



March
2022

RIVER CRANE SMARTER WATER CATCHMENT PROGRAMME

STRENGTHENING AND CONNECTING
THE COMMUNITY THROUGH THE
SMARTER WATER CATCHMENT
PROGRAMME YEAR 1

REPORT FOR THAMES WATER AND THE CRANE VALLEY PARTNERSHIP

SUPPORT TO THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT THEME YEAR 1



Let's Go Outside and Learn CIC

Habitats & Heritage

SUMMARY

This report considers principles and workstreams for community engagement within the River Crane catchment in support of the Thames Water Smarter Water Catchment (SWC) programme. The report considers opportunities for community engagement and makes recommendations for developing a series of plans to raise awareness and participation. These include the following:

- Community Building Plan
- Communication Plan
- Cultural Plan and activities
- Education and training plan A community Network Forum
- A community Events Calendar
- To model community engagement activities
- Disability Access and Inclusion Plan
- Communication Strategy for The Crane Valley Trail

Some of these recommendations will be taken forward in Year 2 of the River Crane Smarter Water Catchment programme in the development of the Public Awareness, Action and Participation Access Plan.

The report considers the implications of the Thames Water 2021 Awareness and Attitudes Survey for developing community participation including barriers to access, including fear of crime/personal safety, quality of maintenance and management, lack of facilities and how these barriers might impact on the public engagement strategy. The report also considers opportunities for interrelationships with other Crane Smarter Water Catchment work strands.

In preparation for the Year 2 work to develop a Public Engagement Strategy, the report also briefly examines other models of community engagement for multi-partnership initiatives, how these initiatives are structured and how they communicate their work.

This piece of work also includes an editable toolkit, intended to offer stakeholders and partners working on the River Crane Smarter Water Catchment initiative a framework to develop and plan successful community awareness and engagement plans. The toolkit is made up of nine chapters which includes planning sheets that cover key areas to consider when developing a successful programme: context, community, stakeholders, barriers to engagement, project design, modelling projects, feedback and evaluation, developing a contact list, writing a budget.

The toolkit is designed to be completed electronically and to be amended or altered as required for different plans and proposals and offers a uniform structure for all community engagement and participation plans.

Frances Bennett
Let's Go Outside and Learn CIC
March 2022

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Local communities exploring the River Crane catchment, its ecology and wildlife, history and landscape for leisure and learning.

Background to the report

This report seeks to explore community engagement themes in response to the River Crane Smarter Water Catchment (SWC) programme building on the well-established 'catchment-based approach'. The initiative seeks to add value by encouraging a wide range of partners to collectively deliver solutions to water and open space management issues that yield multiple benefits across a range of themes.

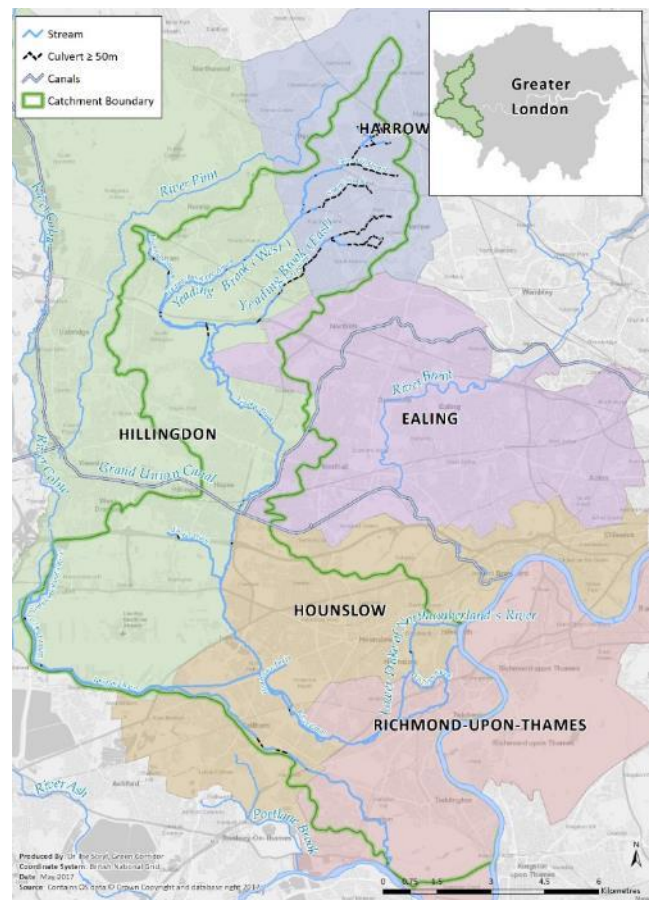
The **five key themes** for the River Crane Smarter Water Catchment are:

- Promote public awareness, access and participation
- Enable biodiversity and ecological connectivity
- Enhance flood resilience for at-risk areas
- Improve water quality in the catchment
- Improve geomorphology in the catchment

Twelve broad benefit categories have been identified across these themes:

- developing partnership resilience and capacity
- reducing pollution /improving water quality
- creating/enhancing habitat
- improving river flow
- reducing flood risk
- protecting heritage
- Improving public access/or site connectivity
- promoting health and wellbeing
- Reducing carbon footprint
- Delivering economic benefits
- Raising awareness and support
- Promoting community engagement

The Smarter Water Catchment programme has a key thread regarding community engagement. This document considers the opportunities to support delivery of this theme, working with the core Smarter Water Catchment team and other partners.



1. WHAT IS A COMMUNITY?

For the purposes of this document, we have interpreted community as a group of people with some common identity and connection which may be based on any number of factors.

In the case of the Crane catchment this may include:

- Geographic location – for example living or working within the geographical area defined as the Crane catchment. The defined catchment boundary is shown above.
- Cultural identity – for example ethnicity, age, religion. These communities often cut across geographical communities.
- Social connections – for example workplace, sports and hobbies, clubs and groups, and other affiliation
- Special interests – industry, housing, disability, gender.

This definition indicates that there is more than one community present on the Crane catchment - the “Crane Community” comprises many independent and inter-dependent communities. It is possible to belong to more than one or multiple communities some with direct links to the river and others that may be unrelated. This is a complexity for community engagement which should be recognised when planning and implementing community strengthening initiatives.

At this early stage of developing the principles for community engagement this document aims to lay the foundations to clearly articulate community engagement concepts and initiatives for the Smarter Water Catchment(SWC). This will help to define how the SWC team and other partners may be able to increase

opportunities for positive social engagement and celebration within the community across the different identified work strands of the SWC.

Parks are social as well as physical infrastructure and can support activities to bring people together and encourage them to use them to benefit their health and wellbeing.



Community building and engagement is a process that helps to strengthen the community and contributes to creating a sense of belonging. It unites the efforts of people from a community in the belief that by working together more can be achieved which will benefit all parts of the community.

The process involves a sustained effort to increase involvement and partnership among members of a community to achieve common objectives with local people, community organisations, government, business and voluntary sector organisations working together to achieve agreed environmental, social and economic outcomes.

Community building initiatives provide the community with:

- Opportunities to access information and knowledge
- Opportunities for participation / interaction
- Opportunities to be involved in local decision making
- The capacity for collective action to achieve the building of new projects, activities, and other opportunities
- Opportunities for collaboration to achieve common goals
- Shared community pride and the development of neighbourhood capacities for problem solving.

2. PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Let's Go Outside and Learn CIC works on the following principles which underpin community engagement. In developing community engagement and participation, we shall seek to include these principles in our proposals:

- Self-determination - people and communities are able to make choices and decisions;
- Empowerment - people should be able to influence decisions;
- Collective action - coming together in groups or organisations strengthens peoples' voices. Local groups already use their skills and experiences to make positive change;
- Working and learning together - collaboration and sharing experiences is vital to good community activity and promoting change;
- An acknowledgement that some people, groups and communities are being excluded and should be included in the discussion and collaboration.;
- Direction - to be derived from consultation with the community and other stakeholders;
- Parks are social as well as physical infrastructure and as such can support activities that encourage people to use them to support health and wellbeing and to bring people together;
- Everybody values good quality green/blue space that is well managed and maintained. The presence of green space does not necessarily mean it will be well used. One of the main influences on an individual's use of green/blue space is how safe they feel;

Smarter Water Catchment Collective Vision for the Crane
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The rivers and waterbodies in the catchment to be widely recognised and valued as the ‘central thread’ that links together the natural environment around the north-west quadrant of London. • The river seen as an essential component of the area’s prosperity, health and wellbeing. • Local residents, businesses and policy makers to understand how the catchment’s natural capital enriches people’s lives. • Local communities, businesses and policy makers in this diverse metropolitan area to be actively involved in caring for the catchment’s natural capital • Local communities, businesses and policy makers feel a shared sense of responsibility to look after it and ensure that it thrives in the future.
Vision to promote public awareness, access and participation from the local community
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the community including baseline and descriptive information • Place every section of our river corridors under community stewardship • Enhance community resilience to flooding in at-risk areas • Establish an unbroken Crane Valley trail from Headstone Manor to the Thames and along each major watercourse (Longford, Upper and Lower Duke’s Rivers) complete with visitor facilities at regular intervals • Encourage public use of the river corridor for recreation and health/wellbeing • Continue growing environmental volunteering throughout the catchment • Embed the Colne and Crane Valleys Green Infrastructure Strategy in local plans • Establish a resilient, community-based Crane Valley Partnership host • Enhance our river and associated open spaces so they’re highly valued by local communities and policymakers

3. VISION AND AIMS FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT WITHIN THE SMARTER WATER CATCHMENT

The SWC Plan for the River Crane outlines 5 themes. There is a linked “collective vision” and an outline of aims to promote public awareness, access and participation from the local community.

These are defined as follows:

There is a long-term plan for community engagement over the 10 years of the strategy. The different themes include work in years 2-4 to develop and implement a public engagement strategy.

This report aims to develop a discussion around building on the existing community awareness and participation within the Crane catchment. It offers a series of plans that support the community stewardship gap analysis work but also look beyond the recommendations given in that report. It is hoped that the proposals for Community Engagement and Participation plans outlined in this report will feed into the public engagement work of years 2-4.



The original proposal for this piece of work was to develop a single plan to use taking forward community engagement. It very quickly became clear that this proposal was oversimplistic and that a multistranded approach was required. This document aims to address this multistranded approach and was developed following review and a discussion with the Crane SWC team. Several of the proposals and recommendations made in this report have been incorporated into proposals for year 2 work by LGOAL/Habitats & Heritage and by CVP CIC.

The report reviews the broad principles for community engagement and then identifies a series of 8 workstreams that together will form a comprehensive community participation and engagement plan. The report identifies further work that is required including, related plans, and makes a series of recommendations.

A toolkit was developed for use when establishing any community focused plans. This toolkit is intended to offer a framework that ensures plans are developed using a similar structure, that will allow them to be compared and built on over future years of the SWC initiative. The tool kit should make it easier to track similarities in themes and outcomes for different community focused plans.

This document looks at how, through the SWC initiative, community awareness and participation can be increased across the Crane catchment. In this report we are not concerned about who would fulfil the roles to achieve this and do not make recommendations about who should take on the delivery roles.

We appreciate that there are other SWC work themes, if not all, that have a need for community engagement to achieve their outcomes successfully. This includes the water quality project developed through Citizen Crane, and the access themes developed by Sustrans. Other themes could make use of the proposals set out here. The principles of the community engagement proposal developed in this report can be used by all these SWC themes when engaging with the local community and when trying to raise awareness of the work of the SWC initiative.

4. BROAD PRINCIPLES FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

This section of the report poses a series of questions that are explored in subsequent sections which could be developed over years 2-4 through the Public Engagement strategy. Some cross cutting principles for the community awareness and engagement plan have been identified. These are as follows:

PRINCIPLE 1: CATCHMENT WIDE

The rivers and waterbodies in the catchment are regarded as the central and linking thread for community engagement. A catchment wide approach allows for a collaborative vision bringing together all those with a stake in the catchment to achieve benefits for the environment, business and local communities.

Longford River at Hampton

Many parts of the Crane catchment have well-established community engagement groups working in-river or on the green spaces. Others have fragmented or little community engagement at present, offering opportunities to extend the engagement further to encompass the whole catchment.



PRINCIPLE 2: EXPLAIN THE BENEFITS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE COMMUNITY

To increase awareness and understanding of the SWC initiative and how it benefits local people

Benefits of participation and interaction for communities in the SWC initiative could include:

- Strengthening and engaging communities – community stewardship, ownership of projects, volunteering opportunities, building community links and connections, partnership working
- Keeping people fit and healthy – opportunities for exercise, spending time in the natural environment, making social connections, exploring new places and feeling connected to nature
- Play and learning – opportunities for lifelong learning, education and skills, play and cultural engagement
- Creating a demand for green infrastructure and investment to the catchment

These benefits can be linked to opportunities and initiatives for community building. These include:

- Opportunities to access information and knowledge
- Opportunities for participation / interaction
- Opportunities to be involved in local decision making
- The capacity for collective action to achieve the building of new projects, activities, and other opportunities
- Opportunities for collaboration to achieve common goals
- Shared community pride and the development of neighbourhood capacities for problem solving.

PRINCIPLE 3: BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS TO DELIVER COMMUNITY AWARENESS AND PARTICIPATION

To establish broad based partnerships that champion SWC themes in policy and practice. The following types of organisation could be included in the partnerships:

- SWC partners and stakeholders including CVP members
- Community based organisations such as:
 - Community stewardship groups
 - Community groups within a geographic location
 - Community groups with a cultural identity – for example ethnicity, age, religion.
 - Community groups that offer opportunities to build social connections – for example workplace, sports and hobbies, clubs and groups, and other affiliation
 - Community groups with special interests – housing, disability, gender, religion etc.
- Businesses, educational establishments, places of worship etc. within catchment area
- Providers of statutory services,

PRINCIPLE 4: MODEL BEST PRACTICE

To establish evidence which showcases good practice and innovative projects that can be shared and replicated throughout the catchment. The following types of best practice could be developed or included:

- Opportunities for working and learning together - collaboration and sharing experiences is vital to good community activity and promoting change.
- A range of resources, to help to build capacity that can be reused
- A methodology for measuring impact, progress and evaluation
- Demonstrate value for money and good use of resources

PRINCIPLE 5: CONNECTING PEOPLE WITH NATURE

To improve health and well-being and grow stronger pro-nature attitudes and behaviours in more people.

Any initiatives should encourage connecting people with the nature of the Crane catchment and should consider who the target audience should be.

This principle of widening community engagement should be informed by a Natural England paper: Nature nearby: Accessible Natural Greenspace Guidance www.ukmaburbanforum.co.uk/documents/other/nature_nearby.pdf and Public Health England's report 'Improving Access to Greenspace: 2020 review'

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/904439/Improving_access_to_greenspace_2020_review.pdf

These reports argue that green space should be treated as a natural asset not a liability, there should be a priority of access to deprived communities, plans developed across different sectors should build on the commitment to greenspace for health, and increased investment is required to ensure that this happens.

PRINCIPLE 6: COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

To safeguard initiatives that are embedded within the community

- Self-determination – how will people and communities make choices and decisions?
- Empowerment – how will people and communities influence decisions?
- Collective action – How will people and communities come together in groups to make positive change?
- Disadvantaged groups – how will excluded groups be included in the discussion and collaboration?
- Direction – how will direction be derived from consultation with the community and other stakeholders?
- Sustainability – is the initiative fully embedded in the community and how will the initiative survive in the long term?

5. LINKING ENGAGEMENT TO SWC OBJECTIVES: WORKSTREAMS FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

This report identifies eight key workstreams for community engagement. These can be developed further to assist in community building between the CVP and other stakeholder organisations and the local community. The themes will also assist in:

- identifying potential partners and stakeholders for new initiatives and to collaborate in the initiative for maximum local benefit.
- Defining priorities and resourcing for community engagement initiatives
- Exploring and making recommendations that enable opportunities for interrelationships with identified themes – access, biodiversity, flood resilience, water quality and geomorphology.
- Making recommendations for outreach to ensure that community engagement includes outreach to those who face barriers to engagement.
- Supporting the broad principles for positive social engagement aid the development of a range of projects and activities for maximum local benefit

The identified workstreams are as follows:

1 - COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT

1.1 Understand the community (including baseline and descriptive information)

1.2 Understand community expectations and the interests of the diverse communities that form the Crane Catchment and determining how will these be prioritised

Recommendation 1A: Develop a detailed community building plan initially working with groups identified through community stewardship audit and communities identified as a priority for engagement in the SWC initiative in the Crane catchment.

1.3 Develop opportunities for open dialogue, feedback and networking with organisations in order to encourage strong ties between organisations working in the Crane catchment to promote increased communication and information sharing.

1.4 Raising awareness to build community engagement. This will include promoting opportunities to communities identified as a priority for engagement.

1.5 Develop messages that are used by all partners and stakeholders to ensure that there is a strong message to the local community. Engage with partners that may not traditionally link to the green/blue spaces to promote the benefits to the local community e.g. local public health teams, health and wellbeing boards, schools, religious institutions, leisure groups, interest groups such as history societies etc.

Recommendation 1B Develop and implement a communication strategy for the SWC initiative which includes all community-based groups working in the catchment, regular opportunities for networking and dialogue, such as conferences.

1.6 To support messages about the environmental, social and historical value of the green spaces.



Development of community infrastructure to encourage the use of the river corridor for learning, recreation, health and wellbeing and active travel.

Existing nodes or hubs have the potential to be enhanced. A communication strategy for the Crane Valley Trail would include identifiable brochures, signage and communications

2 - DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

- 2.1 Encourage public use of the river corridor for recreation and health/wellbeing
- 2.2 Develop clear communication for the unbroken Crane Valley trail from Headstone Manor to the Thames and along each major watercourse (Longford, Upper and Lower Duke's Rivers) complete with visitor facilities at regular intervals.
- 2.3 Build community engagement around a linked series of community "nodes" or hubs along the catchment network which provide a range of community services.
- 2.4 Build community engagement around the concept of a wider green network. This network will include links to the Thames and River Colne through catchment connections.
- 2.5 Develop interpretation, signage and promotion of the Crane trail.
- 2.6 Build community engagement around the Crane catchment and associated trails to a wide and broad audience.
- 2.7 Work with partners in areas where the community has identified that they feel unsafe visiting by including or enhancing infrastructure and offering activities that will encourage more use.

Recommendation 2A : Develop a disability access and inclusion plan for adoption by landowners and stakeholders to encourage access by groups that currently face barriers to access to open spaces within the Crane catchment

Recommendation 2B: Develop a communication strategy for the Crane Valley Trail that includes identifiable brochures, signage and communications.



A network of nodes or hubs with community facilities such as toilets, benches and cafés are central to building community engagement.

3 - WIDEN COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

- 3.1 Celebrate the Crane catchment in different ways through events and activities that have a wide and broad interest for local communities
- 3.2 Develop activities that are appropriate for the community. Community events are an excellent tool for celebrating what the community values. They offer opportunities to promote the uniqueness of the Crane catchment, its wildlife and history. It offers the chance to build relationships between groups and organisations that would not normally work together in green/blue space.

3.3 Quantify participation and reach It is important to quantify participation so that there is a baseline of engagement against which future measures can be compared. This would include for example the frequency of visits, social media engagement; membership of groups, involvement in practical engagement (walks and talks, volunteering, citizen science, education and training; employment, research and personal pro-social activity – e.g. litter picking.

Recommendation 3A: Develop a cultural plan for the catchment that includes events and opportunities to celebrate the rich biodiversity, history, and community involvement.

Recommendation 3B: Develop a community events calendar and a community network forum to promote opportunities and events or activities.

Recommendation 3C: Consider seed funding to community groups to initiate new events.

3.4 Enhance the rivers and associated open spaces so they are highly valued by local communities and policymakers

3.5 Aim to broaden and widen community participation in proposals by developing engagement strategies for different groups of local people that the initiative wishes to engage with.

Recommendation 3D: Develop engagement strategies to model in local areas that can be scaled up and adopted elsewhere on the catchment. These can be targeted and specific to different groups of people or residents as required

4 - PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARTICIPATION/VOLUNTEERING

4.1 Develop the volunteering capacity throughout the catchment and encourage “community stewardship” in every section of the river corridor

Recommendation 4A: Develop a community network forum that is centrally coordinated and managed. This forum could develop a suite of opportunities to promote volunteering opportunities and offering training and support to community groups. The community network forum would identify further opportunities for “community stewardship” and work to support to establish new groups based on spaces within the Crane catchment.

4.2 Develop the community groups contributing to the community’s capacity and encourage them to develop their reach within their community through support skills training and access to facilities that will strengthen their resilience.

Recommendation 4B: Develop a community network forum that is centrally run and coordinated to work with local community groups to grow their capacity.



Citizen Crane Project

Volunteers have been going out monthly to investigate the condition of the river at up to 16 sites across the catchment since April 2014. This work has enabled us to better understand the ecosystem and identify many significant pollution sources. Photo ©FORCE

5 - DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNITY SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES

5.1 Develop activities that meet the needs of diverse communities as identified in the community building plan

5.2 Identify priority groups to shape community engagement to be as inclusive as possible.

5.3 Work with partners to develop a strategy that will consider perceptions of personal safety and security within open space to encourage independent activity / leisure activities within the catchment.

Recommendation 5A: To develop a community building plan with stakeholders to understand needs of diverse communities along Crane catchment and work with SWC team to identify priority groups to encourage involvement and identify areas for shared aims and activities.

6 - ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT TO ALLOW VISION TO DEVELOP.

6.1 Support new community groups to be thriving and resilient to ensure that there is an increased level of community activity within the catchment and that they achieve greater influence and are able to secure more resources.

6.2 Plans need to be linked to the SWC strategy, and stakeholder policies and plans and to be measurable

Recommendation 6A: Develop a community network forum that is centrally coordinated and managed and can develop a suite of opportunities for the local community in addition to training and support.

7 – SUPPORTING COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS TO REDUCE CARBON FOOTPRINT

- 7.1 Work with community groups to identify how they can encourage their communities to reduce their carbon footprint e.g., developing projects that will contribute to climate action plans or will reduce climate emissions. This might include planting more trees and other vegetation, selecting trees which are resilient to climate threats, keeping existing trees healthy, managing grassland and soils, flood alleviation projects and ensuring the water quality in the rivers is improved.
- 7.2 Work with community groups to encourage the development of catchment-wide joined-up walking/cycling opportunities. This would include well signposted and maintained walking and cycling trails along the catchment that can be entered and exited at frequent intervals and work with community groups to encourage more carbon friendly transport options to be chosen both for leisure, regular commuting and for outdoor exercise.
- 7.3 Work with community groups to promote the green spaces of the Crane catchment as a destination to encourage people to stay locally and use these spaces for their day trips, picnics etc. rather than travelling further afield to access better known green spaces e.g. Richmond Park and Burnham Beeches which are overused and under pressure.
- 7.4 Work with community groups to establish a network of community hubs or “nodes” along the river corridor that could be used to focus community interest on issues such as reducing carbon footprint, alleviating flooding, saving food and energy efficiency. Encourage new hubs to incorporate solar pv and thermal energy, insulation, battery storage and heat pumps.

Recommendation 7A: To work with community groups to develop a detailed ideas that would encourage the implementation of existing climate action plans e.g. by local boroughs

Recommendation 7B: Showcase good practice or innovative work relating to reducing carbon footprint by local community groups to other community groups working in the catchment.

8 - DELIVERING ECONOMIC BENEFIT

There are significant benefits to partnership working and including local businesses in the partnership. Potentially it could lead to extra funding, bring in expertise and generate more interest from the wider community. Benefits such as increased employment may have a link to increased community engagement, but the link may be difficult to measure or prove.

Recommendation 8A: To work with community groups to identify opportunities to create jobs and deliver training in maintaining the improved river corridor. Ideas have been developed in a proposal for education and training. These are included in Appendix 5.

The KG Café in Kneller Gardens is a social enterprise that train vulnerable young people from Richmond College to learn new skills. The Friends of Kneller Gardens working in partnership with Richmond Council have recently renovated the café so that the cafe is able to operate all year. This will benefit the café business and the young people that it trains.



6. IDENTIFYING TARGET AUDIENCES

For the purposes of this document, we have interpreted “community” as a group of people with some common identity and connection which may be based on any number of factors. To develop a public engagement strategy more information is required about different communities in the catchment and their geographic distribution, for example the distribution of the following groups in the catchment:

- Young people/ educational achievement
- Older people,
- Lower socio-economic groups
- people from black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds.
- People with limited access to green space

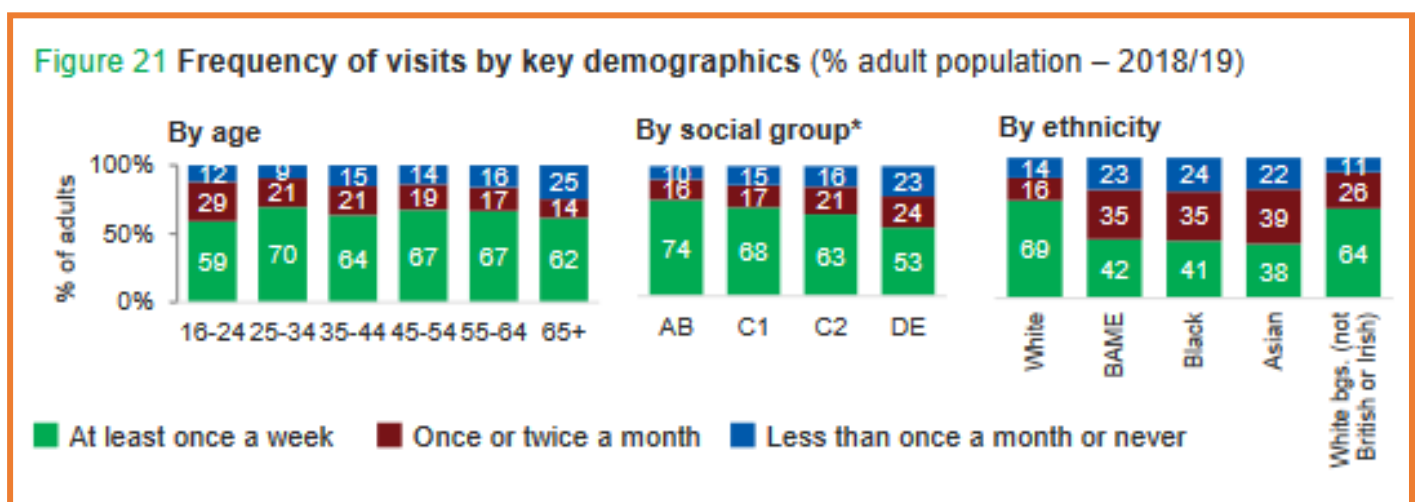


Community engagement events can bring new audiences into the catchment, promotes community building and inclusion.

In 2021 the TW survey of 200 people living local to the Crane catchment explored themes that link to community engagement within the catchment. The survey showed that 44% of respondents visited the catchment with 37% walking in the green spaces daily. Walking was the most frequent reason for visiting the Crane. A third visit monthly to take part in activities with family / friends.

A Public Engagement Strategy would look to extend opportunities to those who do not normally engage with open spaces. Promoting social inclusion usually includes promoting equal opportunities for those who are excluded and would enable people or communities who face barriers to inclusion to fully participate. From research we know that nationally the proportion of the population who visit nature infrequently (less than once a month or never) was 16% in 2018/19. Of this, 6% never visit. Those that do not visit include young people and families. Research also tells us that there is a dip in nature connectedness index in young people between the ages of 10-31. Levels of nature connectedness dipped as children approached their early teenage years. The levels of nature connectedness among children is positively related to those of the adults in their household. This pattern is reflected in the TW 2021 survey of awareness in the Crane catchment.

Natural England. Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment (March 2020). *A summary report on nature connectedness among adults and children in England. Analyses of relationships with wellbeing and pro-environmental behaviours.*



Nature connectedness and other demographics

The frequency of visits to the natural environment varied across key demographics, with larger proportions of infrequent visitors in the oldest age groups, lower socio-economic groups and people from black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds. (Natural England. (September 2019) *Monitor of Engagement with the Natural*

Environment: The national survey on people and the natural environment. Headline report 2019: Analysis of latest results (March 2018 to February 2019) and ten years of the survey from 2009 to 2019

Recommendation 9A: This analysis suggests that to target communities that face barriers to accessing green/blue spaces in the Crane catchment the Community Awareness and Participation plan should target the following groups as a priority:

- Young people
- Families
- Older people,
- Lower socio economic groups
- People from black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds
- People with limited access to green space.

Recommendation 9B: Further analysis and mapping of the geographic distribution of these members of the community within the catchment would support the community building plan and public engagement strategy.

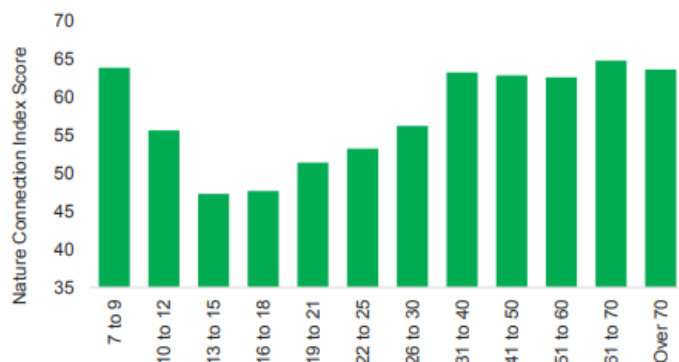
7. SUMMARY LEARNINGS FROM 2021 AWARENESS AND ATTITUDES SURVEY

The following issues can be drawn out from the 2021 survey:

FEAR OF CRIME/PERSONAL SAFETY.

TW survey 2021 showed that over a third did not agree to feeling safe visiting the Crane. This reflects other research such as the Heritage Lottery Fund Space to Thrive report, January 2020 www.heritagefund.org.uk/publications/space-thrive which indicates that concerns for personal safety is the biggest single reported barrier to accessing urban green space. This was expressed both in terms of the physical environment (dense overgrown vegetation, lack of lighting, anti-social behaviour) and the threat of others (gangs, drinking and drug use). Only half of Bangladeshi people said they feel safe using their local green space, compared with three quarters of white people. Anecdotally we know that this is an issue in some parts of the Crane catchment and has been one of the issues addressed through previous large-scale engagement projects.

Figure 1 NCI by age



QUALITY OF MAINTENANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Everybody, regardless of their ethnicity, values spaces that are of a high quality and are well managed and maintained. Poor design preventing views, heavy vegetation and lack of lighting were seen to promote feelings of insecurity.

LACK OF FACILITIES

Failure to acknowledge and provide for the diverse needs of a mixed community, for instance nowhere provided in a local green space for Muslim women to meet away from men.

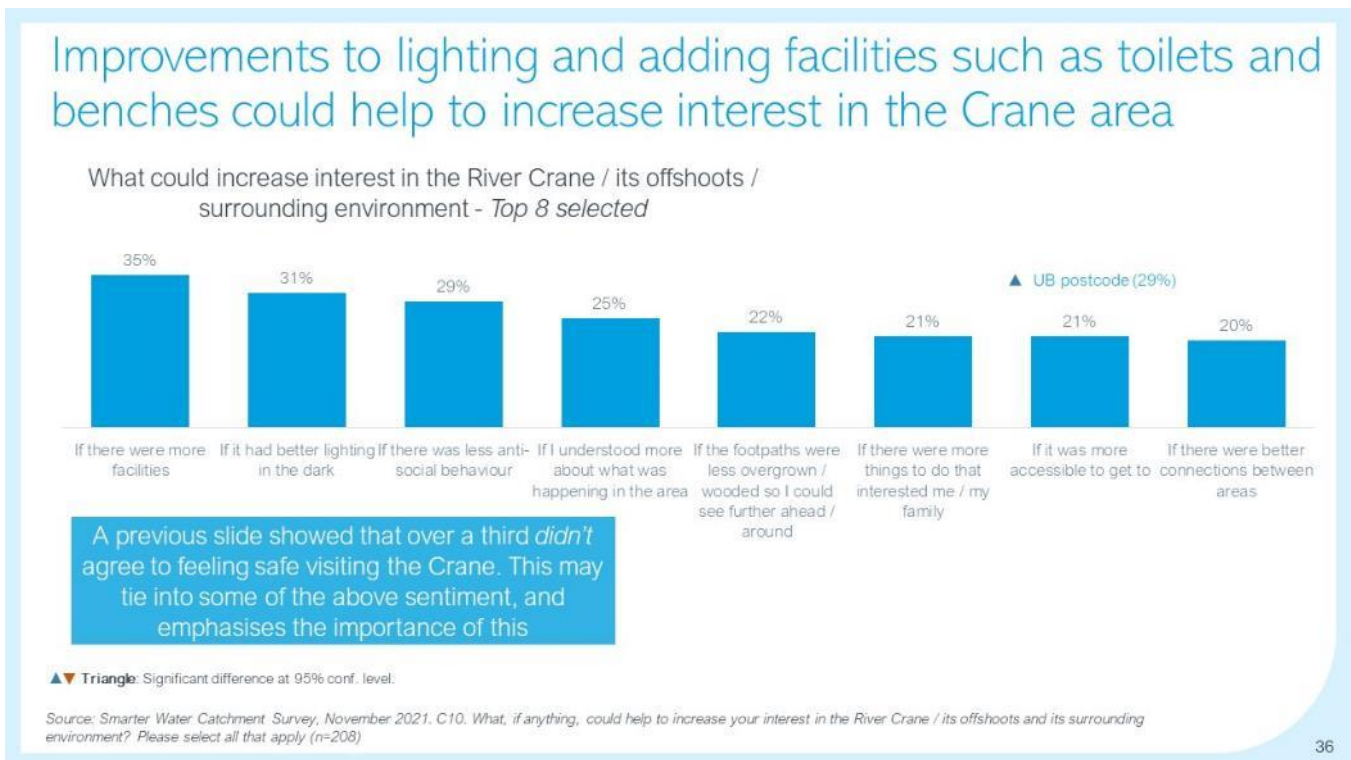
Improving facilities in consultation with local people.



Lack of facilities, particularly lack of facilities for young children, teenagers, older people, and the disabled were considered to be barriers. The following were all considered important: seating for resting and socialising; family areas; clean and safe places to play, and facilities such as toilets and cafés.

These specific concerns are echoed in the TW survey of 2021 where respondents suggested facilities that might encourage more visits:

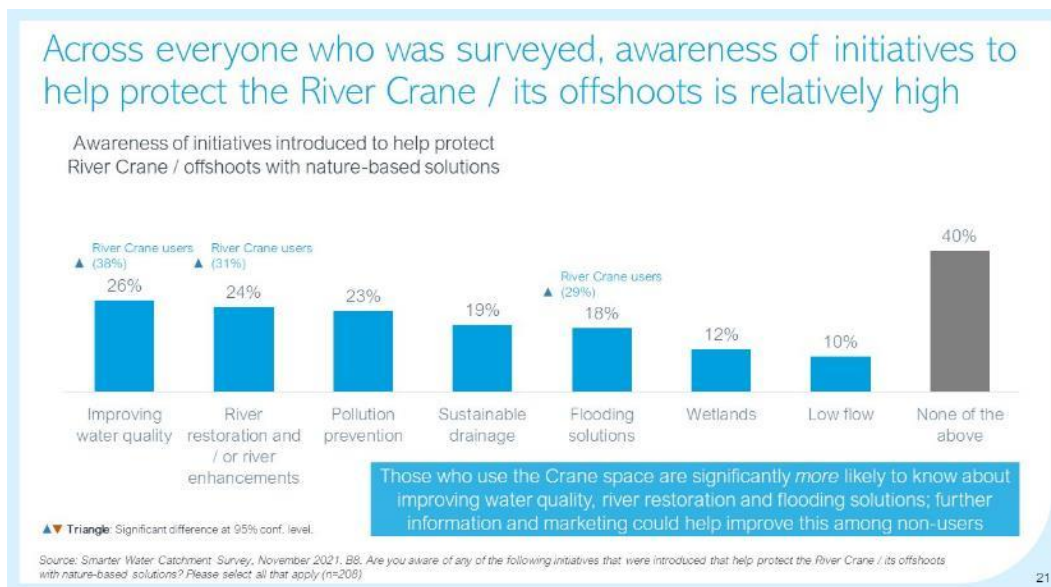
- More facilities including benches 35%
- Better lighting 31%
- Less anti-social behaviour 29%
- Footpaths were less overgrown 22%.



OPPORTUNITIES FOR INTERRELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER SWC WORKSTRANDS

The 2021 Awareness Survey showed that there was an awareness of some of the initiatives that the Crane Valley Partnership are involved in, but even among those who say that they use the green spaces of the Crane catchment

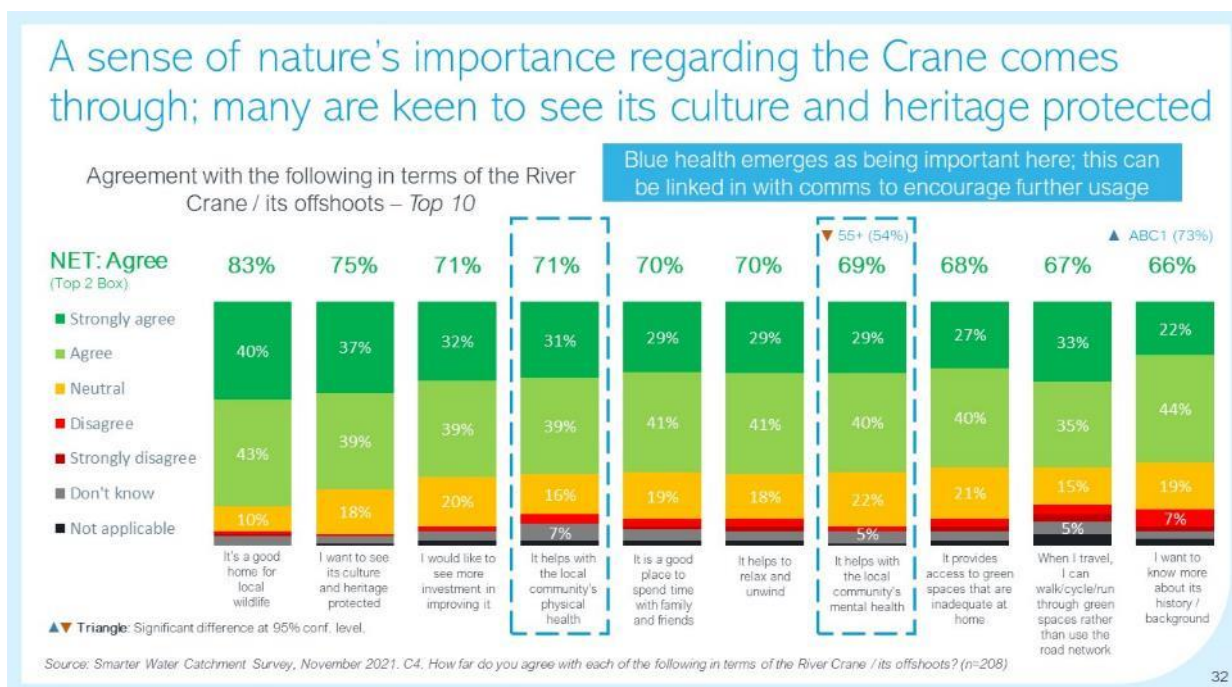
the awareness could be improved further (36% for work to improve the water quality, 31% on river restoration initiatives and 18% on flooding solutions.)



This indicates opportunities for developing interrelationships across all areas of the SWC initiative and opportunities to work in collaboration with all other stakeholders (access, biodiversity, flood resilience, water quality and geomorphology) and to involve communities in initiatives.

Work and messages can be embedded in activities and initiatives, and there are opportunities to develop messages specifically linked to different work areas exploring some of these themes. These could be targeted at specific audiences as part of community learning initiatives, educational initiatives, social action initiatives or cultural initiatives for families or specific groups within the community. There are also opportunities for linking SWC initiatives to the “Blue Health” and health and wellbeing initiatives. These were identified in the 2021 Awareness survey as important to residents.

There are opportunities to develop targeted engagement with identified community groups to **model activities**. The



opportunities to link to the SWC themes such as improving access, addressing the health and wellbeing and culture and heritage widens the opportunities for different messages to be developed.

8. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

WORKSTREAM 1 - COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Recommendation 1A: Develop a detailed community building plan initially working with groups identified through community stewardship audit and communities identified as a priority for engagement in the SWC initiative.

Recommendation 1B: Develop and implement a communication strategy for the SWC initiative in the Crane which includes all community-based groups working in the catchment, regular opportunities for networking and dialogue such as conference.

WORKSTREAM 2 DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Recommendation 2A : Develop a disability access and inclusion plan for adoption by landowners and stakeholders to encourage access by groups that currently face barriers to access to open spaces along the Crane Catchment

Recommendation 2B: Develop a communication strategy for the Crane Valley Trail that includes identifiable brochures, signage and communications.

WORKSTREAM 3 WIDEN COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Recommendation 3A: Develop a cultural plan for the catchment that includes events and opportunities to celebrate the rich biodiversity, history, and community involvement.

Recommendation 3B: Develop a community events calendar and a community network forum to promote opportunities and events.

Recommendation 3C: Consider seed funding to community groups to initiate new events.

Recommendation 3D: Develop model engagement strategies in local areas that can be scaled up and adopted elsewhere on the catchment. These can be targeted and specific to different groups of people or residents.

WORKSTREAM 4 PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARTICIPATION/VOLUNTEERING

Recommendation 4A: Develop a community network forum that is centrally coordinated and managed and can develop a suite of opportunities to promote volunteer opportunities as well as offering training and support. The community network forum would identify further opportunities for “community stewardship” and work to support new groups to establish.

Recommendation 4B: Develop a community network forum that supports community participation and volunteering. This network forum could be centrally run and coordinated to work with local community groups to grow their capacity. There would be a requirement for this forum to work closely with all the key themes of the SWC programme, including the Citizen Crane programme in order to ensure that there was no duplication of effort.

WORKSTREAM 5 DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNITY SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES

Recommendation 5A: To develop a community building plan with stakeholders to understand needs of diverse communities within Crane catchment and work with SWC team to identify priority groups to encourage involvement and identify areas for shared aims and activities.

WORKSTREAM 6 - ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT TO ALLOW VISION TO DEVELOP.

Recommendation 6A: Develop a community network forum that is centrally coordinated and managed and can develop a suite of opportunities community opportunities as well as offering training and support to community groups and other organisations. This would be one of several activities offered by the forum.

Catchment-wide community engagement could be enhanced through the development and implementation of a series of plans listed below and identified in the recommendations above.

WORKSTREAM 7 – SUPPORTING COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS TO REDUCE CARBON FOOTPRINT

Recommendation 7A: To work with community groups to develop a detailed ideas that would encourage the implementation of existing climate action plans e.g. by local boroughs

Recommendation 7B: Showcase good practice or innovative work relating to reducing carbon footprint by local community groups to other community groups working in the catchment.

WORKSTREAM 8 – DELIVERING ECONOMIC BENEFIT

Recommendation 8A: To work with community groups to identify opportunities to create jobs and deliver training in maintaining the improved river corridor.

WORKSTREAM 9 – IDENTIFYING AUDIENCES

Recommendation 9A: This analysis suggests that to target communities that face barriers to accessing green/blue spaces in the Crane catchment the Community Awareness and Participation Plan should target the following groups as a priority: young people, families, older people, lower socio-economic groups, people from black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds, people with limited access to green space

Recommendation 9B: Further analysis and mapping of the geographic distribution of these members of the community within the catchment would support the community building plan and public engagement strategy.

9. TOOLKIT: DEVELOPING A COMMUNITY AWARENESS AND PARTICIPATION PLAN

There are several recommendations included in this report that aim to develop a series of linked plans to enhance community awareness and participation. To guarantee a common structure for these plans this step-by-step toolkit will enable stakeholders to develop plans to enhance community participation and engagement around planned activities with the aim of raising awareness or developing and introducing new activities to the local community along the Crane catchment.

This toolkit is given in Appendix 3 at the end of the report.

10. CONCLUSIONS

Community awareness and engagement in the Crane catchment can be raised through a series of interlinked plans that have been outlined in this report. The principles and workstreams to do this have been set out in the report, which also includes a series of recommendations that would allow the workstreams to be developed over time. A toolkit has been developed that can be used to progress the plans. Adoption of the toolkit will permit any plans for community engagement to have a coherence and similar structure over the coming years as the SWC initiative develops.

The toolkit has the potential to be developed in other ways so that community groups and other stakeholders can develop their own plans for community engagement and participation, for example to engage with different audiences, extend their engagement or plan a project for fundraising initiatives.

As work strands have developed over 2021/22 many of the initiatives identified in this report have been included in the work plans for 2022/3 and beyond. These work strands are identified in Appendix 3. In developing ideas the project team looked at other examples of multiagency working and drew on some of the ideas adopted by these long-term projects. A review of these is included in Appendix 1.

There is significant benefit in building on the already extensive community engagement that takes place within the River Crane catchment and working with communities to deliver their objectives. There are opportunities for building the capacity of existing and new groups both in the short term but also in the longer term. The aim is to develop a culture of linked but strong, self-sufficient, and engaged community groups throughout the catchment. The value of these groups is that they act as voluntary community custodians, fundraisers, influencers, conservationists, land managers, and event organisers.

Community groups act as the 'eyes and ears' of green and blue spaces when they come under threat, or need improvement, they take on responsibility for maintenance and management often in innovative ways. They are the glue that keeps the green spaces at their best, and their actions should be valued highly, and recognition that they represent a massive community asset for the catchment.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 MODELS OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FOR MULTIPARTNERSHIP INITIATIVES

This section aims to highlight other models that may be useful in developing and informing the evolving community engagement plans for the Crane SWC.

Many of these models focus using green space to support health and wellbeing of the local community and the role the green infrastructure can play to support community health initiatives. Others have a focus on economic development.

NATURALLY BIRMINGHAM

A useful project to look at because it has numerous similarities with the SWC Programme. While the website is rich in information, it could be organised so as to make it easier to navigate.

Resources: They do not have many resources/ toolkits to download, but there are Health and Wellbeing Guides available for park-users/ residents, and for link workers involved in social prescribing: <https://naturallybirmingham.org/health-and-wellbeing-guides/>

Structure: Naturally Birmingham identifies itself as operating according to **three core frameworks:** environmental justice; citizen involvement; healthy city.

Pilots: The project has several pilot strands: Skills and Jobs; Children and young people; Health and Wellbeing; Employment; Housing and Public Green Space Development. These pilots are being delivered by different groups working in partnerships, and an overview of the pilots' proposals and intentions are on [this page](#). It's worth keeping an eye on the website, as they might share more case studies, resources and tools as the project progresses.

Each pilot's webpage outlines activities/ initiatives/ proposals e.g. [Health and Wellbeing](#) included sensory walks, duckling watch, community-informed landscape design.

Supporting/ Partnering: They have [published reports](#) on their consultation process, 'Community Conversations', and they encourage ongoing contribution from and conversation with groups.

Plan: Naturally Birmingham's *City of Nature Plan* is described on this page (NB, the information could be presented in a more easily navigable way): <https://naturallybirmingham.org/birmingham-city-of-nature-delivery-framework/>

The proposed **City of Nature Alliance** would support green spaces to be the best they can be, through connecting individuals, groups, organisations - some of the aims echo the purpose of the SMARTER WATER CATCHMENT PROGRAMME.

Champions: They have a **Green Champion** programme which aims to empower individuals, encourage networking, partnership working, and knowledge-sharing. Additionally, Champions should hopefully promote wider engagement with the Future Parks Accelerator programme across the city.

Communication: Generally, the website could be a bit easier to navigate and search. The blog section contains useful and interesting material e.g. the Greenground map. It would be interesting to hear more about how Naturally Birmingham approaches the opportunities and challenges of meeting the needs of/ representing diverse communities.

Future Parks Accelerator are also working in the London Boroughs of Camden and Islington ([Parks for Health](#)), but there is not much information about the projects online yet.

The FPA project in Edinburgh, called '[Thriving Green Spaces](#)', might also have insights for the SWC Programme since it works across green and blue spaces (rivers, lochs, sea shores), and work streams including ecology, people, governance, learning. No resources are offered on the website but they are currently calling for volunteers to carry out observation and mapping studies.

Opinion: A useful model to observe as it develops, particularly in the way it describes itself and organizes its work across project areas.

HEALTHY PARKS, HEALTHY PEOPLE / EUROPARC FEDERATION

The resources offered are targeted at those working in management of parks and protected spaces, e.g. rangers, but might be more widely applicable.

The Toolkit: <https://www.europarc.org/nature/healthy-parks-healthy-people-europe/hphpe-toolkit/>

The toolkit is structured across **four pillars** of *Making the Case; Building Partnerships; Developing Capacity and Practice; Connecting people and nature.*

Each pillar has a corresponding checklist with goals and actions, and the Checklist can also be downloaded separately from the page linked above.

While the toolkit is aimed at single sites with resourced staff/ managers, the toolkit may be adaptable for multipartner/ community stewardship groups and initiatives. Although many of the points might be familiar already to SWC Programme partners and groups in the catchment, it might provide a way of articulating issues and proposals.

Knowledge Hub: Here Europarc Federation share case studies, media, campaigns, and resources about topics including Healthy Parks Healthy People initiative: <https://www.europarc.org/knowledge-hub/health-green-exercise-hphpe/>. In the HPHPe Knowledge Hub there are case studies from around Europe on topics including accessibility of green spaces, plus well-structured case studies on [Wild Ways Well](#) in Cumbernauld, Scotland and the [Wilderness Foundation's nature immersion therapy](#).

Europarc also have a strand aimed at engaging younger people in parks/ protected spaces. This isn't strictly part of HPHPe, but it points to wellbeing impacts for young people and also changing perceptions and behaviours at a younger age:

<https://www.europarc.org/nature/young-people/>

Case Studies about working with young people e.g. Junior Ranger programmes can be found in the Knowledge Hub:

<https://www.europarc.org/knowledge-hub/youth/>

Training: It may not be the right fit for organisations involved with SWC Programme, but Europarc offer free communicator toolkits, which may have material that could serve as inspiration or be adapted for community-led groups, e.g. guidance on social media content creation, writing press releases etc: <https://www.europarc.org/tools-and-training/communication-skills/toolkit/>

Opinion: Although the scope of Europarc Federation is much broader and seems aimed at established organisations/ institutions, within the Healthy Parks Healthy People programme the condensed checklist and the full toolkit are both worth looking at as templates or resources to signpost towards.

THE MERSEY FOREST

As with Naturally Birmingham, it is useful to observe how this project presents itself, because in structure and aims it has similarities to the SWC Programme. The website is generally well-organised and easy to navigate, and they offer a lot of information about their work.

Resources: Green Infrastructure Valuation toolkit: <https://www.merseyforest.org.uk/services/gi-val/>. They also offer examples of how the toolkit has been used in practice. The toolkit, is aimed at 'land managers, developers and other organisations investing in local sustainable development'. They also offer Green Skill Guides:

<https://www.merseyforest.org.uk/things-to-do/learn-green-skills-original/>

Offering support: The Mersey Forest core team offer support to local groups and schools in establishing site priorities, applying for/ allocating funding. E.g. A Mersey Forest [schools fundraising pack](#). They also offer free 'how to' resources for learning green skills e.g. how to create wildlife ponds, hedgerows etc; <https://www.merseyforest.org.uk/things-to-do/learn-green-skills-original/>

Case Studies: Under the project area of Empowering Communities, the Mersey Forest have worked on several initiatives to engage communities and green spaces. There are case studies available on the site: <https://www.merseyforest.org.uk/our-work/communities/>

Natural Health Service: they have a PDF report with Four Key Facts for Health Commissioners: <https://naturalhealthservice.org.uk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Natural-Health-Service-four-key-facts.pdf> - this might be a useful resource for groups who have not previously explained their work in these terms, providing an insight into how to frame the aims and benefits to a health professional audience. The Natural Health Service also works with Liverpool John Moores University and the University of Liverpool, demonstrating again the benefit of working with research centres.

Communication: The Mersey Forest website offers a user-friendly way of presenting what the project is about and what is on offer in the Forest, e.g. in their 'Things to Do' section: <https://www.merseyforest.org.uk/things-to-do/> - these are largely self-guided activities such as geocaching and forest bathing, but they offer basic instructions to support people engaging by themselves. On the '[join a community group](#)' webpage, they signpost numerous groups by region.

Consultancy/ Services: The Mersey Forest team are able to offer studies including mapping, interactive mapping development, web tools development, valuation of green infrastructure, GIS analysis, offering green solutions to overcome development barriers. Consultancy services described [here](#). They do also offer [mindfulness in forests for organisations](#).

Opinion: The website is a good model for how to organise information and communicate about the project, promote engagement and public awareness. There are lots of case studies in the '[Our Work](#)' section, but there are not that many free resources and toolkits available at the moment.

BLUEHEALTH RESEARCH PROJECT

This research project seeks to understand the connections between engagement with blue spaces in urban environments and health/ wellbeing.

TOOLBOX: <https://bluehealth2020.eu/resources/toolbox/>

There is detailed guidance available on the practical application of each tool. It could be worth reviewing the available tools, but some may require significantly more resourcing and preparation than others.

In outline:

1. [Environmental Assessment Tool](#) (a professional and a community version are available) . Comprehensive questionnaire. Could allow groups to gather significant quantities of data, but quite complex and not all fields necessarily applicable in the Crane catchment setting.
2. [Decision Support Tool](#) - aimed at those involved in planning, maintaining and designing, collates guidance based on respondents' descriptions of site-specific concerns.
3. [Behavioural Assessment Tool](#) - requires data collector(s) to conduct on-site monitoring/ observation and log information through QGIS, an open-source GIS software.
4. [Community Level Survey](#) - conducting interviews to learn about behaviour and perceptions of local communities, to be employed before and after interventions.
5. [SoftGIS](#) - capturing and logging subjective/ 'soft' data through participatory mapping to understand a spatial dimension to people's activities in an area. The tool used by BlueHealth research project is a commercial (quite expensive) tool, others could be available.
6. [International Survey](#) - large-scale 19,000 respondent survey, analysis still in progress.

Protocol: *Urban Blue Acupuncture* in Plymouth: <https://bluehealth2020.eu/publications/acupuncture-protocol/>

BlueHealth researchers have written a paper evaluating a landscape design intervention to improve health and wellbeing. ‘Acupuncture’ denotes a project where the effects can extend in scale far beyond the initial (small) intervention.

More about *Urban Acupuncture*, in Estonia: <https://bluehealth2020.eu/news/tallinn-tartu/>. Could the *Urban Acupuncture* model / label be something to use in SWC Programme?

Scenario Planning: Using the DESTEP methodology to apply broad predictions at local level. This identifies factors that determine the outcomes of projects e.g. whether a new riverside footpath will encourage more walking. Scenario planning is ideally implemented in multi-stakeholder workshops. Guide to producing Scenarios: <https://bluehealth2020.eu/resources/ten-steps/>

Use of technologies: Virtual reality is being used experimentally to investigate whether the technology can bring benefits of blue space to those who cannot physically experience them. The results are still pending. VR is also being used in planning and design.

Partnering for research: University of Exeter are a research partner in BlueHealth. Uni of Exeter’s European Centre for Environment and Human Health have a research group who publish findings on the [Beyond Greenspace](#) blog: they share resources including on Green Social Prescribing, and resources on how to make the most of green space for people’s health.

Opinion: It would be interesting to investigate how BlueHealth and University of Exeter’s resources/ tools could be employed to better understand and subsequently meet the needs and concerns of communities in the Crane Catchment. The Blue Health project also demonstrates the benefit of working closely with university research groups in data collection and analysis.

APPENDIX 2 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDED PLANS TO BE DEVELOPED FOR SWC INITIATIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Identified plan	Objective	Status March 2022
Community Building Plan	To determine levels of participation, to define who the stakeholders and community are and to be able to review progress. To identify or prioritise what the needs of the community and stakeholders are and what the priorities should be To inform the decision-making or service delivery as part as a longer-term strategy To develop collaborative ways of implementing elements aims and objectives To define how barriers to engagement will be overcome	Some identification of stakeholders covered 2021/22 Community gap analysis Priorities and other workstreams to be developed in 2022/3 Community work
Communication Plan	To help achieve overall objectives To engage effectively with stakeholders and the local community To demonstrate success To ensure people understand what we do To change behaviour and perceptions where necessary.	Covered 2022/3 Community work
Model Engagement Activities	Trial activities with priority groups that can be tested. E.g. work with young people or families to engage them in spaces on the Crane catchment, or activities that will address the perception of lack of safety in open spaces.	Covered 2022/3 Community work

Community Network Forum	To help communities get involved, find common cause with others Help individual community groups build confidence, skills and governance. Facilitate contact between groups, foster trust, support groups, help groups develop productive relationships with decision-makers, achieve greater influence and secure better resources. Encourage activities, events and engagement and further opportunities for “community stewardship”	Covered 2022/3 Community work
Community Events Calendar	An online listing of all activities and events taking place within the Crane catchment.	Covered 2022/3 Community work
Cultural Plan and activities	To generate a vision and action plan for strengthening and growing arts and culture assets. To integrate artistic and cultural resources across the local community. Cultural plans may include goals and strategies that address topics including: social cohesion, community engagement, arts and culture programming, cultural economic development, and cultural facilities development.	To be developed
Education and training plan	To develop opportunities in the area of education and training that have potential to support these different themes. The aim of the work would be to develop a series of education hubs through the catchment that would support the concept of life long learning.	Outline of a proposal was developed February 2022
Seed Funding	To allow small community events to develop programmes of activities that are relevant to their local community.	Covered 2022/3 Community work Recent proposal will allow funding to be used for equipment, furniture, promotional materials, insurance and delivering events.
Geographic mapping of demographic characteristics of communities	To allow for targeted engagement of events and activities.	To be developed or included in 2022/3 PES work
Disability Access and Inclusion Plan	To plan and implement improvements to access and inclusion with regards to services and events, buildings and facilities, and information. These plans benefit people with disability, the elderly, young parents and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.	To be developed
Communication Strategy for The Crane Valley Trail	This includes an identifiable house style for interpretation and signage, wayfinding and information.	To be developed

APPENDIX 3 TOOLKIT: DEVELOPING A COMMUNITY AWARENESS AND PARTICIPATION PLAN

A toolkit which will allow stakeholders to develop a structured plan to develop community awareness and/or to encourage community participation. The text of this toolkit is given separately.

APPENDIX 4 EDUCATION AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

BACKGROUND

Year 1 work of LGOAL and Habitats & Heritage for the SWC programme has shown the need to develop community activities across the catchment that engage the public to showcase the catchment and to trial /model activities across the different themes of biodiversity, flood resilience, water quality, and geomorphology in the catchment.

The LGOAL and Habitats & Heritage have identified several opportunities in education and training that have potential to support the SWC themes. The aim of the work would be to develop a series of education hubs through the catchment that would support the concept of lifelong learning.

SUPPORTING SCHOOLS COLLEGES AND EDUCATIONAL ESTABLISHMENTS

The partners identified the need to understand the current situation and build on this. Activities would include:

- Audit of schools, colleges and other education establishments that are within the catchment or potentially could benefit from access to the River Crane
- Collate information from each establishment on what river engagement is currently on offer
- Identify potential barriers to river engagement
- Look to understand and make recommendations to mitigate against any identified barriers where possible
- Consult local education establishments on what type of provision would be useful e.g. resources, workshops, staff training, assemblies, river packs including risk assessments, maps, access points, transport links etc.
- Generate provision according to outcome of audit
- Facilitate opportunities for education hubs to come together to share good practice and collaborate on potential river stewardship experiences for their students
- Promote other opportunities within the catchment to schools, colleges and educational establishment e.g. volunteering, citizen science etc

DEVELOPING TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

- Explore the potential to work with colleges and universities to develop training opportunities e.g. practical experience to support careers in the sector at all levels, university applications from 6th formers and university students. This could include volunteering, citizen science or more structured activities for example students looking for practical experience for land management courses.
- Offer information sessions to school leavers, 6th form students and university students looking to study environmental topics
- Explore potential for qualifications such as AQA or similar on river stewardship, green space management and other river opportunities. Work with educational establishments to devise qualifications if no such qualifications exist
- Identify existing local provision for apprenticeships, training and employment
- Consult providers about potential to train local community members on aspects of the Crane catchment including: stewardship, biodiversity, ecology, green space management, community engagement etc
- Potential to collaborate with other higher education institutions to support environmental stewardship training and facilitate opportunities for students with a view to long term engagement in the river catchment: Capel Manor, West Thames College, West London College, St Mary's University etc.
- Explore possibility of working with existing employers (including borough contractors) with an interest or investment along the Crane catchment.

- Promote the Story Map to all contacts in Education, Employment and Training
- Invite interested parties to SWC road shows, training day at RFU etc. to meet partner organisations.

LIFELONG LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

- Build public interest and participation in community activities in the Crane catchment. This will include:
 - Activities that engage the general public in the catchment e.g. litter management, opportunities to support health and wellbeing.
 - Activities that encourage an increased in enjoyment, knowledge and use of the catchment and its environs. Topics could include ecology and wildlife, history and archaeology etc
- Build voluntary and community groups capacity to deliver activities to support this theme.
- Develop opportunities for learning new skills through programmes of volunteering that support community learning activities – e.g. traditional land management skills such as meadow management, hedge laying etc.
- Develop opportunities for taking part in citizen science activities throughout the catchment for families and older people by training community led organisations to deliver these activities.

INDICATIVE BUDGET

This proposal has not been costed but could form a scheme of work going forward in year 3-5 of the SWC initiatives. Some foundations will be laid in 2022/3 through CRA062 Community Based Opportunities.

FURTHER INFORMATION

This report was written by staff from Let's Go Outside and Learn CIC (Lead organisation) and Habitats & Heritage.

LET'S GO OUTSIDE AND LEARN CIC

Let's Go Outside and Learn is a Community Interest Company set up in 2015, to date we have worked in the London Boroughs of Richmond and Hounslow. The organisation has 3 directors, 7 specialist advisers, 6 freelance staff and about 12 volunteers.

Let's Go Outside and Learn CIC offer access to nature to promote positive physical and mental health opportunities to people with reference to those at risk of social isolation and those who face barriers to engaging with the natural environment. Projects are framed around the three themes of "discover", "inspire" and "learn" and priorities are around collective action and strengthening people's voices to make a positive change to people's lives. To achieve this, we view greenspace as social infrastructure for the local community as well as physical infrastructure.

Our projects aim to:

- Foster and encourage a connection to nature and pro-environmental behaviour
- promote social contact and connectivity, foster a sense of belonging, we have a focus on reducing isolation and loneliness
- promotes healthy behaviours, such as engaging in physical activity and other recreation,
- support learning, the development of skills and capabilities

We acknowledge that some people, groups and communities are excluded but should be included and look for ways to include them.

HABITATS & HERITAGE

Habitats & Heritage is the local charity that cares for the natural and historic environment and climate in south and west London. We want to see nature flourish whilst protecting and enhancing south and west London's historic

environment. Our work splits into four programme areas; Habitats, Heritage, Climate and Community. We take care of our local landscape; its wildlife, ecosystems, heritage as well as empowering communities to improve parks and neighbourhoods and fostering sustainable behaviours.

Habitats & Heritage was formed by a merger of South West London Environment Network and the Environment Trust in 2020. Both organisations have a long history of working in South and West London with a focus on supporting local residents to become involved in protecting and enhancing the environment. This work includes setting up community organisations, such as Friends of Parks groups, and delivering public and business participation in environmental projects, such as conservation work days.

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