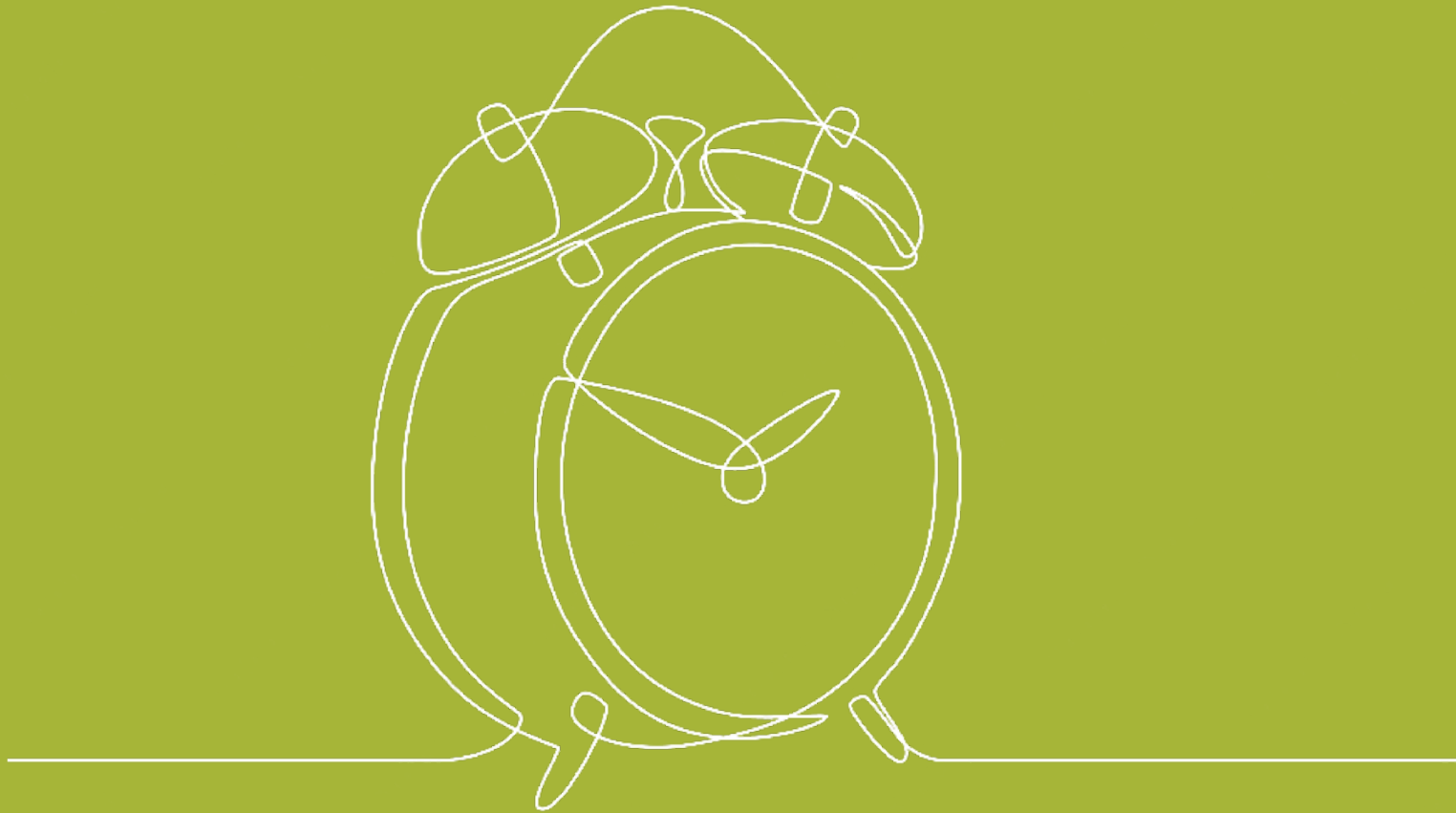


# Climate and Nature Action: A Vision for the Connswater Community Greenway



October 2023



**GroundsWell**  
Transforming our cities from the ground up



**QUEEN'S  
UNIVERSITY  
BELFAST**



CONNSWATER COMMUNITY  
**GREENWAY**

**EAST  
SIDE  
GREENWAYS**

the **paul hogarth** company

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Wilder Spaces

Flood Zones



Education & Information



Biodiversity Projects



Flood Zones

# Introduction

## *Vision for a Greener Greenway*

In 2023 EastSide Greenways and the GroundsWell Consortium commissioned a collaborative process to look at Connswater Community Greenway through the lens of climate resilience, adaptation, nature conservation and self sustainability. This document summarises the findings and recommendations of that process, researched and facilitated by Landscape Architects, The Paul Hogarth Company. As opportunities arise it is hoped that the proposals of this report can be actioned in the short to medium term by many parties, contributing to the urgent need for climate and nature action across the city and beyond.

The Connswater Community Greenway is a £40 million investment in East Belfast to create a linear park comprising green spaces and 16km of foot and cycle paths along the Connswater, Loop and Knock rivers, as they flow from the Castlereagh Hills to Belfast Lough. The project was developed by EastSide Partnership and delivered by Belfast City Council. It was funded by the Big Lottery Fund, Belfast City Council, the Department for Communities and Department for Infrastructure. An £11 million flood alleviation scheme incorporated into the project has helped reduce flooding to 1700 properties.

## GroundsWell Consortium

GroundsWell Consortium is a team of researchers, local communities, implementers and policymakers who aim to create a virtuous cycle of research, data, policy, implementation and active citizenship. By working together, they aim to better understand and evidence the role of Urban Green and Blue Spaces within wider social, economic, environmental, cultural and health systems. GroundsWell's research activity is based in Edinburgh, Liverpool and Belfast, where it is being led by Queen's University Belfast.

## Objectives of Eastside Greenways

**To ensure the sustainability of the Connswater Community Greenway as a living landmark.**

**To promote the potential for and facilitate the delivery of a wider 'EastSide Greenways' network.**

**To maximise the potential of the Connswater Community and EastSide Greenways to contribute to EastSide's overarching strategy to deliver social and economic benefit, and enhanced health and well being.**

**To use the Connswater Community and EastSide Greenways as a catalyst for economic regeneration in east Belfast.**

**Create new opportunities and promote well-being through the active engagement of local communities and the wider public.**

**To enhance and conserve the environment along the Connswater Community and EastSide Greenways.**

## EastSide Greenways

EastSide Greenways (formerly the Connswater Community Greenway Trust), is a registered charity that aims to maximise the potential of the Connswater Community Greenway as a catalyst for the ongoing physical, social, economic and environmental regeneration of East Belfast. EastSide Greenways aims to promote the use and development of green open spaces, parks, rivers and off-road transport routes in East Belfast and to act as a catalyst for the ongoing regeneration of the area.

# The Challenge

## *Climate and Nature Crises*

Two of the most important issues of our day are the climate and nature crises, and this is a critical moment in time for humans and nonhuman species.

Our global climate is changing faster than people and wildlife can adapt. Humans emit a wide range of greenhouse gases that are driving climate change, for example burning fossil fuels (oil, gas, coal) causing the release of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere while also destroying carbon-absorbing ecosystems. The greenhouse effect, which is being brought on by these and other emissions, traps heat and causes the Earth to warm.

The impacts of climate change are now being felt across the world. In Northern Ireland our sea levels are rising and temperatures warming. Fresh water resources are decreasing and extreme weather events are becoming more frequent. We have become accustomed to daily news items from around the world such as serious wildfires, floods, droughts and famines.

Another alarming occurrence closely linked to climate change is a sharp decrease in global biodiversity and the collapse of ecosystems. According to the IPBES Global Assessment, one million of the world's estimated 8 million species of plants and animals are threatened with extinction. This endangers food and health systems the world over, while bringing about irreversible impacts on our terrestrial and marine environments. It also deprives future generations of a rich tapestry of flora and fauna and the many scientific discoveries yet to be made.

A key component of addressing climate action and addressing public health is the quality of our Urban Green and Blue spaces. The air we breathe, the food we eat and the environments in which we live have a marked bearing on our levels of health and well-being. It is vital therefore, that we protect and enhance our such spaces, including the Connswater Community Greenway.



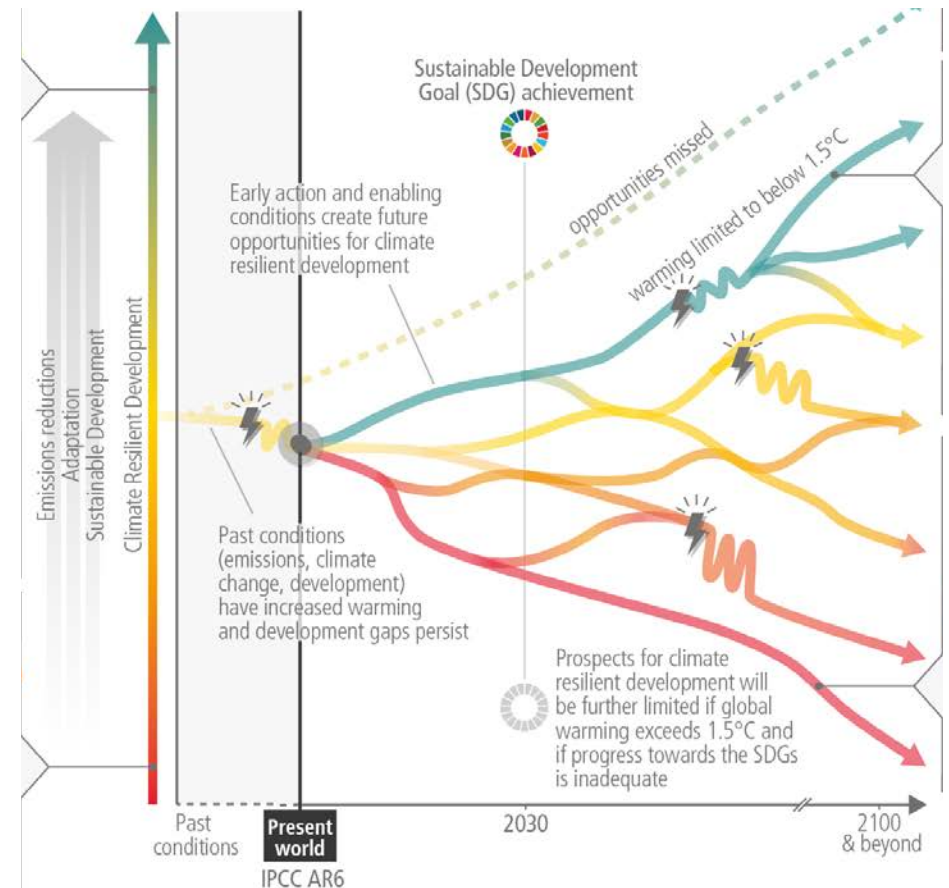
# The Challenge

## Climate and Nature Crises

During the course of this project two important publications have highlighted the severity of the global challenge and the urgent need for local action.

### IPCC | Climate Change 2023: Synthesis Report (20 March 2023)

- A.1 Human activities, principally through emissions of greenhouse gases, have unequivocally caused global warming, **with global surface temperature reaching 1.1°C above 1850–1900** in 2011–2020. Global greenhouse gas emissions have continued to increase, with unequal historical and ongoing contributions...
- A.3.6 Key barriers to adaptation are limited resources, lack of private sector and citizen engagement, insufficient mobilization of finance (including for research), low climate literacy, lack of political commitment, limited research and/or slow and low uptake of adaptation science, and **low sense of urgency**.
- C.3.4 Urban systems are critical for achieving deep emissions reductions and advancing climate resilient development (high confidence). ... Green/natural and blue infrastructure supports carbon uptake and storage and either singly or when combined with grey infrastructure can **reduce energy use and risk from extreme events** such as heatwaves, flooding, heavy precipitation and droughts, while generating co-benefits for health, well-being and livelihoods (medium confidence).
- <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/sixth-assessment-report-cycle/>
- <https://www.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Adapting-to-climate-change-Progress-in-Northern-Ireland-Web.pdf>



The Rapidly Narrowing Window of Opportunity to Enable Climate Resilient Development. (IPCC)

### CCC | Adapting to Climate Change: Progress in Northern Ireland (April 2023)

- The Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 requires the Northern Ireland government to set greenhouse gas emission reduction targets in line with reaching Net Zero in 2050.
- Planning for climate change in Northern Ireland remains at an early stage. Across key areas of adaptation most of the critical policy and planning milestones that we identify as important for delivering adaptation are not in place.
- Despite the critical importance of adapting to climate change, there is only **limited evidence of delivery, and data gaps in key areas are unacceptably large**.

# The Greenway Today

## *The Current State of Play*

The Connswater Community Greenway currently plays a valuable role in addressing a number of climate and nature related issues in East Belfast. Before identifying new opportunities, it is important to recognise these existing functions and to consider how they can be sustained and developed.

***Foot and cycle links providing an alternative to the car and physical activity opportunities which have health and well-being benefits***

***Flood defences protecting homes and businesses***

***Riparian wildlife habitats supporting flora and fauna***

***Safe and accessible green and social spaces***

***Regular community events, activities and volunteering opportunities***

The Connswater Community Greenway is managed through an innovative partnership between EastSide Greenway (ESG) and Belfast City Council (BCC), underpinned by a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and Legal Agreement agreed in 2020. This MoU outlines the roles and responsibilities of both organisations with BCC, as landowners, responsible for the ongoing management and maintenance of the Greenway and ESG responsible for promoting the use of the space and delivering an annual animation calendar of activities and events and engaging with stakeholders and volunteers.

The valuable contribution made by the Connswater Community Greenway to the city should be defined in terms of its Natural Capital and its Ecosystem Services. Natural Capital comprises “..elements of nature that directly or indirectly produce value or benefits to people, including ecosystems, species, freshwater, land, minerals, the air and oceans, as well as natural processes and functions” (Natural Capital Committee 2014). The Greenway provides many Ecosystem Services, including the management of flooding and microclimates, aesthetic value and recreational opportunities.





# The Greenway Today

## The Current State of Play

Tackling such major challenges cannot be undertaken alone. EastSide Greenways and the GroundsWell Consortium greatly value the work and support of their partner organisations working in this field, including:



The executive authority working on behalf of the Northern Ireland Assembly to take decisions on significant issues, agree proposals for new legislation for consideration by the Assembly and the drawing up a programme for government and an agreed budget for approval.



**Belfast**  
City Council

The Local Authority representing the city of Belfast and landowners responsible for the ongoing management and maintenance of the Greenway including all parks and open spaces along the route. BCC Climate Team are also leading on several initiatives in relation to Climate Action including the Million Trees initiative, Upsurge and others.



Northern Ireland's largest university and a member of the Russell Group of UK research intensive universities, combining excellence in research and education with a student-centred ethos.



An intersectoral network devoted to increasing understanding of climate change impacts and risks within Northern Ireland and promoting the adoption of actions necessary to address these.



A network of organisations and individuals formed to facilitate cooperation between organisations working on climate change issues to bring about appropriate action in Northern Ireland to tackle climate change



One of three city-based climate commissions across the UK established to translate climate policy into action 'on the ground' to bring about transformative change



Part to the WHO Healthy Cities Programme committed to improving the health and wellbeing of people living and working in Belfast through an intersectoral approach



# Your Say

## *How Can We Future Proof The Greenway?*

The core focus of this project was to stimulate a conversation with the public and partner organisations around how the Connswater Community Greenway can be future proofed. Thousands of people use the Greenway and as such, can bring great knowledge and passion to this important initiative. A particular emphasis was placed upon the views of children and young people, whose future will be affected most by the impacts of the climate and nature crisis.

The engagement process comprised 5 key components:

**Partner Workshop** - At the outset a workshop was convened with partner organisations sharing an interest in the Greenway and climate action. This included Belfast City Council, the Department for Infrastructure and Climate NI.

**Public Questionnaire** - A short survey was developed and circulated amongst the public for completion on paper and online. 188 responses were received and form the basis of this document.

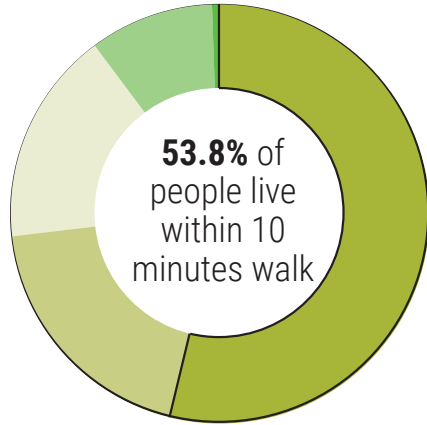
**Love Your Greenway Market Stall** - Public engagement took place during a Saturday afternoon market event held at C.S. Lewis Square with a stall specifically for this initiative.

**Public Drop-In Event** - An all day event was held at the Skainos Centre to which the public and other stakeholders were invited. This included focus group workshops and arts based activities with local school children.

**Webinar** - The findings and draft proposals were presented and discussed during an online event. This feedback was used to further refine the vision.

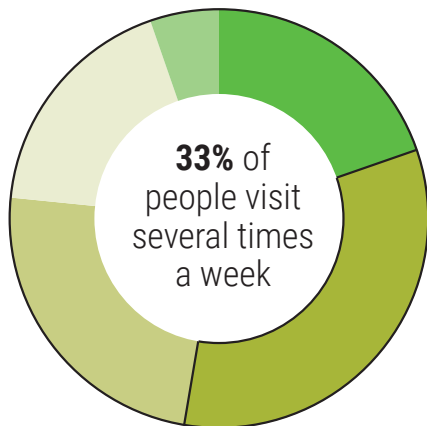


# Your Say



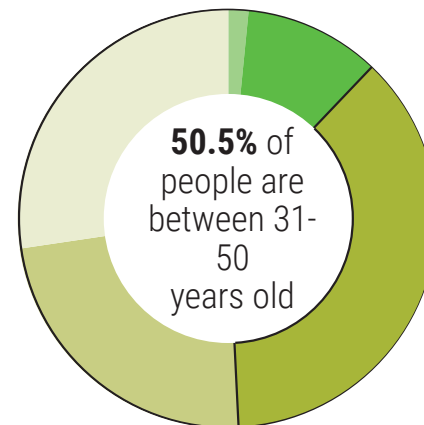
How far do you live from the Greenway?

- • **Less than 10 minutes walk**
- • Less than 20 minutes walk
- • Elsewhere in Belfast
- • Elsewhere in Northern Ireland
- • Other



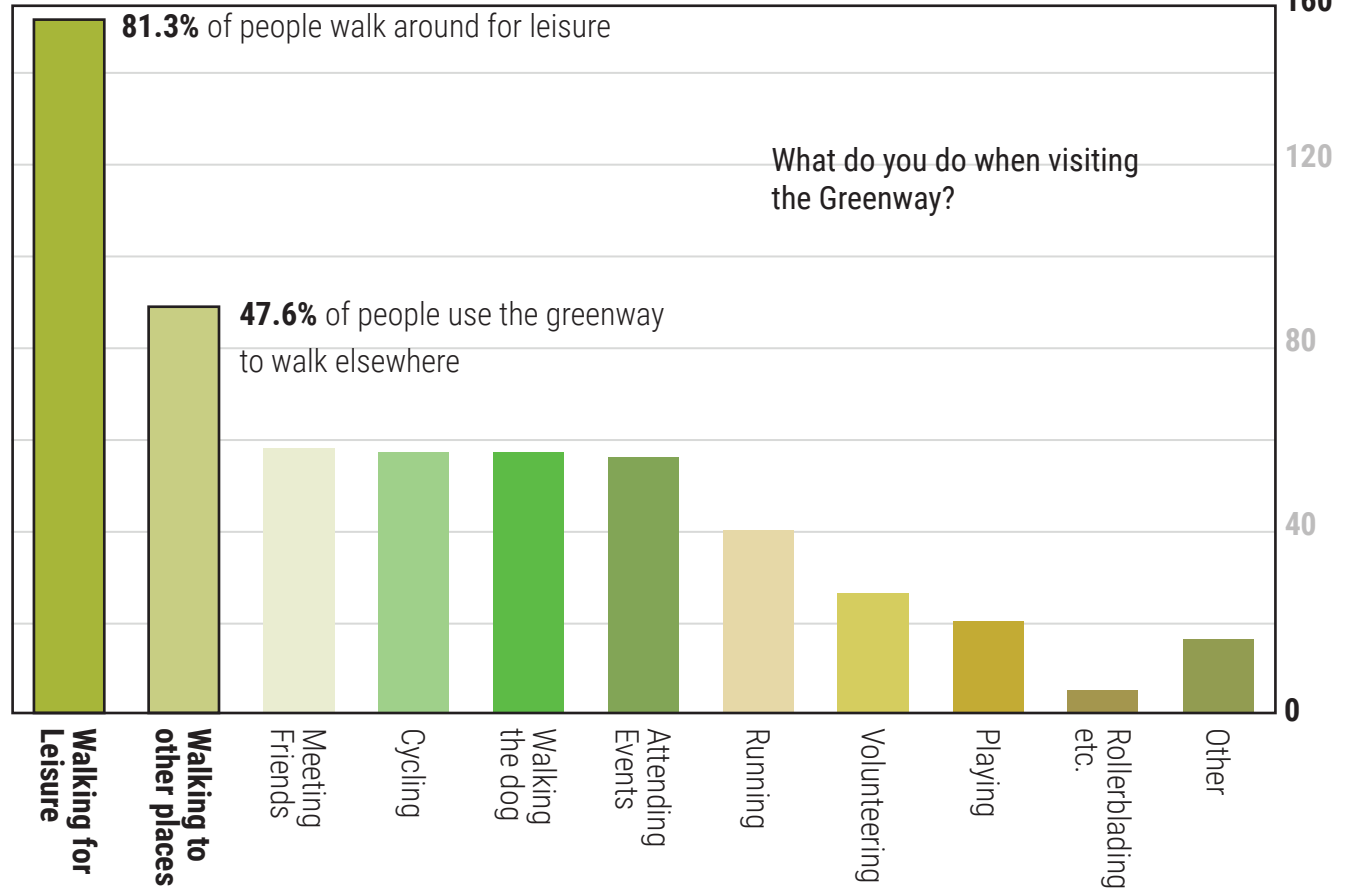
How often do you visit Connswater Community Greenway?

- • Every day
- • **Several times a week**
- • Several times a month
- • Several times a year
- • Rarely or never



To which age range do you belong?

- • Under 18
- • 19-30
- • **31-50**
- • 51-70
- • Over 70

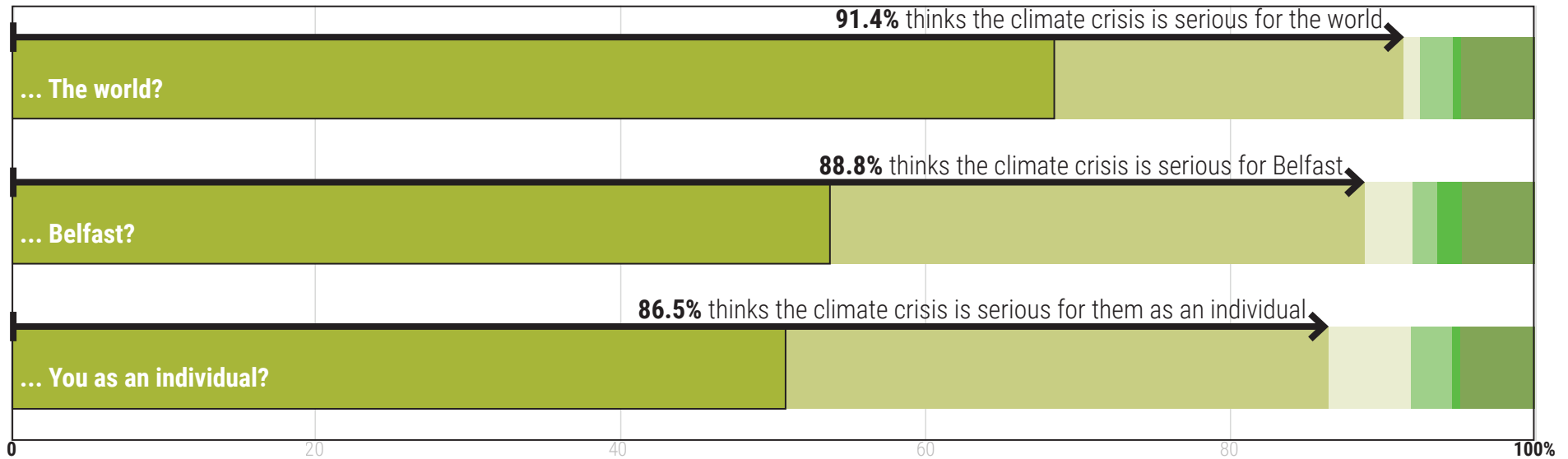


# Your Say

## How Can We Future Proof The Greenway?



How serious an issue do you think Climate Change is for...



“ There is too much throw away waste and Pollution in the rivers We need more renewable energy, sustainable materials Need to educate our children of the importance of nature and the environment

“ You can see changes in wildlife and the seasons are different

“ Climate change is happening and there are very few mitigation and adaptation solutions which will have outcomes in the short term so we need to act now in order to experience the benefits in the future.

“ Belfast will begin to see more extreme weather such as more flooding, heatwaves etc. and without the proper infrastructure changes many people will suffer - especially old and vulnerable individuals in heat waves and those already living on floodplains for flooding

“ Belfast is at serious risk of flooding due to climate change

“ Climate Change is the key issue of our time - we need to work collaboratively and urgently to address the challenge

“ In regards climate change, I believe if everyone does something no matter how small it seems it makes a difference

“ We need to protect the environment for the next generation, making East Belfast a safe, healthy place for people to live

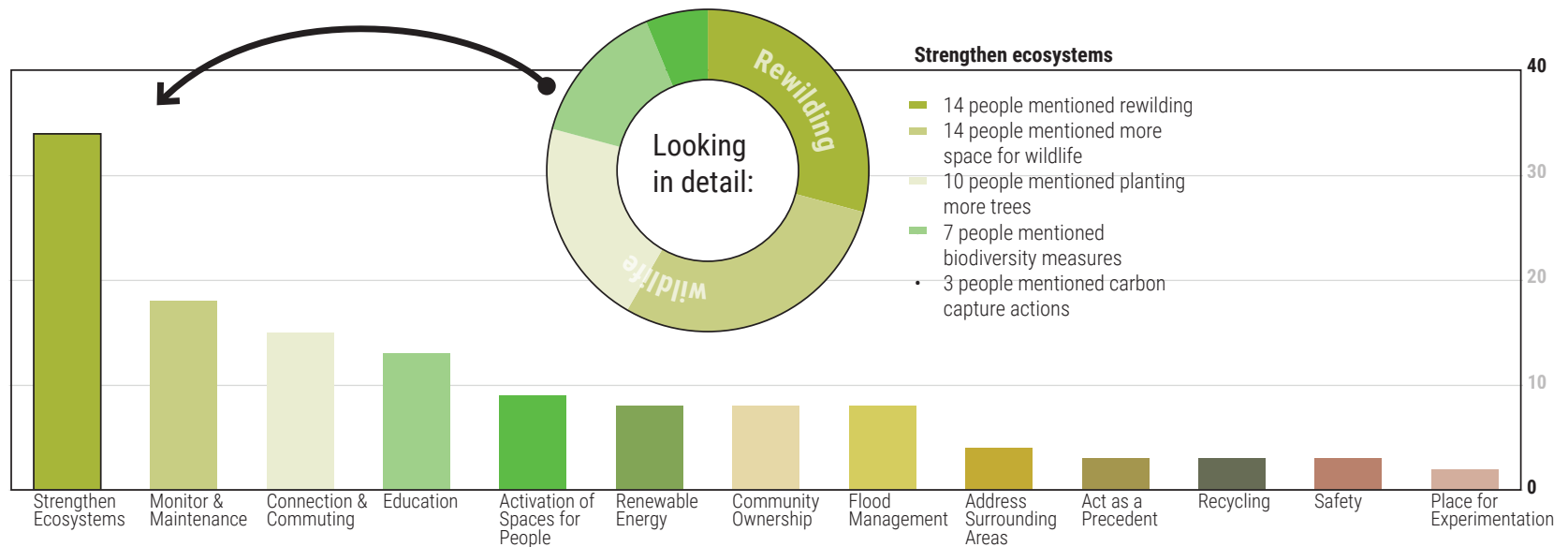
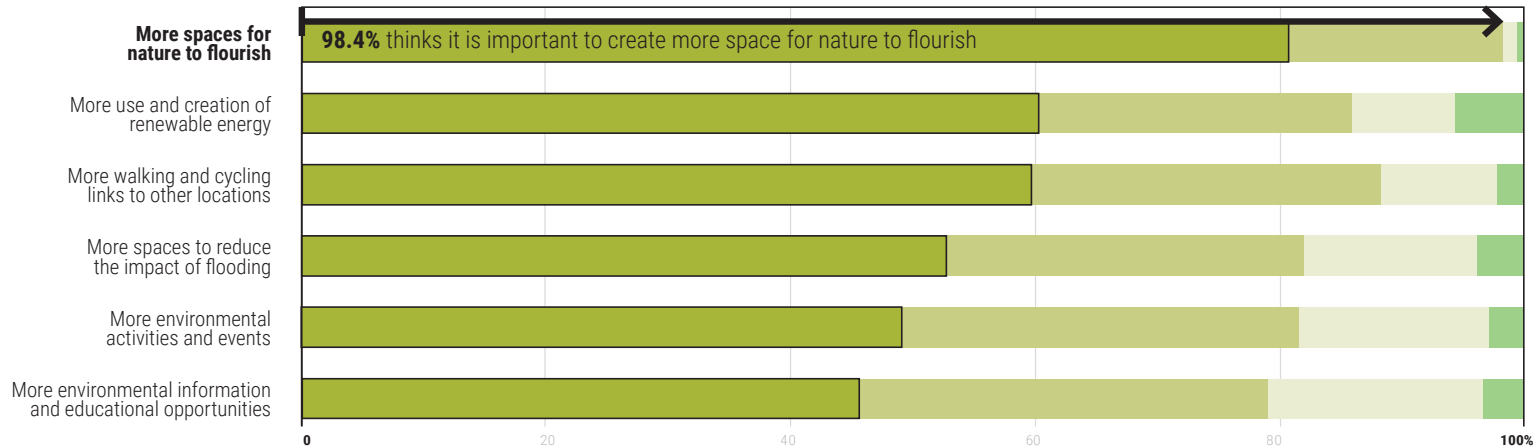
“ My contribution is local and I do my bit with recycling etc but the topic is overwhelming and feel very small in the solution to the bigger problem

# Your Say

## How Can We Future Proof The Greenway?



Please score each of the following possible actions for future proofing the Connswater Community Greenway:



# Your Say

## How Can We Future Proof The Greenway?

“

More green spaces and planting of trees, no bonfires, scrambles or flags, more connected cycling linking to Comber greenway and city centre, more sweeping of glass, maintaining broken lights.

“

Making links to other areas more accessible, opening up the area to all sections of the community.

“

A living lab to test solutions that the rest of the city and beyond can learn from.

“

Spread the word across the city and beyond to encourage many more greenways as good as Connswater.

“

Plant more trees. More pathways for the public to other locations to encourage walking or cycling to work etc. Introduce more wildflower meadows to attract different butterfly species and bees. Better lighting to encourage walking during winter months and possibly wardens along routes to make walkers/cyclists etc feel safe. A wild card!!! A coffee stop!

“

Improved bins to include recycling, use of solar power on greenway, more planting of trees  
Use Orangefield Park for Forest Schools - education for surrounding Primary Schools.

“

To make a play place for children, and more animal habitats.

“

Make use of the waterway for renewable energy.

“

More recycling areas, planting trees, growing veg for community use. Solar lighting, community orchards, bug houses, bird boxes, wild flower meadows.

“

Improving further safe connectivity routes off the Greenway. Developing the biodiversity along the Greenway as an asset & Driver of education.

“

More recycling/general waste and dog mess bins on the greenway. planting of more trees shrubs and hedgerows to allow wildlife and birds to flourish. solar powered lighting and or benches which provide phone charging capabilities etc.

“

Native species conservation and perhaps beekeeping.

“

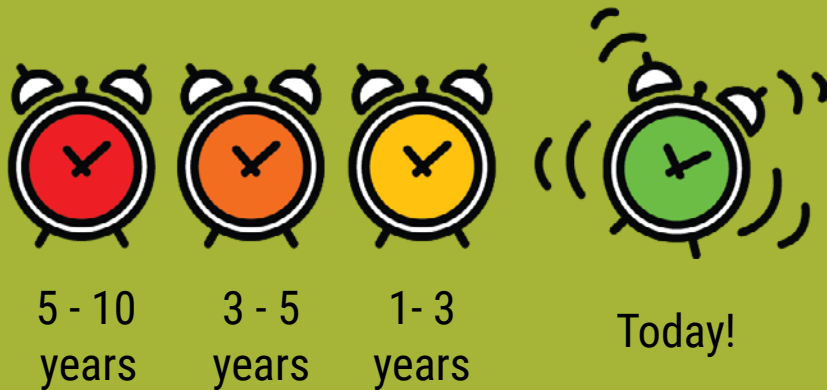
More critical and carbon sensitive landscape management provision - act as a precedent.

# Our Priorities

## For the Connswater Community Greenway

**Space** and **Time** are two key considerations when identifying ways in which the Connswater Community Greenway could be future proofed.

**Space** relates to potential geographies of impact. There is an ethical responsibility for climate action to benefit the global community and those disproportionately affected by its impacts, many of whom live in poorer parts of the world. Potential also exists for the Connswater Community Greenway to influence and inspire action across the city and region. Yet arguably most potential for change exists on and around the Greenway, including its physically adjacent neighbourhoods, spaces and buildings, but also amongst the many communities and organisations with a stake in the Greenway and its future.



**Time** is fundamentally important to any proposals for future proofing the Greenway. The pace of the climate and nature crisis is such that action is needed urgently. Therefore proposals must to bring about change in the short term - i.e no longer than 10 years, preferably much sooner and some instances, today. Look for the alarm clocks shown by each idea.

## Geographies of Impact

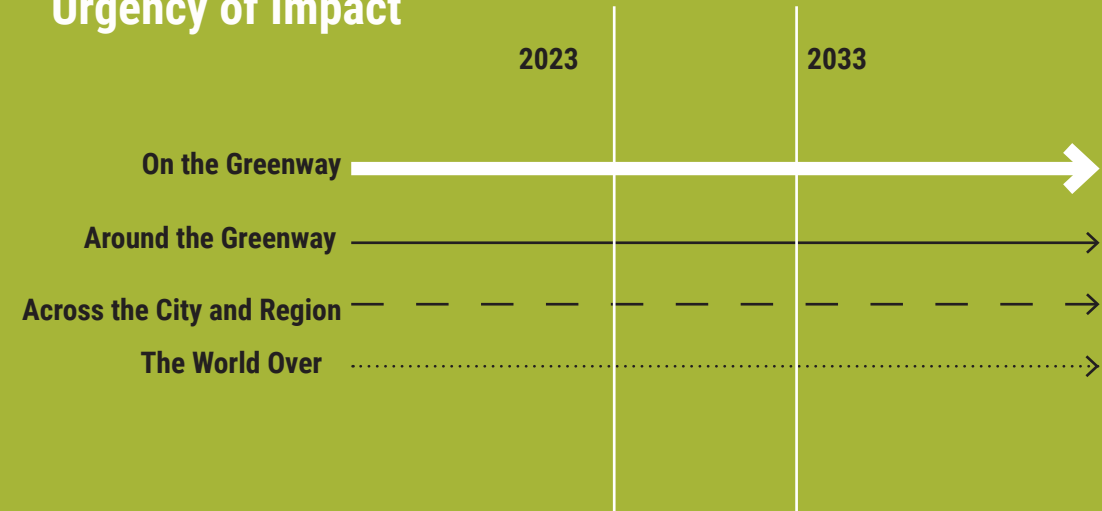
The World Over

Across the City and Region

Around the Greenway

On the Greenway

## Urgency of Impact





# Our Priorities

*For the Connswater Community Greenway*



**Eliminate Emissions**  
Target Direct and Indirect GHGs



**Capture Carbon**  
Prioritise Sequestration



**Strengthen Resilience**  
Adapt the Greenway and Surrounds



**Build Biodiversity**  
Manage Ecologically



**Raise Awareness**  
Inform and Inspire Action



**Nurture Research**  
Test and Develop



**Sustain Activity**  
Maintain and Grow Capacity

# Eliminate Emissions<sup>A</sup>

## Direct and Indirect Green House Gases (GHGs)

Every effort is urgently required to reduce the emissions of harmful gases into the atmosphere, caused largely by the burning of fossil fuels. The Greenway plays a key role in this regard, offering people an alternative movement route. However, more work must be done to reduce direct and indirect emissions along the Greenway. If all those living and working along the greenway were to work together, their collective impact could be substantial.



## Modal Shift<sup>1</sup>

Getting more people to use the Greenway will be one of the quickest and most effective forms of climate action possible. This would increase levels of 'modal shift' away from the car, towards walking and cycling, while also benefiting health, air quality and economy. This should include proactive initiatives such as school walking buses and cycle trains.



## Network Expansion<sup>2</sup>

Growing the Greenway by adding new pathways, spaces and neighbourhood connections would increase its reach and levels of usage. Work is already underway to consider a wider greenways network plan for East Belfast and the city. Where possible in doing so, green spaces should be protected, while grey spaces are transformed. The delivery of this vital work should be accelerated as a means of getting more people moving on greenways by foot and bicycle.

## Energy Saving<sup>3</sup>

Another fast way to bring about climate action along the greenway will be energy saving initiatives. This objective was inspired by a member of the public who highlighted that a public building on the Greenway has its lights left on every night. A range of initiatives should be brought forward to reduce energy consumption on and along the Greenway. This would relate to lighting and other draws upon the energy grid, as well as the insulation of buildings to conserve heat.



**Eliminate Emissions**  
Direct and Indirect GHGs

## Energy Generation<sup>4</sup>

Imagine the Greenway was one big green power station. This could be made possible through the deployment of on-site energy generators such as wind turbines, solar panels, hydro-electrics and ground source heat pumps. A specialist study is required to determine the most appropriate options. These should not just benefit the greenway, but also surrounding communities and especially those most affected by fuel poverty. ParkPower, the pioneering work in this area by Greenspace Scotland should be consulted.



# Capture Carbon<sup>B</sup>

## *Prioritising Sequestration*

There are too many green houses gases in our atmosphere, including carbon dioxide. A priority must be to seek opportunities for its sequestration. This is when carbon dioxide is removed from the air and stored in liquid or solid form. Through its trees and other plant life the Greenway already performs this function - it is now time to make sure it is maximising that very important role.



## Wetland Expansion<sup>1</sup>

Wetlands are one of the world's most effective carbon sinks, locking away 'blue carbon' to great effect. The Connswater Community Greenway has some limited areas of wetland, including tidal mudflats at Victoria Park and seasonally flooded meadows at Marsh Wiggleyway. Opportunities should now be found to extend and develop wetland areas along the Greenway, helping store more carbon while enhancing wildlife habitats.



# Tree Planting<sup>2</sup>

Many people responding to the survey expressed a wish to see more trees planted along the Greenway. Trees provide many ecosystem services, including the storage of carbon throughout their lifetime. A systematic assessment of the greenway should be undertaken to identify areas suitable for the planting of new, locally grown native trees by the community. Consideration should be given to the potential contribution of certain native trees to a specific area, including blossom for pollinators and fruits for human and non-human consumption.



**Capture Carbon**  
Prioritise Sequestration



# Soil Improvement<sup>3</sup>

Another sometimes forgotten carbon sink is the soil. The earth can store high volumes of carbon, especially when it is rich in organic matter. A process of soil testing would therefore inform efforts to improve soil quality along the Greenway (such as mulching and composting), so helping it absorb more carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

# Strengthen Resilience<sup>C</sup>

## *Adapt the Greenway and Surrounds*

As our climate changes, so too will our landscapes, including the Connswater Community Greenway. It will therefore be important to get 'ahead of the curve' in assessing what adaptations can be made to lessen negative impacts, while realising associated benefits.



## Planting Strategy<sup>1</sup>

The Greenway is home to many wonderful plants, from trees and woodlands, to shrubs, grasses and semi aquatic species. In the context of the climate and nature crisis, a regular review of plant species should be undertaken to ensure they will be resilient to extreme weather events and continue contributing to ecological objectives. Over time this will inform appropriate new plantings. For example, many hedgerows on the Greenway consist of a single, non native species and potential exists to augment these with complementary native plants, so increasing their ecological value.



# Flood Management <sup>2</sup>

A key feature of the Connswater Community Greenway is its built-in flood defences. Orangefield Park, for example, has been designed to attenuate flood water, thereby protecting adjacent homes and businesses. The opportunity exists for the greenway to play a further role in local flood defence, by diverting and storing surface and river waters during times of peak rainfall. An added benefit of such interventions is the creation of wetland wildlife habitats.



**Strengthen Resilience**  
Adapt the Greenway and Surrounds



# Greenway Neighbourhoods <sup>3</sup>

Many thousands of people are lucky to live along the Greenway. By thinking of these areas as 'Greenway Neighbourhoods', much potential exists to extend the value of the Greenway into surrounding streets and spaces. A Greenway Neighbourhood should have more street trees and sustainable urban drainage systems. They may also be good candidates for Low Traffic Neighbourhoods, where walking, cycling and public transport are given greater priority over the needs of the car. Furthermore the continuance of community development in Greenway Neighbourhoods would also help strengthen their social resilience and shared greenway identities.

# Build Biodiversity<sup>D</sup>

## Manage Ecologically

The Greenway is a refuge for nature in the city, playing host to various ecosystems of plants and animals. Coming into contact with nature is a great source of joy for many people who use the greenway. In the context of the climate and nature crises, the time has come to enhance our understanding of the Greenway's ecology and to use that knowledge to improve management practices. Local people should be involved as much as possible in these processes, further strengthening historic and social ties within the community.



## Habitat Surveys<sup>1</sup>

Knowing what lives on the Greenway is a critical first step to managing it more ecologically. Various habitat surveys were a requirement of planning consent for the greenway and activities such as birdwatching and river kick-sampling are regular activities today. After a comprehensive review of existing data, habitat surveys are required to systematically map the Greenway and build an accurate ecological baseline. Opportunities for public involvement in this process should be actively sought.



# Biodiversity Action Plan <sup>2</sup>

Upon completion of habitat surveys it will be possible to develop a Biodiversity Action Plan for the Connswater Community Greenway. This will focus attention on how the Greenway can further enhance it's ecological value, targeting key habitats, ecosystems and species for conservation and enhancement. The Action Plan should be fully integrated with the management plan produced for the Greenway each year. It is within this context that public calls for 'rewilding' can be given full consideration.



**Build Biodiversity**  
Manage Ecologically



# Ecological Projects <sup>3</sup>

Many people on the Greenway are keen to play their part in caring for nature. The Biodiversity Action Plan will enable a range of valuable ecology projects to be designed and delivered. From bird boxes and bug hotels, to wild flower seed sowing and the removal of invasive species, every project must be strategically coordinated and verifiably outcomes focused to ensure maximum cumulative impact.

# Raise Awareness <sup>E</sup>

## *Inform and Inspire Action*

As an increasingly popular destination for locals, commuters and visitors, the Connswater Community Greenway presents an excellent opportunity to raise awareness of environmental issues. The Greenway itself should communicate to its users through a range of creative and effective measures, tailored to suit a diverse audiences and maximise impact.



## Events Programme <sup>1</sup>

The greenway plays host to many events and activities each year, attracting both locals and visitors alike. Great potential exists to grow and develop this events programme, thereby increasing the reputation of the greenway as a place to learn about the climate and nature crisis.



# Interpretation Signage <sup>2</sup>

Carefully designed and positioned signage can provide an effective means of communicating with greenway users. Both permanent and temporary signs would help explain the ecology of the Greenway, and why and how it is being cared for. The use of QR codes and other technologies would help to provide more information online.



# Artworks <sup>3</sup>

Another effective way of communicating with people is through site specific artworks. Sculptures, murals, performances, light installations - the greenway has significant potential to host a wide range of artworks that invite people to engage with important environmental themes. For example, one idea that emerged from the public was large sculptural recycling containers.



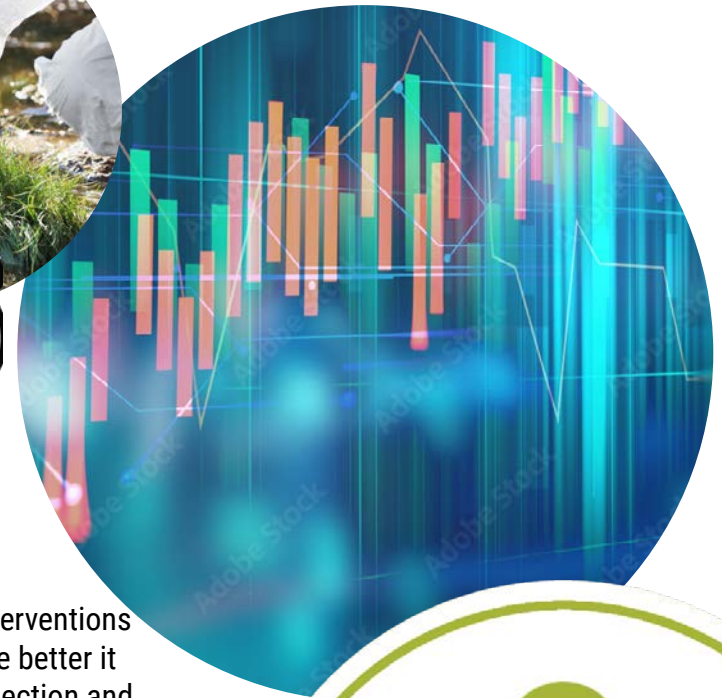
**Raise Awareness**  
Inform and Inspire Action



# Nurture Research <sup>F</sup>

## Test and Develop

As a large and successful example of an urban greenway, the Connswater Community Greenway has much potential to both contribute and benefit from academic research and teaching. This in turn can help combat the challenges of the climate and nature crises, while benefiting the Greenway and others like it across the region and beyond.



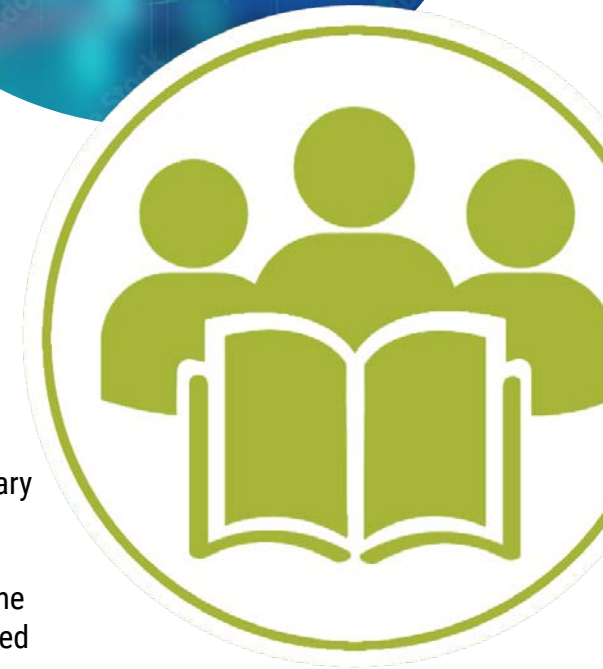
## Greenway Data <sup>1</sup>

Who uses the Greenway, how long do they spend there, what interventions have increased usership? The better we know the Greenway, the better it can be managed in a way that maximises its potential. The collection and analysis of key data sets would greatly help to inform decision making.



## Academic Links <sup>2</sup>

Since its inception the Connswater Community Greenway has enjoyed strong links with educational establishments from primary schools to colleges and universities. This project and more than 10 years of working with Queens University Belfast are excellent examples of how researchers can contribute to the success of the Greenway. Academic links should be maintained and strengthened whenever possible, drawing upon the power of citizen science.





# The Living Lab <sup>3</sup>

The Greenway holds much potential for use as one big classroom or laboratory. Opening its door to pioneering research offers another means by which the Connswater Community Greenway can contribute to the challenges of the future. A wide range of potential areas include health, biodiversity, social sciences, engineering and geography. The Greenway is particularly suited to research that would benefit from interaction with the public, in turn could adding to their experience.



**Nurture Research**  
Test and Develop



# Centre of Excellence <sup>4</sup>

EastSide Greenways regularly welcomes visits from those wanting to learn more about the story of the Connswater Community Greenway. With new greenways and blueways emerging across the island and beyond, consideration should be given to formalising and disseminating learnings from the Greenway. The establishment of a Centre of Excellence in partnership with Queen's University and others would help ensure that the Greenway remains at the cutting edge of best practice, while learning from other places. Educational programmes should seek to bring the benefits of such expertise to the local community.

# Sustain Activity<sup>G</sup>

## *Maintain and Grow Capacity*

It is vital that the good work of the Connswater Community Greenway is sustained and developed for the benefit of future generations. Like all urban green and blue spaces, the Greenway requires resources, both human and financial, to be sustained. The Greenway adds to the local economy and has much more to offer to the wider social, economic and physical regeneration of East Belfast.



## **Local Skills<sup>1</sup>**

It takes a lot of work to run a Greenway and in doing so, a range of specialist skills are needed, from horticulture to events management, community engagement to governance and financial management. The Greenway can play a greater role in providing opportunities for local skills development, through Belfast City Council and its partners, bringing benefits to the local economy and those living and studying in East Belfast.

# The Greenway Economy <sup>2</sup>

As a high quality piece of urban green infrastructure, the Connswater Community Greenway must continue to play its part in contributing the local economy. The Greenway is helping transform investor attitudes to this part of the city, while a host of possibilities exist for entrepreneurship and business start ups linked to the Greenway.



**Sustain Activity**  
Maintain and Grow Capacity



## Long-term Income <sup>3</sup>

EastSide Greenways draws from an endowment awarded to it by the Big Lottery Fund at the outset of the Greenway. Work must start now to identify other sustainable avenues of funding for the Greenway to make sure it can continue making a proactive difference for decades to come.

# Our Priorities

*The place based integration of our 23 priorities*





# Our Priorities



## A. Eliminate Emissions

1. Modal Shift 
2. Network Expansion 
3. Energy Saving 
4. Energy Generation 



## E. Raise Awareness

1. Events Programme 
2. Interpretation Signage 
3. Artworks 



## B. Capture Carbon

1. Wetland Expansion 
2. Tree Planting 
3. Soil Improvement 



## F. Nurture Research

1. Greenway Data 
2. Academic Links 
3. The Living Lab 
4. Centre of Excellence 



## C. Strengthen Resilience

1. Planting Strategy 
2. Flood Management 
3. Greenway Neighbourhoods 




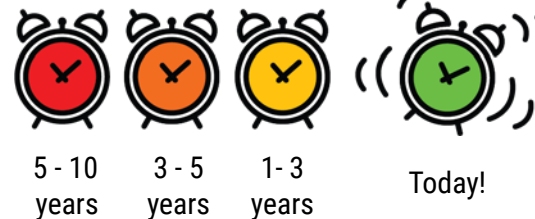
## G. Sustain Activity

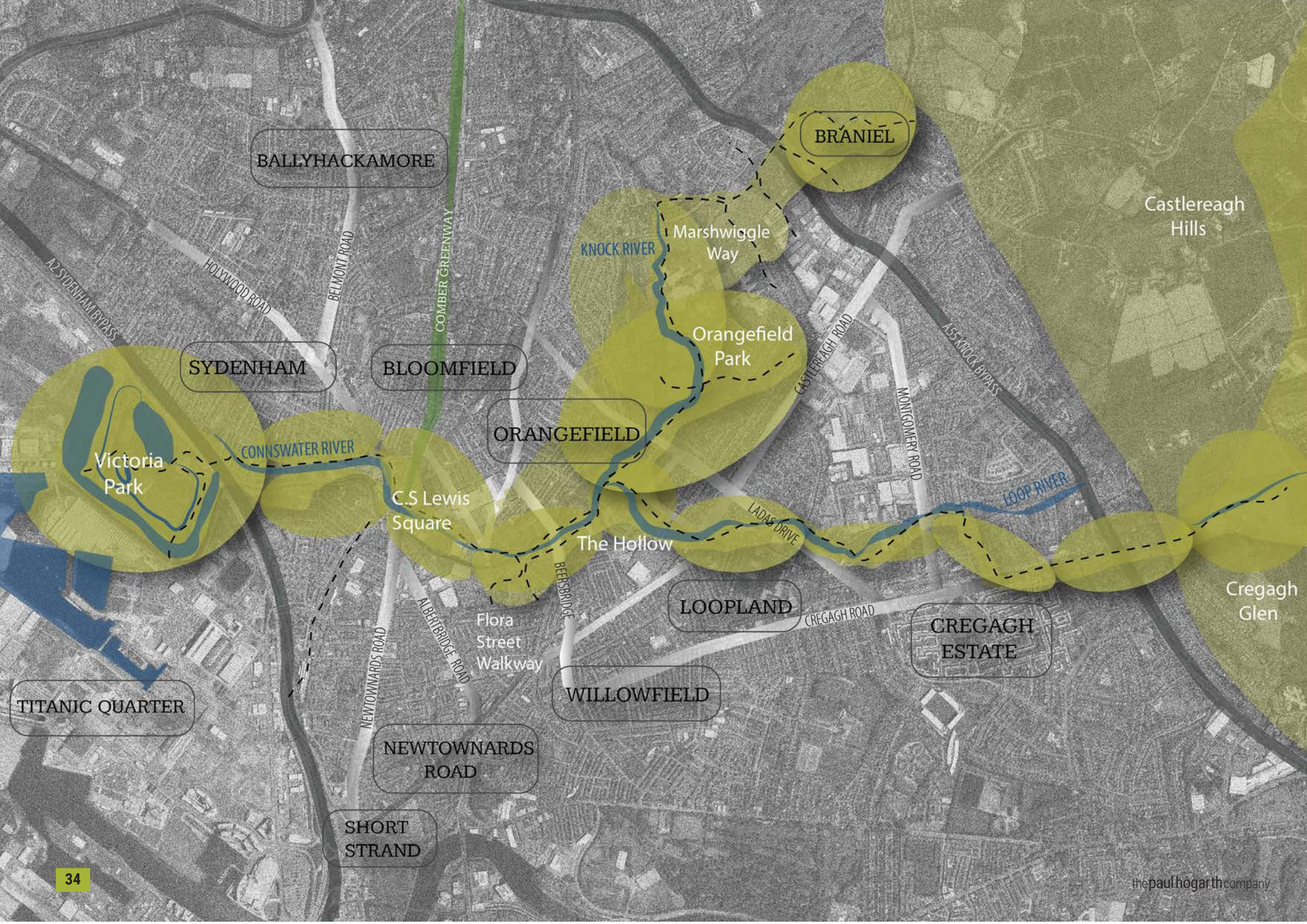
1. Local Skills 
2. The Greenway Economy 
3. Long term Income 



## D. Build Biodiversity

1. Habitat Surveys 
2. Biodiversity Action Plan 
3. Ecological Projects 





BALLYHACKAMORE

BRANIEL

Castlereagh Hills

SYDENHAM

BLOOMFIELD

Marshwiggie Way

Orangefield Park

ORANGEFIELD

Victoria Park

CONNSWATER RIVER

C.S Lewis Square

The Hollow

LADA'S DRIVE

LOOP RIVER

Cregagh Glen

TITANIC QUARTER

LOOPLAND

CREGAGH ESTATE

Flora Street Walkway

WILLOWFIELD

NEWTOWNARDS ROAD

SHORT STRAND

# Next Steps..

## *Climate and Nature Action: Vision for Connswater Community Greenway a Greener Greenway*

The Connswater Commuter Greenway holds a special place in the heart of many people living and working in East Belfast and beyond. It is a place to have fun and relax, a place through which to move and a place to learn and engage.

This study demonstrates that as the world faces the daunting challenge of the Climate and Nature Crises, the greenway has a significant role to play. On the one hand, it must be supported to continue the good work already taking place there. Yet on the other, many exciting opportunities exist for the further development of greenway habitats, infrastructure and programmes to support climate action across the city and beyond.

EastSide Greenways, The GroundsWell Consortium, Queen's University Belfast and The Paul Hogarth Company would like to thank everyone who contributed their time, energy and ideas to this study. They now look forward to continuing the conversation and working with partners to bring forward actions that will make a difference for the benefit of all.



Hannah Barnes, Elmgrove Primary School

# Useful Links

**Belfast City Council - Climate Change** [www.belfastcity.gov.uk/climate-change](http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/climate-change)

**Belfast City Council - Parks and Open Spaces** [www.belfastcity.gov.uk/parks](http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/parks)

**Belfast Climate Commission** [www.belfastclimate.org.uk](http://www.belfastclimate.org.uk)

**Belfast Healthy Cities** [www.belfasthealthycities.com](http://www.belfasthealthycities.com)

**Climate Change Committee** [www.theccc.org.uk](http://www.theccc.org.uk)

**Climate Coalition Northern Ireland** [www.nienvironmentlink.org/working-groups/climate-coalition-ni](http://www.nienvironmentlink.org/working-groups/climate-coalition-ni)

**Climate Northern Ireland** [www.climatenorthernireland.org.uk](http://www.climatenorthernireland.org.uk)

**DAERA** [www.daera-ni.gov.uk/topics/protect-environment/climate-change](http://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/topics/protect-environment/climate-change)

**EastSide Greenways** [www.eastsidegreenways.com](http://www.eastsidegreenways.com) -

**GroundsWell Consortium** [www.qub.ac.uk/sites/groundswell](http://www.qub.ac.uk/sites/groundswell)

**National Biodiversity Network** [www.nbn.org.uk](http://www.nbn.org.uk)

**The Paul Hogarth Company** [www.paulhogarth.com](http://www.paulhogarth.com)

**Queen's University Belfast** [www.qub.ac.uk](http://www.qub.ac.uk)





**GroundsWell**  
Transforming our cities from the ground up



**QUEEN'S  
UNIVERSITY  
BELFAST**



CONNSWATER COMMUNITY  
**GREENWAY**

**EAST  
SIDE  
GREENWAYS**

the **paul hogarth** company