

Green Connections Workshop Notes

As part of the Natural Capital Conference, Jessica Thompson, Mirander Clarke & Lucy West from City of Trees together with Carragh Teague from Transport for Greater Manchester delivered a participatory Roundtable session on Green Connections in which attendees were asked:

What can we do to support Greater Manchester's natural environment as a destination to visit, volunteer at and enjoy as part of a healthy lifestyle?

Green Connections is a project which City of Trees are working with partners and members of the public to improve the links between Green Spaces in the Greater Manchester conurbation. This focuses on improving Five Key Strategic Routes- These could change *

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| 1 | The Carbon Trail |
| 2 | National Cycle Network Route 6 & Smithills Spur Route |
| 3 | Tame Valley & Medlock Valley Routes |
| 4 | Bridgewater Way & Transpeninne Trail Route |
| 5 | Green Corridor Walking Routes existing walks around city of Manchester |

The workshops provided maps of the highlighted routes, in which attendees gave feedback & ideas. The suggestions or common themes that came out of the workshops have been grouped and listed below, the sites or ideas that were listed the most have been listed in order of response.

Improving Infrastructure: Inclusion of new Routes

Canal Towpaths

Suggested Improvements/Links

- **Linking the RHS Bridgewater Flagship Site -to the existing Bridgewater Canal** and other Green Connections Routes
- **Linking the Bridgewater Canal to existing Green Corridor Walking Routes** - there were strong themes relating to more interpretation & signage along this Canal
- **Link the Rochdale Canal to the Green Connections Medlock Valley Route & Green Corridor Walking Routes**

Trails & Other Routes

Suggested Improvements/Links

- **River Irk Corridor-** look at opportunities to work with the Environment Agency to potentially improve this river corridor & improve access.
- **Medlock Valley River Corridor** was highlighted as a key route to look at improvements for access.
- **Linking the Kingfisher Valley Trail North Section to the Smithills Spur Green Connections Route**
- **Clifton Country Park_ within City Forest Park boundary** there were suggestions to improve footpath links through this Country Park
- **Link the Salford Trail to the Carbon Landscape Trail & Green Connections National Cycle Network Route 6**

- **Linking the Carbon Landscape Trail to Leigh Town Centre**
- **Linking the Carbon Landscape Trail to Hope Carr**
- **Manchester River Valley Routes** highlighted as having poor interpretation
- **Link more Oldham Local Nature Reserves to Medlock Valley Green Connections Route**
- **Link University of Manchester Tree Trail with Green Corridor Walking Route**

Projects in the Pipeline

- **New routes which would link the Green Connections Smithills Spur Route with the Green Connections NCN6 Route** are under construction

Cycle Infrastructure

Suggested Improvements

- **Oxford Road Cycling Corridor** highlighted as a very positive new cycle route for Manchester City Centre
- **Continue to Improve other Manchester City Centre Cycle Routes**
- **Link the Fallowfield Loop Line to Green Corridor Route** there were also strong themes relating to cycle related crime on this Loop line.
- **Developing more SUDS enabled cycle paths**
- **Improving bike access on Trains- storage**
- **Use more bridleways & disused railways as Cycle Route networks**

Projects in the pipeline

- **Proposals to Improve Cycle access around River Mersey near Jacksons Boat- Trafford Council**
- **Proposals to improve cycling access around the River Mersey on the Trans Pennine Trail Route**
- **Potential Funding to improve cycle routes- Stalybridge/ Mossley area near the Tame Valley Green Connections Route**

Improving Interpretation

Digital

Beat the Street' mass participation physical activity programme in Salford turns City into a Game this was listed as very useful interactive tool linking people with nature - this could be rolled out across other areas

QR Codes on Trees- University of Manchester – is a popular engaging & interpretive tool

Geo-Caching good interpretative tool which can improve activity levels. There were suggestions to roll this out with more schools across Greater Manchester allowing pupils to connect with nature

Smart Phone Technology- Apps-Good way of allowing communities to connect to sites, routes & maps

Social Media- Twitter & Facebook –Used to promote a high number of sites both at Local Authority Level & by Friends Groups & Community Groups. This is also a good tool to promote activities

Websites-there were many suggestions to promote sites & activities via this method

On site Signage

Signposts/ Waymarkers There were a number of requests for more guidance/ best practice

Manchester City Council Parks Signage was highlighted as improving their signs

Tameside Council are planning to install new signs on a number of sites

Look at European Signage for Good examples of onsite signage

Leaflets

Leaflets & Flyers are still a very popular & trusted method for promoting sites and activities

Hard Copy Maps are still very popular and should still be used

On Public Transport

Display more Information on Trains & Trams- Transport for London was suggested as providing some good examples

Top Tips & Ideas for Green Connections

Partnership work is a very good way to help deliver multi-functional schemes
Use different messages & community engagement for different audiences
Guided Walks & Talks are very popular, they can achieve health & wellbeing outcomes & allow more communities access to nature
Consider how people travel across sites /routes across Local Authority boundaries – develop more joint working to share best practice
Incorporate other Natural Capital into new corridors- SUDS, flood management function, biodiversity
Think about mixed use of pathways & make provision for different groups
Good Communication is key to successful community engagement
Plan projects for the Long Term- Co create programmes for future users
Reduced Maintenance Budgets are a concern – obtain more support from schemes from Developers ie S106 Contributions
There is a huge interest in Heritage, Nature & which could be great for promoting more Green Connections

