centre, Sure Start, Cricket Field, Spinney Park and Glazebrook Square.

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The third group felt one of the biggest local concerns was young people speeding on scooters and motorbikes, thought to be connected to drug dealing and ultimately knife crime. The speed, noise and lack of considerate driving were the cause of a lot of upset and fear and led to people not feeling safe in the area, especially those looking after children. It was felt that this has been an ongoing issue that has never been resolved. Group conversations around the printed map of the area highlighted that this was a challenging situation across the whole of New Parks and not just limited to one area. The different ways suggested to tackle this included more police presence, in particular PCSOs, to deter this anti-social behaviour as well as introducing speed bumps and traffic calming measures on some roads. It was agreed that because of limited resources, interventions should be targeted and as such a scheme similar to Neighbourhood Watch could be set up to anonymously report and record incidences. This would help to identify patterns in activity and therefore the most effective times and places to increase police presence and prioritise locations for speedbumps. In addition, another important point was raised that more activities for young people could offer a positive diversion for youths who could become involved with the wrong people and get involved in crime, i.e. drug running and drug use. The latter suggestion was backed up by others who believed that caution was required not to simply move the problem on to another area and instead reduce the demand.

The general sentiment voiced among participants during the workshop was they want to see actions, not words and while research is useful, it shouldn't stop there. The young people were adamant that they needed their voices to be heard in order to effect sustainable change.





## Interview Responses

Five semi structured interviews were conducted with representatives from both the public and third sector. These comprised individuals from the police, local authority and community leaders. The views expressed by those interviewed as part of this research are based on peoples' own experiences and perceptions having either lived and/or worked within the New Parks People Zone. These, however, have not been cross referenced against any official datasets, as this was deemed out of the scope of the research in this instance.



### Community Assets

In line with the ABCD approach underpinning the research and development of the New Parks People Zone, interviewees were asked their opinion on what the best thing about New Parks is and the unanimous response was the people. The overwhelming sentiment was that there is a genuine heart within the community and that it has grown some fantastic people. One interviewee commented on how well the community can pull together and look out for each other. Another spoke of the passion and energy that many people have for the area. Physical assets such as Team Hub, New Parks Club for Young People, and the library were also identified. It was acknowledged, however, that without the people and teams who run these centres, they would just be buildings. Team Hub, in particular, was identified as being 'the centre' of New Parks. Their expansion in terms of different service provision, be that the free breakfast club or coordinating mother and toddler swimming sessions, were seen as one of the best things to happen in New Parks. Cruyff Court football pitch was seen as another great asset within the community, which was further echoed during the pop-up sessions in which a number of people listed it as one of the assets to keep.

One interviewee stated that there is a community that wants to change and that this can only materialise if it's driven by the people within the community. They went on to say that the community is now realising things are happening and as such are getting behind the organisations leading the way. For example, campaigning to get the swimming pool reopened and the youth club reopened, even if for one day a week, were seen as all small victories that serve as motivating factors for the community to see that things can be done. One respondent felt that the most successful assets, which were largely considered as people, are those who connect with the community long term, are community led, and who do not consider their roles as just a job, but rather as a passion.

Another community asset identified during the interviews was the gym that is run from Team Hub, which many people attend, and holds 28 classes throughout the week. People coming together through the gym has led to new relationships being forged and ideas being bounced around between those who attend. One of the limiting factors hindering





the expansion of the gym to cater for more people is space. Other venues, such as the New Parks Club for Young People or Leisure Centre were identified as potential new hosts that would allow for such an expansion. The New Parks Club for Young People (formerly known as the Boys Club), as a physical asset, was seen by some as underutilised but with a huge potential to boost the accessibility of and use of the club. The current youth provision in the New Parks Club for Young People includes a class on a Wednesday and Friday, with a bingo night run for older residents on Thursdays. They are, however, looking to expand the activities run from the centre including seasonal events such as a Christmas and Easter market.

Additional assets within the New Parks People Zone, aside from the community itself, are those working to serve the people in the area both paid and unpaid. Those interviewed were asked about their role within the community, and many felt they served to bridge the gap between residents and the different agencies, such as the police and local authority; others, as connecting different sectors and thematic areas, such as education, and health and wellbeing. One interviewee felt that it was their duty to try and get the best possible services for the people who need it most. Another commented on the fact that they have lived and worked in the community for decades and as such understood the local issues and had made it their mission to set-up activities and programmes to support and help residents to tackle these. Using a targeted area of interest, such as sport, was a channel used by two of the respondents to reach out, engage, and motivate different age groups within the community, which subsequently has led to initiating new programmes to target specific challenges faced.



### Nurturing Potential

Several individuals were identified as local community champions, whether for their volunteering efforts, can-do attitude, or dedication to keep things running despite the lack of funding. Giving those individuals support in becoming community leaders and providing them with leadership training would contribute to nurturing these individuals and perhaps encouraging others to follow suit. One interviewee provided an example in which one resident voluntarily started an activity as a way for parents to engage with their children through sport. This was the first such activity of its kind in the area. Through support from an external agency, specific training was offered that enabled the individual to start a course and gain qualifications that could provide some form of income generation through grassroots sports. Similarly, arts and music has been used as a channel through which to engage and nurture talented young people. One young person, as a result, successfully produced a rap related to some of the issues faced by young people in the area. Supporting such individuals, who can potentially serve as role models and who are relatable to young people in New Parks, should be encouraged.



A point raised by one respondent was the need to create an environment where people feel supported and able to start something without the fear that it may fail. Things can and do fail but there is learning in that, and their sentiment was that it is better to try rather than do nothing. They felt that people often just need to know that there will be guidance and support, which would give them the needed reassurance and boost of confidence to try. Offering hands-on practical experience, was also seen as important, as people have different learning styles, and some may initially be intimidated by more formal training schemes which then act as a barrier. Providing people with opportunities and asking them what they'd like to do as a starting point was mentioned.

Having a community connector type role was brought up by two respondents. Whether this is to build trust between those with new ideas that they wish to initiate with those who may have the facilities and/or know-how, or to sign-post people to let them know that if they turn-up at a certain place and time they can get support to do something, were the ideas put forward.



## The Challenges Faced

In enquiring about some of the challenges faced by those either living, working, or supporting people in the area, the lack of youth provision was raised by several respondents. This was put down to years of austerity resulting in the temporary closure of youth centres, with those still running being severely impacted by the lack of funding and subsequently operating with reduced opening times. Most of those interviewed felt that this is something that needs to be addressed. The provision of activities for the primary school age group was believed to be much better than for those of secondary school age, which was believed to contribute to a lot of the antisocial behaviour that has been raised throughout the research.

One of the biggest challenges put forward by one interviewee related to working with the local authority and statutory services. The view was that there are a lot of barriers around residents accessing services in the broadest sense, be that getting support to obtain a bus pass to enable them to access different parts of the city or to getting benefits or housing support. They admitted that this has improved somewhat as a result of lobbying and through the support of elected members, but also emphasised the fact that things can change when individuals' roles change within the council. Relations can be built through dialogue and interaction, but when people move on, things can revert to the former status quo.

A loss of trust and faith in the services offered by the council came up during several discussions with respondents. People are instead seeking support from community centres or trusted community leaders, who do not necessarily have the expertise, nor feel that they should always be the go-to or have the capacity in some instances. There



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are people in posts whose role it is to support people, but the access and the communication lines appear to be quite fractured was the view.

A similar sentiment was echoed by two respondents in relation to support services promising things, which often culminates in people parachuting in for short periods of time with little action. One went onto say how frustrating this can be for the community and those permanently on the ground and leads to a sense of them not feeling valued, and grassroots workers being left to firefight. This, however, has improved over the years with different external organisations realising the benefits of collaborating with those who are permanently operating within the area, since much of the hard work, in terms of relationship building and community engagement, has been done by those on the ground.

Drugs were identified as a huge problem in the area, along with the subculture around drugs, such as violence, knife crime, and grooming. It was acknowledged that people are acutely aware of the problem and one respondent felt that it appears to be largely accepted now, especially among the younger generation. Young people are getting excluded from school because of it, which results in children as young as twelve being out of education and either sat at home or wandering the streets, was the concern raised by one interviewee.

Mental health was mentioned as one of the underlying problems affecting some of the challenges faced by different community members. One interviewee felt that there was somewhat of a crisis when it came to mental health support services in the area. For example, one respondent stated that a lot of the residents' reported issues with GP waiting times, which they admitted is not unique to New Parks. This results in people having to learn to live with their long-term conditions. As a result, people's health and wellbeing deteriorate over time, which then requires an emergency response that ultimately costs more in the long run because people are not getting the support or intervention as a preventative measure.

Other issues mentioned by several respondents related to litter, dog fouling, broken glass, and fly-tipping. One spoke of the fact that complaints about these were frequently communicated to the police who are not the agency responsible for addressing such issues. It was felt that this, in part, is because residents do not see their local city ordinance physically out and about within the community, although they are the agency responsible for these matters, and these are things that people care about. The criticism that different agencies may advertise what they are doing in the area, but are not physically seen out and about within the community, was made.

Time and resources, whether funding or physical space, were some of the limiting factors cited for preventing individuals from expanding on their existing responsibilities or activities. It was felt by some that certain buildings were not being used to their potential capacity to serve more people in the community and support the expansion of certain activities. In some instances, this was believed to be due to limited staffing and a lack of



volunteers, in others, an aversion to change. One interviewee spoke of the lack of youth provision to the eastern side of New Parks, and several interviewees were unsure of some of the things being run in other facilities in different parts of New Parks.



## Collaborative Working

The challenges raised were considered in more detail when respondents were asked whether different organisations and agencies successfully work together in the area. One respondent felt that bringing different actors together more could enhance the opportunities in the area but that there was a significant lack of leadership from the agencies. As to who might be the appropriate individual to take-on such a role, or from which organisation, they were unsure.

One respondent felt that the agencies do not work as well as they should be working together. One example cited was the closure of the housing office and the fact that services were moving away from having direct contact with people to a phone-based or digital service. They went on to discuss the difficulties in working with other agencies because many come into the community, with funding for six months, for example, “tick their tick boxes” and then disappear. A change of mindset from some of the agencies and adopting a more consistent and sustainable approach was felt needed.

The Community Panel meetings were highlighted as one of the conduits through which many of the organisations and agencies meet with residents, and each other. Its reach, however, was felt to serve a certain part of the community and is not necessarily completely representative of the New Parks demographic. It was also felt that there was some resistance to change that would allow the group to evolve. Two interviewees spoke of certain challenges and barriers in connecting with one of the local schools. It was felt that different organisations had met with resistance from certain members of staff, but that there was the perception, from the school’s perspective, that they have good links within the community.

Counter to the sentiment echoed by some of the interviewees, one felt that some actors are working well together and that through their own networking with the different organisations, community champions, and agencies, this has improved over time. Another responded by stating that had they been asked three years ago they would have categorically said no. However, in building relationships with key individuals, they had garnered a lot of support over the past few years. The pandemic was also cited as a catalyst that brought different actors together to support people within the community. It was evident, from the discussions, that successful collaborations do occur but mainly through specific individuals or community centres.

Looking at the current gaps in service provision, other than for youths, interviewees mentioned financial support, particularly with the cost-of-living crisis, as one area that is



currently lacking. Emergency support, whether for a particular service, or quick response from the crisis team for mental health, were other areas discussed by several respondents that do not appear to be present for local people. It is believed that this then has a subsequent effect on people's mental health because things are not being addressed. Team Hub was previously successful in securing funding through the Getting Help in Neighbourhoods Adult Mental Health Fund, to improve the amount of mental health support available in the community, by extending the hours their café is open for drop-in support.



### Adopting a Different Approach to Tackle the Challenges

In exploring the potential or desire to expand on existing responsibilities or activities there were several areas touched upon. It was identified that there are a lot of good things going on in the area, but it requires a bit more joint-up working, or leadership, to connect and link existing assets and resources. For example, the existence of several food banks that could potentially work together to co-ordinate or expand their provision was mentioned. One interviewee suggested the idea of extending the support provided in a way that gives people long-term life skills. For example, by providing short cookery classes on days a foodbank is open to help people learn how to cook simple affordable meals. Similarly, people are currently struggling with energy issues but may not admit to it. Providing tips and advice sessions during foodbank days, or via any of the small group activities being run across the New Parks People Zone could help those who may not ordinarily reach-out. One of the interviewees mentioned the fact that there are many small groups and things happening that people are probably not aware of. The fact that there is a music studio in the library that they had only just become aware of was one example cited. In addition, sometimes the different agencies are also unaware of some of the groups and activities, which leads to missed opportunities to connect with, and support, the existing assets and networks that are already there and doing.

Alternative ways of working and collaborating have been trialled in the area. For example, to address some of the residents' housing issues, with the closure of the housing office, a pilot was set-up to hold surgeries in and around the community. Although some were not massively attended in terms of numbers, they proved to be successful for the people that did attend in terms of being solution based and impactful. The potential to role this out to other areas of support and provision could be further beneficial.

The wish to expand on and duplicate some of the programmes currently being run at Team Hub, for example, to other venues across New Parks was proposed by one interviewee. Peoples' age, mobility, home location, the timings of certain activities, and its location were seen as possible barriers to some in accessing Team Hub. This could release some pressure from specific centres but also open-up others that may currently be underutilised yet are more accessible due to their location.



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Being able to partner up with organisations to provide workforce support via mentoring, shadowing, work experience, and leadership awards for volunteers and community champions, during which individuals can gain something meaningful, was the desire expressed by several interviewees. This could enable people to grow in confidence which could then hopefully lead to more paid roles to make individuals and their ideas more sustainable. Ultimately, when looking at the potential for the New Parks People Zone to support an alternative way of working and doing, two of those interviewed stressed the point that it needs to be led by the community and not an agency. They further went on to emphasise that it needs to be led by people who know what the challenges are and for the agencies to then support them in tackling these.

Some ideas around different approaches to tackle the challenges raised were discussed with interviewees. More regularity and continuity to the youth provision was suggested would be a step forward in tackling ASB and potential involvement with drugs. Providing young people with a safe space would not only serve them but would reduce the likelihood of them hanging around unsupervised in parks and on the streets and would also serve to comfort concerned residents. Through the interactions within these safe places, trust can be built where young people can confide in the adults present, which has previously happened through the likes of the breakfast club at Team Hub. This could provide an opportunity to share information and suggestions about things that might be going on or desired. It was suggested that this should not be overcomplicated but rather just be an open space to chill out with some clear boundaries set around what is and is not allowed to do.

The discussions around tackling the issue of drugs and associated crimes primarily centred on raising awareness. There was an emphasis on the need to make people aware of the effects that drugs have on both individuals and on their community. One respondent made the point that no one likes to see a police van and six cars turn up on their street, banging doors down. There are programmes set-up by the Force, such as the Youth Engagement Officers who go into schools and School Liaison Officers who are now trying to work on raising awareness by talking about knife crime, drug awareness and related issues. One interviewee highlighted the fact that this should not solely be down to the police, and several spoke of the need to have people out in the community who have had lived experiences, understanding of the impacts, and the appropriate training to communicate to people in ways that they can relate. Why are these kinds of people not going into schools was the question posed. Putting in place a system whereby people are out and about on the streets to address the fact that people who take or deal drugs are unlikely to talk to the police but might talk to somebody else who is not behind a uniform, was another idea put forward. In addition, having positive, relatable, male role models was also discussed.

Keeping the most vulnerable safe and stopping the impact of drugs on those who are not involved was the priority for one respondent. They pointed out that prevention is needed but having the right intervention, at the right time, and with the right people was key. The





council were also seen as being part of the solution and in some way facilitating the problem. The policy around statutory housing provision which requires councils to [re]home someone that is homeless often results in the rehousing of drug dealers. One respondent felt such policies only lead to a cycle of shifting the problem from one location to the next.



## Trust Within the Community

Working with or in any community can present multiple challenges and one expressed by several of the interviewees was getting people to trust you. For example, uniformed officers have had to work hard to try and get people to see through the uniform and to get people to sit down and have a chat about anything. The consistent presence of one PCSO in the area who has become a familiar face was noted as a positive step forward by the respondents. As frontline Officers they are targeted but having that visual presence of a familiar face is important. It was suggested that residents may question the fact they are paying the Police and Crime Commissioner to do a job and make decisions, but rarely see them out and about in the community.

One interviewee stated that there is no trust when it comes to police in the area and that the community has been let down. They went on to say that people do not feel listened to or important unless it is regarding something the police wish to tackle. Even though the police encourage the community to report things, the loss of the police station in New Parks and lack of follow-up when people do, serves as a barrier and leaves people feeling that it's pointless, was the sentiment.

Similar feelings of mistrust with other agencies were expressed. To overcome issues of trust one respondent pointed out that residents need to feel that they have been listened to, which, they admitted is difficult to measure, define, or demonstrate. But ultimately this simply comes from being present and being there. Furthermore, most interviewees stressed the importance on not just making people feel like their voices have been listened to but actually following through with action and communicating what action has been taken.



## Investing in the New Parks People Zone

Some of the issues, for example those around broken glass, litter, and fly tipping led to questions as to what might encourage the community to take more pride in the area. The 'Burns Flats' were identified as being quite stark, void of colour or flowers. Several interviewees said that this goes back to issues of funding and that if they were simply cleaned, decorated, and maintained people might take more pride in where they lived,



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which might then have a knock-on effect across other areas. One commented on the fact that they wouldn't like to put their family "into a place like that, so why are we letting people live like it?" It was acknowledged that this is not solely down to the council, but interviewees felt that the council must take some sort of responsibility to make the area feel nice, look after the verges, and start giving people pride back in where they live.

One respondent said engaging with the community to be part of making the area look nice is also needed insofar as them not just asking for more, but also giving more. For example, there have been issues with rats in the flats, yet some residents put seeds and bread outside and, on their balconies, to feed the birds. This unintentional act serves to attract the rats and simply requires some form of awareness so that people can understand the consequences of their actions.

An idea proposed by one of the interviewees was to work with the community to identifying some small, designated spaces and funding to create nice community spaces. As an example, they referred to what had previously been done along the New Parks Boulevard, where a community group planted flower bulbs along the grass verge that lines the route. If there were more areas that were given a bit of tender loving care, which could involve brining in external groups such as British Gas as part of their corporate social responsibility programmes, it might encourage people to do similar things in their own area. Workshops to show residents how to make a hanging basket that they could then take home was another idea put forward.

Making improvements to the area are, however, sometimes contested. For example, getting lighting put into a small park area and putting the goal post back became an issue where the council suggested lighting makes ASB worse. The local sentiment was that providing lighting and some minimal equipment gives children somewhere to play opposite their homes where their parents can see them and felt safe to let them go out.

When asked how £5,000 could be spent in the community one respondent highlighted the fact that there are a lot of things for young people to do but there is always a cost element attached, which can serve as a barrier for many.

*"The first thing to be sacrificed when things are financially difficult are the activities for the children."*

Their idea would be to utilise the money to try and remove some of the cost elements and have more free activities, or be able to subsidise them. A similar approach has been adopted for a weekly swimming group of 20 parents and 20 children. Each session costs thirty pounds, half of this is subsidised with the remaining contribution shared between the parents. The interviewee went on to state that

*"...those feel-good factors and activities that take people away for a moment, they provide an opportunity to socialise, enable people to be active, and are just as important as food."*

One interviewee discussed using the money as an injection into different projects to mobilise things but the key here, would be to think about their sustainability over the



longer-term. Setting up assets and projects that are hidden, for example, the music studio, and investing a small amount to advertise and promote these. They went onto propose that any events or community ideas that could benefit from a small injection of funds should state how they will manage to maintain what they set-up.

Two respondents referred to the desire to invest the money into providing additional hours for existing community outreach and youth workers to enable them to have more time and resources to reach the young people in the area. Specifically, people that young people can both understand and relate to. One suggested targeting young vulnerable girls who might be susceptible to grooming to get the right intervention at the right time, and by the right people. Another saw this approach as a channel to connect youths they might interact with to other groups and youth services.

Similarly, one interviewee spoke of providing mentoring support to existing community enablers and giving them some form of reward and recognition. Whether those individuals are employed or working on a voluntary basis but to reward and recognise those community champion roles. This, they suggested, could be in the form of providing an experience or an opportunity that could be match-funded with a charity to support a day out or something that speaks to the people that have been making a difference.



### A Vision for the Area

When respondents were asked for their five-year vision for the New Parks People Zone, given unlimited resources, one response was that if improvements were made to the aesthetics of the area; lighting; cleaning up an area - keeping it clean - people's pride would come back. They went on to state that there is a massive community within the estate, but people don't shout out about it or that there is an external preconception that New Parks is a bad place to be, which is echoed by some

*"It is about changing people's preconceptions of the estates".*

The interviewee stated the community will come back if we start putting resources back into the community as opposed to keep taking them away. Their view was that the general feeling is that the rug has been pulled from underneath people's feet too many times.

A comment made by one individual was that they would love to have a completely different conversation about the area in five years' time.

*"...to prove everybody wrong and say yes, we are pumping money into this estate, and we are going to do something to get rid of the drug dealers to make it better for everyone. A future in which New Parks had less crime, less antisocial behaviour, and more resources"*



## Report

Two interviewees expressed the desire to really push People Zones and tell people what it's all about and how it will make improvements to the community. They also had the belief that the People Zone concept could work. Having an injection of energy and people championing the area to say that New Parks is just as important as any other community. They felt that eventually the community will see the benefits and really get behind it, especially where they are already seeing a difference. The respondent went on to say that this requires the involvement of everyone.

The need to get certain services linked up and working together and promote community led approaches with many of the services in the area was mentioned. This could help those currently struggling to locate suitable spaces to accommodate their activities, for example. Having a very “open approach” to potentially utilising physical community assets, with support from agencies like the OPCC and local authority, who would be willing to support initiatives and have belief in them, in the understanding that they could be hugely beneficial was the vision put forward. Generating and harnessing togetherness was seen as key. This would allow the development of branding for community providers where they could erect billboards and shout about what they're all doing and what's on offer across the community from behind the school gates.

One interviewee outlined a vision that encompassed a more tiered strategic approach. In their view this would comprise:

1. A strategic level board or group of organisations that would oversee the funding model. It would have relationships with public health, the local authority etc., and from a strategic point of view, identify what priorities, areas, and services could be brought into support.
2. An operational network, including the multi-agencies that would oversee the operational delivery of services, support groups with finding and hiring venues, and support the continuing professional development of community champions. It could also help to provide consultations to different areas or groups that felt like they didn't have anything or that there were gaps in services.
3. At the grassroots level would be the workforce, the community champions and the doers, which would include the youth workers, the police who are there on a day-to-day basis, links with the schools.

Their ideal would be to also have charitable involvement across all levels to try and help from the funding side. This would include an agreement on investment from all the schools to support the community. Even if that were small, but just that acknowledgement to show that the community is a priority for them as well. This could simply be in terms of people power rather than money.



## Observations and Informal Interactions

Throughout the research work there were a number of ad hoc situations where anecdotal evidence was collected in an informal manner, for example personal conversations and meetings. Below are some of the points that were raised.

When speaking to residents and local workers, there appeared to be a lack of awareness of all the activities and opportunities that were on offer in the area. It was mentioned that a better up-to-date knowledge of *what was happening, and where*, would be useful to signpost residents to and not duplicate efforts. Although not all the residents could access this digitally as some were not confident online, community leaders and workers could act as the conduit for this information.

Parking was another issue that was raised during conversations, with a lack of parking spaces allocated for some of the flats on Aikman Avenue. This has led to tension around people parking outside others' homes or the issuing of unaffordable parking tickets.

The lack of shopping facilities was also a concern for some local workers, with the available grocery shopping being less affordable than the larger discount supermarkets. This could disproportionately affect those residents who are less able to travel out of the neighbourhood to find cheaper food stores and therefore increase the reliance on foodbanks.

Personal observations highlighted the imbalance in the availability of fresh healthy food compared to less healthy options, with no greengrocers selling fruit and vegetables or cafes providing healthy snacks, for example.

Observations about the ethnic diversity of the area were made in that Black and Asian residents were seen walking around the neighbourhood, frequenting the MUGA football pitch, and the adventure playground. This demographic, however, was poorly represented in the survey responses and non-existent in the workshop attendance. Several of the interviewees acknowledged that they didn't feel they had been successful in reaching out to all the diverse communities that are potentially now in New Parks. There is a madrasah group that use Team Hub, a homework club after school on a couple of evenings a week, and others that use the building for prayer, especially during Ramadan. There is also a Nigerian organisation that is based in the ward, who have previously organised trips to the seaside, which was funded by the ward budget. One interviewee said that there is quite a few Somalis living in the flats along Aikman Avenue who are residents but don't seem to access the local services. More work needs to be done to reach out to this part of the community was the view. Overall, going forward, there is the need to look at what the New Parks demographic is in general: age; gender; ethnicity, and ensure that their needs and ideas are being gathered and met as best as possible, with the resources available.





## New Parks Community Asset Map

An output of the research is an online community map which members of the public can not only consult for information but also contribute to in order to keep it accurate and up to date. The community map is a living resource to document all the local assets and other information in response to the community feedback. As the survey and workshops highlighted, the amount of local assets available varied depending on age groups, therefore as well as categorising the assets into *types*, further functionality was added (*Tags*) to be able to filter the assets according to target age groups. Figure 20 shows a screenshot of the map with the different categories visible. The community assets were divided into seven categories to make the information easier to navigate, as follows:

- Help, Support and Advice
- Activity and Health
- Learn, Work and Volunteer
- Faith and Spirituality
- Fun and Friendship
- Meeting Place/Venue
- Events

At the time of writing, there are 34 entries on the map covering the different categories. Any contributions from the public will be moderated by a steering group member before going live on the map, in order to maintain integrity. A training session with Steering Group members will be delivered in the next month.

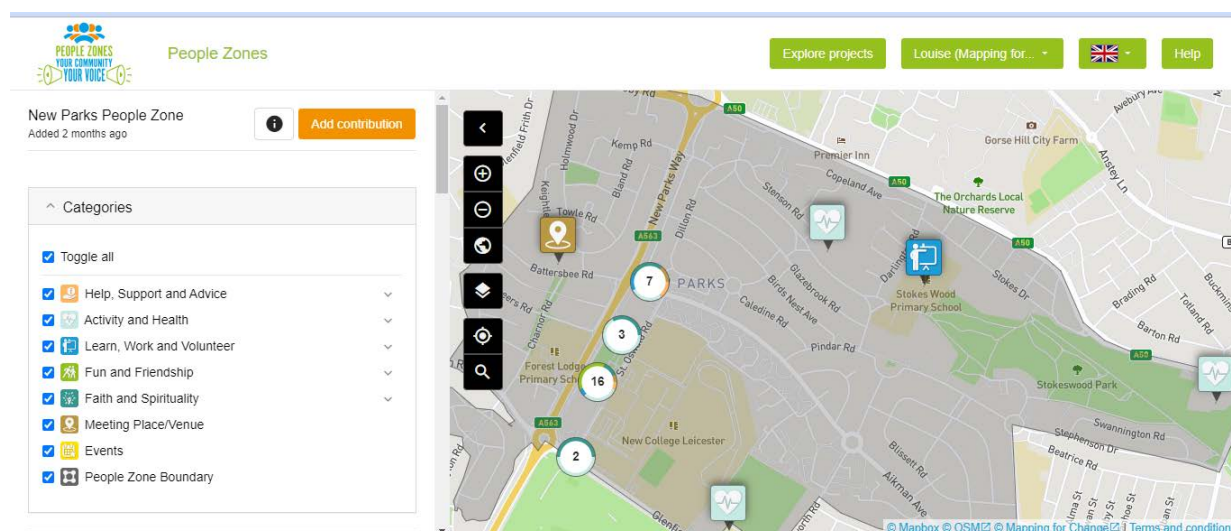


Figure 20 A screenshot of the map with the different categories visible



## Summary of Findings

The research included a broad representation of residents in terms of the age groups that make up New Parks, which was very positive, especially to hear the views of the younger demographic. When considering the findings, the bias towards females, who accounted for almost 70% of survey responders, should be taken into account as well as a noticeable absence of residents from the Black and Asian ethnicities throughout the whole research, including survey responses, workshop attendees and interviewees. Whilst there was a small proportion of survey respondents who said that they did not visit any of the local organisations for support, it is important to note that as most of the surveys were distributed through these organisations, the number of individuals not accessing the local assets in reality could be much higher.

The research shows that the community assets in terms of organisations and activities are well used by much of the community. The overwhelmingly biggest asset in New Parks People Zone is the community itself, being described as friendly, welcoming, and tight knit. It appears that much of this community spirit is generated and nurtured via the local organisations, in particular, Team Hub, New Parks Library, and New Parks Community Mission and Foodbank. This is shown in that less than a third of survey respondents said they would ask individual community members for support compared with 92% who said they accessed organisations for support.

Only two of the 15 survey respondents that didn't visit any local organisations said they would ask others for support and only three mentioned 'community' or 'people' as what they liked most about New Parks. The lack of access to local organisations could hinder community cohesion as it suggests that individuals are less likely to feel like part of the community if they are not involved in the groups and activities. Or to put it another way, the organisations build a sense of belonging.

Individuals may not be accessing the services and activities due to a lack of awareness or misconceptions. Organisations may also not be fully informed of the local assets, for example the music studio available at New Parks Library. In addition, over half of the survey respondents said they would like more opportunities to volunteer, but not all knew where to find out about this. Some of the community leaders interviewed suggested the need for a Community Connector role to bring people together and signpost or match residents with the groups, support and opportunities on offer. The lack of knowledge about what is available locally was echoed during informal interactions with local workers.

It appears that there are few activities or even spaces for young people to safely enjoy, especially for the young adults, aged 16 plus. It was suggested that more activities could help to reduce anti-social behaviour by keeping young people off the streets and parks and could also build self-esteem to reduce the risk of individuals turning to drugs and crime, or becoming victims of grooming for county lines drug trafficking. The young



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people at the workshops felt that activities for young people should be delivered by young people, with the support of youth workers.

There was a general sentiment among some of the community leaders that there was room for improvement when working together to design, develop and deliver services. For example, some buildings seemed under-utilised whilst others were almost over-capacity; some activities were competing for resources instead of pooling their assets. This lack of a joined-up approach stretched beyond local organisations to local authorities and agencies, including Housing and Benefit Support.

The greatest area of concern for people within New Parks People Zone was crime and anti-social behaviour with speeding motorbikes and scooters causing problems across the whole area. Litter and fly-tipping were also seen as a local problem, in particular broken glass and bulky items since the council started charging for collections.

In general, most people felt safe around New Parks, but more so during the day. Aikman Avenue was perceived as the least safe location within the Zone and parks such as Western and Stokes Wood were mentioned as places where people felt less safe.



## Recommendations and next steps

- There are some residents who do not access the services available which hinders community cohesion. Engaging a broader demographic and creating awareness will require a concerted effort using door-to-door promotion via flyers, newsletters etc, which includes a contact number, as well as an email, to a dedicated community connector who is available on set days in set locations. This could help draw out the 'hidden voices', ideas and assets people may have within the community.
- An overall collation and audit of the services available and accessed in the area to identify any opportunities for collaboration, sharing of resources and to reduce any duplication of efforts.
- Increased communication between organisations – including staff on the ground - so residents can be informed of the opportunities and activities available.
- More activities available for older children and young adults, designed by the target audience to ensure they are relevant.
- A recording system to monitor the speeding motorbikes and scooters to narrow down the locations and times for interventions which could include greater police presence and targeted traffic calming measures. This in turn could mean limited resources have a greater impact.
- A flexible leadership training programme comprising informal learning, practical experience and personal support to nurture individuals into becoming community leaders and role models for others. As trust takes a long time to build, residents would have a head start over external agencies to engaging other residents.
- A better relationship could be built through regular advice surgeries or meetings between the local authority departments / agencies and residents. This would help to reduce the impact of loss of services previously located in the area and help residents get more timely and practical support whilst relieving some of the pressure on community organisations who unofficially bridge the gap.
- To improve health outcomes and reduce the cost of living, cooking classes, budgeting and nutrition education could be added on to the foodbank offer.
- Longer term investment from agencies – in terms of funding and personnel on the ground was seen as an important step to building trust within New Parks yet with the focus on supporting community led projects.



## Acknowledgements

The authors of this research would like to thank all residents, workers and visitors in the New Parks People Zone who took time to complete the surveys, engage at the pop-up stands and attend the workshop; the key community contacts who provided valuable insights via the interviews and everyone who offered input to this valuable research.



## Appendix A

### New Parks Resident Survey Questions

The map to the right shows the boundary of the New Parks People Zone in pink. Please tick which best describes you:

- ☐ I live within this area
- ☐ I work within this area
- ☐ I live and work within this area
- ☐ I am visiting this area

How did you hear about this survey?



- 1) What three words would you use to describe the New Parks area?
- 2) What do you like most about living in the New Parks area?
- 3) What do you like least about living in the New Parks area?
- 4) Which, if any of the following organisations or groups do you use or visit for support? Tick all that apply...
- 5) Do you ever ask any networks such as neighbours for help e.g. with shopping or for emotional support?
- 6) Do you ever support your neighbours informally, e.g. babysit, bake cakes or dog walk?
- 7) Do you contribute to any locally organised activities, e.g. volunteer at the community centre or local allotment?
- 8) Would you like more opportunities to contribute to local activities and community services?
- 9) What do you think a friend or family would say your top 3 talents/skills/assets are?



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- 10) How safe do you feel travelling around the New Parks area?
- ☐ Always feel safe
  - ☐ Feel safe during the day
  - ☐ Feel safe at night
  - ☐ Never feel safe
- 11) How likely are you to report a local crime or anti-social behaviour?
- ☐ Likely to report it
  - ☐ It would depend on the situation
  - ☐ Unlikely to report it
  - ☐ More likely to tell someone else, for example a community leader, than report it to the police
- 12) Please list any particular areas where you are worried about your personal safety in the New Parks area?
- 13) What would you consider to be the biggest area of concern locally?
- ☐ Lack of local services/ facilities
  - ☐ Crime and anti-social behaviour
  - ☐ Not enough mental health support
  - ☐ Lack of youth activities
  - ☐ Nowhere to socialise
  - ☐ Isolation and loneliness
  - ☐ Fly-tipping and litter
  - ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_
- 14) Have you ever heard of People Zones before receiving this survey?
- |     |    |          |
|-----|----|----------|
| Yes | No | Not sure |
|-----|----|----------|
- 15) How do you usually find out about local news and events? Tick all that apply
- |                 |              |                             |
|-----------------|--------------|-----------------------------|
| Local newspaper | Online       | Social media, e.g. Facebook |
| Neighbours      | Local groups | Posters/flyers              |
| Other _____     |              |                             |





## Appendix B

### Interview questions

- 1) How would you describe your role in the local community?
- 2) Are there other responsibilities/activities that you would like to take on/expand as an organisation if possible?
  - a) If so, what is limiting this?
- 3) Other than funding and lack of time, what are your greatest challenges living /working /supporting people in the area?
- 4) What is the best thing about the area, in your opinion?
- 5) Could you identify any community champions among your groups who could lead on projects?
  - a) What support would be required to achieve this?
- 6) Do you think that different organisations and agencies are successfully working together in the area?
  - a) How do you think this could be improved?
- 7) Do you feel that there are any gaps in service provision in the area and if so where?
- 8) What do you think would encourage more trust in the OPCC amongst residents?
- 9) If you were given £5,000 tomorrow to spend in the community, what would you spend it on?
- 10) How would you imagine New Parks People Zone in 5 years if it could have unlimited funding and support, obviously in an ideal world?
- 11) One of the main concerns among residents in the area is drug use and dealing. Do you have any ideas how this could be tackled?
- 12) What do you think could encourage residents to take more pride in their community?
- 13) What type of activities or actions do you think would enhance the self-esteem and/or confidence of local residents?

