

Softworks strategy

A place for nature

A report by Natural England published in October 2020 showed that the ability to get outside to enjoy nature is linked to family income. Almost three-quarters of children from households with a total annual income below £17,000 spent less time outdoors since the pandemic began. This compared with 57% of children from households with an annual income above £17,000.

Eight in ten children agree that being in nature made them very happy. Numerous published studies, including in Bioscience, demonstrate that even quite sparse nature in a neighbourhood can be associated with better mental health and reduced stress. This has important implications for policy, planning and design and paves the way to test for health gains that arise from specific interventions in and around the places where we live and work.

As such, designing in every possible opportunity to (re)connect people with natural systems has been considered to ultimately enhance health and well-being for the local community, both new and existing. Abbott Road - the new Healthy Street - forms an important spine in the delivery of this approach, and connects the improved open spaces of Leven Road and Braithwaite Park, new Highland Place, and improved existing open space of Jolly's Green.

The design team approach is to create natural capital and green connections as a layered matrix across the entire site, and in this way actively respond to the climate emergency. A variety of planting typologies will be proposed, including semi-natural wildflower meadow planting, SuDS, and flower-rich ornamental planting with perennials, grasses and shrubs.

Further information can be found in **Chapter 7.3 Hardworks and Softworks of the Design and Access Statement: The Masterplan**, including the Ecology Strategy, Biodiversity Net Gain, and Urban Greening Factor.

- Site boundary
- Illustrative planting
- Illustrative amenity lawn
- Illustrative wildflower meadow
- Illustrative woodland (as defined by Ecology report)
- Existing woodland (as classified by Ecology report)

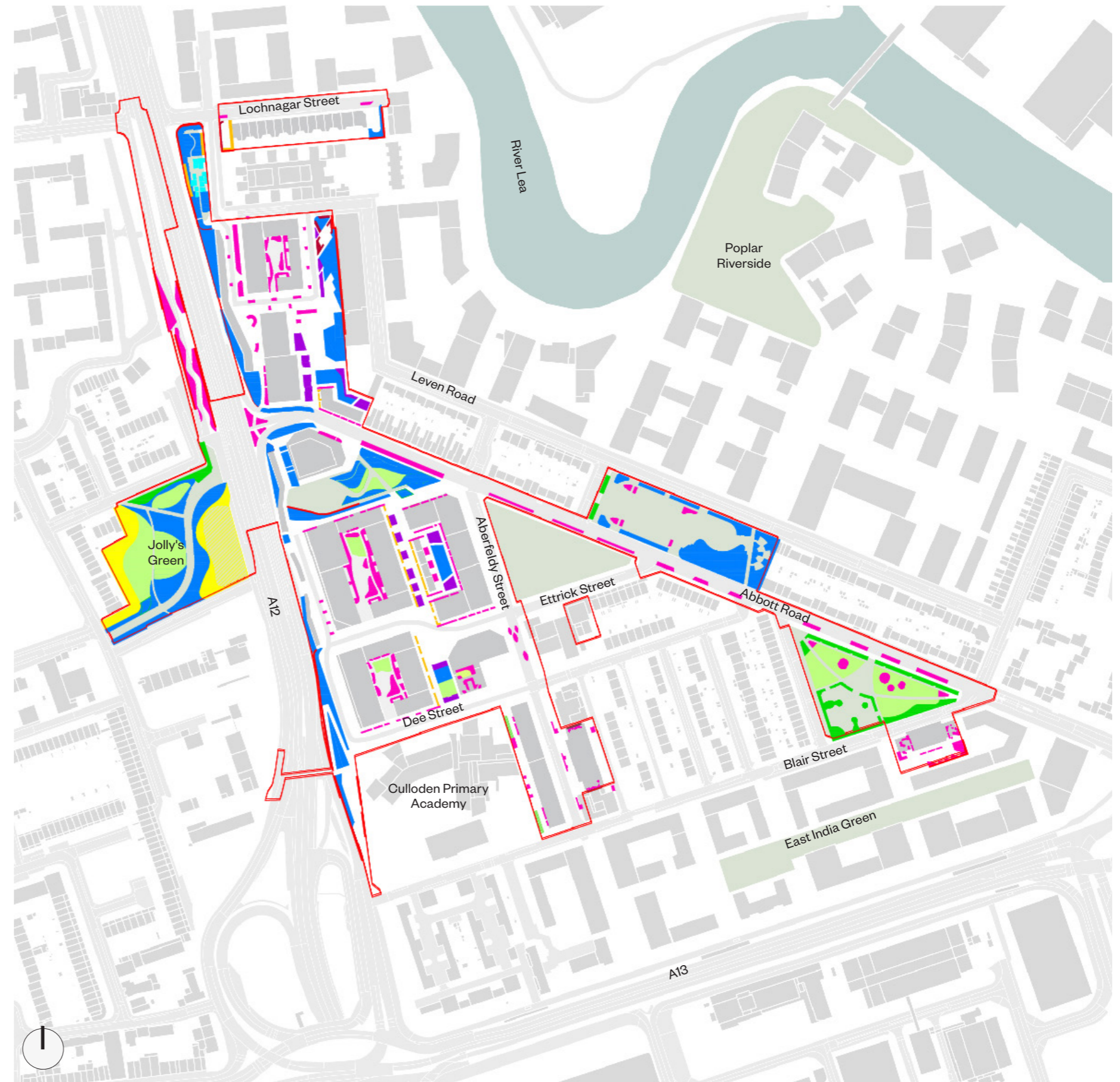


Fig.22 Illustrative softworks diagram

Public Realm

Community Lane

The life of Community Lane

Community Lane is a safe, pedestrianised route through the heart of the residential part of the illustrative masterplan. It is activated by maximising opportunities for front door access direct to family housing, with front gardens along its edges. It is characterised by informal, soft planting with opportunities for private and semi-private social spaces opening out into key spaces, e.g Nairn Square, Culloden Green, for community activities.

Community Lane being car free, creates a safe route for children which encourages independent child mobility, walking to school as part of a healthy lifestyle and play on the way. Maintaining clear sight lines will be key to ensuring all residents feel safe and welcome through this space.

The northern part of Community Lane is connected to Nairn Street. The proposal here is to keep the current conditions for traffic. This limits traffic accessing the Site to only necessary journeys, but also creates a wide pedestrian/cycle only connection to the South of Nairn Street. Nairn Park will provide gardens, play, seating and meadow. This creates a substantial new community green space at the northern end of Community Lane. The extent of meadow has been increased in this revision to achieve an Urban Greening Factor of 0.4 (previously 0.37). Please refer to pages 29-30 of this document for further information.

Front garden transitions from private to public will allow residents to take ownership of their private front gardens for active uses and meeting neighbours, particularly through the southern part of Community Lane.

The southern part of Community Lane, between Ettrick Street and Dee Street, Culloden Green is formed, bordered by private front gardens and planting. As a small community green, it adds to the diversity of spaces along Community Lane, offering opportunities for play, games and social activity.

- ① Nairn Street with new tree planting alternating with parking bays
- ② Nairn Park, new gardens, play and wildflower meadow
- ③ Nairn Square dedicated play and playable landscape
- ④ SuDS planting
- ⑤ Pockets of green space, playable landscape and semi-private hardspace
- ⑥ Formal pedestrian crossings with enhanced safety
- ⑦ Playable landscape, street furniture and new tree planting
- ⑧ Culloden Green with meadow



Fig.23 Character area diagram Community Lane - North



Fig.24 Character area diagram Community Lane - South

Public Realm

Movement and spatial organisation

Spatial Design

The design for Community Lane flexibly responds to both the changes in widths and the adjacent building uses. A route of 3.7m wide for pedestrians, cyclists and emergency vehicles creates a diverse range of spaces. Throughout Community Lane spaces range from private to semi-private, and through to public.

Entrances will be coupled where possible to allow every opportunity for neighbours to meet. Private front gardens are defined by low-walls, which also offer the potential as incidental seating and the chance for the community to get to know one another in these spaces.

Strengthening Community

Providing this transition from private to public fosters a sense of security and community which allows residents to take ownership of their private front gardens and utilise them to their full potential, whether it's for growing tomatoes in pots or eating breakfast in the morning sun.

The semi private amenity zone will have parcels of green space with play, informal seating, and planting that frame small pockets of hard space that have the opportunity to be used informally.

- █ Main pedestrian footway
- █ Vehicle movement
- █ Commercial spill out zone
- █ Semi-private amenity zone
- ▲ Servicing entrances
- ▲ Retail entrances
- ▲ Lobby/main entrances
- ▲ Residential Entrances
- █ Suggested locations for parking
- █ Suggested locations for loading
- ✿ Node
- █ Active landscape zone
- █ Planting opportunity
- █ Flexible lawn area
- █ Play area
- █ Play on the way
- █ Meadow

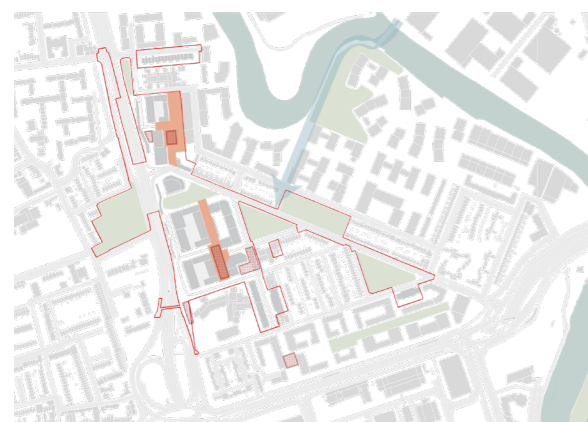


Fig.25 Character area location plan - Community Lane



Fig.26 Community Lane North movement and spatial organisation diagram

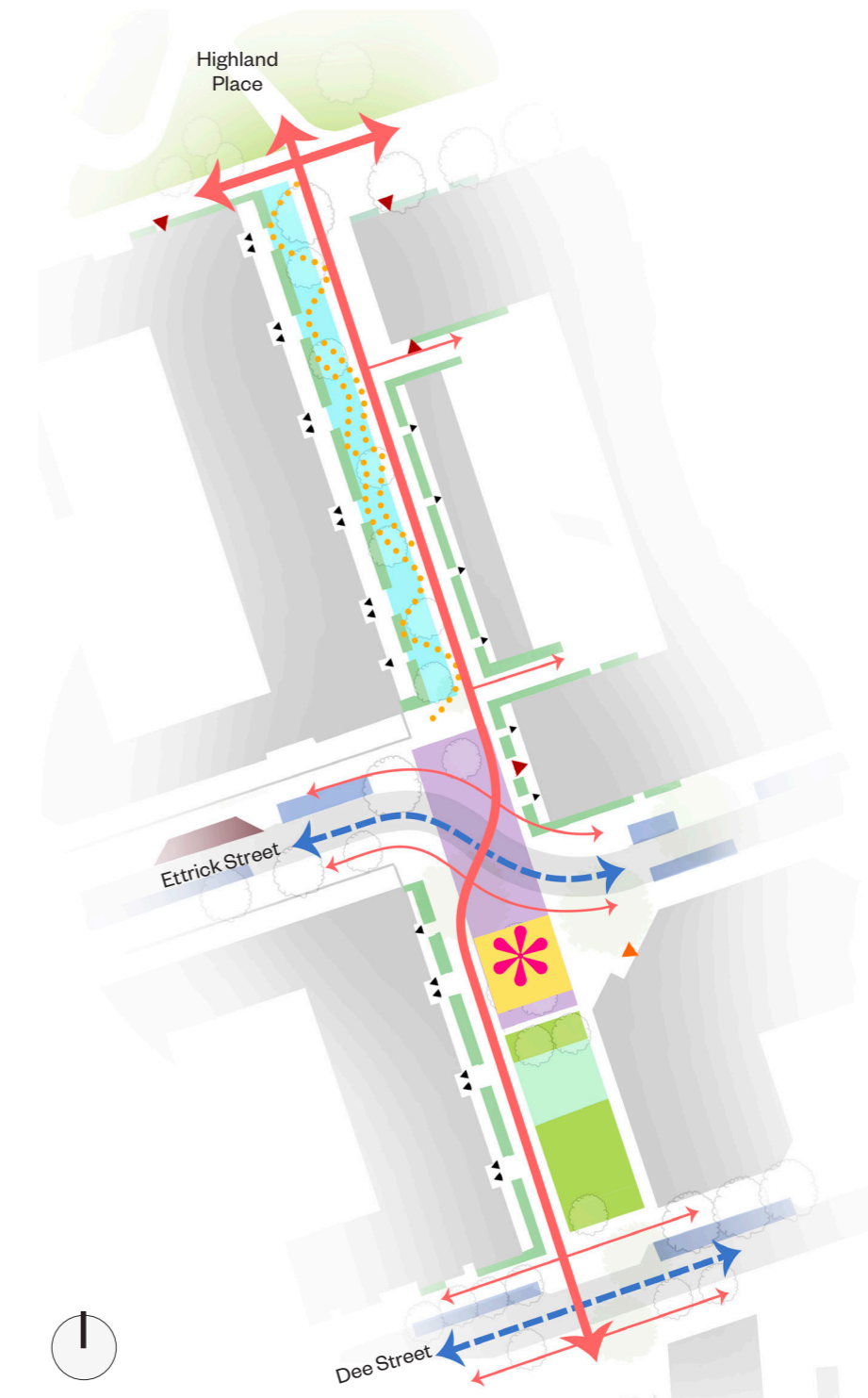


Fig.27 Community Lane South movement and spatial organisation diagram

Public Realm

Nairn Square

Nairn Square is an important community space within the over-arching character area of Community Lane. It is a local square that provides a variety of different areas for social opportunities, and for families and neighbours to gather.

Within the space is a mix of dedicated and playable opportunities, and multiple play areas to cater for a number of age groups and abilities. Immediately to the south of Nairn Square there is a strong green planted strip, designed to manage water as a sustainable drainage area that will also bring greening and nature into the heart of the space.



Fig.28 Illustrative view of SuDS planting and street furniture with residential terrace spill out, located to the southern end of Nairn Street

