



Inequalities and Environmental Action

**A report by Centric Lab for the Greater London Authority
February 2022**

Authors

Josh Artus, Araceli Camargo, Daniel Akinola-Odusola



Contents

	Page
Executive Summary	2
Project Brief	4
Project Context	4
Project Relevance	5
Findings	7
Discussion	36
A Disconnect Between Environmental Factors and Drivers	36
What is Likely to Have Been Missed by the Nature of this Project Exercise?	36
Recommended Guidelines for Future Work	36
Identity & Status of Community Groups	37
The Role of Urban Planning	38
The Green New Deal	39
Suggestions	41
Key Points	41
Groups Whose Insights can Shape a Future Community Insights Hub	43
Appendix	44
Research Approach	45
Principles	45
Research Method	45
Data Collection	46
Data Analysis	50
Glossary	51



Executive Summary

This report commissioned by the Greater London Authority, and produced by Centric Lab, attempts to uncover the work of community groups and environmental issues in Hackney, Newham, Tower Hamlets and Waltham Forest.

These four boroughs were selected as they have some of the highest proportion of multi-ethnic low income communities who were greatly affected by the coronavirus pandemic. Many reports highlighted the role of environmental pollutants and structural deprivation as a determinant of Covid-19 infection and impact. The Mayor of London's *Engaging Londoners in Recovery Programme 2021-2023* sets out an agenda to champion the intellect and capacity at the community level to help deliver bottom-up led change in policy, such as that of a Green New Deal for London, as London and its citizens recover from the Covid-19 pandemic.

This desktop research exercise identified 157 different community focused groups working in the four boroughs. They ranged from local offices of global NGOs tackling global climate change to residents associations advocating for the protection of green space and home insulation. 96 of the groups were focused on activities relating to their immediate locale, such as maintaining a pocket park; 42 groups were working at the borough level looking at issues such as sustainability or urban farming programmes; 11 groups were working across east London such as a combined approach to challenge the development of industrial facilities, with the remaining whose issues also work across larger regions.

77 (49%) of the groups were unincorporated as companies/charities meaning that they can be at a disadvantage from engaging with legal or financial opportunities open to others. This demonstrates an opportunity to see whether structural advice and support can help increase the group's activities, outreach and impact.

The borough with the largest representation of individual groups is Hackney (54) with the lowest being in Newham (25). Much of this can be brought down to more structural and historical issues such as Hackney having a long tradition of anarchist groups since the 1970s and many areas of Newham being previously industrial land with relatively newer residents, who may congregate in other ways such as through faith organisations. Therefore, there's an opportunity for future research by authorities to understand the reasons in how people organise in areas as a means to identify policy and funding opportunities.

Some highlights from the report

- Campaign groups such as Communities Before Construction and East London Waterworks Park are producing alternative guidance and business models for assets in their local areas.
- 75% of groups were outward facing, looking to engage with more and more people, showing the inclusionary aspect of their work.
- Of the 10 'Creative' groups that were identified through this research they were overwhelmingly led by younger people and from a BAME background.

Some observations

- Many community groups reported a lack of equity in the planning system, and a lack of accountability from authorities as key obstacles in resolving local environmental issues.
- Recognition and relation to a Green New Deal was very low.



- The main drivers for community groups were centred on improving access to nature, protecting it, and providing pathways for engaging with nature through activities such as urban farming.
- There were surprisingly low levels of creative projects led by communities about the local community and the environment. For example, podcast series weren't location specific.

Some next steps

- Before committing to future policy plans, understanding how people organise within communities is crucial, for example it could be through local religious and faith centres who act as the fulcrum for communities.
- Identify what legal, practical and financial resources community groups need where there are currently barriers to access.
- Expand this research to include non place specific organisations to paint a fuller picture of community voices and environmental issues.
- Provide physical and financial resources to allow for individuals to start up creative projects about the local environment such as video channels or audio stories.

This report demonstrates that the Mayor of London's Office has fertile ground to expand this research across the whole of London as a means of showcasing the incredible and long standing work of community groups. Community groups have demonstrated their awareness of both large and small environmental issues; multiple ways of exploring their relationship to them; creating plans and solutions that address our future climate related challenges, so that a future recovery via a Green New Deal for London is led by the people of London.

This report was produced in late 2021 and early 2022 when 'Plan B' Covid-19 restrictions were in place for most of its duration. This project was a desktop study and focused on working remotely. All data was gathered through online means and digital communications. This means that despite collating the amazing work of 164 organisations there's a chance some were missed due to low digital visibility. Therefore, this report is intended to be explorative and discursive rather than conclusive and determinist.



Project Brief

Here we set out the background for this piece of research.

Project Context

Communities have an historic track record of bringing about changes in environmental policy.

The first record of a community coming together for environmental and health justice was in the early 1980's in [Warren Country, North Carolina](#). They were a small African American community that created an opposition to the hazardous landfill site near their homes. Their lived experience and expertise led them to accurately conclude that their poor health outcomes were related to the toxins being emitted from the site. This community work mobilised an entire cross country movement, leading to structural changes for marginalised communities experiencing environmental injustice.

The Community Engagement team at the Greater London Authority (GLA) commissioned this report to identify and map community-led projects and insights that focus on environmental issues and concerns in four London boroughs; Hackney, Tower Hamlets, Newham, and Waltham Forest.

This report will help to influence the Community Engagement Team's project to develop a prototype version of a Community Insights Hub, which will begin by focusing on insights that are gathered by communities who experience inequalities relating to environmental policy issues. The Insights Hub will be a platform to host community-led insights and amplify lived experiences. It will contribute to strengthening the connection between community expertise and policy making, with a particular focus on London's recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. It will be a one-stop for policy makers, funders, and community organisations across London and host data led and generated by communities, about their ideas, aspirations, experiences, needs, priorities and successes.

Data on the insights hub will be presented in a range of formats: films, illustrations, photographs, audio clips, podcasts and more. It will tell the stories behind the text and data that is often used and humanise the statistics that are used by communities, funders and policy makers to evidence and evaluate their policies and programmes. It will re-connect us with the lived experiences of Londoners, which should be at the heart of our decision-making.

This report, and the wider work on the Insights Hub, fit within the Mayor of London's Engaging Londoners in Recovery Programme 2021-2023. The programme focuses on improving engagement practice in London and connecting community expertise and insight to policy making. Through a learning network, the insights hub, and a civic leaders programme, it aims to ensure that systems are in place to ensure that community voice is at the heart of the city's recovery from the COVID-19.

The purpose of this report is to:

- provide a database of community organisations, research organisations, think tanks, local authorities etc. who have led, commissioned, or been involved in community-led research focused on environmental issues
- discuss factors, drivers, and learnings from collating the database
- collate insights from 10 community organisers
- develop an understanding of the diversity and depth of community leadership within the realms of environmental action



- uncover patterns and trends in community-led or involved environmental projects and programmes
- identify what the key drivers are / focus of the existing work and community engagement; uncovering areas of need and gaps in research.

This report has been prepared by Centric Lab on behalf of the Greater London Authority between late December 2021 and early February 2022.

About Centric Lab

Centric Lab is a neuroscience lab that creates tools and strategies that support community health. This project will allow the GLA to understand the wide range of communities involved in environmental action in order to create future strategies to structurally support their work.

Project Relevance

Many of the communities that were hardest hit by Covid-19 were already advocating for environmental action such as adequate housing, fairer wages, access to green spaces, shelter for the unhoused, migrant rights, or clean air. Therefore, providing structural and long term support to community-led organisations will create readiness for the future challenges caused by the environmental crisis.

It's very important for environmental action strategies to be led by communities, as they will often have years of experience, deep scholarships, tools, and knowledges that are relevant for successful solutions. Additionally, when communities lead their own change, the solutions are organically incorporated, resulting in long-term change.

The places we live have an impact on health outcomes. For instance, pollutants from industry are contaminating our soil, water, and air. As a result, this is changing the make-up of gut bacteria and putting stress on all of our organs. This can lead to a wide range of diseases such as diabetes, asthma, anxiety, depression, obesity, or dementia ([source](#)).

Secondly, those who are exposed to both environmental pollutants and other stress factors related to the experience of poverty such as, poor housing, job instability, food insecurity, or violence can further burden the human body. This means there are communities that are experiencing environmental pollutants as well as other stressor, creating a phenomena identified by Centric Lab as *biological inequity* ([source](#)).



Image source: [Fhimetalor Akhere Unuabona](#)

Findings

As this was a desktop study with some, but limited, contact with those being written about we had to set some frameworks to ensure accurate assessments. Please refer to the [Appendix](#) to understand more about how the data was collected, the consents given, what was omitted and the limitations of such an exercise.

Here we set out the findings from the research. Each category is listed in table format whereas relationships between two categories are presented via data visualisations. At the base of each finding is an initial observation that has been made. Further discussion points and suggestions are made later in this report.

According to the research parameters 157 groups were identified that qualified as engaging with environmental action in Hackney, Newham, Tower Hamlets and Waltham Forest.

INDEX

	Page
TECHNICAL INFORMATION ABOUT GROUPS	
Organisational Type	10
Legal Status	11
Relationship between Organisational Type and Legal Status	12
GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION	
Distribution of Community Groups by Local Authority	13
Place-based Activity	14
Distribution of Place-based Scale of Activity	14
OUTPUTS & ACTIVITIES	
Inward/Outward Facing	15
Outputs of Community Groups	16
Leadership & Operational Structure	17
Timescales	18
Relationship Between Organisational Type and Timescale	18
Groups That are Aged Focused	19
ENVIRONMENTAL DRIVERS	
Groups Focused on Single Environmental Factor	20
Groups Citing an Environmental Issue	20
Details of Groups Citing Air Pollution	21
DRIVERS & MOTIVATING FACTORS	
Drivers/Areas of Focus	23
Drivers/Areas of Focus by Local Authority	25
Relationship Between Organisational Type and Drivers/Areas of Focus	26
Drivers/Areas of Focus of Groups Citing Air Pollution	27
Location of Locally Focused Groups Concerned with Built Environment / Spatial Issues	28
Location of Locally Focused Groups Working on the Rights of Access to Nature and Sensitivity to Climate Change Related Heat & Flooding	29
THE GREEN NEW DEAL	
Identifying with a Green New Deal	30
Assessing a Group's Relationship to the Green New Deal Agenda	30
Green New Deal categories across Local Authorities	31
Distribution of Locally Focused Groups who fall under Social/Economic Justice	32
RACE & RACISM	



Self Identification with Race, Racialisation and/or Racism in their Community Group	33
Subcategories of Race, Racialisation or Racism	34

Organisational Type

Community	66
Advocacy	41
Campaign	35
Creative	10
Political	4
Religious	1

Observation

The highest representation of groups were groups directly concerned with improving their local community, albeit a high number of groups within this section could also be labelled under 'advocacy' as they relate to the protection, restoration and care of local green space for their community. Therefore we shouldn't read too much into these results other than to observe that community groups are mostly focused on local issues rather than working at a more generalist activity. The lowest was religious, however this could be that much of their environmental action goes unnamed. For example, a mosque could be providing shelter for those who are unhoused during extreme weather events, but it's informal and not digitised or advertised.

We used the following definitions for the Organisations Type:

- Advocacy - making a general statement(s) about issues;
- Community - concerned with the quality of life of a particular community of people;
- Campaign - explicitly focused on a key issue relating to policy, politics and practice in their local area;
- Creative - whose inputs and outputs are focused on solely creative projects in the arts;
- Political - whose purpose is to represent and deal with issues of a political nature
- Religious - an organisation related to a faith group

Legal Status

Unincorporated	89
Registered Charity	33
Special Project	15
Incorporated Non Profit Company	8
Community Interest Company	5
Incorporated Company	2
Registered Society	2
Cooperative Society	2
Community Benefit Society	1

*This information was collected by what was publicly and openly available. It provides a trend rather than an accurate assessment.

Observation

The vast majority of organisations were unincorporated according to the Charities Commission and Companies House registers. There could be various reasons for this, such as lack of resources or lack of knowledge of the system. This could impact future funding opportunities that require a legal entity.

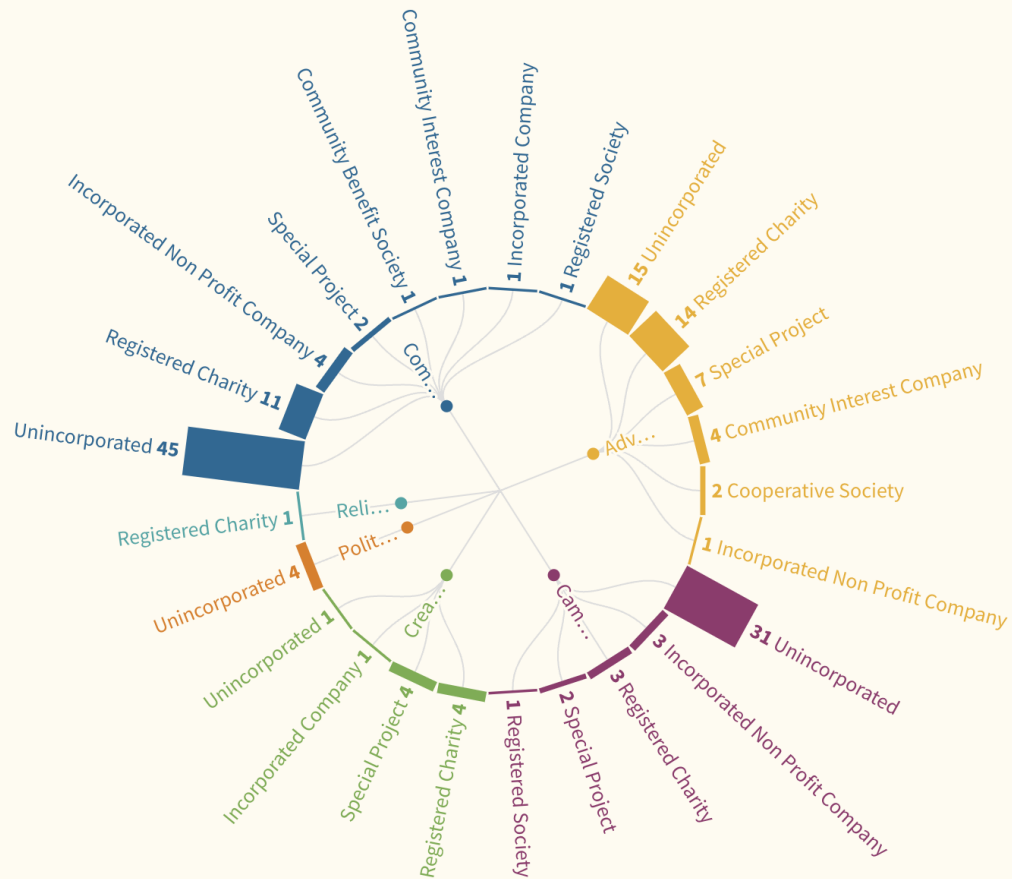


“People feel frustrated that it's like anything you're doing goes through official lines of communication. Things get slowed down a bit and a lot of people are just trying to get on with things and doing stuff and they can't wait for all of this bureaucracy. It's hard because I can see why there are rules, regulations, but sometimes there's just too many constraints. You get into that whole chain of doing things that slows everything down then people just go 'I can't be bothered'. I find it hard to see why people would be encouraged.”

- Annie Chipchase, Tree Musketeers

Relationship between Organisational Type and Legal Status

Community Advocacy Creative Campaign Religious Political



Observation

Advocacy based organisations had the most formalised legal structure. This is likely due to these groups having an intention to tackle issues that will last a long time and may need assets and funding attached to them, therefore the benefits of incorporating under a legal entity come into effect.

Distribution of Community Groups by Local Authority

Working in All Boroughs	5
Hackney	52
Newham	25
Tower Hamlets	30
Waltham Forest	43
Hackney & Tower Hamlets	2

Observation

Hackney has a larger proportion however as it is discussed later in this report this could be to different organisational systems which vary from community to community.



“People are exhausted, my community is exhausted from all the oppressions across social and racial justice. They're exhausted, they don't have time to be thinking of these things....when we talk about green insulation and things like this shouldn't be a burden on people to have to think about this thing and apply for grants and all these things now. It should be automatically done for them.”

- Bhavini Patel, PACCT & XR Hackney working in Bethnal Green



Place-based Activity

Yes	137
No	20

Observation

13% of all activities are not working to a specific location. We can draw from this that the majority of community led work is focused on a specific location rather than a generalist issue, which tend to be done by larger NGOs.

Geographic Scale of Place-based Activity

Local	96
Borough	42
Region (east London)	11
City	3
n/a (not working at place level)	5

Observation

The overwhelming focus is on local based issues, such as an immediate neighbourhood, with a sliding scale downwards as the region gets larger.



Inward / Outward Facing

An 'inward facing' group is one concerned with a specific demographic and are representing their aims.

Inward Facing	25% (39)
Outward Facing	75% (118)

Observation

The majority of groups are open to the public with low barriers to entry; no formal application, no fees and easy access.

Outputs of Community Groups

Forums/Collectivist Action	44
Inclusive Events & Activities	41
Physical Activity	37
Knowledge Sharing	20
Creative Projects	11
Services	6
Reports/Research	2

Observation

The numbers indicate that Forum/Collectivist Action groups and those focused on Knowledge Sharing were in higher numbers. There were only two organisations who had a focus on producing research and 6 providing community led services. This could be due to research being costly, high barriers to entry and time intensive as many groups work on a volunteer basis and are looking for more immediate impact.



“We're always trying to communicate more with different groups. We've got a kit of tools and stuff. And there are times in the year when we do lend them out to other other organisations or other groups. I think one of the things [to learn about] would be to know who's got what, who can share, so that people aren't always having to be trying to do fundraising. Which is getting harder and harder. Is everyone just trying to get some money to support themselves? Or just getting in touch with other groups and being able to discuss online?”

- Annie Chipchase, Tree Musketeers



Leadership & Operational Structure

Community Led	96
Charitable Structure	47
Company	13
Research Collective	1

Observation

A significant majority of community focused groups follow highly democratic structures where members are nominated, elected and stay in positions on merit rather than ownership.

Timescales

Now	46
Near Term	85
Future	26

Observation

Many communities face very immediate issues that are time sensitive, which is reflected in the data. With projects that were concerned with the “now” or “near term” were more prevalent according to this analysis.

Relationship Between Organisational Type and Timescale



Observation

Those that are running campaigns are dealing with issues that are time sensitive, therefore need immediate action. Interestingly, each different time horizon had a different main value.

Groups That are Aged Focused

All Ages	154
Children	4
Young Adults	3
Older People	2

Observation

According to this study, most environmental action was inclusive of all ages. Children, young adults, and elderly may be less likely to have the social agency to organise their own project. For example a child may need parental consent or the elderly may not be digitally literate.

However, this does not excuse the lack of groups who were explicitly advocating/campaigning for people based on age. For example, there were no groups directly involved in ensuring safe walking neighbourhoods for young people. These issues appear to be included in other initiatives such as low traffic neighbourhoods.

Barrie Stradling of Our Bow (Geezers Club) made a pertinent observation about digital exclusivity; “there’s no wi-fi at our community centre so that would be the first problem to solve”. He went on to say that the Geezers Club was formed as a result of Age UK bringing people together to understand why men don’t go to resource centres and after conversations a group agreed that having a little place they could go, that they could call their own, was integral to talking about their local neighbourhood; “we need more resources for that (physical community spaces), so people are not isolated”.

Groups Focused on Single Environmental Factor

Yes	11
No	146

Observation

Based on the database less than 10% of groups had formed as a result of specific environmental issues such as air pollution. This could be due to communities organising around systemic change that covers various factors. For instance, a community focused on child safety, could be tackling air pollution as well as access to green spaces for children.

Groups Citing an Environmental Issue

Air Pollution	24
Heat Pollution	0
Noise Pollution	0
Light Pollution	0
Flooding	0
Climate Breakdown	62
No mention	71

Observation

There are two ways to understand a score of zero;

1. The community may not identify an environment such as noise, light, and heat as a concern rather an outcome of living in an urban environment.
2. They are factored into other issues.



“Air pollution is a huge impactful thing in Tower Hamlets. However, those that do have cars, it's often because they literally are so time poor, from dropping off kids getting to work coming back, picking up kids going back to work. You know, the efficiency of a vehicle for them is a necessity. It's not, it's not a luxury. And I think this is what we meant about a just transition, right? You can't be asking the people that are the most impacted by injustice to be making those transformative changes.”

- Bhavini Patel, PACCT & XR Hackney

Details of Groups Citing Air Pollution

NAME	Based in	Borough of Operation	Scale of Activity
Clean Air Hub - Tower Hamlets	n/a	Tower Hamlets	Borough
Growing Communities	Stoke Newington	Hackney	Borough
Hackney CVS	Dalston	Hackney	Borough
Hackney Cycling Campaign	n/a	Hackney	Borough
Hackney Living Streets Group	Hackney Central	Hackney	Borough
Hackney Together	n/a	Hackney	Borough
Immersion	Aldgate	Tower Hamlets	Borough
Make Newham Greener	n/a	Newham	Borough
Mums for Lungs - Waltham Forest Branch	n/a	Waltham Forest	Borough
Communities Before Construction	Lea Bridge	Waltham Forest	Local
Daubeney Fields Forever	Clapton	Hackney	Local
Filter (the Hackney side of) Downham Road	Haggerston	Hackney	Local
Fulbourne Road Development Community Group	Walthamstow	Waltham Forest	Local
Horrendous Hackney Road Closures	Hackney Central	Hackney	Local
Love Lea Bridge	Lea Bridge / Leyton	Waltham Forest	Local
Manor House Development Trust	Manor House	Hackney	Local
Parents Air Quality and Road Safety Group at Hackney New Primary School	Dalston	Hackney	Local
Save Lea Marshes	Lea Bridge / Leyton	Newham	Local
Save Low Hall	Walthamstow	Waltham Forest	Local
Save Orient Way Pocket Park	Lea Bridge / Leyton	Newham	Local
Save Our Square	Walthamstow	Waltham Forest	Local
Stop the Silvertown Tunnel Coalition	Silvertown	Newham	Local
The Friends of Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park	Bow	Tower Hamlets	Local
Stop The Edmonton Incinerator Now	Waltham Forest	Waltham Forest	Region

* note that these results are for those groups explicitly referencing air pollution. Those citing climate change/breakdown will also by default include air pollution but for this exercise we were curious about those directly relating to air pollution.

Key

Local - of a specific area

Borough - including the whole borough

Region - including all of east London

City - all of London

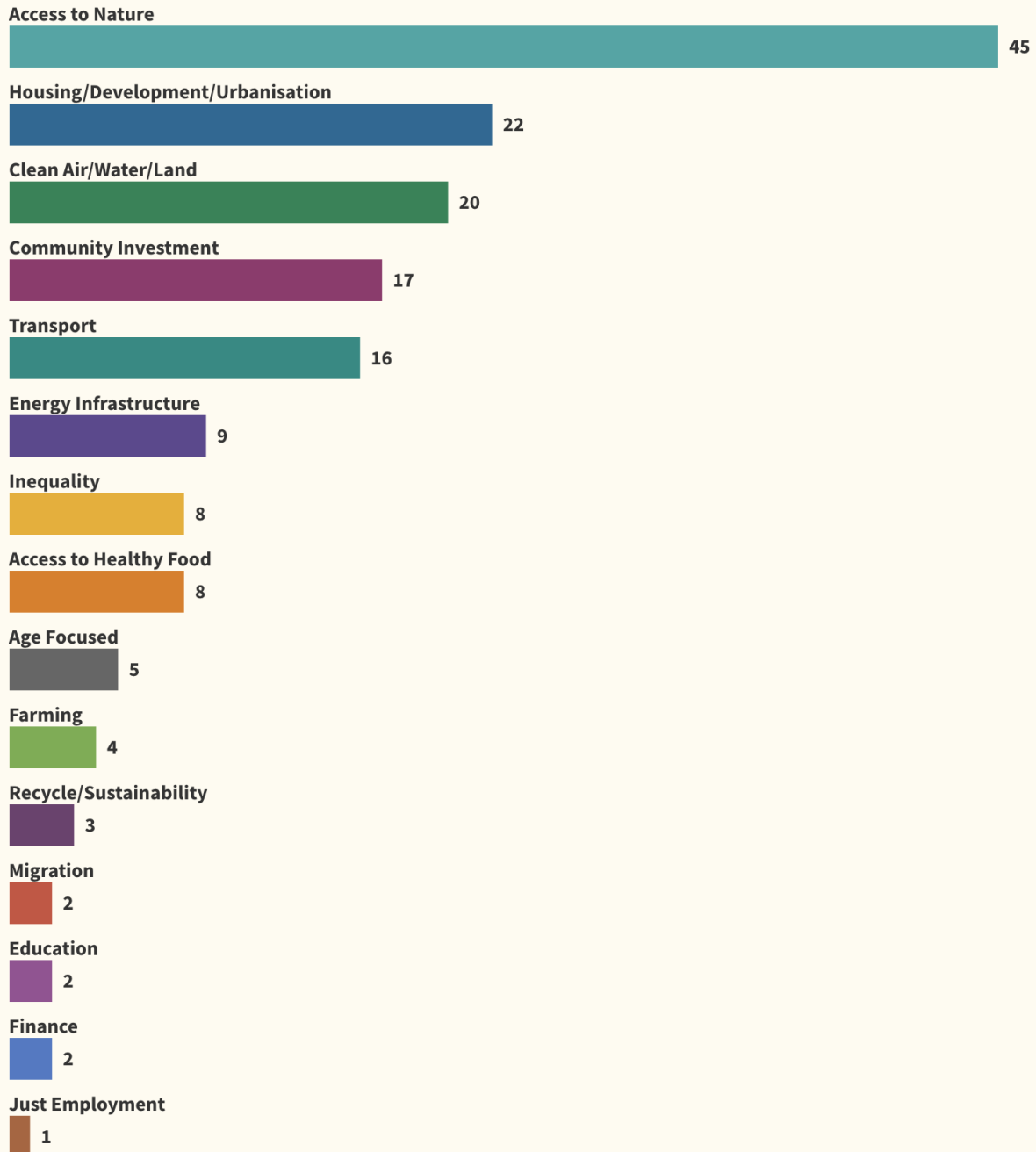


Observation

14/24 groups that cited air pollution were locally focused. Albeit a small sample the relationship between issues of air pollution and local actions is high. Local residents' lived experiences of air pollution should be understood when making assessments of air pollution levels in local areas.

Drivers/Areas of Focus

In order to accurately portray the drivers of community groups we created the following categories that reflected their activities. There is inevitably some overlap where a group can be focused on more than one issue, we endeavoured to identify them by their most evident driver.



Observation

Being in and around Nature is a clear driver. Nearly half (73) of the groups had areas of focus that relate to being outdoors and engaging with Nature. Showing that it is perhaps easiest to start by doing something with one's hands before engaging in other activities such as politics, economics or campaigning. One can also argue that Nature is the easiest mechanism through which people can engage with issues about the environment.

When directly interviewing a number of people from different groups the issues of improved urban planning policy frequently came up:

“

“...that's one of the crucial things about public health and environmental issues; people having and knowing they've got somewhere to live that they can afford, and that that is, in a sense an environmental issue, because it's to do with their well being and their health, but also issues that cheaper housing is usually much worse built in an environmental sense. There's also much less environmental policy in poor areas.”

- Adam Forman, Morning Lane People's Space

“

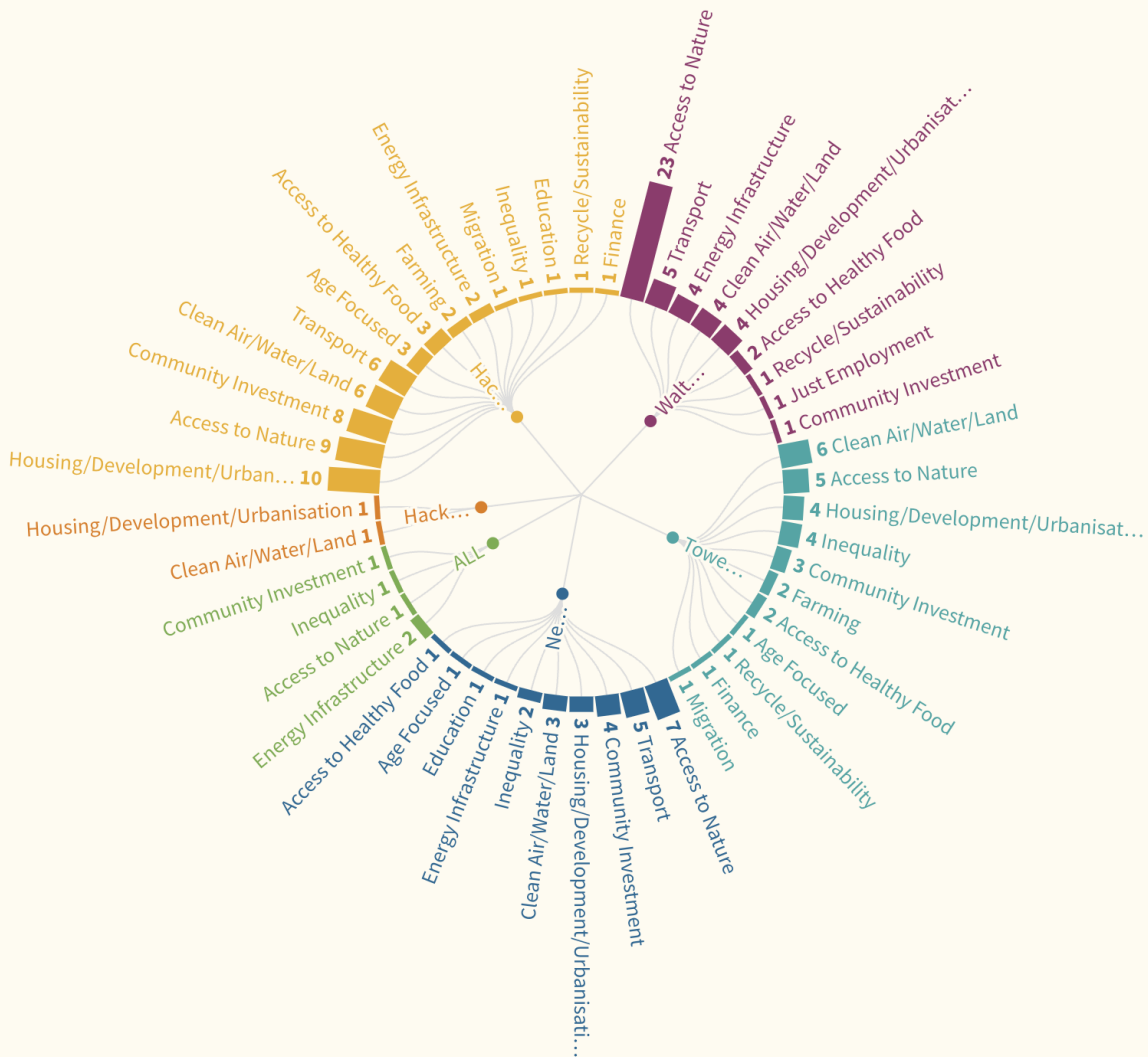
“And this is exactly the point we keep making to the Lea Valley Regional Park Authority. Why aren't you using the huge wealth of local knowledge? We know what we're talking about. We probably spend more time learning about it than you do now, you finished your studying 20 years ago. But the powers that be consistently ignore and gaslight local communities and that is where I think the anger comes from. If, for example, the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority says we're not doing what you want, because of this/because of a strategic political, economic reason. We might say we don't like that, we'll go away and think about how you could do it differently. But they're never that honest. They always put some flagrantly transparent excuses out there. And we're not stupid. So we think that is actually really important. It's another opportunity just to have a real step change in understanding that the people who live in communities and who spend goodness knows hours of their time on this stuff in addition to having a full time job on this stuff.”

- Abigail Woodman, Save Lea Marshes & East London Waterworks Park

We can therefore see that the main drivers for community groups are concerned with creating the adequate layers of governance and policy to protect natural space and prevent other built environment issues becoming an environmental issue.

Drivers/Areas of Focus by Local Authority

■ Newham
 ■ Hackney
 ■ ALL
 ■ Waltham Forest
 ■ Tower Hamlets
 ■ Hackney/Tower Hamlets

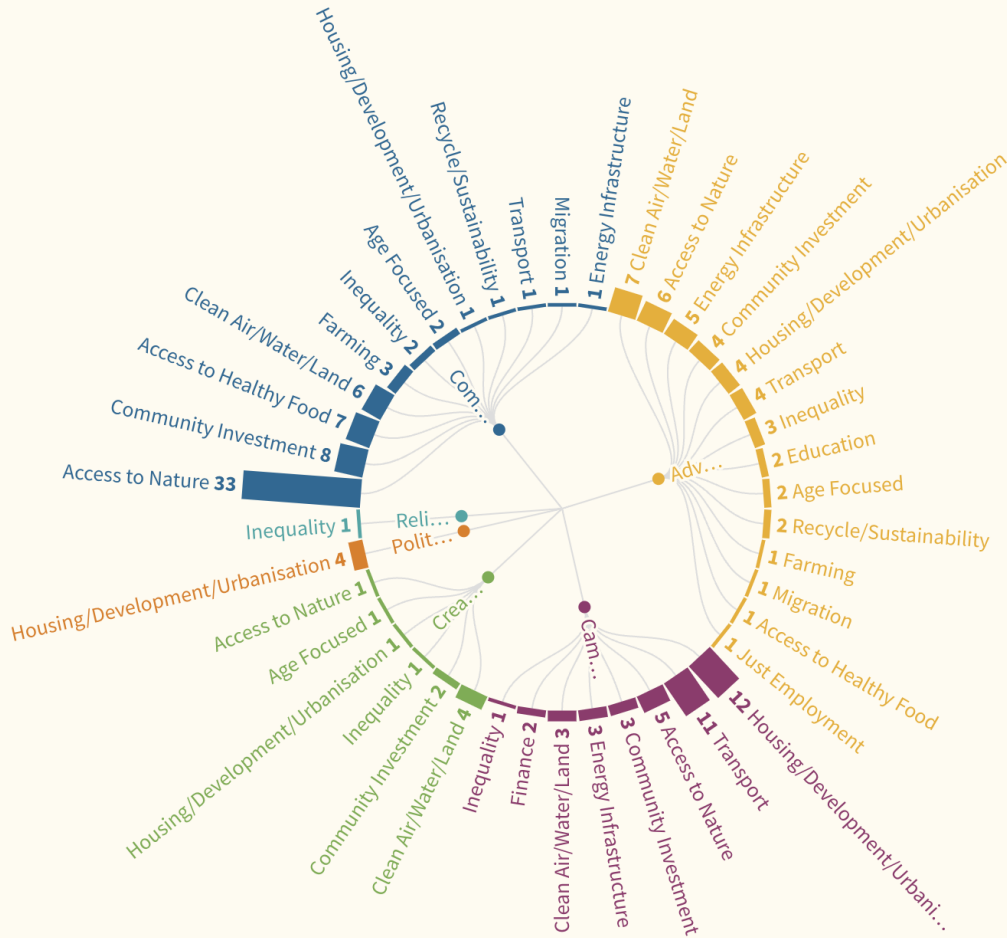


Observation

The Access to Nature groups of Waltham Forest stand out, which is likely due to the local authorities partnership with The Conservation Volunteers network (tcv.org.uk) demonstrating that investment partnerships yield activities. It can also be argued that Waltham Forest has a higher presence of green space above the other boroughs, therefore it is more a part of the local scene and identity. Before other local authorities and policy makers jump to conclusions and establish partnerships they should assess how local community groups engage with Nature; some people prefer to socialise in Nature in large groups whereas others are happy being by themselves. Insights from these surveys should determine the types of partnerships to form.

Relationship Between Organisational Type and Drivers/Areas of Focus

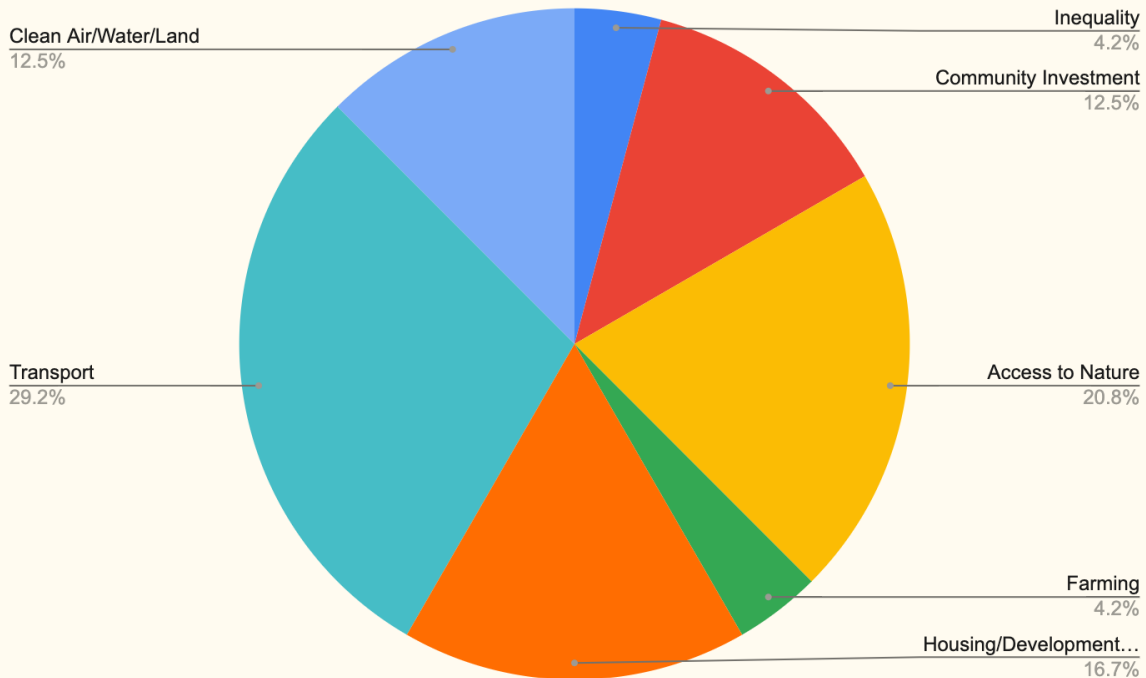
■ Community
 ■ Advocacy
 ■ Creative
 ■ Campaign
 ■ Religious
 ■ Political



Observation

Overwhelmingly Community Groups were more focused on *Access to Nature* than other group types. This is likely due to the areas of this study being exposed to high levels of urbanisation, with little protection or conservation for natural environments. Those groups that were 'Political' were solely focused on ensuring the local community had an active voice in change in local politics, namely around issues of urban planning.

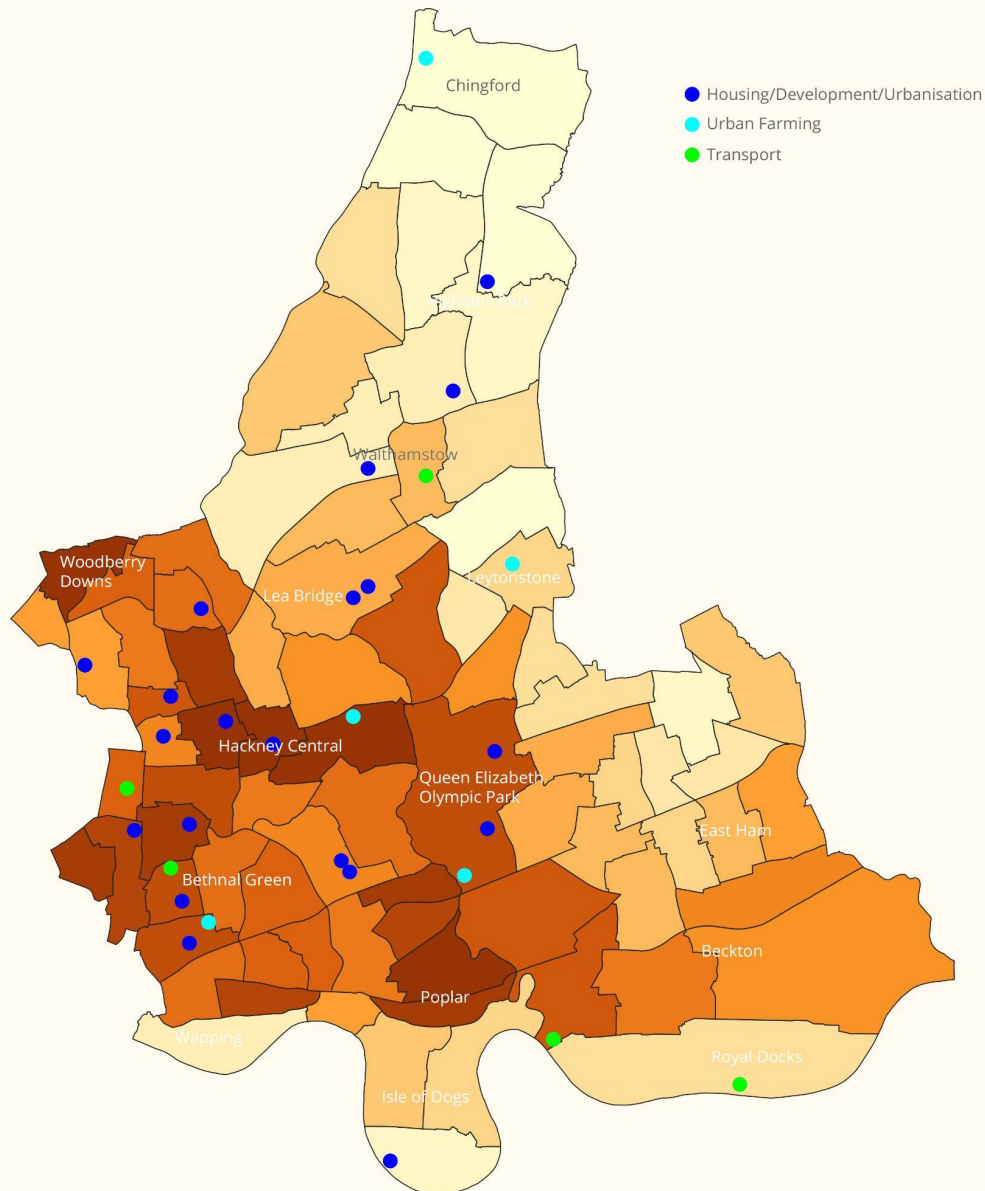
Drivers/Areas of Focus of those citing air pollution in their messaging



Observation

The issue of air pollution is a driver to many different types of activities and initiatives. There is a relatively even distribution across the categories. Interestingly, those citing air pollution activities were centred on issues advocating for a better built environment such housing/development (real estate)/urbanisation and the investment in local community infrastructure, rather than increasing outdoor activities such as farming or increasing access to Nature. Therefore, it would be remiss to assume that interventions to a community's relationship with air pollution is to merely add green space, it is a far more systemic issue. This result, albeit small, relates to further recommendations made in this report on the inclusion of community knowledge and intelligence directly in local/city authority policies that relate to air pollution.

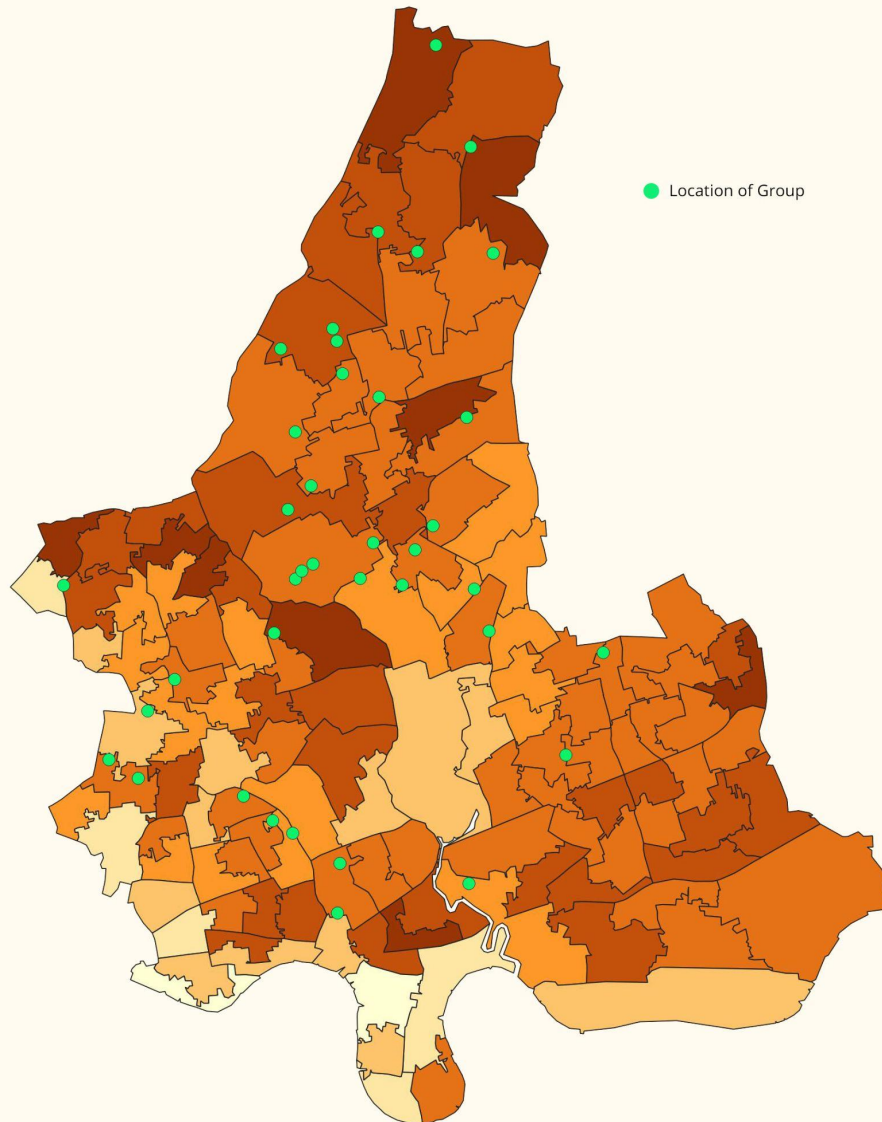
Location of Locally Focused Groups Concerned with Built Environment / Spatial Issues.



Observation

There is a higher proportion of activity in Hackney and Tower Hamlets with a much lower representation across Newham. This can be down to the current high levels of urbanisation, development and perceived gentrification in areas such as Hackney that have higher housing values. By default, where there is higher population density there are higher levels of activity. The colour grading of the map relates to Centric Lab's Biology Inequity Index shown at Ward level. The Index is a combined score of annual averages for air/noise/light pollution, summer heatwave data, and deprivation data. The darker the colour the greater the inequity. The colour scale is unique to the 4 boroughs. There is a higher clustering of activity in areas of health inequity demonstrating a link between habitat and action.

Location of Locally Focused Groups Working on the Rights of Access to Nature and Sensitivity to Climate Change Related Heat & Flooding.



Observation

There is no apparent relationship between an area's vulnerability to heat and flood risks from climate change and the local action of community groups. It would be remiss to state that the two are correlated, especially as only 10 of the 39 groups cite an environmental factor and only 5 actively cite 'climate change' as part of their reasoning for action. The locations are placed on top of a colour scaled geospatial map made from 'Climate Just' data published by the Environmental Agency and sourced from the [London Data Store](#). The darker the colour the greater the sensitivity to climate related issues of heat and flood using the metric 'ZSENS_IND'. The groups chosen were all focused on local issues rather than borough, region, city or nation wide.

Identifying with a Green New Deal

Did a group explicitly reference the Green New Deal in the communications?

Yes	31
No	126

Observation

It's clear to see that many groups did not explicitly or implicitly relate to the Green New Deal. For example, there are 64 groups concerned with Access to Nature and Clean Air/Water/Land, you would expect that all these groups would align themselves to a global movement, however they don't. There is no direct articulation on any website material. This is an opportunity for authorities to act on and align groups where possible.

Assessing a Group's Relationship to the Green New Deal Agenda

Organising a group's driver/area of focus into one of the 4 main Green New Deal themes

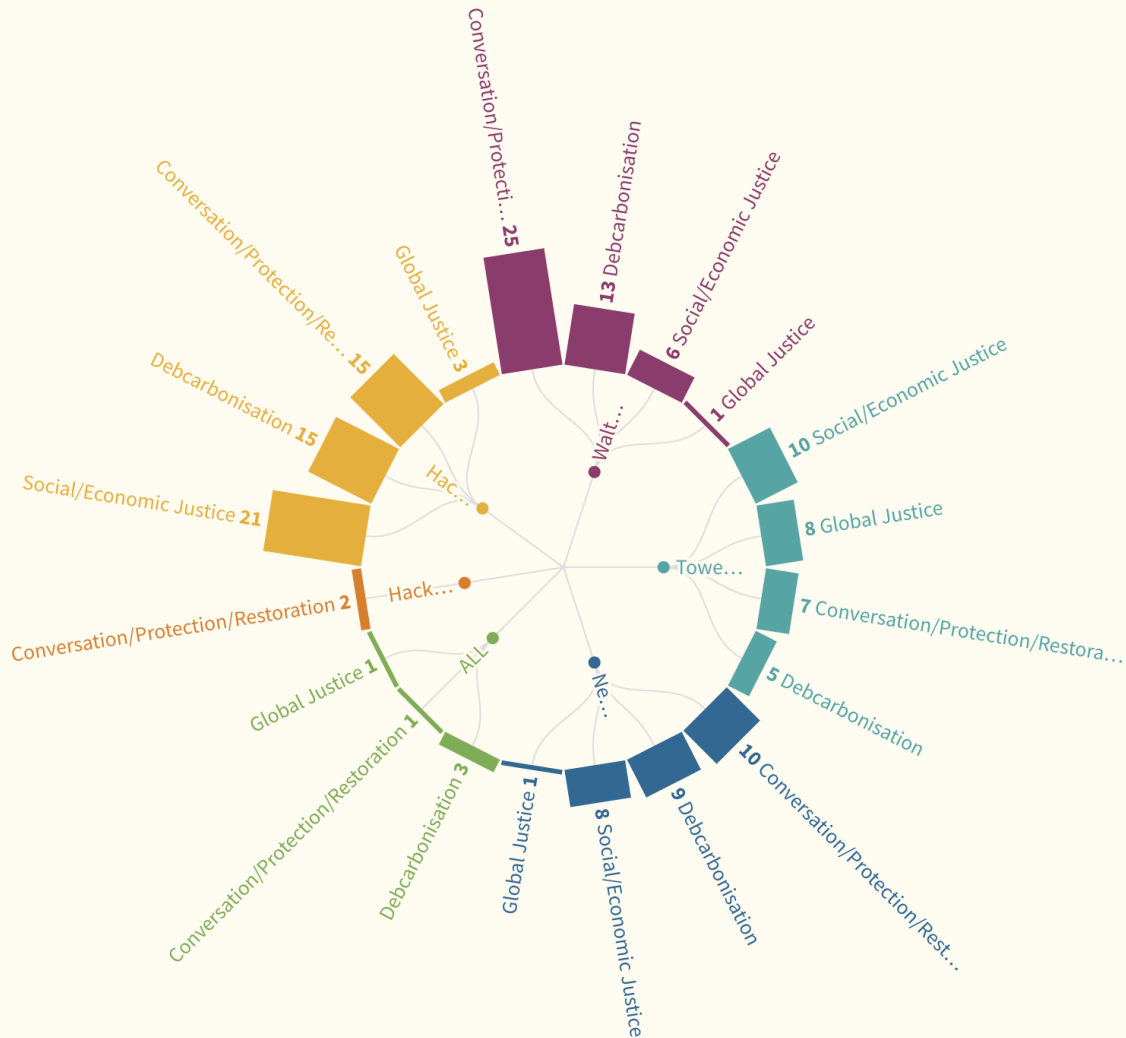
Conservation/Protection/Restoration	59
Social/Economic Justice	45
Decarbonisation	39
Global Justice	14

Observation

Groups that fell directly under the Green New Deal category of 'Conservation/Protection/Restoration' of natural spaces had the highest representation according to the research and Global Justice had the lowest. Global justice could be low due to many causes being focused on local issues. It is likely that if a second category were to be added many would overlap. It's hard to draw a definitive conclusion from this sample size.

Green New Deal categories across Local Authorities

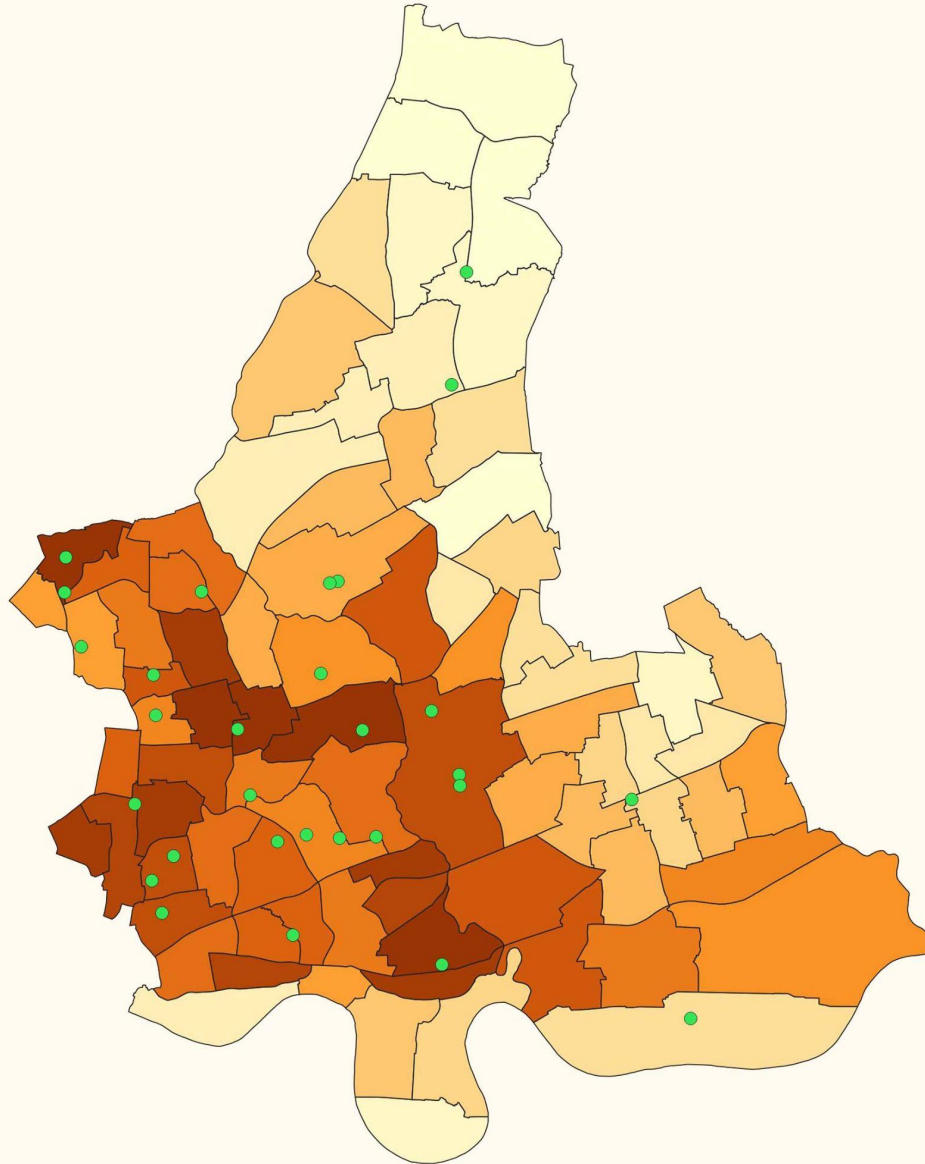
■ Newham ■ Hackney ■ ALL ■ Waltham Forest ■ Tower Hamlets ■ Hackney/Tower Hamlets



Observation

It's fair to say that the proximity and abundance of green/natural space in Waltham Forest is the leading reason as to why there are more groups there focused on the Conservation/Protection/Restoration of green space over other local authorities. All local authorities have similar demographic make-up so it would be remiss to use that metric as an indicator towards the type of activity. Hackney's long history of advocacy, anarchist, and rebellious community led work is shown in the leading GND category for the borough focusing on Social and Economic Justice.

Distribution of Locally Focused Groups who fall under Social/Economic Justice



Observation

The purpose of this exercise was to observe whether there is a link between the environmental inequality of an area and the groups who were working on local issues relating to Social and Economic Justice. It's fair to say there is a correlation shown by the proximity of green spots in the darker colour areas however it would be incorrect to say there is causation, where one is the direct result of another. The question to ask is *where are the actions of those in the "better" scoring areas, are they being manifested/discussed in different formats?* The colour grading of the map relates to Centric Lab's Biology Inequity Index shown at Ward level. The Index is a combined score of annual averages for air/noise/light pollution, summer heatwave data, and deprivation data. The darker the colour the greater the inequality. The colour scale is unique to the 4 boroughs.

Self Identification with Race, Racialisation and/or Racism in their Community Group

Yes	30
No	127

Observation

From the research one fourth of the groups explicitly identified with race, racialisation, and or racism. This could be related with the high population of racialised communities of the boroughs included in the study. Hackney for example, has a long history of Black activism, therefore it makes sense for race to be a strong component of environmental action for that borough.



“It's really difficult to be talking about just the climate because actually it's racial and social justice. As far as I'm concerned, you can't separate that and this is where I think climate justice is a good way of expressing this because it covers all those nuances. Rather than the environment. The capacity and time of people is impacted by social injustice. The mental health from the oppressions of racial justice also impact people's ability to speak about subjects. So you know, food and heating are more of an issue right now than the idea that they can be talking about the environment. They're at the frontline of financial injustice, as well as work injustice. So from our work, we recognise we can't really just be talking about climate tasks, or climate action. We really need to be looking at our community in a holistic way, for example, food is an environmental thing.”

- Bhavini Patel, PACCT & XR Hackney

Subcategories of Race, Racialisation or Racism

BAME	23
Black, Afro-Caribbean, Turkish	2
Bengali	1
Gypsy & Traveller	1
BIPOC	2

Observation

BAME was the highest subcategory within this study. However, it must be noted some may shorthand to BAME whilst being more focused on Black or Asian issues, a ground truthing study would shed more light.



“in the light of the authoritarian bills that are going through now, I will not be encouraging my community to give a digital footprint of themselves in any capacity, given the the environment that's being created for for brown and black people at this moment in time in this country, the hostile environment that's that's been targeted at us continuously is no good.”

- Bhavini Patel, PACCT & XR Hackney

Discussion

In this section we will be discussing the various observations, patterns and insights from the community interviews to draw out points of significance. They are expansions of the *observations* made in the previous chapter.

A Disconnect Between Environmental Factors and Drivers

Whilst air pollution was cited as a driver for many groups, none were centred around noise-, light-, heat-pollution, or flooding. This is surprising given their very straightforward personal impacts, such as causing discomfort at night, annoyance during the day, or very literal risks related to climate change and environmental injustice. For example, there were no groups advocating for quieter nights. This is interesting because in a [study on people's perceptions of air pollution](#) and their urban experience in Lewisham, south London, by Magali Thomson many of the respondents brought up 'noise' as an equal problem. When people are directly asked about how they experience their local environment through the senses they can go into great detail about it however it appears that it is not a key driver for a group of people to act on in its own right. Many institutions, such as local authorities, routinely measure the levels of noise recorded in an area as [chronic exposure to noise can lead to health problems](#). There is a disconnect between what is measured academically and statistically in terms of environmental experiences and the activities that people are doing. Encouraging collective organising around environmental factors can help align research, science, community action, with authority led policy changes. Providing resources and information can help underpin a group's agenda and potentially partner with other organisations who share similar goals.

What is likely to have been missed by the nature of this project exercise?

This lack of standardisation and reliance on digital presence affects several aspects of how we draw conclusions from this research. This research does not capture more grassroots conversations and advocacy that may be present in hyper local communities, such as via WhatsApp which became a common form of communities communicating with each other during the first wave of [pandemic related lockdowns](#). There are also activities (such as resale, car sharing, activities in community centres) that could be playing a part in environmental action that are not likely to be captured.

The place-based approach of this research project drives results to be *direct* community voices rather than *voices of community*, with the latter being an increasing issue as environmental and climate issues are faced universally by communities regardless of geographic proximity. As Saif Osmani who was interviewed for this project mentioned many of the people living in Bethnal Green are from Bangladesh and will have direct ties to families and communities at the forefront of the climate crisis.

Recommended Guidelines for Future Work

Centric Lab has identified guidelines to turn this initial work into a meaningful and equitable platform for community led projects focused on environmental action.

1. Create an environment where communities and individuals can share their lived experiences with openness.
2. Allow for identification to be flexible as identity is not static or ubiquitous across a person's life. A person's racialisation is only a small part of who a person is and it is not the only lens from which they experience life.

3. Create a platform for feedback, co-creating, and iteration. Communities will already have knowledges, strategies and data that can be built on. Don't start from scratch.
4. Always financially compensate people and communities for their time; interviews, consultancy, ideas, or contacts.

Identity & Status of Community Groups

89/157 groups were either an unincorporated group or had no apparent relationship to an entity on the Companies House and Charity Commission registers. This could be due to financial and bureaucratic difficulties of running legally incorporated entities, especially for those whose English is not their first language. When there are no assets involved, the need for law or legalities may be seen as an unnecessary cost. Finally, some communities may not know about the advantages of setting up their organisation through legal means, especially the relevance to fund raising. A future step for the GLA could be providing support or partnering with organisations like The Social Change Nest, who run a platform called Accountable, which gives unincorporated groups a safe and transparent way to receive funding and manage their money. They take care of the admin and finance, so groups "can focus on changing the world".

There were some missing groups from the study, most notably were groups that explicitly were centred around older people, children and LGBTQIA+ communities. Whilst there were exceptions, such as Mums for Lungs and Our Bow it is likely that environmental issues are discussed through other formats such as schools or large charities.

Through this research Centric Lab was only able to identify one environmental group/project that was *explicitly* related to LGBTQIA+ issues, Queer Botany. However, this cannot be interpreted as a lack of interest from this community. There could be more direct and pressing issues that are taking precedence, there could be a fear of persecution, or LGBTQIA+ peoples could be organising via other, larger, community groups.

This is a risk of research studies aiming to quantify groups by their ability to identify themselves. Bhavini Patel of PACCT & XR Hackney made this point very clear: "they might get put in a database and before you know it ends up in the hands of people that are actually going to come and cause trouble for those community members. The idea that we can just talk about the environment as this elusive thing detached to the struggle of being a community member is in itself, environmental racism because it means you've not understood what oppression is, and what climate justice is. Because there's no separation between the racial social climate justice."

Type of Institutions/Organisations

The types of organisations and groups that were particularly low in number were in the creative, religious and political categories. This could be due various reasons, firstly, religious organisations cover many various issues that may not be formally identified for a project such as this. For example a mosque could provide shelter for the unhoused in times of extreme weather, which is an environmental action, however, this may not be digitally advertised. Political groups, such as Neighbourhood Planning Forums, carry more social weight and responsibility, they are not as easy to set up and require more maintenance. Therefore, it could be argued that it is not a matter of *will* from citizens but barriers to entry are high. The lack of place-based creative groups/projects/organisations were perhaps the most alarming given the long established creative economies within these areas. There were numerous *one-off* creative projects that schools, religious institutions and galleries performed about the environment but were not community-led, which is an important characteristic of this project, and were thus excluded from the results.

Project / Activity Location

Hackney appears to have a higher representation of independent community groups. This can be down to the historic nature of 'anarchist' communities settling in the borough for over 50 years and their influence on the local authority. Equally, many areas in Tower Hamlets and Newham were once industrial land with comparatively newer communities living in them now, meaning that due to less time the areas have not developed an equal culture of community action. This could be down to how certain communities organise, such as through larger faith based entities. Therefore to draw too far a conclusion from this type of assessment could potentially miss other ways in which people organise.

There appears to be a low representation of community groups in areas such as Whitechapel, Stepney, Limehouse, Poplar and the Isle of Dogs. This is likely to be due to the vast majority of community-centred work coming from local religious places of worship. As evidenced by the East London Mosque & London Muslim Centre, conversations about climate change do take place. Therefore it would be inaccurate to conclude that a missing digital presence is indicative of no action or interest.

The Role of Urban Planning

Whilst only 22 of the 157 groups are explicitly focused on issues to do with urban development, housing and regeneration, it was a core focus in nearly all the interviews.

"The whole nested layer of planning documents that come down from national to London to local is a mess. We've just been upgraded to a town centre. That sounds good, right? But it's awful because that means we've got to have high density developments in a place that was never designed for them." - Heather Mendick, Morning Lane People's Space

"...you know, that's three or four hours of work for each consultation, and there are a lot of them. Community groups are being expected to give themselves again and again, they've got to step up to the plate. And if they don't do it, then it's going to be deemed that they're not interested or it didn't work or local people aren't worth listening to because they didn't get involved with a digital thing...And so I would rather the money was not spent on digital infrastructure. It was spent on a person and their job. Their job was to both be a person to be reached out to and to reach out to communities. I'd love that job...I don't need another place to tell someone what I'm struggling with. I need something to solve that problem." - Abigail Woodman, Save Lea Marshes & East London Waterworks Park

"We've got 35 cycle spaces on our estate. I calculated on the old London plan, the one that has just been superseded, I calculated that we would need for our estate, on their calculations, if we were a new build, 580 cycle parking spaces. But now post Grenfell fire regulations are much stricter and so if your bike is not locked in your home, or in one of these designated 35 spaces. Your bike will get an eviction notice and it's a tenancy issue. So there's that kind of thing, and we get sucked in." - Gerry Matthews, Wellington Estate Tenants Residents Association

"more consultations have been going on but you know, it's like consultations have led to what? Most people walk away just feeling frustrated at the end of it."

- Annie Chipchase, Tree Musketeers



"Looking at some of the new developments in Hackney, how could the developers have built something like these and asked people what they want? It's clear that local people haven't really been being consulted"

- Adam Forman, Morning Lane People's Space

Further in Adam's interview he expressed that whilst there is "consultation" taking place, it's very tokenistic, and can be gamified by those in charge:

"they make the mistake of putting very strict parameters about what they're going to ask questions about. So they're only going to get answers back to the priority areas that they've put down."

Many visions of a '15 Minute City' align to the agenda of a Green New Deal however as Simon Rix of Communities Before Construction notes they're falling foul of being "a bourgeois concept detached from communities". Simon said he used to be able to walk to work and asks how cleaners and key-workers fit into the '15 Minute City' model because otherwise they're excluded from this opportunity due to spiralling housing costs and often get told they're the problem because they travel a lot. He pointed to why key-worker housing wasn't protected or delivered more in more business-friendly places? Additionally pointing out that having work and light industrial spaces closer to communities would reduce emissions as the need to travel would decrease. Therefore, Local Planning Authorities need to address the role of urban planning as an emissions model by protecting certain asset classes, and encouraging others, ultimately moving away from a market-led approach to urban development.

The Green New Deal

Overwhelmingly, in both 1-2-1 interviews via Zoom, and through publicly available materials groups and people did not align themselves with a Green New Deal (GND). In the interviews when asked the question "how do you think your group aligns and identifies with a Green New Deal?" The majority replied with a version of "remind me what this is again" or "I don't even know what it is really". Only 31 of 157 made conscious statements of a direct relationship to the GND or inferred through their messaging. This would demonstrate a gap between long standing, well discussed top-down policy initiatives and what is discussed and practised at local levels.

This is an interesting observation as nearly every group is already delivering on many of the issues within the GND. Campaigning for housing rights and protection, for adequate housing, for insulating homes and retrofitting to save money on increasing energy bills are all part of a just transition for a GND. Protecting and conserving, and increasing access to nature is intrinsically related to a GND that includes health and wellbeing. Campaigning for racial justice, migration justice, and gender based justice are also widely acknowledged factors of a Green New Deal. Therefore, a potential disconnect between what policy makers are aiming to deliver and what communities are already doing. Many are already delivering a GND but it is not being "owned" under the banner of a specific top-down policy initiative. It would appear there is a responsibility on policy makers to ensure that they don't create projects, funding streams, and policies that would destabilise existing work.

"The term the green New Deal means different things to different people. There seem to be several green new deals. I was quite familiar with the Labour Party definition of the Green New Deal in the 2019 manifesto. But for me, what it means is a completely different outlook on how you organise society really, and that we've got to prepare to organise society in a way which sustains the environment rather than organising the society that sustains profit. But most people don't see it like that. They just see it that we can just tweak things and we can



make money having solar panels made in Vietnam shipped here, made in very bad working conditions and have them shipped here in containers. Is that really a Green New Deal? No, that's just a green veneer on the same old and inequity, really. So for me, that's, it's ordering society in a way that sustains the environment.

- Adam Forman, Morning Lane People's Space

"What we're trying to do with PACCT is to empower people to create their own sustainable work. So in some ways they might be creating their own jobs for themselves. So in that sense, it relates to how to create a local economy and a local job market that really comes from the local needs of the community." Lizzy Mace of PACCT articulating how a GND can be a bottom up initiative is the right support structures and funding was available.

It's important to stress that any form of GND has to be one steeped in justice as Bhavini Patel of PACCT & XR Tower Hamlets stated to us. *"So unless a green New Deal understands the oppressions past and present, and equity and impact, then a Green New Deal is only going to really service the rich again. It's a good start that we're talking about a Green New Deal. But unless it's based in justice, then it's going to be environmental racism all over again...can someone come and test the air pollution on a weekly basis in our community? How can we keep a track of the impact when we don't even have the measurements, right? So how are we going to be talking about a Green New Deal when you don't even measure the impact of what's actually happening now?"*

With thanks to those who gave their time to support this research project:

Bhavini Patel, PACCT & XR Hackney

Lizzy Mace, PACCT

Simon Rix, Communities Before Construction

Heather Mendick, Morning Lane People's Space

Adam Forman, Morning Lane People's Space

Saif Osmani, Bengali East End Heritage Society

Abigail Woodman, Save Lea Marshes & East London Waterworks Park

Annie Chipchase, Tree Musketeers

Barrie Stradling, Our Bow & The Geezers Club

Gerry Matthews, Wellington Estate Tenants Residents Association

Helga Lane, Wellington Estate Tenants Residents Association

All interviewees were contacted prior to the publication of this report and consented to their quotes being used as listed above.



Image source: ["My Life Through A Lens"](#)

Suggestions

This database and the corresponding insights give an opportunity to policy makers and other stakeholders how community-led projects around environmental concerns, particularly from or for marginalised groups, are currently creating missions and outcomes relating to the Green New Deal.

Key Points

General

- To accept that at the root of environmental issues are social, racial, and economic injustices. There is already an abundance of work in these sectors and strategic support will lead to more impact on, and unilateral support, of environmental concerns in London.
- Develop a better understanding in how community groups communicate internally and externally, such as through WhatsApp groups. This may uncover a number of more informal groups. This could influence what type of services to offer via an Insights Hub and the digital complexity of material.
- There is an opportunity to engage a wide audience into future Green New Deal policies as it has the potential to bond groups together and align Local Authorities to Communities. However, mitigating the risk of it becoming a top-down exercise that deviates community groups away from their causes is crucial. This is likely to be achieved by having a series of loose principles, rather than rules, that are supported by funding mechanisms.

Urban Planning Policy

- Understand where new levels of local governance, led by communities, can speed up processes.
- Provide more human resources to support communities navigate complex issues such as the urban planning system. [Planning Aid London](#) is continually overrun with enquiries and interviewees expressed their belief for this type of service to be a local government issue as a basic tenet of democracy. 4/10 interviewees mentioned [Just Space](#) as an integral part of their work.
- Provide information to community groups on where exactly within the planning system environmental issues can be addressed. This can be done by showing what is the role of a local authority (e.g. Hackney Council) and what is the responsibility of central authority (e.g. The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities). This helps a community group understand where to direct their actions and concerns and what levels of agency they have in creating change.
- There needs to be more communication between local authority policy departments; many of the obstacles to a citizen first London stems from the perceived undemocratic nature of the planning system. Understanding where redundancies exist and the ability to include community intelligence in decision making processes can result in quicker impacts.

Providing New Services

- Research further whether community groups would benefit from legal resources and professional advice on governance/company structures that may support the ability for further funding.
- Research further whether a “fintech” solution would be of use to community groups for accounting would be of use to support funding opportunities. Whilst the philanthropic and charitable sector are crucial to London’s community ecosystem, there are barriers to entry due to the regulations in place. It can take a lot of time to provide this type of information, which some smaller unincorporated groups don’t have access to.

Digital

- To acknowledge that any future technology product is not built around *likes* but *needs*. The interview process demonstrated more of what communities needed: strategic support on economic, legal and policy based issues. They would *like* to meet more people however they *need* to have an impact on their causes.
- Any digital resource should be about saving community groups time - such as finding the right contacts in local government, or legal representation, or simply being able to contact other groups. Many community groups are supported by volunteers therefore are time poor when coming up against larger organisations who have full time well employed staff.
- Considerations of any new digital infrastructure have to be considered through the lens of digital exclusion; both type/sophistication of tools but also lack of digital resources such as wi-fi at home, smartphones and access to computers. This is particularly true for older citizens who prefer to meet in person and would hope there is training available to navigate ever increasing complex digital systems. A number of interviewees demonstrated the importance of digital connectivity and physical spaces. There is a clear alignment between the *Digital Access for All* mission and three others; *High Streets for All*, providing alternative places on the high street that aren't just consumption focused and a place for communities to come together; *Mental Health & Wellbeing*, allowing people the mental headspace to discuss these issues is crucial to a sense of belonging; *Strong Communities*, as evidenced by the above even in a digital world people like to gather, especially when you already have proximity to each other.

Future Research

- To provide resources and directly ask community groups about how their activities relate to environmental stressors and risks of air pollution, noise pollution, light pollution, heat pollution and flood risk in order to bring communities lived experiences and insights into academic and statistical research.
- This research should be opened up to allow for non-place specific projects and activities, to allow for *community voices* rather than *a community's voice* to be included. This will likely increase the number of *creative* groups in particular whose outputs vary such as *Propagate* and *Sound Advice*; increase more advocacy groups who are sharing knowledge such as *Just Space* and *Action for Conservation*; increase more groups providing environmental services to communities such as *Energy Garden* and *Community Energy London*. A point worthy of its own sentence is the need to increase the wider voices of justice. Injustice's are not held to a single postcode, the commonalities of structural racism and classism are experienced across multiple geographies. The foundations of groups such as *Union of Justice* and *Decolonising Economics* are steeped in racial, social, economic, health and environmental injustice. These factors underpin their wider message about reorganising our society. If the Green New Deal does not reflect these issues then it will not gain the traction it needs for success.
- To explore the role faith organisations have in how people congregate over issues such as the local environment.

Groups Whose Insights can Shape a Future Community Insights Hub

By Type

Advocacy	Sustainable Hackney	Save Lea Marshes
Campaign	Morning Lane People's Space	Tree Musketeers
Community	Forest Recycling Project	Hackney Social Radio
Creative	Voices That Shake!	Hostile Housing
Political	Isle of Dogs Neighbourhood Planning Forum	Roman Road Bow Neighbourhood Plan
Religious	East London Mosque and London Muslim Centre	

By Output

Creative Projects	Queer Botany	Foundation for Future London
Forums/Collectivist Action	Save Ridley Road	East London Waterworks Park
Inclusive Events & Activities	Coffee Afrik CIC	Young Hackney
Knowledge Sharing	Bengali East End Heritage Society	Roman Road Community Land Trust
Physical Activity	Growing Communities	Newham Green Gym
Research/Reports	Communities Before Construction - Play Strategy	Stop the Silvertown Tunnel Coalition
Services	Stokey Energy	The HEET Project



Appendix

Research Approach

Here we set out the research approach that guided this project. As this was a desktop study with some, but limited, contact with those being written about we had to set some frameworks to ensure accurate assessments and conclusions to be drawn.

Centric Lab Principles For Research

In order to establish an equitable relationship between the GLA and communities, a set of working principles have been identified.

- Ground Truthing
 - Ground truthing is cross referencing the data with the lived experience to create insights. This is an essential next step for this type of desktop research. Ten interviews were conducted to bring an element of ground truthing to the project.
- Limits of Digitisation
 - Marginalised communities may not have access to a digital presence due to time or money constraints. Secondly, they may not want a digital presence due to immigration status, legal restrictions, or social constraints. Therefore not all communities will be found through digital research.
- Informed Consent
 - Communities should be asked for informed consent. A detailed explanation of the project was put out via social media and communities were given the opportunity to ask questions directly to the researchers. All communities were informed about their inclusion in the database and given the option to opt out.
- Transparency and Access
 - Transparency is a pillar of equitable communication. This was reflected in the town hall which was open for anyone wanting to know more about the researchers and project.

Centric Lab Methods for Research

The following are the steps taken to identify the various communities working on environmental action.

Step 1: Defining Environmental Action

The first step was defining the pathways for environmental action. As it was said in the introduction, communities often have intersecting challenges, therefore, it was important to identify all the issues related to environmental action.

- Direct Pathway
 - a. Identify communities who are involved in direct pathways of environmental action. This can include advocating for clean air, energy poverty, biodiversity restoration, the expansion of green spaces, or growing food.
- Systemic Pathway
 - a. Identify communities working on systemic factors that relate to environmental action. This can include advocacy for adequate social housing, worker rights, fair wages, urban infrastructure or social infrastructure. These systemic pathways are as important to recognise as they impact a community's ability to participate in environmental action. For example, free childcare can allow a guardian to find time to acquire a skill, such as learning how to grow food.

Step 2: Mapping the factors for each pathway to create different categories.

- Community Groups and Social Change
 - These groups create social infrastructure, they have three links to environmental action.
 - Creating time to spend in green spaces
 - Social support can help mitigate against the mental burden of environmental inequity.
 - Creating more time and space to prepare community and neighbourhood to create strategies for environmental action.
 - Creating time and space for self education on environmental issues.
- Social Justice
 - These groups advocate for a specific social issue or group, they link to environmental action through creating social inclusion.
 - Social exclusion makes people more vulnerable to environmental issues. For example, Trans Peoples are more likely to experience insecure employment, which makes them more vulnerable to being homeless. Living on the streets is becoming harsher as London faces more acute weather.
- Climate crises and Environment
 - These groups have a direct pathway to environmental action.
 - They are taking action against a singular or multiple environmental pollutants such as air pollution.
 - They are advocating for access to Nature; safer/cleaner green spaces, more access to allotments, or biodiversity restoration.
 - They are directly preparing communities for a severe weather event such as flooding, storms, or heatwaves.
- Health Equity
 - These groups are working on health related inequities, these groups have three links to environmental action.
 - They are advocating for a specific health issue that relates to the environment, such as a new building site that is causing a rise in respiratory issues.
 - A group advocating for access to healing and wellbeing practises. For instance a neurodiversity group advocating for equitable and safe access to green space.
 - Or a group linked to a specific health issue. For instance an elderly group experiencing dementia advocating for access to gardening allotments as part of their therapy.

Step 3: Cross checking against the Green New Deal

The categories were then cross checked against the 4 key elements of the Green New Deal; decarbonisation, social & economic justice, land protection and conservation, and global justice ([source](#)).

How The Data Was Collected

Due to the 'Plan B' Covid-19 restrictions in place for most of its duration, this project was a desktop study and focused on working remotely. All data was gathered through online means and digital communications.

Limitations

The risk and limitations of such a method is that not all groups have a digital presence we can access.

Organisation of the different community groups

The data was organised into multiple types that were a combination of a group's own expression through their web based material and the categories identified in the "Methods for Research" section. The breakdown of the classifications are:

Organisation Type	<p>This helps identify whether a group is centred around advocacy, campaigning, representation, or creative. Their definitions are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Advocacy - making a general statement(s) about issues; ● Community - concerned with the quality of life of a particular community of people; ● Campaign - explicitly focused on a key issue relating to policy, politics and practice in their local area; ● Creative - whose inputs and outputs are focused on solely creative projects in the arts; ● Political - whose purpose is to represent and deal with issues of a political nature ● Religious - an organisation related to a faith group
Legal Status	<p>This helps to understand the legal status of groups as this can be a hindering factor to growth and impact. The definitions chosen for this project were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Unincorporated ● Community Interest Company ● Registered charity ● Special Project (often a sub-division of a larger entity) ● Incorporated Non Profit Company ● Registered society ● Cooperative Society ● Incorporated Company
Location	<p>Whether a group is physically based or working in a specific area</p>
Borough	<p>As a means of understanding the general spread across the four boroughs</p>
Specific Place Based	<p>Answered in Yes/No format as a means of understanding whether a group was focused on a specific geography or a more generalist area</p>
Scale	<p>The scale at which groups were working</p>
Inward/Outward facing	<p>To understand whether a group is concerned only with the activities of a select group of people or open to the wider community.</p>
Outputs	<p>The outputs of their works fitting into the categories of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reports/Research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Producing written reports and literature ● Forums/Collectivist Action <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Collective work against a particular issue, seeking to make change.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Inclusive Events & Activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Running a diverse range of activities across a broad range of issues, not focusing on a single issue. ● Creative Projects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Primarily producing creative outputs such as art, music, film, or theatre on a regular basis. ● Knowledge Sharing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ An output focused around sharing ideas and resources to people without a clear directive. ● Physical Activity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A group whose activities centre around physical activities ● Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Directly providing community related services about environmental issues
Operational Structure	To understand the nature of how they were organised internally.
Relationship to Green New Deal Principles	As a means of aligning a group to one of the macro categories of the Green New Deal. At the beginning of this study a review of the various definitions of the Green New Deal was performed whereby 4 categories were applicable to this project: decarbonisation, social/economic justice, global justice, land protection and conservation.
Driver/Area of Focus	The activities that a group focused on, such as increasing access to nature for people or collectively advocating for policy change on urban planning.
Self Identification with the Green New Deal	Through literature, did the group explicitly state their alignment to a form of Green New Deal or use language thereof.
Perspective of Injustice	Whether the group expressed an awareness of injustice.
Established around a specific environmental factor	Whether the group was established around a specific factor to start with, such as collectively organising around air pollution.
Citing Environment factor	In broader terms what environmental factor[s] were the group expressing as a concern.
Self Identification of Race/Racism	Whether the group self-identified with issues on race and racism.
Specific Racialised Community	Of which specific racialised community/communities were the representative and in support of.
Time based Nature of Organisation	The extent to which they are focused on issues in the short, medium and long term. Something that is classified as <i>Now</i> refers to the immediacy of the issues the group are working towards, something that is classified as <i>Near Term</i> refers to their work being concerned with impacting lives over the next few years, and <i>Future</i> refers to work that is more concerned with a longer

	time horizon such as generational impact.
--	---

What has been omitted from the collection process

In assessing the findings of this report it’s important to remember there will be groups excluded from the parameters of this research project that could be included in future opportunities. It is therefore likely that there are more community led groups in these areas of London who will engage on environmental issues and broaden potential funding and policy impact.

For this project these are the four areas of omission.

- Community-led projects that were a “one-off” as the focus for this project is long-term environmental action
- If the project was not specific to a local neighbourhood as those are usually led by external organisations. This project focuses on community-led local projects.
- Thirdly, projects that showed evidence of being inactive since 2018 were omitted, to ensure this project focused on current activity. It is important to note that an out of date website was not the sole indication as many organisations are still active but do not have the resources to constantly update websites.
- Organisations that did not focus either directly or systematically on the Green New Deal agenda or environmental action as identified in the “Methods for Research” section were also omitted. For example, a community group focusing only on community events, whilst it is social infrastructure, there is no focus on either freeing time or directly on environmental action.

Understanding racialised and marginalised labelling (e.g. BAME / LGBTQA+, and the limitations of desktop based research)

Community groups will have their individual and community-based relationships with environmental issues. These relationships affect the way in which they create the identities of their campaigns. Even with good intentions, we run a risk of alienating, erasing, mislabelling, and simplifying the underlying complexity of communities if we are overly reliant on assigning labels to community-led groups tackling environmental concerns.

For example, there will be benefits for some groups to be identified as BAME because of the nature of their advocacy and the multi-ethnic make up of their community. However, another group may choose to explicitly identify as Black or Bangladeshi because of a specific history, culture, or social practises that create specific issues to this particular group. In these cases putting these groups together under the BAME umbrella, not only is inaccurate but it creates erasure. People may also be part of these groups but not automatically attach these identities to their environmental issues and concerns, therefore categorising them as BAME will not be useful. Finally it should be noted that some communities may feel that labels such as BAME are categorisations that are imposed on them by funders looking for specifically labelled projects, however this may not reflect their entire focus.

LGBTQA+ communities may also choose to focus on one particular community. For example, trans women may face different environmental needs than others under the LGBTQA+ umbrella, this report will reflect this.

Taking these parameters into consideration, this report moved away from creating assumed categorisations and only listed labels when they were specifically identified by the organisation.



Data Analysis

Given the limitations of a digital study, the most accurate analysis was creating findings based on observations from the databases rather than a statistical analysis.

Direct correlations and other statistical analysis were avoided as the organisations represented in the filtration systems are not a complete representation of community-led projects as some groups may not have a digital presence.

Glossary

Here is a list of key terms used throughout the report.

Planetary crisis

It is more accurate to speak of the planetary crisis than climate change as it includes the environmental degradation, biodiversity loss, contamination, as well as extreme weather events.

Inequity

We are using the word inequity rather than inequality, as the distribution is not random, it is driven by systemic discriminating factors such as misogyny, ableism, racism, ageism, homophobia, transphobia, and classism.

Race

Race is an illegitimate concept and is not supported by biology. Therefore it is more accurate to refer to people as racialised, as it implies the phenomena of structural racism. It is the racialisation of a person that causes social inequities as the race of a person does not actually exist.

Multi-ethnic working class

The various ethnicities that comprise the working class, this is a more accurate representation of who faces economic inequality.

Lived experience

The experience and knowledges acquired from inhabiting a specific place, community and neighbourhood.

Community sovereignty

Each community has the ability to govern themselves and are best poised to make decisions that affect their life.