

**Bristol Health
Partners**

SHINE

Supporting Healthier Inclusive Neighbourhood Environments

Developing a healthy inclusive neighbourhood checklist

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Open Space Bristol**

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University of
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Introduction

The Supporting Healthy Inclusive Neighbourhood Environments Health Integration Team (SHINE HIT) aims to support Bristol in becoming a healthier city by integrating health, well-being and social inclusion with urban development, transport and planning to reduce health risks and support healthier lifestyles. The team includes experts from Bristol's universities, the city council, NHS trusts, independent specialists and local communities. Members of SHINE undertake research and engage with policy makers, planners, practitioners and local communities to influence future planning and transport policy, and investment decisions, with the aim of producing positive outcomes that improve people's health and promote social inclusion.

A key focus for SHINE is the infrastructure of the neighbourhood environment. Although people may feel they know what a healthy inclusive neighbourhood environment looks like, the evidence for which aspects of the urban realm promote physical and mental health is not always clear. This has implications for investments in neighbourhood environments. For example, in times of austerity, would it be better to spend money on parks or pavements to promote physical activity? Are community gardens good for people's mental health? Are benches really important to enable people to get out and about? SHINE is seeking to develop an evidence-based 'checklist' which can be used by local people, policy makers and planners to ensure that the infrastructure and public realm of different neighbourhoods has the 'basic ingredients' to promote and sustain physical and mental health.

During Bristol's Healthy City Week 2015, a half-day workshop was organised to consider some of the academic evidence for which aspects of the urban infrastructure are important to support health and wellbeing. Formal presentations were followed by an opportunity to



share ideas. The event was aimed at policy makers, planners, local residents and anyone with an interest in what makes up a healthy, inclusive neighbourhood environment.

The event was attended by 56 participants with a wider range of experience and expertise, and representing different neighbourhoods across Bristol.

Methods

Participants were asked to work in pairs and discuss with their 'partner' which features of the public realm are important for a healthy inclusive neighbourhood environment. Key points to take into consideration were:

- Ideas could be in relation to their own neighbourhood or more generally
- The focus was on the infrastructure of the public realm e.g. talking to neighbours is good but what is important in the layout of the neighbourhood that enables neighbours to talk to each other?
- Ideas could be based on something they already have in their neighbourhood, or something they wish they had



Facilitators (Adrian Davis, Ben Barker, Marcus grant, Suzanne Audrey) were available to answer any questions or issues that arose. Following a 10-minute discussion, participants were asked to decide which idea they thought was the most important and write it on an 'ideas slip'. They were invited to fix their ideas to the giant whiteboard and then repeat the exercise with a different partner.



During the second round of discussions the facilitators checked the whiteboard and started to group similar ideas under preliminary headings. Participants were asked to decide on a second feature they felt was important for a healthy inclusive neighbourhood environment and write it on another ideas slip.

Participants were again invited to fix their ideas on the whiteboard, and to decide if their second idea fitted an existing group heading or a new heading was needed. This was

followed by an opportunity to view all the ideas on the whiteboard, with further discussion and an opportunity to move ideas around on the board.

Following the event all of the ideas were removed from the board and summarised into a table that was analysed and sorted into broad categories. All of the ideas are included under broad headings in the following pages. This document will form the basis of further work in relation to developing a healthy inclusive neighbourhood checklist for use with local communities, policy makers, practitioners and others with an interest in healthy neighbourhoods.

Pedestrian infrastructure

Idea	Important for
Safe routes between neighbourhoods supported by champions/guides/leaders to lead walking 'buses' to schools, and health walks. Wider pavement, less obstructions, attractive planting and less traffic.	Physical health, mental health, reducing isolation, improving quality of air/environmental impacts.
Better cycling etiquette.	Making walking more pleasant for people who would otherwise find difficulty/feel vulnerable.
Raised pavements at entrance to streets.	-
Cars and cycles off pavements.	Being able to get out of the house and move around City safely.
Pedestrianisation of public space to facilitate active travel.	Improving health and safety.
Keep pavements free of dog mess as it puts people off walking.	Communities. Fair and easy access for all.
Pedestrian routes to ensure users feel safe.	Communities. Fair and easy access for all.
Keep pavement for pedestrians (no overgrown bushes, parked cars, bins, rubbish) – job of council and local people.	Everybody, especially people with visual impairments.
Less road, wider pavements.	People walking and meeting – nourishing the community.
Solve obstructions on pavements – parking, wheely bins.	Making pavements attractive- a pleasant experience. Pride in neighbourhood. Inclusion and equality – obstruction hits people with disabilities and parents with pushchairs the hardest.
Pavements – walkable/clean.	-
Suitable surfaces of paths for all users.	-
Good quality walking networks so that it's easy for everyone (young, old, able, less able) to get from place to place safely by foot. Appropriate width, well maintained pavements, safe crossing points linking places.	Enabling people to get around actively and safely will mean more active populations and more scope for social interaction and neighbourhoodliness.
Comprehensive "active travel" network with quality infrastructure. Wider pavements.	Health and wellbeing – fantastic social return on investment.
Visibility (and practicality) of pedestrians routes around big shopping centres e.g. Eastgate – it's OK to get to on foot/cycle but once there going from shop to shop is difficult.	Changing the attitude "car is king"; Increasing use of public transport and walking.

Cycling infrastructure

Idea	Important for
Electric bike hire/bike clubs in communities.	Encouraging people to try electric cars/bikes, especially those who can't afford to buy; thus improving levels of healthy activity/pollution control.
Safe routes between neighbourhoods supported by champions/guides/leaders to lead cycling to schools. Wider pavement, less obstructions, attractive planting and less traffic.	Physical health, mental health, reducing isolation, improving quality of air/environmental impacts.
Cycle routes to ensure users feel safe.	Communities. Fair and easy access for all.
Comprehensive "active travel" network with quality infrastructure. Local cycling network.	Health and wellbeing – fantastic social return on investment.
Cycle parking at all public buildings, workplaces, places of recreation etc.	Encouraging usage and demonstrating it is possible.
Active travel network – dedicated cycle lanes – where this is not possible a dedicated road parallel to main road for cyclists – car access only for residents and "bus gate".	Confidence to cycle around the neighbourhood.
Better to not have speed bumps ... Cars just race between speed bumps, tricky for cyclists.	Encouraging greater access and use to different parts of community/services.



Access, street furniture and toilets

Idea	Important for
Safe access for all to shops, transport, community centre, green spaces, toilets etc.	Sense of community.
Ensure access in open spaces has suitable surfaces so all can use.	Communities. Fair and easy access for all.
Accessible bus stops.	Communities. Fair and easy access for all.
Good public transport.	Being able to get out of the house and move around City safely.
Useful, technical things such as maps/signage that tell you how long it will take to walk to or cycle to places in the neighbourhood.	Helping people realise things are closer than they think by foot or bike.
Legibility of large town centre and shopping centres – should prioritise pedestrian and cycle movement over car journeys, and make good provision for safe cycle storage and toilets.	Increasing and promoting active travel. Increase the time people want to spend in a place – better for the economy and better for socialising = greater sense of pride and belonging.
Accessible benches.	Being able to get out of the house and move around City safely.
Location of benches.	-
Regular seating.	-
Public toilets – accessible for all and available.	Part of public realm – in cities particularly needed.
Regular toilets and information on whereabouts.	Fuller solutions.
Attractive walkways with green verge and street trees, wide and accessible.	Increased interactions and getting to know your neighbours/community.
Clear pavements/walkways of litter bins and cars.	Encouraging active travel, access (especially for those with access issues and young children) feeling safe.
Coniston Road speed bumps but no pedestrian/zebra crossings. Lots of social housing in that area with 40% older people. Better to not have speed bumps but pedestrian crossings and 20mph signs.	Safe walking in the area. Encouraging greater access and use to different parts of community/services.

Streets

Idea	Important for
Streets are seen as places beyond just conduits for traffic (of whatever type). Should be used for variety of uses food/social/community/play/activity.	All residents.
Opportunities to connect and socialise in residential streets – temporary closure of traffic. Often need a mediator/community facilitator through schemes like Playing Out, street parties, Sustrans “pocket” space (car park space turned to social space).	Health, wellbeing. Resilience, progression.
Temporary closures of residential streets to allow street play, cycling and use of streets without cars flying past.	Safety; perceptions of freedom; Less reliance on cars.
Clean streets.	Being able to get out of the house and move around City safely.
Quieter streets – more community contacts; security – rear access; enclosure and definition of the street; well-kept homes; smaller/safer streets – cul de sacs?	Sense of wellbeing – feeling safe, happy, secure.
Quieter streets; security; well-kept homes; smaller streets.	More social contact and integration.
Opportunities for community participation i.e. developing playing out scheme across more streets.	Community cohesion and social inclusion, reducing social isolation.
That children can play safely in the streets where they live – via temporary road closure initially but longer time via larger changes.	Children and young people’s independent mobility in community; Increasing parental confidence.
Playing out.	Social inclusion
To take out all the restrictions – railings, signs, white lines, speed limits etc. The evidence from Holland and recent experiments in the UK is that accidents are reduced and people take care naturally – even lorry drivers.	Returning the responsibility for safety to the public. Note the expert on this is Ben Hamilton- Baillie (O117 9114221).
Street champions to mentor community activity e.g. street parties, neighbourhood watchdogs.	Addressing social isolation. Community cohesion.



Green space and food

Idea	Important for
Green spaces, trees.	-
Softening and “greening” residential streets with street trees, front gardens or window boxes.	Returning the over-dominance of landscaping.
Keeping green spaces.	Mental health and the environment.
Greenery/foliage.	-
Green infrastructure.	-
Green infrastructure.	-
Flower beds, trees, raised crossings with artworks.	Cleaner air.
Nature in the street.	-
Stewardship business and dwellings on green space routes.	-
Education - importance of healthy lifestyles and how to maintain green spaces.	Mental health and general wellbeing. People will be better informed re. community decisions and infrastructure.
Utilizing our adjacent/local grey spaces. If it’s on your doorstep, you’re more likely to access it.	Wildlife, bringing neighbours together, growing fresh seasonal food and improve mood from enjoying outdoor spaces.
Improvement to existing housing and gardens. Use of green space currently neglected - include community in this.	Community involvement.
Introduce “water gardens” round car parks where it’s difficult to plant trees. With additional planting – not only will this help with surface water run-off, but it will also provide green areas in highly built up areas.	Healthy green outlook for residents.
Having food growing available for eating with information about it.	Education about where food comes from and exposure.
Using small local green spaces for growing spaces for local residents especially for areas with high numbers of flats.	-



Motorised traffic

Idea	Important for
Less traffic and slower traffic	To enable children to walk to school safely.
Reduce traffic/ help walking to school projects. Need bigger pavements so traffic reduces.	Children walking to school.
Less car dominance.	Increased interactions and getting to know your neighbours/community.
20mph speed limits and separate cycle lanes where possible. Change road layouts to reduce speed.	Public health, environments, social benefits.
Local residents helping children to school. Reduce traffic, congestions, traffic fumes around Henbury and Brentry and get children to school more safely i.e. schools working together to help parents and children on the school run.	The health and wellbeing of residents in Henbury and Brentry.
Park & Ride (or equivalent) to create more no car areas. Make it harder for people to drive through town.	Our senses of sight, smell and sound.
Being able to get where I want to go without having to be fearful of traffic – especially at junctions.	Enabling our environment where people are welcomed especially to walk and cycle.
Local authorities to scrutinise and identify which streets/areas have highest number of serious injuries and fatalities. Then implement various traffic calming measures in relevant streets.	To reduce serious injuries and fatalities to increase sense of confidence and security of local residents.
Street furniture to limit speed.	Safety, slowing cars down and perceptions of speed.
Car free development; Safety; Reduce car speed, parking, volume.	Social inclusion, community, public transport viability.
Traffic noise stops people walking as a mode of transport.	Modal shift; Increasing rates of MVPA; Social cohesion
Defined parking areas. Not everyone should automatically have parking outside their home.	Use of streets for other purposes.
Electric car hire/car clubs in communities.	Encouraging people to try electric cars, especially those who can't afford to buy; thus improving levels of healthy activity/pollution control.

Shared spaces

Idea	Important for
Quality space, well maintained. Spaces which appeal to all age groups and social groups.	Increased interactions and getting to know your neighbours/community.
Diverse/mixed use in terms of facilities, shops, amenities. Prioritise people.	Interest, convenience and social interaction.
Small parades of shops – area around them to be attractive/hospitable. Many feel barren, paving slabs, no greenery, and ugly shop fronts. These are often places where people are harassed.	Creating a 'local' community so people want to 'pop' to their local shop rather than driving. More inclusive for people who are less mobile.
Local businesses/community groups being encouraged to use pavements outside their door flexibly e.g. benches, seating areas to promote sense of ownership/pride and social interaction (but in a way that doesn't block access and traffic congestion doesn't increase). Wider pavements?	Sense of pride/ownership; Social interaction; Community; Use of outdoor spaces that can be 'wilded' with nature interventions.
A relatively small local space/centre where informal contact with other community members can happen.	Ensuring residents have a sense of inclusion rather than isolation.
A variety of places and spaces for informal interaction opportunities. Flexible places to play/talk/walk/sit/eat/make/think.	Especially for children and older people.
Better places for young people to go in the evenings – to make open spaces less intimidating.	Open spaces – encouraging use for wider population; Young people – give them better facilities and opportunities.
Organising outdoor activities to get people meeting each other outside and walking. There is a lack of community centre in the area.	Getting people involved, walking exercise, socialising. Use of green spaces.
Location of play spaces.	Sufficient suitable space of various types for all age groups.
Open spaces that interconnect; desire lines.	Outdoor social space is crucial for healthy neighbourhoods.
Sharing space.	
Community meeting point- ownership.	Making people proud of where they live.
Informal, recreational environments in the heart of urban areas e.g. skate parks in front of sports centres, and free.	Show lifestyle is part of everyday life.
Shared, open/green spaces which are pedestrianised and encourage multi-functional use e.g. community events. Used as living space rather than through routes.	Fostering community interaction. Sense of place/community.
Open spaces/ areas where like-minded people can meet e.g. mums and toddler, OAPs, young people. Tolerance of other groups/ generations comes from having common purpose e.g. sunflower growing competition/community garden.	Getting people out and about, meeting other people, getting fresh air – all good for mental and physical health.
Retaining areas of open space for public use – conflict of issues i.e. need for more housing vs play space (often informal space and not publically owned)	Physical activity for children, informal play, kick around areas etc.

Multi-functional spaces which can be used for a variety of activities. Toilets so people can enjoy spaces for longer. Some lighting so spaces feel safe during low light and can be used for longer.	Getting people out and using spaces and enjoying them for longer; Better quality spaces.
Give people reasons to use shared spaces – events, community gardens, social action projects.	Community cohesions, ownership. Health and wellbeing.

Cleanliness, maintenance and safety

Idea	Important for
Less air pollution	Health
Feeling of being physically safe in the neighbourhood – able to get to your destination. Identify the things that feed into the feeling of being safe.	Building community – without people and places to meet, community cannot happen.
The local residents should want to live there - mentality of “This place makes me feel better, I want to stay here and help maintain/improve it”.	Means people have and want an active commitment to the neighbourhood. Better able to support each other, cooperate and behave well towards each other. Can challenge poor, obstructive behaviour and make their voices heard.
We should be proud of our city. The public realm must always be clean and its facades facing and framing it must be beautiful.	-
Maintenance realm.	All or any intervention could be floored by maintenance and cleaning.
Community safety.	Sense of community.
No antisocial behaviour.	-
Free from litter and animal mess.	To avoid social conflict.
People feeling safe – visibility.	People feeling able to walk around
No litter, and recycling.	-

Community buildings

Idea	Important for
Community buildings – availability and improve health and wellbeing. Support to get them open and used.	Part of public realm – in city’s particularly needed.
The public realm should include all public buildings and facilities in neighbourhoods and the local community should control the design of the facilities (not the authority).	So that local communities can feel proud of their public facilities.
Build a community centre to enable more social activities to occur to help people connect with their area and other residents.	Health and wellbeing of Henbury residents.

Planning and community involvement

Idea	Important for
Not building supermarkets in built up areas, allowing goods vehicles to deliver all hours.	Noise control.
An integrated city/neighbourhood/street level approach – multi component - that engages the local population.	Everyone.
User groups – consult with users and actual needs; public consultations.	-
Improvements to local area prioritised and designed by local people.	All local residents.
Improved consultation, embracing people’s views. Need to take communities ideas and create inclusive environment – ownership.	Whole community; interaction; embracing each other’s life styles; cohesion.
Engage local people, groups/communities in directing changed – not lip service, but importantly demonstrate progress.	Push down decision making.
Involvement of users - identify needs of people in this particular areas. One needs to see the area in context of the needs of local people to ensure that plans and changes to environment actually effective.	Building an environment that is used by people to act and interact with.
Building for people should be building with people. Take whole person into account when thinking about people’s needs.	Building an environment that is used by people to act and interact with.
Proper engagement; Inclusive thinking.	Fuller solutions
Community have far more formal authority in the development/planning in neighbourhood.	To ensure the needs of this area (as opposed to average area in wider region) are met.
Adaptable design – target local communities and adapt the public realm to meet their needs e.g. gym equipment.	Pride in local area, increased use, building stronger local communities.
New building developments, however big, to be integrated into existing communities with resources such as schools, health centres, shops, community space.	Connectivity.
Safe, accessible, educational and inclusive.	Community, cohesion.
Access and inclusion relies on relationships and sense of ownership, as well as the features of the physical space. Community development consultation is key.	-
Use focussed approach to look at different group’s needs. Not one size fits all.	Meeting different needs.
Ensure new developments have links to existing facilities.	Communities. Fair and easy access for all.

Participants

James	Adamson	Regional Development Manager	Sustrans
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Laura	Dickinson	Senior Tutor/Teaching Fellow	University of Bristol
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Martin	Fodor	Cllr	Bristol City Council
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Paul	Frisby	Partnerships Manager	South Gloucestershire CCG
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