

220
people
engaged

5
community
events

Social infrastructure and the process of mapping

The value of mapping local assets is primarily in the process. In asking questions about where different assets are located within a neighbourhood we have an opportunity to think differently about our neighbourhoods and to learn from others with deep local knowledge.

Mapping assets collaboratively across organisations can reveal knowledge and insights that may be hidden. It can be useful in pooling knowledge between individuals or partners who do not regularly work together, for sparking ideas and fresh thinking about how to develop local assets and to cut across the silos and structures that can inhibit innovative thinking.

What do we mean by assets? We include all the supports that residents use to meet their needs, to socialise, to take part in decision making, to have influence. This could include formal assets like libraries or community centres or informal groups or online networks.

Sports Quarter

The Sports Quarter maps cover inner-east central Birmingham neighbourhoods and is centred around Saltley, Alum Rock and Bordesley Green. Community knowledge of assets is concentrated to the east of the area, clustered around major roads running east-west including Alum Rock Road, Bordesley Green Road and Coventry Road. Fewer community assets were highlighted to the west although several places of worship, local employers and health & wellbeing facilities are identified.

Community groups' understanding of neighbourhood boundaries is largely based on roads and railway lines. The map shows positive sentiment towards the strength of social networks within the community, however gaps in community provision were mentioned, for specific groups and uses, as well as places that bring people from different backgrounds together.

A feature of the area is the strong informal economy which keeps money and assets within the community, this is linked to social supports but also to low levels of achievement in formal education. This level of self-help is an asset however it often centres around low paid insecure informal work. There are some economic links between more formal organisations like Morrisons supermarket, which supplies food to Saheli Hub, and Griffin Cafe, which supplies food to Birmingham City Council.

The map highlights how Muslim women in the community face gender-based challenges, notably exclusion from health and wellbeing facilities that do not accommodate their needs. Despite a sense of pride, the community continues to be affected and sometimes stereotyped by crime and fear of crime, poor public transportation and deprivation.

