

Creating a City of Nature for Birmingham - Consultation

1. Background and objectives

Birmingham City Council will be consulting with local communities, businesses and other stakeholders in the production of a City of Nature Plan.

The City of Nature 25-year Plan sets out the city's ambitious plans for our green spaces. To support and protect our green spaces, a transformation changes in the way we treat nature is needed. Challenges such as climate change, air pollution and environmental degradation threaten our very existence and unless we tackle these challenges, citizens of Birmingham will be hindered in their ability to enjoy and maximise the wellbeing benefits nature brings.

The purpose of the Plan is to set out a 25-year Plan for Birmingham, focusing around transforming our green spaces to tackle climate change and air pollution, ensuring all citizens can access good quality green spaces. The five themes set out in this document will operate together in harmony with each other to establish the actions Birmingham will take to help achieve the Plan. These themes are:

- A Healthy City
- A Fair City
- An Involved City
- A Valued City
- A Green City

The City of Nature Plan will specifically:

- Provide an introduction as to the journey Birmingham's green spaces have been on
- Explaining why Green Space is so important
- Setting the evidence basis for what needs to change and reasoning why
- Setting the ask for where Birmingham wants to get to in terms of its green spaces
- Explains that the Plan is a people's movement
- Sets out how Birmingham will achieve the Plan
- Provides the monitoring and evaluation process as to how Birmingham will know it has been successful in delivering the Plan.

To accompany the City of Nature Plan's themes, key objectives with accompanying milestones and measures will be established to monitor the actions and initiatives to be implemented to achieve the Plan.

As a draft document, the City Council will consult widely on the content of the City of Nature Plan, with the final version to be formally adopted by the City Council by mid-2022. This

document sets out consultation activity to be undertaken and provides information on engagement that has occurred to date.

2. Strategic Context

Future Parks Accelerator Programme - In July 2019, the Council received £900,000 from Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and up to £100,000 in-kind support from National Trust (NT); to run the Future Parks Accelerator (FPA) Programme, with the huge ambition to embed the value of green spaces across the Council – within Health and Wellbeing (pilot site Witton Lakes), Employability/ Skills (pilot site Ward End Park), Children’s Trust (pilot site Dawberry Fields Neighbourhood Park) and Housing/ Development (Edgbaston Reservoir and Druids Heath BMHT development).

The city now has an opportunity to bring forward green investment through our green spaces to address important challenges and maximise opportunities such as:

- **Climate change**; aspiring to be carbon neutral by 2030 in response to the climate emergency.
- **Air quality**; parks reduce harmful carbon pollution that is driving Climate Change and combat Urban Heat Island Effect.
- **Accommodating future growth**; delivering new jobs and other opportunities relating to the green industry.
- **Commonwealth Games**; offering a unique opportunity to provide a nature legacy within the city.

3. Previous engagement

Effective stakeholder engagement has been developed as part of the Future Parks Accelerator Programme over the last two years. Through this we have developed good relationships with a wide range of delivery partners and stakeholders that have been used for disseminating information and stimulating discussions in support of various consultations and engagement activity.

Methods of doing this have included sending out regular Naturally Birmingham newsletters (<https://naturallybirmingham.org/read-our-newsletters/>), ensuring appropriate web content is available, social media activity, holding stakeholder briefing sessions and undertaking informal briefing sessions with Councillors.

Engagement on the forthcoming City of Nature Plan was integral. A series of meetings with the public, internal colleagues within BCC and external partners is described in Appendix H. From this the Plan is now at the point of being published for consultation.

4. Consultation on draft plan - Methodology

The following individuals and groups will be consulted:

Stakeholders	Name / Organisation	Method (Letter, e-mail etc.)
1	Birmingham MPs	E-mail
2	BCC Councillors	E-mail Offer to meet at ward forums and with Cllrs
3	Town/Parish Council	Sutton Coldfield New Frankley in Birmingham E-mail
4	Neighbouring local authorities	WMCA, WM local authorities, neighbouring county councils E-mail
5	Emergency Services	All E-mail
6	Birmingham City Council officers	Transportation & Connectivity, Highways & Infrastructure, Planning and Regeneration, Landscape Practice Group, Parks, Public Health, Environmental Health, Commonwealth Games team, Education and Skills, Housing Development. E-mail Birmingham Connected e-bulletin Birmingham City Council Intranet, and other internal communication channels
7	Residents	Various Press release Birmingham City Council web site Be Heard consultation portal Social media accounts (Birmingham City Council and Naturally Birmingham) Information to be made available on Be Heard consultation portal and provide opportunity for individual meetings, if required Information to be made available for Ward Forums and other community meetings 3 online community webinars

Stakeholders	Name / Organisation	Method (Letter, e-mail etc.)
8	Businesses, Planning consultees, Community Groups, Environmental Groups and other Stakeholders	Various Press release Birmingham City Council web site Social Media accounts (Birmingham City Council and Naturally Birmingham) Naturally Birmingham Newsletter Library of Birmingham (paper copies) Information to be made available on Be Heard consultation portal and provide opportunity for individual meetings, if required. 3 online community webinars

5. Equality Assessment

An Equality Assessment has been carried out for the consultation on the City of Nature Plan. This highlighted that putting nature at the heart of decision making and improving the quantity and quality of green spaces should cater to the needs of a broad range of groups, and so the overall impact is likely to be positive.

We have not identified adverse impacts on any of the protected characteristics, but the consultation period will allow the opportunity to explore this further. We will collect (optional) monitoring data on protected characteristics so it will be possible to analyse responses in line with demographics where available and relevant.

In terms of the format of the consultation itself, it is important that the consultation is accessible to all. For drop-in sessions, venues will be chosen that have level access or ramp access at the entrance and will use a room towards the front of the building to minimise walking, with chairs available for consultees to rest on. We will endeavour to make information and printed materials available in different formats where this is requested. As well as seeking to engage with citizen's directly, representative groups will be specifically invited to respond to the consultation and put forward views on behalf of their members or service users.

6. Timescale

The consultation for the City of Nature Plan will be officially launched on Wednesday 9th February 2022 to coincide with publication of papers for the Birmingham City Council Cabinet Meeting being held on 8th February 2022 to consider and approve consultation on this document.

Pending approval, there will be a formal consultation period running from Wednesday 9th February 2022 to 17th March 2022.