PRIDE IN PLACE
LED BY YOU – BACKED BY UK GOVERNMENT

BIRCHWOOD WEST

Pride In Place Consultation Report

November 2026

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1.0 Engagement Overview

The development of the Birchwood West Pride in Place Vision and Investment Plan has been shaped by a broad programme of engagement with residents, children and young people, community organisations, schools, faith groups, local services and delivery partners. Importantly this is not to a one-off period of consultation but an ongoing programme of sustained engagement. The purpose so far has been to better understand everyday experiences of Birchwood, identify the strengths residents want to protect, and establish the changes that matter most over the next decade.

The engagement has designed to be accessible and varied. Rather than relying on a single survey or formal meeting, the programme has combined online and in person activities, conversations at community events, outreach in familiar venues, school-based activity, youth provision and creative exercises. This has helped people contribute in different ways and provided routes for residents who may be less likely to take part in a conventional consultation process.

So far, we have recorded over 1,000 engagements and this continues to rise as engagement continues. This total brings together more than 320 interactions through local events and outreach, 95 responses to the Birchwood Pride in Place Community Survey, 540 Children's Voice questionnaire responses and associated schools' engagement and an estimated 50 individual attendees at the Birchwood Zone Go activity.

The evidence base also includes Pupil Voice activity, LEGO® Serious Play, the Family Fun Day and "Love Letters to Birchwood", the Broomhill Community Centre coffee morning, the Dementia Hub meeting at Birchwood Leisure Centre, stakeholder conversations, neighbourhood profiling, the independent Birchwood Big Local evaluation and research commissioned by MHCLG and delivered by Zencity.

The engagement has reached families, working-age and older residents, community volunteers, service users, school communities and young people. Children and young people were given a direct voice through questionnaires and creative activity.

Community and delivery organisations contributed practical insight into local needs, existing capacity and the conditions required for sustainable delivery.

Seven priorities emerged from this programme of engagement activities, all of which will be thoroughly explored in the following sections:

1. Our Children and Young People Thriving
2. Our Neighbourhood Feeling Safe and Confident
3. Our Parks, Play Spaces and Green Areas Welcoming Everyone
4. Our Everyday Amenities Working for Us and the Environment
5. Our Community Active, Healthy and Proud Our Neighbourhood Connected and Accessible
6. Building Skills, Finding Work and Feeling Financially Secure.

2.0 Context and Challenges

Birchwood West is a predominantly residential neighbourhood on the south-western edge of Lincoln and forms part of the wider Birchwood estate. Developed largely during the later twentieth century, its identity has been shaped by its family-oriented character, extensive green spaces and established community facilities. Parts of the neighbourhood experience relatively high levels of deprivation, alongside challenges relating to income, employment and skills, community safety, and the quality and accessibility of some amenities and public spaces.

However, Birchwood West is not defined solely by these challenges. The neighbourhood has a strong sense of community, valued parks and green spaces, established schools, community and faith organisations, and facilities that support recreation, learning and social connection. Engagement has highlighted the strength of local relationships and residents' attachment to Birchwood, alongside examples of positive youth provision, community events, volunteering and improvements to local parks and spaces.

The Pride in Place programme is built around three aims – Thriving Places, Building Stronger Communities, and Empowering People to Take Control. These themes provide a shared framework for understanding the challenges facing neighbourhoods across the country, while allowing each place to define what they mean in their own context. For Birchwood West, they offer a way of describing the long-term issues residents experience, the strengths they value, and the opportunities that could shape a better future.

The following sections set out Birchwood West's local context through these three themes.

2.1 Thriving Places

The evidence presents a mixed picture of place. The MHCLG/Zencity Benchmarking Survey estimated that 63% of Birchwood West residents were satisfied with their local area as a place to live. However, only 26% were estimated to believe that the area had improved during the previous 12 months and 29% expected it to become a better place to live during the following two years.

These results provide a useful programme baseline but should be interpreted cautiously: the direct Birchwood West sample comprised 30 respondents and the published place-level percentages were modelled estimates rather than raw local survey results.

Local evidence similarly shows that many residents value living in Birchwood while identifying persistent concerns. In the Community Survey, 66.3% felt very or mostly positive about living in the area. At the same time, only 50.5% agreed that they felt safe locally, while 15.8% disagreed. Open-text responses frequently referred to antisocial behaviour, vandalism, drug and alcohol misuse, dark streets, nuisance vehicles and limited visible policing.

These perceptions sit alongside significant socioeconomic pressure. The latest English Indices of Deprivation were published by MHCLG in October 2025 and measure relative deprivation at Lower-layer Super Output Area level. Within Birchwood West, Lincoln 007A was in the most deprived national decile for overall deprivation, income, employment, education and health deprivation. Lincoln 007C was ranked 291st most deprived of 33,755 English LSOAs, placing it within approximately the most deprived 1% nationally. The remaining LSOAs are less deprived, demonstrating that conditions are not uniform across Birchwood West and that neighbourhood-wide averages can conceal particularly acute concentrations of disadvantage.

A population-weighted profile of the constituent Birchwood West LSOAs reinforces this picture. It records an overall IMD 2025 score of 39.08 and an average rank of 8,179, compared with a Lincoln score of 28.87. The corresponding income-deprivation rate is 37.3%, while the employment-deprivation rate is 22.5%. The area also has a comparatively low health-deprivation rank of 5,549, where a lower rank denotes greater relative deprivation. These measures do not mean that every resident experiences deprivation, but they show that limited income, exclusion from employment and poorer health outcomes affect a substantial part of the neighbourhood.

Pressure on children and families is particularly evident. The 2025 Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index gives Birchwood West an aggregated rate of 51.3%.

Separately, the official Ofsted neighbourhood profile reports that 47% of state-funded pupils in the Birchwood West MSOA are eligible for free school meals, compared with 30% across Lincolnshire and 27% nationally. The Ofsted measure is drawn from the school census and places Birchwood West within the highest 10% of English areas for free-school-meal eligibility. These figures underline the importance of affordability and of ensuring that lower-income families can participate in and benefit from future investment.

Safety and the physical environment are closely connected in residents' accounts. The Zencity survey found that vehicle-related antisocial behaviour and evidence of drug use were among the most frequently identified local problems, while antisocial behaviour was the aspect most commonly selected as needing improvement. Local engagement similarly linked safety to lighting, maintenance, the condition of parks and paths, limited visible presence and whether public spaces are actively and positively used.

Birchwood West nevertheless has significant physical assets. Its parks, woodland and informal green spaces, schools, Birchwood Leisure Centre, the Children's Centre, neighbourhood shops, faith venues and community organisations all contribute to daily life. The official deprivation evidence also indicates that the neighbourhood performs comparatively better on the overall living-environment domain than on its income, employment and health measures. This does not diminish residents' concerns about particular streets, routes and facilities; rather, it suggests that the central challenge is how existing assets are maintained, made accessible and supported by sustained activity, alongside targeted improvements in the locations experiencing the greatest need.

2.2 Building Stronger Communities

Community spirit is one of Birchwood's clearest strengths. In the Community Survey, 61.1% agreed or strongly agreed that they felt a sense of belonging, while 53.7% agreed that people from different backgrounds get on well. Short survey comments repeatedly described a

> "good community", "community spirit" and a place where people support one another.

> *"This still feels like a small community, where people stick up for one another."*

These positive relationships coexist with gaps in wider participation and social infrastructure. Only 35.8% of Community Survey respondents agreed that there were enough opportunities to meet other people locally, while 22.1% disagreed. When asked what would improve social cohesion and community, 72.6% selected activities for young people, 61.1% selected more community events and activities, and 51.6% selected better community spaces or hubs. Improvements to safety and lighting and measures addressing cost-of-living pressures were also supported.

A locally derived population-weighted analysis of the five LSOAs comprising Birchwood West places the neighbourhood around the first percentile of the national CNI distribution, indicating particularly high community need. This suggests that, alongside socioeconomic deprivation, parts of Birchwood West experience challenges relating to the infrastructure, connections and community capacity that enable residents to participate in neighbourhood life.

The constituent LSOAs vary, but the profile identifies high need across Civic Assets, Connectedness and Active and Engaged Community, with two parts of Birchwood West experiencing the combined disadvantage of high community need and high deprivation. This supports the local evidence calling for accessible meeting places, sustained activities, stronger information networks and opportunities for residents to participate beyond existing groups. It also cautions against treating the presence of individual buildings as sufficient: social infrastructure depends on the accessibility, programming, staffing and long-term operation of those assets as well as their physical condition.

Census 2021 provides a more reliable basis for considering demographic and access issues. The Birchwood West MSOA had approximately 7,321 residents and 3,165 households. Residents aged 65 and over accounted for approximately 14.3% of the Census population, rather than around one fifth. Of 3,164 classified households, 352 – 11.1% – were one-person households occupied by somebody aged 66 or over.

The 2021 Census also reports that 27.5% of households in Birchwood West had no car or van available, compared with 23.3% nationally. These figures do not in themselves demonstrate social isolation, but they strengthen the case for accessible local facilities, safe walking routes, appropriate transport connections and information provided through both face-to-face and non-digital channels.

Local organisations, volunteers, schools, faith groups and community venues already provide important support and offer a strong foundation for future activity. The challenge is to connect these assets and relationships more effectively, widen participation and ensure that community spaces are accompanied by sustainable staffing, communication, programming and revenue arrangements.

2.3 Empowering People to Take Control

Empowerment in Birchwood West has both a civic and an economic dimension. Residents need meaningful opportunities to influence decisions about their neighbourhood, but they also need the confidence, time, skills, information and practical means to participate in community life and benefit from wider opportunities.

The MHCLG/Zencity baseline estimates that 22% of Birchwood West residents feel that their voice is listened to when decisions are made about the local area. Thirty per cent believe they can personally influence decisions, while 66% report that they had not been consulted about local services or issues during the previous 12 months. These are modelled estimates and should be interpreted alongside direct engagement, but they indicate a substantial gap between formal opportunities for influence and residents' experience of being heard.

Local open-text feedback reinforces this finding. Residents asked for earlier consultation, clearer information, more face-to-face opportunities, published results and visible evidence that decision-makers have acted on what people said. Empowerment therefore requires more than inviting residents to occasional meetings or surveys. It depends on sustained communication, accessible routes into decision-making and a clear feedback loop showing how community evidence has influenced priorities, project design and spending decisions.

Economic circumstances can also affect people's ability to participate. The 2025 deprivation evidence records an employment-deprivation rate of 22.5% across the best-fit Birchwood West geography, compared with 15.0% for Lincoln, alongside an income-deprivation rate of 37.3%. Census 2021 also shows that, among 5,707 residents aged 16 and over recorded in the qualifications table, 1,205 – 21.1% – had no formal qualifications. Conversely, 1,254 – 22.0% – held Level 4 qualifications or above and 344 had an apprenticeship as their highest qualification, demonstrating that the neighbourhood contains skills and experience on which future activity can build.

Community Survey respondents highlighted skills, training and employment support, while 35.8% selected measures addressing cost-of-living pressures as something that would strengthen social cohesion. Children participating in Pupil Voice also raised the cost of living and expensive shops among their concerns. These findings indicate that affordability affects civic participation as well as household finances: the cost of activities, travel, childcare, training and access to services can determine who is able to take part and who benefits from investment.

Birchwood West has important routes through which greater resident influence can be developed, including schools, community organisations, youth provision, faith and wellbeing settings, local facilities and the Neighbourhood Board. The challenge is to broaden participation beyond residents already connected to formal groups; provide accessible opportunities for young people, older residents, disabled people and carers, lower-income households and those disengaged from established processes; and connect involvement to visible decisions and outcomes.

One relevant qualitative lesson from the Birchwood Big Local evaluation is that community leadership is strongest when volunteer commitment is matched by proportionate governance, reliable evidence, realistic delivery capacity and appropriate professional support. Reliance on a small number of volunteers can otherwise narrow participation and make long-term delivery difficult to sustain.

3.0 Engagement Approach

The Neighbourhood Board is responsible for developing a long-term vision for Birchwood West with the community. Engagement was therefore designed to provide different ways for residents to contribute, combining surveys with face-to-face conversations, community events, school and youth engagement, creative activities and outreach through existing community settings.

The approach recognised that no single consultation method would reach everyone. Online and paper-based surveys provided a consistent way of gathering views, while engagement through schools, community organisations, events and familiar local venues created opportunities for people who may be less likely to participate in a formal consultation exercise.

Statistical and neighbourhood evidence has also been considered alongside community engagement. This allows residents' experiences and priorities to be understood within the wider social, economic and physical context of Birchwood West.

The Neighbourhood Board has drawn on additional capacity to support continuing engagement throughout the development of the programme:

- Lincoln City Foundation is delivering a 12-month schools engagement programme, providing continuing opportunities to work with pupils, parents, carers, school staff and education partners.
- CVS Lincolnshire is delivering a complementary 12-month community engagement programme focused on outreach, stakeholder engagement, under-represented groups and consultation around emerging proposals.
- A dedicated Birchwood Pride in Place Community Connector, employed by City of Lincoln Council, provides a visible local presence, supports relationships with residents and community organisations and creates additional routes into the programme.

Engagement is therefore being treated as an ongoing process rather than a single consultation exercise.

The methods used to date are summarised below, with the approach to reaching less-heard groups and remaining evidence gaps considered in more detail in Section 3.5.

3.1 Birchwood Pride in Place Community Survey

The Birchwood Pride in Place Community Survey provided a consistent source of quantitative and open-text evidence about residents' experiences and priorities. It explored connections to Birchwood, perceptions of the area, community belonging, safety, priorities for investment, groups requiring additional support and facilities considered missing or inadequate.

The analysed dataset contains 95 responses, with 80% of those answering the relevant question identifying themselves as Birchwood residents. Other respondents worked, volunteered, used local facilities, had children attending local schools or maintained family or historic connections with the area.

3.2 Community Events and Outreach

Face-to-face engagement complemented the Community Survey and enabled residents to contribute in familiar and informal settings.

Activity included the Birchwood Family Fun Day at Birchwood Leisure Centre, Broomhill Community Centre coffee morning, leisure and wellbeing settings, community and faith venues and other local events. Methods ranged from informal conversations to short creative exercises and structured consultation activities.

Using existing events and community settings helped broaden participation and provided opportunities to explore the reasons behind residents' priorities in greater depth. Specific examples of how this approach was used to reach groups who may be less likely to participate through conventional consultation are set out in Section 3.5.

Case Study:

Voting for Birchwood's Priorities

At the Birchwood Family Fun Day on 31 May 2026, voting boxes offered attendees a simple way to indicate which broad areas they considered important for Birchwood's future. Four categories were presented, covering the quality of places and opportunities to socialise; community connection and safety; health, wellbeing and physical activity; and jobs, skills, education and opportunity.

The exercise recorded 152 votes:

- Better places to live and socialise – 49 votes, representing 32.2% of the votes cast;
- Stronger, safer communities – 41 votes, representing 27.0%;
- Jobs, skills and opportunity – 33 votes, representing 21.7%; and
- Healthier lives – 29 votes, representing 19.1%.

The exercise provided a quick and accessible way for people attending the event to express a broad preference. Better places to live and socialise received the largest share of votes, followed by stronger, safer communities. Together, these results reinforce wider engagement findings about the importance of welcoming places, community activity, social connection and safety.

However, support was distributed across all four categories. More than four in ten votes related to healthier lives or jobs, skills and opportunity, showing that residents' aspirations extend beyond physical improvements and community safety to wellbeing, learning and longer-term opportunity.

Key learning: Residents' aspirations cut across place, safety, community, wellbeing and opportunity. The voting exercise supports an integrated approach in which physical improvements are accompanied by activity, community connection and opportunities for residents.

3.3 Children, Young People and Creative Engagement

Children and young people were engaged directly through a combination of Children's Voice, Pupil Voice, school-based engagement, Zone Go and creative activities including LEGO® Serious Play.

The Children's Voice questionnaire has generated 540 responses so far across the Birchwood school community and provided a substantial evidence base on children's experiences and priorities. Pupil Voice and creative engagement provided additional qualitative insight into issues including sport and recreation, parks and play, creative activity, cleanliness, safety and places for young people to meet.

The evidence is stronger for primary-aged children than for teenagers, and this is recognised as an ongoing representation gap.

Further detail on the methods used to engage children and young people, including the Birchwood Family Fun Day and Zone Go, is provided in Section 3.5.1.

3.4 Stakeholder and Community Partner Insight

Conversations with local organisations and partners have helped validate resident findings and identify practical delivery issues. Organisations engaged to date include community and faith groups, Birchwood Leisure Centre, the Children's Centre, Lincolnshire Co-op, Groundwork Five Counties, local wellbeing and men's support organisations, the Diamond Park Community Project, Woodland Medical Practice, local councillors, volunteers and group leaders.

This evidence is used as informed stakeholder insight rather than as a substitute for resident voice.

Its value lies in understanding current provision, delivery capacity, groups who may be under-represented and the management or partnership arrangements that future projects may require.

3.5 Reaching Seldom-Heard Groups and Evidence Gaps

The engagement approach deliberately went beyond online surveys and formal meetings. Conversations were taken into familiar, trusted and accessible settings where people were already meeting, receiving support or taking part in activities. This included schools, youth provision, family events, coffee mornings, leisure and wellbeing settings, craft groups, faith venues and community organisations. Face-to-face conversations, paper-based activities, creative methods and free events provided alternative ways to participate for people who may have limited digital access, caring responsibilities, financial barriers, mobility needs or less confidence in conventional consultation processes.

3.5.1 Children and Young People

Children and young people were engaged directly rather than relying solely on parents, schools or professionals to speak on their behalf. Routes included the Children's Voice and Pupil Voice exercises, school-based activity, the Birchwood Family Fun Day, Zone Go and LEGO® Serious Play. These methods allowed children and young people to express their views through questionnaires, conversation, play, model-building and participation in activities.

The Birchwood Family Fun Day at Birchwood Leisure Centre provided a free and informal opportunity for children, young people and families to participate. A total of 112 people contributed through "Love Letters to Birchwood", with 48 also taking part in the three-word neighbourhood activity. The event reached a broad age range, with particularly strong participation from children, young people and adults aged 25–44.

Zone Go provided a different route into youth engagement. The free mobile provision was delivered within Birchwood rather than requiring young people to travel to a city-centre venue or attend a formal consultation session.

It recorded 115 attendances across five days.

Repeated visits enabled relationships and group identity to develop, with young people increasingly moving from taking part to shaping the activity themselves.

Staff observed participants self-facilitating karaoke and games and identified emerging leadership within the group. Of the Birchwood participants surveyed, 83% felt welcome and included, 92% said it was important that Zone Go was located within their community and 71% felt part of the community because of it. In addition, 67% attended independently, 33% had not previously attended a Zest event and 50% were participating in an arts or cultural activity for the first time.

This experience shows the value of free, local and low-pressure engagement. Some young people may be more willing to express views while taking part in an activity, talking informally with a trusted adult or returning to a familiar setting than through a standalone meeting or written survey. Zone Go also demonstrates that repeated contact can move engagement beyond consultation towards greater confidence, ownership and leadership.

3.5.2 Older Residents and People Experiencing Isolation

Engagement with older residents was undertaken through existing community settings rather than relying on public meetings or digital consultation.

The coffee morning at Broomhill Community Centre provided an informal setting where residents could discuss local priorities in greater depth. The conversation generated practical suggestions concerning policing and visible presence, lighting, CCTV, litter, parking, community facilities, accessible venues, craft and wellbeing activity, neighbourhood gardening and printed information about local events. This illustrates the value of attending an established group: residents were able to explain how issues affected their everyday lives and identify practical ideas that may not have emerged as clearly through a standard questionnaire.

Birchwood's Community Connector and a Neighbourhood Board Member also attended the Dementia Hub at Birchwood Leisure Centre as part of the wider effort to take engagement into settings relevant to older residents, people living with dementia and carers.

The broader engagement programme reached residents across age groups, including people aged over 80. However, older residents remain less well represented than families and working-age adults. Further targeted engagement is therefore needed to understand older residents' experiences of mobility, accessibility, local amenities, social isolation, safety and access to information

3.5.3 Residents Accessing Support and Wellbeing Services

Outreach also took place through settings used by residents seeking social contact, informal support or wellbeing activity.

The engagement programme recorded 12 interactions through outreach at Arise Wellbeing Café. The Café was already recognised by residents as one of the local organisations and spaces that provides support and brings people together. Taking Pride in Place conversations into this setting provided an opportunity to hear from people in a familiar environment rather than expecting them to attend a separate consultation event.

A further nine interactions were recorded through St Luke's Craft Group. Craft and faith-based settings have provided informal routes into engagement for residents whose participation is based around shared interests, trusted relationships or regular community activity.

The wider programme also used leisure-centre engagement, community services and conversations with organisations including Birchwood Children's Centre, Woodland Medical Practice, community and faith groups, wellbeing organisations, local volunteers and group leaders. Stakeholder insight helped identify existing support networks and potential participation gaps, but it has been treated as complementary to – not a replacement for – residents speaking directly about their own experiences.

3.5.4 Taking engagement into everyday community settings

To reach residents who may be less likely to attend formal consultation events or complete an online survey, engagement has also been taken into places people use as part of their everyday lives.

This included a drop-in engagement session at the local Lincolnshire Co-op supermarket, providing an informal and accessible opportunity for people to participate while going about their normal activities.

Residents were introduced to the seven priorities developed by the Neighbourhood Board from the wider evidence and engagement undertaken to date. Using voting jars, participants were asked to identify the priorities they considered most important and those they considered least important. The exercise was deliberately simple and quick, allowing people to contribute without having to attend a meeting, complete a lengthy questionnaire or have previous knowledge of the Pride in Place programme.

The findings provided an additional way of testing the emerging priorities with the wider community.

3.5.5 Remaining Evidence Gaps

The engagement provides a substantial evidence base, but it is not fully representative of Birchwood West. The principal groups requiring further or more targeted engagement are:

- secondary-aged young people;
- disabled residents and carers;
- disabled children and young people and SEND learners;
- EAL pupils and residents who may require translated or adapted communication;
- young people affected by antisocial behaviour or youth risk;
- young people not in education, employment or training;
- parents and carers as a distinct voice;
- older residents, particularly those experiencing isolation or mobility barriers;
- residents in the highest-need parts of Birchwood West;
- local businesses and employers;
- health and social-care partners; and
- residents disengaged from formal civic processes.

3.6 Continuing Engagement

Engagement will remain a core function of the programme, supported by CVS Lincolnshire's community engagement role and Lincoln City Foundation's schools engagement programme. These partners bring trusted relationships, local knowledge and specialist expertise, ensuring that engagement is sustained, inclusive and representative.

A key part of Birchwood's long-term engagement model is the newly appointed Birchwood Pride in Place Community Connector, employed by City of Lincoln Council.

The Community Connector will act as a consistent, trusted presence in the neighbourhood, building relationships with residents, supporting local groups, and ensuring that Pride in Place activity remains rooted in people's everyday experience of Birchwood.

Their role includes day-to-day outreach, informal conversations, support for community events, and targeted engagement with seldom-heard groups.

They will also help residents navigate opportunities to participate, ensuring that people who may not engage through formal routes still have meaningful ways to shape the programme.

The Board will maintain a continuous cycle of engagement, using a blend of methods tailored to Birchwood's diverse communities.

This will include regular outreach across parks, neighbourhood centres, schools, faith venues and community facilities; school-based engagement to ensure children and young people continue to influence decisions; and targeted engagement with seldom-heard groups such as disabled residents, carers, older residents, secondary-aged young people, families experiencing deprivation, and residents disengaged from formal consultation.

Creative engagement methods, such as LEGO® Serious Play, will continue to be used to reach young people in imaginative and accessible ways.

Digital engagement will complement face-to-face activity, following the Neighbourhood Board's social media strategy and using mobile-friendly surveys, social media and simple feedback tools to reach residents who prefer online participation.

Throughout this process, the Board will maintain a visible presence in the community. Members will attend events, visit community spaces and maintain regular contact with residents.

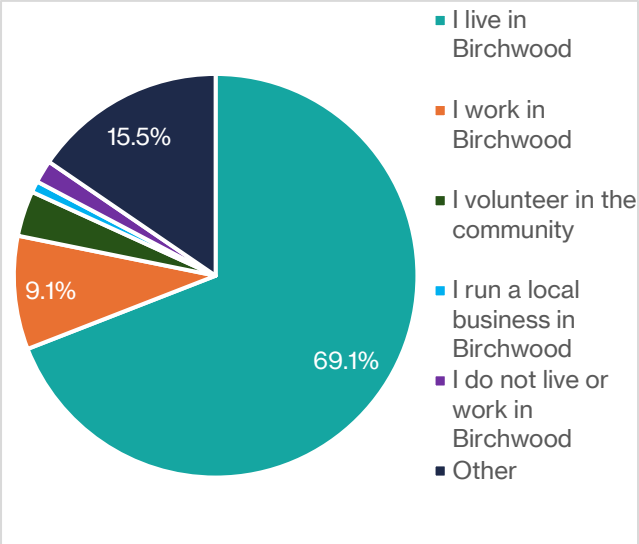
4.0 Resident Survey Findings

An important recommendation from 3ni's evaluation of the Birchwood Big Local programme, was to conduct a baseline survey to ascertain residents' perceptions of their neighbourhood in 2026 to help support engagement activity around Pride in Place, measure performance and inform the Neighbourhood Board about current local priorities.

The survey invited residents to identify what they value most about Birchwood, including what works well and needs improvement, as well as how funding should be prioritised. Leaflets were printed with QR codes that connected people to the survey online. The leaflet was distributed through physical copies to Birchwood residences, across shared spaces in the community such as coffee mornings, as well as distributed across other events by local MPS and community co-ordinators. To date, 95 responses to the survey have been completed.

4.1 Overview

The Community Survey was completed by 95 respondents, the majority of whom live in Birchwood. 80% of respondents said they lived in Birchwood but as the question was multiple choice, the percentages below are shown as a percentage of total responses i.e. some people will have selected that they live and work or live and volunteer in Birchwood.



Almost all responses are from people who spend a significant amount of time in Birchwood either for work (9.1%), volunteering (3.6%) or running a local business (0.9%). Only 1.8% of survey respondents reported that they do not live or work in Birchwood.

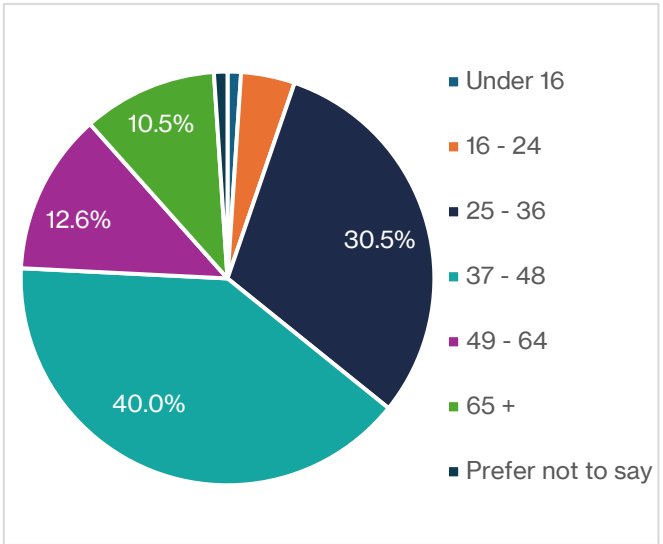
Those who selected 'Other' report being very familiar with, or spending a lot of time in, Birchwood.

Explanations include:

- They regularly visit family who live in Birchwood.
- They live or work on the outskirts of Birchwood or nearby and visit regularly.
- They use facilities in Birchwood e.g. the gym or children attend the local school.
- They used to live in Birchwood.

Almost half of responses are from long-term residents who have lived in Birchwood for more than 10 years (48.4%), and a third (30.5%) are from those who have lived in Birchwood for between 1 and 10 years. The chart below illustrates the ages of people who responded to the survey, whereby 87.7% are part of the working-age population (16-64 years), 9.9% are of retirement age (65+ years) and 1.2% are below 16 years old.

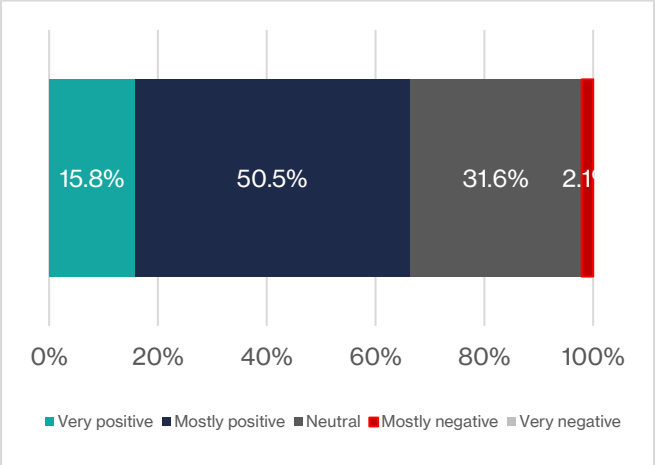
Chart: Which age group are you in?



4.2 Perceptions of Birchwood

Our survey analysis found that people have a good perception of Birchwood, with **66.3%** of respondents feeling either 'Very' or 'Mostly' positive about living in the area. A third of respondents feel neutral and only 2.1% feel mostly negative about living in Birchwood.

Chart: Overall, how do you feel about living in Birchwood?



When asked the question, 'What do you think Birchwood does well?' many people mentioned things to do on the doorstep including Birchwood's Shopping Centre and Leisure Centre, as well as activities for children, parks and green spaces, and general events. However, an overwhelming level of responses positively attributed Birchwood to its sense of community and togetherness.

A selection of key responses has been selected below:

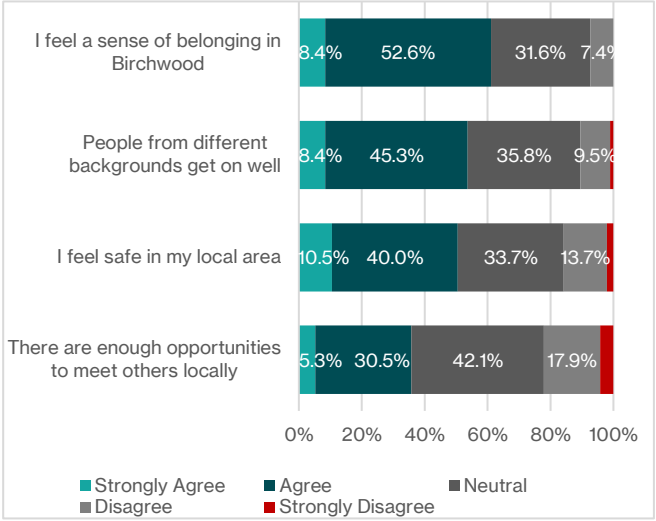
> "Good community."

> "Sense of community and pride."

> "This still feels like a small community, where people stick up for one another."

> "Community spirit."

Chart: To what extent do you agree with the following statements?



Some key findings have been highlighted below:

- Positive feelings about living in Birchwood strongly align with our survey findings that showed that **61.1%** also 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree' that they **feel a sense of belonging in Birchwood,** indicating that many residents have a meaningful attachment to the area and identify with the local community.
- Over half 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree' that **people from different backgrounds get on well (53.7%),** which could indicate a reasonable level of tolerance and social cohesion. However, the modest majority highlights potential uncertainty or limited interaction across social, cultural or economic groups for some.
- Half of survey respondents **feel safe in their local area (50.5%),** however 15.8% 'Disagree' or 'Strongly Disagree' that they feel safe, meaning that safety is not a consistently positive aspect of living in Birchwood and may vary depending on circumstances.
- Survey respondents were least likely to agree that there are **enough opportunities to meet others locally in Birchwood (35.8%)** with the most people disagreeing with this statement on some level (22.1%). Whereby Birchwood residents value their community and feel a sense of belonging and together, these findings could reflect a demand for more opportunities to strengthen opportunities for connection.

4.3 Social Cohesion

According to **3ni's Big Local Report**, Social Capital is understood as a community asset that impacts a community's capacity for resilience with a focus on neighbourhood cohesion and civic engagement.

This was measured across three interconnected dimensions at the neighbourhood level, including:

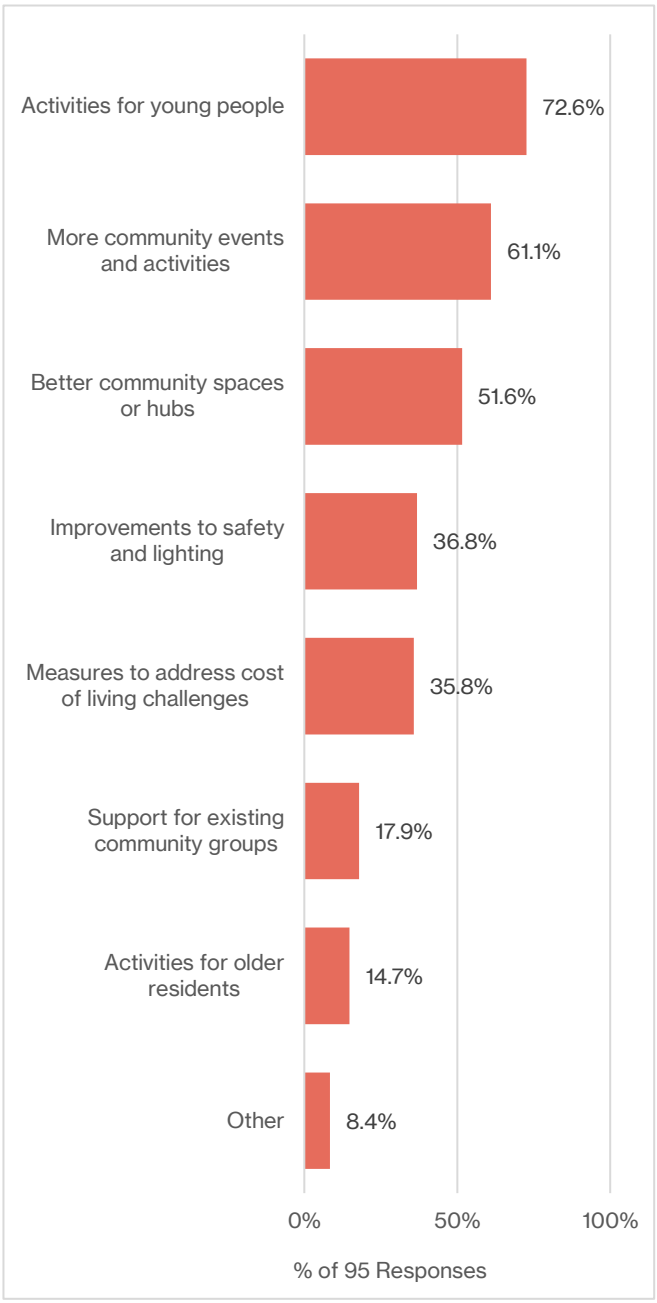
- **Bonding –** the level of connection among individuals with similar backgrounds such as family, close friends or neighbours, important for internal cohesion and resilience at a local level.
- **Bridging –** captures relationships across diverse social groups, important for social mobility and cross-community collaboration.
- **Linking –** the vertical connections between individuals or communities and institutions, important for access to opportunities.

The Big Local Report found that 'Bonding' is a clear strength for Birchwood West, which aligns with our survey findings highlighting the 'strong sense of community' as a positive factor associated with living in Birchwood by survey respondents.

Despite this, the report found that Birchwood West had a weaker Social Capital Score compared to other areas in direct proximity. This was largely attributed to scores associated with 'bridging' of neighbourhoods or across different ethnic, socio-economic or cultural backgrounds.

The chart below highlights the activities, spaces and support that residents believe would help strengthen local relationships. These findings help ensure that future investment reflects community priorities.

Chart: What would help improve social cohesion and sense of community?



Some key findings have been highlighted below:

- **Activities for young people** would help improve social cohesion and a sense of community for the most people in Birchwood **(72.6%).**
- This is followed by a desire for **more community events and activities (61.1%)**, and **better community spaces or hubs (51.6%).** This aligns with the previous findings that people were least likely to agree that there are enough opportunities to meet others locally in Birchwood.
- Over a third of respondents believe that **improvements to safety and lighting (36.8%)** would help improve social cohesion and sense of community.
- **35.8%** are interested in **measures to address cost of living challenges.**
- **17.9%** would like **support for existing community groups** and **14.7%** would like **activities for older residents.**

4.4 Challenges

Anti-social behaviour and crime related to vandalism, violence, drug and alcohol misuse in the streets, and more, were some of the most common responses to the question "What do you think are the biggest challenges facing the area?".

A selection of key responses has been selected below:

> "Anti-social behaviour from youths."

> "Damage done by vandalism."

> "Anti-social behaviour and vandalism."

> "Crime which happens with dark streets and lack of police presence. In particular, vandalising cars which seems to happen on a daily basis."

> "Crime currently on the rise and local drug users causing problems within the community with no service willing to take responsibility for them or help."

> "Anti-social behaviour is by far the biggest issue, and unaccompanied groups of children being menaces, and it has escalated year on year."

> "Antisocial behaviour and boredom with the younger generation there doesn't seem to be many free or reduced cost activities."

This aligns with findings that only half of respondents feel safe in their local area (50.6%), 33.7% feel neutral about the topic of safety and 15.8% do not agree on some level that they feel safe in Birchwood.

Responses indicate that much of the anti-social behaviour can be attributed to young people, with few activities for them to engage in and prevent them from getting involved in criminal behaviour. A lack of building space, community hubs or parks to spend time in contribute to this.

4.5 Priorities for Investment

The survey asked residents to rank their top five priorities, where 1 is the highest priority, for investment in Birchwood. The findings, below, determined that the following 3 priorities were selected by most as their top priority for investment: activities for children and young people; improving public spaces/ green areas; and community safety and crime prevention.

The priorities are listed below in the order of the number of people who selected each as their top priority.

1. Activities for children and young people
2. Improving public spaces/ green areas
3. Community safety and crime prevention
4. Community centres and meeting spaces
5. Health and wellbeing services
6. Skills, training and employment support
7. Transport and connectivity
8. Support for residents facing cost of living crisis
9. Support for local businesses
10. Housing improvements

Consultation responses show a clear priority for safe, affordable and accessible facilities and activities for children and young people, particularly teenagers.

When asked if they could change or improve one thing in Birchwood using the Pride in Place funding, residents frequently proposed improved play areas, youth provision, skate and splash parks, sports facilities and a swimming pool were all frequently proposed.

Some key responses have been highlighted below:

> "More activities for young people."

> "Youth club and facilities for young people e.g. swimming pools."

> "Create a space for children to play. A big play area with skatepark similar to what Skellingthorpe village has would be excellent."

> "More accessible play parks and skatepark for children as there aren't enough for a large estate."

> "Birchwood needs a swimming pool facility."

> "A splash park for our kids."

> "Places for older kids to play e.g. basketball court."

> "Activities for teenagers to feel connected to their local area, a sense of pride and belonging."

> "Build a skate park. It will provide youths something positive to do, preventing boredom that leads to antisocial behaviour. It is low-maintenance and encourages physical activity."

A community centre or shared communal space may also support local events for children and young people to spend time, as well as serve as safe spaces, whereby improvements to safety through lighting, CCTV and visible policing, appeared as another recurring priority.

Some key responses have been highlighted below:

> "If I could improve one area particularly it would be ensuring safety on the streets and in the parks, by adding CCTV, effective lighting and properly regulating the use of e-scooters and dirt bikes in both, and a visible increase of wardens and community police presence."

> "A safe space to entertain and support the older children. There are wonderful activities for the younger ones."

> "Build a floodlit skatepark and recreation area."

Another recurring theme across survey responses show that residents would like funding to improve and protect green spaces such as Birchwood Nature Park, woodland, lakes and pathways. Better infrastructure for walking and cycling will also help ensure safer, greener and better-connected neighbourhood spaces to strengthen inclusion, belonging and pride in Birchwood.

Some key responses have been highlighted below:

> "Please keep our beautiful green spaces, for the people, the animals and the environment."

> "Look after green spaces, more play park maybe."

> "I would improve green spaces, we lost a large area of green space with the new housing development, improvements such as pathing or a park in the woods would be good too."

> "Make the Nature a more family friendly place. It is a huge area with lots of potential for walking and activities for people to engage with. More lighting in and around it. Develop a safe learning place where families can access it without transport."

> "More green spaces, that are better looked after with better amenities."

These priorities strongly align with the findings that young people, families and children under the age of 14 years, were selected as the groups needing most support in Birchwood, by 73.7%, 60.0% and 55.8% of residents respectively.

4.5.1 Facilities

Lastly, survey respondents were asked to highlight any local facilities or services they feel are missing or inadequate.

Responses indicate a clear demand for stronger local provision for children and young people, particularly safe youth spaces, age-appropriate activities and support for teenagers and young adults, including neurodivergent residents. This includes more places for young people to meet safely, including professionally led after-school clubs and youth centres. A local swimming pool was the most consistently requested individual facility, alongside affordable leisure, improved play areas and all-weather sports provision.

Respondents also called for an accessible community hub offering social, skills, wellbeing and family support across all age groups, with a permanent base for CHOMP highlighted as a specific opportunity. Suggestions include a community kitchen and growing space to teach people new skills. Whilst a community hub that is accessible later in the evening could provide wellbeing support to people experiencing social isolation and loneliness.

Wider priorities include better green spaces and active-travel links, provision for older and isolated residents, improved health and pharmacy services, and greater police visibility and action on antisocial behaviour.

Affordability, accessibility, inclusion and prevention run through the responses, with residents seeking welcoming, non-judgemental places that strengthen community connection.

5.0 Our Overall Findings

The engagement has given us a clear, evidence-based direction for Birchwood West. We heard from residents, children and young people, community organisations and local partners through surveys, events, outreach, school and youth engagement, creative activities and conversations in familiar community settings.

Seven connected themes emerged. We tested and refined these at a Neighbourhood Board meeting, which confirmed that they provide the right framework for Birchwood West:

1. Our Children and Young People Thriving
2. Our Neighbourhood Feeling Safe and Confident
3. Our Parks, Play Spaces and Green Areas Welcoming Everyone
4. Our Everyday Amenities Working for Us and the Environment
5. Our Community Active, Healthy and Proud
6. Our Neighbourhood Connected and Accessible
7. Building Skills, Finding Work and Feeling Financially Secure

Our priorities are closely connected. Youth opportunities can support wellbeing, belonging and community safety. Welcoming parks can support physical activity and social connection. Accessible routes can help residents reach schools, services, activities and employment opportunities. Strong community organisations can help activate and sustain local assets.

We will use these priorities to guide the development and assessment of proposals. They do not represent a fixed list of approved projects. Emerging ideas will continue to be tested against community support, feasibility, affordability, deliverability, long-term management and their contribution to the Vision.

The findings below bring together the survey responses with evidence from stakeholder interviews and conversations with the community.

5.1 Our Children and Young People Thriving

5.1.1 Challenges

We heard more consistently about children and young people than any other issue. The Community Survey ranked activities for children and young people first for investment, while respondents identified young people, families and children under 14 among the groups requiring most support.

The Children's Voice questionnaire reinforces this message. Among 370 responses, 162 selected more sport and physical activity, 159 wanted places to play or be active with friends, 148 selected water-based activities, 117 wanted better parks and outdoor spaces, 104 selected skate or wheeled-sports provision, 97 wanted music, art, dance or other creative spaces, and 62 wanted places where young people could meet safely.

Pupil Voice, the Family Fun Day and creative engagement also highlighted sport, play, creative activity, water-based provision and clubs. Residents frequently connected a shortage of affordable activity with boredom, antisocial behaviour and limited opportunities for young people to develop confidence and belonging.

Young people also told us that facilities alone are not enough. They value trusted adults, welcoming environments, choice, supervision where appropriate, good maintenance and activities that continue over time.

Case Study:

Zone Go - Birchwood Pop-Up

In summer 2026, Zone Go brought free mobile youth provision directly into Birchwood, creating an informal local space where young people could meet, relax, play games, enjoy music and take part in creative activities. It recorded 115 attendances across five days, averaging 23 attendances per day.

Repeated visits helped a strong group identity to develop. Staff observed participants organising karaoke and games themselves and identified emerging leadership within the group. Young people increasingly moved from taking part to helping shape the atmosphere and activity.

Feedback from Birchwood participants showed that:

- 83% felt welcome and included;
- 92% said it was important that Zone Go was located within their community;
- 71% felt part of the community because of Zone Go;
- 60% said it improved their mental health;
- 81% felt able to be themselves; and
- 57% said it opened their minds to new possibilities.

In addition, 67% attended independently, 33% had not previously attended a Zest event and 50% were taking part in an arts or cultural activity for the first time.

For us, the key learning is that successful youth provision is not only about facilities. Young people value provision that is free, local, welcoming and flexible, supported by trusted adults and sustained contact. Repeated participation can help young people build relationships, confidence, ownership and leadership.

5.1.2 Opportunities

Birchwood already has schools, leisure facilities, community organisations and youth partners on which to build. We see an opportunity to combine activity, trusted relationships and progression with proportionate improvements to the places young people use.

We will not assume that one building or a standard youth-club model will meet every need. We also recognise that our evidence is stronger for primary-aged children than for teenagers. We need to hear more from secondary-aged young people, SEND and disabled young people, young people affected by antisocial behaviour or youth risk, and those not in education, employment or training before detailed provision is fixed.

Based on what we heard, we have identified the following areas to explore:

- sustained, affordable and locally accessible sport, play, creative and social activity;
- safe and welcoming spaces, supported by appropriate staffing, safeguarding, management and maintenance;
- mentoring, youth work, volunteering and pathways into skills and employment;
- opportunities for young people to co-design and progressively help shape activities; and
- building on effective schools, leisure and community provision rather than unnecessarily duplicating it.

5.2 Our Neighbourhood Feeling Safe and Confident

5.2.1 Challenges

Residents told us clearly that safety and antisocial behaviour affect how they feel about Birchwood and how confidently they use streets, routes, parks and public spaces. Community Survey participants raised vandalism, drug and alcohol misuse, nuisance vehicles, dark streets and limited visible policing. Only 50.5% agreed that they felt safe locally; 33.7% gave a neutral response and 15.8% disagreed.

Official police data provides additional context. The closest readily available police geography is the Lincoln Birchwood neighbourhood policing area, which overlaps with but is not coterminous with the Birchwood West Pride in Place boundary. Across the 12 months from September 2025 to August 2026, the area recorded 891 police-reported incidents across the published crime and antisocial-behaviour categories. In August 2026, antisocial behaviour accounted for 24 of the 95 reports, alongside nine vehicle-crime reports and seven reports of criminal damage and arson. Overall Birchwood has a slightly lower than average reported crime rate compared to Lincoln as a whole[1], although feedback from some residents expressed concern that this may be due to residents not reporting crime rather than an actual lower crime rate.

Children and young people also told us that safety matters. Of those answering the Children's Voice safety question, 146 felt very safe and 88 quite safe, while 22 felt quite unsafe and 24 very unsafe. A further 131 said that there were places in Birchwood where children felt unsafe or uncomfortable. Suggested responses included more activities, trusted adults and places to meet.

We heard support for greater police visibility, improved lighting and CCTV in appropriate locations. However, we do not believe the evidence points to enforcement alone. Confidence is also affected by maintenance, the condition and use of public spaces, youth opportunities, trusted relationships and whether residents can see that concerns are being addressed.

Case Study:

Broomhill Community Centre Coffee Morning

The Broomhill Community Centre coffee morning enabled residents to discuss local priorities through informal conversation in an established community setting.

Safety was prominent, with suggestions including greater police visibility, improved lighting and CCTV. Residents also raised parking and traffic around schools, better use of existing community facilities, craft and wellbeing activities, community clean-ups, neighbourhood gardening and printed information about local events.

The discussion showed us that residents experience safety, environmental quality, communication and community activity as connected issues. It also demonstrated the value of meeting residents in familiar settings where they can explain how concerns affect everyday life rather than responding only to predetermined questions.

5.2.2 Opportunities

We see an opportunity to bring together community-safety partners, environmental improvements, maintenance and positive activity. Visible improvements can demonstrate that places are valued, while well-used spaces and trusted local relationships may help strengthen confidence.

We recognise that Pride in Place cannot replace statutory policing, highways or community-safety responsibilities. We will work with the responsible organisations and expect proposals to respond to evidenced locations and needs.

[1] https://opencrime.co.uk/lincolnshire/lincoln/#rank-history

Based on what we heard, we have identified the following areas to explore:

- improving lighting, visibility and environmental design where evidence demonstrates a need;
- addressing vandalism, neglect and maintenance through coordinated work with responsible organisations;
- supporting positive youth activity and trusted adult presence as part of a preventative approach;
- considering proportionate safety infrastructure, including CCTV, where need, management and data responsibilities are clear; and
- providing visible feedback so residents understand how concerns are being considered and addressed.

5.3 Our Parks, Play Spaces and Green Areas Welcoming Everyone

5.3.1 Challenges

Residents repeatedly told us that parks, play spaces and green areas are among Birchwood's most valued assets. The Community Survey, Family Fun Day, Children's Voice, Pupil Voice and LEGO® Serious Play all reinforced their importance for play, exercise, nature and community life.

However, people also described uneven quality, safety and maintenance, and insufficient equipment or activity for different ages. Among Children's Voice respondents, 159 wanted places to play or be active with friends, 117 wanted better parks and outdoor spaces and 54 selected better safety in parks and public spaces.

Children frequently connected enjoyment with safety. Cleanliness, maintained equipment, lighting, accessible routes, appropriate boundaries and trusted adults all influence whether spaces feel usable and welcoming.

5.3.2 Opportunities

Birchwood already has substantial green assets on which we can build. We see an opportunity for improvements to support physical and mental wellbeing, biodiversity, family activity and informal social connection together.

LEGO® Serious Play gave us additional insight into what children value. Models included flowers, plants and trees, play and activity, welcoming and comfortable places and spaces where people could spend time together. This suggests that nature, play, comfort and social connection should be considered together rather than as separate functions.

Engagement also identified demand for recreation and physical activity across age groups. The proportion of Birchwood West residents who are 'active' or 'fairly active' is below the national average. Sport England's Active Lives Survey reported that 71.7% of adults and 68.7% of children and young people undertake an average of more than 30 minutes of activity per week, compared with the respective national statistics of 75.0% and 69.9%. Residents view accessible leisure and exercise opportunities as contributors to health, wellbeing and stronger community connection, highlighting an opportunity for strategic need. Together, these findings highlight a strategic opportunity to address local need through improved access to recreation and physical activity.

Based on what we heard, we have identified the following areas to explore:

- improving existing parks, play areas and outdoor facilities for different ages and abilities;
- addressing cleanliness, lighting, access and maintenance alongside equipment;
- supporting nature-based activity, community gardening, environmental volunteering and outdoor learning;
- improving routes between homes, parks and community facilities where feasible; and
- establishing realistic maintenance and stewardship arrangements before capital investment is approved.

5.4 Our Everyday Amenities Working for Us and the Environment

5.4.1 Challenges

Residents told us that everyday amenities make an important difference to how Birchwood works and feels. Issues raised included community buildings, public toilets, seating, bins, lighting, local information, health and pharmacy access, banking facilities, shops and the condition of the neighbourhood centre and public realm.

Pupil Voice identified cleanliness and the environment among children's concerns. At Broomhill, residents suggested community clean-ups and support for neighbours unable to maintain gardens.

LEGO® Serious Play also showed that young people recognise existing shops and the Birchwood Centre as part of their local identity.

Not every suggestion raised through engagement will be within Pride in Place's control or prove feasible. Our role is to understand the underlying need, identify where investment can add value and work with the organisations responsible for other services and assets.

5.4.2 Opportunities

We see opportunities to combine visible everyday improvements with better use of existing buildings and facilities. Smaller changes can influence whether the neighbourhood feels cared for, while improvements to community infrastructure may enable a wider range of services and activities.

We will consider environmental responsibility through effective reuse, proportionate energy-efficiency improvements and long-term operating costs, rather than treating sustainability as separate from community use.

Based on what we heard, we have identified the following areas to explore:

- improvements to cleanliness, bins, seating, lighting, public conveniences and other evidenced public-realm needs;
- more flexible and effective use of existing community buildings before assuming a new facility is required;
- removing accessibility barriers in community facilities and public spaces;
- improving information about local services, activities and opportunities through digital and non-digital routes; and
- considering ownership, staffing, maintenance, energy efficiency and operating costs from the outset.

5.5 Our Community Active, Healthy and Proud

5.5.1 Challenges

Community spirit is one of Birchwood's greatest strengths, but residents told us that opportunities to meet and participate are not evenly available. Only 35.8% of Community Survey respondents agreed that there were enough opportunities to meet others locally. Residents asked for events, social groups, creative and wellbeing activities, volunteering and intergenerational opportunities.

Information can also a barrier, for example, some residents asked for a printed monthly roundup rather than reliance on social media alone

Previous community-led delivery through the Big Local programme provides one important lesson: resident leadership needs realistic staffing, coordination and professional support. We want to create opportunities for participation without expecting a small number of volunteers to carry long-term delivery responsibilities.

5.5.2 Opportunities

We recognise that Birchwood's existing identity, community relationships and sense of belonging are important assets on which Pride in Place can build.

Case Study:

Family Fun Day – Love Letters to Birchwood and Birchwood in Three Words

The Birchwood Family Fun Day at Birchwood Leisure Centre provided a free and informal opportunity for residents of different ages to share what they value about their neighbourhood and what they would like to see change.

A total of 112 people contributed through "Love Letters to Birchwood", sharing their views about the area's strengths and aspirations for its future. The activity highlighted the importance residents place on community spirit, parks and green spaces, activities for children and young people, local facilities, community events and feeling safe.

Alongside the Love Letters, 48 participants were invited to describe Birchwood in three words. Responses reflected themes evident throughout the wider consultation, with Birchwood described as friendly, welcoming, supportive, diverse, family-oriented and home. One participant summarised their feelings as:

"Proud, diverse and home."

The two activities provided an accessible way for people to contribute without completing a formal questionnaire. Participants could express a simple feeling about Birchwood or provide a more detailed view about what they valued and wanted to improve.

Importantly, the exercise demonstrated that residents' aspirations for change sit alongside a strong existing attachment to place. While people identified improvements they would like to see, they also valued Birchwood's people, community relationships and local identity. This provides an important foundation for Pride in Place: investment can build on an existing sense of belonging and community pride rather than seeking to create it from scratch.

The Family Fun Day evidence provides a positive counterbalance to findings focused on problems and unmet needs. Participants described Birchwood in terms including friendly, welcoming, supportive, diverse, family-oriented and home. Although these descriptions were not ranked and should not be treated as representing every resident, they show that many people already have a strong emotional connection to the neighbourhood.

We therefore see an opportunity not only to address gaps in provision, but also to protect, celebrate and strengthen what residents already value. Community investment can create more opportunities for people to come together, share positive experiences, develop relationships and contribute to Birchwood's identity. This should include accessible activities for different ages and interests, while recognising the value of existing organisations, venues, volunteers and informal community networks.

The engagement itself also provides useful learning for us as a Board. Love Letters to Birchwood and the Three Words activity allowed people to contribute without completing a lengthy questionnaire or attending a formal meeting. Some participants shared a simple feeling about the neighbourhood, while others offered more detailed views. We will continue to provide different routes and levels of involvement so that residents can participate in ways that work for them throughout the life of the programme.

We also recognise that meaningful community involvement requires support. We want residents to have opportunities to contribute ideas, influence decisions and participate in delivery where they choose, but we will not assume that a small number of volunteers can sustain long-term activity without appropriate coordination, resources and professional support.

Based on what we heard, we have identified the following areas to explore:

- supporting regular community events, celebrations, social groups, creative activity and intergenerational opportunities;
- strengthening existing community organisations through capacity-building, coordination, partnership working and proportionate revenue support;
- making better and more flexible use of existing community spaces and improving access to affordable and inclusive venues;
- providing clear and accessible information through printed, face-to-face and digital channels; and
- creating transparent routes for residents to shape, help deliver and review projects, while ensuring that responsibility does not become concentrated within a small volunteer base.

5.6 Our Neighbourhood Connected and Accessible

5.6.1 Challenges

Residents and young people told us that dark or poorly lit paths, difficult crossings, speeding, parking pressure, school congestion and unclear pedestrian routes can make everyday journeys feel less safe and accessible. Children also raised concerns about routes to parks and schools. For us, this matters because these routes connect residents to education, green spaces, shops, services and community facilities, and influence whether people feel confident travelling locally on foot, by wheeling, cycling or public transport.

The Broomhill Community Centre coffee morning added practical local detail. Residents raised concerns about on-street parking associated with school pick-up and drop-off, speeding and lighting. Zencity's modelled baseline also identified vehicle-related antisocial behaviour as a prominent concern.

5.6.2 Opportunities

We see an opportunity to focus on practical neighbourhood-scale barriers rather than present Pride in Place as a comprehensive transport programme.

Many relevant interventions require the involvement or approval of highways, transport, landowning or other statutory partners. We will work with those organisations and continue targeted engagement before designs or locations are fixed.

Based on what we heard, we have identified the following areas to explore:

- assessing priority walking, wheeling and cycling routes to schools, parks, shops and community facilities;
- considering lighting, crossings, dropped kerbs, surfaces, seating, signage and wayfinding as part of accessible journeys;
- working with highways and transport partners on speeding, parking and school-access concerns;
- engaging further with disabled residents, carers and older people; and
- improving information about routes, services and activities through accessible digital and printed channels.

5.7 Building Skills, Finding Work and Feeling Financially Secure

5.7.1 Challenges

Official evidence shows that parts of Birchwood West experience significant income and employment pressures. A population-weighted aggregation of the 2025 English Indices of Deprivation across the LSOAs forming the best-fit Birchwood West geography records an income-deprivation rate of 37.3% and an employment-deprivation rate of 22.5%.

Labour Market Statistics also show that a larger proportion of people aged between 16 to 64 years claimed out of work benefit in Birchwood West (5.1%), than in Lincolnshire (3.1%) and nationally (4.1%).

The Ofsted neighbourhood profile also reports that 48% of state-funded pupils in the Birchwood West MSOA are eligible for free school meals, compared with 30% across Lincolnshire and 27% nationally.

These pressures align with what we heard locally. Community Survey respondents identified skills, training, employment and cost-of-living support, while residents and young people stressed the importance of free or affordable activities. Pupil Voice also raised the cost of living as a challenge.

We have concluded that financial resilience is relevant across the programme, not only to employment-focused projects. Costs associated with activities, travel, childcare, accessibility and training can affect who participates and who benefits.

5.7.2 Opportunities

Pride in Place cannot resolve every structural economic challenge, but we see an opportunity to make existing education, training, employment, advice and progression routes more visible and accessible.

We recognise that businesses, employers and young people not in education, employment or training are under-represented in the current evidence. We will continue to engage with them before detailed interventions are selected.

Based on what we heard, we have identified the following areas to explore:

- engaging residents, businesses, employers, training providers and NEET young people;
- improving awareness of existing skills, employment, benefits and financial-resilience support;
- community-based learning, mentoring and progression routes linked to evidenced needs;
- connecting youth and schools engagement with longer-term aspiration and careers pathways;
- addressing practical barriers including cost, travel, accessibility, caring responsibilities and confidence; and
- links with local enterprise and social-economy activity where further evidence supports them.