

Shaping Wellbeing in Kidbrooke: Community Voices - Shared Priorities

Kidbrooke Games and
Healthy City Lab Project
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Project Lead

Imane Bkiri, Co-founder
and Co-Director
Kidbrooke Games Club
CiC

Community Lead

Vidushi Khosa,
Co-founder and
Co-Director
Kidbrooke Games Club
CiC

Project Partners

Menna T. Jones
University of Greenwich

Rami Shamseen
University of
Greenwich

Executive Summary

This report presents the findings of a research project carried out in Kidbrooke examining residents' perceptions of the barriers contributing to persistent health inequalities and social isolation in the area.

Participatory Mapping Sessions highlighted the following themes:

- High-risk areas and traffic hazards impacting physical safety and contribute to stress
- Valued community and green spaces supporting mental and social health
- Social meeting points and informal spaces fostering connection and belonging
- Opportunities to improve walkability, cycling, and independent mobility

The Community Voices session reinforced that residents' lived experiences are central to shaping healthier, safer, and more inclusive urban environments, and should directly inform local decision making and planning

From the recommendations identified by residents, ten key actions have the potential to positively impact health and well-being, and they are:

1. Invest in Street Lighting
2. Increase visible police patrols
3. Preserve and maintain green spaces
4. Promote family-friendly recreational programs
5. Upgrade Pedestrian and Cycling Routes
6. Implement traffic calming measures
7. Organise family-friendly recreational activities
8. Invest in more accessible community spaces
9. Create a programme of community activities for all ages
10. Give residents the opportunity to use public spaces

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Introduction

In 2025, Kidbrooke Games Club CIC was awarded funding from the Greenwich Healthier Communities Fund to deliver a project with two complementary aims: to gather and amplify community voices around health inequalities and social isolation, and to bring local residents together through activities designed to support physical health, mental wellbeing, and social connection. The aim of the project was to capture the community's perspective on improving health and wellbeing in their area, guided by the simple principle: "Live well - Be well - Feel well".

Through the 14 week project, 'Kidbrooke Games and Healthy City Lab', a programme of participatory and intergenerational research was delivered. The project engaged local communities across Kidbrooke including children, families, carers and socially isolated residents.

The project developed from the Kidbrooke Games Club, where weekly board games and holistic health sessions were held, providing an established and trusted space for community engagement. It entailed 12 weekly sessions, two specialist sessions on participatory mapping and a Community Voices Workshop, delivered in conjunction with the University of Greenwich.

This report presents findings from the consultation carried out during the participatory mapping sessions alongside insights from the community voices workshop. During these sessions, residents, children, adults and older generations shared their perceptions of how they would like to be more active, their issues around personal safety and how they would like more opportunities to come together as a community in Kidbrooke.

The report begins with an overview of the methodology followed by key findings and priorities identified by residents along with a set of actionable recommendations.

Methodology

The methodological approach was community-led with academic input from a researcher at the University of Greenwich to ensure rigor while maintaining community ownership.

As the project builds on the success of Kidbrooke Games Club existing weekly activities (such as chess clubs and cognitive engagement activities), it benefited from strong existing community trust and participation.

The consultation engaged a diverse cross-section of Kidbrooke residents, this included: Women, children, families, older adults, and long-term residents.

2.1 Participatory Mapping Sessions

The participatory mapping sessions were led by Kidbrooke Games Club and designed to capture residents' lived experiences of Kidbrooke. Through facilitated group discussions and place-based mapping activities, participants were asked to identify local assets, challenges, and opportunities that influence health and wellbeing in their everyday lives.

2.2 Community Voices Workshop

The Community Voices session was a participatory workshop designed to share experiences, discuss ideas, and gain insights from residents about life and wellbeing in Kidbrooke. Participants engaged in open discussions about local challenges, opportunities, and priorities affecting wellbeing, safety, mobility, and access to community spaces.

The session was enriched by an academic lecture on "Designing Healthy Communities: How Urban Space Shapes Wellbeing?" delivered by a researcher from the University of Greenwich, partner of our project. This provided a framework for understanding how urban design, public spaces, mobility, and social infrastructure impact physical, mental, and social health, while ensuring that the discussion remained community-led-focused.

Key Findings and Shared Priorities

The findings presented here are drawn from both the participatory mapping sessions and during the Community Voices Workshop. Key themes include:

- personal safety,
- improving Kidbrooke walkability and cycling friendly, especially for families,
- the need for an improved public transport,
- safe and more accessible parking,
- more opportunities for community social events, either in formal community venues or in informal, public spaces,
- and access to nature and wildlife.

These findings have been set out as priorities, and are given below with specific related recommendations that were suggested by the residents included:

Priority 1: Safety through the interaction of mobility, security, and public space (Physical & Mental Health)

Residents reported safety as a systemic issue requiring integrated approaches across mobility approaches, security, and public space design. Key identified points by residents are:

- Busy main roads pose a risk to physical health by increasing the likelihood of accidents for pedestrians, cyclists, and children.
- Traffic congestion and fast-moving vehicles reduce walkability, creating stress and anxiety (mental health)
- Three fatal accidents have occurred due to high-risk road conditions
- Parents report constant vigilance for children, affecting both parental stress and child independence
- Historic incidents and serious crimes shape perceptions of danger, influencing use of public space and social interaction

Recommendation:

1. Integrated interventions are required to improve physical safety, reduce stress, and enable active mobility.

Priority 2: Evening Safety for Women and Girls (Mental Health & Social Wellbeing)

Residents highlighted that women and girls face constraints on walking freely in the evening, which impacts on limiting social participation. Reasons for this fear were explained as being based on:

- A violent crime against a woman four years ago continues to impact perceived safety, causing stress and fear

- Low lighting, poor visibility, and antisocial behaviour reduce confidence
- Unsafe spaces hinder social interaction and mental wellbeing

Recommendations:

1. Enhanced street lighting and visibility
2. Safe routes connecting homes, parks, hubs, and transport
3. Targeted measures addressing women and girls' safety

Priority 3: Walkability for Families and Children (Physical & Mental Health)

Residents identified walkability as a critical determinant of health, however at the moment:

- Parents reported fear of allowing children walk to school alone, limiting independent mobility and physical activity
- All residents considered that main roads, crossings, and footpaths are often unsafe
- All residents wanted continuous footpaths, safer crossings, and reduced traffic speeds, to support both physical activity and mental wellbeing

Recommendations:

1. Upgrade pedestrian infrastructure (continuous footpaths, safe crossings, reduced traffic speed).
2. Create child-friendly walking routes to schools and parks.
3. Implement traffic calming near schools and residential areas.
4. Promote safe active travel programs to encourage walking and cycling.

Priority 4: Connectivity and safe movement networks (Physical & Social Health)

Residents identified a lack of connectivity between different parts of Kidbrooke, which reduced their participation in community life:

- Disconnected pedestrian and cycling routes reduce usability and safety, limiting healthy mobility and social interaction
- Community members face limited access to parks, schools, and community hubs in the evening due to safety concerns and poor lighting in some areas, restricting opportunities for physical activity, social interaction, and stress reduction.
- Movement networks should integrate safety, accessibility, and visibility, rather than relying on isolated interventions, to promote both active travel and confidence in public space for all.

Recommendations:

1. Improve linkages between key destinations (parks, hubs, schools) to create continuous, safe routes.
2. Ensure evening accessibility with lighting, signage, and safe pathways.
3. Integrate safety features into movement networks, not just isolated interventions.

Priority 5: Public transport provision (Physical & Mental Health)

Residents reported that the infrequent public transport services significantly reduce access to employment, healthcare, and social activities. This limitation:

- Restricts physical mobility, forcing reliance on cars and reducing opportunities for active travel such as walking or cycling.
- Increases stress and anxiety, as residents worry about missing appointments or being stranded, especially in the evenings and mornings.
- Limits social participation, reducing opportunities to meet friends, engage in community activities, or access support networks, which can contribute to social isolation and lower overall wellbeing.

Recommendations:

1. Increase frequency of bus and train services.
2. Improve safety and lighting to bus stops and stations to encourage active travel

Priority 6: Cycling infrastructure (Physical & Mental Health)

Parents highlighted a strong desire for their children to be able to cycle, however:

- Lack of protected cycling routes prevents families from active travel to schools, parks, and community spaces
- Cycling on unsafe roads increases stress and perceived risk
- High conflict with vehicles reduces confidence and uptake of active mobility

Recommendation:

1. Develop a connected network of protected cycling routes to support physical health and reduce stress.

Priority 7: Safe and Accessible Parking (Physical, Mental, and Social Health)

Residents highlighted that parking availability in Kidbrooke is limited, particularly in denser areas (school, community hub). The only nearby parking, such as the Aldi parking, is far from homes and local amenities, and the routes to reach it are often perceived as unsafe, especially for women. For this reason:

- Underground parking is frequently avoided due to concerns about safety and visibility, particularly in the evening.
- Poor lighting, visibility, and unclear wayfinding along access routes reduce confidence and discourage residents from using available parking areas.
- These challenges limit independence, mobility, and access to services, recreational facilities, and social activities.

Recommendations:

1. Enhance lighting, visibility, and safety along key access routes to parking areas.
2. Explore additional surface parking options closer to residential zones and community facilities, reducing reliance on distant or underground parking.
3. Ensure parking solutions prioritise safety for women and vulnerable users, particularly during evening hours.

Priority 8: Inclusive and safe community spaces (Mental & Social Health)

As all sessions for this project were held at the Hub in Kidbrooke, there was much recognition of how important the place was for the communities in the area, there was however recognition that:

- Residents request more inclusive, flexible spaces for social interaction beyond the central hub
- Nearest roads around existing spaces require improved lighting and safety measures, particularly at evenings

Recommendations:

1. Increase the number of flexible, accessible community spaces beyond the central hub.
2. Improve lighting, maintenance, and visibility around community hubs, particularly at evenings.
3. Support programming for all age groups to maximize social engagement.

Priority 9: Community activities, cohesion, and voice (Social & Mental Health)

While opportunities to meet others at the Hub were valued by participants, they identified a need for wider range of activities and locations for social interactions:

- Residents request more inclusive activities across all ages, which reduce isolation and promote wellbeing
- Community engagement fosters social cohesion and mental health
- Community voice must be actively supported to ensure sustained participation in local decision-making.

Recommendations:

1. Expand community activities for all ages, including informal gatherings.
2. Use activities to reduce antisocial behaviour and social isolation.

Priority 10: Visible Safety Measures and Policing (Mental Health & Social Wellbeing)

Residents reported concerns about crime and anti-social behaviour in the area, highlighting the:

1. Lack of visible police presence reduces confidence and perceived safety.
2. Antisocial behaviour increases stress and discourages use of public space.
3. Coordinated policing and management enhance a sense of security and wellbeing.

Recommendations:

1. Increase visible police patrols in parks, streets, and high-risk areas.
2. Implement coordinated security measures with community
3. Address antisocial behaviour proactively

Priority 11: Access to nature and Wildlife (Physical & Mental Health)

Sutcliffe park was identified as key asset with residents highlighting that:

- Parks, green spaces, and wildlife areas are vital for relaxation, family recreation, and stress reduction
- Calm, wildlife-rich areas support mental restoration and social interaction
- Safe cycling and walking access promotes physical activity and healthy lifestyles

Recommendations:

1. Preserve and maintain quiet, wildlife-rich green spaces, particularly at Sutcliffe Park as key source for mental wellbeing.
2. Improve safe walking and cycling access to these areas to encourage active travel.
3. Enhance lighting, paths, and seating areas without compromising tranquility.
4. Promote family-friendly recreational programs in parks to support mental and physical health.

Priority 12: Social connection, belonging, and informal meeting Spaces (Social & Mental Health)

Residents highlighted the importance of opportunities for social connections in public space, however, confidence to engage is dependent on safety and environmental qualities:

- Feeling safe and welcome in public spaces enables social engagement and mental wellbeing
- Walkability supports community connection and confidence
- Environmental factors including traffic, air quality, and noise—affects stress levels and overall wellbeing
- Access to informal meeting spaces fosters interaction across age groups
- Belonging and connection to place encourage care for environment and community participation

Recommendations:

1. Create and maintain informal meeting spaces across the neighbourhood to encourage interaction.
2. Improve walkability and environmental comfort to facilitate social connection. Support programmes that fosters inclusion and belonging across different age groups and communities.
3. Ensure residents feel ownership of public spaces, promoting community engagement.

Overall Recommendations

Based on the priorities identified by the residents, the following ten actions are recommended to support improvements in safety, mobility and community wellbeing:

1. Improve street Lighting particularly along routes linking key destinations (e.g. Parks, Hubs, Schools, Parking areas, railway station etc) and at bus stops [improve physical safety and Opportunities for Community Involvement]
2. Increase visible police patrols in parks, streets, and high-risk areas [improve physical safety]
3. Preserve and maintain quiet, wildlife-rich green spaces, especially at Sutcliffe Park [Reduce Stress]
4. Promote family-friendly recreational programs in parks to support mental and physical health [Reduce Stress and Opportunities for Community Involvement]
5. Upgrade Pedestrian and Cycling Routes to become family-friendly [Enable Active Mobility]
6. Implement traffic calming measures particularly near schools and residential areas [Enable Active Mobility]
7. Organise family-friendly recreational activities in parks [Enable Active Mobility]
8. Invest in more accessible community spaces [Opportunities for Community Involvement]
9. Create a programme of community activities for all ages [Opportunities for Community Involvement]
10. Give residents the opportunity to use public spaces for socialising and small events

Whilst we realise that this is outside of the influence of the Royal Borough of Greenwich, support would also be valuable in promoting for an increased frequency of bus and train services to and from Kidbrooke.



