

# CREATING **STRONG** COMMUNITIES

HOW TO MEASURE THE SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY  
OF NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS

COMMISSIONED BY THE BERKELEY GROUP



# Foreword

**We need to build a lot more homes in Britain, urgently. But you cannot separate this issue from the social question of what kind of places we want to create. The physical and social fabric of a community are inextricably linked.**

The problem is that we are much clearer and more sophisticated when it comes to addressing the former. We know how to deliver good quality homes and assess their design quality and environmental performance. But talk about the social dimensions of new housing and the conversation quickly gets confused. People use words like cohesion and resilience which mean very little in practice.

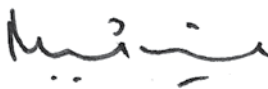
This is a fundamental concern because of the National Planning Policy Framework. The NPPF has given us a presumption in favour of sustainable development. That's good. But if we cannot define what we mean by sustainable development, how does it help local authorities make quick decisions with confidence?

This report is our first attempt to solve the problem. We have created a framework which defines social sustainability and how you measure it; and we have tested it on four Berkeley developments built over the last ten years.

It is not yet the finished article but it is well on the way to providing developers and planners with a way to prove that we can deliver a lot more than housing. We can help to create strong communities which offer people a great quality of life, now and in the future.



**Tony Pidgley**  
Chairman



**Rob Perrins**  
Managing Director



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# About this report

This report describes the development of a framework to measure the social sustainability of new housing and mixed-use developments.

The work was commissioned by the Berkeley Group and carried out by Social Life and Tim Dixon, Professorial Chair in Sustainable Futures in the Built Environment at the University of Reading. It forms part of a work programme undertaken by the Berkeley Group to understand the importance and relevance of social sustainability to the housing industry.

Over the last five years, the Berkeley Group has been a strong champion of environmental issues. Berkeley was the first residential developer to publish a Climate Change Policy and the first to commit to certifying every new home to Level 3 of the Code for Sustainable Homes. For the last six years, the Group has also achieved first place in the NextGeneration Sustainability Benchmark of the 25 largest home builders in the UK.

But while environmental concerns remain critically important, Berkeley considers that less emphasis is currently placed on the social dimensions of sustainability in both government policy and industry practice.

Shortly after the English city riots in 2011, Berkeley published an essay by Professor Tim Dixon called “*Putting the S word back into sustainability: can we be more social?*”. It argued that people, places and the economy are as important as, and closely intertwined with, environmental issues. Following publication of the “*S word*”, Berkeley then set out to find a way to define and measure social sustainability.

The framework that has now been developed and tested in this project is based on the previous work of Social Life<sup>1</sup> and Professor Dixon,<sup>2</sup> adapted and evolved to meet the requirements of the Berkeley Group.

This report was written by Nicola Bacon, Douglas Cochrane, and Saffron Woodcraft. The survey design and statistical analysis was carried out by Dr John Brown.

Many of the photos are taken by residents on the four developments used for the research.



# Who we are



## THE BERKELEY GROUP

The Berkeley Group builds homes and neighbourhoods. We seek to create beautiful, successful places. We work together with other people to tackle the shortage of good quality homes, and we make a lasting contribution to the landscape and to the communities we help create. Berkeley is a FTSE 250 company and made up of 5 autonomous companies: St George, St James, Berkeley, Berkeley First, and St Edward. It was voted Britain's Most Admired Company across all industries in 2011 and Housebuilder of the Year in 2010 and 2011.



## SOCIAL LIFE

Social Life is a new social enterprise created by the Young Foundation in 2012. Social Life's Founding Directors are Nicola Bacon and Saffron Woodcraft, who set up and led the Young Foundation's work on communities from 2006 to 2012. Social Life's mission is to reconnect placemaking with people's everyday experience and the way that communities work. Our expertise is in the social dimensions of placemaking and sustainability, in understanding how to accelerate local social innovation, and in knowing how to translate these insights into practice and policy. Social Life is working in the UK and internationally.



## UNIVERSITY OF READING

Tim Dixon is Professorial Chair in Sustainable Futures in the Built Environment in the School of Construction Management and Engineering at the University of Reading. He is also an Associate of the Walker Institute for Climate Change at University of Reading and a member of the RICS Sustainability Taskforce. He was formerly professor of real estate and Director of OISD at Oxford Brookes University where he led the work on social sustainability for the European Investment Bank.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to express thanks to our expert group, Dr Nicola Dempsey of Sheffield University, Dinah Roake of the HCA, Stephen Burns of Peabody, and Paul Allin formerly of the ONS, for their feedback and guidance on this work.

Thanks also to Joelle Moore and Niamh Lenihan for their contributions to the fieldwork and analysis, to Matt Lally from Matrix Partnerships for carrying out the site surveys, and to Coralie Pring and Pru Shelton from ComRes for their work on the residents' survey.



# Executive summary

**This project demonstrates that new housing developments can rapidly become strong communities that offer residents high quality design and a good quality of life.**

**The findings challenge the popular stereotype that new housing developments are less sociable and less attractive places to live than older, more established communities.**

**This work shows that the social sustainability of new housing developments can be assessed, offering lessons which enrich the process of building successful places. That is crucial as the Government seeks to encourage one of the biggest housebuilding programmes this country has seen in a generation.**

Housebuilders have made significant progress in improving the environmental performance and design quality of new housing and public spaces in the past 10 years. The challenge now, for all the stakeholders involved in creating new developments, is to build on this progress and ensure that new housing routinely creates strong communities. To do this requires an ability to measure the impact of new development on people's quality of life, the strength of communities, and the surrounding areas.

The purpose of this project has been to create and test a practical, cost-effective measurement framework which could be used across the Berkeley Group. We used the concept of social sustainability as a way to bring together and measure a wide range of factors that influence local quality of life and the strength of a community, and defined the term as follows:

**Social sustainability is about people's quality of life, now and in the future. It describes the extent to which a neighbourhood supports individual and collective well-being.**

**Social sustainability combines design of the physical environment with a focus on how the people who live in and use a space relate to each other and function as a community. It is enhanced by development which provides the right infrastructure to support a strong social and cultural life, opportunities for people to get involved, and scope for the place and the community to evolve.**

The framework has been designed to build on what is known about creating and supporting thriving communities. It has then been tested on four developments, to assess how they perform. These include two in inner city London, Empire Square in Bermondsey and Imperial Wharf in Fulham; one suburban site, The Hamptons in Worcester Park, south west London; and one in a semi-rural setting, Knowle Village near Portsmouth in Hampshire.

The framework consists of three dimensions: "infrastructure and social amenities", "voice and influence" and "social and cultural life", which are underpinned by 13 indicators. Data from 45 questions in total created the results for each indicator. Primary data was collected through a face-to-face residents' survey and a site survey.

The results of the site surveys were benchmarked against industry standards, while the results of the face-to-face interviews were benchmarked against large-scale national datasets for comparable places in the UK. These national datasets included the Office of National Statistics Output Area Classifications (OAC), which distill census data for the whole of the UK to indicate the character of local areas, and from Index of Multiple Deprivation area scores.



# Executive summary

Testing the framework established that residents on three of the four new housing developments report more positive responses compared to the benchmarks for comparable places on the ‘feelings of safety’ indicator. Residents report greater feelings of safety walking alone during the day and at night and feel that crime in their neighbourhood compares favourably to other areas<sup>1</sup>.

Responses to key questions in the residents’ survey also revealed that:

- **They feel they belong** – residents report higher rates of feeling like they belong to the neighbourhood.
- **They regularly talk to their neighbours** – residents report higher rates of regularly talking to their neighbours.
- **They plan to stay in the community** – they report higher rates of intention to remain resident in the neighbourhood.

The survey also found that residents of the four developments report less positive responses on two questions:

- **They feel less like they are playing a useful part in things.**
- **They are less likely to feel that people pull together to improve the neighbourhood.**

Overall, residents of the four developments report the same or similar levels of well-being compared to the benchmarks for comparable places.

However, when the results of the 598 responses to the residents’ survey are compared against all people nationally, the responses showed a statistically significant difference on two key questions:

- **Well-being: Berkeley residents were more likely to feel reasonably happy than all people nationally**
- **Safety: Berkeley residents were more likely to feel safe than all people nationally**

Behind these headline statements, the real value of this work lies in the wealth of underlying data, which illuminates the specific local circumstances and dynamics of a place and how these change over time in response to different interventions.

Academic research on social sustainability has identified the importance of local context to providing a meaningful understanding of quality of life and strength of community. Testing our framework against these four new developments has demonstrated that:

- New housing developments can (given the right support) achieve the same levels of overall well-being, quality of life and community strength as older and more established communities in a relatively short amount of time.
- New housing developments can generate significant feelings of safety for residents, in particular in high-density, inner city communities. This could be a result of the higher levels of security. Higher levels of ‘neighbourly’ behaviour in the two high-density developments may also explain this finding. It is possible that high density positively influences informal local social interaction, which in turn influences feelings of trust and perceptions of safety.
- Early provision of amenities and social infrastructure is often important for residents’ quality of life and to support neighbourliness and local social interaction.
- Housing providers could potentially do more, in partnership with local authorities and local public agencies, to provide residents with meaningful and appropriate ways to get involved in local decision-making. This needs to take account of the full range of local interests and existing opportunities for engagement. The aim should be to offer people a range of formal and informal options, from one-off events that do not require ongoing involvement, to scope for community-led asset management if there is local demand.
- More work is needed to understand the relationship between housing tenure, social and spatial integration, belonging, neighbourliness and social sustainability.

<sup>1</sup> With the exception of Knowle Village where residents report positive responses on feelings of safety but also report feeling that crime in the area is higher than the country overall

This is an important project that will contribute to how all those involved in housing understand social sustainability. It marks an important shift in the industry’s focus from placemaking to thinking about long-term stewardship and ‘placekeeping’. It is also essential to recognise that social sustainability is a joint responsibility. Some aspects of it can be directly delivered by a developer. Others depend on the expertise and involvement of the council, a housing association or the residents themselves. We hope this work will offer everyone practical insights about how the idea of social sustainability can be put into practice and nurtured in new developments.

This summary is an overview of the project. The main report is in two parts:

**Part one** discusses what social sustainability means for housing developers, presents the findings that can be drawn from testing the measurement framework, and sets out a series of recommendations.

**Part two** includes a detailed description of the process of development of the measurement framework, and how it was tested. It reports on the evidence base used to develop the framework; how indicators were selected; methods of primary data collection; data treatments for secondary analysis; and strategies for testing the framework, and some lessons learned.

The Appendices contain data tables, notes on data treatments, statistical testing, and the resident survey questionnaire.





Social sustainability is  
about people's quality of  
life, now and in the future.



# 1.0

## Creating strong communities

Housebuilders have made significant progress in improving the environmental performance and design quality of new housing and public space in the past 10 years. A number of initiatives have encouraged innovation and changed industry practice, from the Code for Sustainable Homes to Building for Life, new planning policy and design review panels.

Now all those involved in the creation of new housing developments can build on this progress and consider how new development can create strong, inclusive and thriving communities. But in order to do this, a way is needed of measuring the impact of new housing on the quality of life of individual residents, the strength of communities, and, in the longer term, on the surrounding areas.

This project is a step towards being able to achieve that goal. We use the concept of social sustainability as a framework to bring together and measure a wide range of factors that influence local quality of life and the strength of a community now and in the future.

The term social sustainability is not yet widely used by housing developers or public agencies in the UK, although it has been an object of academic research for over a decade. We believe it should become central to the way that everyone involved in the process of building new housing settlements – from government, central and local, to architects, communities and developers – understands sustainability in the years ahead.



## 1.0 What is social sustainability and why does it matter?

There is increasing global interest in social sustainability, amongst policy makers, academics, governments and the various agencies involved in the process of house building, planning and urban regeneration.

The term originates from the ‘three pillars’ of sustainable development – environmental, economic, social – which date from the 1987 Brundtland Commission to the United Nations. The former Norwegian Prime Minister, Gro Harlem Brundtland, defined sustainable development as development that “meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”.<sup>iii</sup>

Over the past decade a body of academic research has emerged that has attempted to define and conceptualise social sustainability and to map out its key characteristics and principles (see example in table 1).

This work has identified that social sustainability brings together a number of different ideas about social equity, social needs and the sustainability of communities, often described in terms of social capital, social cohesion and well-being.<sup>iv</sup> Housing and urban regeneration are strong themes throughout this work, as is the idea that the neighbourhood or local community is an appropriate scale for measurement.<sup>v</sup> Importantly, this work acknowledges that the practical and operational aspects of social sustainability are not well explored, clearly defined or well integrated in the policy and practice of urban planning and housing.<sup>vi</sup>

TABLE 1: URBAN SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY: CONTRIBUTORY FACTORS AS IDENTIFIED IN THE REVIEW OF LITERATURE (IN NO PARTICULAR ORDER) BY DEMPSEY ET AL., 2009 (2011).<sup>vii</sup>

Non-physical factors	Predominantly physical factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Education and training</li><li>• Social justice: inter- and intra-generational</li><li>• Participation and local democracy</li><li>• Health, quality of life and well-being</li><li>• Social inclusion (and eradication of social exclusion)</li><li>• Social capital</li><li>• Community</li><li>• Safety</li><li>• Mixed tenure</li><li>• Fair distribution of income</li><li>• Social order</li><li>• Social cohesion</li><li>• Community cohesion (i.e. cohesion between and among different groups)</li><li>• Social networks</li><li>• Social interaction</li><li>• Sense of community and belonging</li><li>• Employment</li><li>• Residential stability (vs turnover)</li><li>• Active community</li><li>• Organisations</li><li>• Cultural traditions</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Urbanity</li><li>• Attractive public realm</li><li>• Decent housing</li><li>• Local environmental quality and amenity</li><li>• Accessibility (e.g. to local services and facilities/ employment/green space)</li><li>• Sustainable urban design</li><li>• Neighbourhood</li><li>• Walkable neighbourhood: pedestrian-friendly</li></ul>



## 1.0 What is social sustainability and why does it matter?

Between 2010 and 2011, the Social Life team (then at the Young Foundation) carried out a large-scale review of available evidence about what makes communities, in particular large-scale new communities, flourish socially. This work was commissioned by the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) and was an attempt to consolidate the available, but disparate, evidence to make the case for investment in community infrastructure. The evidence gathered in the full review was published on [futurecommunities.net](http://futurecommunities.net),<sup>viii</sup> a website hosted by the HCA. This body of work was the starting point for developing a practical measurement framework for this project.

A practical understanding of social sustainability is pressing in the light of current housing need and scarce public resources. Government predicts that the number of households in England is projected to grow to 27.5 million in 2033, an increase of 5.8 million (27 per cent) over 2008, or 232,000 households each year.<sup>ix</sup> Alongside efforts to increase the volume of supply, there needs to be a better understanding of how to make sure that housing built today creates places where people will thrive in the future.

In the UK, large-scale new housing developments have a chequered history. While the Garden Cities and Garden Suburbs continue to flourish and provide inspiration, and new developments from Granary Wharf in Leeds to Tibby's Triangle in Southwold and Accordia in Cambridge have been highly successful, there are as many examples where new housing developments have failed to thrive. High profile urban regeneration schemes like the Elephant and Castle continue to attract controversy for their impact on existing residents; while the legacy of failed high-rise social housing can be seen around the country, from Park Hill in Sheffield to Fountainwell Place in Glasgow.

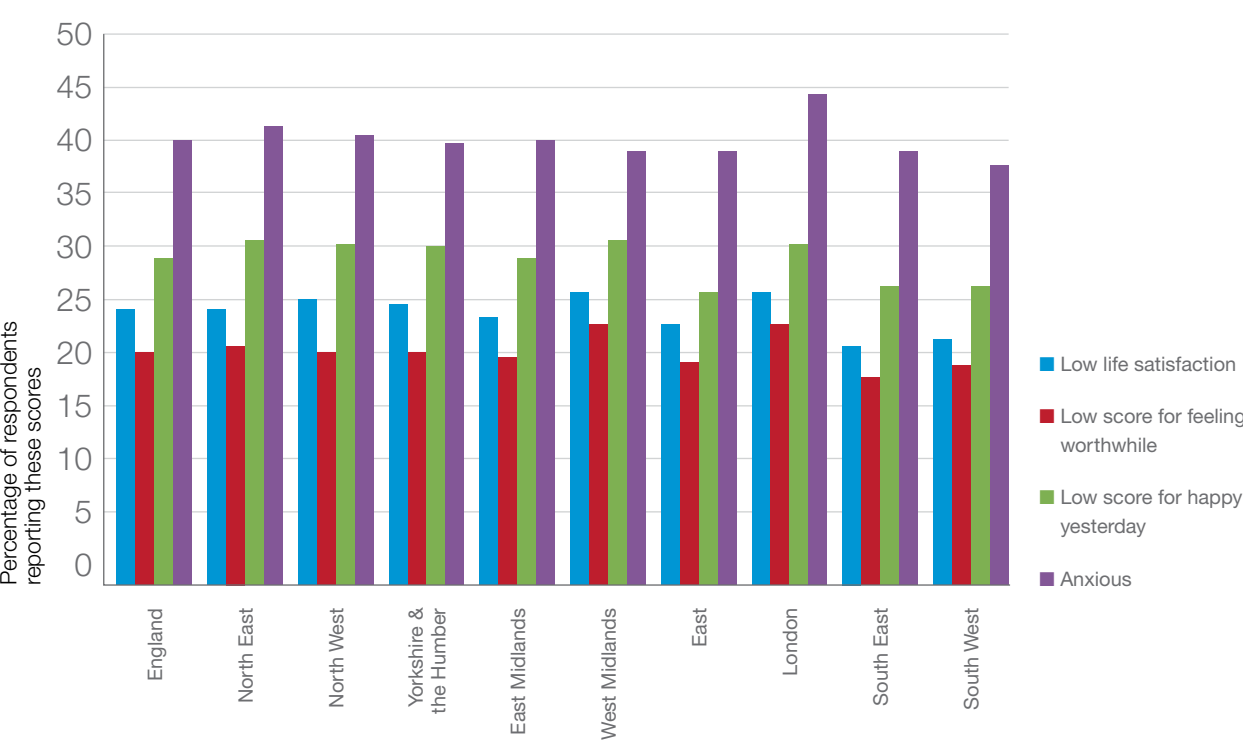
The wish to find ways to make new places flourish is not a new preoccupation and there is now a widespread understanding of the physical and environmental challenges involved in creating new settlements. We know a great deal about how architecture shapes social behaviour and people's sense of place; how high quality, well maintained public spaces influence perceptions of personal safety; and how to design out crime.

However, there are still crucial questions to address about what makes a strong community. The riots of August 2011 starkly illustrated the fragility of many inner city neighbourhoods and have given a new urgency to efforts to build places that can become thriving and resilient. Continuing economic uncertainty only compounds this.

As a nation we are also becoming increasingly aware of quality of life as a social and political issue.<sup>x</sup> As the recession threatens material well-being across social classes, the government's attempts to measure well-being systematically and to use these insights to inform policy are showing interesting results, including for whom, and where, well-being is lower than the national average.

Recent analysis by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) reveals that Londoners report the lowest life satisfaction and highest anxiety of all English regions. Understanding how to boost social sustainability could help Londoners, and those responsible for their housing, develop policies to help the Capital flourish.

FIGURE 1: WELL-BEING BY ENGLISH REGION. FIRST ONS ANNUAL EXPERIMENTAL SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING RESULTS, 2012<sup>xi</sup>



(Note: in this graph "low" life satisfaction, sense of feeling worthwhile and reporting being happy yesterday are the aggregated results of those who scored low or very low in surveys)

For housing providers, focusing on quality of life and community strength can deliver real benefits by ensuring that new communities maintain their value over the long term. It means that new housing developments are more likely to become successful places, supporting residents to cope with the increasingly complex societal changes the UK will face over the next decade.<sup>xii</sup>

Government planning policy, as articulated in the 2012 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), is now based on a presumption in favour of sustainable development. This has already triggered debate on what constitutes sustainable development, beyond current notions of sustainability and environmental considerations.

The 'social role' of development is defined in the NPPF (p2) as 'supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being'.

As a result, when local authorities and communities now evaluate proposals, they should be looking beyond environmental impact and seeking new development that delivers positive social outcomes.

For developers, being able to show how new housing will create strong communities is therefore likely to become increasingly important. While many promise to build new places that will enhance people's quality of life, few offer evidence about how this can be achieved. Being able to articulate coherently what social sustainability means, and understand how it can be boosted, will now become ever more valuable.



# 2.0 Measuring quality of life and the strength of a community

Berkeley defines social sustainability as being about people’s quality of life, now and in the future. Social sustainability describes the extent to which a neighbourhood supports individual and collective well-being. It combines design of the physical environment with a focus on how the people who live in and use a space relate to each other and function as a community. It is enhanced by development which provides the right infrastructure to support a strong social and cultural life, opportunities for people to get involved, and scope for the place and the community to evolve.

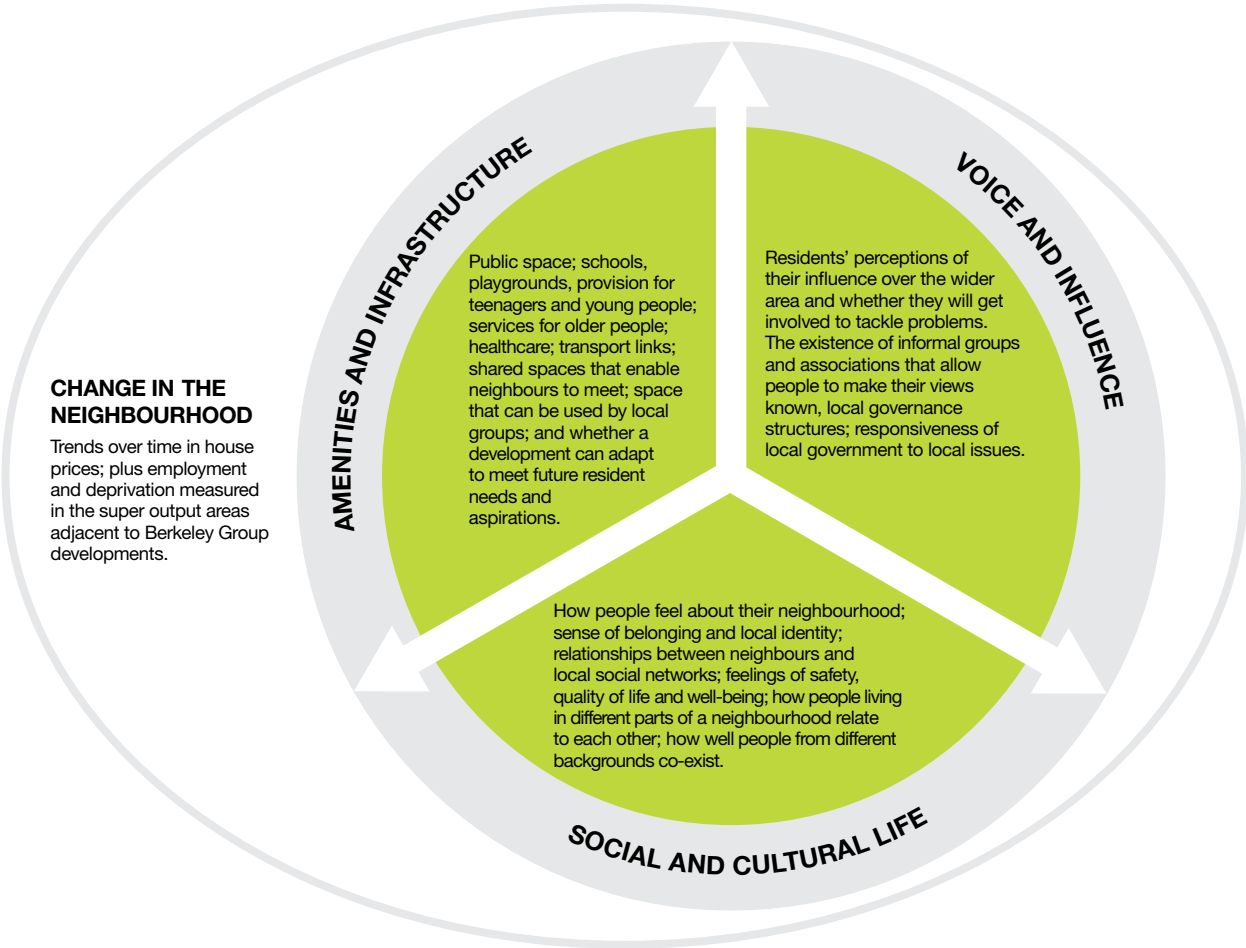
The aim of this project is to create a practical and cost-effective way of measuring people’s quality of life and the strength of community, which can be mainstreamed across Berkeley. To achieve this, a measurement framework was developed, grounded in academic research about social sustainability and its relationship to the built environment, and evidence from national surveys carried out by government and research councils about what is known to boost quality of life and well-being in a local area.

The factors that underpin local quality of life can be categorised as physical and non-physical.<sup>xiii</sup>

- ‘Physical factors’ include decent and affordable housing, access to opportunities, high quality public services, good quality and sustainable public realm, good transport connections.
- ‘Non-physical factors’ encompass safety, local social networks, social inclusion and spatial integration, cultural heritage, a sense of belonging and identity, and well-being.

The measurement framework organises these factors into four core dimensions: social and cultural life; voice and influence; amenities and infrastructure; and change in the neighbourhood.

FIGURE 2: FOUR CORE DIMENSIONS OF SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY



Underpinning each dimension is a set of indicators. Indicators are informed by a number of questions, drawn primarily from pre-existing national data sets or industry assessment tools.

The work presented in this report measures three of these dimensions: social and cultural life; voice and influence; and amenities and infrastructure. The fourth dimension, change in the neighbourhood, can be assessed later this year when relevant data from the 2011 Census becomes available.

Set out overleaf is a summary of how the framework was developed. A full explanation of the development process is included in Part Two of the report.



## 2.1 Creating the framework

The three different dimensions of the framework (social and cultural life, voice and influence, and amenities and infrastructure) are underpinned by 13 different indicators. In turn, the 13 indicators are underpinned by 45 different questions.

The indicators for the social and cultural life and voice and influence dimensions were created by selecting questions from large-scale national datasets that captured key issues within these two dimensions (datasets used were the Understanding Society Survey, the Taking Part Survey, the Crime Survey for England and Wales, and the Citizenship Survey). A number of questions were created for the social and cultural life dimension where appropriate questions did not already exist.

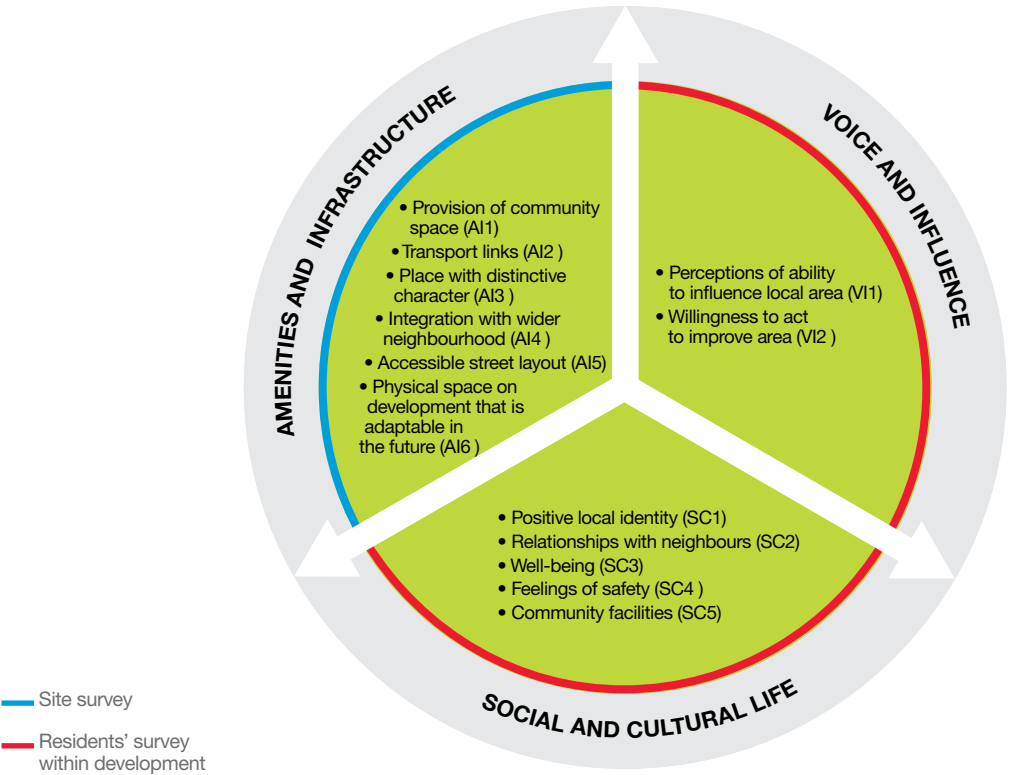
TABLE 2: NATIONAL SURVEYS INCLUDED IN THE ANALYSIS

British Household Panel Survey/Understanding Society (BHPS/US)
• Institute for Social and Economic Research (ISER), 1996 to present
• 100,000 individuals in 40,000 British households
• Data used from 2008-2009 Innovation Panel Waves 1-2
Taking Part (TP)
• Department of Culture, Media and Sport, 2005 to present
• 14,000 participants
• Data taken from 2010-2011 survey
Crime Survey for England and Wales (formerly British Crime Survey (BCS)
• Home Office, 1986 to present
• 51,000 participants
• Data taken from 2010-2011 survey
Citizenship Survey (CS)
• Department for Communities and Local Government, 2001 to 2011 (biannual to 2007, annual 2008 to 2011)
• 11,000 participants
• Data taken from 2009-2010 survey

## Selecting the indicators

The indicators from the amenities and infrastructure dimension of the framework were created by selecting questions from the Building for Life assessment tool, from PTAL (Public Transport Accessibility Level) assessments and from additional sources of secondary data about residents' travel habits. Additionally, a number of questions were created for this dimension where appropriate questions did not already exist.

FIGURE 3: THE 13 INDICATORS



A full explanation of the indicator selection process is included in Part Two of the report (see sections 2.1, 2.5 and 2.6).







# 3.0 Social sustainability framework assessments

This section sets out the findings of work to test the measurement framework on four Berkeley developments. The findings are organised in two sections: first, the results of the framework assessments on the four test sites; and second, implications and lessons from testing the framework. The measurement framework was tested on four Berkeley developments: Empire Square, The Hamptons, Imperial Wharf, and Knowle Village.

The indicators for the social and cultural life and voice and influence dimensions were created by selecting questions from large-scale national datasets that captured key issues within these two dimensions (datasets used were the Understanding Society Survey, the Taking Part Survey, the Crime Survey for England and Wales, and the Citizenship Survey). A number of questions were created for the social and cultural life dimension where appropriate questions did not already exist.

TABLE 3: THE FOUR TEST SITES

Name of development	Typology	Where	Brief description	Planning consent	Completion
Empire Square	Urban	In London Borough of Southwark, south London. Inner city.	Former warehouse site, 567 homes, 30% affordable	September 2002	April 2007
The Hamptons	Suburban dwellings	In London Borough of Sutton, south west London. Suburbs.	Former sewage works, 645 homes, 33% affordable	Outline granted in December 2002. Final Phase consented in September 2009	April 2012
Imperial Wharf	Regeneration	In London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham. Inner city.	Former gas works, 1,428 homes, 47% affordable	Outline permission granted in 2000	2013
Knowle Village	Rural/ semi-rural	In Winchester City Council area, Hampshire. Rural.	Former hospital for mentally ill, 701 homes, 31% affordable	October 2003	July 2010

## 3.1 Comparative findings

Testing the framework established that residents in three of the four new housing developments report more positive responses compared to the benchmarks for comparable places on the ‘feelings of safety’ indicator. Residents report greater feelings of safety walking alone during the day and at night and feel that crime in their neighbourhood compares favourably to other areas.<sup>2</sup>

The residents’ survey also revealed that:

- **They feel they belong** – residents report higher rates of feeling like they belong to the neighbourhood.
- **They regularly talk to their neighbours** – residents report higher rates of regularly talking to their neighbours.
- **They plan to stay in the community** – they report higher rates of intention to remain resident in the neighbourhood.

The survey also found that residents of the four developments report less positive responses on two questions:

- **They report feeling less like they are playing a useful part in things.**
- **They are less likely to feel that people pull together to improve the neighbourhood.**

<sup>2</sup>With the exception of Knowle Village where residents report positive responses on feelings of safety but also report feeling that crime in the area is higher than the country overall.





FIGURE 5: RAG RATING: EMPIRE SQUARE

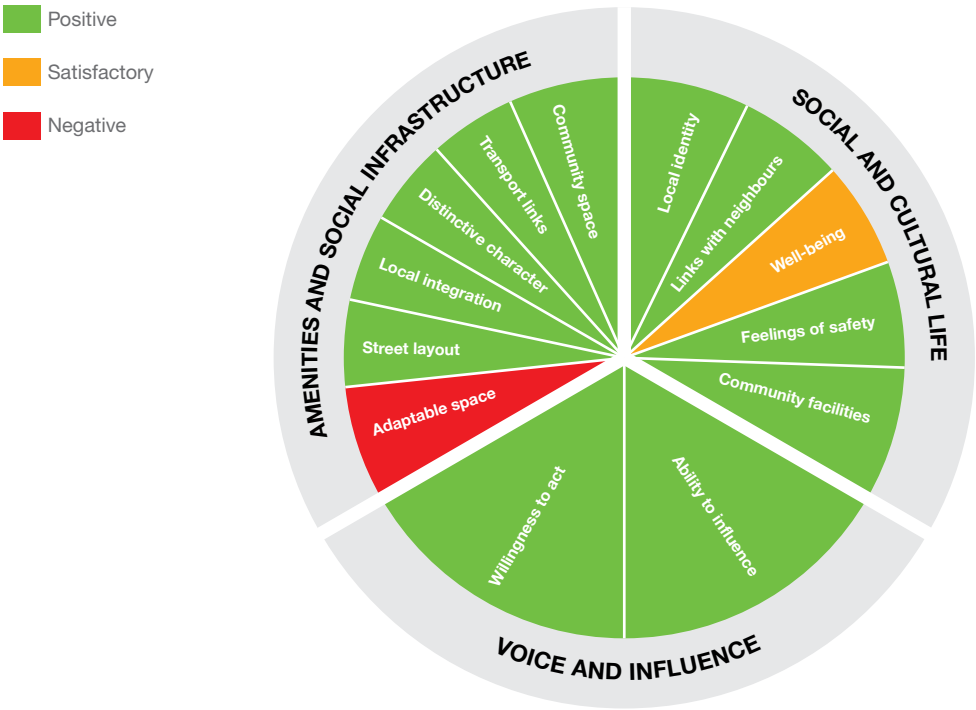


FIGURE 6: RAG RATING: THE HAMPTONS

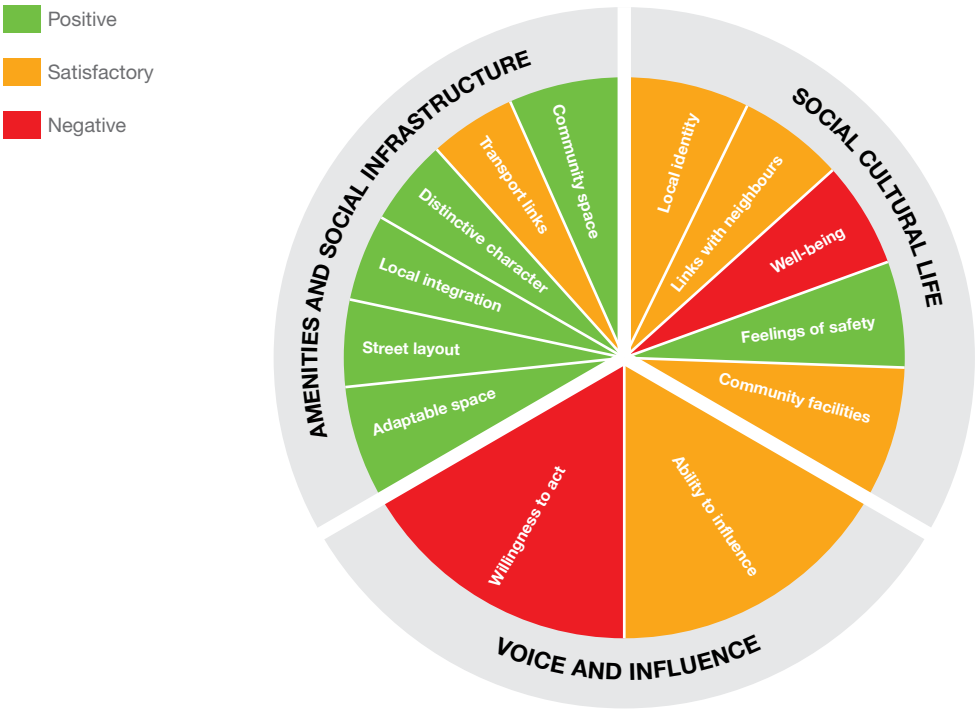


FIGURE 7: RAG RATING IMPERIAL WHARF

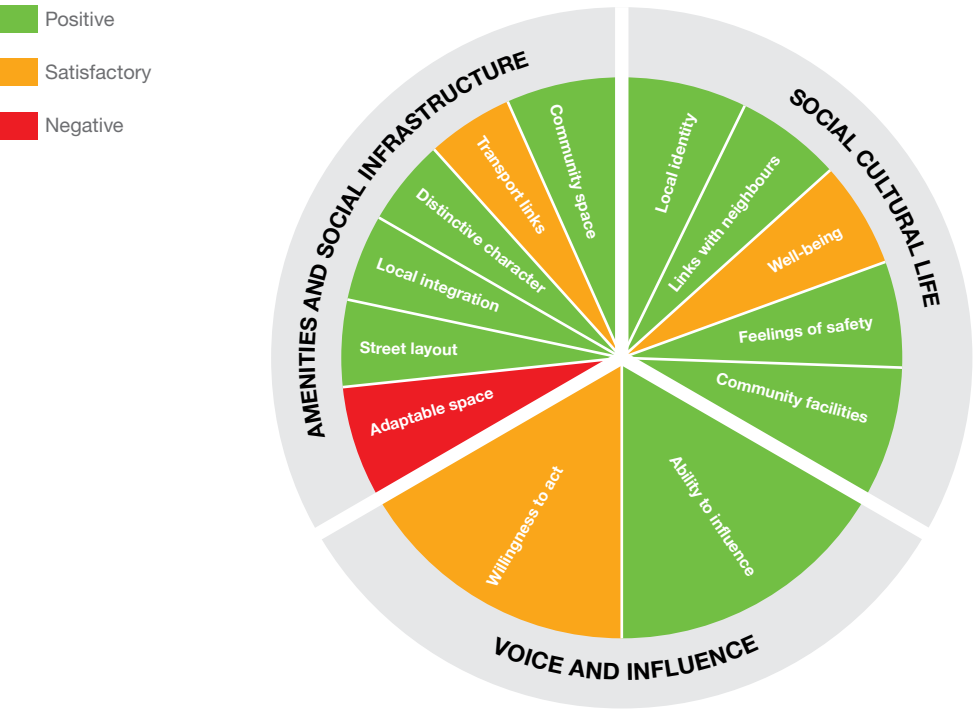
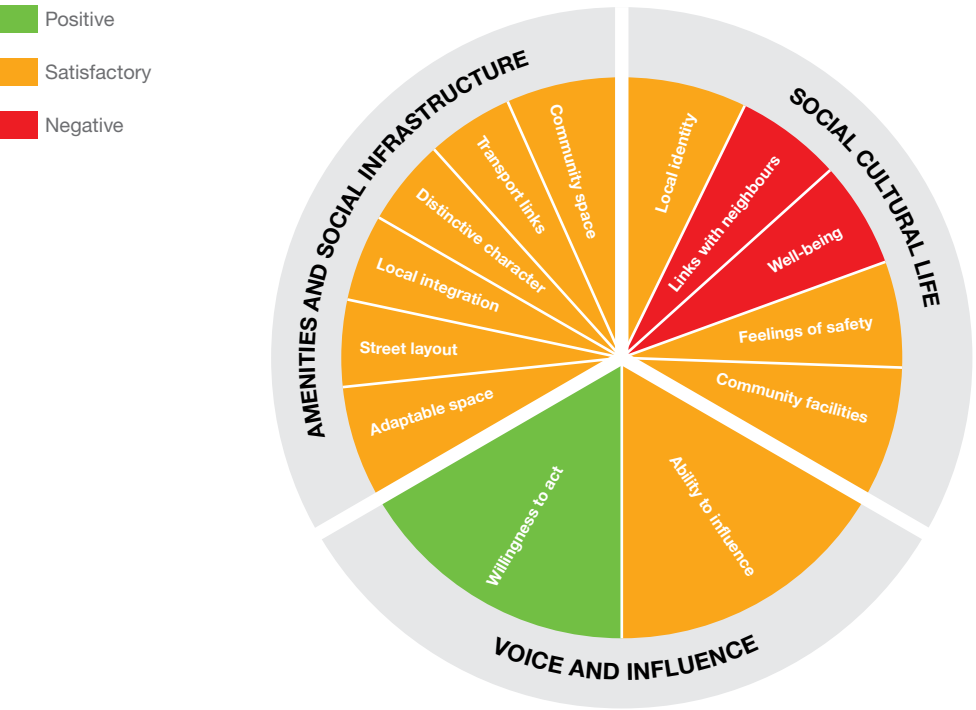


FIGURE 8: RAG RATING KNOWLE VILLAGE





### 3.2 Social and cultural life

Overall, findings from the two inner city developments show a similar pattern. Residents report higher levels of feeling like they belong and higher rates of intending to stay in the neighbourhood when compared to the benchmarks for comparable places and compared to the two other developments in this study outside of inner city London.

Imperial Wharf reports the highest levels of neighbourliness of the four developments, followed by Empire Square.

Residents of Knowle Village report feelings of safety that are no different from the benchmark for comparable places but perceive levels of crime in the local area to be higher than in the country as a whole.



#### Safety

TABLE 4: QUESTIONS IN THE FEELINGS OF SAFETY INDICATOR

How safe do you feel walking alone in this area after dark?
How safe do you feel walking alone in this area during the day?
Compared to the country as a whole do you think the level of crime in your local area is...

Empire Square, Imperial Wharf and The Hamptons were all given positive ratings for the feelings of safety indicator. The underlying data shows significantly higher feelings of safety than would be expected for the benchmarks for comparable places. The responses from residents of Empire Square and Imperial Wharf are of particular interest. They show higher feelings of safety and lower perceptions of crime than both the benchmarks for comparable places and the other two non inner-city developments. This challenges popular stereotypes about the perceived safety of low-density suburban communities compared to high-density urban communities.

Empire Square and Imperial Wharf also report higher rates of neighbourly behaviour than the other two developments. This mirrors a finding from other academic research looking at the relationship between social capital, fear of crime and public safety at neighbourhood level.<sup>xiv</sup>

#### Well-being

The Office for National Statistics, following a policy direction set out by the Prime Minister after the 2012 election, is putting considerable focus on the measurement of the nation's well-being. The ONS is using four questions to explore different aspects of well-being: 'overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?', 'overall, to what extent do you think the things you do in your life are worthwhile?', 'overall, how happy did you feel yesterday?', and 'overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday?'.<sup>xv</sup>

There were anxieties about the prospect of interviewers, working on behalf of a property developer, asking such a personal set of questions. In addition, the national survey data used to benchmark findings pre-dated the ONS' well-being reports and did not contain this set of questions. For this reason, an alternative set of questions was asked, using the well-established life satisfaction question<sup>xvi</sup> and three others that complemented the other residents' survey questions.



TABLE 5: QUESTIONS IN THE WELL-BEING INDICATOR

Have you recently felt that you were playing a useful part in things?
Have you been feeling reasonably happy?
How dissatisfied or satisfied are you with life overall?
Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local area as a place to live?

Residents of Empire Square and Imperial Wharf reported higher rates of feeling like they were playing a useful part in things than residents of The Hamptons, and slightly higher than respondents from Knowle Village, but the same or similar rates to the benchmark for comparable areas.

Residents of The Hamptons and Knowle Village reported lower levels of satisfaction with their local area as a place to live than benchmarks of comparable places.

Responses to the questions of life satisfaction were not statistically significant at the level of the individual developments, meaning that either responses were in line with the benchmark for comparable areas or the sample was too small.

Overall, the use of this combination of well-being indicators is a useful part of the framework. A recommendation for future residents' surveys is to use the ONS' four well-being questions now being extensively used in national surveys.

This is a complex area and more work is needed to understand the relationship between overall life satisfaction and satisfaction with the local area. Above all, there is a need to understand how different variables such as age, ethnicity, housing tenure or employment status, are related to local quality of life and the strength of a community.





### 3.3 Voice and influence

A comparison of the RAG Ratings for the four developments suggests that more could be done to provide residents with opportunities to influence decision-making and to encourage their participation in these processes.

#### Willingness to act

TABLE 6: QUESTIONS IN THE WILLINGNESS TO ACT INDICATOR

I would be willing to work together with others on something to improve my neighbourhood.
In the last 12 months, have you taken any of the following actions to try to get something done about the quality of your local environment?
To what extent do you agree or disagree that people in this neighbourhood pull together to improve this neighbourhood?

Overall, residents of Empire Square and Knowle Village report the highest levels of willingness to act compared to their benchmarks for comparable places. In Knowle Village residents report particularly high levels of trying to get something done about the local environment, which reflects the activities of residents described in the contextual interviews. Residents of The Hamptons report significantly lower rates of willingness to act.

#### Ability to influence

TABLE 7: QUESTIONS IN THE ABILITY TO INFLUENCE TO ACT INDICATOR

In the last 12 months, has any organisation asked you what you think about...
Do you agree or disagree that you can influence decisions affecting you local area?
How important is it for you personally to feel that you can influence decisions affecting your local area?

Residents of Knowle Village report higher rates of active community engagement compared to the other three developments. They were more likely to have joined or attended a neighbourhood forum, contacted a councillor, MP or the council, attended a meeting, or organised a petition. They described campaigns for community facilities and resident activism in opposition to a planned nearby development.

Residents of Empire Square and Imperial Wharf report higher perceptions of their ability to influence compared to the benchmarks for comparable places.

Responses from residents of Imperial Wharf and Empire Square for the rates of active community engagement were statistically insignificant. But residents in both developments reported the highest rates of consultation activity, with a variety of agencies approaching residents for their views.

### 3.4 Amenities and infrastructure

A comparison of the RAG Ratings shows three out of the four developments generating positive, or above average, assessments for at least four of the six indicators related to provision of amenities and social infrastructure. The Hamptons receives the most favourable assessment with a positive rating for five out of the six indicators. Empire Square also had positive rating on five indicators, but one negative rating. Imperial Wharf rated positively for four out of the six indicators. Knowle Village received a satisfactory assessment on these indicators, which means it delivers the expected standard for the industry.

This set of indicators includes questions about the quality and design of public space and provision of community facilities. They also include questions about integration, referring both to integration of different housing tenures within the development, and integration with the wider neighbourhood.

The indicators – community space, distinctive character, local integration and street layout – reflect the core business of residential and mixed-use property developers, in creating high quality and well designed places. Knowle Village, which performed less well overall against the amenities and social infrastructure indicators, received planning consent before the introduction to statutory and voluntary initiatives such as Planning Policy Statement 3, Building for Life framework, and the Sustainable Communities Plan. Our findings could demonstrate the successful impact of these standards on improving the physical design of new housing developments over the past 10 years.



#### Community space

TABLE 8: QUESTIONS IN THE COMMUNITY SPACE INDICATOR

Does the development provide (or is it close to) community facilities, such as a school, parks, play areas, shops, pubs or cafés?
Have the community facilities been appropriately provided?
Is public space well designed and does it have suitable management arrangements in place?

This indicator captures information about the appropriate and timely provision of community space and facilities.

Empire Square, Imperial Wharf and The Hamptons received positive assessments for community space.

Knowle Village received a satisfactory assessment for community space. The development now includes a range of community facilities, including a new community centre, village green, football and cricket pitches, multi-use games area, several playgrounds, a community shop, wine bar and beauty salon, but receives only a satisfactory rating because of problems with the original community centre provided in a converted chapel, and because the cricket and football pitch have only recently been provided. Residents led a campaign for a new community hall. This has since been built and transferred to the Community Buildings Association, a residents' group tasked with managing the site.

### 3.4 Amenities and infrastructure

#### Adaptable space

TABLE 9: QUESTIONS IN THE ADAPTABLE SPACE INDICATOR

Do external spaces and layout allow for adaption, conversion or extension?
Do internal spaces and layout allow for adaption, conversion or extension?

The Hamptons received a positive rating for the adaptable space indicator. Knowle Village was rated satisfactory. Empire Square and Imperial Wharf received weak ratings.

The adaptable space indicator includes an assessment of the flexibility of internal and external spaces in the development. Academic and applied research about social sustainability has repeatedly identified the importance of this. In practical terms, it can be interpreted in a number of ways:

- the provision of homes that can be adapted to accommodate changing household forms over time.
- public spaces that can be adapted for different uses as the community changes, for example, play space that could evolve if the average age of children shifts.
- space and flexibility within governance and decision-making structures for residents to shape decisions that affect the area.

However, the housebuilding industry tends to specify and tightly define the use of space, both internal and external. There is also a perception that the first residents of a new development may not want the responsibility of shaping how the place evolves, or the experience of moving into a development that might appear unfinished.

There are a growing number of innovative ideas and examples of good practice that could mitigate these concerns. For example, the ‘meanwhile’ use of community or open space as demonstrated by the pop-up and temporary projects created by organisations such as Space Makers Agency and Meanwhile Space CIC; or establishing stewardship functions, governance structures, or asset management vehicles that can be transferred to the community, as in Knowle Village.

This issue of adaptability and flexibility warrants more investigation to better understand what is practical, appropriate and affordable in different circumstances.



#### Transport links

TABLE 10: THE TRANSPORT LINKS INDICATOR

<b>This indicator uses the PTAL score for Empire Square and Imperial Wharf.</b>
<b>ForThe Hamptons and Knowle Village the RAG Rating is based on an assessment of secondary data about resident travel patterns and transport provision. Six questions were created, assessing public transport provision, other transport provision, car use and car parking, and scored in the same way as the other site survey questions.</b>

Empire Square received a positive assessment for transport links reflecting its central location and proximity to a tube station, multiple bus routes and a mainline train station. Imperial Wharf, The Hamptons and Knowle Village received satisfactory ratings.

For The Hamptons, the additional sources of data included “Does car ownership increase car use? A study of the use of car parking within residential schemes in London”.<sup>xvii</sup> This report included data from two surveys of the travel habits of people living in the development. The surveys explored employment locations and travel to work patterns, shopping behaviours and travel patterns, and attitudes to different types of transport including walking, cycling, car clubs and public transport. For Knowle Village the additional data sources included information about traffic and transport provision and investments.

### 3.5 Tenure analysis



A wealth of primary data has been generated by the resident surveys. It is not in the scope or timescale of this project to carry out a full analysis of the dataset, although this work would reveal valuable insights about how different variables influence quality of life and community strength.

We have carried out a rapid review of the data focusing on the impact of housing tenure on some of the underlying trends. Housing tenure was selected because the different housing options offered to residents of different tenures emerged as a salient issue in contextual interviews. We analysed the results of the questions which were most indicative of the nature of relationships between different social groups and people living in housing of different tenure, including “to what extent do you agree or disagree that this local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together”, “I feel like I belong to this neighbourhood”, and “to what extent do you agree or disagree that people in this neighbourhood pull together to improve the neighbourhood”.

In all the four sites, affordable housing, ranging from social housing for rent to various types of subsidised home ownership (shared ownership, HomeBuy, NewBuy and Discount Market Sale homes) was located in different parts of the development to the privately owned housing. As well as being managed and maintained under different arrangements, affordable housing was often visually different from the private housing.

In three of the four developments (Knowle Village, Imperial Wharf and The Hamptons) residents living in affordable housing reported weaker feelings of belonging to the neighbourhood than private owners and renters. However, in Empire Square residents living in affordable housing reported a stronger sense of belonging.

Owner-occupiers and residents living in affordable housing reported broadly similar responses to the questions analysed. Residents of the Hamptons showed most divergence of views about people from different backgrounds getting along, when responses from owner-occupiers and affordable housing tenants were compared.

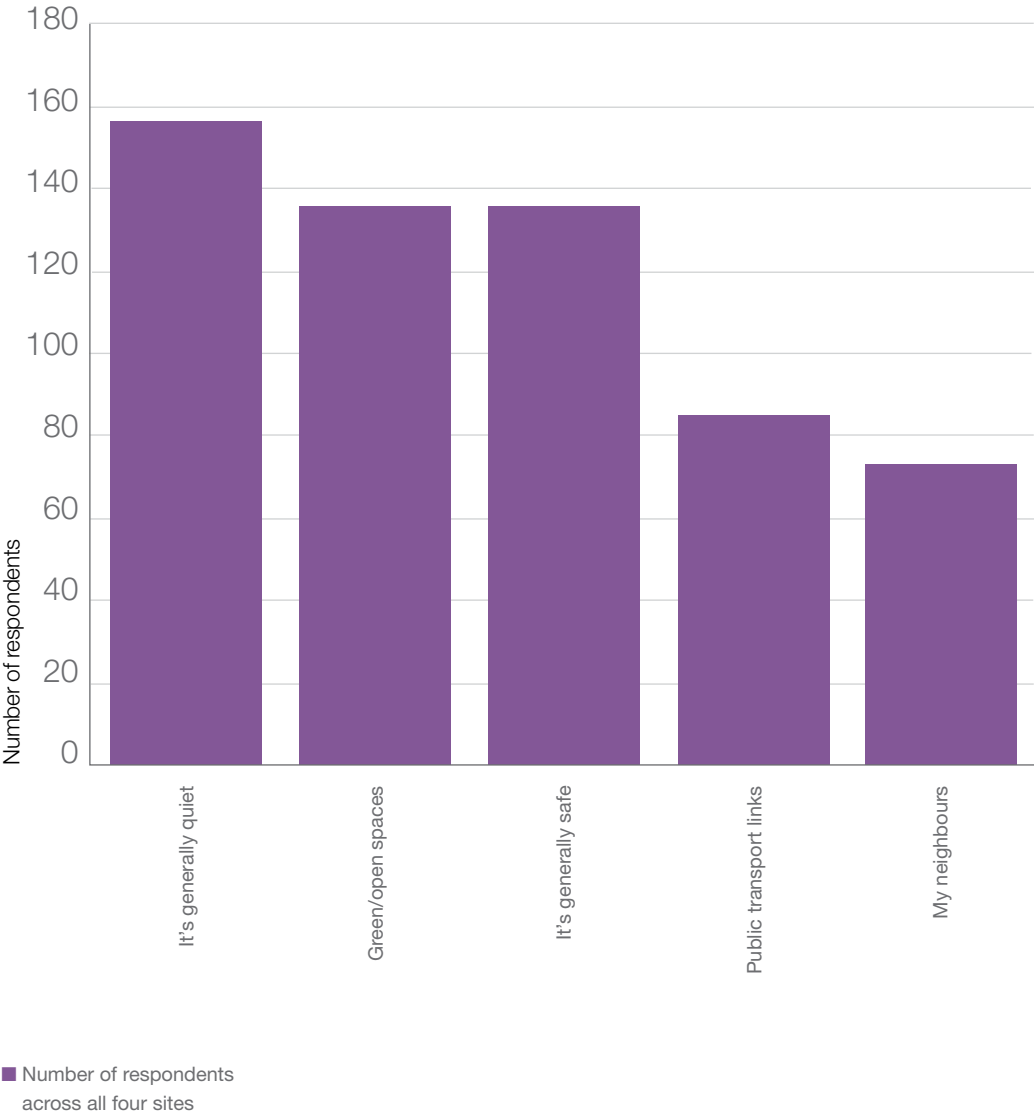


### 3.6 Quality of life from the residents’ perspective

As part of the residents’ survey, respondents were asked to identify which three factors about living in their neighbourhood contribute most to their quality of life.

Overall, the responses from all four sites combined show the following factors to be most important.

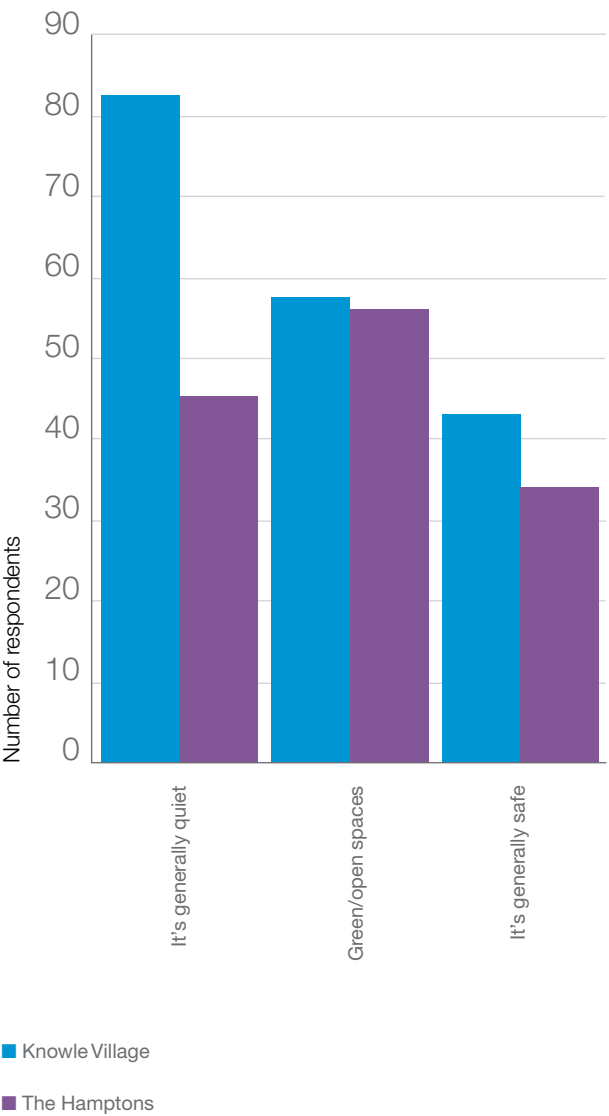
FIGURE 9: WHAT FACTORS ABOUT LIVING IN YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD CONTRIBUTE MOST TO YOUR QUALITY OF LIFE? OVERALL RANKINGS ACROSS ALL FOUR DEVELOPMENTS.



#### The Hamptons and Knowle Village

Residents of The Hamptons and Knowle Village identified the same three factors as contributing most to their quality of life: quietness, green and open spaces, and safety (see figure 10 for response rates).

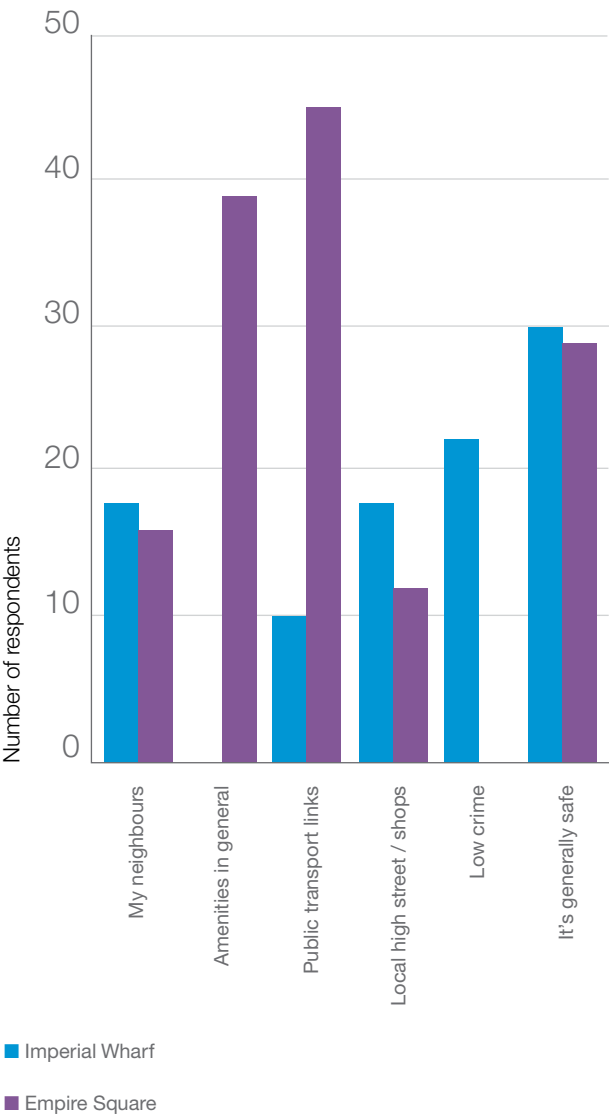
FIGURE 10: WHAT FACTORS ABOUT LIVING IN YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD CONTRIBUTE MOST TO YOUR QUALITY OF LIFE? THREE MOST IMPORTANT FACTORS FOR KNOWLE VILLAGE AND THE HAMPTONS.



#### Empire Square and Imperial Wharf

Residents of Empire Square and Imperial Wharf identified a broader range of factors as being important.

FIGURE 11: WHAT FACTORS ABOUT LIVING IN YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD CONTRIBUTE MOST TO YOUR QUALITY OF LIFE? MOST IMPORTANT FACTORS FOR EMPIRE SQUARE AND IMPERIAL WHARF BASED ON NUMBER OF RESPONSES.





# 4.0 The results by site

## 4.1 Empire Square

### Respondents' profile

55% of those interviewed on Empire Square are male. 40% of respondents lived in two person households. 15% lived alone, 19% live in three person households and 16% live in four person households. The sample also includes a small number of people living in with seven and eight occupants.

50% of respondents live in homes with two bedrooms. Of the remaining interviewees 21% live in one bedroom and 26% live in three bedroom households. 3% of interviewees live in four bedroom homes.

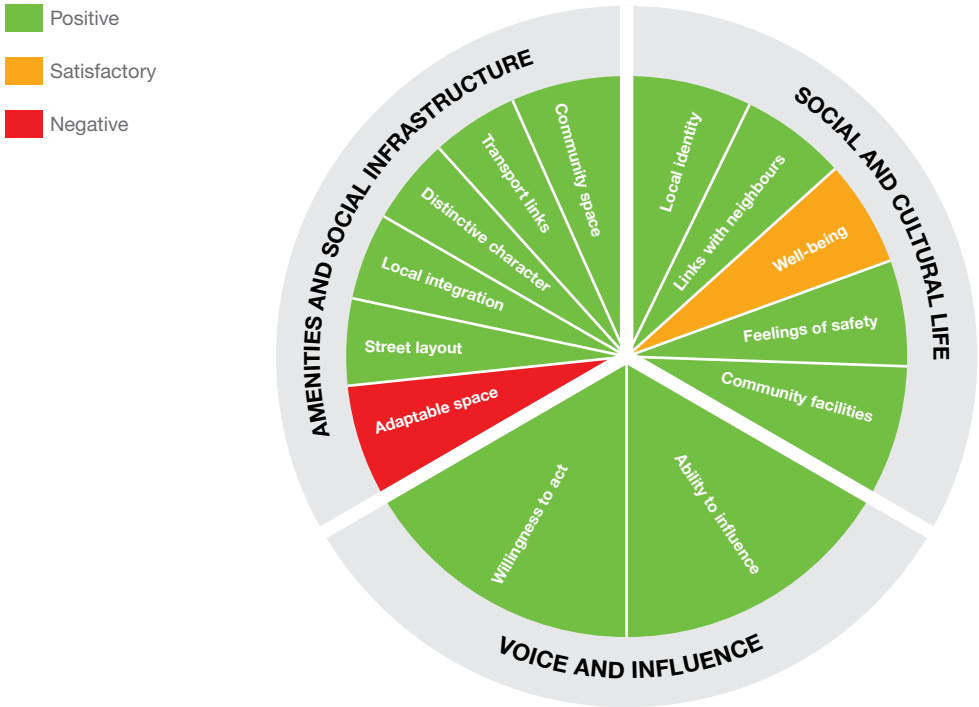
The age distribution of those interviewed is spread between 20 and 74. Respondents of Empire Square are younger than on other developments, with more than half under 40.

60% of households have no children, with 19% housing one child. The remaining range of respondents is split between two (11%), three (6%), four (4%) and six (less than 1%) children households.

A broad mix of ethnic groups was represented in the sample for Empire Square. 37% of those interviewed described themselves as White British, with 18% African, 7% Other White background, and 9% Caribbean or White and Black Caribbean. Other ethnic groups make up 27% of interviewees. These include people who describe themselves as Irish, Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Chinese, other Asian and other Black backgrounds.

57% of interviewees are in full time paid employment and 11% are self-employed. None of the remaining categories represent more than 10% of the sample size.

FIGURE 12: RAG RATING EMPIRE SQUARE





## 4.1 Empire Square

### Residents’ survey

Empire Square has positive ratings in the “social and cultural life” dimension for local identity, links with neighbours, feelings of safety, and community facilities indicators. The development received a satisfactory rating for the well-being indicator.

Empire Square residents report high rates of feeling safe walking alone in the area during the day and at night when compared to the benchmark for comparable areas.

Residents of Empire Square reported significantly higher rates of intention to remain in the neighbourhood, belonging to the neighbourhood and talking to neighbours than the benchmark for comparable places.

In the “voice and influence” dimension, Empire Square received a positive score for the willingness to act and ability to influence indicators, with residents highlighting a strong belief in their capacity to affect decisions in the local area and the importance they put on being able to influence decisions in the local area. The number of people who report having joined or attended a neighbourhood forum or attended a protest meeting or joined a campaign group, helped organise a petition or contacted the council or local media is also higher than for comparable areas.




### Site survey & other pre-occupancy data

Overall, Empire Square received a favourable assessment in the site survey and PTAL score, receiving positive ratings for five out of the six indicators (see figure 13).

It was described as being well integrated with the wider neighbourhood, with an accessible street layout, appropriately provided community facilities, and a distinctive local character. The one unsatisfactory score on the site survey comes out of concerns that the site has little potential for adaptability in the future.

There are two issues to consider here in relation to adaptability and flexibility of space. One is the flexibility of public or open spaces in the development and the potential for residents to shape how these can be used in the future, and the second is the adaptability of internal space. In the case of Empire Square, there is limited scope for flexibility or adaptability in either internal or external space. In part, this is an inevitable result of its high density and close proximity to other buildings, but it also reflects an approach taken to management of the public realm.

FIGURE 13: EMPIRE SQUARE SITE SURVEY RESULTS

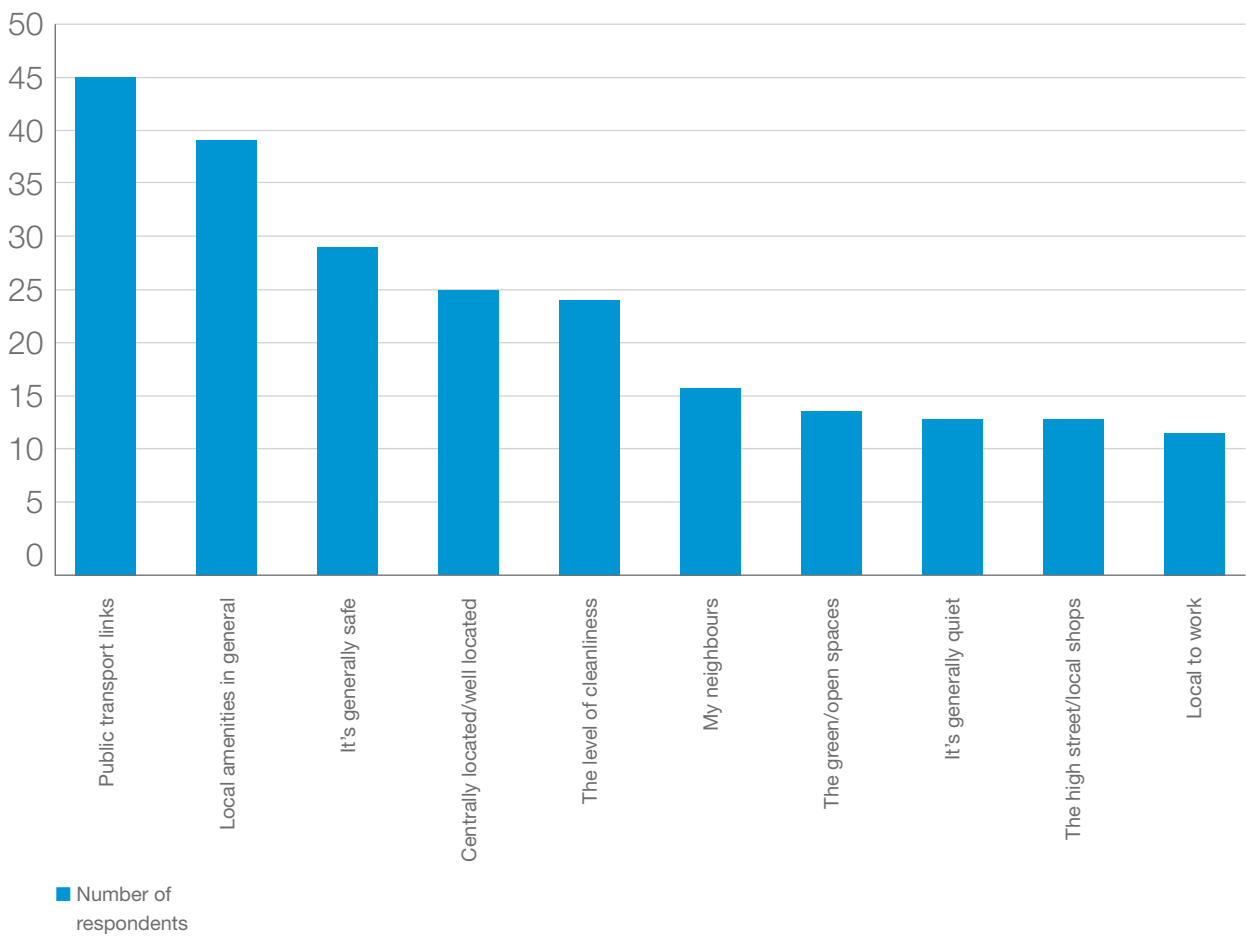
Framework Component	Indicator Sub-Group	Score
 Amenities and Infrastructure	Provision of community space	3/3
	Transport links (PTAL)	6/6
	Place with distinctive character	1/1
	Integration with wider neighbourhood	3/3
	Accessible and safe street layout	5/5
	Physical space in development that is adaptable in the future	0.5/2

## 4.1 Empire Square

### Open-ended question

In Empire Square, the five most frequently identified factors reported by residents as contributing to their quality of life were the public transport links, local amenities, safety, its central location, and cleanliness.

FIGURE 14: RAG RATING EMPIRE SQUARE



### Tenure analysis

The analysis of key questions by tenure revealed that residents from different tenures living in Empire Square had a broadly similar pattern of responses. The only significant differences were that:

- Residents living in affordable housing reported a stronger sense of belonging than those owning or renting their house privately.
- Affordable housing residents agreed less strongly that the local area was a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together, than the private owners and renters.

### Contextual interviews

Although there is little evidence of a strong sense of shared identity linked specifically to the development, residents place value on broader physical and emotional connections to the wider area. They generally describe themselves as content with life on Empire Square. Residents who intend or aspire to remain living on the development tend to place more value on the social support that local relationships provide.

The interviews revealed that some residents have experienced difficulties as a result of divergent expectations and lifestyles, particularly between different tenant groups, key workers, and short-term let occupants.

### Tenant groups:

Marlin Apartments owns a number of properties at Empire Square which are available for short-term lets. This has caused some disruptions for permanent residents who have been affected by the behaviours of visitors (including noise levels and damage of property) with little or no stake in the area as a place to live.

Respondents also made a clear distinction between the behaviours and expectations of housing association tenants – the majority of whom have been relocated to Empire Square from established local communities and are now more active and engaged with their neighbours – and those of private owners and renters – who tend to have a more transient connection with the area and other residents.

### Local identity:

Residents generally identify themselves as part of a broader community, based around Southwark or Bermondsey rather than Empire Square. The development is largely regarded as a pleasant environment, but respondents placed a much greater emphasis on the opportunities it provides to occupy and explore surrounding areas where most of their social life takes place.

### Shared space/activities:

The central outdoor area is well used by residents and non-residents but there have been some issues around management arrangements. The site is tightly regulated, with rules in place to prevent disruption for those living directly alongside the shared public space. These rules have proved unpopular with some inhabitants, particularly those with young children, and disagreements have arisen between residents with different ideas about how the area should be used.

Although some local amenities were provided as part of the development (including a gym and nursery), these are not used by many Empire Square residents. Respondents identified frustration among residents – particularly affordable tenants – about the costs associated with using the services.

### Physical connections:

Respondents highlighted the importance of their central location and local transport links in connecting residents to the facilities (work, leisure, health) and social structures (family, friends, colleagues) that they value.





## 4.2 The Hamptons

### Respondents' profile

A significant majority of those interviewed on The Hamptons were female (more than 65%). Respondents from four person households made up the largest group in the sample (30%). 12% live alone, 26% live in a two person household, 22% in a three person household, and 8% live in a five person household. The remaining 2% occupy homes with six or seven inhabitants.

36% of interviewees live in three bedroom properties, with occupants in two or four bed households the next largest categories (22% and 24% respectively). 12% inhabit one bedroom homes and the remaining 6% of respondents live in five bedroom properties.

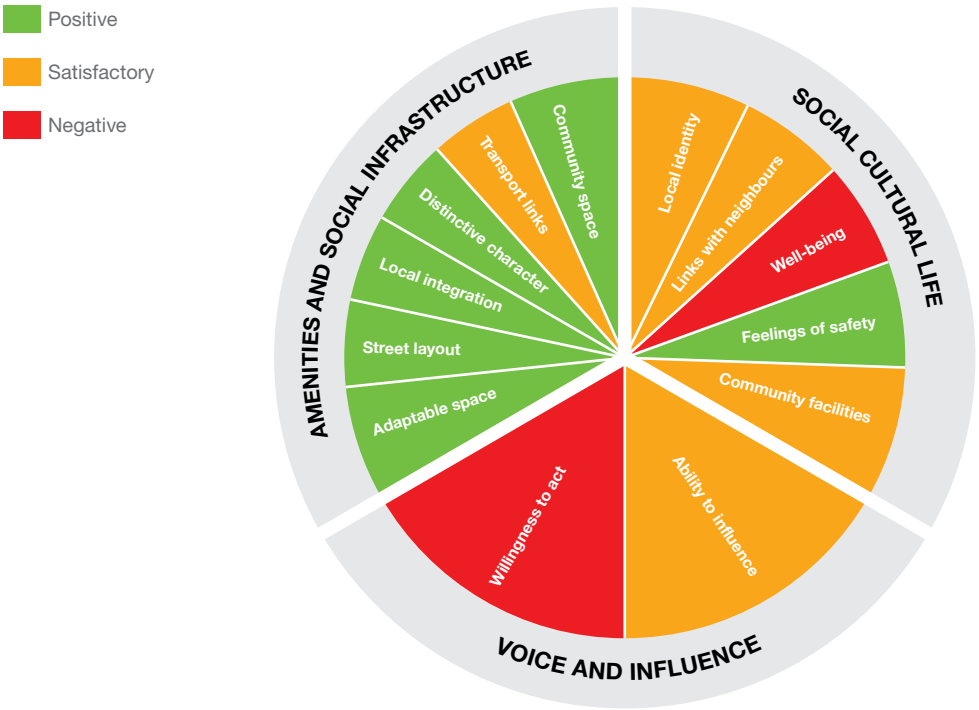
More than half of respondents have children. Two children households make up 28% of those asked, 15% have one child and 9% have three.

The age distribution of interviewees is spread between 18 and 90. The majority of respondents are between 27 and 47.

The significant majority (over 70%) describe themselves as White British. 6% describe themselves as Other White, 3% African, 3% Caribbean or Black and White Caribbean. The remaining 16% include White and Black African residents, Indian, Pakistani and Chinese residents.

47% of those interviewed are in paid employment and 10% self-employed and 8% unemployed. 10% of interviewees are retired. The Hamptons has the largest group of residents who cited family care or home in relation to their current employment – 15% compared to 10% in Knowle Village, 4% in Empire Square and none in Imperial Wharf. 5% are long-term sick or disabled.

FIGURE 15: RAG RATING THE HAMPTONS





## 4.2 The Hamptons

### Residents’ survey

In the “social and cultural life” dimension, The Hamptons receives a favourable rating for the feelings of safety indicator. As with Empire Square and Imperial Wharf, residents of The Hamptons report high levels of safety during the day and after dark, when compared to the benchmarks for comparable areas.

Overall, The Hamptons receives a yellow rating for the links with neighbours indicator, with responses to only one of the six questions being statistically significant. However, the contextual interviews reveal interesting findings about positive experiences of very local (eg street-level) neighbourliness (see 3.3.8).

Residents of The Hamptons report lower than average responses on the well-being indicator questions compared to the benchmark for comparable areas. Although two of the four questions feeding into the indicator are not statistically significant (which in this case means they are not significantly different from the benchmark for comparable areas) the two remaining questions (“satisfaction with local area as a place to live” and “people pull together to improve the neighbourhood”) are below the benchmark for comparable areas.

In the “voice and influence” dimension, the willingness to act indicator also achieves a red score. This rating reflects responses that are significantly lower than the benchmark for comparable areas for the following question People in this neighbourhood pull together to improve the area.


### Site survey & other pre-occupancy data

The Hamptons receives positive ratings in every indicator of the site survey, with the exception of transport links, where it achieves a satisfactory score. In particular, the local community facilities and shared public space were praised, as was the inclusive nature of local clubs (particularly for children) and attempts to facilitate public consultations.

Unlike Empire Square, The Hamptons was regarded as a development with the capacity to adapt to respond to changing local priorities and needs. The large landscaped green space in the centre of the development, which is used widely by different groups of residents and from the surrounding neighbourhoods, was identified by the site surveyor as a principal reason for awarding a positive score in this area.



FIGURE 16: THE HAMPTONS SITE SURVEY RESULTS

Framework Component	Indicator Sub-Group	Score
 Amenities and Infrastructure	Provision of community space	3/3
	Transport links (PTAL and travel patterns survey data)	3/5
	Place with distinctive character	1/1
	Integration with wider neighbourhood	3/3
	Accessible and safe street layout	4.5/5
	Physical space in development that is adaptable in the future	1.5/2

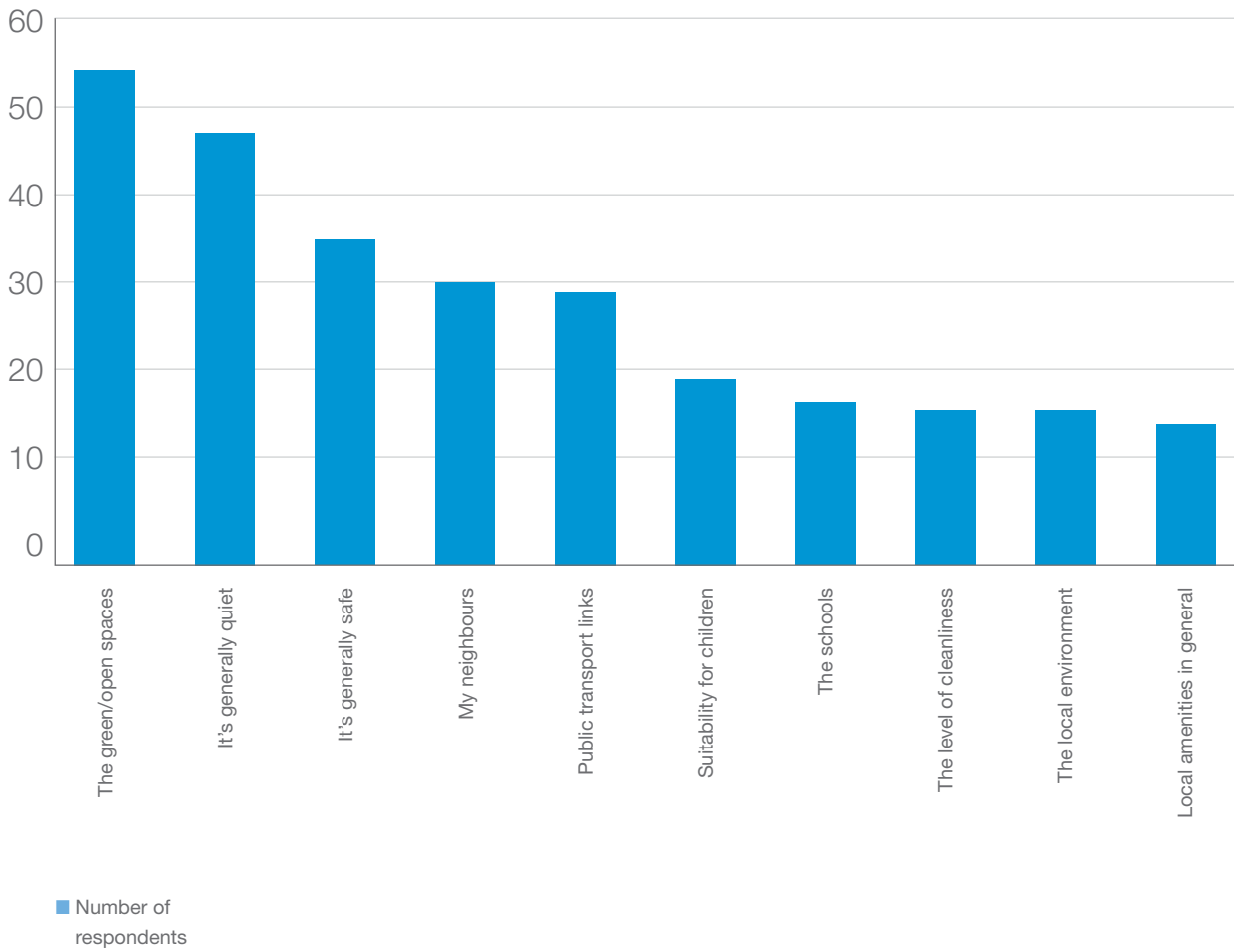


## 4.2 The Hamptons

### Open-ended question

In The Hamptons, the five most frequently identified factors seen by residents as contributing to their quality of life were the green and open spaces, the quietness, safety, neighbours, and public transport links.

FIGURE 17: OPEN-ENDED QUESTION – MOST COMMON RESPONSES



### Tenure analysis

The difference in the reported experience of affordable housing residents and private owners and renters was more marked in The Hamptons than in the other three sites. Affordable housing residents appear to be less positive about relationships between different groups than private owners and renters.

- Fewer residents living in affordable housing reported a strong sense of belonging than those owning or renting their house privately.
- The number of affordable housing residents agreeing that the local area was a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together was fewer than the private owners and renters, with a significant minority “definitely disagreeing” with this statement.
- Affordable housing residents were less likely to agree that people in the neighbourhood pulled together to improve the neighbourhood than private owners and renters.

### Contextual interviews

Residents value the quality of their local environment and the opportunities that it provides. Some residents have experienced issues relating to the behaviour of some younger inhabitants; and the spatial separation of affordable and privately owned and rented homes has caused some feelings of resentment. Despite this, respondents also highlight the existence of pockets of community activity built around shared interests and spatial areas, particularly streets and cul-de-sacs.

### Local identity:

Respondents suggested that residents generally defined their local identity as street-based rather than relating to The Hamptons as a whole. In this context, some groups of neighbours have built positive relationships with one another (“we always say ‘hello’”). These relationships were described as being based on a “mutual sense of comfortable co-existence” and reflect the kind of social ties that are sometimes described as latent social capital.

### Shared space/activities:

Some areas of the development are occupied and used by a broad cross-section of residents. The large green space around which the housing units are arranged is very well used and appreciated. An on-site fishery has recently been started with the involvement of residents from across the tenure spectrum. The central community facility is also shared by a mix of Hamptons residents (particularly families with young children), and plays host to a number of local groups.

### Physical connections:

There is a sustainable transport plan and car-share scheme. However, residents have reported on-going issues around a lack of parking spaces.

### 4.3 Imperial Wharf

#### Respondents' profile

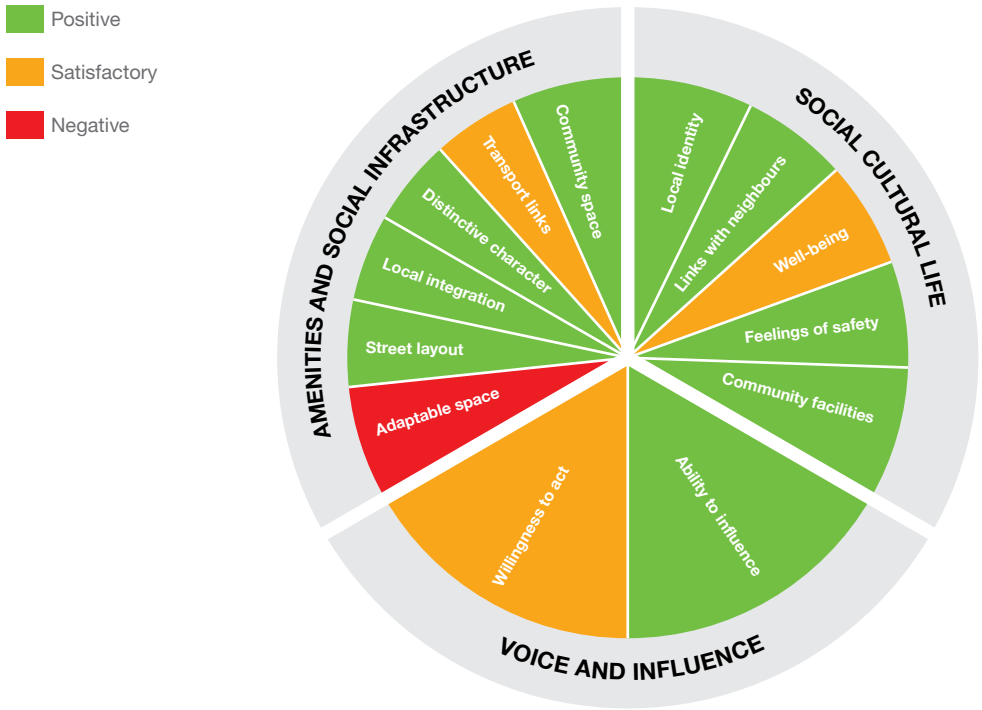
The majority of respondents on Imperial Wharf were male (56%). 43% live in two person households, 25% are living in three person households, 24% live in a four person household and 8% live in a household with more than five inhabitants.

40% of those interviewed live in a household with two bedrooms, with occupants of three and four bed homes the next largest categories (30% and 26% respectively). The remaining 4% respondents were split evenly between one and five bedroom households. Similar to Empire Square, 62% of these households do not have any children in residence. 15% have one child, 19% have two children, and 4% have three children.

The age distribution of interviewees is fairly evenly spread between 21 and 71, but with a disproportionately high number aged between thirty and fifty. 33% of respondents describe themselves as White British, 26% Black African, 18% White and Black African, 3% Other White, 3% Caribbean or Black and White Caribbean, and other ethnicities make up 16% of the sample.

77% are in paid employment and 4% are self-employed. 10% are in full time education with only very small proportions of retired (4%) and unemployed (2%).

FIGURE 18: RAG RATING IMPERIAL WHARF





### 4.3 Imperial Wharf

#### Residents’ survey

Imperial Wharf scored positively for four indicators in the “social and cultural life” dimension of the RAG Rating wheel. As with Empire Square, residents reported positive feelings of safety on the development during the day and at night, as well as a good sense of local identity, and a high degree of satisfaction with local facilities, under the “community facilities” indicator. Overall, residents of Imperial Wharf reported significantly higher rates of neighbourliness than the benchmark for comparable areas.

Imperial Wharf and Empire Square, both inner-city developments, report strikingly similar results for feelings of safety and for questions about regularly talking with neighbours, seeking advice from neighbours, and borrowing things or exchanging favours with neighbours.

Questions about residents’ well-being generated a yellow satisfactory rating because they showed very little deviation from the benchmark for comparable areas.

Mirroring results on Empire Square, responses in the “voice and influence” dimension point to positive feelings about the ability to influence decisions affecting the local area, and satisfactory results in relation to “willingness to act”.

Residents of Imperial Wharf report lower responses on a number of questions that make up the “willingness to act” indicator, specifically with regard to taking local action. Although these results are not significant when compared to the benchmark, they illustrate a different pattern to the other three developments.

#### Site survey & other pre-occupancy data

Imperial Wharf received favourable ratings for four of the six indicators in this dimension of the framework. The development was awarded particularly high ratings for the following indicators: accessible street layout, and design and distinctive character.

The site survey data generated one unsatisfactory rating for the adaptable space indicator. As with Empire Square, the other inner city development, the site survey reported limited flexibility and adaptability to respond to local needs and future changes. It generated a yellow, satisfactory rating for transport links.



FIGURE 19: IMPERIAL WHARF SITE SURVEY RESULTS

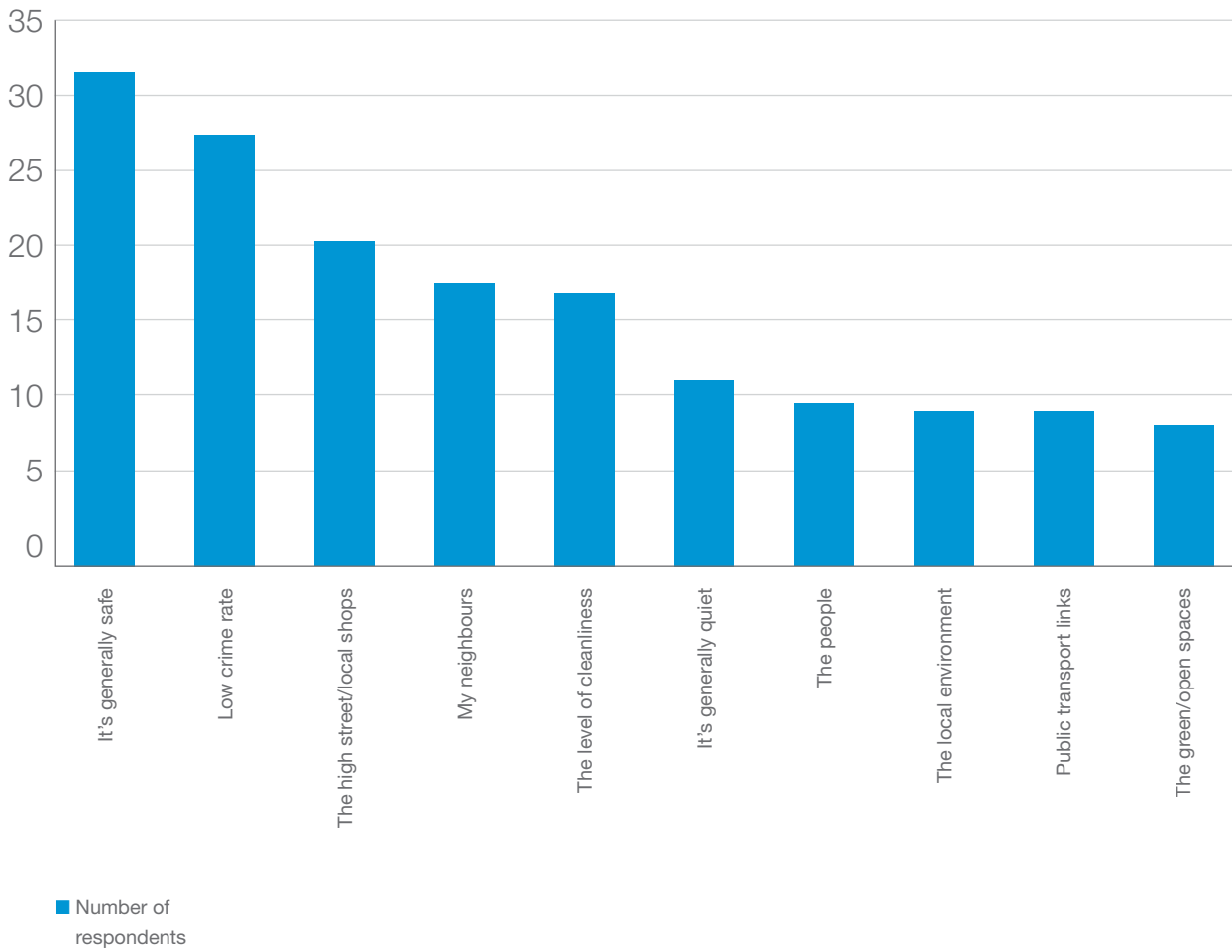
Framework Component	Indicator Sub-Group	Score
 Amenities and Infrastructure	Provision of community space	3/3
	Transport links (PTAL)	3/6
	Place with distinctive character	1/1
	Integration with wider neighbourhood	2.5/3
	Accessible and safe street layout	4/5
	Physical space in development that is adaptable in the future	0.5/2

## 4.3 Imperial Wharf

### Open-ended question

In Imperial Wharf, the five most frequently identified factors seen by residents as contributing to their quality of life were the safety, low crime rate, the local shops, neighbours, and cleanliness of the area.

FIGURE 20: OPEN-ENDED QUESTION – MOST COMMON RESPONSES



### Tenure analysis

The analysis of key questions by tenure showed that different tenures gave a broadly similar pattern of responses, although a low response rates from residents living in affordable housing limited the analysis.

- Residents living in affordable housing were less likely to strongly agree that they felt they belonged in the neighbourhood than private owners and renters.
- Affordable housing residents, however, were more strongly in agreement with the statement that the local area was a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together, than the private owners and renters.

### Contextual interviews

The interviews revealed a number of similarities between the experience of residents on Imperial Wharf and Empire Square, although they manifest themselves in different ways.

Affordable occupants were identified as placing a greater emphasis on local relationships when compared to other tenant groups. Respondents also highlighted the impact of empty units, mainly used as second homes, on the experience of permanent residents, and the lack of active community engagement activities to connect groups across the site.

Despite these observations, respondents generally suggested that most people seem satisfied with their life on the development. For a number of residents, particularly private renters, motivations for moving onto the site were convenience of access and design quality, rather than community networks or social supports.

### Tenant groups:

Housing association residents were described as more connected to their neighbours than private owners and renters. Respondents also suggested that formal community networks (such as resident groups) were principally used and managed by social tenants. For private owners and renters a number of the typical functions and social supports that a thriving community would provide – for example resolving local disputes, looking after spare keys, recommending tradespeople – are fulfilled by the “particularly active” estate management team.

Echoing some of the challenges encountered on Empire Square, a number of respondents highlighted issues relating to the transient nature of the community. In particular, residents pointed to the number of occupants who only use their homes for short periods.

### Local identity:

Residents generally placed great importance on the quality of their home and the local environment when asked about valuable local assets. Despite highlighting a lack of opportunities for community exchange, respondents were keen to emphasise that most residents seem fairly satisfied with their material circumstances; reflecting the core priorities that inform their judgments about Imperial Wharf as a place to live.

### Shared space/activities:

Respondents also noted the absence of local events and activities in the recent past that would bring residents together. Few effective attempts have been made to build the connections that encourage and support communal local identities. Discussions uncovered divided opinions about whether such attempts would be likely to attract interest or engagement from non-active residents.

### Physical connections:

Similar to the situation on Empire Square, respondents highlighted the importance of their central location and local transport links in connecting residents to the facilities (work, leisure, health) and social structures (family, friends, colleagues) that they value.





## 4.4 Knowle Village

### Respondents' profile

58% of respondents on Knowle Village are female. 32% of interviewees are living in a two person household, 21% in a three and 22% in a four person household. 13% of interviewees live alone and 12% live in households with five or more inhabitants.

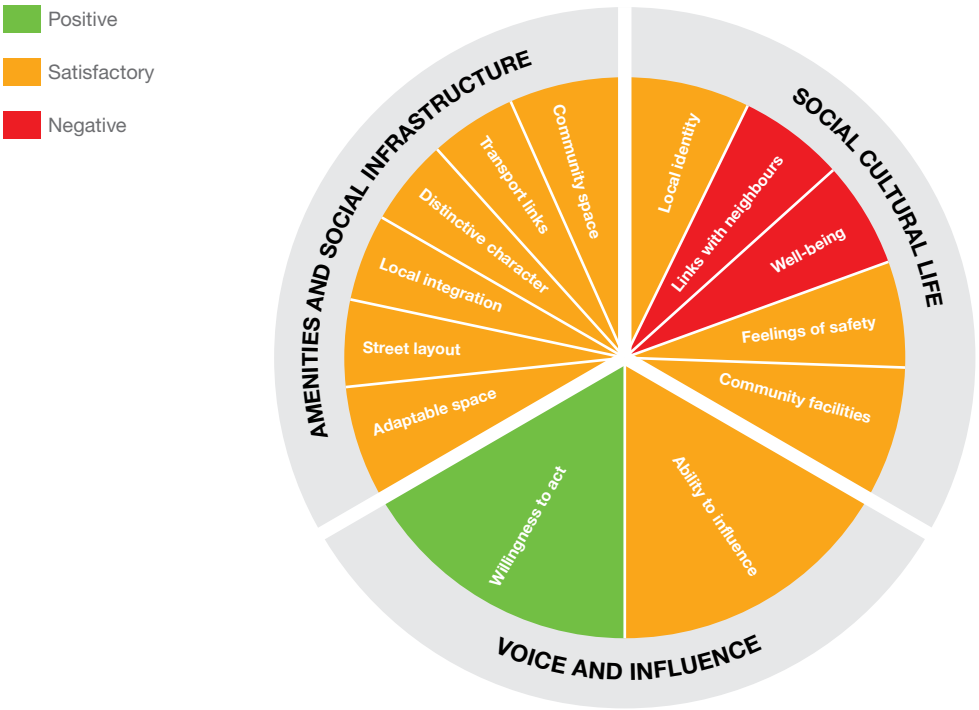
The age distribution is spread between 18 and 84, with a majority of interviewees between 20 and 45.

More than 50% of respondents have children: 22% have one child, 22% have two children, 6% have three children and 5% have more than four children.

Respondents on Knowle Village are the least ethnically diverse, with 92% describing themselves as White British. 2% are African, 2% White and Black African, 2% Other White and the remaining 2% described themselves as Bangladeshi, Other Asian or Arab.

56% of the sample is in full-time employment, 9% self employed and 6% unemployed. Knowle Village had the largest proportion of retired residents (13%) in the sample and 10% who describe their employment status as family or home care. 2% are students and 5% long-term sick or disabled.

FIGURE 21: RAG RATING KNOWLE VILLAGE





## 4.4 Knowle Village

### Residents’ survey

The results of the residents’ survey analysis for Knowle Village was that of the seven indicators that assess “social and cultural life” and “voice and influence” one receives a positive rating, four receive satisfactory ratings, and two receive red ratings.

Residents of Knowle Village reported positive responses for willingness to act. The contextual interviews reinforce this by identifying high levels of resident activity and local action.

In the “social and cultural life” dimension, residents of Knowle Village reported levels of neighbourliness and well-being that were lower than the benchmark for comparable areas. Specifically, in response to questions about neighbourliness they reported lower rates of feeling like people from different backgrounds get on, and lower rates of seeking advice from neighbours. Knowle Village residents reported lower rates of satisfaction with the area than the benchmarks for comparable places.

Knowle Village is the only of the four surveyed developments that did not achieve a positive score in the RAG Ratings for feelings of safety. Primarily, this is linked to residents reporting a perception that the crime rate on the development is higher than the national average.

In the “voice and influence” dimension, Knowle Village scores well on the “willingness to act” indicator. Residents of Knowle Village report higher responses to having tried to get something done about the local environment than the benchmark. However, this result is not consistent with other questions that make up the “willingness to act” indicator: respondents report significantly lower rates of neighbours pulling together to improve the neighbourhood.

Contextual interviews give some useful background. Residents have encountered a number of issues that led to local action, most recently in opposition to a proposed new housing development nearby. In spite of considerable community-led action, residents report low levels of influence about local decision-making.



### Site survey & other pre-occupancy data

Knowle Village receives a good score for the ‘integration with wider neighbourhood’ indicator, in relation to the mix of accommodation types. However, the overall rating suffered because of what the site surveyor described as an “introverted approach to urban design” with only one vehicular access point across the development.

PTAL data was not relevant to Knowle Village so the “transport links” indicator was assessed using secondary data about resident travel patterns and transport provision. Six questions were created, assessing public transport provision, other transport provision, car use and car parking, and a satisfactory rating was given.

Overall, Knowle Village receives a yellow rating for the “appropriate provision of community space” indicator as a result of difficulties related to the delivery of a central community facility immediately after completion of the development (see contextual interviews for further discussion), and the timing of the provision of a local sports field.

FIGURE 22: KNOWLE VILLAGE SITE SURVEY RESULTS

Framework Component	Indicator Sub-Group	Score
 Amenities and Infrastructure	Provision of community space	1.5/3
	Transport links (PTAL and travel patterns survey data)	2.5/5
	Place with distinctive character	0.5/1
	Integration with wider neighbourhood	1.5/3
	Accessible and safe street layout	3/5
	Physical space in development that is adaptable in the future	1/2

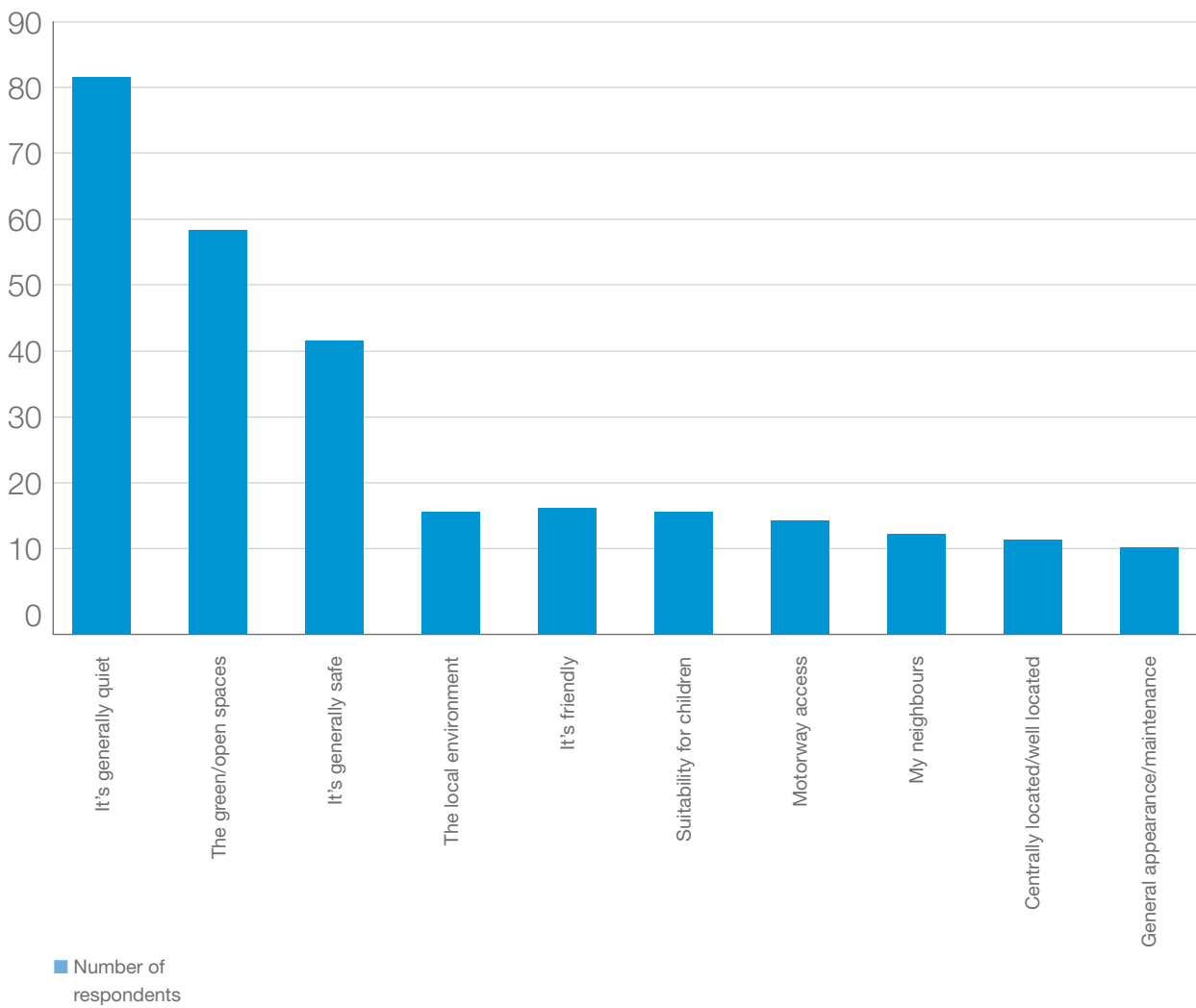


## 4.4 Knowle Village

### Open-ended question

In Knowle Village, the five most frequently identified factors seen by residents as contributing most to their quality of life were the quietness of the area, the green and open spaces, safety, the local environment and the friendliness of the area.

FIGURE 23: OPEN-ENDED QUESTION – MOST COMMON RESPONSES



### Tenure analysis

The analysis of key questions by tenure revealed that Knowle Village residents from different tenures had a broadly similar pattern of responses to other developments.

- Residents living in affordable housing were less likely to strongly agree that they felt they belonged in the neighbourhood than private owners and renters.
- Affordable housing residents, however, were more strongly in agreement with the statement that the local area was a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together, than the private owners and renters.

### Contextual interviews

Despite some difficulties early on, respondents were in agreement that the community is beginning to find its feet, with residents representing themselves rather than relying on external sources to facilitate involvement. Local events and activities are becoming more frequent and inclusive - bringing people together from different on-site areas and tenure groups - and community facilities are now well-managed and used.

#### Tenant groups:

Consort Property Management operates as the estate managers on Knowle Village. The costs incurred in providing this service are covered by residents who pay an annual fee for on-site maintenance. Respondents pointed out that the fees have often been applied inconsistently with some residents (split by tenure type and date of purchase) paying more than others. This inconsistent application has led to some frustration among those who have paid while non-paying residents still enjoy the benefits of Consort's work. Recent efforts have begun to redress this imbalance with an updated cost structure now in place for new residents.

#### Local identity:

The site has 791 homes. This total exceeds estimates outlined in the original brief (between 450 and 520 dwellings) and manifests itself in the increased density on the site periphery. Residents have suggested that the impact of this increase has affected the area's identity; too large to effectively support a "village feel", but too small to support some of the local amenities and services that people want.

#### Shared space/activities:

A central community facility was provided by Berkeley on project completion. However, the site selected to fulfill this function (a converted chapel) was later deemed to be unsuitable. This sparked a move by residents to get the facility replaced with an on-site alternative that would better meet their needs. A new community hall has since been built and transferred over to Community Buildings Association, a residents' group tasked with managing the site.

Farnham Council has proposed to build a new town half a mile from Knowle Village. The development will include approximately 6500 new homes and construction is due to start in 2013. The Knowle Village Residents' Association has responded by launching a "Just Say No" campaign and has played an active role in challenging the plans, inviting views from local residents and representing their interests at public meetings.

#### Physical connections:

Respondents reported that poor public transport connections have led to on-going issues around local traffic and parking access at Knowle Village.

4.5 Comparing the residents’ survey findings

The scores of the questions that can be benchmarked against data from comparable areas demonstrate how the scores for the four developments contrast. There is a broad similarity of responses between the two inner city sites, compared to the suburban and semi-rural developments.

Figure 24 illustrates a diagram of the z-scores – that is the amount that the residents’ survey differs from the benchmark for comparable areas – for these questions.

FIGURE 24: Z SCORES FOR RESIDENTS’ SURVEY FINDINGS THAT CAN BE BENCHMARKED TO COMPARABLE AREAS, ALL FOUR SITES





### 4.6 Local authority and national benchmarks

The original intention of this study was to compare responses of Berkeley residents to others nationally and within local authority areas.

The residents’ survey findings from all the 593 face-to-face interviews in the four sites were aggregated and compared with national data. This enabled exploration of the differences between the reported opinions and perceptions of Berkeley residents and national averages. “National” in this instance means England and Wales, for the questions derived from the three national surveys (Understanding Society, the Citizenship Survey and the Crime Survey for England and Wales) that cover these two countries. The Taking Part survey covers England only, so the results of questions taken from this survey have been compared to the England data only.

After statistical significance testing, the question responses showed a statistically significant difference overall for the residents’ survey results across the four sites and the national averages on two key questions:

- **Well-being:** Berkeley residents were more likely to feel reasonably happy than all people nationally.
- **Safety:** Berkeley residents were more likely to feel safer than all people nationally.

An attempt was made to benchmark residents’ survey responses against data from national surveys at the local authority level. This involved comparing data for the London Borough of Southwark with Empire Square residents’ survey data, data for the London Borough of Sutton with The Hamptons residents’ survey data, data for the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham with Imperial Wharf residents’ survey data, and data for Winchester City Council with Knowle Village residents’ survey data.

The benchmarking was based on national survey data from one single year and analysis found that not enough responses were collected across all of the local authorities in this single year to create a representative sample of local authority residents.

It would be possible in the future to create local authority comparisons by combining the responses in national surveys over a number of years to produce a sample size sufficiently representative of the area. However, this was beyond the scope of this project. See the Appendix for more information.



# 5.0 Lessons from using the measurement framework

**This work is developmental. It brings together data from different sources, combined in new ways, to quantify people’s quality of life and the strength of a community. As with all innovative projects, our framework has limitations and we have learnt valuable lessons from the process.**

The aim of this work has been to develop a practical, low-cost measurement framework which allows the Berkeley Group to assess social sustainability. It is crucial that the framework can be used by teams in the business, providing useful insights about what makes new communities flourish, and shaping decisions about design, planning and community engagement. It is also important that the framework could easily be replicated and applied across Berkeley’s wider portfolio of developments.

This section describes these lessons, discusses how the framework and data gathering approach could potentially evolve in the future, and also records some important caveats about the work. This is included to mitigate against misinterpretation or inaccurate application of the research.

## 5.1 Interpreting the findings

The measurement framework has been developed to provide developers with a means by which to highlight headline findings about specific developments (whether positive or negative). It has been designed to help illuminate emerging patterns by enabling broad-brush comparisons with appropriate benchmarks for comparable places or other new housing developments. It does not, without supplementary analysis, identify the underlying factors or practical concerns that play an important part in shaping how people experience a place.

The in-depth contextual interviews enabled us to make more informed and meaningful interpretation of the survey findings. Although these insights were not scored or formerly represented in the final assessments, they became an essential part to the project enabling the results to be put in context. Some site-specific, qualitative research should always be incorporated in the framework.

## 5.2 Present and future communities

Places are always changing and social sustainability is widely acknowledged to be a dynamic concept. This measurement framework has been designed as a practical, replicable tool. It has not been created to track a large sample of residents over a long period of time but to provide a snapshot of community strength and quality of life at a point in time. Our approach is not as robust as a large-scale longitudinal study in tracking changes in communities and individuals, and neither is it designed to measure the impact of any specific intervention. However, if applied periodically (say two, five and 10 years after completion) and/or to a range of different developments (as in this study), the framework can provide opportunities for meaningful comparisons over time. What is lost in robustness is gained in ease of use – and meaningful information emerges from this relatively low cost approach.

## 5.3 Mixed methods and mixed data sources

One of the major challenges in constructing this framework was combining the different types of data that underpin each indicator. Different types of data were selected to contribute different insights and perspectives to the framework.

The site survey work focuses on predicting the likely outcomes for residents based on the well-established assumptions and experience of urban design practitioners, that good design and provision of community facilities will have a positive impact on outcomes for residents.

The residents’ survey attempts to measure what happens in communities after they are completed. For example, the data reflected in the “social and cultural life” dimension investigates how people feel about their neighbourhood, their neighbours and their own well-being. The residents’ survey also attempts to look ahead to capture data about whether residents are willing and able to have a say in shaping the future of their local area (“voice and influence”).

It was impossible to directly aggregate information from the site survey (with a three tier grading system from a single source) and the residents’ survey (with a broader sample with statistically benchmarked responses). Doing this would have generated misleading results. The two types of data were therefore split between different dimensions of the framework. Site survey data and PTAL scores was used to populate the “amenities and infrastructure” dimension, and residents’ survey data was used to populate the indicators feeding into “social and cultural life” and “voice and influence” dimensions of the framework.

The created questions in the residents’ survey - those without comparable standards in existing data sets - also needed to be treated differently. Responses to these questions were RAG Rated without benchmarks. The questions relate to satisfaction with the provision of local facilities, and residents in urban developments (Empire Square and Imperial Wharf) gave more positive results than in other developments. This is unsurprising given their proximity to a wider range of facilities. In the future, as more data is collected across a range of different developments it will be possible to create more robust benchmarks for these questions.



## 5.4 Well-being

Resident well-being, capturing their perceptions of the quality of their lives, is a key aspect to social sustainability. It is closely related to how strongly people feel they belong in the area, and feeds into their neighbourliness and willingness to take part in community activities.

This pilot measurement framework included four questions selected on the basis of their fit with the other questions in the residents' survey, and the availability of questions in the four national data used to benchmark the survey. The results of the well-being indicator results revealed that residents reported their quality of life at the level to be expected for comparable areas.

For future surveys, use of the four questions now being employed by ONS to measure the nation's well-being would be recommended, to give a better indication of how residents fare compared to the emerging national picture.

## 5.5 Assessing transport links

The process of testing the measurement framework has revealed the limitations of the transport links indicator. There are three issues: first, PTAL scores are not widely used outside Greater London so for Knowle Village (and other semi-rural or rural developments) there is a gap in available data; second, there is a need to distinguish between what is appropriate transport provision for urban and suburban or semi-rural developments rather than only measuring proximity and frequency of public transport; third, the contextual interviews indicated that it is also important to capture residents' views about the provision of transport options.

In future we recommend adapting this indicator to incorporate a wider range of measures, such as public transport connections, car use and car parking, sustainable transport options including walking, cycling, car sharing and car clubs.

## 5.6 Scope

This measurement framework has been designed for a particular housing developer. The focus therefore was on the aspects of community strength and quality of life that a housebuilder could reasonably be held directly accountable for, or could influence through relationships with public agencies.

This has meant that some important dimensions of social sustainability are not represented in this framework; specifically, measures focused on social equity and justice and access to education and employment. They have been excluded where they are beyond the control or influence of a housebuilder. For example, although the house building industry contributes to local job creation and can in the short-term create access to job opportunities in a particular neighbourhood, wider issues of social justice and access to opportunities are factors that are dependent on much larger structural and political issues.

## 5.7 Developing the methodology

Statistical testing of the residents' survey findings benchmarked against comparable areas (see Part Two section 2.4) revealed that some of the results were statistically insignificant, meaning that they do not show a significant difference between the experience of Berkeley residents and those in comparable places (RAG Ratings were compiled based on statistically significant results only). Increasing the sample size for the residents' survey could help establish whether the results that were statistically insignificant were because Berkeley residents do not significantly differ from comparable groups, or because of the sample sizes.

This pilot used face-to-face interviews as these have the highest return rate and guarantee that a minimum number of responses can be recorded. An approach that may not increase cost is to use multiple methods of collecting responses from residents, including self-completed web based and paper questionnaires alongside face-to-face interviews. Using multiple methods of collecting results is well established and carried out by the national surveys and the methodologically most advanced academic surveys such as the British Birth Cohorts survey and the Avon Longitudinal Survey of Parents and Children.

One of the original intentions of this study was to compare responses of Berkeley residents to others living in the same local authority area. However, this was not possible in practice. The national survey data used was from one single year, and analysis revealed that not enough responses were collected in all of the local authorities in this single year data to create a representative sample of local authority residents.

It would be possible to create local authority comparisons by combining the responses in national surveys over a number of years to produce a sample size sufficiently representative of the area.

Finally, there is scope to introduce more qualitative research. The approach taken by this study did not allow for exploration of the reasons why residents chose to respond as they did to the survey questions. Costs permitting, this could generate valuable insights for the planning authority and housing providers.



# 6.0 Conclusions

**This project has demonstrated that it is possible to devise a measurement framework that can be used relatively swiftly and cost-effectively, to assess and evidence the quality of life and strength of community on new housing and mixed-use developments.**

The findings and lessons from this project will now be used to take this work a step further. Berkeley intends to trial the framework on a number of sites pre-planning or in the early stages of development and then consider rolling out this approach across the business, building social sustainability into the way it approaches every place.

More widely, we believe the idea of social sustainability will become increasingly important for government and society over the coming decade.

Underpinning this summary is a wealth of data that providing a rich picture about how residents from different backgrounds experience life in a new housing development.

The insights revealed by this work can enable all those involved in creating new housing developments – whether they are property developers, housing associations, or local authorities responsible for the stewardship of communities – to identify where interventions and investments in services, support for social life, or design improvements, are most needed or can be most effective. The findings also enable housing providers to explore the experiences of people from different backgrounds, for example, understanding how tenure relates to perceptions of safety or overall well-being, and how more vulnerable residents are being supported.

When the 'change in the neighbourhood' dimension is incorporated into the framework (on publication of the relevant 2011 Census data), it will also be possible to understand the impact of new housing developments on a wider area over time. It will be possible to explore changes in the demographic profile of surrounding neighbourhoods, in health and education outcomes, in employment and income, and housing affordability. This information will be valuable in understanding the long-term social effects of building new housing and in developing new thinking about how to mitigate some of the challenges faced by many neighbourhoods, such as the impact of long-term disadvantage.

This is an important project that will contribute to how the industry understands social sustainability. It marks an important shift in the industry's focus from placemaking to thinking about long-term stewardship. We hope the work will offer practical insights about how the idea of social sustainability can be put into practice and nurtured in new housing and mixed-use developments.

The adoption and delivery of tough new environmental standards in recent years shows the house building industry to be capable of changing the way it thinks and works dramatically.

Now we have an opportunity to achieve a similar breakthrough in terms of social outcomes. It involves a shift in focus from the point of sale to the future health and well-being of new communities. A new emphasis on social sustainability means thinking about *placekeeping* as well as *placemaking*. It requires us to recognise that some intangibles – the emotional relationships that people who live in and use a space develop – are as important as the hard infrastructure we deliver.





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