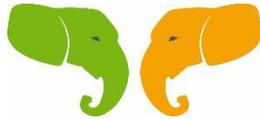# LQRC

and

Clever Elephant LLP

Independent Evaluation of:
'Age Friendly Tyburn – Creating
an Age Friendly Neighbourhood'

STAGE 2 EVALUATION REPORT

(April 2019 – July 2019)

**Dr. Leon Quinn (LQRC) &
Dr. Anna Hraboweckyj (Clever Elephant)**

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I. Executive Summary

"They took a blank page approach, then applied planning professionalism in their methodology alongside a community development strategy. Just looking at the nuances that they have brought to this work, it is brilliant."

Local strategic stakeholder interviewee, AFT evaluation

Age Friendly Tyburn: Built Environment (AFT) is a project commissioned by BVSC on behalf of the Birmingham Ageing Better Partnership. Initial work began in June 2018, with a community engagement officer in post from September 2018. The project is being delivered by Sustrans and will run until June 2020 as part of the wider Ageing Better in Birmingham programme (ABB).

The AFT project is working in three particular areas of Tyburn: Birches Green, Castle Vale and Pype Hayes. Its first aim is to work with residents in these areas *"to support them in acting as co-designers to identify aspects of the urban environment that make travel and social interaction difficult"*.[1] As the project's brief outlined, *"an initial audit of the area will lead to developing and trialling ideas that positively enhance their neighbourhood environment to make it Age-Friendly and make access for over 50s easier"*.[2]

These trials were to be initially low cost and short term, but with the view to using them as evidence to propose lasting positive changes through the development of a five to ten-year implementation plan for the built environment in the area. Ultimately, the project aspires to make public places, outdoor spaces and local streets easier to access and more attractive to be in. As Sustrans put it, *"as a result of such changes, we hope this will encourage people to join more activities, access local services, travel around more actively and reduce the possibility of social isolation"*.

The AFT project comprises four main stages:

- Stage 1: 'Discover' – Initial Area Assessments / Community Engagement
- Stage 2: 'Develop' and 'Design' – Community Workshops and Ideas Audit
- Stage 3: 'Deliver' – Quick Wins Identification / Ideas Trialling
- Stage 4: 'Legacy' – Production of Long-Term Implementation Plan

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[1] Sustrans, 'Age Friendly Tyburn - Creating an Age Friendly Neighbourhood: Q1 and Q2 Interim Report' (January 2019), p.3.
[2] Sustrans, 'Age Friendly Tyburn: Project Brief' (December 2018), p.1.

This report is the second of the four evaluation reports that will be produced over the lifetime of the project (one per stage), and so forms the evaluation of the project's second stage. As per the brief for the evaluation as a whole, this report first considers the effectiveness of the project in identifying other locations (UK or international) that offer lessons in designing and implementing age-friendly built environment audits and plans. It then goes on to consider the project's effectiveness in realising the production of its audit of the local built environment (its main task in stage 2), before also assessing the project in terms of the levels of volunteer involvement and citizen participation it inspired to help achieve this (in other words, its co-production performance). Finally, it considers any crosscutting or general issues to arise from the project's second stage, before coming to some conclusions relating to the project's overall work to date and the recommendations that arise from that experience for the stages still to come.

Overall, the Age Friendly Tyburn project has had a successful second stage, building on the strong start made by the project in stage 1. This evaluation has found that AFT has learned from other similar projects and produced an audit of the local built environment which universally impressed interviewees with its detail and grasp of the area. The audit was also well received in terms of the processes leading up to it – residents and volunteers were overwhelmingly positive about the way the project had worked with them to make sure they were fully involved with the audit, fully signed up to its results, and even coming up with further ideas of their own separate from it. Other unexpected outcomes of the project included the practical discovery of new services and routes in and around their areas by project volunteers, as well as a greater sense of local pride in their areas that arose from getting to know its features and history better.

The following recommendations therefore should be seen in the light of a project which has met all of its relevant milestones to date, but for which the most challenging stages are most likely still to come:

Recommendation I. More communications work with non-volunteer residents, including use of simplified/Plain English versions of audit findings

The level of detail in the audit is undoubtedly impressive, with the document over 100 pages long even without its appendices. There was a tradeoff for this though, as it made it more difficult for stakeholders to follow than a

shorter, less detailed document would be. The shorter summary report for residents, volunteers and other stakeholders that Sustrans is working on therefore needs to be completed and distributed now to complement the full report.   Moreover, as even the slides at the audit presentation were deemed too complicated to follow by some of the project's volunteers, there may also be a need for further work by the project to produce even shorter summaries of the audit findings using plain English, or perhaps even Easy Read versions of the documents. If a quarter of all adults in England have such low reading ability that they would struggle to read a bus timetable,[3] then even when working with a relatively literate age group such as the over-50s, simplifying the project's messages as far as possible could reap rewards in terms of allowing non-professional stakeholders to engage with its findings.

Recommendation II. Increase the pool of non-volunteers feeding back to the project on a repeat basis

Implementing the above recommendation could also be beneficial in remedying another area where interviewees felt the project could have done more in its second stage: increasing the pool of non-volunteer residents feeding back on its work and ideas. This is by definition a difficult task, as Tyburn residents who are not volunteers with the project are the group with the least external motivation to engage repeatedly with its proposals. It should also be noted that the project has only limited time and resources for community engagement, and there is only so much one worker or even one project can do, even if the project has, as AFT has done, successfully built up a willing volunteer core of 'co-researchers' in its first two stages. It should be acknowledged that the project has done well in terms of reaching the different equalities groups that make up its area of benefit on a one-off consultation basis, and project staff should be commended for that. Nonetheless, an important task for it now may be to find ways to go back to those people it has already consulted and involve them again in later stages too, in order to create the 'groundswell of opinion' locally that more than one interviewee identified as crucial to the chances of the audit's ideas becoming a reality.

Recommendation III. Increased, proactive focus on publicising the results of the audit, 'quick wins', trial results and so on with potential strategic partners

[3] S. Jamieson, ''Three Rs' on the decline as a quarter of adults have a reading age so low they struggle to read a bus timetable' (Telegraph, 29 August 2016), available at: https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/08/28/three-rs-on-the-decline-as-a-quarter-of-adults-have-a-reading-ag/ <accessed July 2019>.

Perhaps the biggest area for the project to work on in its remaining two stages is its engagement with strategic partners. There was undoubtedly some evidence of progress in this respect in stage 2, but the widely-shared view among those stakeholders interviewed for this evaluation was that more still needed to be done. While Sustrans' involvement may be judged a success at one level if its milestones are all achieved and a long term implementation plan produced, to a very large extent, the project will ultimately stand or fall by its ability to win over those potential partners with the power to make its ideas become reality. If its ultimate outcome of "*a positive long-term improvement in the physical environment of the Tyburn ward, contributing to an 'age-friendly' neighbourhood*" is to be realised,[4] it will take a whole organisation approach from Sustrans for that to happen. The project is not yet well known within crucial potential influencing organisations such as the local authority, and while it is still relatively early days, if its ideas are to be heeded then proactive engagement with higher levels of strategic decision-making in places like the city council must now take place, in order to ground any implementation plan on firmly realistic base. Project staff have rightly been careful not to raise local people's hopes too high, and it may be that there are others better placed in Sustrans than them to make these strategic links, hence the need for a whole organisation approach to lobbying for the project. Even that idea may underestimate the work that will need to be done though – the project may have to make use of each and every one of the friends it has already gained, and all of the organisations connected with the project, if it is to ultimately succeed in developing an implementation plan with sufficient buy in to actually make Tyburn's built environment more age friendly.

In conclusion, however, none of these areas to work on should overshadow what the project has achieved in its second stage. It stands as a testament above all to its staff and volunteers, who together ensured the production of an audit document that, if sufficiently publicised, could come to stand as an exemplar of best practice, both in terms of how to engage a community in auditing their local built environment and how to produce a comprehensive document capable of garnering wide supported for its implementation and further development.

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Dr. Leon Quinn (LQRC)
Dr. Anna Hraboweckyj (Clever Elephant)

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[4] Ageing Better in Birmingham, 'Tyburn Local Action Plan' (6 June 2017), available at
https://www.ageingbetterinbirmingham.co.uk/images/Tyburn_Local_Action_Plan_v1.0.pdf
<accessed March 2019>, p.12.

II. Introduction and Methodology

Age Friendly Tyburn: Built Environment (AFT) is a project commissioned by BVSC on behalf of the Birmingham Ageing Better Partnership. Initial work began in June 2018, with a community engagement officer in post from September 2018. The project is being delivered by Sustrans and will run until June 2020 as part of the wider Ageing Better in Birmingham programme (ABB).

The AFT project is working in three particular areas of Tyburn: Birches Green, Castle Vale and Pype Hayes. Its first aim is to work with residents in these areas *"to support them in acting as co-designers to identify aspects of the urban environment that make travel and social interaction difficult"*.[5] As the project's brief outlined, *"an initial audit of the area will lead to developing and trialling ideas that positively enhance their neighbourhood environment to make it Age-Friendly and make access for over 50s easier"*.[6]

These trials were to be initially low cost and short term, but with the view to using them as evidence to propose lasting positive changes through the development of a five to ten-year implementation plan for the built environment in the area. Ultimately, the project aspires to make public places, outdoor spaces and local streets easier to access and more attractive to be in. As Sustrans put it, *"as a result of such changes, we hope this will encourage people to join more activities, access local services, travel around more actively and reduce the possibility of social isolation"*.

The AFT project comprises four main stages:

- Stage 1: 'Discover' – Initial Area Assessments / Community Engagement
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- Stage 4: 'Legacy' – Production of Long-Term Implementation Plan

This report is the second of the four evaluation reports that will be produced over the lifetime of the project (one per stage), and so forms the evaluation of the project's second stage. As per the brief for the evaluation as a whole, this report first considers the effectiveness of the project in identifying other locations (UK or international) that offer lessons in designing and implementing age-friendly built environment audits and plans.

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[5] Sustrans, 'Age Friendly Tyburn - Creating an Age Friendly Neighbourhood…', p.3.
[6] Sustrans, 'Age Friendly Tyburn: Project Brief…', p.1.

It then goes on to consider the project's effectiveness in realising the production of its audit of the local built environment (its main task in stage 2), before also assessing the project in terms of the levels of volunteer involvement and citizen participation it inspired to help achieve this (in other words, its co-production performance). Finally, it considers any crosscutting or general issues to arise from the project's second stage, before coming to some conclusions relating to the project's overall work to date and the recommendations that arise from that experience for the stages still to come.

In terms of the methodology for this evaluation, quantitative data from the project analysed included the audit itself, as well as the project's engagement records, plus the demographic data of its 81 direct participants in stage 2. These data were then complemented by qualitative interviews with nine key stakeholders. Interviewees included local residents and project volunteers, workers on other Tyburn ABB projects and strategic representatives from key organisations working with older people in the area. Finally, in-depth interviews with the two main Sustrans workers on the project were also carried out in order to get their perspective on the audit and the processes that led to its production.

The AFT project is designed to take a 'test and learn' approach throughout, with feedback at each stage of the project shaping the next stage. The emphasis throughout all the stages of our evaluation is on taking a realist approach, looking not just what has worked or not worked, but also why, for whom and – most importantly of all – what has been learned. It is with the first of the key questions outlined in the brief for this evaluation, namely the question of what was learned from the project's survey of other age-friendly audits and plans prior to the production of its own audit for Tyburn, that this report begins.

III. Identification of Other Built Environment Audits and Plans

> *"They took a blank page approach, then applied planning professionalism in their methodology alongside a community development strategy. Just looking at the nuances that they have brought to this work, it is brilliant."*
>
> Local strategic stakeholder interviewee, AFT evaluation

The primary output for the project in stage 2 was the production of its formal audit of the built environment in the Tyburn area.[7] The audit, just over 100 pages long in total, comprises five main elements that may be broadly categorised as follows:

- Learning from other projects and related guidance.
- Sustrans' initial area assessments (their baseline audit, which divided Tyburn into eight 'character areas').
- The results of the community audits of the built environment in Tyburn that built on the initial baseline audits.
- A strategic fit review looking at various longer term development plans from bodies such as Birmingham City Council or the Department for Transport that will affect the Tyburn area over the next five to ten years.
- Recommendations for potential 'quick wins' to be trialled in year 2 of the project, together with potential longer term considerations that might be suitable for inclusion in the five to ten-year implementation plan that will be the ultimate key output of the project as a whole.

The section on learning from other projects and related guidance within the audit is relatively short, but nonetheless demonstrates that the project has drawn on learning from elsewhere in identifying the recurring themes that formed the basis of audit. For example, the first four of the audit's key recurring themes, as well as the final key theme in the list,[8] drew in significant part on Age Friendly Manchester's 'Researching Age Friendly Communities' guidance.[9] Similarly, the remaining key recurring themes identified in the

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[7] M. Jenks and R. Kalaria, 'Age Friendly Tyburn: Year 1 Audit Report' (Sustrans, July 2019), available at: https://www.sustrans.org.uk/our-blog/projects/2019/england/age-friendly-tyburn/ <accessed July 2019>.

[8] Ibid, p.10.

[9] See T. Buffel (ed.), 'Researching Age Friendly Communities: Stories from Older People as Co-investigators' (University of Manchester Library, 2015), available at:

audit had all also been previously identified in the work of another Age Friendly City, Belfast.[10]

Other documents cited in the audit included Age Action Alliance's 'Overcoming Barriers' report, the Centre for Ageing Better's 'Transforming Later Lives' strategy, the University of York's 'Older People's Experiences: Everyday Travel in the Urban Environment' paper and the Health and Wellbeing Commission's 'Inquiry into the Built Environment' report.[11]

The audit's appendix also provided links to the World Health Organisation's 'Global Age Friendly Cities: A Guide' and to Transport for London's 'Guide to the Healthy Streets Indicators'. These were the two sources that most influenced the design of the bespoke audit tool the project used.[12]

The audit referenced two Public Health England documents as well, its 'Falls and Fractures Consensus Statement' and its 'Healthy High Streets: Good Place-Making in an Urban Setting' report.[13] This last reference appeared to ripple out to the report's audience, with one stakeholder interviewed commenting in relation to the audit that they had *"been thinking about how this fits into other strategic developments, such as place making, the 'Reimagining the City' bid, and other bids focused on connecting Castle Vale to external areas, as well as internal neighbourhood connectivity"*. (Indeed, following the audit, the interviewee in question had discussed within their organisation the possibility of using Sustrans *"to map how neighbourhoods in Tyburn disjointed by the motorway could be connected"*.)

According to one of the AFT staff members interviewed, the project had also benefited from being able to draw on existing street design programme experience within Sustrans, for example the experience the organisation has in using temporary street furniture to help residents reimagine some of Tyburn's existing spaces. As the staff member in question put it, *"the stages*

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https://www.ageuk.org.uk/globalassets/age-uk/documents/reports-and-publications/reports-and-briefings/active-communities/rb_july15_researching_age-friendly_communities.pdf <accessed July 2019>, p.105.

[10] See, for example, Age Friendly Belfast, 'Age-Friendly Belfast Plan 2018 – 2021' (Belfast Strategic Partnership, 2018), available at: https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/nmsruntime/saveasdialog.aspx?IID=28907&sID=2999 <accessed July 2019>, p.8.

[11] M. Jenks and R. Kalaria, 'Age Friendly Tyburn: Year 1 Audit Report…', p.11.

[12] See M. Jenks and R. Kalaria, 'Age Friendly Tyburn: Year 1 Audit Report - Appendices' (Sustrans, July 2019), available at: https://www.sustrans.org.uk/our-blog/projects/2019/england/age-friendly-tyburn/ <accessed July 2019>, p.79.

[13] M. Jenks and R. Kalaria, 'Age Friendly Tyburn: Year 1 Audit Report…', p.11.

of community engagement we've gone through have been similar to those of other projects".

At the same time, some of the challenges thrown up by the Tyburn project were perceived as unique. According to the same staff member:

> *"We've never done an audit in quite the same way – our audit of the National Cycle Network is the nearest thing. There was nothing 'off the peg' to use. So we looked at Healthy Streets, then brought in things specific to older people, like access to toilets. This kind of thing wasn't totally outside of our wheelhouse, but we had to do some research to be able to add it in properly."*

It should be noted at this point that identification of best practice from elsewhere was not something the original project brief saw as only relevant to this stage of the project, but something also seen as likely to be even more important in the later stages of the project, and particularly the production (and realisation) of its long term implementation plan. Project staff certainly seemed to be of this view, with one commenting that "*we're aware of the need to go back to existing research to look again at what learning can be applied to getting the plan implemented*". One example given was that they would *"plug into Living Streets guidance regarding the main road crossing points, particularly places where there's been clusters of accidents"*, although at the same time they would also *"involve the project volunteers in doing the specific auditing work needed for that*".

In general, the project appeared to gain a great deal of confidence about the prospects of its longer term implementation from its initial identification of other locations that might offer lessons in designing and implementing age-friendly built environment audits and plans. In the words of the same staff member quoted above in relation to going back to that other learning later on, *"we'll be doing that fairly soon, as we know there is stuff in there we can use to help with implementation too"*. It may be therefore that the most important application of knowledge from elsewhere for the project is still yet to come.

IV. Effectiveness of Audit Production

> *"The audit is far more comprehensive than I thought it would be. It really has captured the different areas within Tyburn. Because of history, geography and the different nature of the housing stock in each area, Pype Hayes, Birches Green and Castle Vale, all have different environments. Sustrans did really well to break the area down."*

> Local stakeholder interviewee, AFT evaluation

In terms of the effectiveness of the audit itself, feedback fell into two main categories or aspects of effectiveness:

- The effectiveness of the audit report in capturing challenges to age friendliness currently caused by the built environment in Tyburn.

- The effectiveness of the report in communicating those challenges and their potential solutions to its various audiences.

Looking at the first aspect, as indicated by the quote at the start of this section, feedback on the audit from other professionals working in the Tyburn area was indeed that it had been effective in capturing the area's built environment issues. As the interviewee above also observed, the audit had highlighted *"barriers such as main roads which are hard to get across"* and that *"local transport is good on the main road to get in and out of the city but there is no transport from there to the housing"*.

Similarly, another interviewee working in the area registered their approval of the practical suggestions in the audit, such as those relating to pedestrian crossings *"because this is an everyday issue for older people"* They also supported the audit's idea of more and better bus shelters in the area *"as buses are so unreliable, shelter is important for older people"*.

A third interviewee from a local organisation working in the area situated the audit's effectiveness within the potential outcomes that might flow from its identification of the challenges and next steps in terms of making Tyburn's built environment more age friendly. In their words, they had found the audit *"most helpful, on the grounds that the project provides a level of detail that I simply have no access to in any other way – the project's contact with community groups has enabled it to provide a level of detail which is quite*

exceptional". In their view, *"if the changes outlined the audit are sustained and those people who have been involved so far remain engaged then social isolation will be reduced".*

As noted in the previous section, in terms of the structure of the audit, the mapping information from the community audits (walks and so on) was laid over the initial baseline area assessments from stage 1, with the final set of overarching recommendations for potential quick wins and long term plan considerations for the project then based on the areas of overlap between the two.

As a member of the project staff commented when interviewed, each stage of the audit therefore seemed to build on or reinforce its other stages:

> *"The baseline assessments from stage 1 of the project were useful to work out what community engagement best practice to follow. They also meant we could hook into the community's conversations from the start. The community then really came on board looking at routes and cross-referencing to the broader picture. Some differences in perception emerged, for example, the community was less positive than we were about facilities in the area, such as the cycle paths – feedback like this allowed us to really drill down more closely into things and uncover things that would otherwise have been missed, such as the linear route accident rates."*

Indeed, positive views among volunteers and residents of the audit seem to have mainly been rooted in their experience of the project's engagement work. As one volunteer interviewed put it:

> *"The way that Sustrans have gone about their business has been very informal and creative. The project worker has linked with other forums, which was the best way to do it."*

Community views about the audit document itself were, however, slightly less positive. While the level of detail in it was seen as commendable, it also made the document difficult to engage with for some interested parties. For example, three volunteers interviewed all commented that they had not been through the audit fully, but had rather just looked at bits of it – *"it's so big and so technical that we find that offputting".* Similarly, another volunteer interviewed noted that there did not seem to have been much feedback on the

audit from residents *"beyond the hardcore ones who always feedback"*. They put this down to *"general community inertia"* and expressed the hope that ideas in the audit like the trial street closures *"might open the community up a bit"*.

Certainly, perhaps in part down to the strategic fit section that was included within it, the audit was effective in raising awareness of the wider context to the project's work, at least if the following comment from one group of volunteers interviewed is anything to go by:

> *"We have strong reservations about just addressing bits of local landscape. For example, we've lost a lot of bus services so now older people can't get out very easily. It's no good giving them free bus passes if there are no buses. One disabled lady can't even get to the bus stop. So while I think this audit is great, we do need other partners to get involved to deliver things like better transport in and out of the area, and not just improve a few things locally. We want change and if all this hard work does anything, it must help older people get out and about."*

In relation to this, a project staff member interviewed was very open that even the 'quick wins' the project is aiming at in stage 3 might actually take some time to implement, and that it had been important not to raise hopes too high about what the audit would achieve in the short term. As they outlined:

> *"We will be trying to do on-carriageway work on a few projects in the quick wins later this year, or at least get the conversations started – they can take a long time. The end of project recommendations have been streamlined based on the emerging findings and discussions with the local authority and other delivery organisations. It's more about following opportunities when we can, rather than formally ranking some of them as more important or more achievable."*

Finally, considering the audit as a wider process, rather than simply looking at the report that was the result of that process, there were also some ways in which it was unexpectedly effective, at least according to one interviewee working in the local area. As they observed:

> *"Lots of the volunteers who went on the walks weren't aware of the history or the facilities available on their patch. For example, on one*

*walk they discovered an outdoor gym which they didn't know about.
Whether they'll use it is another matter, but at least they know about it
now."*

According to the same interviewee:

*"They learnt a lot about local history too, the area's background of
horseracing and the automotive industry. This came up as the historical
context determining road names. People found this really interesting
and even a source of pride."*

This view was echoed separately by a volunteer on the project as well:

*"We found out about things we didn't know about despite having lived
here for so long, like a picnic area that if we'd known about we would
have loved to have gone to. It's amazing what you find out on a walk."*

Another volunteer interviewed expressed similar sentiments:

*"What I liked was that I'd never been to Birches Green before, so on
the walk I learnt so much, especially about the park. This was
interesting to me – even though it's opposite my house, I didn't know
how big it was. You often don't appreciate what you've got."*

Finally, there were some unanticipated practical benefits of the audit process
identified by the local worker quoted, who observed that *"some people were
made aware of shortcuts between and within estates they didn't know about
before, which will them help get about"*.

Perhaps the most interesting feedback of all relating to the audit and its
effectiveness came from one professional extremely familiar with the area (or
better said, areas) where the project works. In their view, there were not just
physical and mobility barriers – things like some older people having to get a
bus simply to avoid the difficulties of having to cross one of the area's main
roads – but other barriers too. As they put it:

*"A lot of community development needs to be done to address the
mentality barriers. One thing that's really important is the cross-
germination of activities. For example, I encourage people from Castle
Vale and Pype Hayes to attend activities in each other's areas so they*

get to know each other. It's a mentality barrier rather than a physical barrier. It's beginning to happen now, but it is going to be a long road."

If this view is correct, then the effectiveness of the audit cannot be divorced completely from the long term community engagement work that informed its production. That work will also shape the further development of the ideas for quick wins and longer term changes to the built environment in Tyburn that are contained within it. The next section of this report therefore looks at the effectiveness of that work during stage 2 of the project, and particularly the levels of co-production with the local community AFT achieved.
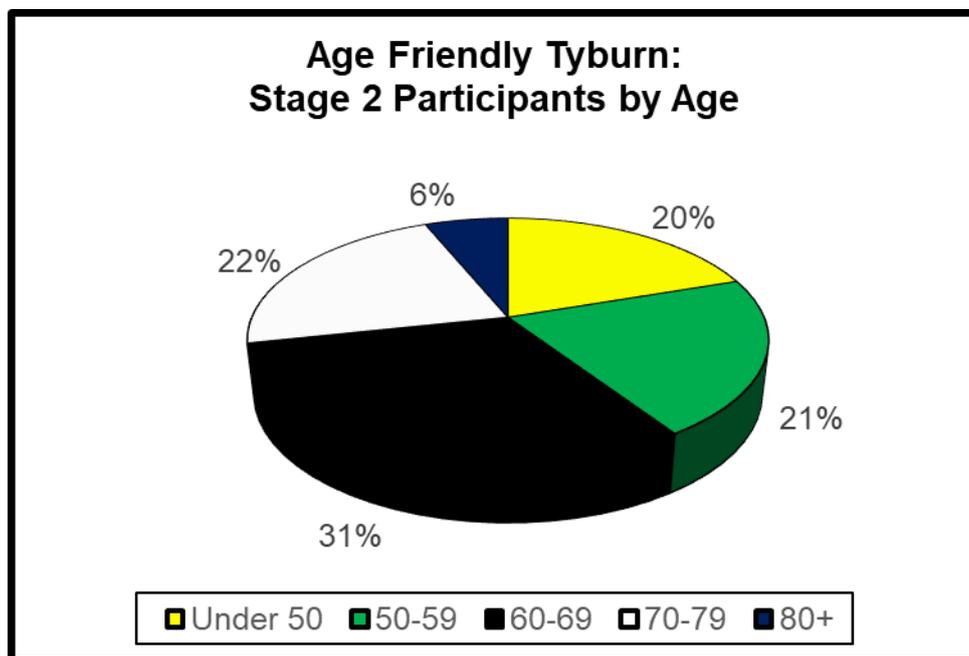
V. Co-production, Citizen and Volunteer Involvement

"On the level of community engagement and support the project has been very good. In terms of generating practical ideas that we can actually implement because they've provided enough detail, it's been really good. More often than not people don't provide enough detail for implementation."

Citywide strategic stakeholder interviewee, AFT evaluation

In its second stage, the project engaged 81 local residents through its workshops, walks, visits to other projects, pop up events and other activities. Building on the 96 local residents reached in stage 1, this figure indicates the breadth of community reach upon which the project was able to build its audit of the local built environment.
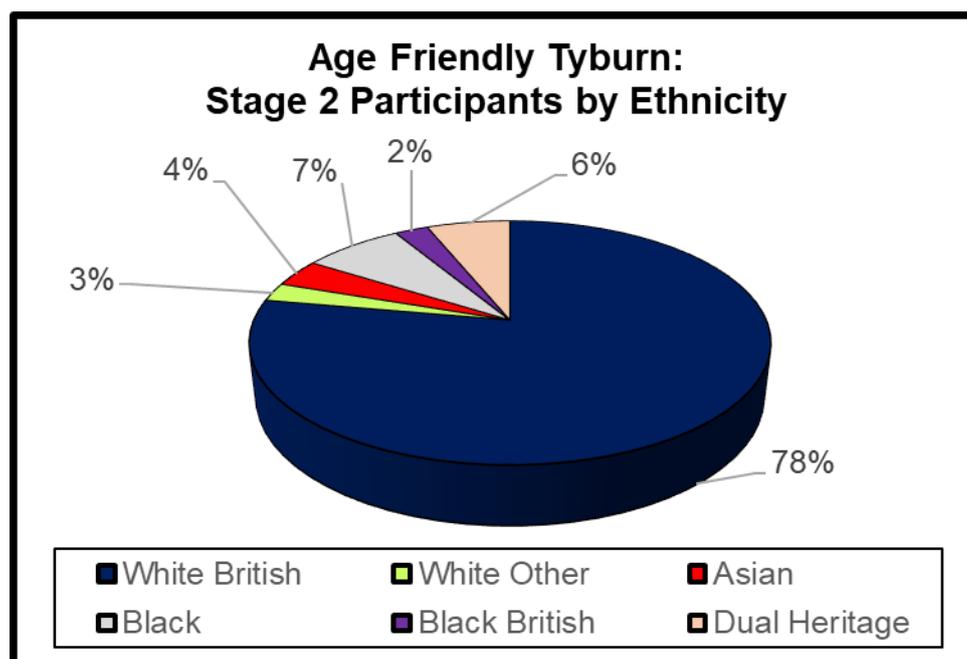
There were some differences between the demographic profiles of the groups engaged in the two stages. The number of older people in the upper age ranges engaged by the project increased in stage 2, with the exact split as follows:

Age Friendly Tyburn: Stage 2 Participants by Age

- Under 50: 20%
- 50-59: 21%
- 60-69: 31%
- 70-79: 22%
- 80+: 6%

Similarly, the slight gender imbalance from stage 1 evened itself out in stage 2 through a corresponding slight imbalance the other way, with 58% of participants female and 42% male in stage 2 (compared to a 47% to 53% female to male split in stage 1).

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The project also continued to reach other equalities groups well, for example building on the 30% of participants with a disability engaged in stage 1 by engaging a further 20% of its participants in stage 2 from among those older people in Tyburn with a disability.

AFT also continued to reach a significant number of BME (Black or other Minority Ethnic) people in Tyburn, as the following chart records:

Age Friendly Tyburn: Stage 2 Participants by Ethnicity

White British 78%, Dual Heritage 6%, Black British 2%, Black 7%, Asian 3%, White Other 4%

The project does not have any formal targets in terms of particular types of participant to be engaged, but it is encouraging nonetheless that its audit was based on a broadly representative sample of Tyburn's older population.[14]

In terms of putting co-production principles into practice, the audit document itself is a good example of how the project has sought to pass its own professional, expert knowledge through the filter of more local, non-expert

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[14] It is difficult to give exact figures through which to compare the project's demographic base with that of the group it is trying to help, partly because the Tyburn ward that existed at the inception of the project has since been split up and its constituent areas made part of other wards. As a result, any figures relating to the ward as a whole are out of date. Even where they are available, they tend to be all age figures rather than relating specifically to the over 50s. Nevertheless, what figures there are do suggest the project is been broadly reflective of the likely ethnic mix among its beneficiaries, with its 22% BME participation rate comparing reasonably closely with the 25% of Tyburn residents of all ages declaring themselves of a BME ethnicity at the 2011 census. (See, for example, figures based on the 2011 census at: https://www.citypopulation.de/en/uk/westmidlands/wards/birmingham/E05001215__tyburn/ <accessed July 2019>.)

knowledge, in order to come up with recommendations for quick wins and longer term solutions that will have the support of the community in Tyburn.

Project volunteers gave various examples of the project's hands-on, can-do approach to co-production. One noted the following approvingly in relation to the guided walks that formed a major part of the community element of the audit:

> *"The project worker leads so that people keep to time and remain focused on the matter under discussion. She is a skilled facilitator and comes well prepared. She really gets involved with us."*

The same volunteer observed how this, as well as the wider support of the group, had helped the less confident volunteers grow their confidence, commenting that *"there was one lady who wasn't at all confident at first in looking at the map, but we supported her and she did it, and she was so proud of herself in the end"*.

On the evidence of the interviews for this evaluation, the project worker's view – *"we have a good group that turns up regularly and they concentrate when they're on the walks, picking up minute detail; this signals to me that they care"* – is accurate. According to the worker, *"there's a core group of between 10 and 12 people I think can be called co-researchers"*.

Certainly the project had some enthusiastic co-researchers among the volunteers interviewed for this evaluation. As one recounted:

> *"When we were out, it poured and poured nearly every day, but it didn't put us off. We just pulled up our hoods and carried on. We really worked as a group and we chose what we thought was important."*

Wider stakeholders too were impressed by the number of residents who had participated in the audit who were also at its launch, even though the event was held in central Birmingham, rather than in Tyburn itself.

At the same time, there was also a feeling among interviewees that even more could still be done to reach the most lonely and socially isolated older people in Tyburn. As one member of the project's staff put it:

> *"Communication is the hardest thing to do with residents, but some of the*

trials may give more opportunity for snowballing. There is no single way to communicate with residents. Partly we hope that by sharing the audit with partners, it will be disseminated onwards. We are currently putting together a summary report that will go to partner organisations and residents on our mailing list. We are also on the agenda for a councillor's meeting in the ward".

This view was echoed by local residents and volunteers. In the view of one*:*

"I think there needs to be more advertising. Sustrans rely on Facebook and emails and asking to pass the information onto others, but if you want more people from the existing groups, you need to do more, much more".

Or as another put it:

"I think we agree that we need much more general community support. We need a swell in the community to get this done and we can only do this with better communications. Why not put an advert for the project into one of our leaflet drops?"

Another came up with the suggestion of spending some project money on adverts aimed at drivers to stop them parking on dropped kerbs – *"it's such a problem for the disabled"* – but also added that *"we need feedback about the findings in the audit in common English, not technical, just simplified – at the launch the slides were too crowded to understand them well from where we sat"*. Indeed, the audit report launch meeting had felt in some volunteers' view less formal than some of the meetings the project had put on for volunteers in Tyburn, which they found surprising *"as it was supposed to be such an important meeting"*.

Local residents did appreciate the more traditional community development type work Sustrans had done to raise awareness of the audit process, with one commenting that "*the Sustrans project worker has done more for the community by putting leaflets through doors"* than other organisations in the area that simply expected people to come to them instead. At the same time, even this interviewee saw the need for further efforts to disseminate the audit report more widely:

"Sustrans needs to latch onto more local activities so that they can

feedback to the community about the audit. The project worker goes to the Sanctuary quite often, but I don't know if they pass on any information to anyone. She does her best, but it is a struggle."

This view was supported by project staff too:

"It's a bit drip feed, unless we go door knocking or stand on street corners with a stall, which is what we should be doing in a project like this. We just haven't had the capacity for intense outreach in the difficult areas."

A stakeholder from a local organisation interviewed echoed the doubts expressed by the volunteer concerned with creating a 'swell in the community'. In doing so they used almost exactly the same term in their (entirely separate) interview:

"I am not at all sure how they are feeding back about the audit to the wider community. I know they are feeding back to the volunteers and voluntary groups that were involved, but as for the wider community, I don't know. It needs wider community support in order to build a groundswell of support."

This interviewee emphasised too the importance of small events like litter picks in maintaining momentum or building models to show potential improvements to residents *("along the lines of Planning for Real")*. Whatever approaches are taken, it seems there remains more work to be done on the dissemination of the audit at the end of the project's second stage, even if the audit itself has been very successfully produced.

Finally in relation to citizen engagement, particular barriers identified in stage 1 of the project, such as the lack of venues in Birches Green where the project worker could (in their own words) *"hang out to meet the local community"*, persisted in stage 2, as did the imbalance between the number of volunteers from Castle Vale compared to other areas of Tyburn. One volunteer observed that this aspect of the project was *"a learning curve"*, commenting that *"there have only been a few faces on the walks from Pype Hayes, and none of them has really stuck"*.

A member of the project's staff agreed with this. In their view:

"Proper community engagement needs more run in time, and time to do the sort of thing that the project ought to do, door knocking, face-to-face, pop

ups, really focusing on the isolated and hard to reach people in the difficult areas. But that would have needed two people in the project worker role to give more face-to-face time. As a result there are still more people from Castle Vale engaged, although a trickle of people is now coming through from Birches Green and Pype Hayes."

Nevertheless, the broad view from volunteers and local residents, project staff and other stakeholders about the project's co-production and citizen involvement efforts was that those efforts had been valuable and largely successful.   As one stakeholder from a local organisation summed up their experience:

"The interaction between people on the walks and Sustrans was really, really good. The residents were given free rein, which meant that their input was useful and influential. Sustrans already had buy-in from community groups and we were able to engage with their volunteers through this."

So while there remain areas where the project could refine its citizen involvement element further, it is already doing more than might perhaps have been expected at its outset. It is also true that there will be some stages of the project where residents will be able to be involved more than others. As one of the project staff noted in their interview:

"The next stage of the project is undertaking the trials. The trials are based on the community mapping and the audit document, and some of it needs permissions, for example for street closures. We are currently trying to arrange these, but dates have to be arranged around staff availability. Once those permissions are granted the community can come back more into the process. For example, if the project is going to seek street narrowings to reduce speeding, we will ask the community to get their input on the logistics and practicality of those plans. Likewise things like the temporary tiger crossing which the community loved when we showed it to them – they will be involved with the how, when and where that it happens."

In its first two stages, AFT has been able to balance the technical demands of its work well with its desire to involve as many of Tyburn's older citizens in its processes as it can. As a result, the indications are positive that it will be able to retain that balance as it moves forward into its potentially more technical phases.

VI. Crosscutting Issues and General Themes

> *"I've seen small improvements even within this short period of time, but I fear that at the end we will get the audit and six months later we will be asking 'What was the follow-up?'. We need to go for long term projects."*
>
> Local resident and volunteer, AFT project

When it comes to crosscutting issues that do not fit under the three specific headings for this evaluation report, one stands out clearly as the most widespread concern among all types of interviewee – the project's **prominence on the agendas of key organisations**, such as the city council. For example, one worker from a local organisation questioned the current strength of Sustrans' link with the local authority, commenting that *"they need to link with key personnel now, not just hand over a report per se and expect something to happen"*. Another important local stakeholder saw a similar need:

> *"The audit should be given a higher profile now. It should be presented to appropriate portfolio holders at the city council (transport, health and well-being, and older people)."*

This point was made too by a different project volunteer to the one quoted at the start of this section:

> *"They've got to get more partners involved, especially the city council, to address the buses and transport issue. It's no good just giving a report in and expecting something to happen."*

An interview with a member of one of the organisations the project will need to influence added to this impression, but also gave some grounds for optimism:

> *"I first heard of the project through Sustrans, the project is not well known among my colleagues. I will remain in contact with it though, now that it has reached the point where there are some significant crossovers going forward."*

In a sense, it is only now the project has the concrete output of the audit that it can start to gather momentum for the ideas in it and really try to get on the agendas of those other organisations, principally the local authority, that will be crucial in its implementation. One stakeholder was convinced that now was the time to start

publicising the project far and wide:

> "This is an amazing piece of work, relevant not just to older people but also for the wider population. It's generic and applies to young people, cyclists and so on too. It's a robust, well evidenced report that we can use later, but it hasn't had the profile it needs. It would be a key brick in the wall in terms of what our organisation is trying to scope in relation to green transport and community provision. It shouldn't just go onto the shelf. I will push this agenda with the city council, including this piece of work."

The interviewee from a target organisation for the project's influencing efforts quoted above was also supportive of the idea of now being the right time for the project to start expanding its influence, commenting that:

> "We don't have big budgets, but we are always looking at new ideas. The project has already put in for a grant, which we would probably deliver. We do want to support the project."

Other strategic questions to crop up in interviews included the **potential role of the new Neighbourhood Network Schemes (NNS)**. As discussed in the stage 1 evaluation report, the schemes are part of Birmingham City Council's new 'prevention first' approach to adult health and social care in the city. The schemes are locality and constituency based networks that aim to support older people "*to connect with individuals, groups, organisations, activities, services and places in their local neighbourhood*".[15] The NNS will invest in, and support the development of, community assets, together with the individuals, groups and organisations who are delivering community activity.[16] Networks will also locally commission activity through a micro and small grants scheme.[17]

The member of the project staff bringing the schemes up felt that they had not been particularly relevant in the first two stages of the project, but that now it was past the audit stage and starting trials, *"this would be a good time to liaise"*. In their view:

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[15] See Ageing Better in Birmingham, 'Neighbourhood Networking Schemes', available at: https://www.ageingbetterinbirmingham.co.uk/neighbourhood-networking-schemes <accessed March 2019>.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid.

"Now that AFT is recommending spaces for interaction, they have shareable aims. Hopefully there will be some overlap. The NNS are important in terms of legacy, as they are there to provide an environment for better adult social care."

The same interviewee noted that the project was looking at practical ways of working together and had already talked to Sutton Coldfield NNS, who have a Disability Access Group:

"So there may be a link there. NNS have been engaged in mapping assets and developing social prescribing so far, but I am really hoping we will be able to work with them to create the spaces."

The stakeholder from the local NNS itself interviewed for this evaluation backed up the AFT staff member's view, giving a very positive response when asked about the relationship between the two initiatives:

"Ageing Better Birmingham and Age Friendly Tyburn functioned in effect as stage one for NNS. They mapped and built relationships which NNS can now look to build on and develop the assets further. NNS can capacity build organisations and help with gaps in the community, for example the need for more volunteers or more buses. Ageing Better Birmingham, Age Friendly Tyburn and the audit have really helped NNS to see what's in these communities, to see the gaps and barriers as well as the assets."

The final crosscutting strategic issue related to **developments in the project's area of benefit**. These included the splitting of Tyburn ward up to become parts of other wards instead, and the effects of that on political efforts to get a new train station at Castle Vale/The Fort, as well as the local authority's 'Green Transport Area' initiative, which one interviewee cited as an example of a scheme where the council did not have sufficient capacity to take it forward properly, with the result that *"it ran out of steam"*. While not necessarily all taking place specifically within stage 2 of the project, these developments are useful reminders of the wider context that will always exist to AFT's work. This context is also likely to become increasingly relevant and important as the project progresses, rather than less.

Another general theme to emerge in stage 2 of the evaluation concerned the **wider Ageing Better in Birmingham programme** of which the project is part. Interviewees were generally positive about the programme where they

mentioned it, with, for instance, one stakeholder commenting that:

> *"Ageing Better in Birmingham was a 'test-and-see' programme funded by the Lottery. Now it has become much more than that. The community understands that it can take a lead role in its own future."*

At the same time, the 'Ageing' element of the programme's title came in for criticism from more than one interviewee, just as it had during stage 1 of the project. One local resident, for example, asked:

> *"How can we draw on the skills of everyone over 50, their experience and capacity, rather than just patronise them on the grounds of their age? The title 'Ageing Better' is a bit detracting. Sometimes when people are told they are old often enough and rendered useless because they are old, they begin to believe it. We need services that flip this on the head. There's a lot of cracking people in this area, but we need to ask people how they will feel safe and be able to contribute."*

Another local stakeholder expressed a similar opinion:

> *"In terms of Ageing Better targeting the over 50s, I struggle with this. People in their 50s, 60s, even their 70s, do not find 'Ageing' an attractive moniker and many of them don't need the sort of support implied in the programme. Lots of people live their lives with other networks and other interests, and encouraging them to engage in a community setting may not suit them at all."*

Other crosscutting issues identified included the underlining once more of **the importance of taking into account gender and sexuality differences** within the population of the over 50s, and of valuing diversity in the area instead of *"lumping people all together under the banner of age – sometimes age is not the major issue or the major barrier"*.

Finally, at a less strategic level, a number of very **specific bits of feedback about the local built environment** emerged from the interviews for the project's second stage. Suggestions included a crossing outside St Gerald's school, more 'hop on, hop off' bus services to prevent older people being marooned and a seat for people to sit in at the supermarket while waiting for a taxi or by the disabled spaces (*"they go on about loitering but the supermarket has security so why not use it?"*). The most commonly expressed desire of all, however, was simply for

the better enforcement of parking regulations, as the following quotes from four different interviewees illustrates:

> *"Mobility is a problem. There are a lot of people with mobility scooters here and they will only go a certain range where they know they will be able to cope with the infrastructure. They don't know what they will meet in a new area, so they are not confident enough to go there. Cars parked across dropped kerbs, for example, create real problems."*

> *"Parking rules should also be enforced, as disabled ramps are routinely parked across, creating a hazardous situation disabled people, who can fall when trying to negotiate a kerb. A fall for older people is serious."*

> *"We need to get the parking regulations enforced."*

> *"There's a lot of mobility scooters on Castle Vale. Could we not get them together to protest about parking across dropped kerbs, for example?"*
>
> *.*

While a mobility scooter version of the Critical Mass bike ride approach has yet to be tried by the project in Tyburn, it may be something to be considered as AFT moves into its latter stages, focused as they will be on influencing key stakeholders in order to get the wealth of ideas and suggestions within the audit implemented.

VII. Conclusion and Recommendations

> *"We were on the telly, on the 6 o'clock and 10 o'clock ITV News! It was hard work at the time, and we really got into it, but we have to ask, 'Will anything come of it?'. Sustrans have done the right thing by telling us that they will give in the audit but there is no guarantee that anything will happen. So will it end up as a bit of a waste of time, you know what I mean? Other agencies need to get involved now, Sustrans needs to do that."*
>
> Volunteer interviewee, AFT project

Overall, the Age Friendly Tyburn project has had a successful second stage, building on the strong start made by the project in stage 1. This evaluation has found that AFT has learned from other similar projects and produced an audit of the local built environment which universally impressed interviewees with its detail and grasp of the area. The audit was also well received in terms of the processes leading up to it – residents and volunteers were overwhelmingly positive about the way the project had worked with them to make sure they were fully involved with the audit, fully signed up to its results, and even coming up with further ideas of their own separate from it. Other unexpected outcomes of the project included the practical discovery of new services and routes in and around their areas by project volunteers, as well as a greater sense of local pride in their areas that arose from getting to know its features and history better.

The following recommendations therefore should be seen in the light of a project which has met all of its relevant milestones to date, but for which the most challenging stages are most likely still to come:

Recommendation I. More communications work with non-volunteer residents, including use of simplified/Plain English versions of audit findings

The level of detail in the audit is undoubtedly impressive, with the document over 100 pages long even without its appendices. There was a tradeoff for this though, as it made it more difficult for stakeholders to follow than a shorter, less detailed document would be. The shorter summary report for residents, volunteers and other stakeholders that Sustrans is working on therefore needs to be completed and distributed now to complement the full report. Moreover, as even the slides at the audit presentation were deemed

too complicated to follow by some of the project's volunteers, there may also be a need for further work by the project to produce even shorter summaries of the audit findings using plain English, or perhaps even Easy Read versions of the documents. If a quarter of all adults in England have such low reading ability that they would struggle to read a bus timetable,[18] then even when working with a relatively literate age group such as the over-50s, simplifying the project's messages as far as possible could reap rewards in terms of allowing non-professional stakeholders to engage with its findings.

Recommendation II. Increase the pool of non-volunteers feeding back to the project on a repeat basis

Implementing the above recommendation could also be beneficial in remedying another area where interviewees felt the project could have done more in its second stage: increasing the pool of non-volunteer residents feeding back on its work and ideas. This is by definition a difficult task, as Tyburn residents who are not volunteers with the project are the group with the least external motivation to engage repeatedly with its proposals. It should also be noted that the project has only limited time and resources for community engagement, and there is only so much one worker or even one project can do, even if the project has, as AFT has done, successfully built up a willing volunteer core of 'co-researchers' in its first two stages. It should be acknowledged that the project has done well in terms of reaching the different equalities groups that make up its area of benefit on a one-off consultation basis, and project staff should be commended for that. Nonetheless, an important task for it now may be to find ways to go back to those people it has already consulted and involve them again in later stages too, in order to create the 'groundswell of opinion' locally that more than one interviewee identified as crucial to the chances of the audit's ideas becoming a reality.

Recommendation III. Increased, proactive focus on publicising the results of the audit, 'quick wins', trial results and so on with potential strategic partners

Perhaps the biggest area for the project to work on in its remaining two stages is its engagement with strategic partners. There was undoubtedly some evidence of progress in this respect in stage 2, but the widely-shared view among those stakeholders interviewed for this evaluation was that more still needed to be done. While Sustrans' involvement may be judged a success at

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[18] S. Jamieson, ''Three Rs' on the decline…'.

one level if its milestones are all achieved and a long term implementation plan produced, to a very large extent, the project will ultimately stand or fall by its ability to win over those potential partners with the power to make its ideas become reality. If its ultimate outcome of "*a positive long-term improvement in the physical environment of the Tyburn ward, contributing to an 'age-friendly' neighbourhood"* is to be realised,[19] it will take a whole organisation approach from Sustrans for that to happen. The project is not yet well known within crucial potential influencing organisations such as the local authority, and while it is still relatively early days, if its ideas are to be heeded then proactive engagement with higher levels of strategic decision-making in places like the city council must now take place, in order to ground any implementation plan on firmly realistic base. Project staff have rightly been careful not to raise local people's hopes too high, and it may be that there are others better placed in Sustrans than them to make these strategic links, hence the need for a whole organisation approach to lobbying for the project. Even that idea may underestimate the work that will need to be done though – the project may have to make use of each and every one of the friends it has already gained, and all of the organisations connected with the project, if it is to ultimately succeed in developing an implementation plan with sufficient buy in to actually make Tyburn's built environment more age friendly.

In conclusion, however, none of these areas to work on should overshadow what the project has achieved in its second stage. It stands as a testament above all to its staff and volunteers, who together ensured the production of an audit document that, if sufficiently publicised, could come to stand as an exemplar of best practice, both in terms of how to engage a community in auditing their local built environment and how to produce a comprehensive document capable of garnering wide supported for its implementation and further development. For now, however, the most important thing to note is that the project has done almost everything that it could in its first two stages to try to bring about such an outcome. On the basis of the evidence of this evaluation of AFT's second stage, it still looks far from impossible that it may achieve the lofty goals set out for it at its beginning, and make a real difference to the lives of some of the most lonely and isolated older people in Tyburn.

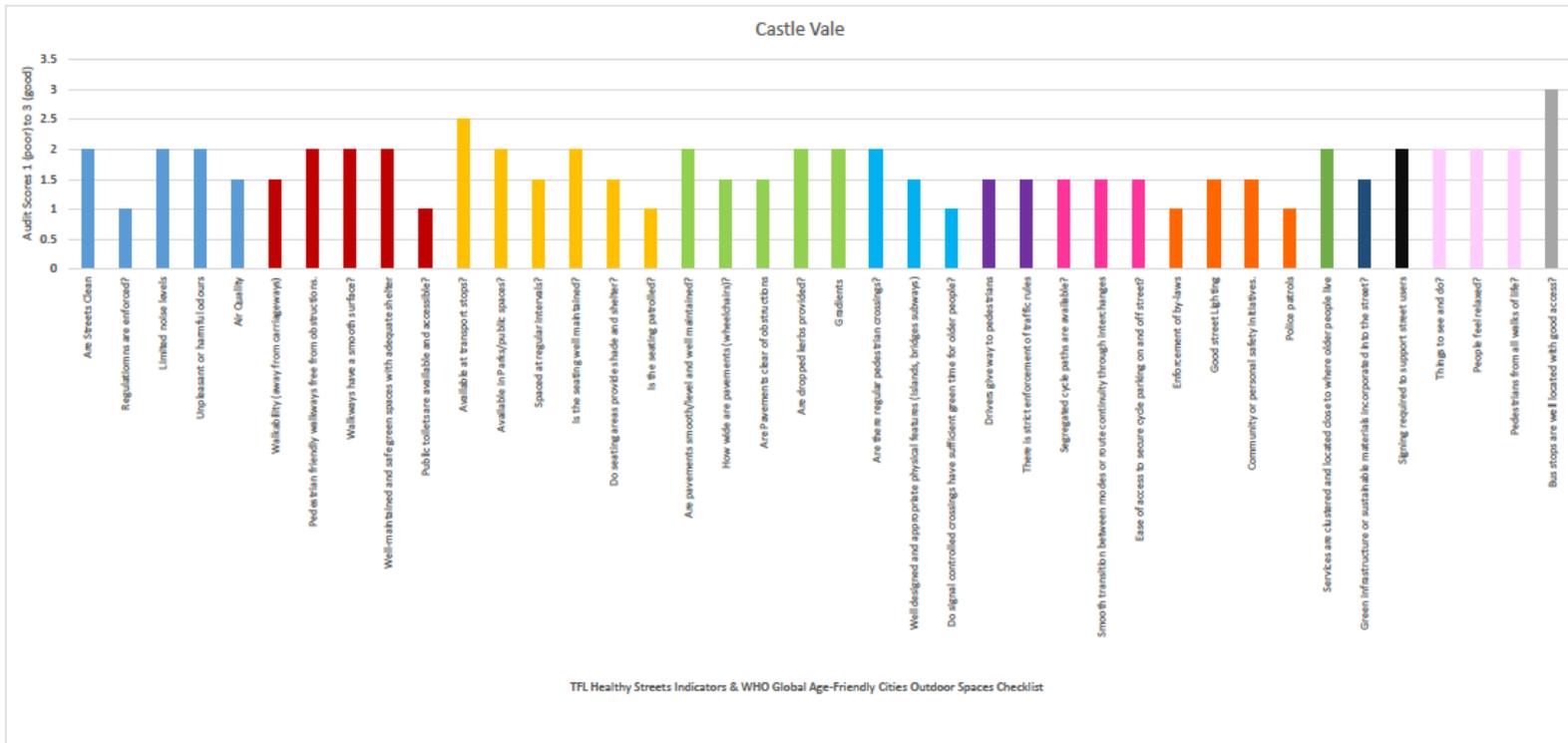[19] Ageing Better in Birmingham, 'Tyburn Local Action Plan…', p.12.

APPENDIX I: AFT Project – Geographical Areas of Work
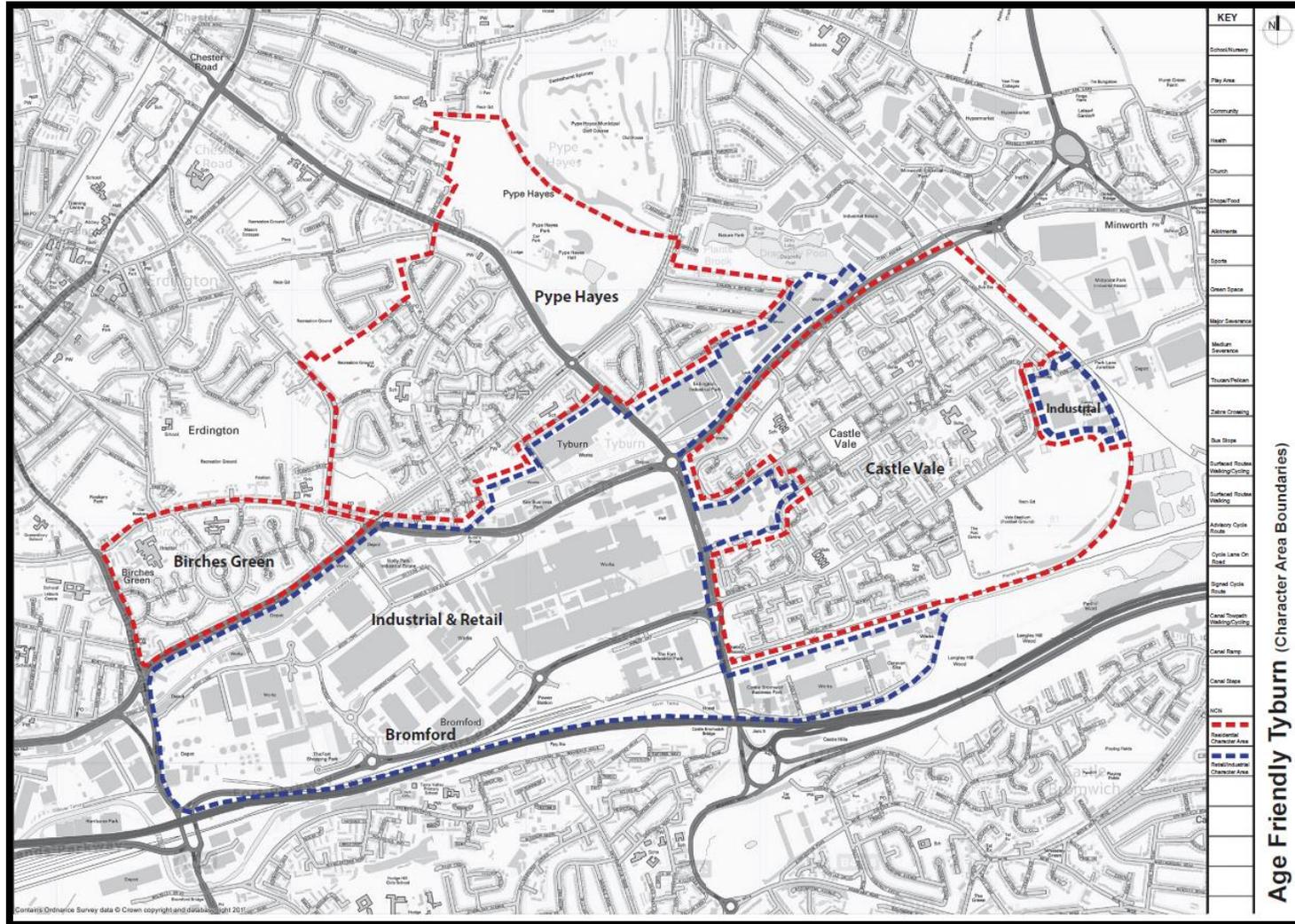
APPENDIX II: AFT Project – Example Audit Results

4.4 Castle Vale

4.4.1 Community audit results

Castle Vale

TFL Healthy Streets Indicators & WHO Global Age-Friendly Cities Outdoor Spaces Checklist

WHO Age-Friendly Category	Bar Chart Colour Key
Environment	
Green Spaces and Walkways	
Outdoor Seating	
Pavements	
Roads	

WHO Age-Friendly Category	Bar Chart Colour Key
Traffic	
Cycling	
Safety	
Services	
Street Greening	

WHO Age-Friendly Category	Bar Chart Colour Key
Signage	
Street Experience	
Public Transport	

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APPENDIX III: AFT Project – Example Community Audit Conclusions

4.4.2 Community audit conclusions

In the table below, the audit results for each of the WHO Age-Friendly Cities categories have been analysed to identify Castle Vale's strengths and weaknesses from the community's perspective. These findings have then been used to guide the Year 2 project trials including quick wins, and are also starting to shape the direction of the five to ten year plan.

WHO Age- Friendly Category		Summary of Category Performance
Environment:	✓	The community felt that their estate was relatively quiet and didn't have strong odours and limited noise levels
	✗	Community audits showed a lot of litter around the Tyburn House roundabout and in the vegetation on the A38 bunding
Green Spaces & Walkways:	✓	There are lots of pedestrian walkways within the estate although there is limited signage. There are several green spaces and children's play parks, although not enough sheltered seating
	✗	The pedestrian walkway elevated above Yatesbury Av is uneven with tree roots
Outdoor Seating	✗	There is no seating within the allotments or conservation area
Pavements:	✓	Pavements are in average condition with many 2m wide pavements and there are dropped curbs in most places – although a few are missing from pedestrian walkways
	✗	There is a steep gradient path up to the walkway on Yatesbury Av
Roads:	✗	The crossing points along the Chester Road, especially at Tyburn House roundabout have short green man times and Tyburn House has a narrow island
	✗	Pavement parking and congestion both at school drop off and pick up times as well as reports of JLR staff parking on the estate to avoid the congestion from their car parks
Traffic:	✗	Speeding along the linear roads is a major concern for residents
Cycling:	✓	There is cycling infrastructure available although a lack of cycle parking
	✗	Some of the cycling infrastructure is dated and there are several difficult transitions and some on carriageway routes which raised safety concerns due to speed of traffic
Safety:	✗	There aren't any police patrols and some residents have reported anti-social behaviour. Community perception was that there are pockets of unsafe areas
Services:	✓	Residents felt they had a lot of the services they needed on the estate. There is an active community and residents often reported not feeling the need to leave the estate which also led to residents sometimes not knowing the best routes to get off the estate
Street Greening:	✓	There is street greening, but in some cases vegetation needs maintenance
Signage:	✗	Residents talked about lack of signage on the pedestrian walkways and rights of way, including lack of signage to the canal
Street Experience:	✓	There are a good few things to do in the neighbourhood
Public Transport:	✓	There are good bus links, although some residents reported some long waits for buses

Figure 4.5: Project Champions mapping and auditing Castle Vale

Project Trials & Quick Win Recommendations:

- Temporarily reclaim carriageway on linear routes such as Yatesbury Av to highlight speeding, traffic, congestion and pavement parking
- Encourage more community activity with events, parties and activities in Centre Park and by the 'Baby' – the statue close to the retail park (Sainsbury's)
- Temporary crossing points to slow speed and highlight a need for a safer crossing point
- Seating in conservation area on the South East corner of the estate
- Cut back overgrown vegetation on Yatesbury Av

Five to Ten Year Plan Recommendations:

- Improve and widen the crossing by the Tyburn House roundabout
- More bike parking on the estate
- Segregated bike lane on Tangmere Drive and extension of Chester Road bike lane from Tyburn House roundabout to Spitfire Island
- Handrail on steep section of Yatesbury Av by Sainsbury's