The Social Impact of Urban Nature in Regeneration

Indicators & Guidance 2020 – 2021

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In partnership with

Middlesex University London

Introduction – why focus on the social impact of urban nature

The connection between nature and wellbeing is well evidenced in science and in practice, and has been amplified by the Covid-19 pandemic and the huge pressure that the lockdowns placed on people's mental health and subsequent demand for green open spaces in cities.

The multiple functions of urban greenspaces and water, in building climate resilience as well as contributing to healthy, happy and cohesive neighbourhoods are now broadly recognised in planning. For example, the London Plan 2021 (Ch. 8; Policy G1 C) stipulates nature based solutions and green infrastructure as delivering multiple benefits for communities while providing environmental services from air purification to temperature management and biodiversity benefits. Urban planning is increasingly characterised by an aspiration for greener cities (e.g. GLA 2021).

But it is also well known that urban greenspace does not always function as intended for everyone's benefit. The tragic events of 2021 in London - in particular the murders of Sarah Everard and Sabina Nessa - have

raised concerns about safety especially for women and indeed, for all demographic groups. While some groups are more at risk of violence, others may feel excluded for different reasons. Particularly in the context of regeneration, where the material environment and communities are disrupted and in evolution over long time-periods, greenspaces and water – henceforth urban blue and greenspace, such as parks, lawns, courtyard gardens, canals and ponds – can become contentious and a cause for divisions among residents. It follows then that the benefits of urban green and blue spaces are often unevenly distributed and dis-benefits, such as risks associated with access and experienced anti-social behaviours need to be understood and addressed if the potential wellbeing benefits are to be realised for all.

This guidance aims to unpack the key barriers and risks that underpin the realisation of positive social impact from urban blue and greenspace with a specific focus on neighbourhood undergoing regeneration – a process creating both tensions and opportunity for the integration of urban nature into the built environment. This guidance is based on a review of international literature and empirical research in two estates undergoing regeneration in North East and West London. Our findings demonstrate that while their wellbeing and liveability benefits are undisputed, urban blue and greenspaces can be exclusionary. Moreover, a host of subtle factors in the material and social context of our case study estates impact on how these spaces are perceived and engaged with by different types of urban residents and whether their potentially significant social benefits are actually realised for all. It is also evident that planning practice matters in this too. The identification of community needs and community input into blue and greenspace design is crucial from the start of any regeneration project. However, perceived lack of agency and the difficulty of reaching and engaging all groups remains a challenge. Some voices tend to be louder than others.

The BlueGreen Impact project ran from April to September 2021. Its outputs are aimed for urban practitioners who participate in the delivery and management or urban parks and leisure cover. Section of this guidance 3 summarises and provides indicators for the many beneficial social impacts of these spaces. Section 4 explores indicators of risk factors associated with the dilution and subversion of benefits and sometimes, the catalysis of negative functions. Section 5 provides examples of problems encountered in our case study areas and suggests some possible solutions to those. The contents of this booklet are aimed specifically at managing the social impact of blue and greenspace in the context of urban regeneration, which itself has a significant impact on the involved communities.

How was this guidance produced – our methods

This guidance was produced by the BlueGreen Impact project team, which combines expertise from urban planning and greenspace research (Dr Meri Juntti, Middlesex University) and social impact evaluation (Sevda Ozsezer and Shingai Chirimuuta, London Development Trust).

The project involved:

- A rapid systematic literature review of 527 research papers of which 60 were chosen for analysis of social impacts from urban greenspaces and water features all over the world.

- A survey of 270 residents and visitors of the Acton Gardens and Woodberry Down estates to understand the applicability of the review findings in the context of North East and West London.

- 15 resident and stakeholder interviews, which helped build an in-depth understanding of how greenspaces and water features function, are accessed and impact the everyday lives of residents.

- Interviews with, and feedback from, stakeholders to develop usable indicators and guidance.

We would like to thank all our research participants who gave their time to contribute data and feedback.

The Locations

Woodberry Down estate in North East London, and Acton Gardens estate in West London are both, undergoing long-term regeneration delivered for local authorities by private developers and housing associations. On both estates, regeneration is delivering a mix of new social and private housing. This has involved an increase in the number of dwellings, with a 40:60 ratio of affordable housing to private development in Woodberry Down and 50:50 in Acton Gardens. Woodberry Down is a large 64-acre estate bordering two unused reservoirs that are both open to recreation access. Acton Gardens, 52 acres, replaces the old South Acton estate. Both projects are approximately 10 years into the regeneration process, whereby all existing residents are being offered a dwelling from the new housing stock. In Woodberry Down, this has involved temporarily rehousing residents elsewhere. Both construction projects deliver a significant amount of designed greenspace and in Woodberry Down, sustainable drainage systems (SUDS) and a new wetlands centre on the adjacent reservoir have been established. In Acton Gardens, three parks and two public squares are being created by the developer, who has also funded improvements to two adjacent parks by the Local Authority. Regeneration has entailed a significant and ongoing increase in the number of residents on both sites.

The social impact of urban nature – indicators

The beneficial impact of urban blue and greenspace is broadly evidenced in literature, but the concept of 'social impact' is not consistently defined.

This guidance groups the social impact of blue and greenspaces into the four categories of wellbeing (mental and physical health), community relations (trust and cohesion), empowerment and ability to influence (feelings of), and economic factors and green gentrification. This definition is based on literature on urban ecosystem services, amenity value, community and health impacts of urban nature and the broader social impact literature (the technical report for the BlueGreen Impact Project provides further details). Table 1 offers indicators and examples of each category based on our research.

Table 1: Indicators of social impact from urban nature

Social impact	Indicators (in bold) and examples
Wellbeing – self-reported mental and physical health	The sensory landscapes (of visual aesthetics, sounds and smells) created by blue and greenspaces on the estates are a source of emotional and mental wellbeing. These benefits hinge on the ability to spend time outside to relax and to socialise. Access to urban greenspace and water also encourages physical exercise, which yields physical health benefits. Wellbeing benefits have clearly been amplified during the pandemic and many describe how they have come to appreciate the greenspaces on the estates much more during lockdowns. But for some, greenspaces are also associated with fears, of injury, insects and animals, as well as for general safety. But it appears that abundant, well-managed greenspace tend to support feelings of safety and play down perceptions of crime. Literature suggests that trees play a role in decreasing both perceptions and actual incidences of crime. Accessibility is important, as are environments which are experienced as inclusive for all, for these benefits to be realised. The ability to grow plants – community gardens or growing boxes – are sources of self-confidence and satisfaction.
Community cohesion – neighbourhood relations, connectivity and feelings of belonging	A broad range of different, multifunctional greenspaces supporting access to a range of demographic groups also means that spending time outdoors affords an insight into the demographic and social context of the estate. This is an important function for making sense of the neighbourhood and for having meaningful interactions with neighbours. The parks and leisure spaces, and the reservoir paths in Woodberry Down, form versatile spaces that are used by most residents for a broad range of purposes from play and exercise to socialising and quiet relaxation. But sufficient space is crucial for positive relations, and there are groups that feel excluded, predominantly young people and the elderly or those that suffer from access limitations. Greenspaces can also disenfranchise black and other ethnic minorities from nature due to covert and overt racism, where some spaces become profiled as predominantly 'white middleclass'. Differences in cultural preferences for types of greenspace and the prevalent stigmatisation of certain groups such as young black men can contribute to these feelings of alienation. Greenspace delivery as a part of regeneration is often perceived to be for the benefit of property value and primarily for those living in the privately owned or rented dwellings. Moreover, meaningful social interaction in greenspaces requires abundant and good quality facilities such as seating, picnic tables and areas, sports equipment and designated areas for active pursuits. Services, such as affordable cafes and sports, social or education provision foster meaningful connections between neighbours. While community gardens can be a source of wellbeing for some, gardening groups can also be exclusionary. Therefore, community managed, open plan community gardens are more inclusive and better at fostering community relations. Well managed greenspaces and water features also contribute positively to place identity and overall liveability, playing a role in the length of residency.
Empowerment – feelings of agency in relation to own circumstances and the local context	Urban greenspace can underpin feelings of empowerment in broadly two ways. Firstly, the most significant empowering impact of urban greenspaces on the estates is the role they play in enabling and encouraging active exercise. Sufficient designated space and availability of equipment enhances these benefits. Literature cites measurable evidence of greenspaces, particularly those with water such as reservoirs or lakes, in supporting active lifestyles. Yet cultural differences are associated with differing perceptions regarding gender-appropriate activities, where exercise may be perceived as mainly for men. Also risk perceptions differ and in particular, waterbodies can be experienced as dangerous and as attracting unwanted or anti-social behaviours such as noisy outdoor gatherings. Secondly, many residents are aware of the risks associated with climate change and the prevalent 'extinction crises' and the potential role that urban greenspace plays in mitigating both of these. The diversity of species and the presence of trees on the estates were perceived to harbour biodiversity, insulate against heat and storm winds as well as supporting a better understanding of and more positive attitudes towards nature. During the pandemic, the available blue and greenspaces contributed significantly to satisfaction with people's concept of 'home'.
Local economy	Aesthetic and varied greenspaces are seen to increase the value of the estate and its properties. But some express fears that this will lead to an adverse impact on affordability of rents and service charges. Well managed and varied greenspaces attract visitors, add positively to the social mix on the estates and provide scope and premises for economic activities, such as local cafes and fitness entrepreneurs.

The role of the social and material context of urban housing estates in mediating the social impact of urban nature

Literature and our findings clearly demonstrate that the social benefits derived from urban blue and greenspace are modified by the material and social context as well as subjective factors.

Material context refers to spatial form and diversity: size and location of parks, presence of water and facilities, and type of vegetation. For example, the presence of facilities and services increase amenity value and encourage social activities.

Social context refers to demographic and socio-economic factors, cultural and ethnic diversity and levels of crime. For example, greenspaces situated in poor neighbourhoods are associated with less health and wellbeing benefits.

Planning context refers to the practices and agendas that characterise the planning, design and management of greenspaces. For example, community-led management of community gardens is key to their ability to contribute to social capital in urban neighbourhoods.

Subjective factors refer to physical ability, gender, education, socio-economic status and identity. For example, children with high BMI benefit more from access to nature rather than sports facilities.

It is therefore fair to say that social impact does not passively flow from nature, but is co-produced and assigned meaning as a part of the experience of everyday life. Under some conditions, and for some individuals and groups, beneficial impacts can become diluted or even become 'dis-benefits' (a disadvantage or loss). Examples of dis-benefits are an increase in anti-social behaviours or divisions within the community. Table 2 below, lists contextual factors from literature and our empirical research that contribute to these risks and provides examples of the mechanisms underpinning the dilution of benefits or the emergence of dis-benefits.

Table 2: Contextual indicators of risk and mechanisms diluting social benefits or dis-benefits from urban nature in the context of regeneration

Indicator of risk	Mechanisms underpinning the dilution of benefits or the emergence of dis-benefits in a regeneration context
Community change	Changing communities are inherent to regeneration – neighbourhood groups are broken up, new people move in and the mix of social and private housing changes. Changes in community composition and the loss of and need to re-build neighbourly relations also mean that feelings of ownership of public spaces and shared understandings of acceptable behaviour in them are altered and possibly completely lost. This can lead to uncertainty and disagreements about the intended and appropriate uses of greenspaces, decrease access and undermine the beneficial impact on community cohesion and at worst, lead to conflicts regarding ownership and appropriate uses.
Socio-economic diversity	Socio-economic diversity, for example resulting from the addition of privately owned residences on regenerated estates may inspire interpretations of greenspace and particularly water as markers of a hierarchy of housing value and thus as marking a division between council and private properties, contributing to inequality between residential buildings. Aesthetic beauty and water are associated with higher value whereas play areas and diverse greenspaces managed for environmental values are not perceived as similarly 'prestigious'. High end catering outlets such as the Coal House Cafe on the East Reservoir at Woodberry Down, can be seen as indicating that access by all is not welcome in certain spaces, or that they are intended for the residents of privately owned properties.
High density	High density of buildings and people and the gradual densification associated with progressing regeneration can deter access to greenspaces and dilute its wellbeing and community benefits. This was particularly the case during the pandemic when people were wary of close proximity to others. Densification exacerbates potential conflicts between different uses, such as children's play and cycling, and increases the risk of conflicts and experienced anti-social behaviours.

Indicator of risk	Mechanisms underpinning the dilution of benefits or the emergence of dis-benefits in a regeneration context
Semi-private/ private greenspaces	Semi-private greenspaces such as block specific courtyard gardens can be seen to inhibit social mixing by segregating people into allocated spaces. They dilute the role of the estate as a single neighbourhood and inhibit broader community building. If not appropriately designed with clearly established appropriate uses, they may become unused 'wasted' spaces. Access limitations vary within semi-private spaces; double gated entry systems that comprise block specific greenspace have been proven to cut anti-social behaviour and increase the safety of access to homes. This kind of defensive space around the block can be very welcome in contexts where safety is an issue, but on our case study estates, this did not seem to be the case. Moreover, sometimes access to greenspaces adjacent to a housing block is seemingly open, but tacit limitations such as private security oversight can cause divisions within communities and appear exclusionary. Similarly, the existence of fencing and gates, even if not locked, can create the impression that access is restricted. This is particularly the case for groups and individuals who feel already excluded and are therefore more uncertain about whether their presence is welcome. Opening times and access limitations due to privatisation were cited as among the top five barriers to access on both of the BlueGreen Impact project case study estates in the survey. However, some of these access limitations were perceived limitations, and did not actually reflect the actual levels of access allowed. For example, many people believed gates to be locked at night, and access restricted, when in fact this is not the case. Whether perceived or actual, these divisions nevertheless influence access and the ability of residents to benefit from greenspaces on their home estate.
Overly prescriptive design features	Despite the evident need to designate greenspace for different type of uses so as to ensure that it really serves multiple users and to avoid conflicts, care has to be taken with prescriptive design. Highly prescriptive facilities such as children's play equipment can thwart creative play and/or be misinterpreted by residents, leading to confusion and disagreement as to what the space is for and therefore discourage use and lead to conflicts. Versatility of use is important.
Lack of facilities	Insufficient facilities such as seating and play courts / sports equipment catering to all age groups and lack of facilities such as cafes and picnic areas to sit down can dilute the benefits that greenspaces can offer for community cohesion. This is particularly the case during regeneration, when the development is in progress and spaces remain unfinished. Unfortunately, this coincides with a time when social cohesion is disrupted and the need for relationship building is at its greatest. Meaningful relationships with neighbours take time to be formed and conversations and interactions are crucial. Greenspace alone will not lead to closer knit communities in regeneration, but the provision of sufficient and appropriate facilities will increase time spent in public greenspaces and invite and enable social interactions, alongside organised activities such as gardening, events and sports.

Indicator of risk	Mechanisms underpinning the dilution of benefits or the emergence of dis-benefits in a regeneration context
Groups at risk	Markers of identity such as gender, sexuality, age, disability, race and ethnicity play a significant role in how people interact with greenspaces and to what extent they will access and engage with urban nature. Cultural differences inform differential perceptions of the risks associated with urban nature and the range of appropriate uses. For example the consumption of alcohol in public spaces is regarded as inappropriate or associated with threatening behaviours by some; and water-features are often perceived as dangerous by families with young children. Different perceptions of appropriate uses may lead to conflicts.
	Differential gender roles can underpin different levels of access between men and women. Our primary data demonstrated that for men from some cultures, greenspaces are perceived to be primarily for women and children. In terms of safety, particularly young women limit access to greenspaces on the estates because of perceived risks and experienced harassment. Similarly, in certain contexts where crime and violence pose risks, young men are deterred from access to certain areas, either because they experience being at higher risk themselves, or because they feel stigmatised as potential perpetrators. Ethnic and racial minorities have both different preferences, different experiences and different risk perceptions when it comes to blue and greenspaces. As discussed above, design, type of facilities and the social context – presence of overt or covert racism for example – influence how welcome and safe different people feel in greenspace. Greenspaces designed from a gender, race and culture 'blind' perspective may be experienced as alienating among certain groups and block benefits.
	Older children and young adults are a neglected group with insufficient age-appropriate facilities that would afford the types of behaviour that people in this age group can and like to engage in. Youths, approximately 15-25 year olds, often move in large groups involving noisy activities. Both girls and boys, not to mention sexual minorities, in this age group are at high risk of being either victims or (perceived) perpetrators of anti-social behaviour or violence and are easily stigmatised in public spaces.
	The elderly, particularly those living alone and those with limited mobility and physical ability also become easily marginalised in blue and greenspace provision.

Examples of problems and solutions supporting positive social impact from urban nature in the context of urban regeneration

This section offers examples of problems and their potential solutions from the context of our two case study sites.

Problem 1: Densifying neighbourhoods dilute the wellbeing benefits from greenspace and pose a high risk of conflicts of use.
Solution: Design features and interim solutions can mitigate the impact of density.

Example 1: In Acton Gardens, seven parks and/or public squares in total will be open to the community once regeneration is finished. But the ongoing construction works have meant that many of the planned spaces remain inaccessible and unfinished. Meanwhile, the lack of interim solutions while greenspaces are occupied by building works has meant that conflicts of use have emerged and the lack of sufficient play areas and services such as cafes and toilets is felt acutely. With long-term regeneration projects, the identification and delivery of functional interim solutions managing density in public spaces need to be devised. Communities can be involved in this with support for pop-up solutions and community led design.

Example 2: The high and growing number of residents using the blue and greenspaces underpins many of the conflicts concerning acceptable use and experienced anti-social behaviours on our case-study estates. Respondents suggest that design could be used to afford and allocate different types of activities in (e.g. active vs passive; dog walking vs children's play) into different parks so as to avoid conflicts between incompatible uses. Careful consultation and the involvement of residents in the design of public spaces and the allocation of new dwellings can also help foster more positive relations within communities. Participatory events and organised activities in outdoor spaces can help establish an understanding of shared norms of appropriate use as well. Events can be profiled to bring different demographic interest and socio-economic groups together and help overcome marginalisation. Engagement efforts should aim to understand existing norms and perceptions regarding possible perceived hierarchies among new housing and either observe or address these to increase equal access. For example the allocation of new flats among existing council housing residents should be done with sensitivity to the existing norms concerning entitlement, which are often informed by length of residency on the estate.

Problem 1: Continued.

Example 3: Densification can compromise the feeling of privacy of homes. But trees address this and contribute to aesthetic beauty, liveability and biodiversity in Acton Gardens. Existing trees have been safeguarded and maintained despite extensive construction works. There is a good range of mature trees on the estate, which also provide privacy through leaf cover in the summer months, despite the new higher building density.

Problem 2: Crime and anti-social behaviours deter access to greenspace for all groups and underpin dis-benefits where greenspaces are experienced as dangerous no-go areas, that afford mainly anti-social behaviours.
Solutions: Designing green and blue spaces as destinations and so as to increase connectivity between regenerating neighbourhoods and their broader surroundings.

Example: Regeneration has brought private security and new types of residents onto both of our case study estates, which is not without problems, but, together with the newly delivered greenspaces has made the estates seem safer and more approachable to people from the broader area and beyond. This has a further impact on the social context, which is now experienced by many of our respondents as less amenable for anti-social behaviours such as drug dealing and associated violence. In Woodberry Down, key features in this are the Woodberry Down wetlands and the path along New River, which connects the estate to the Castle Climbing Centre and West Reservoir Sailing Centre and beyond, to Clissold park. This forms a route that passes through the estate and that is busy with leisure walkers and bicycle commuters throughout the week. Although the crime statistics concerning the local area released by the police do not support this, many of our respondents describe the estate as much safer than before. However, it should be noted that this experience is likely to vary according to demographic, and in our data, there is evidence that young women particularly still feel vulnerable to harassment on the estates. But overall, a more mixed social context created by a less enclose character, visitors and new private rental and ownership residents affords different kinds of behaviours and discourages some anti-social ones, at least during busy hours.

Problem 3: Congregation and stigmatisation of young people in public spaces. Older children and young adults are at higher risk of either falling victim to or being (perceived) perpetrators of antisocial behaviours in public spaces, including greenspaces.

Solution: Organised activities and spaces designed flexibly and specifically to accommodate young peoples' activities

Example 1: Designated active spaces for this age group (approximately 15-25 year olds) are for example basketball and football courts, but these are often insufficient and with limited opening hours. Young people need a lot of space due to their tendency to congregate in groups and engage in physical and sometimes noisy activities. Youth centres need access to plentiful exercise and greenspace, preferably not immediately adjacent to residential buildings to minimise nuisance from noise. At arm's length supervision, such as that provided by youth centre staff, can be used to create safe spaces where young people can spend time with a mitigated threat of falling victim to crime.

Example 2: Lack of activities leads to loitering and hanging around in noisy groups and can be intimidating for other residents. As activity levels and healthy habits are very important for wellbeing of this age group, supervised activity to introduce new skills and to model new, exciting and appropriate uses of existing greenspace are important. Access should be provided to subsidised activities that nurture physical development, self-confidence and a broad set of skills. In addition to football and basketball, activities such as parkour, and social activities which do not require equipment and find alternative ways of engaging with urban space, including greenspace, should be encouraged and supported. Nearby greenspace with seating areas and sports equipment are also important.

Problem 4: It is difficult to engage communities in planning and design of greenspaces. Residents are busy and distrustful of their ability to really influence their local environments. Most believe that their needs will be compromised for economic reasons.

Solution: Starting with trust building and a community needs assessment and trialling a broader range of participatory practices that keep communities engaged throughout regeneration and extend into post-occupancy evaluation.

Example 1: Conflicting uses of greenspaces often stem from the differing needs of demographic and other groups on the estate. The planning and design of public spaces, including blue and greenspaces, should start with a broader community needs assessment and work to ensure that the potential social benefits and functions of greenspace are targeted at the identified needs. This will also go some way towards revealing the challenges posed by different types of diversity, where identity and demographic groups may have differential experiences and needs. The need to accommodate differing functions within designated spaces, such as provision of sufficient greenspace adjacent to youth centres with appropriate activity provision should be identified in collaboration with residents, making sure that those involved in participation represent the diversity of the estate. This could be done through 'gatekeeper' organisations and projects, such as local youth centres and projects involving and ran by young people such as My Place, Stay and Fame Star Youth on Woodberry Down.

Example 2: Contributing to planning through participatory practices is time-consuming and demands both confidence and ability to represent oneself. To make participation easier for all, it should utilise a range of methods such as written and digital consultations, in-person and digital participatory mapping and in-person information provision and negotiation, for example in the form of participatory scenario planning. Scheduling of meetings needs to cater for different barriers to access such as childcare for single parents and support for those struggling with representing themselves. Visits to schools and surgeries are further means. There needs to be attention to the existing power dynamics within communities, where certain groups may have come together around a specific agenda, for example regarding parking space provision or bus stop locations, but their established ability to represent themselves may lead to them dominating the decision-making space at the expense of those who are in need of more flexible options and scope for participation.

Problem 5: difficulty of combining environmental and social impact

Solution: provide information of greenspace functions and use greenspaces for education

Example 1: Urban nature can play a significant role in nurturing biodiversity and environmental quality. But the majority of our respondents prefer blue and greenspaces that are managed primarily for aesthetic purposes. However, there is a significant minority who would prefer greenspaces to be maintained more explicitly for their environmental purposes. For example, segments of lawns have been designated for wildlife mixtures and relaxed mowing in Woodberry Down. This is recognised and appreciated by some residents. The 'ecological value' of urban nature could be further publicised to increase the acceptability of ecological management approaches. Blue and greenspaces form rich educational resources and an understanding of their environmental features and functions often influences attitudes towards maintenance practices in a positive manner. More information on the environmental function of the 'meadows' is requested in our interviews.

Example 2: There are some very aesthetic and multifunctional Sustainable Urban Drainage Solutions (SUDS) in Woodberry Down which provide good visual and biological diversity. But often, residents are often not aware of their actual functions. In addition to informing residents, SUDS provide a potential educational resource for local schools covering climate change mitigation and adaptation in the curriculum. Also the local community could be better informed of their functions and value to support awareness, understanding and change of behaviour.
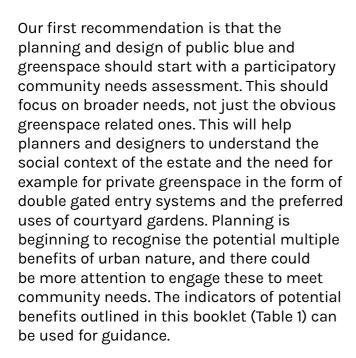
Conclusions and guidance

This section sums up on the indicators, impacts, contextual factors and case examples explored in the document. It provides recommendations that we hope will be useful for those working in greenspace delivery and maintenance in local authorities, design and construction.

Our first recommendation is that the planning and design of public blue and greenspace should start with a participatory community needs assessment. This should focus on broader needs, not just the obvious greenspace related ones. This will help planners and designers to understand the social context of the estate and the need for example for private greenspace in the form of double gated entry systems and the preferred uses of courtyard gardens. Planning is beginning to recognise the potential multiple benefits of urban nature, and there could be more attention to engage these to meet community needs. The indicators of potential benefits outlined in this booklet (Table 1) can be used for guidance.
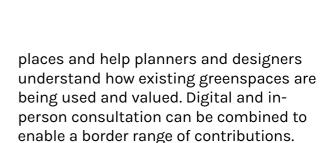
For example the London Plan (2021) Part D1A sets out guidance for area assessment, understanding the existing character of a place and how places are experienced and valued. This is hugely important for greenspace delivery as well. Greenspace planning, design and management should take into consideration the constraints posed by the social and material context and their potential solutions. Here, the indicators of risk factors (Table 2) can be used for guidance. To sum up, it is important to:

- Consider the impact of community change on available space and shared norms and understandings of appropriate use of greenspaces.

- Consider the role of diversity – social identities and particularly race emerge as a significant factor underpinning differential experiences of greenspaces in our data for example. Residents' perceptions matter here and participatory practices intended to understand and address these need to be poised to build trust in the intention to address everyone's needs to equal extent.

- Note that in the mixed context of a housing estate undergoing regeneration, tenure blind design is not working to counter the perceived divisions between private and council properties and on its own will not lead to equal access to greenspace. Features such as decorative gates and design and pricing of catering outlets can constitute access limitations and contribute to perceived divisions among residents and dwellings. Block specific greenspaces can easily remain under-used and contribute to perceived inequality.

- Recognise that density dilutes the benefits of greenspace and underpins conflicts, but can be alleviated to some extent by attentive planning and design.

- Ensure that the manner in which blue and greenspaces are managed can influence crime and anti-social behaviours, which in turn shape experiences of blue and greenspaces. Well designed and managed greenspace can decrease perceptions of crime and can attract alternative uses that deter crime at least during busy hours.

- Although challenging, it is necessary to involve communities in order to really understand the character, challenges and values associated with a place and then to deliver appropriate blue and greenspaces and to help establish appropriate uses for them. Multiple and prolonged community engagement methods are needed throughout the regeneration process and beyond. Key lessons for participatory approaches that emerge from our research and are widely recognised are:

- Participatory practices need to recognise that communities are not homogenous entities but consist of groups and individuals with differing capabilities and needs, some more frequently marginalised that others. The factors that contribute to marginalisation are often intersecting, for example, young black men have a different experience and are harder to reach than middle-aged white women. Both need to be represented but may need to be engaged via different methods. It is important to be physically present in order to engage young people for example.

- A mix of engagement methods are needed. Participatory mapping, for example via a digital map such as used by the Commonplace citizens' engagement platform (www.commonplace.is), can support ongoing communication with communities and enable people to communicate preferred uses and problematic issues to do with specific places and help planners and designers understand how existing greenspaces are being used and valued. Digital and in-person consultation can be combined to enable a border range of contributions.

- Ongoing monitoring which will feed back into greenspace design and flexible management will help build trust and demonstrate that participation is taken seriously and can make a difference.

- Community led interim planning and pop-up solutions should be enabled and encouraged to address space issues during regeneration. These can inform permanent design where positive feedback is received.
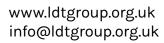
Finally, in our data, young people (approximately 15-25 year olds) feel very excluded and stigmatised in the blue and greenspaces on our case-study estates. This indicates that there is a significant need involve them more in needs assessment and the planning, delivery and management of these spaces. Ensuring the provision of sufficient, separate space and arms-length friendly and trusted supervision as well as organised activities (sports and knowledge oriented) that takes place in greenspaces is important for this age group. There is a need to engage particularly with young women to find out how their experience can be improved. Contextual safeguarding is relevant to both the male and female experience of harassment and crime in the urban space.

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