

Bell Foundry 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 Bell Foundry.

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 the Bell Foundry 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 a roadmap for the Bell Foundry People Zone and ensure that support is targeted to meet the priorities of the residents and the networks of organisations that make up 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.

It was evident that there are many local assets in and around the Bell Foundry, including individuals as well as support organisations. There is a clear potential to enable residents to become more active, with over half of survey respondents wanting more opportunities to volunteer within the community. The organisations who were contacted were all well-respected and their services used, but also felt over-stretched. In addition to providing the services that were expected, staff needed to go beyond their remit to try and plug gaps in provision or address urgent needs. Organisations expressed the need for extra resource, in terms of physical space, longer-term funding and personnel to support more residents. It was also felt that collaborative working across the different agencies could be improved, especially among the public sector service providers, to reduce barriers to finding help for individuals and building capacity.

The location of the Bell Foundry area was seen as a real positive to residents, with its proximity to Loughborough town centre and other facilities such as local schools. The second most positive response echoed was about the community itself, with words such as 'friendly', 'lively' and 'diverse' being used. The biggest challenges identified throughout the research were crime and antisocial behaviour, and drugs and drug dealing. Ideas proposed to address the drugs issue included extra mental health support to prevent addiction and working with Housing and the Police in collaboration to reduce the impact on the rest of the community.

Overall, most residents felt safe travelling around the neighbourhood in the day, but many did not feel safe at night. The least safe place was perceived as Peel Drive.

Events or activities to bring the community together was considered important to build connections. There was a perception of geographical divisions, or enclaves, amongst some within the community, with areas such as the Bell Foundry Estate, Peel Drive and Chapman Street seen as somewhat separate. Multicultural activities could also help to



create a stronger community as, according to the surveys, there was little crossover between the services and spaces the Asian residents accessed compared to the white residents.

With local organisations being already over-stretched, a regular presence of the OPCC to promote People Zones and encourage and support community-led projects is essential until the concept is firmly rooted in Bell Foundry.

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 collaborates with individuals and communities, along with the organisations and networks that support those communities, where the goal is to create positive sustainable transformations in their local environment. This is achieved through the use of mapping, collective data gathering, geographical information, and in the co-design of 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 Bell Foundry People Zone (Figure 1). Further reports will be published for the two other People Zones – New Parks and Thringstone & Whitwick as part of this six-month research project.

The Bell Foundry People Zone sits to the east of Central Loughborough, close to the university campus and with good transport links by road and rail. The area is steeped in history, being named after the last remaining working bell foundry in the UK, which still employs local people today. The Hastings Bell Foundry Ward of Charnwood, which covers the majority of the People Zone, was the lowest *Lower Super Output Area* (LSOA) in Leicestershire in 2010, in both the Indices of Multiple Deprivation and the Health Deprivation and Disability rankings.

The objective of the research was to engage the Bell Foundry 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 as possible, a mixed methods approach was taken, including surveys, workshops, pop-up events, and interviews.

A Steering Group for the Bell Foundry People Zone was set up to ensure the momentum and awareness generated during the engagement and research phase 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.

An online asset map was also created 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 Steering Group will be responsible for promoting and moderating the map.

The findings in this report will inform the Bell Foundry People Zone development and direction.

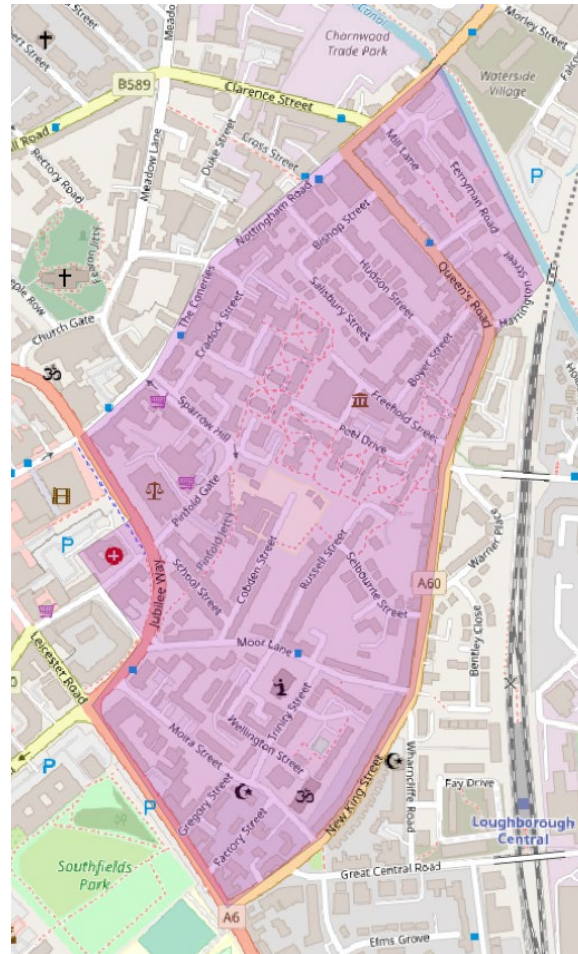


Figure 1 The total area of the Bell Foundry People Zone highlighted in pink

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 on an existing Google Map developed by Milo Poli, Team Leader for Charnwood Local Area Coordination, Leicestershire County Council.

Various research methods were employed to uncover the assets, challenges and opportunities in the Bell Foundry People Zone. These included desk-based research, on-the-ground familiarisation, several meetings with local organisations, paper and online surveys, two pop-up events, an informal workshop and seven 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 door-to-door for local businesses, online promotion via social media and Neighbourhood Link, posters with QR codes to complete online and a pop-up stand.

To supplement the survey data and gather more views, a pop-up stand was set up outside the Marios Tinenti Centre in July to map the local residents' perceptions and wishes for the area. This was repeated at the Falcon Support Services Breakfast Drop-in Café. The two locations were selected as having a high footfall and range of visitors, with each location serving different members of the community. It also allowed for a greater geographical spread as the workshop was later held at Fearon Hall. It was hoped to hold a third pop-up at the Mosque but unfortunately the timings and other commitments did not allow for this.



Figure 2 Poster advertising residents' workshop



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?

A workshop was organised in August at Fearon Hall (Figure 2) 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 group - Anand Mangal Woman's Group and a local resident famed for his cakes! 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 Pass the Parcel. 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 draw their hands on a piece of paper 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.

After a short break for food, the group played Pass the Parcel. This entailed a wrapped parcel being passed around the group to music, when the music stopped, the person holding the parcel removed one layer of wrapping which revealed an icon and a small prize. The icon prompted them to discuss a particular theme or issue:

- What do you love about Bell Foundry?
- What can be built upon or improved in Bell Foundry?
- What might bring people together more in Bell Foundry?
- What would you like the future to look like in Bell Foundry?

This was repeated until the final layer was removed and a prize was won, giving everyone an opportunity to speak.

In depth interviews were conducted online with seven community representatives. The interviewees were selected to cover a range of community roles and perspectives, from community policing to faith leaders and 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.

A Steering Group was set up as a final element of the research in order to provide a sounding board for the online asset map and to drive the People Zones forward in the future. The initial meeting was held at the beginning of September and included establishing the Terms of Reference for the group, agreeing on a Mission and roadmap for the Bell Foundry People Zone, confirming the accuracy of the stakeholder map and introducing the online Community Asset Map.

Final Stakeholder map



Figure 3: Stakeholder map for Bell Foundry People Zone

Survey Responses

The survey was available to complete both online and offline. In total 92 surveys were completed, 54 respondents lived in the People Zone, 13 worked in the People Zone, 4 lived and worked in the People Zone and 21 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
Fearon Hall	23
Loughborough Mosque and Islamic Cultural Centre	15
Marios Tinenti Centre	14
Falcon Support Services	14
Equality Action	7
The Bridge/John Storer House	3
Bangladesh Social Association	2
Hastings Community Association	1

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 clear differences in responses between the different demographic groups. Figure 4 to Figure 9 present the detailed breakdowns and can be summarised as:

- A spread across all age groups, with the majority (71%) falling between 25 and 64.
- Almost a quarter, 24%, of respondents had a disability.

The majority (64%) of responders were white, 27% were Asian and 2% black, which almost mirrors the local demographic for Hastings of 29.7% Black and Minority Ethnic Population [Taken from *Ethnicity and Language Indicators (2011)*, Public Health England, (2013)].

Looking at the data further, not shown in figure 5, only two female respondents were Asian meaning this group could be under-represented in the data.

- The main religions represented were Christianity, followed by Islam and then Atheist. Two people identified as Hindu, one person as Sikh and one Pagan.
- The majority of responders described themselves heterosexual (70%). No respondents described themselves as a gay male meaning it was the only group not represented in the survey data. One person described themselves as gay female/lesbian and six as bisexual, which is higher than the national average of



3.1% of the 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)).

- The gender split was slightly biased with 52% of respondents identifying as male compared to 39% female. One person identified as non-binary.

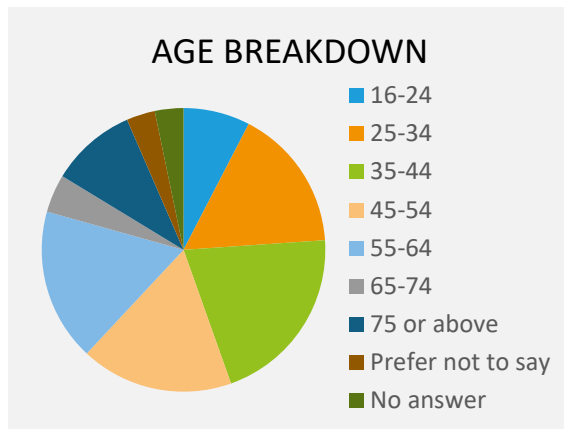


Figure 4 Age breakdown of respondents

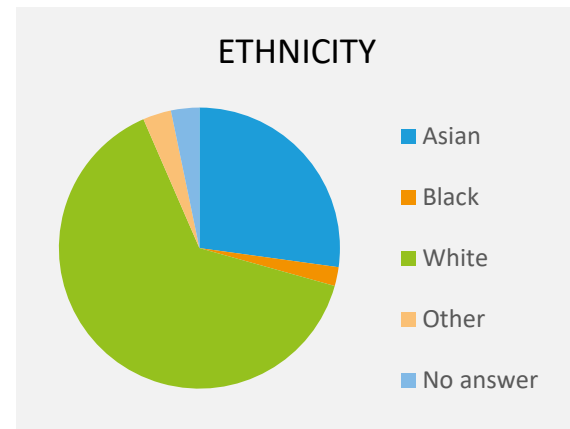


Figure 5 Ethnic breakdown of respondents

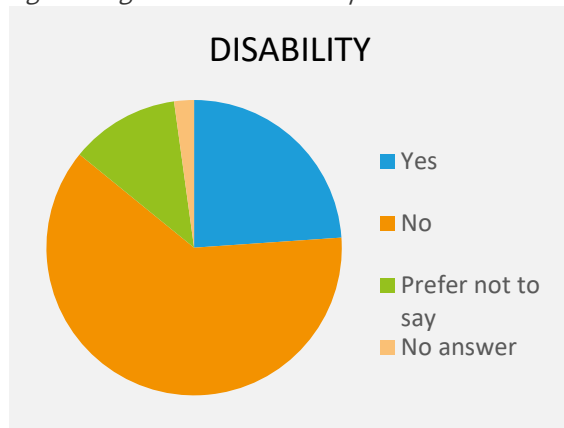


Figure 6 Disability breakdown of respondents

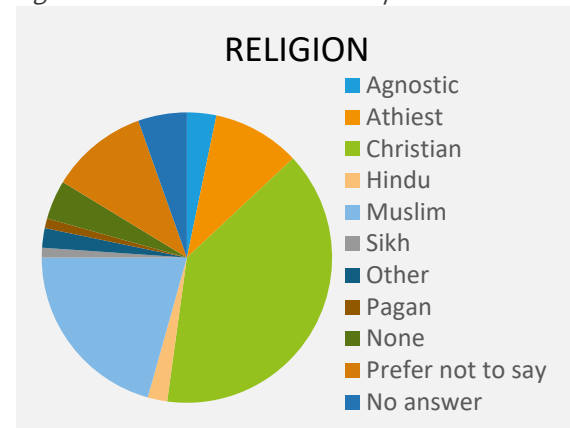


Figure 7 Religious breakdown of respondents



Figure 8 Sexual orientation of respondents

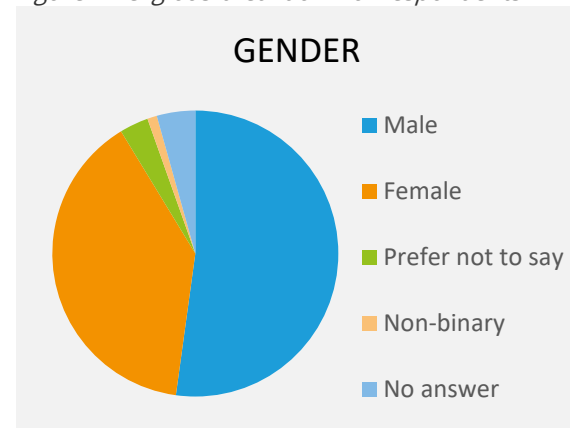


Figure 9 Gender breakdown of respondents

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 some ethnicities and genders, not all groups were included in every



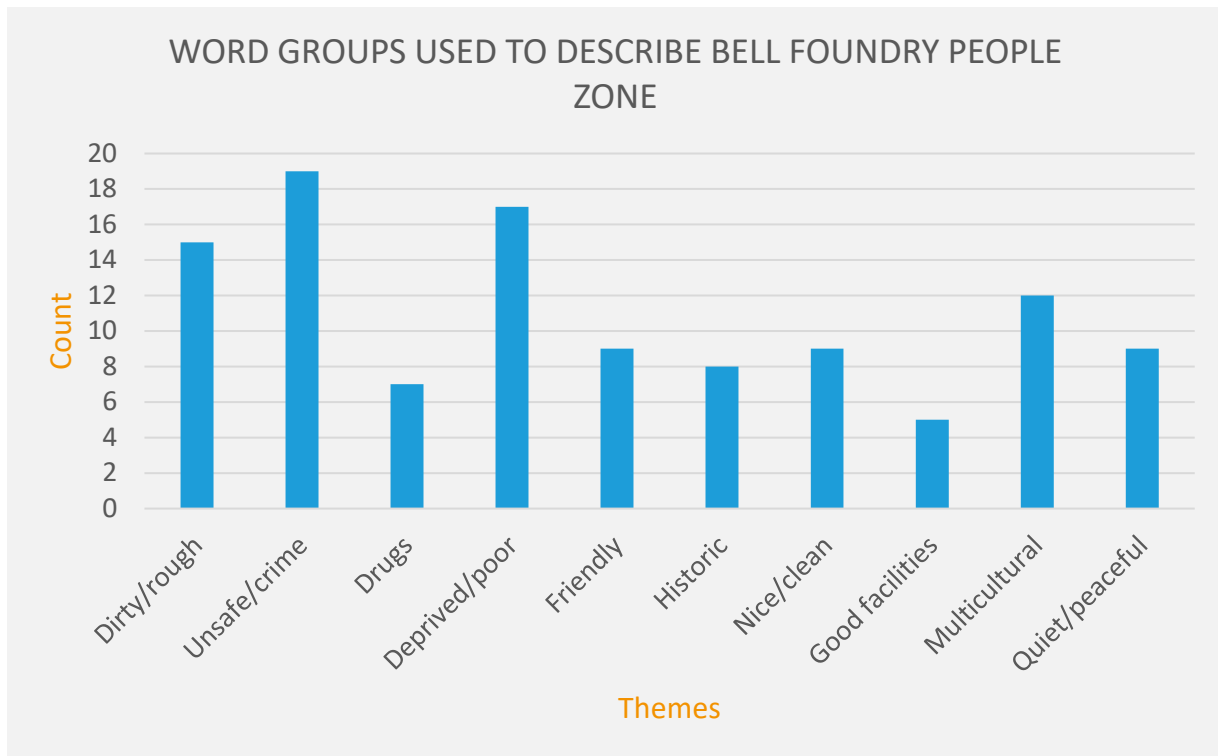


Figure 31 Bar chart of the count of responses of the words to describe Bell Foundry People Zone, grouped into themes

The respondents were asked what they liked most and least about living in the area, as free text answers, the responses were grouped into themes (Figure 12 and Figure 13). 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 very little difference in responses between the different age ranges or gender apart from Heritage was raised by only female and non-binary respondents. Some differences can be seen among the different ethnic groups with proportionately 60% (9 out of 15) of Asian respondents cited convenience to town/local amenities compared with 30% (10 out of 33) of white respondents. No Asian respondents listed community clubs/centres; heritage; or quiet as elements of Bell Foundry that they liked, while no white respondents specified multiculturalism.

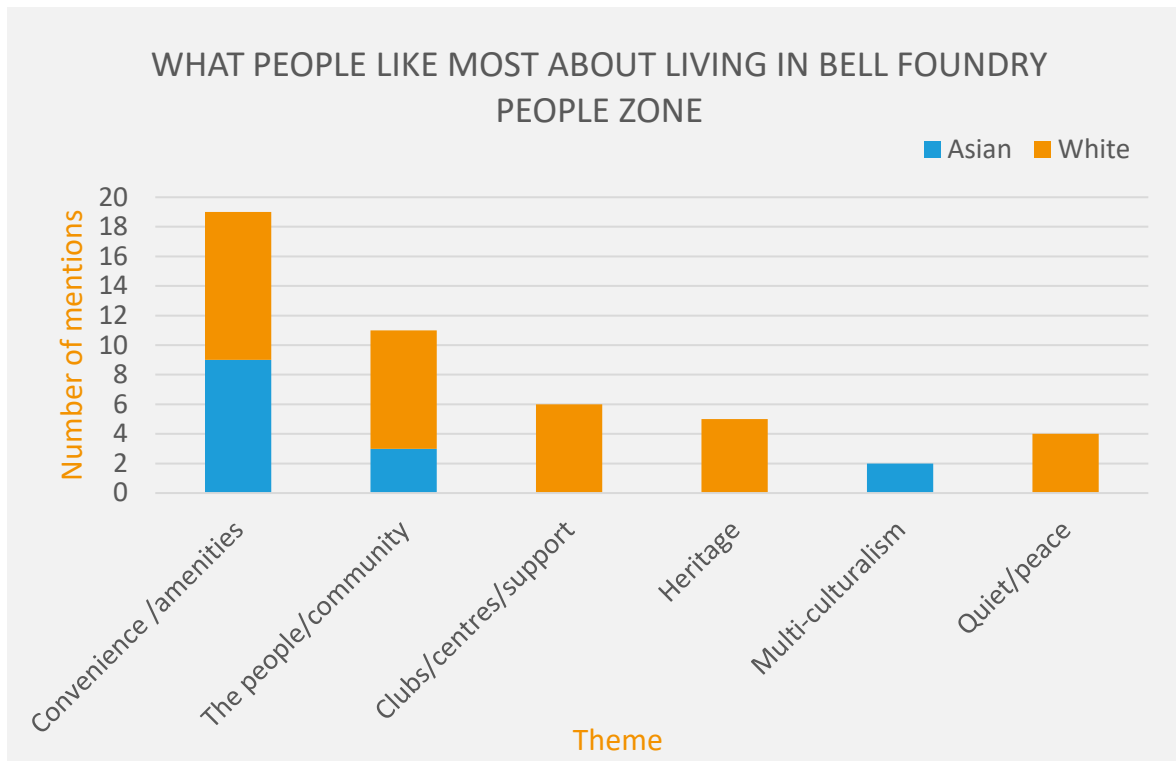


Figure 12 What respondents liked most about living in the Bell Foundry People Zone, grouped into themes

When asked what they didn't like about the area, the greatest concern for the majority was drugs followed by crime and antisocial behaviour. As with the previous question, there was little difference in responses across the different genders. Some differences were observed between the age groups with litter only being mentioned by people between 35 and 64 years old and the only group not to mention Drugs was the over 75s. Comparing different ethnic groups, the main difference was that crime and feeling unsafe was listed by 60% of Asian respondents compared to 20% of white respondents, who were more likely to refer to drugs.

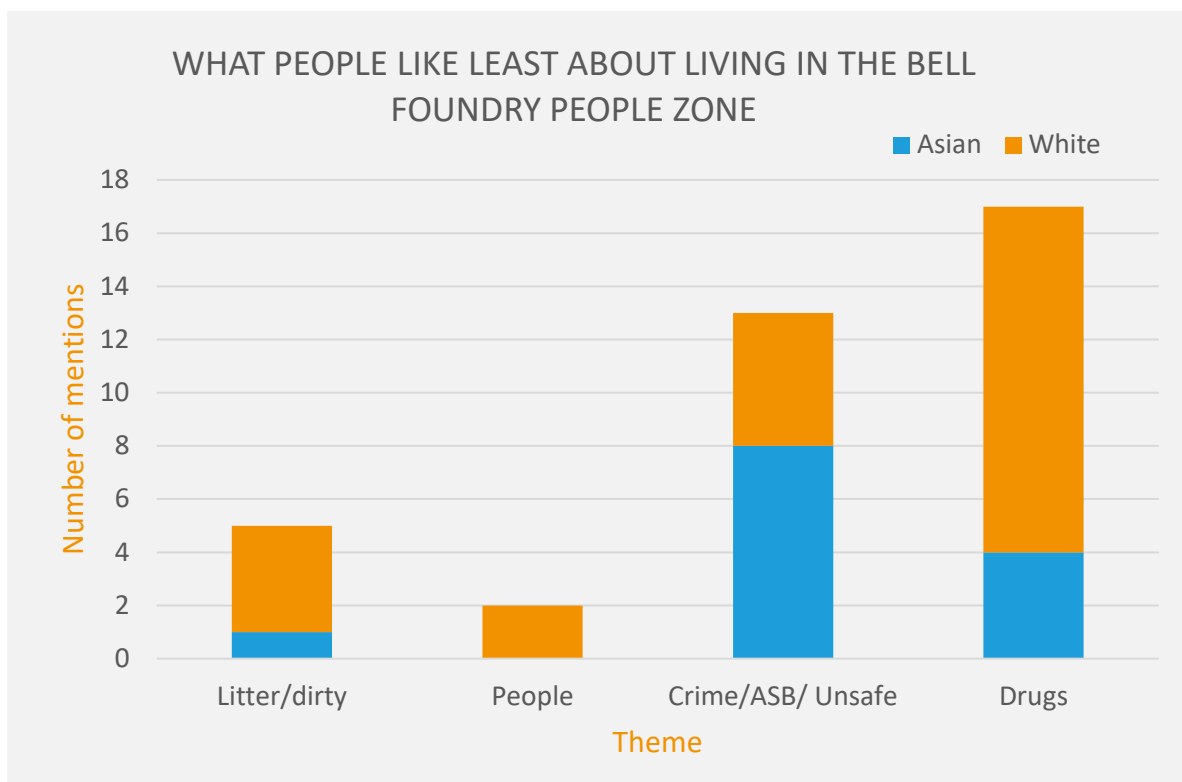


Figure 13 What respondents liked least about living in the Bell Foundry People Zone, grouped into themes

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 demographic groups. Several organisations were manually added under the ‘other’ option as follows: Your Store, Active Charnwood, Hastings Community Association, Wellbeing Centre, Moneywise and All Saints with Holy Trinity. The data analysis included those who were visiting or working in the area to gain a fuller picture of the use of local services.

The data shows that white females are most likely to visit Fearon Hall and the Marios Tinenti Centre. White males on the other hand frequent The Bridge/John Storer House and Falcon Support Services most often. Asian males (very few Asian female respondents) mainly visit the Loughborough Mosque & Islamic Cultural Centre and the Bangladesh Social Association. Respondents with a disability visited a range of organisations, except for Equality Action and the Bangladesh Social Association and only one selected the Loughborough Mosque & Islamic Cultural Centre. This may be explained by only one Asian respondent having a disability.

Considering the age of respondents, Falcon Support Services, The Bridge/John Storer House and the Loughborough Mosque all had visitors from each age range except those between 65 and 74 (the least represented age group with only 4 respondents in total). The 16–24-year-olds mainly cited Falcon Support Services whereas the over 75s mainly visited Fearon Hall.

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Table 2 The local organisations that respondents visit for support (orange denotes where there was a marked difference between respondents)

	Total	Asian	White	Black / Oth	Female	Male	Non-binary
Fearon Hall	29	3	25	1	21	8	0
The Bridge /John Storer House	25	3	18	3	9	14	1
Falcon Support Services	18	2	12	2	3	11	0
Loughborough Mosque & Islamic Cultural Centre	16	11	3	1	3	11	0
Marios Tinenti Centre	15	1	13	1	8	7	0
Bangladesh Social Association	15	13	0	1	2	11	0
Equality Action	8	7	0	0	2	5	0
The Moira Adult Learning Centre	3	0	2	1	3	0	0
Active Charnwood	2	0	2	0	2	0	0

Respondents were asked if they ever ask people in the community such as neighbours for help e.g. with shopping or for emotional support. Using the answers from those living in the area only, 34% of respondents said they did. However, when asked if they ever offered informal support, this proportion increased to 40%. There were fewer respondents who said that they contributed more formally to organised activities at 26% but over half (55%) said they would like more opportunities to volunteer, and this was seen across ethnicities, ages and genders.

To assess the potentially untapped assets within the People Zone, the survey asked respondents to list their top three talents or skills. The free text responses were grouped into themes to analyse the data and can be seen in 14. Some answers included practical skills such as craft or DIY whereas other answers focussed more on character traits like honesty and being organised. The most often listed skills/ assets centred around friendship, listening, and talking. These answers included those respondents who lived and worked in the area as well as visitors.



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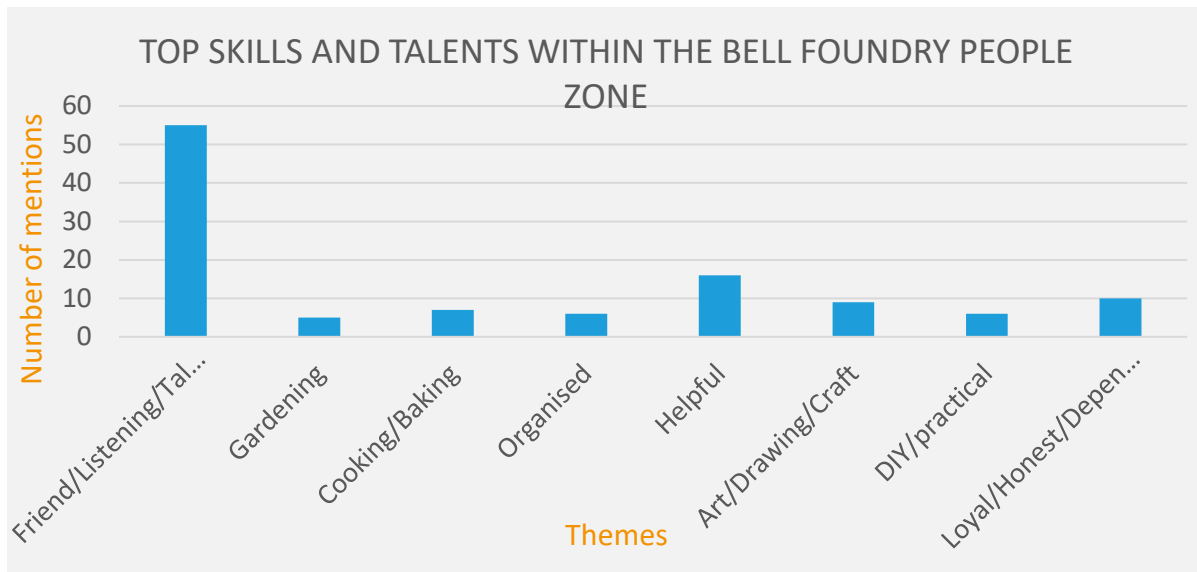


Figure 44 The skills and talents of respondents grouped into themes

There were a number of other talents included but these were not grouped into themes as they were too varied, for example, swimming and languages. The word cloud below (Figure 15) includes the different responses verbatim.



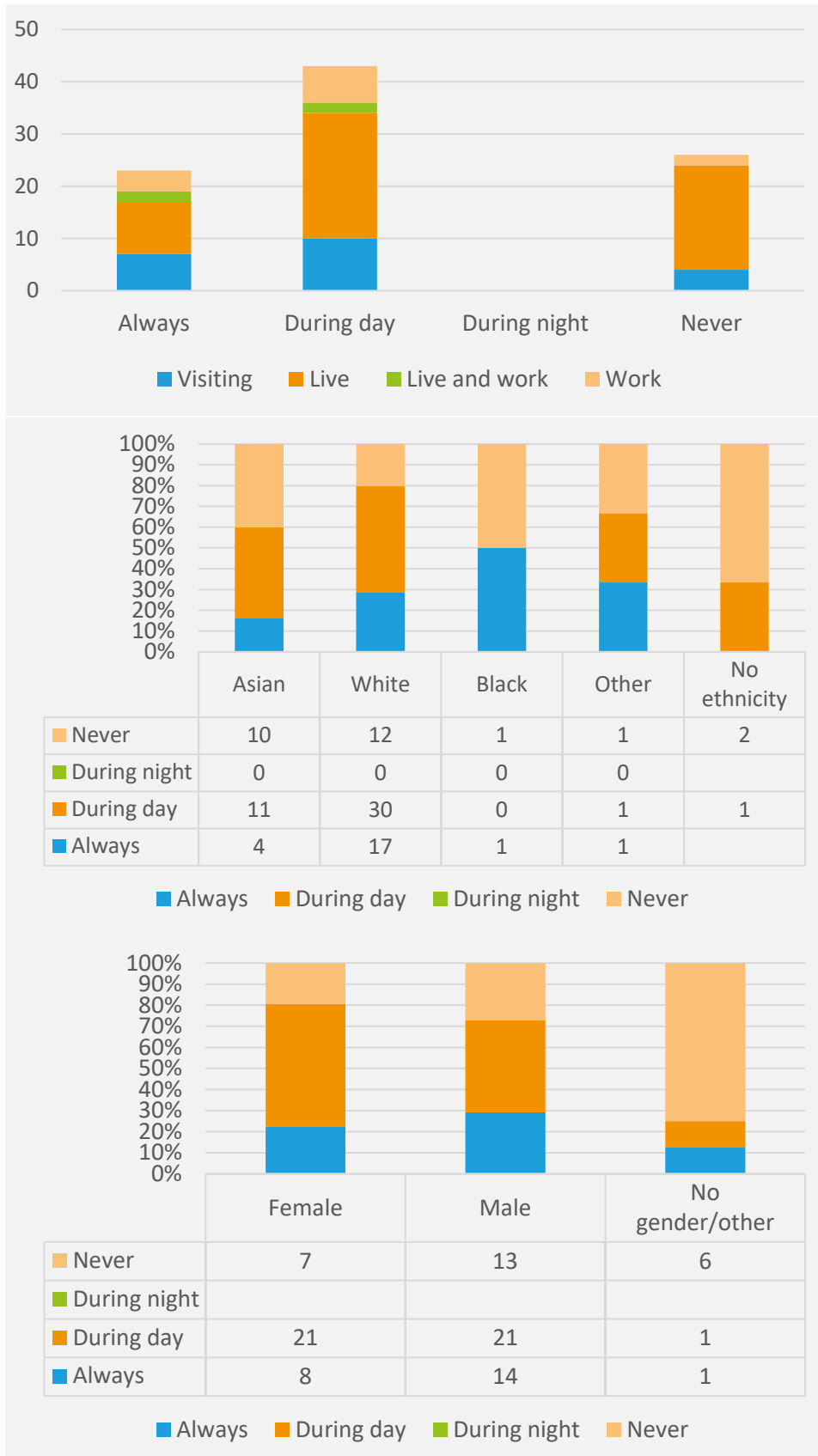
Figure 55 Word cloud of respondents' talents and skills in the Bell Foundry People Zone

The survey went on to gather the respondents' perceptions of the Bell Foundry area in relation to their personal safety and local crime. The Figure 16 below show how the different demographic groups consider their safety levels. Most respondents agreed that they felt safe during the day, however over a third (37%) of respondents who lived in the area said that they never felt safe, the breakdown being 8 Asian males, 2 white males, 5 females (white and other), and 5 non-binary or unknown gender. The youngest age group



were proportionately much more likely to *always* feel safe. The data shows that apart from those people who always felt safe, no one felt safe at night.

HOW SAFE DO PEOPLE IN THE BELL FOUNDRY PEOPLE ZONE FEEL



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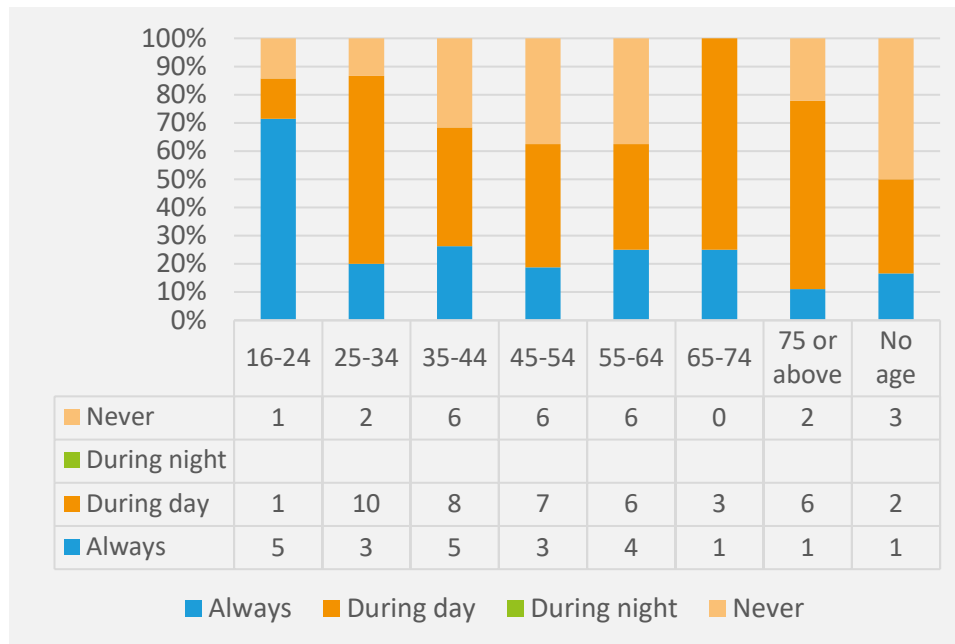
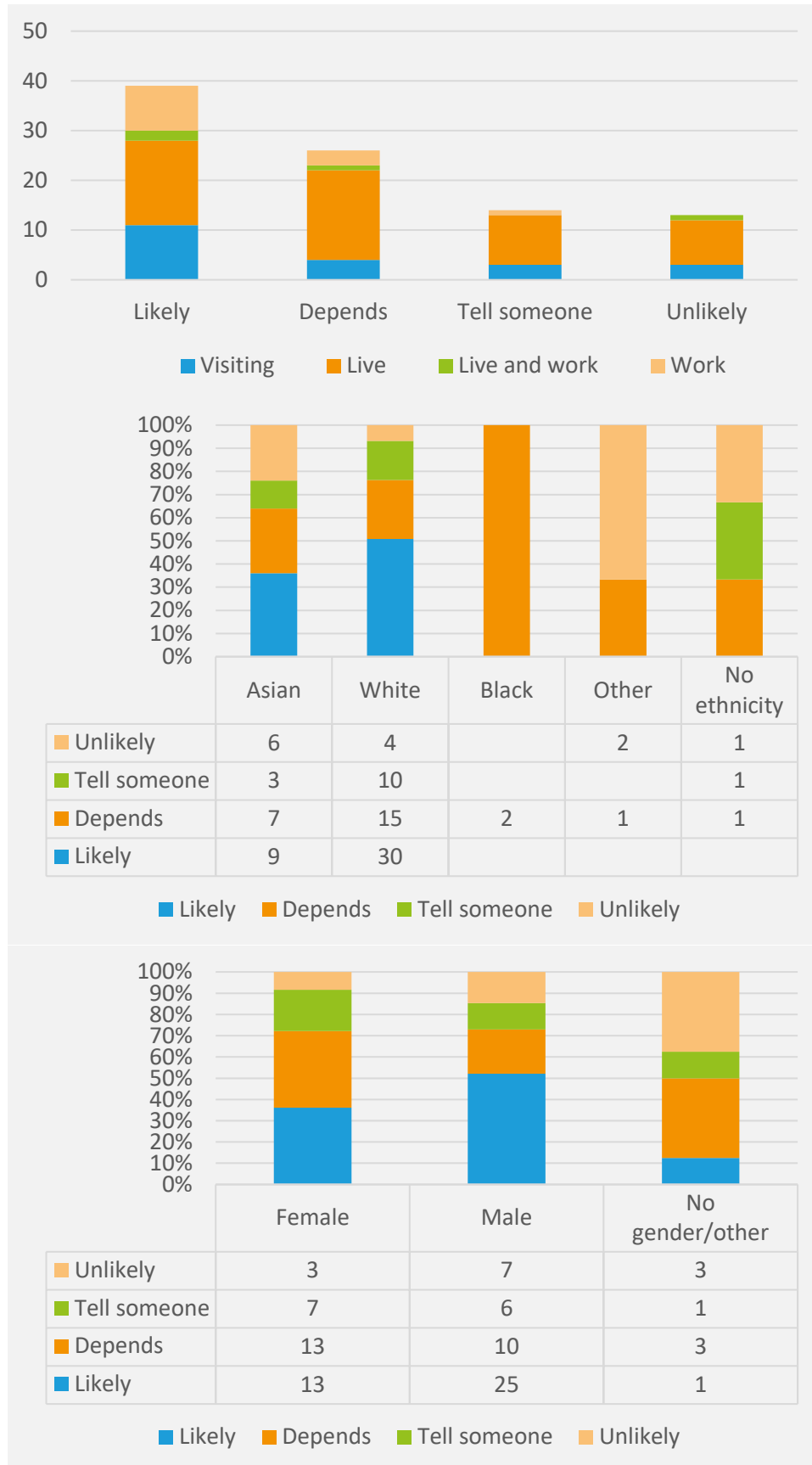


Figure 6 Perceptions of safety according to whether respondents live, work, or are visiting; proportion of responses according to their ethnicity; their gender and their age

Considering the likelihood to report a crime, proportionately those visiting or working in the area were more likely to report a crime whereas those living in the area were more inclined to assess the situation and decide what action to take. White respondents were most likely to report a crime of all ethnicities although the number of black or other respondents is too few to compare it statistically. Proportionately more Asian respondents said they were unlikely to report any crime. Males were also more likely to report a crime than females, who were more inclined to assess each situation or tell someone else rather than the police. The youngest age group is least likely to report a crime and the oldest age group is most likely to report it or to tell someone else rather than report it. See Figure 17 for a more detailed breakdown.



HOW LIKELY ARE PEOPLE IN THE BELL FOUNDRY PEOPLE ZONE TO REPORT A CRIME?



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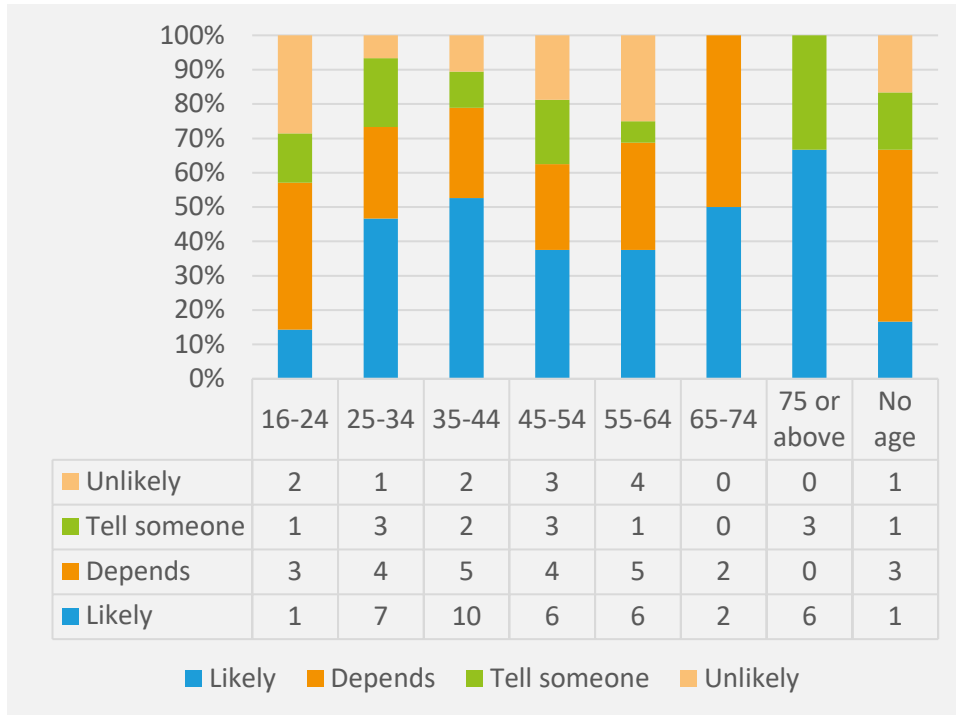


Figure 77 Likelihood of reporting a crime according to whether respondents live, work, or are visiting; proportion of responses according to their ethnicity; their gender and their age

The map below (Figure 18) highlights the areas of concern for personal safety that were mentioned in the survey responses. Peel Drive was the greatest area for concern with 18 people mentioning it, followed by Moira Street with 6 mentions. 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 were bin sheds, secluded car parks, back streets etc.



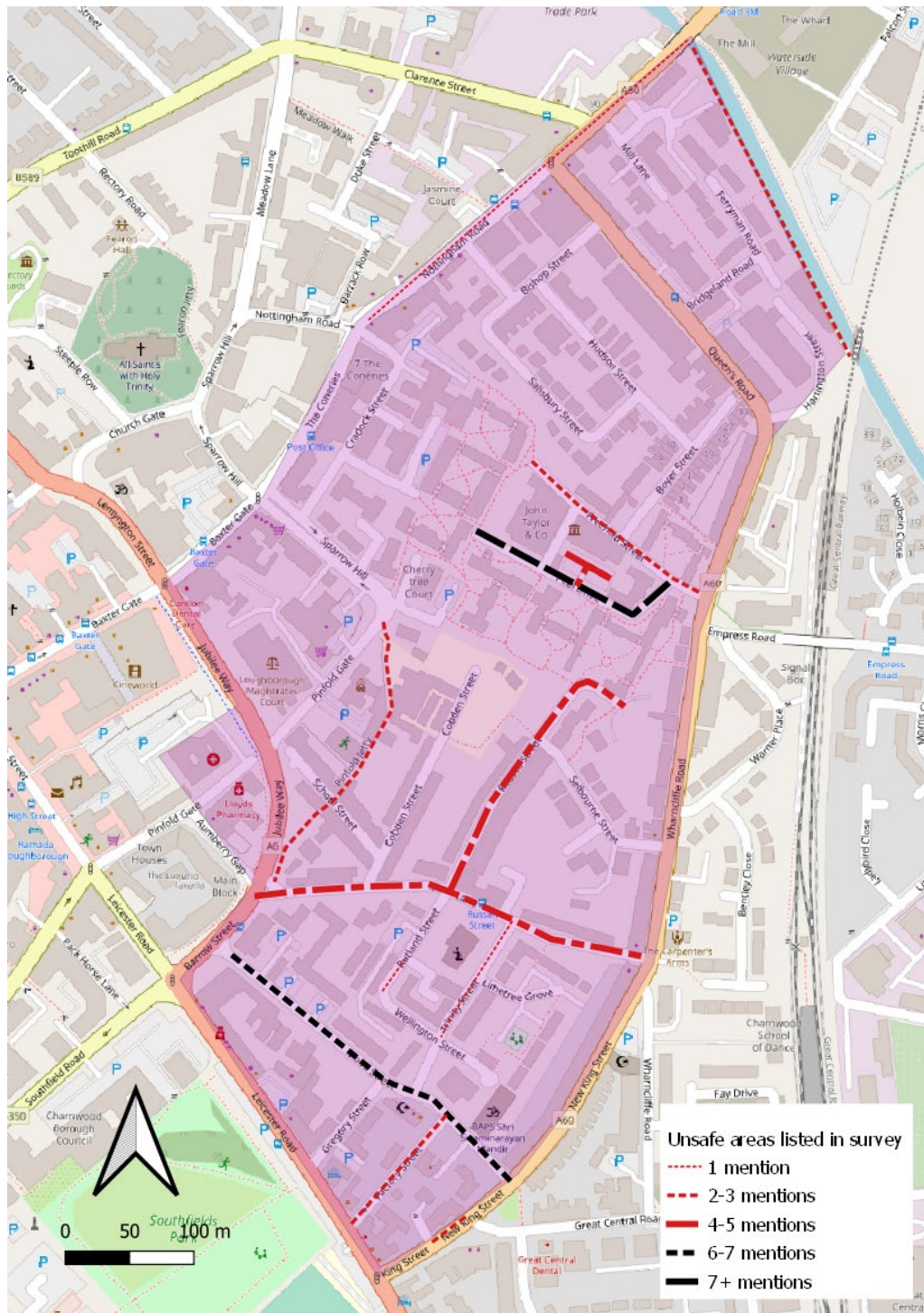
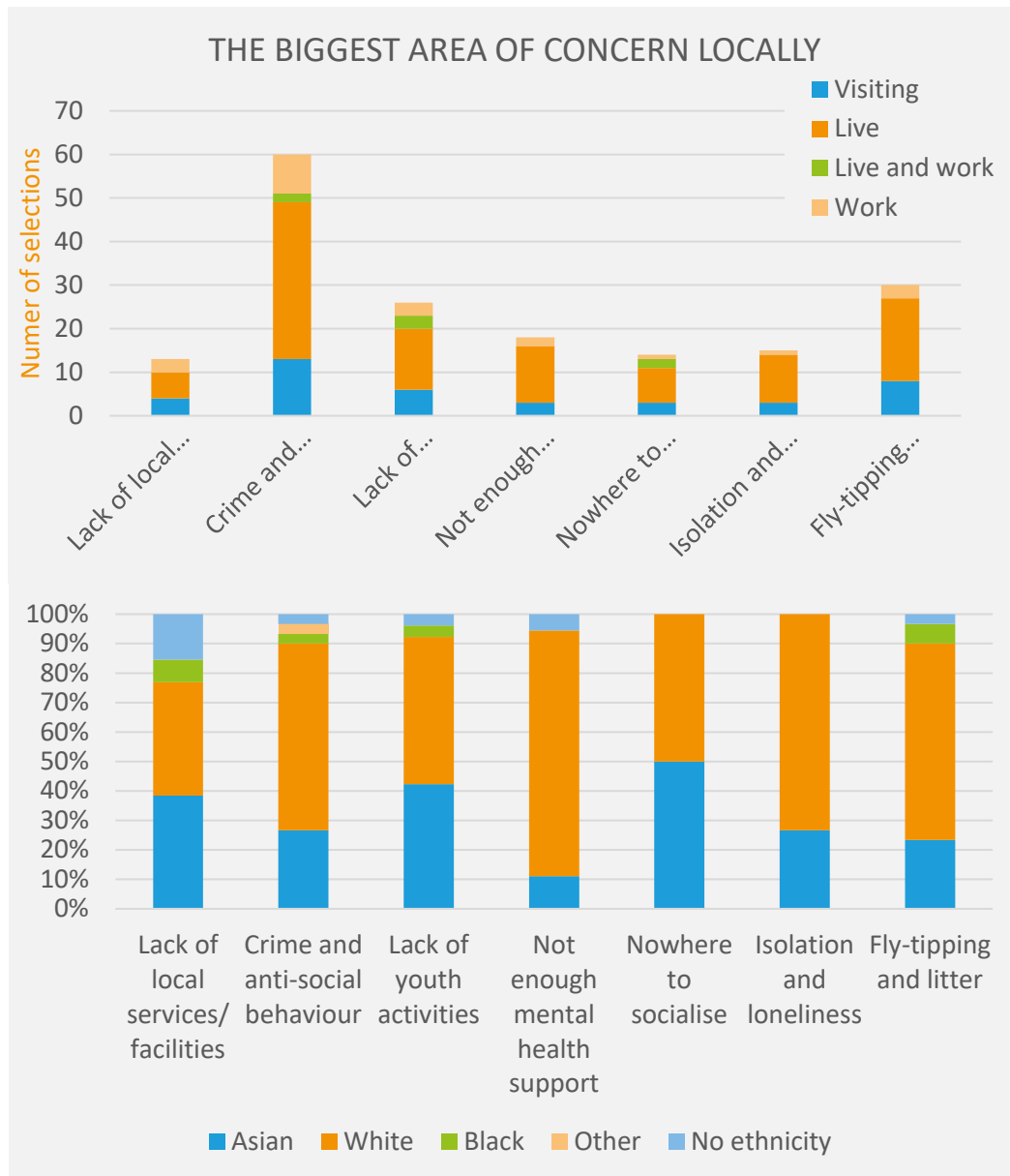


Figure 18 Map of Bell Foundry People Zone highlighting the respondents' areas of concern for personal safety

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 19 below shows that there are some differences between the different demographic groups. Fewer Asian respondents and no black respondents felt that not enough mental health support was a concern and instead having nowhere to socialise was considered a bigger local issue



for the Asian respondents. More females selected not enough mental health support than males. There were no clear differences across the age groups with all ages selecting almost all the issues listed, except the 65-74 age group which only had 4 respondents in its group and so difficult to compare. Otherwise, the only other difference is that the 55-64s did not choose 'nowhere to socialise'.



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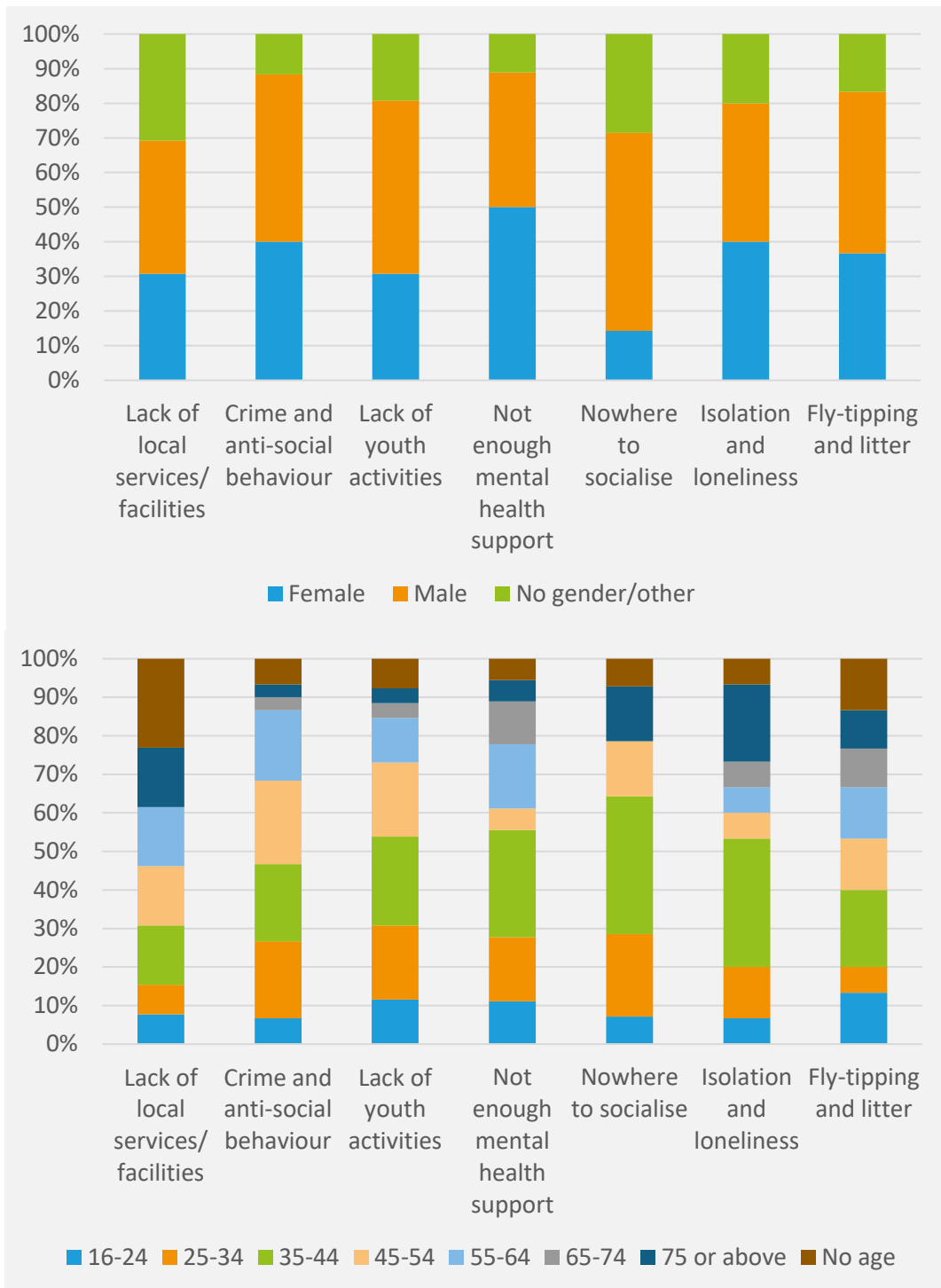


Figure 89 The biggest areas of concern locally, according to whether respondents live, work, or are visiting; proportion of responses according to their ethnicity; their gender and their age

Results of workshops and pop-ups

In July pop-up stands outside the Marios Tinenti Centre and at the Falcon Support Services Breakfast Drop-in Café collected further data. Participants added the post-it notes to a large map of the People Zone under the three different categories: What would you keep; what would you change and what could you give. Table 3 lists the contributions made.



Table 3 Results of the pop-up stands per category

What would you keep?	What would you change?	What could you give?
The Marios Tinenti Centre	Better play areas for young kids, like at Queen Street so people integrate more	Smiles to friends
The Marios Tinenti Centre	Training that is accessible, bring it to them. Include experience so there is more chance of a job later	Drawing
The Marios Tinenti Centre support people	Create a MUGA for basketball and other sports, managed by a sports club	Teaching
Prayer walks Friday	More activities for young people to encourage community and good practice	Constructive feedback
Greening in the area	The drugs, noise and scooters	Handyman/DIY
Park for kids	Get rid of drugs and Antisocial behaviour (ASB)	
Warwick Way Wednesdays	More vibrant, colourful, wall art	
Park and leisure centre	More police	
MTC allotment	Less police	
Louise (MTC)	Some residents and drugs	
All Together Place	More community events that bring people together	
	Address drugs issue – offer help/rehab	
	Get rid of drug dealers by the school	
	Build a lido	
	A fountain and wishing well and statue, e.g. Seb Coe	
	Set up knitting groups	
	Women only group that is not only for sex workers but for all women	
	More funding for organisations like the Falcon Centre	
	More day centres with arts & crafts / board games	
	More hostels	
	More care for grounds and litter	



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A total of 16 participants attended the workshop at Fearon Hall and included representatives from Marios Tinenti Centre, Fearon Hall, Charnwood District Council and Leicestershire County Council as well as local residents.

The responses from the Tale of Two Hands exercise are listed in Table 4. In total 31 skills or assets were documented compared with 17 requests for improvement. The more common skills available included practical skills such as DIY, decorating, cooking and electricals, as well as emotional skills, for example caring, talking, listening, befriending and helping.

Table 4 The responses from the Tale of Two Hands exercise

To give	Wanted
DIY x2	Computers
Gardening	Electrics
First aid	Decorating x2
Caring	Coping with deep water
PAT testing	Somewhere to meet people
Walking for health	Friends
Talking x2	Local knowledge
Electrical repairs	Gardening x2
Skip foraging	DIY
Cooking	Ramp for house
Eating	More friends closer than Fearon and other places
Listening x2	More people at John Storer House
Crosswords	Dealing with conflict management
Driving	Working in the community
Befriending	Bookkeeping
Foreign languages	
Contacts	
Disability allowance	
Networking	
Showing people how not to dance	
Helping	
Singing	
Meeting friends	
Fearon Hall	
Friendly	
Tidying up the community	
Decorating	
Building work	



The Pass the Parcel activity focused more on the community and the People Zone as a whole and allowed all participants a chance to speak. Under the four focus areas as prompted via the icons in each layer, several points were raised and discussed.



WHAT PEOPLE LOVED ABOUT BELL FOUNDRY

- Chapman Street Gardens
- People working together to improve the area
- Friends and the community
- Bird watching on a bird feeder
- The people who live here and the passion people have
- Marios Tinenti Centre get things done



WHAT CAN BE BUILT UPON OR IMPROVED IN BELL FOUNDRY?

- Better lighting so the spaces are more likely to be used
- More bins and litter picks to reduce litter
- Less swearing and drinking in public
- More police presence at certain times
- Allocation and enforcement of parking permits for blue badge holders
- Expanding Marios Tinenti Centre with longer opening hours
- The boundary should be expanded
- More noise monitoring equipment as noise pollution and ASB are underestimated and affect people
- Improve signposting so it doesn't just give people the run around



WHAT MIGHT BRING PEOPLE TOGETHER MORE IN BELL FOUNDRY?

- Find a common interest
- Adversity!
- Fun day, barbeque
- New equipment such as benches, playgrounds
- Nowhere in the middle to meet. Peel Drive, Chapman Street and Bell Foundry are all separate and never meet
- An activity at Fearon Hall for everyone
- A networking event with all different stands so people can meet the Housing Officer, Police, ASB Officer etc.
- Need more face-to-face things organised to improve relationships





WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE THE FUTURE TO LOOK LIKE IN BELL FOUNDRY?

- To see people valued more and more caring environment.
- Where the good is brought out in people
- No self-medication with drugs and alcohol
- More accessible paths and dropped kerbs



Interview Responses

Seven semi structured interviews were conducted with representatives from both the public and third sector. These comprised individuals from the police, local authority, public health, Loughborough Mosque, youth services, and community centre managers. 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 Bell Foundry 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 Bell Foundry People Zone, interviewees were asked their opinion on what the best thing about the Bell Foundry Estate and surrounding area is and the unanimous response was the people. One commented by stating that the vast majority of people, irrespective of the issues they may have, are amazing and wonderful. It was recognised that there are some beautiful people who do some beautiful things. The community was seen to be both tight-knit and tolerant with a mix of people from diverse backgrounds, religions, and ethnicities. When it came down to trying to address the local issues one interviewee stated that they are all singing from the same page. It was felt that people from outside the area stereotype it and think everyone takes drugs and does not work, which was said to be far from the truth.

"There are so many intelligent and interesting people who are interested in things. Circumstances, such as family or mental health breakdowns may have been what brought them to the area, but they are still fundamentally ordinary people."

Additional assets within the Bell Foundry People Zone, aside from the community itself, are those working to serve the people in the area both paid and unpaid. Interviewees were asked about their role within the community, and this was predominantly seen as providing support to residents. Some were quite focused on, for example, a particular age group, i.e., youth, or vulnerable group, such as sex workers. Others provide more universal support to those in need. Providing a point of contact between the different agencies; offering and signposting to different activities being run; providing safe spaces and time to listen to people's concerns and supporting them to address these were all mentioned. This may take the form of making a phone call to an agency, drafting an email, to physically taking people to different centres across Loughborough.



Nurturing Potential

Given that people were seen as the greatest asset within the area, respondents were asked whether they could identify any community champions who might be willing to take the lead on community projects. The initial response from some was that many individuals would not consider themselves in this way – that is to say 'community



champions'. There are volunteers, for example, who are talented at crafts and very creative but may not consider themselves as community champions. It was suggested that linking these individuals to people with similar interests could offer a potential opportunity to connect residents, build and nurture relationships, and generate new ideas. Other individuals were also identified whether for their clear-thinking can-do attitude, their gardening skills, willingness to run errands, or for their desire to clean-up the area by litter picking. It was suggested that some encouragement and skills sharing might be needed to support, embed, and mobilise such community members.

Community champions that either work or volunteer within institutions such as the Mosque, Marios Tinenti Centre (MTC), Fearon Hall and The Bridge were noted as being active. Some of these focus on community cohesion in terms of bringing the diverse community together. Others on more specific areas such as tackling economic hardships by helping at food banks and with hot meals, or in helping people with certain addictions. It was suggested that working with and supporting these kinds of people who have been working within the community, frequently as volunteers and for a long time, should be encouraged as they are the community champions. One idea put forward to support the Champions was:

"Maybe as a collective where they come together, whether it's through a barbecue or whether it's through a cup of tea once a quarter at the MTC and they say, okay, what practically do you need? How can we help you provide it? And whether it's things like access to a computer or knowing where to go to get some funding. That's something that the Officer of the OPCC could possibly do, or we as an association could help with"

The view the respondent conveyed here was that it should be about a form of low-level support that is not about an organisation coming in and doing it to 'them' but rather in an accessible format and structure that is less daunting. It should be based on what people want but we should point out that people are doing a cracking job. Whilst, through conversation, draw out what help might be needed to make things better?

From the discussions it was evident that there are many people who are quite capable within the area but sometimes it comes down to the question of whether they want to, or whether they see it being worthwhile. They may have also been previously discouraged from undertaking certain activities. For instance, when the question was posed about what support might be required to enable community champions to develop or lead on projects, one account shared related to two elderly people wanting to start litter picking within the area. The Council was asked whether they could provide them with litter pickers and the response was to direct them to Wilko and for them to purchase their own. The interviewee suggested that this was somewhat discouraging and perhaps such offers could be met halfway. Accounts were given about another local resident who has always been keen to improve the area by gardening and undertaking various small jobs, such as laying a few slabs outside the MTC. The individual eventually became frustrated as they reportedly would do something and then get told off by the Council for doing something



they were not supposed to. It was suggested that a degree of hand holding, and confidence building might be required for a lot of people.

"I think if they did it, then they know they can do it, but it's getting them to do it. It is keeping people's motivation up."

One respondent mentioned the fact that you can start a group, or a session and you might only get one or two people the first time. They went on to point out that you could look at that negatively or could think one or two people have given up their time to come and join. This comes back to points raised earlier around providing the relevant support so that people don't get disheartened. In looking at the types of activities or actions that could build the confidence of residents, the role of a Community Connector that could work on a one-to-one basis was suggested.

One of the respondents stated that ultimately, they want resident buy in, so residents need to be asked what they want. They acknowledged that sometimes agencies say what they plan to do and what they believe to be a good idea without asking residents whether it is something that will interest them or the area. They went on to say that one area might not be interested in something, but Chapman Street might, and those living around Russell Street might be interested in something completely different. As such, engagement should not just be a one off, or seen as a tick box exercise.



Identifying Barriers to Mobilisation

Nurturing and supporting the assets within the Bell Foundry People Zone was identified as a need but there were also certain barriers and challenges noted that may require some attention. The need to tackle peoples' fear and mindset was one such barrier. For example, a number of residents are on disability benefits but are often of the view that to get that benefit, they have to say, they can't do this and can't do that. One respondent stated that when they previously thought about setting up or doing physical activity groups some people would say

"Oh no, you don't want to do that cause if you're doing that, they'll take your benefits away from you."

They also suggested that the fear of moving from the status quo had a part to play. The interviewee was of the opinion that often people believed that this – being getting active - may be the worst thing that could ever happen to them rather than considering the fact that engaging in such activities could improve health, or that going to work could in fact be great. This respondent was not suggesting that everyone who is disabled should be forced into work but simply that some people are very stuck and if they could find a way to move forward, it would really improve their quality of life.

The lack of bricks and mortar infrastructure within the Bell Foundry area that could be used as a community venue for young people and members of the older community alike was identified as huge barrier. Particularly for the younger demographic where some of



the only places they have are the open parks. This was said to concern parents as these spaces are not monitored and are out of adult supervision. The perception of many parents is that it is in these places that negative grooming occurs, which then leads to crime, further alienation of the community, and towards further anti-social behaviour. It was noted that such facilities were historically available and provided activities for young people in a safe environment, such as the Bangladesh Social Association, Fearon Hall, and the Moira Centre, which is now an adult education centre. Furthermore, interviewees stated that where activities are available to young people from the area, these come with a cost, which a lot of people find prohibitive. For example, behind Loughborough Mosque is a dance centre, which is great community asset. Reportedly, most of those attending the dance club however, come from outside of the area because the fees are too expensive for most within the immediate local vicinity. The lack of accessible spaces for younger people was cited as the reason for building the park next to Cobden Primary School so that children from the estate would not have to cross major roads to get to Southfield or Great Central Park.



The Challenges Faced

In enquiring about some of the challenges faced by those either living, working, or supporting people in the area - other than funding and lack of time - one respondent emphasised the fact the challenges were multifaceted. Problems with drug addiction and associated crimes were raised throughout the research. Mental health was another area mentioned as presenting some of the most challenging issues alongside substance abuse, whether drugs or alcohol. The latter was considered a surface issue by many. The thought here was that people may self-medicate to deal with past trauma but have not yet understood that they may have mental health problems and as such do not seek medical help. One interviewee suggested that the benefit system acted as an 'enabler' that facilitates, in some form, people's addictions in that it provides free housing and financial support. This, coupled with the fact that people can source food through food banks, they believed, contributed to people being able to spend their Universal Credit or Personal Independence Payments to support their addictions.

The ability to be responsive by, for example, ensuring that there is recovery support accessible when and where people need it was seen as important but lacking. Turning Point, which is in the town centre, was mentioned by most respondents, but issues in getting people there at the point that they're ready to go, was reportedly a challenge. An Outreach Worker from Exaireo was said to be crucial in providing a responsive bridge as and when crises arise and acts as a steppingstone to try and encourage people into rehabilitation. There is, however, only one such Outreach Worker that operates in the area. The Falcon Centre was identified as one of the organisations doing great work in this regard, especially during recovery week, where they introduce people that feel ready to try different rehabilitation centres.



The transitory nature of some of the residents versus those who are long-term was suggested as an area of tension. One respondent spoke about the conflict between long-term and short-term residents, particularly in relation to community cohesion, and went on to state that considerable efforts have been made to try and ensure that this doesn't flare up or continue, which has reportedly been the case over several years. Another, spoke about the transient resident population and suggested that, through no fault of their own, the targeted placement of housing and support schemes results in drawing lots of people together with similar challenges. For example, some of the Falcon Centre's follow-on houses and some of the drug and alcohol rehabilitation properties are in the area. They felt that it was brilliant that as a small town, there is a lot of support, but the concentration of these in a particular area coupled with the social housing needs, and the needs of some of the people, doesn't help to build a sense of community.

Current housing policy and how people come to live in the flats across the Bell Foundry Estate and some of the terraced housing was considered potentially problematic. Where previously, certain age restrictions are believed to have been imposed on tenants within certain blocks to meet the needs of older single people who require smaller properties, these have since been changed. It was suggested that such policies may have been introduced to create a blended society or to address increasing demand, alongside vacant properties. However, there have been occasions where tenants have been living alongside one another harmoniously and a new tenant moves in, is found to be a drug dealer, and upsets the dynamics within the whole block for prolonged periods. The Council Housing policy is such that they have a duty of care to provide housing irrespective of whether a new tenant has come from a forced closure elsewhere. One interviewee expressed the unfairness of such policies where, for example, someone who perhaps may have lived with their parents into their thirties and is looking to branch out and get a tenancy of their own and can't get on to the housing list.

"It's dreadful to know that somebody who's led a decent life. They've got no alcohol issues, no crime issues, no problems like that... The only way they can get on the list is if they decide they're gonna lie. And they're gonna say, mom's having to say, you can't stay here anymore... And that is wrong because these people are good people, and they don't want to deceive anyone"

Time and resources were the key limiting factors cited by all in preventing individuals and their specific institutions from expanding on their existing responsibilities or activities. Relationships were considered another challenge. For example, the short-term nature of some residents *and* public sector employees was seen as limiting the development of relationships that take time to build. Relationships between different service providers and residents was also seen as challenging. Often residents are unsure of who to contact for what, and how to deal with changes to different government and council policies. The bureaucracy involved in trying to navigate the system, even for those who are familiar with it, was considered difficult and frustrating.



It was felt that there is a lack of understanding from elected members within the council about what people from the area are facing day-to-day. For example, the decision to start charging for collecting bulky waste may not cause a problem in wards where people either have cars or can pay for the collection. Many people in the Bell Foundry area don't have those options and therefore it was suggested that this is one of the things that drives fly tipping.



Tackling the Challenges

The discussions around tackling drug additions and associated crimes were very much grounded on preventative measures such as removing demand and through education. For example, providing early years and secondary school education to teach children and young people about the impacts and effects of drugs as they grow up was mentioned as one approach that could go some way to ensuring they might be less likely to turn to drugs. The Force has designated teams that go into schools, but it was suggested that going into schools, such as Cobden Primary School, would be better delivered by local Police Officers and better received by the students where they are more likely to see the same Officers out and about in their community. This resonates with sentiments expressed throughout the research in relation to trust and building relationships.

It was thought that having more facilities available within the community to address people's issues and additional human resources - trained people that can provide counselling, therapy sessions, and drug rehabilitation - would alleviate a lot of the problems.

Enforcement was seen as a necessary accompaniment to tackling the drug issues but in and of itself, insufficient. One respondent stated that people acting with impunity need to be addressed and there needs to be a very clear message that this is not tolerated in the area and that people should not have to look out of their window and see drug dealing happening in the open air and seemingly nothing being done about it. Whether people are reporting that they've seen it is another matter. It was acknowledged that the public like to see warrants and people arrested, which looks good for the police and partner agencies but has not solved the issue in the area, to-date, and that you can't enforce your way out of the problem.

It was noted that the police are good at supporting vulnerable people to get out of situations, who have perhaps had their houses taken over by drug dealers. One representative did question, however, whether they are helping people in the right way. For example, people are often referred to Turning Point but the question around whether the agencies are necessarily doing everything that they can or adopting a holistic approach to better peoples' lives was questioned. The lack of desire and preparedness, as a society, to invest in tackling addiction was described as short-sighted. Whereas, investing in rehabilitation, was deemed to provide potential savings to the public purse in the long run.



Closure orders are an instrument used to prohibit access to a premises for a specified period. On the one hand it was felt that where people have breached their tenancy agreement it should not be tolerated nor dismissed simply because it's within the Bell Foundry Estate and peoples' view is that 'that's what the area is like'. On the other hand, it was acknowledged that removing troublesome tenants can be of comfort to neighbours but this often either displaces the problem to another location or leaves a void, which is potentially filled by someone with a similar problem. It was stated that a lot of people are not accepting of the drug dealing that happens but are rather somewhat apathetic to it and don't expect anything different. One interviewee said that agencies need to be less accepting and need to challenge this behaviour.

One of the respondents spoke about the need for the Council to be more stringent and enforce the probationary period policy for new tenants, which could go some way to handling parts of the problem. They suggested that people would not have to live so long, suffering anti-social behaviour or criminal activity from their neighbours, and perhaps the Council would find it easier to remove tenants, rather than having to go to court. Using this policy could be effective to disturb the set-up of new drug dens and drug grows because people would be forced to continually move, and grow houses take time to establish, was the point being made.

An interesting opinion put forward during one of the interviews was the fact that much of the focus and energy appears to be spent on those causing problems within the community, who are by far in the minority. The question they posed was what if greater focus was given to those that are living peacefully, fulfilling their responsibilities, and celebrating that? It was suggested that people may then feel like they're being invested in, the balance is then tipped away from unacceptable behaviour, and everything else is celebrated. They went on to suggest that if all that is being reported is closure orders and the negative things, then all people will think about is the negatives. What about the nice people in the gardens? What about the people who get up every day and go to work? These questions posed links to other comments made about perceived reputation and the need to change perceptions. Notably, the respondent accepted that this was easy to point out and far more difficult to address. In the broader sense another also suggested more emphasis should be made on celebrating the successes of the area on a wider scale and not just focusing on the negatives, which was felt that much of the current communication does.



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. Most respondents felt that this was frequently not the case. The unanimous sentiment was that there was significant room for improvement. Internally, at the organisational level, particularly when dealing with different departments within the council there were challenges identified, such as people working in silos. In addition, response times, issues



with communication and feedback, and a lack of joined-up working were also cited as being problematic across service providers.

One example mentioned in connection to poor communications was linked to a spate of burglaries that were repeatedly being reported. The general perception from residents, however, was that there was a lack of follow-up or feedback to those reporting such incidents, which in turn leads to a lack of willingness to report further cases. This was brought to the attention of the head of the police for the Charnwood area and the local MP prior to the Covid-19 outbreak. At that time, commitments from the MP and the head of the police were made, to make a more concerted effort to increase communication levels with the rest of the community and the victims to try and ensure that they can prevent further burglaries from happening. It was suggested that arranging such meetings to provide an avenue for people to speak and address the police and MP directly made a difference to those in attendance. Subsequent meetings were planned but have not occurred post-pandemic yet were still thought desirable.

Similarly, where vulnerable people have been identified as being targeted by individuals carrying out crimes, it was felt that such information *should* be shared with the relevant agencies so that people can be further supported within the community and any necessary safeguarding measures implemented straight away. It was mentioned that difficulties arise when that support doesn't work, where people drop-off rehabilitation, for example, and that information is not shared with the relevant agencies. Better communication would alert both the police and other service providers of an individual in the community, who has no support and has been left with little to no knowledge of the area. How do we then try and reengage them back, was the question posed.

One interviewee disclosed that frequently, things get drawn to the wrong agency. For example, residents may speak to the police about a noise complaint, or something related to ASB but the police are not, in fact, the right agency for noise and it should be addressed by the Council. This suggests that greater awareness around the correct reporting procedures is required. It was suggested that this is where the police and the council need to work better together because ultimately people get passed from pillar to post, especially in relation to drug dealing, which was said to ultimately be an anti-social behaviour issue but it's where the council and the police need to work jointly.

It was noted that a lot of positive things occur behind the scenes but in the absence of any updates or feedback on outcomes people are not always aware and greater awareness would make people feel better and safer. Again, many of the points raised came down to inefficient communication, a lack of interconnection, and joint-up delivery.



Adopting a Different Approach

In exploring the potential or desire to expand on existing responsibilities or activities there were several areas touched upon. Several respondents expressed the desire to shift from trying to deal with the symptoms faced by community members and having



more time to do proactive preventative work. It was acknowledged, however, that this takes time and investment, and that the impact may not be seen for five to ten years. One interviewee alluded to the fact that current funding cycles, timelines and reporting requirements do not generally provide such support, particularly where ‘instant’ results are not visible.

A wish to provide safe private spaces for residents to share any challenges they may be facing during times of crisis was expressed. Several respondents mentioned the desire to be able to be more responsive in the support they provide. This was typically linked to being able to call on the appropriate professional service providers when the need arises, so as not to miss opportunities, as is often the case. Offering anything from parenting classes to leisure activities, financial services, or substance abuse support, in the spaces where people are comfortable, was thought would yield better outcomes for many. This was deemed especially true for those individuals who may suffer from anxiety or mental health issues.

From the perspective of the police, it was about building relationships and trust with residents by, for example, being present at more community events to offer advice alongside other agencies and carrying out more patch walks. One respondent expressed their desire to ensure that the people of their community get the best of what is available for them, irrespective of who they are or where they come from. They communicated the desire to give back to people of their neighbourhood in terms of what they did and didn't have when they were growing up, to give everyone the opportunity so that they have a better standing in society.

One of the respondents felt that it was extremely important to tackle mental health but admitted it was not easy. They mentioned the great work being done at Fearon Hall and MTC but spoke about a couple of cases where very vulnerable people who needed adult social care had referrals placed, but the subsequent lack of communication from adult social care following the referral culminated in nothing particularly happening. They felt that one of the things missing in the area is a mental health café with mental health professional that different providers can collaboratively work with to make sure they get quicker results. The interviewee went on to state that Fearon Hall spend a lot of time when it comes to mental health and crisis that pulls them away from their day job where in fact, it's not their day job. They strongly believed that having a mental health professional in the area would free up time for staff at the MTC and Fearon Hall to get on with their day jobs and look after the elderly or whoever needs support.

Bringing professionals, support organisations and other public sector workers such as Turning Point, The Bridge, and Social Services into facilities on a regular basis that are frequented by residents was proposed as a more proactive approach that could also address some of the concerns around communication and joint-up working. Increasing the amount of outreach work within the community was another. However, a couple of the respondents suggested that monthly surgeries and bringing providers in often doesn't work because by the time people are ready to open-up, service providers are



recalled to carry out their wider work and can no longer spare the time for such a small geographic area, especially if timely results are not produced as proof of success. It was emphasised by one interviewee that for the collaborative and joined up working to effectively deliver, there needs to be one person that has the budget, adequate timeframe (three years were suggested as a minimum), to strategically co-ordinate and get things done.

Holding regular multi-agency meetings to provide an opportunity to both capitalise on the different strengths and address areas of weaknesses could further ensure that there's a collective effort to move in the direction needed. The Loughborough East Development Group meeting was noted as one of the partner agency meetings that takes place. Some actors may not however be present during these due to timings, location, not having been invited, and/or the lack of relevant contact details.

It was suggested that both steps previously mentioned would help build relationships with key individuals across agencies and organisations. The dynamics can change, however, where individuals move on to new roles, and relationships need to be rebuilt but may then lack the same affinities. The high turnover of Beat Officers was one such example cited where one individual who was well-known within the community and had built trust amongst both residents and service providers moved on from their post. Due to the subsequent high turnover of predecessors such connections and level of trust has been difficult to rebuild.



Trust Within the Community

Trust within and amongst the community and other agencies was identified as a deep-seated issue. Not just with the OPCC but with any outside agency. There were mixed views about the impact of increasing the police presence in the area for example. One suggestion was that this would only make a difference if it was sustained in the long term and involved a regular Beat Bobby that was in the area and was there to help someone who was feeling down and could signpost people to where they needed to go. The need to build up a community relations officer, as it was historically, was echoed by several individuals.

Residents are very reluctant to trust new people and as such time needs to be given so that people become familiar with who the outsiders are. The effectiveness of the monthly beat surgeries was raised by several respondents and questions about its potential reach outside of the residents that frequent places like MTC. Rather than holding a beat surgery it was suggested a better way of working would be for the police to just pop-in to places like MTC and if they happen to be there when people are around, people may decide to talk to them. It was mentioned that people are less bothered about the uniform once they know the person. One respondent noted that there are some regular Police Community Support Officers (PCSO) that visit places such as MTC and will sit and chat with people and have cups of coffee with the residents and then leave. Because of this, on occasions residents express the fact that they've been waiting to see them and use the opportunity



to talk with the PCSO about a particular issue in private. This works because they are known to the residents and have made themselves visible.

“We've got to be a bit smarter, latch onto things rather than go right, we're running a beat surgery at the MTC and expect loads of people to come down and engage with us because it just doesn't happen”

The fact that the police provide the option of reporting incidents online was raised by one respondent. They went on to state that if people are fearful of those organisations and think that there's no point in reporting things, because nothing gets done, which was suggested is one of the reasons why people don't report crimes, alternative ways to engage with and encourage residents need to be provided.

“...Thinking logistically about the people you want to engage with, finding ways that can make them want to do it rather than what organisations feel is practical or easy if it doesn't work for the people that they're supposed to be engaging”.

It was acknowledged that no one is expecting things to be solved overnight but small, low-level action that cumulatively will add up to make small changes is needed and less talking. One comment made was that if people can see things happening in the area, that would make a difference. Whether it comes out through the schools, the Mosque, whether it's less about the authority and more about the message and managing expectations about what the OPCC can do is likely to gain more respect from the residents was the view.

It was recognised by one interviewee, who regularly interacts with the wider community, that residents have no faith in police and no faith in the council. However, where there have been incidents in which a property has been closed, based on information provided and in a matter of weeks, the feedback from residents has been positive, even in areas that are quite anti-police. The fact that people contact the police all the time and don't see any changes was reiterated by several respondents. The police do, however, share what they have done via social media. This comes back to the comments made earlier regarding knowing the audience and using the appropriate communication channels and mediums to reach them. It was pointed out that leaflets are circulated in neighbouring properties when specific action has been taken, which can have a positive influence on the levels of communication that ensues. Giving residents the mobile numbers of police known to them, and whom they know have previously acted, was suggested as a positive and proactive way to break-down barriers and improve trust.



Investing in the Bell Foundry People Zone

When asked how £5,000 could be spent in the community some responses centred on targeting crime prevention measures, such as installing/fixing lighting and the installation of CCTV. Enhancing the aesthetic appearance of the local environment by planting up areas in a similar fashion to what has been done in Chapman Street. The idea, as suggested, is to implement changes so the area is not perceived as scary and to



encourage residents to take pride in their surroundings. Issues with lighting and perceived safety arose on several occasions throughout the research.

One of the respondents suggested the money should be spent tackling some of the points raised earlier in relation to existing housing policy and the integration of new tenants. Their view was that new tenants, many of whom may have never lived independently or been fortunate enough to have been taught life skills at home, should be supported with some of the basic skills needed to run a home i.e., cooking; cleaning; managing finances; paying bills etc., and providing basic education around what it means to live in, and be a member of, a cohesive community where people are respectful to one another.

Several of the responses related to investing into places with existing physical infrastructure. For example, extending the MTC building to enable them to have more private spaces for people to talk but also to extend their capacity to run activities targeting children etc. Similarly, investing in places like Fearon Hall was proposed as a way to support the many people suffering from loneliness and isolation whether due to their age or other health conditions. Offering subsidised excursions was another idea proposed to combat issues of isolation. Having places where people can go, learn, socialise, and work towards a career and setting goals were also touched upon.

Investing in relationship building via community connectors to overcome barriers between different sections of the community was seen as a valuable place to inject resources. Identifying like-minded people with skills that they want to share and learn from others, as mentioned by some when considering local community champions. It was acknowledged that this would need a level of consistency, however, investing in something to kickstart a process of bringing people together would be beneficial. Providing small funding pots for community led projects that do not require arduous application forms was mooted.

Targeting young people within the area by providing them with a safe place that they can go to and socialise so that they are nurtured and engaged in their early years was seen as critical. One interviewee was keen to initiate a creative craft group for children that they could attend directly from school. Activities could involve making a collaborative mural, for example, that could be put up in the estate to generate positive memories within families that they can hold onto when they're older. This was also linked to suggestions around offering alternative educational opportunities for both parents and youths, in addition to trying to increase job opportunities in the area.



A Vision for the Area

When respondents were asked for their five-year vision for the Bell Foundry People Zone, given unlimited resources, one response was that it would be an area that looks nice and one in which you could walk through and say that this looks like a really nice place to live. An area that is reenergized, properties are decorated, the gardens and park are well kept,



and people want to live there. Another imagined it to be calmer and more pleasurable to live for the residents. There was no expectation that the scenery or anything would change for that respondent, but it would be a lot cleaner and there would be more respect.

“Seeing the area as an ordinary place with no stigma attached to it, where people who live in the area don't feel negatively about it in the way they do, nor do they feel it's forgotten about, or they're not valued. More of a sense of community, even though there is a sense of community, but more so. It just needs to be people going about their ordinary lives and life.”

One of the interviewees said they expected that crime would be something that people say doesn't occur and it's a safe place.

“Children should be able to go from their houses to the parks without fear and women able to go from one end to the other without fear. It would be nice and clean. People would have jobs and there would be no need to resort to such crimes. People would be as they are right now - nice and loving - but everyone would have less stress. With less stress, people would live longer, would be healthier and happier. The area would be a place wherein everyone wants to move into and stay instead of just waiting to move out.”

One respondent expressed the desire for it to be a place where people have the skills to be assertive and can say no to what is unacceptable. The ability for residents to express their wish to live in peace and harmony; to know that their children are safe; they are safe without outsiders coming in and causing issues. Another said that it would be a place in which residents are comfortable in warning people who don't take heed that they will be reported, and that they feel empowered to know they are able to do that without fear of reprisals and comeback.

Desires were that the area is physically more attractive, more resources are put into the area from a practical point, such as improved bin collection, and if there are issues, that they are dealt with quickly. Ultimately, it really should not be an 'us and them' type of area.

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.

Drugs was an issue that a lot of people brought up, both dealing and using drugs. One person who identified as an addict said it wasn't right that they were dealing near the school where children were. A distinction was also made between getting rid of 'druggies' and getting rid of drugs – i.e., more help for addicts and less blame attached. It was also suggested that whilst there is some help for people at crisis point, more effort could be put into preventative measures or catching situations earlier.

The work of the community leaders is essential but can be difficult to quantify as is often a case of picking up the slack where people have fallen through the cracks. Examples given were helping a resident to avoid eviction; providing debt advice; offering practical and emotional support to report challenging neighbours and providing a welcoming place for people to go. A particularly concerning point raised was the lack of connectedness between service providers, especially around safeguarding issues. In one case, after several reports raised by different agencies to social services, the resulting action was a telephone call to the vulnerable person to check on their wellbeing and the case was closed.

The community itself can also offer support, one community worker explained a situation where a young child had gone missing and the whole street instantly went out to search for them, being assigned different areas to cover until they were found.

Bell Foundry 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 showed that people would like the opportunity to volunteer, a category for 'Opportunities' was included, similarly, as people wanted more social activities, 'Events' was added to promote any community get-togethers. Figure 20 shows a screenshot of the map with the different categories visible. The community assets were divided into nine categories to make the information easier to navigate, as follows:

- Advice and support
- Community groups
- Education, training and employment
- Faith and spirituality
- Health and fitness
- Local business
- Meeting place/venue
- Opportunities
- Events

At the time of writing, there are 73 entries on the map covering the different categories. Any contributions from the public are moderated by a Steering Group member before going live on the map, in order to maintain integrity. A training session with Steering Group members was delivered 12th October 2022.

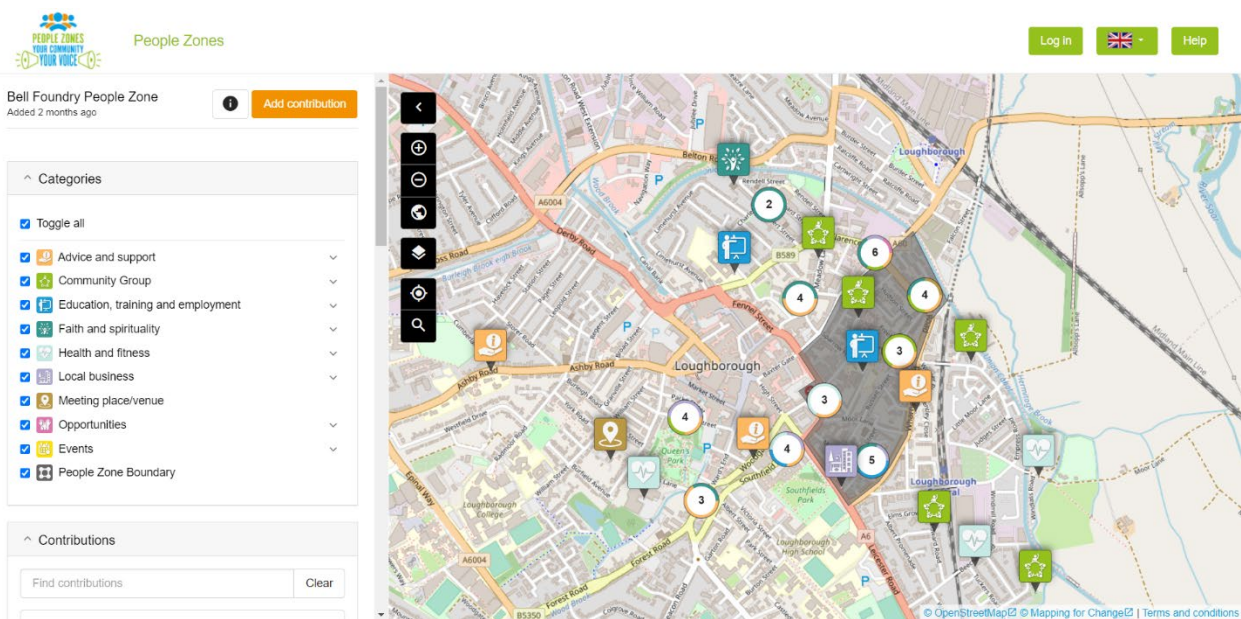


Figure 209 A screenshot of the map with the different categories visible



Summary of Findings

Crime and safety

Most people felt safe during the day but over one third of people didn't feel safe at night and this was particularly apparent among females and Asian males. The crime data between May 2021- April 2022 provided by the OPCC shows that the average number of crimes committed per hour gradually increases from 08:00 with the highest level of crime occurring around midnight and smaller peaks at 10:00 and 20:00. The average amount of crime at 9:00 and 10:00 (morning) is similar to the levels at 21:00 and 22:00 (evening). Therefore, the perception of safety may not mirror the reality or crime is going under-reported.

The main location where people felt unsafe was Peel Drive, followed by Moira Street. There were some people who felt unsafe in busy areas near the shops and others who felt less safe in quiet dark areas. This highlights the challenges in addressing perceptions of safety and building trust when there is a clear divide over what 'feels safe'.

When people were asked to say what the biggest issues in the area were, most agreed that it was crime / antisocial behaviour and drugs / drug dealing. However, there were different ways of tackling the drugs issue with some suggestions of preventative measures such as more support for mental health and addiction and others focused more on it being a police and housing issue to move the drug users and dealers away from the neighbourhood and empower residents to report it.

Trust

Overall, the survey showed that 42% of people were likely to report a crime to the police. However, among those who lived in the area, this dropped to 31% with most saying it would depend on the situation. Almost a fifth of the respondents who live in the Bell Foundry People Zone said that they would tell someone else, for example a community leader, rather than report a crime to the police. This raises two important questions: why do people feel that they might not go to the police? And, would 20% of crime go unnoticed by the authorities without the support network of community leaders?

Suggestions for building trust in the OPCC and police in general included a number of different approaches, but all involved an increased presence, communication and visible action. One suggestion was for the local police officers to deliver the school engagement programmes so that they would start to become a familiar face. On a similar note, others felt that keeping the local police officers in post for longer would help, offering more time to build the trust. Holding a community meet and greet session for Police, council ASB team etc was an idea raised during the workshop.

In more general terms, the community need to believe that they will be listened to, from whichever agency they approach, be it ASB team or street cleaning. Not seeing any direct action as a result of their complaints or reports has done and will continue to discourage working together. Issuing closure orders are not only a way of removing residents who



cause trouble but also a visible way of showing that residents are being listened to if they report a crime.

Communication is important where for whatever reason actions may not be taken straight away. This was mentioned in connection with a spate of burglaries where poor communication meant that those affected by the crimes felt unheard and unempowered to report it in future.

Assets

The main benefit of living in the area was seen as its proximity to the town centre and local amenities such as shops and schools. Although some residents have a limited travel horizon, preferring to remain in the familiar territory of the Bell Foundry area, the town centre of Loughborough being an approximate 10-minute walk away appeals to many residents.

The second most popular aspect of living around Bell Foundry was the people and the community. This was listed in the survey and referenced in the workshop during Pass the Parcel. This was meant in different ways, ranging from living close to their family to feeling a sense of community pride. This was also a point that came through in all the interviews – the people are the biggest asset. In order to build on this huge asset however, work is required to build confidence, skills and reverse years of negative conditioning in individuals. Community champions already exist, but they may not even recognise it in themselves.

A point about potentially focussing on the wrong members of the community was raised during an interview. A lot of energy and resources are directed towards a minority who make trouble for the majority. Could some efforts be directed to celebrating those living peacefully and behaving well, thereby tipping the balance from unacceptable behaviour, and everything else is celebrated and going some way towards improving the perceived reputation of the area.

The community leaders are a great asset to the Bell Foundry People Zone. Many go above and beyond their remit to fill in the gaps in provision. As well as supporting individuals directly with financial advice, emotional and practical support, they provide access and signposting to resources such as food banks and leisure facilities and ultimately a trustworthy point of contact. Better joined-up working between agencies would improve their impact on individuals and provide more effective signposting.

Potential

There is a great deal of potential for community development within the Bell Foundry People Zone. Over half of the survey respondents (55%) said they would like more opportunities to volunteer, and this was seen across ethnicities, ages and genders. In addition, there is a wealth of skills and talents that were uncovered during the pop-up events, workshops and surveys. Whilst it is too simplistic to simply matchmake the community's needs with the skills, it is encouraging to see that some connections could be made. For example, a number of survey respondents and workshop attendees said



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that they can offer befriending and listening skills which could seek to address the isolation and loneliness expressed by 15 survey respondents.

Ideas for how to improve the area included: private, safe spaces for consultations and reporting crime; adding colour/vibrancy and improving the look of the place to instil pride; removing litter; encouraging more groups like Chapman Street Gardens to take ownership of spaces; providing more play areas for young children to encourage socialising with parents too; holding more community events to bring people together; creating indoor places to socialise; improving accessibility of paths; making people feel valued and bringing out the best in them; supporting people before they turn to self-medication.

Recommendations and next steps

- The survey found that the most used channel to find out about local news and events was social media but local newspapers, word of mouth and local groups were also well used. Social media is used by all age groups, ethnicities, and genders in the Bell Foundry People Zone. Therefore, a mixed method approach of promoting and informing should be used for the People Zone.
- The survey was promoted through means other than via local organisations, such as posting on Neighbourhood Link but only five respondents said they had heard of People Zones before receiving the survey suggesting a low awareness of the programme which could be improved.
- New services and programmes should be accessible – not just in terms of cost or mobility but also within people’s social realities of anxiety, addiction, and mental health issues. Therefore, local activities should be held in a familiar, comfortable place with trusted leaders to reach the most vulnerable members of society. The shared use of space could be considered as an option as many people used several services.
- Community events to bring people together and build connections slowly. Consider a central space so all feel welcome, such as residents from Peel Drive, Chapman Street and Bell Foundry
- Efforts to encourage multicultural activities in the area as there was very little crossover seen between the services/spaces the Asian survey respondents accessed compared to the white respondents
- Offer different types of volunteering opportunities, with mentoring support and /or formal recognition where possible. Peer to peer role models could motivate new potential champions and help to dispel the myths around benefits and change mind-sets
- Consider long-term preventative action rather than treating the symptoms. Fund the usually ‘unfundable’ because it is too risky, no instant impact, or even just boring!
- Bringing together the different agencies to work better together and in turn be more responsive
- Generate greater awareness around the correct reporting procedures and who to contact in different situations
- Finding ways of offering more immediate support for those in crisis or wanting to change, i.e., a bridge between the residents and longer-term support providers such as Turning Point
- Maintain an ongoing OPCC presence in the People Zone, offering support to residents and community groups.



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Appendix A

Bell Foundry Resident Survey Questions

The map to the right shows the boundary of the Bell Foundry 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 Bell Foundry area?
- 2) What do you like most about living in the Bell Foundry area?
- 3) What do you like least about living in the Bell Foundry 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?
- 10) How safe do you feel travelling around the Bell Foundry area?
 - Always feel safe
 - Feel safe during the day
 - Feel safe at night
 - Never feel safe



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- 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 Bell Foundry 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 Bell Foundry 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?