

Newcastle

Green Infrastructure Strategy: Consultation Report



(Final Version October 2022)



Newcastle City Council Open Spaces and Green Infrastructure Strategy – Consultation Report

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Glossary of Terms

Term	Meaning
AGS	Amenity Green Space
ANGst	Accessible Natural Greenspace standards
CIC	Community Interest Company
CIL	Community Infrastructure Levy
CSUCP	Core Strategy and Urban Core Plan
EA	Environment Agency
GI	Green Infrastructure
GNR	Gosforth Nature Reserve
LEP	Local Enterprise Partnership
NCC	Newcastle City Council
NCN	National Cycle Network
NHSN	Natural History Society of Northumbria
NTC	North Tyneside Council
NWL	Northumbrian Water Limited
PPG	Planning Policy Guidance
PPS	Playing Pitch Study
PROW	Public Rights of Way
SPACE	Safe Pedestrian and Cycling Environment
SPD	Supplementary Planning Document
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
WASt	Woodland Trust Woodland Standard
WEA	Workers Education Association

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Ethos Environmental Planning conducted stakeholder consultation on behalf of Newcastle City Council to support the evidence base document (part 1) of the open space and green infrastructure strategy.

A four-week period of consultation was conducted with a range of stakeholders including:

- Strategic stakeholders
- Council officers
- Parish/community councils
- Community Groups
- Neighbouring Local Authorities

The questions posed to each type of stakeholder were slightly different, but focused on the topics of water, recreational and accessible open spaces and access routes, ecology and landscape and heritage.

This report takes each stakeholder and looks at the unique questions asked to these groups before analysing the responses of all stakeholders by the green infrastructure topics.

The key findings from the opinions of the consultation (summarised by theme) were as follows (please note these are consultee views and have not been factually evidenced):

Water:

- The water quality of rivers is poor and there are gaps in access routes alongside rivers.
- Previous culverting of rivers may have harmed the ecological value.
- There has been an increase in flooding due to new housing and the associated infrastructure.
- There are opportunities to restore wetlands and ponds along the Ouseburn, develop green corridors along watercourse and to use nature-based solutions to aid flood mitigation.

Recreational and Accessible Open Space and Access Routes

- There are shortfalls in parks and green spaces and a lack of cycle routes.
- Several issues with the quality of open spaces were highlighted including a lack of diversity and wildlife, inaccessible PROWs, and management and maintenance of spaces and trees.
- Access to open space and to access routes was highlighted as a particular problem in areas of deprivation.
- There is a concern that in some areas access routes are being diverted due to new developments and not being replaced causing an incomplete network.
- There are opportunities and aspirations for recreational and accessible open space and access routes including connecting the cycle network between urban and rural areas, enhancing/upgrading access routes, more tree/shrub planting in open spaces, and the creation of community orchards and food growing opportunities.

Ecology

- There are concerns that new development has led to the loss of wildlife corridors, hedgerows, and trees. This was mentioned as a particular issue in the North and West of Newcastle.
- Other issues mentioned included the usage of herbicides, verge mowing destroying habitats, the prevalence of pets impacting wildlife.
- There are opportunities where ecology could be improved including introducing more wildlife corridors, increase tree planting, improve the connectivity for wildlife, improve the management of trees and reduce grass cutting/improve road-side verge management.

Landscape and Heritage

- Stakeholders did not highlight many issues or opportunities for landscape and heritage assets in Newcastle. One issue raised was the lack of heritage trails as access routes.
- The aspirations for landscape and heritage focussed on developing, promoting, and protecting existing heritage and landscape assets.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This is one of three reports provided within the overall Open Spaces and Green Infrastructure Strategy 2021. It is a supporting document to the evidence base report. It summarises consultation findings from stakeholder's comments which feed into the evidence base report as explained below:

1.1 Study Overview

Newcastle City Council appointed Ethos Environmental Planning to update the existing Green Infrastructure Strategy Report (2011) and the Green Infrastructure Delivery Framework (2018).

The scope of the work is to review and identify the current positions and priorities for delivery of green infrastructure and to feed into a delivery plan.

The green infrastructure strategy aims to deliver six objectives:

1. Protect existing GI
2. Improve the quality and connectivity (functionality) of existing GI to maximise multifunctionality and the benefits provided to people and wildlife.
3. Create more high quality multifunctional GI, especially in areas of deficiency.
4. Provide GI that promoted health and wellbeing, community cohesion and is inclusive and accessible.
5. Continue to work with partners and build relationships to secure funding and resources to deliver and maintain GI and ensure its long-term sustainability.
6. Raise awareness of the importance of and the benefits provided by high quality GI.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

This report contributes to the evidence base which includes other evidence and findings such as policy review and case studies. Undertaking this comprehensive consultation and engagement with relevant stakeholders is an essential part of the overall process.

The focus of this consultation was on green infrastructure as consultation on open spaces was conducted as part of the open space study in 2018 (see summary of this in section 3.0 below). A list of stakeholders were agreed with the project team, this included:

- Strategic stakeholders
- Council officers
- Parish/community councils
- Community Groups
- Neighbouring Local Authorities
- Ward members (through a liaison officer)

The consultation ran for a period of 4 weeks in February 2021.

The consultation with each type of stakeholder focussed around the main themes (except for neighbouring local authorities); water, recreational and accessible open space,

ecology/biodiversity and landscape and heritage. All stakeholders were asked the following set of questions based on each theme:

- What the most important GI assets are in Newcastle?
- Are there any deficiencies, gaps or issues in GI provision, quality or access?
- What opportunities are there to enhance GI?

The responses across all stakeholders are grouped by theme and are summarised later in this report.

3.0 PREVIOUS CONSULTATION WORK

As part of the 2018 open space assessment a local needs assessment was conducted and included a general community consultation, parish council survey and consultation with local groups and organisations. The following sections summarise the findings in relation to GI.

3.1 General Community Consultation – Key Findings

Quantity

A majority of respondent households suggested that there were shortfalls in wildlife areas and nature reserves (60%) and country parks, local countryside and woodlands (59%). A lesser majority thought there was also a shortfall in footpaths, bridleways and cyclepaths (51%).

Quality

The majority of households suggested that all kinds of outdoor facilities/open spaces were in general of average or better quality. It was noted that parks and gardens and country parks/countryside/woodlands were rated relatively highly by significant numbers.

Access

Respondents were more likely than not (55%) to drive to country parks, countryside, and woodland. Of the transport options driving is also the most common means of getting to wildlife areas/nature reserves (48%); and water recreation sites (45%).

For a significant number of households public transport is important in relation to accessing the following types of open space - water recreation sites (21%), wildlife areas/nature reserves (17%), and country parks, countryside, and woodland (16%).

Over 85% of households confirmed that they would be prepared to walk/cycle further if the quality of the route were improved and that if the quality of the route were improved, they would make the journey more often.

Priorities and other issues

The open spaces highlighted by the largest number of households as a high priority for potential improvement/new provision were parks and gardens (59%); better footpaths, bridleway and cycle path provision (58%); and country parks, accessible countryside/woodlands (52%).

Overall households tended to suggest that improvements to existing open space facilities rather than new provision was most needed. Some sectors of the community face particular barriers to access such as disabled people; children and young people; and those in the more deprived wards of the study area.

3.2 Consultation on parks, green space, countryside, and rights of way – key findings

- Natural England stress the need to consider the ANGst standard as a starting point for developing a standard for natural and semi natural green space. Variations from this standard should be justified.
- The Woodland Trust Woodland Access Standard (WAS - endorsed by Natural England) provides guidance on access to Woodland, which should be taken into consideration.
- The importance of partnership working, including volunteer engagement, in delivering funding and management of open space is highlighted.
- The importance of biodiversity, ecological networks and the health and wellbeing benefits associated with access to good quality open space were key issues highlighted throughout the consultation.
- Quality of sites varies throughout Newcastle City. Key issues include dog waste, litter, and vandalism. Information and signage, water quality and biodiversity/connectivity have also been highlighted as key issues.

4.0 NEIGHBOURING LOCAL AUTHORITIES

4.1 Overview

Newcastle City Council shares borders with the local authorities of Gateshead, North Tyneside, South Tyneside and Northumberland. Planning policy officers from these local authorities were contacted regarding any wider strategic or cross-border issues of relevance to Newcastle that they thought should be taken into account¹. Comments and observations from the officers of these authorities are provided below.

4.2 Summary of Responses

Gateshead Council

Type of Study	Notes/updates on relevant studies	Comments and observations – cross border and strategic issues
Green Infrastructure	Completed Sept 2011 and updated in Sept 2017	Report identified shared elements of strategic GI network identified in the CSUCP. A separate report on the River Tyne focussed on this asset.
Open Space/PPG17	Completed in Sept 2018	
Play/Youth Facility Strategy	PPS completed in Nov 2016 Outdoor Sport completed in Oct 2016	
Biodiversity	Wildlife Corridor Review completed in 2020 but not yet adopted. Biodiversity opportunity mapping to commence in 2021. Biodiversity SPD to commence in 2021. Local Nature Recovery strategy to be undertaken, timescale unknown.	Wildlife Corridor Review – undertaken jointly with Sunderland and South Tyneside Biodiversity Opportunity Mapping – joint study with Sunderland and South Tyneside Biodiversity SPD – to be undertaken jointly with Sunderland and South Tyneside Local Nature Recovery Strategy – timescale to be determined subject to Environment Bill.
Geodiversity Study	To be completed but timescale unknown	

Other Comments

Future work which may have an impact upon Newcastle and provide an opportunity for partnership working, these are:

¹ The officer responses were collected via emailed pro-forma.

- The Local Nature Recovery Strategy – this is dependent on the boundary to be determined by Natural England and linked to the progress of the Environment Bill.
- Future planning work may require an agreed approach to planning for green infrastructure and biodiversity.

North Tyneside Council

Type of Study	Notes/updates on relevant studies	Comments and observations – cross border and strategic issues
Green Infrastructure Strategy	Completed in 2015.	The strategy highlights several areas in Newcastle that are cross border and that also provide access to North Tyneside resident these are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesmond Dene • High Gosforth Park • Gosforth Wood and Lake • Big Waters Nature Reserve • River Tyne This report is out of date and in need of an update.
Green Space Strategy (considers open space/PPG17)	Completed in 2015.	This strategy highlights the usage of the above mentioned spaces as being used by North Tyneside residents.
Biodiversity Action Plan	Completed in 2019	This is a joint strategy with Newcastle City Council.
Green Belt Review	Completed in 2015.	
Playing Pitch Strategy	Completed in 2013 and current till 2023.	
Built Sports Strategy	Completed in 2016.	
Local Green Space	Completed in 2015.	
Allotments	Completed in 2009 but is now out of date.	

Other Comments

North Tyneside Council highlights the need for collaboration across three areas going forward:

- Biodiversity net gain
- Coastal mitigation and any other biodiversity mitigation
- Future development

South Tyneside Council

Type of Study	Notes/updates on relevant studies	Comments and observations – cross border and strategic issues
Green Infrastructure	Completed in 2013.	It is intended to be updated to support the emerging local plan.

Type of Study	Notes/updates on relevant studies	Comments and observations – cross border and strategic issues
Open Space/PPG17	Completed in 2015 and updated in 2019.	
Biodiversity		Biodiversity policies are being updated to support the emerging local plan.

Northumberland County Council

Type of Study	Notes/updates on relevant studies	Comments and observations – cross border and strategic issues
Green Infrastructure	Completed in October 2011	Need to ensure GI connected networks/corridors between authorities.
Open Space/PPG17	Completed in May 2011	
Biodiversity	Completed in January 2008	Need to ensure biodiversity net gain is connected between authorities.

5.0 STRATEGIC ORGANISATIONS

5.1 Overview

A list of strategic stakeholders were agreed with the project team. An online survey link was emailed to all stakeholders. In total we received 8 responses, the organisations consulted were (indicated a response received):

- Northumberland Wildlife Trust
- North East Nature Partnership
- Natural England ✓
- Tyne and Wear Joint Local Access Forum ✓
- Woodland Trust
- British Horse Society
- Environment Agency
- Tyne Rivers Trust ✓
- Sustrans
- Urban Green ✓
- Northumbrian Water Ltd
- British Geological Society
- CPRE Northumberland ✓
- Joint Local Access Forum
- Friends of the Earth (responded by Climate Action Newcastle on their behalf) ✓
- Newcastle Disability Forum ✓
- Lead Local Flood Authority
- Buglife ✓

5.2 Update on 2018 Delivery Framework

As part of the GI Delivery Framework in 2018, an action plan was drawn up with each action having a responsible organisation to lead the delivery. Strategic organisations were asked to provide an update on any of their actions if applicable.

Action	Responsibility	Update
Explore opportunities for development to address Opportunity Areas Area 4 – Newburn Haugh/Riverside	NCC Developers EA Ground Work North East	Tyne River Trust hosts the Tyne Catchment Partnership which received updates and supports Tyne Estuary Partnership (facilitated by Groundwork).
Explore opportunities for development to address Opportunity Areas Area 6 - Jesmond Dene/Lower Ouseburn Valley	NCC Urban Green	Urban Green is developing plans to develop Jesmond Dene as a major visitor attraction, but are first carrying out the necessary studies, and will also be updating the management plan.
Explore opportunities for development to address Opportunity Areas Area 8 – Walker Riverside St Anthony's Tar Works Depot remediation	Urban Green	Urban Green are unaware of this action for delivery but will look to pick this up as management plans are developed for each of its parks.
Explore opportunities for development to address Opportunity Areas Area 8 – Walker Riverside – s106 improvements	Urban Green	Urban Green confirm that they are currently completing the outstanding works required and anticipate having these completed by the end of 2021/22.

6.0 COUNCIL OFFICERS

6.1 Overview

Council officers across a range of teams at Newcastle City Council were contacted asking to complete an online survey. Responses were received from:

- Public Rights of Way Officer
- Transport Officer
- Planning Team Manager (Landscape & Ecology)
- Service Manager (Community Hubs, Libraries & Open Space)
- Principle Engineer, Flood Management
- Planning Team Manager
- Health and Wellbeing Manager

6.2 Baseline Mapping

Council officers were asked to review the baseline mapping by theme to ensure that the datasets used captured all the existing GI assets.

Water

Officers were asked to review the water GI mapping to ensure all existing water GI assets were captured.

Mapping Changes Suggested	Response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Devil’s Burn not fully on your map - goes into gardens along North Duke’s Moor to Ouseburn. • Water culverts are missing (all marked on the map) 	<p>Boundary extended on mapping.</p> <p>Culverts as marked on the stakeholder map have been added to existing GI water assets mapping.</p>

Open Space and Access Routes

Officers were asked to review the open space and access routes mapping to ensure all existing open space and access assets were captured.

Mapping Changes Suggested	Response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Map should include strategic cycle routes within the city. • Add St. James & St. Basil Church garden as public open space. • NCN 72 Hadrian’s Way is shown on the map as following the Tyne riverside route between Shelley Road, Newburn, and Scotswood Road / Lemington Point. This is incorrect: this riverside path is popular and well used by walkers and cyclists but is privately owned and permissive. There is much redevelopment in the area and the riverside route should be confirmed as a public bridleway as soon as possible to safeguard public access in perpetuity. • NCN 72 follows the line of the former Wylam Wagonway from Newburn Bridge to Neptune Road, Lemington, running along the southern edge of Percy Pit Park. • Should road NCN links be included as an access route as part of this study. These routes offer no additional infrastructure to that of a standard road and give a false impression of accessibility. • Temporary water body on the Town Moor which could be made more 	<p>Cycle route datasets added onto the map (OnRoadNCN, TrafficFreeNCN and City Cycle Network2020).</p> <p>2018 open space dataset used as agreed with the project team.</p> <p>Cycle routes included on the map have been detailed above.</p> <p>This is already marked as surface water on the map, but will add as an opportunity to make permanent.</p>

Mapping Changes Suggested	Response
permanent water body to support biodiversity.	

Biodiversity

Officers were asked to review the biodiversity mapping to ensure all existing biodiversity assets were captured.

Mapping Changes Suggested	Response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fountain Row AGS – new wildflower meadow created Wildlife Garden (Arthurs Hill) 	Sites are too small to add onto existing key habitats mapping, this map focusses on priority habitats and designated sites.

Heritage and Landscape

Officers were asked to review the heritage and landscape mapping to ensure all existing heritage and landscape assets were captured.

Mapping Changes Suggested	Response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add listed buildings 	Listed buildings have been added to the landscape map.

6.3 Constraints to enhancing the GI network

Council officers were asked what the potential constraints are to enhancing the GI network in Newcastle. Several respondents identified funding as the main constraint to enhancing GI especially in terms of ongoing maintenance of assets. Numerous respondents mentioned the need to work strategically across the council and in partnership with major landowners. Officers also raised concern regarding development viability along with developing integrated solutions, for example e.g. with transport and housing for better green space management.

7.0 COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS

7.1 Overview

An online survey was set up for local organisations with an interest in green infrastructure. A list of community organisations was drawn up from the previous open space study, contacts from the council and online research. The list of organisations contacted was as follows (indicates a response received):

- Greening Wingrove and Arthur's Hill CIC ✓
- Ouseburn Trust ✓
- Newcastle and District CHAF Rambling Club ✓
- Friends of Gosforth Central Park ✓

- Friends of Heaton & Armstrong Parks
- Friends of Leaze Park
- Leazes Park Angling Association
- Scotswood Natural Community Garden
- Friends of Throckley and Walbottle Dene
- Friends of Jesmond Dene ✓
- Breeze – Women only cycling
- Newcastle and Northumbria Mountain Bike Club
- NewCycling
- Scotswood Village Residents Association ✓
- Save Newcastle Wildlife ✓
- Elders Council of Newcastle upon Tyne
- Newburn Volunteers ✓
- Natural History Society of Northumbria ✓
- Friends of Havannah ✓
- Friends of Summerhill
- Friends of Walk Park
- Northumberland & Tyneside Bird Club ✓
- Friends of Fenham Pocket Park

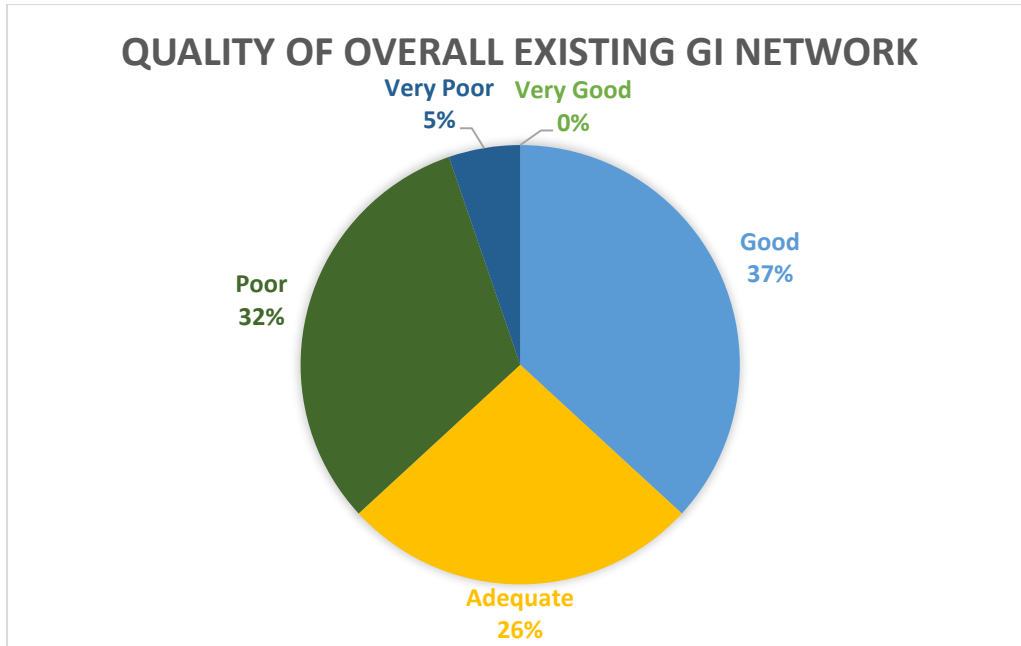
There were a small amount of organisations that were passed on the link to survey or contacted Ethos directly requesting to complete the survey, there were responses from:

- The Parish of St James and St Basil Fenham
- Northern Hills Meetup
- Newcastle Green Spaces Initiative
- Tyne Amateur Rowing Club
- Cities 4 people
- Wild West End
- WEA North East Green Branch
- SPACE for Gosforth
- Ponteland & District Red Squirrels (group located outside of Newcastle)

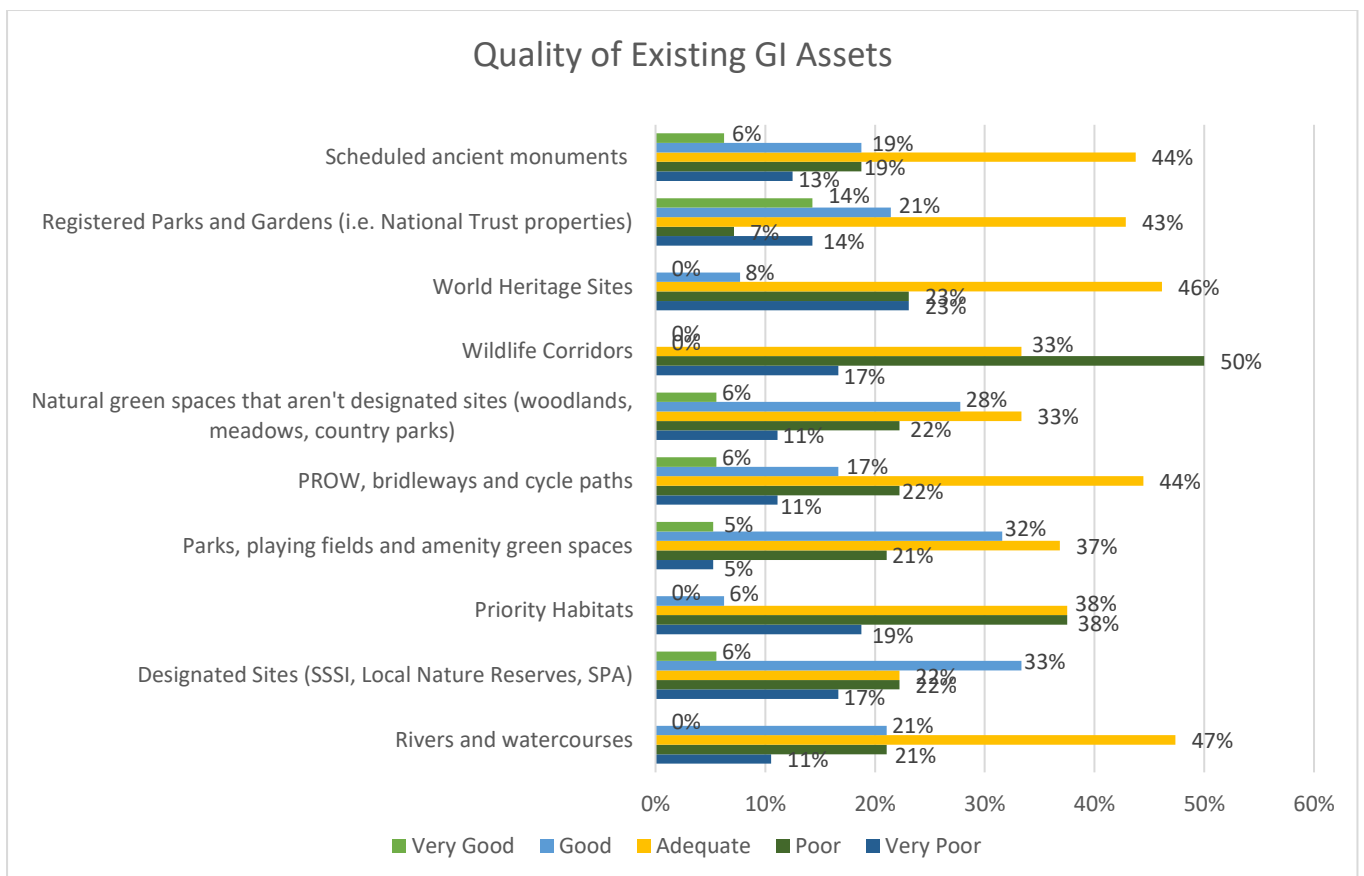
Please note as a limitation to this report, some organisations did not complete the survey and instead emailed information directly to Ethos.

7.2 Quality of Green Infrastructure Network

Community groups were asked, looking at the network as a whole, how would they rate green infrastructure across Newcastle. The majority of respondents (37%) rated the network as good, with 26% rating as adequate and 32% rating as poor.



Following this community groups were asked to rate the quality of specific GI assets.



Overall, designated sites were highly rated with 39% of respondents rating as either good or very good. Registered parks and gardens and parks, playing fields and amenity green spaces were also rated highly with 37% rating parks, playing fields and amenity green spaces as very good or good, and 35% rating registered parks and garden at very good or good.

Wildlife corridors and priority habitats were rated the most poorly with 50% rating wildlife corridors as poor, and 38% rating priority habitats as poor.

7.3 Other Comments

Respondents were asked if they had any other comments, comments which related to a theme have been included in section 9.0 to 12.0, any other comments in relation to GI in general are summarised below:

- Would like members of the public to be included within this consultation.
- Would like a cabinet member to oversee biodiversity and green infrastructure to provide a greater emphasis on supporting biodiversity across the city.
- Developer contributions should be used to enhance the natural environment.
- Parks, greenspaces and the natural environment would become dilapidated without the assistance of volunteers. There has been disappointment that the Parks and Gardens departments was abolished but hope that the new set-up can work.
- Overall GI needs to be improved for the public's health and the health and survival of wildlife.
- Views were expressed that GI has not been protected and has been lost over the past 12 years (including fields, hedges, trees, wildlife, open spaces). The Council should protect the green belt and build upwards using brown and urban spaces.
- Several respondents commented on the value that well-maintained GI has an enormous benefit on the health and wellbeing of those living in Newcastle. The cost of maintained GI would be insignificant to the costs of caring for many people with greater health inequalities.
- Working in partnership with Urban Green to improve open spaces and wildlife was highlighted by many friends of groups.
- It is positive that the Council is developing a new GI strategy during the climate and ecological emergency. Post-pandemic the multiple benefits of GI are being seen as even more obvious and needed. The cost of not protecting and enhancing GI will lead to increased social care, flooding and transport budgets.

8.0 PARISH AND COMMUNITY COUNCILS

Within Newcastle there are five parish and one community councils. Pro-formas were sent to all parish/community councils. Responses were received from the following parish councils:

- Brunswick Parish Council
- Dinnington Parish Council
- Hazelrigg Parish Council
- Woolsington Parish Council

The comments received by the parish councils are included within sections 9.0 to 13.0 below.

9.0 THEME 1 – WATER

This section combines all Consultee comments on the theme of water.

9.1 Most Important Assets

- The Ouseburn River
- Ponds which provide key biodiversity including Gosforth Nature Reserve & St Nicholas Hospital Nature Reserve.
- Lakes including Exhibition Park, Leazes Parks and Paddy Freeman’s.
- Havannah Nature Reserve water bodies.
- The River Tyne
- Hartley Burn in Dinnington which prevents local flooding
- Drainage ditches to manage water levels and provide wildlife for habitats
- Culverts are key assets in managing surface water especially Ouseburn Culvert, Craghall Dene Culvert and Newburn Culvert.
- Flood alleviation schemes are also key across the city especially Brunton Park Flood Scheme, Benfield Flood Alleviation Scheme and Fairways Flood Alleviation Scheme.

9.2 Strengths

- Good work has taken place across the Tyne Catchment. EA have active enthusiastic staff who work in strong collaborations with partners across the City.
- Several water-based recreational opportunities along the Tyne.

9.3 Issues, deficiencies, gaps

Quantity	Quality	Access
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of ponds across the city. • Limited open water bodies in the west of Newcastle. • Lack of ditches along stream and ponds. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detergent pollution in Devil’s Burn, Nun’s Moor and Kenton. • Littering in water courses. • Some ponds have been neglected such as Paddy Freeman’s pond. • Poor water quality of the Ouseburn through Jesmond Dene, Dewley Burn, Sugley Burn and Reigh Burn. • Incidents of pollution including Whitecroft Burn and Kenton Nuns moor burn. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paths alongside the Tyne especially east of the Quayside could be better linked up and made greener. • Lack of cycle paths alongside the Tyne, particularly along the north side from the Quayside to Tynemouth. • Lack of access for boating along the Tyne.

Other Issues

- There are issues with waterways across parks including Reigh Burn, Ouseburn and Exhibition Park Lake.
- Herbicide usage next to Devil's Burn.
- Open ditches are drying up including an open ditch on the moor behind moorside allotments.
- Some greening initiatives have impacted on the width and safety along the water courses in Newcastle.
- Silting and bank erosion is an issue due to industrial development.
- Denton Burn and Ouseburn have been culverted to develop industrial land adjacent to the River Tyne which has caused a barrier to the natural flow and ecological value of the water courses.
- Concern that there is an increase in flooding due to new housing development and associated infrastructure. This is a particular issue in Hazlerigg and Woolsington. This has been linked to the flooding on Havannah Nature Reserve.
- Concern over new development at Newcastle Great Park and around the Ouseburn and the potential to increase flooding in the area.
- Insufficient attention paid to clearing gullies and dredging ditches resulting in overflowing pathways.
- Town Moor is liable to flooding which impacts parts of the city.
- The control structure in the Ouseburn Barrier is not functioning correctly.

9.4 Opportunities

- Working with farmers to make changes in farming practices to improve biodiversity and reduce water run off contributing to reduced water pollution and flood impact.
- Restoring wetlands and ponds along the Ouseburn along with creating forest and floating gardens.
- Ongoing work of installing a flood alleviation scheme in Walker Park.
- Water features can provide room for insects to thrive, provide safe spaces and friendlier spaces.
- Improve the quality of Devil's Burn and Paddy Freeman's pond.
- Better water management of Gosforth Nature Reserve.
- Increase water GI along the Newcastle Quayside.
- Develop green corridors along watercourses along with strategic wildlife corridors.
- The Tyne and Ouseburn should be used as a catalyst for economic growth, social mobility and a tourist opportunity.
- Improvements to the weir and bridge behind Pet's Corner, Jesmond.
- Nature based solutions to aid flood mitigation such as creating reed beds, scrapes and swales and increasing vegetation.
- City Centre stretch of the River Tyne could be greener with the introduction of street trees and green walls.

- Removal of culverts to improve natural flow of the river and ecological value of water courses.
- Re-establishing lost urban water courses with suds features.
- Safeguarding of fields to perform as an ecosystem service to mitigate flooding.
- Reinstate the steering group for the management of Hartley Burn.
- Create a supplementary planning document on integrated water management for the city similar to the ‘Urban Design Framework for the Lower Ouseburn Valley’.
- There was a temporary water body on Town Moor which could be made more permanent to support biodiversity where there a lack of ponds in the inner west of the city.

10.0 THEME 2 - RECREATIONAL AND ACCESSIBLE OPEN SPACES AND ACCESS ROUTES

This section combines all consultees comments on the theme of recreational and accessible open spaces and access routes.

10.1 Most Important Assets

- All accessible open spaces (all sizes and typologies).
- PROWs are important for connecting areas of the city.
- The Ouseburn as an access route.
- Jesmond Dene
- Town Moor
- Heritage Walk way
- Recreational open space including sports pitches and hubs

10.2 Strengths

- NCC and Urban Green spaces were viewed as good before the COVID-19 pandemic but since increased usage of spaces this may have changed.
- Developers and NCC are good at communicating with the disability forum before submitting a planning application to ensure that developments allow for accessible routes.
- Pocket parks in the city centre are very popular.
- As a city, Newcastle has some large green spaces available on the doorstep of the city.
- PROWs within the urban part of the city are generally good.
- Some open spaces e.g. Exhibition Park have good and varied features for wildlife.

10.3 Issues, deficiencies, gaps

Quantity	Quality	Access
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The cycle network across the city is incomplete and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open spaces mainly consist of amenity grassland and have a 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor signage of PROWs.

Quantity	Quality	Access
<p>contains gaps. Areas identified include along the Tyne & Quayside.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of spaces for older children/young people especially skate parks. • Lack of parks and green spaces. • New development impacting on open space. • Lack of multi-functional parks. • Lack of allotments and community woodlands. • Lack of areas for cricket, rugby, football and hockey. 	<p>lack of wildlife. An example of this is the Town Moor.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some access routes do not provide a safe route for active travel. • Lack of GI on existing pedestrian and cycling access routes. • PROWs have become impassible with heavy rain and increase usage during COVID-19 pandemic. • Poor tree management within open spaces. • Poor maintenance of open spaces. • Poor quality of children's play areas. • Vandalism in parks (e.g. Kingston Park). • Anit-social behaviour in open space (e.g. BlueBell Dene). • Littering (e.g. Gala Field & Bluebell Dene Woolsingham). • Loss of hedgerows in open spaces due to nearby new developments (e.g. Bullock Steads Sports Ground). • Lack of maintenance of bridleways. • Quality of open spaces varies across the city and across typologies. • Lack of wildflower rich areas within 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of access to open spaces within deprived neighbourhoods of the city. • Concerns that PROWs are being diverted due to new developments and are not being replaced. • There are parts of the city which have no green space within 500m. • Poor access to open spaces within a walkable distance

Quantity	Quality	Access
	amenity green spaces and parks.	

Other Issues

- In some parts of the city, there is a lack of understanding about ownership of land, this has been an issue where the council maintains but does not own open spaces.
- Budget restrictions are constraining maintenance on NCC owned spaces.
- New developments are creating more impermeable areas therefore increasing run off to water courses and reduced the amount open green space.
- There is a lack of public education on safe use of shared active travel space.
- The change in management of parks to a charity has not yet achieved improvements in terms of standards or investment.
- Mixture of ownership of access routes causes difficulty in consistent maintenance.
- The Rights of Way Improvement plan is poorly publicised.

10.4 Opportunities

- Connecting the cycle network to open spaces and between the rural and urban parts of the city.
- S106 agreements with developers could enhance/upgrade access routes where there will be an increase in use/footfall as a results of development (recently adopted DAP policies require developments to link surrounding networks).
- Pocket parks could be included within city centre developments.
- Use open spaces to create natural flood management features by innovative planting and landscaping.
- Consider making permanent the Covid-19 active travel corridors including the 5 bridges.
- Improve quality active travel routes from NW Housing Estates/Kenton Road/Town Moor/Newcastle from East via Highbury to Moor & Park.
- Encourage low traffic neighbourhoods & living streets.
- Plan separate safe tree lined cycle routes.
- More tree/shrub planting in existing open spaces.
- Work with volunteers and friends of groups to help develop and improve open spaces.
- Create community orchards and growing opportunities within open spaces.
- More provision for cycling and walking but ensure that there are not installed at the expense of the natural environment (e.g., tree loss).
- Change council policy to protect hedges and trees on access routes.
- Reinstating Moor bank Botanical Gardens.
- Become part of the Incredible Edible initiative.
- Undertake an audit of green spaces across the city to set out how they can be better utilised by local people and wildlife.

- Working with Sport England to improve open spaces linked with housing (linked to active design and urban development).

11.0 ECOLOGY

This section combines all consultees comments on the theme of ecology.

11.1 Most Important Assets

- River Ouseburn as a wildlife corridor
- Scotswood Dene
- All hedgrows
- Havannah Nature Reserve
- Designated Wildlife Corridors
- Woodland
- Semi-natural habitats

11.2 Strengths

- Partnership working with NCC and local groups to designate local wildlife sites.
- The Western bypass north of the Tyne is an example of great road verging with excellent displays of wildflowers and good management.

11.3 Issues, deficiencies, gaps

Quantity	Quality	Access
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of pocket parks. • Lots of tree felling. • Habitat is being lost due to new development. • Loss of wildlife corridors. Examples include Gosforth Park, Killingworth, the tracks near Wills Factory and into Wallsend, Jesmond Dene, Havannah Nature Reserve. • Loss of red squirrels. • Loss of habitat for farmland birds. • Loss of hedgerows. • Lack of tree canopy cover in some wards. • Loss of priority species such as 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Moor has poor biodiversity quality. • The role out of fibre broadband has damaged street trees. • Wildlife is being disturbed by people (e.g. Havannah Nature Reserve). • Light pollution (especially on Town Moor). 	

Quantity	Quality	Access
Dingy Skipper butterfly.		

Other

- Lack of data for trees and biodiversity.
- No landscape 50-year plan rooted in ongoing planning structure.
- No tree/hedgerow protections.
- Usage of herbicides.
- Verge mowing.
- There is no green infrastructure in the pollution hotspots in the city.
- Development is negatively impacting wildlife and ecology particularly in the North and West of Newcastle.
- Prevalence of pets is impacting wildlife especially new developments near nature reserves.
- Wildlife and biodiversity have dropped significantly in NCC's priorities over the last 10 years including the loss of the ecology department.
- Lack of regard for nature reserves with no active management plans.
- Lack of funding to ensure trees and woodland are managed.
- Erosion of grassland areas leading to degrading and damaging habitats.
- Very little attention being paid to the provenance of trees in council or community tree planting projects.
- The council doesn't have sufficient land or budget to increase tree cover as per the tree strategy.
- Loss of wildlife on the Town Moor due to incorrect management processes.
- Artificial grass is being installed by the Council and should be prohibited.

11.4 Opportunities

- Improve the management of old trees with the removal of non-native species, replacing with native species. This could improve air quality and natural flood management.
- Improve the data and monitoring of trees and biodiversity including the transfer of data across organisations and the consistency at which data is captured.
- Improve the connectivity or stepping stones across the city for insects, invertebrates and other wildlife e.g. green bus shelters (e.g. Newcastle Airport).
- Map and protect garden trees and hedgerows.
- Potential to increase planting at school, hospitals and care homes.
- Increase tree planting, hedgerows and community orchard ensuring these are in the right place.
- Educating the public on supporting and improving habitats such as citizen botany plant labels, wildlife friendly gardening and incentivising GI gardens through council tax.
- Add Tree Protection Orders on all large trees.

- Improve connectivity of wildlife through parks and green spaces.
- Reintroduce tree species to grow as understory to the more mature trees to help prevent erosion (an opportunity in Jesmond Dene in particular).
- Introduce more wildlife corridors.
- Opportunity to work in partnership with local residents and organisations to ensure local wildlife sites are fulfilling their purpose and to look at where networks could be extended.
- Reduce fragmentation ecologically which could be done through local planning applications.
- Put in place greater protection for wildlife and habitats through a management and monitoring plan for Havannah Nature Reserve.
- Requirement for all new development to result in net gain for biodiversity.
- Opportunity to work with parish councils to feed into grass cutting plans to benefit pollinators.
- Guidance for roofing works that involve the potential disturbance of priority species such as house martins and swifts.
- Improve public access within Prestwick Carr SSSI.
- An aspiration for Upper Ouseburn Catchment Area and The Ponds to become a local nature reserve.
- Increase tree canopy cover in wards with existing low coverage.
- Reducing grass cutting and better road-side verge management to support biodiversity and create wildflower rich habitats. Potential to be done through a pollinator action plan.
- Invest in natural capital and nature-based solutions to benefit both local communities and wildlife.
- CIL should be used better for wildlife projects to fund nature recovery networks and collaborations between organisations.

12.0 LANDSCAPE AND HERITAGE

This section combines all consultees comments on the theme of landscape and heritage.

12.1 Most Important Assets

- The Ouseburn built heritage
- Listed buildings
- Jesmond Dene
- Hodgkin Park
- Heritage Walk way
- Woolsingham Hall
- Tyne Bridge

12.2 Strengths

- Newcastle has a range of heritage assets including geology, structures and architecture.

12.3 Issues, deficiencies, gaps

Quantity	Quality	Access
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No combined organised trails for Heritage, Health & Biodiversity. • Lack of heritage trails as access routes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor maintenance of heritage assets (for example Leazes Park and Heaton Park). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve access to hidden assets (for example Jesmond Dene).

Other Issues

- The landscape character of the area of Hazelrigg has been altered in recent years as a result of overdevelopment.
- Existing heritage and landscape assets need protection from new development.

12.4 Opportunities

- Develop Newcastle as a heritage destination, for example using Derwent Valley Oak & Iron Heritage Centre as a good practice case study.
- Develop artwork like Gateshead.
- Add heritage walk info panels (for example Gosforth Central Park & Exhibition Park).
- Develop Jesmond Dene to enhance its historical monuments and links to Craggside.
- Promote the history and heritage of the River Tyne.

13.0 Observations and Key Issues			
	Most Important Assets	Issues, Deficiencies and Gaps	Opportunities
Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Ouseburn River Ponds The River Tyne 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water quality of rivers Gaps in access routes alongside rivers Previous culverting of rivers which creates a barrier to the natural flow and harms the ecological value of the rivers. Concerns that there is an increase in flooding due to new housing developments and associated infrastructure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restoring wetlands and ponds along the Ouseburn. Develop green corridors along watercourses. Use nature based solutions to aid flood mitigation.
Recreational and Accessible Open Spaces and Access Routes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All sizes and typologies of accessible open spaces. The Ouseburn Town Moor 	<p>Quantity - it was highlighted that there is a lack of cycle routes with existing routes being incomplete. It was also noted that there was a shortfall in parks and green spaces with some existing open spaces being lost to new development – this was an issue highlighted by many community groups and parish councils.</p> <p>Quality - issues emphasized by consultees include a large amount of open spaces with amenity grassland and a lack of wildlife, PROWs becoming inaccessible and poor management of open spaces especially the management of trees.</p> <p>Access – access to open spaces and access routes was noted by many respondents as being poor within neighbourhoods that have high levels of deprivation. This includes some areas not having access to a park within 500m of their home. Several consultees also mentioned that PROWs are being diverted due to new developments and are not being replaced.</p> <p>Another issue which was mentioned numerous times was that a mixture in ownership in access routes causes inconsistency with maintenance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To connect the cycle network to open spaces and between the rural and urban parts of the city. Using S106 agreements with developers to enhance/upgrade access routes where there will be an increase in use/footfall as a results of development. Add more provision for cycling and walking but ensure that they are not installed at the expense of the natural environment (e.g., tree loss). More tree/shrub planting in existing open spaces. Create community orchards and growing opportunities within open spaces.

13.0 Observations and Key Issues			
Ecology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • River Ouseburn • Havannah Nature Reserve • Hedgerows 	<p>The majority of consultees noted deficiencies of ecological assets which included loss of habitat to new development, loss of wildlife corridors, loss of red squirrels, loss of habitats for farmland birds, loss of hedgerows and tree felling. It was noted that the overall quality of wildlife is being disturbed by humans. Parish councils and community groups were concerned about new developments negatively impacting wildlife and ecology particularly in the North and West of Newcastle. Other issues highlighted by several consultees include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The usage of herbicides • Verge mowing • Prevalence of pets impacting wildlife especially new developments near nature reserves. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introducing more wildlife corridors. • Increase tree planting, hedgerows and community orchard ensuring these are in the right place. • Improve the connectivity or stepping stones across the city for insects, invertebrates and other wildlife. • Map and protect garden trees and hedgerows. • Ensure that it is a requirement for all new development to result in net gain for biodiversity. • Improve the management of old trees with the removal of non-native species, replacing with native species. • Provide guidance for roofing works that involve the potential disturbance of priority species. • Reducing grass cutting and better road-side verge management to support biodiversity and create wildflower rich habitats.
Landscape and Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ouseburn • Listed buildings 	<p>Consultees did not highlight that many issues, deficiencies and gaps with landscapes and heritage features compared to other GI themes. Those that were mentioned include lack of heritage trails as access routes, poor maintenance of some heritage assets and improve access to hidden assets.</p>	<p>Consultees suggestions include developing, promoting and protecting existing heritage and landscape assets.</p>

14.0 PROJECTS, PARTNERSHIPS AND ASPIRATIONS

Consultees were asked about any existing or future projects, partnerships or aspirations they were aware of in relation to GI. These are summarised in the table below highlighting if they are an existing or future project, which theme it relates to (some are cross cutting) and who the relevant organisation groups are.

Description of Project, Partnership, Aspiration	Existing or future	Theme	Organisations involved
Project/Partnership – Working with farmers through a facilitation programmes to improve biodiversity and reduce flooding through changing practices.	Existing	Water	Tyne Rivers Trust
Project/Partnership – Forth Yards Development	Existing	Water	NCC
Project/Partnership – Walker Development Area	Existing	Water	NCC NWL
Project/Partnership - Tyne Estuary Project	Existing	Water	Environment Agency
Project/Partnership - Ouseburn Citizen Jury	Existing	Water	Environment Agency
Project/Partnership – Studley Terrace Flood Allevation Scheme	Future	Water	NCC Environment Agency Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
Project/Partnership – Joint project between the Ouseburn Farm and Ouseburn Trust focussing on restoring, enhancing and improving the green spaces (ponds and orchards), wetlands, woodland, pathways and seating areas in the Ouseburn Valley. Funding of £50k for this project has been secured from the LEP.	Existing	Water, Ecology & Recreational Open Spaces	Ouseburn Farm Ouseburn Trust
Aspiration – community collaboration planting	Future	Water	Climate Action Newcastle
Aspiration – Tyne Amateur Rowing Club would be interested with any initiatives to achieve a greener setting for water-based activities including rowing and also any projects to support a healthier and safer River Tyne.	Future	Water	Tyne Amateur Rowing Club

Description of Project, Partnership, Aspiration	Existing or future	Theme	Organisations involved
<p>Project/Partnership/Aspiration – Aspiration for the Upper Ouseburn Catchment Area and the Ponds to become a nature reserve. The phase 1 of this project is being undertaken in summer 2021 with the water solidifier plant to be removed from the main pond which will improve the water quality, re-oxygenate the pond and improve habitats. This parish council project is being funded from CIL. Phases 2 to 4 include incrementally improving the biodiversity in the river catchment by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enhancing biodiversity and conservation, thin woodland, • increasing wildflower areas, cordon off breeding sites • reducing flooding risks and to explore prospects for increasing inlet/outlet capacity to/from Ouseburn. • tackling effects of antisocial behaviour, litter, fires, damage to trees, motorbikes, etc • introducing better access for all and improve bridleways. • improving pathways, lay some boardwalks. • the introduction of some seating and a dipping platform. <p>This is part of the Woosingham Parish Council Biodiversity Project, and a community engagement exercise with residents has shown overwhelming support for the project.</p>	Existing/future	Water	Woosingham Parish Council Environment Agency Northumbrian Water NCC
<p>Project – conservation management plans have been developed for a closed churchyard and closed cemetery which have the potential to contribute to ecology and biodiversity.</p>	Existing	Ecology	NCC
<p>Project/Partnership - Creating and managing wildflower areas within the city. Engaging with Urban Green to create wildflower areas in their managed sites.</p>	Existing	Ecology & Recreational Open Spaces	Newcastle Green Spaces Initiative Urban Green
<p>Project - Open space management projects are being undertaken on Urban Green managed sites. It will include reviewing waterways running through sites, management of open spaces and tree planting & biodiversity management.</p>	Existing	All	Urban Green

Description of Project, Partnership, Aspiration	Existing or future	Theme	Organisations involved
Project - Play Area Investment Plan – due begin 2021/2022 financial year and will impact a number of play areas in the city.	Existing	Recreational Open Spaces	NCC
Project – NHSN are discussing extending their management and advisory role beyond the boundary of Gosforth Natura Reserve. This work uses the NCC strategic wildlife corridor designation.	Existing	Recreational Open Spaces	Natural History Society of Northumbria NCC
Partnership – Climate Action Newcastle are working with SPACE (safe pedestrian and cycling environment) groups all over the city on various initiatives.	Existing	Recreational Open Spaces	Climate Action Newcastle
Project – Volunteers are developing a wildlife area within Gosforth Central Park (including a pond, living willow structures, wildflower seeding and reinforcement of edges by planting hedegrow shrubs).	Existing	Recreational Open Spaces & Ecology	Friends of Gosforth Central Park CIC
Project/aspiration - Friends of Gosforth Central Park have submitted a vision to Urban Green for enhancing the park. This includes composting, solar panels and allotments.	Future	Recreational Open Space	Friends of Gosforth Central Park Urban Green
Aspiration – Friends of Jesmond Dene park have submitted a forward plan with ideas/suggestions for enhancing the park.	Future	Recreational Open Space	Friends of Jesmond Dene
Project – The Ouseburn Trust has an informal agreement with NCC to look after the green spaces in the Lower Ouseburn Valley.	Existing	Recreational Open Space	Ouseburn Trust
Aspiration – NHSN would be keen to discuss the wildlife corridor more fully with NCC and NTC as are very interested in extending the GNR, onto surrounding land, potentially linked to future developments and on-site greenspace provision.	Future	Recreational Open Space	Natural History Society of Northumbria NTC NCC
Aspiration – Develop space outside (and in the grounds of) Fenham library.	Future	Recreational Open Space	Friends of Fenham Pocket Park
Aspiration – create a garden area with wildflowers within the city centre. Potential area could be Pilgrim Street.	Future	Recreational Open Space	Newcastle Disability Forum

Description of Project, Partnership, Aspiration	Existing or future	Theme	Organisations involved
Aspiration – Brunswick Parish Council would like to add facilities to Big Waters nature reserve for walkers/ramblers and as an education facility.	Future	Recreational Open Space	Brunswick Parish Council
Aspiration – Dinnington Parish Council would like to improve GI including preserving wildlife corridors and the greenbelt.	Future	Recreational Open Space & Ecology	Dinnington Parish Council
Project/partnership – NHSN are currently working with support from the Local Enterprise Partnership to develop a field station at GNR which can be used as a base for learning for all ages and abilities.	Existing	All	Natural History Society of Northumbria
Project/partnership – NHSN are supporting the NCC mental health week in May 2021 with promotion of Gosforth Nature Reserve and citizen science, which would encourage residents to visit local greenspace and record wildlife sightings.	Future	All	Natural History Society of Northumbria NCC
Project/partnership – Climate Action Newcastle are working with local communities to plant more trees and tiny forests.	Existing & future	Ecology	Climate Action Newcastle
Project/Aspiration – Hazelrigg parish council are exploring more tree planting and the creation of wildflower meadows. Will need the support of Highways England and NCC to progress with this.	Existing & future	Ecology	Hazelrigg Parish Council
Project/Aspiration – Brunswick parish council are looking at a tree charter for the village along with a re-awaking of the Brunswick in Bloom	Existing & future	Ecology	Brunswick Parish Council
Aspiration – Woosingham Parish Council aspiration to create Butterfly and moth corridors for major roadsides such as the A696 bypass and a butterfly garden.	Future	Ecology	Woosingham Parish Council
Aspiration - More trees in streets: in support of the objectives of Newcastle City Council’s Tree Strategy 2019 -2024. The use of large containers to be considered in new housing developments and built-up areas.	Future	Ecology	Woosingham Parish Council

Description of Project, Partnership, Aspiration	Existing or future	Theme	Organisations involved
Project – Planting schemes to be undertaken in 2021 at Newbiggin Hall and Callerton. Tree planting also to be undertaken at Bank Foot. This is part of the Woolsingham Parish Council Biodiversity Project.	Existing	Ecology & Recreational Open Spaces	Woolsingham Parish Council
Project – Hedgerow planting to mitigate against the loss of hedgerow due to housing development in Woolsingham village. This is part of the Woolsingham Parish Council Biodiversity Project.	Existing	Ecology & Recreational Open Spaces	Woolsingham Parish Council NCC
Project/partnership – The parish council have been engaging with schools to support outdoor learning and conservation. This is part of the Woolsingham Parish Council Biodiversity Project.	Existing	Ecology & Recreational Open Spaces	Woolsingham Parish Council NCC
Aspiration – Woolsingham Parish Council would like to explore the possibility of a Newbiggin Hall Community Garden (similar to the Scotswood Community Garden). This is part of the Woolsingham Parish Council Biodiversity Project.	Future	Ecology & Recreational Open Spaces	Woolsingham Parish Council
Project/Aspiration – Woolsingham Parish Council are actively involved in the Thriving Communities project run by Action for Children by linking to its biodiversity project for the Upper Ouseburn & the Ponds. This is part of the Woolsingham Parish Council Biodiversity Project.	Future	Ecology	Woolsingham Parish Council
Project/Partnership – Woolsingham Parish Council have been working with the City Council’s Maintenance and Ecology to change the mowing regime in parts of the village to create wildflower meadows and reduce cutting costs.	Existing	Ecology	Woolsingham Parish Council
Partnership – Climate Action Newcastle is foraging partnerships between green & less green parts of the city using wellbeing, heritage and religious assets in the communities and linking with health care organisations.	Future	Landscape & Heritage	Climate Action Newcastle

15.0 CONCLUDING REMARKS

Consultation was carried out with interest groups, parish councils and partners and council officers in February 2021. The consultation has highlighted a wide range of issues and opportunities across the City to inform the Green Infrastructure Strategy and Delivery Plan.

There is a strong degree of consistency in the responses across the various themes from all consultees on the key areas where there are issues and opportunities to review and include in the strategy.

The key observations and issues have been identified and set out in the above report and will be further considered within the main strategy.