

# Future Parks Accelerator Programme (FPA)

Approaches to Embedding Justice & Green Thinking Across Planning  
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**Making a positive difference** every day to people's lives



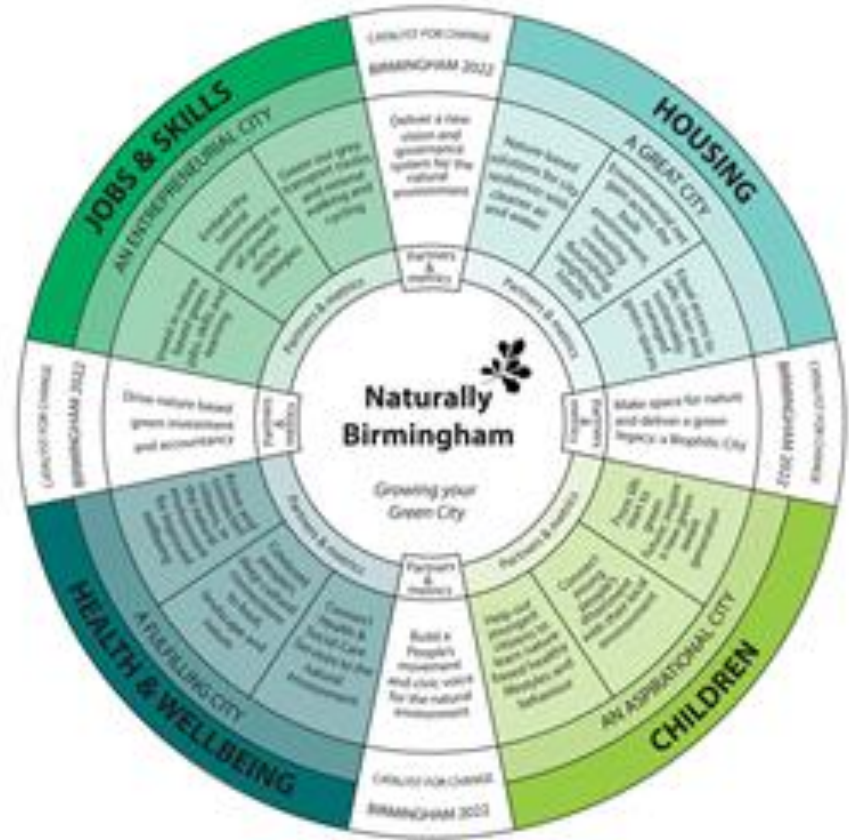
# What is FPA?

- National Scheme funded jointly by the National Trust and MHCLG
- “In a Nutshell”, it supports research and testing into how we can better embed and recognise the value of green spaces in our everyday processes, and better engage local people with their green spaces.
- Birmingham was successful along with 8 other UK cities in being awarded FPA funding
- The programme began in April 2019 and will run until May 2022



# The Original Birmingham Programme with a “twist”

- Housing Pilot now “Built Environment” pilot to reflect wider reach
- Original pilot focused on;
- Nature based solutions to city problems.
- Environmental Net Gain
- Equal Access to safe clean and sustainably managed green spaces



# Research undertaken – Part 1

Reviewed 50 planning applications over the last 5 years where there was either **delivery** or **enhancement** of open spaces. We focused on;

- How green space issues were dealt with in officer reports and consultee comments at main application and discharge of condition stages
- What documents were referred to when commenting on green spaces
- Interviews with DM, BMHT, and specialist planning advice colleagues

# Research Undertaken – Part 2

- Workshop with national/ international private architects and biodiversity experts who examined our adopted policies and spd guidance regarding green spaces.
- Follow up interviews with architects and biodiversity experts
- Worked with FPA team to develop a draft FPA “**Position Statement**” regarding the “ideal” design of green spaces, (discounting viability issues in the first instance).
- Tested and developed the position statement through three workshops where it was interrogated by a range of internal and external partners

# Summary of Findings

- Very good at dealing with the quantum and strategic issues regarding green spaces but policy often generic when it comes to “design and place making detail” i.e. the nitty gritty delivery on the ground, lack of process/ framework, common ground on topics/ opinions
- Felt by partners that it is these small details that make all the difference and often “fall through the ether” if they are not “owned” by anyone in particular.
- Community/ feeling their wants and needs are not reflected in final delivery, and delivery is often contrary to agreed plans.
- Issue with trigger for POS policy comments at 50 dwellings and not 20 dwellings as per TP9.



# Findings ctd..

- Non statutory frameworks not referred to in decision making
- There was too much guidance – at least 26 non statutory frameworks referencing POS or GI
- Potential conflict between Parks and Planning on spending of S106 – lack of clarity on order of importance, particularly frameworks vs Park Ward plans – potential for conflicting information



# Quick Wins

- Development Plans Teams now receive weekly notification of relevant schemes registered, and can feed in their own local comments if needed on schemes of less than 50 dwellings .
- GIS Team are in the process of uploading non statutory frameworks onto local view and access arranged for key park/LPG officers.
- FPA response to the BCC Design Guide Consultation based on the draft “position statement”





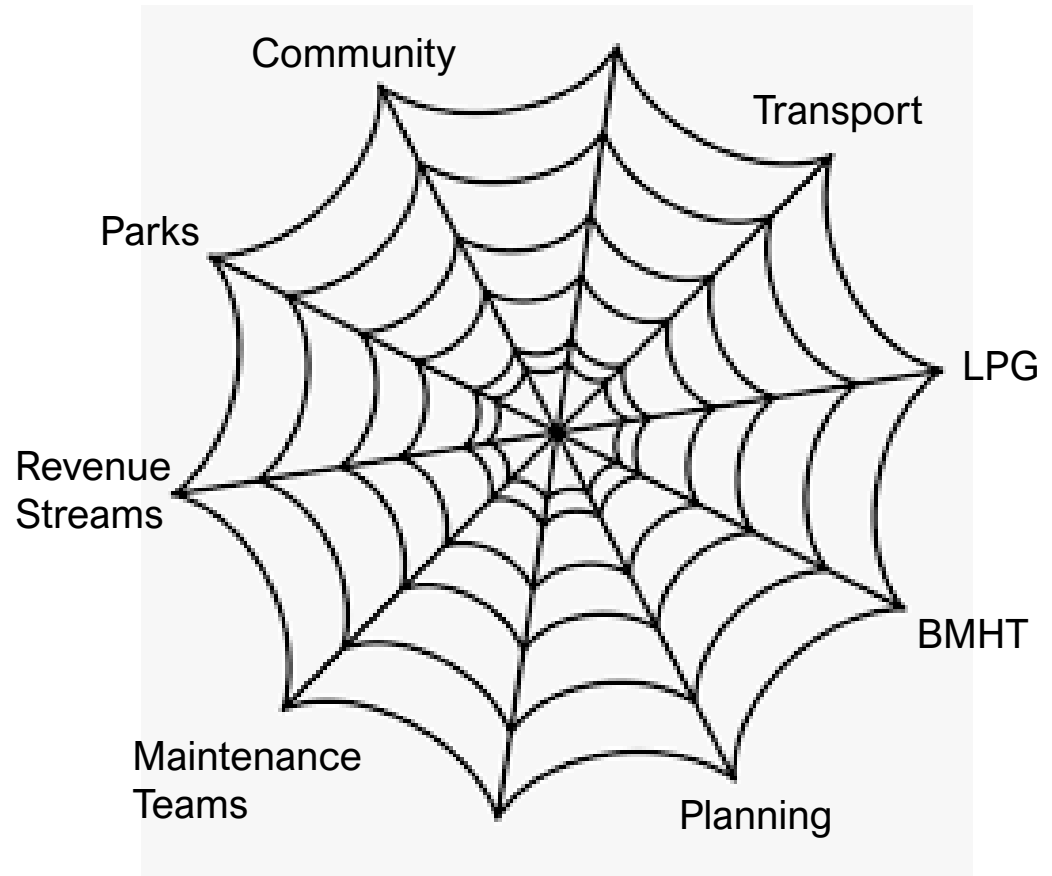
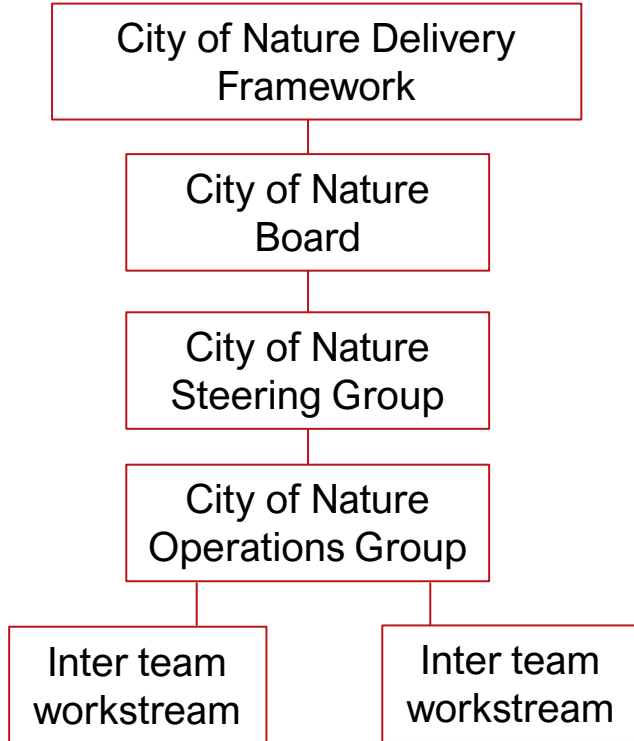
# Way Forward

Development of a City of Nature Delivery Framework around 5 themes

- A Fair City
  - A Healthy City
  - A Green and Managed City
  - A Valued City
  - An Engaged City
- 
- **New steering group and hierarchy setup to deliver City of Nature Action Plan**
  - Some actions in the plan are based on amending our processes, others will only be able to become live through the local plan review process



# The Spiders Web!



# Recommended Actions Summary

1. Development of internal and external checklist of “low level – practical” place making principles regarding green spaces to be used by consultees, developers, policy makers, and for pre application discussions. Question as to whether in the long term in can form part of the design guide
2. Review of planning validation guidance and Parks SPD. Consider whether DAS, Community Statements etc, can be amended to meet points on checklist above, and demonstrate evidence of community involvement in the development of green spaces eg supporting creation of “friends of groups”. Develop Template
3. Consider requirement for majors/ requirement for condition for a sustainable finance framework to be submitted for the management of the land by an appointed management company/ us, and whether this is considered “reasonable”
4. Work with BMHT to embed emerging checklist into its development processes and “pinch points”
5. Research condition in planning applications to provide new homes with a GUG (Green User Guide) as part of HUG developed between FPA and BMHT – informative condition
6. Consider validation requirement for “mini health” impact assessment on majors demonstrating how the development would meet the needs of residents with a range of health conditions. Need to consider what is reasonable and how this fits with the health planning toolkit and the interpretation of TP9... “needs of people with disabilities should be taken into account”

# Summary ctd..

7. Develop draft “greening policy” for tall buildings/buildings to feed into local plan review process. – comparison of building standards, building for life, biophilic framework – plan level viability etc –**not just city centre**
8. Support the creation of an environmental justice audit to support evidence based decisions for future policy making
9. Include within Landscape/ Ecological enhancements plans/condition the requirement for a bi annual statement on the progress of developing POS or GI space to be submitted to the Council. Done by pre commencement, commencement and phased conditions for reporting
10. Commit to supporting a test and development of a 15 minute neighbourhood concept within East Birmingham through the work of the Health and Wellbeing Board.
11. Commit to the development of the “Green Web” concept within Our Future City Plan: Central Birmingham 2040 document, including identifying options for routes to delivery of new and improved green spaces
12. Agree a planning department wide protocol/ process on early phasing of green spaces within the Lifecycle of a development
13. Research alternative Service Charge Models with community involvement
14. Review asset disposal process in light of economic benefits of POS/ explore feasibility/ commercial opportunities for decentralised thermal energy on our open spaces, eg Saughton Park Edinbrough
15. External funding? WMCA, National Gov, Parks Foundation? Energy Companies? Cross service funding on joint issues? E.g. public health fund new trees to tackle air pollution , and promote wellbeing- preventative healthcare, Wildlife Trust fund particular habitats?

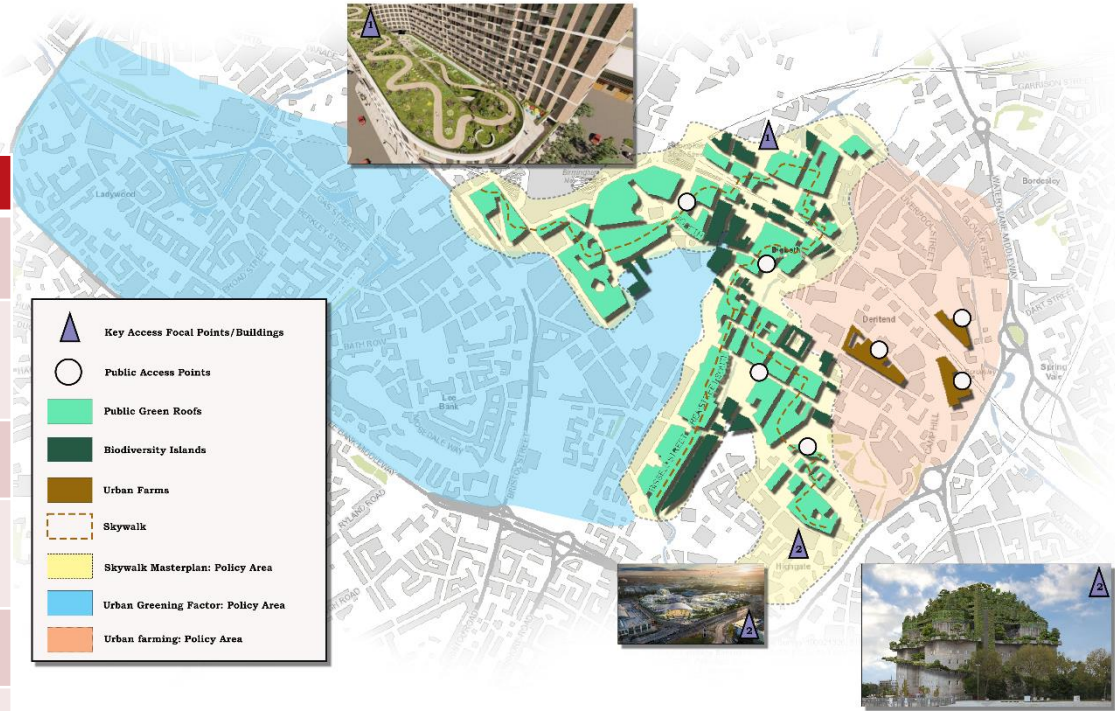
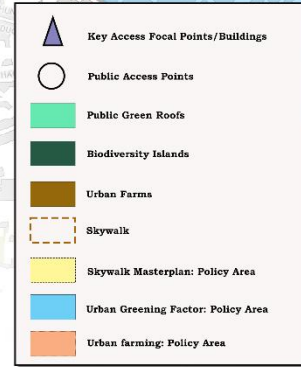
# Issues to be worked through



- Link between good design/ placemaking and maintenance costs/ issues
- Whether conditions recommended are enforceable/ and or reasonable
- Balance between affordable housing delivery and provision of better green spaces and other asks of the plan
- Interface between quantitative tools such as Biodiversity Net Gain, GI Standards, Landscape and Urban Design and how these relate together to create on the ground placemaking through the internal checklist.
- Exploration of the service charge model as a short term solution to delivering more open space but also encouraging community ownership? Council Owned Management Company? Staff Resources? Does a case need to be made for increased support?
- **How do we redress the imbalance in regards to the current provision of open spaces and green spaces across the city? – Green Impact Study Needed**

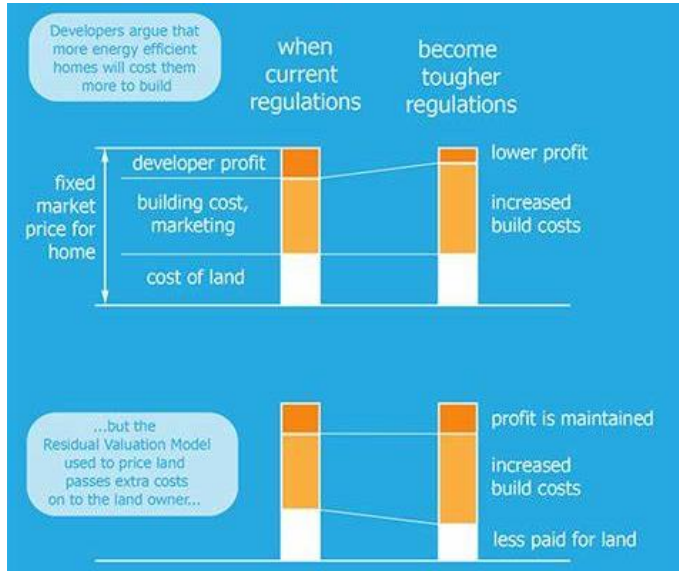
# Complicated Policy Mix – seeing the wood for the trees

Policy/Tool	Application
Environmental Net Gain	All developments triggered
Urban Greening Factor: (includes extensive green roofs)	Selective
WELLS Standards	Selective
Natural England GI Standards	All Developments
Intensive Green Roofs	Selective
Open Space Standards Review	All developments triggered



**Separate** viability inputs required for **each** of these tools/ requirements

# Viability Continued – Residual Valuation



Includes Planning Obligations. These are things like;

- Biodiversity net gain requirements
- Urban Greening Factor
- GI Standards
- WELLs standards
- Open Space Requirements
- Affordable Housing
- Low Carbon Build
- Intensive Green Roofs
- Space Standards
- Etc

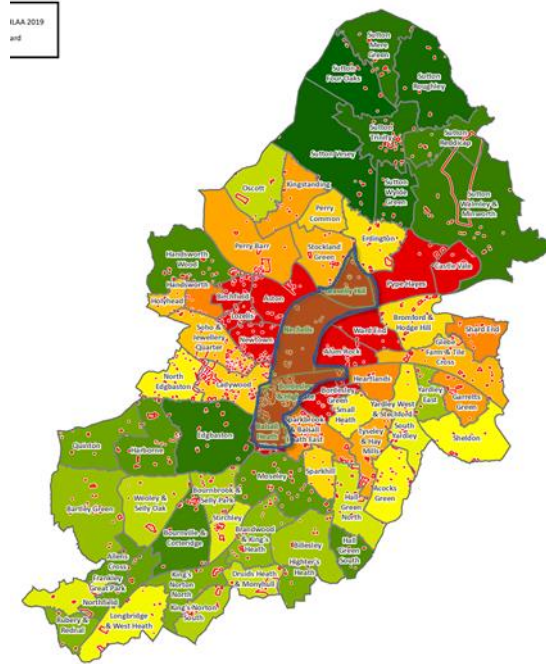
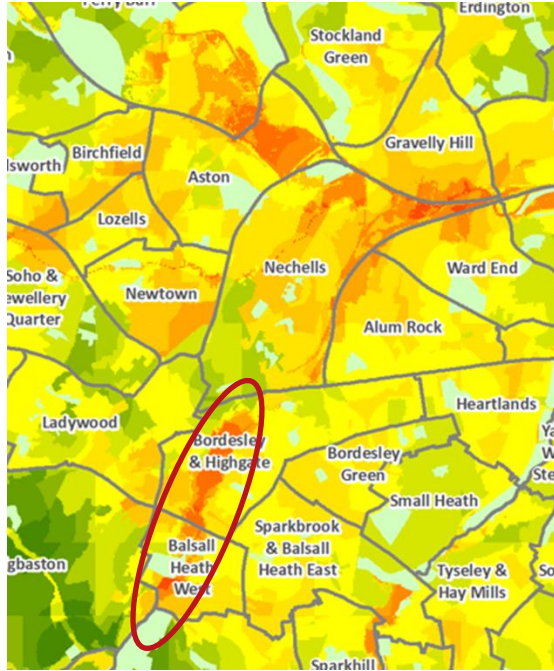
Either **Profit** decreases to accommodate this

**OR**

Cost passed on to **landowner** who may not now want to sell

A **BALANCE** is required

# Focus of Development – Environmental Justice



- FPA Environmental Justice Work is demonstrating a need to focus on the circled north – west corridor which crosses a major part of the city centre. Proposals here would support the themes of OFCP 2040.

(RED = BAD, GREEN = GOOD)

The index includes;

- No access to green space of over 2ha within 400m
- Index of Multiple Deprivation
- Years Life Lost
- Flooding
- Urban Heat Island effect



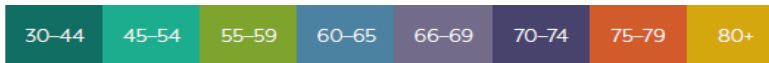
# Parks Audited

- Parks within the target wards have been evaluated against a bespoke audit based around the Green Flag Award Standard.
- Indicators fall under the main headings of the city of nature framework

KEY						
I	C	D	F	O	GF	FPA
Indicator number	Consultation Assessment	Desktop Assessment	Field Assessment	Other Assessments BNG	Green Flag Indicator	Future Parks Accelerator
SCORING LINE						
Very poor	Poor	Fair	Good	Very good	Excellent	Exceptional
0/1	2/3/4	5/6	7	8	9	10
ASSESSMENT						
I	C/D/ F/O	FAIR PARK	Score 1-10	GF reference		
1	D	Environmental Justice Map score	0	Zones 4-1(10,5,3,1) FPA		
2	D	External barriers/connectivity between other green spaces	2	FPA indicator		
3	F	Welcoming	1	A welcoming place		
4	F	Good safe access	1	A welcoming place		
5	F	Signage	1	A welcoming place		
6	F	Equal access for all	1	A welcoming place		
Sub-total			6	Out of 60		
Potential						
SUMMARY						
Domain						
Fair Park			6			
Healthy Park			14			
Green & Managed Park			19			
Valued Park			0			
Engaged Park			0			
Total out of 380			39	10%		

**Basic @ 0- 30%**  
**Birmingham Fair Standard @ 31-44%**  
**Better @ 45-65%**  
**Best @ 66-80+% Green Flag status**

Bandscores



# Final Thoughts ...

- 45 of 69 wards are below the minimum standard of 2ha of POS per 1000 population as expressed in TP9 of the BDP. (65%)\*
- Expansion of Environmental Justice Process to wider **Ward** to identify strategic intervention sites and the development of green infrastructure strategies
- How will we deliver POS in areas where no development is proposed? Do we need to review our asset disposals which are POS sites in this context? Joint Ventures? WMCA Support? This could be a **massive** issue.
- Green space gives a **Council Tax Uplift of £28 million each year**, and **482 million over 25 years**. Is a study needed looking at our housing capacity (SHLAA) and Council owned assets, where there would be a policy trigger for POS, and calculating the increased council tax value across these sites from this uplift, as well BMHT and Inreach Build trajectories\*\*
- **Health benefits** equivalent to **£4.6 billion over 25 years** based on current park provision, therefore POS is a preventative measure leading to **overall long run council savings from Public Health Vs investing in, delivering, and maintaining new POS\*\***

*\*This does not take into account POS that may be available adjacent to the site in another ward*

*\*\* Birmingham Health Economic Assessment and Natural Capital Accounts*

