



Bristol Health and Wellbeing Board

Title of Report:	Bristol City Funds 'City Lab' pilot
Author (including organisation):	Lucy Gilbert, Quartet Community Foundation & David Barclay, Good Faith Partnership
Date of Board meeting:	16 Dec 2021
Purpose:	Information and discussion

- Paper to be no more than two pages long
- Draft papers are reviewed by the Public Health team
- Final papers will be published on the [public website](#)
- Board correspondence: HWB@bristol.gov.uk

1. Executive Summary

Bristol City Funds is running a pilot project called a City Lab. This 4-month process brings people together to explore key issues and develop a specific proposal suitable to receive grant and/or investment funding. The pilot lab is in south Bristol and aims to support the One City Plan target to “support community assets (such as community centres/ groups) to reduce social isolation and improve mental wellbeing, focusing particularly on communities with mental health inequalities.” We aim to share learning arising from the lab and seek input/feedback from the Health & Wellbeing Board.

2. Purpose of the Paper

We have completed the first three sessions of the pilot City Lab. Participating are three organisations in south Bristol who have each recruited 1-4 'Citizen Experts' to take part, sharing their lived experience and doing a wider community research 'listening' exercise. The organisations are: The Park, Hartcliffe and Withywood Community Partnership and Brave Bold Drama.

Two student researchers from the University of Bristol are also using Quartet's data to inform participants' thinking. Their quantitative data is mirroring the qualitative data from the listening exercise, and the two strands together are strengthening the findings from the lab. The community listening has narrowed the focus of the lab down to a set of issues around: anxiety related to isolation and reconnection; access to information and knowledge about local activities; and the availability of local spaces for reconnection.

We're interested specifically in triangulating this direction of travel with the Health & Wellbeing Board and in looking for opportunities for joining up or supporting each other's work in this sphere.

3. Background and evidence base

The City Lab intends to co-design a potentially fundable project that will support the One City Plan aim to “support community assets (such as community centres/ groups) to reduce social isolation and improve mental wellbeing, focusing particularly on communities with mental health inequalities.” The areas of Filwood, Knowle and Hartcliffe and Withywood are shown to have the most serious mental health needs in the city, (pre-pandemic Small Area Mental Health Index scores place some areas in the worst 5% of the country: Bristol = 43, South Bristol = 62, Hartcliffe and Withywood = 112.5). Analysis of information from mental health charities in South Bristol revealed that 60% identified loneliness or isolation as the

needs their work addressed, and 92% identified the pandemic as a contributing factor in residents' mental health issues.

The lab's listening exercise has highlighted related issues around access to and loss of community spaces, especially places that can be accessed without stigma and where activities bring people into contact both with other residents and with increased opportunities to learn about what else is going on locally.

The next phase of the lab will begin to identify potential interventions, and we welcome input from the Health and Wellbeing Board members on this direction of travel and any insights, advice or resources they have to share.

4. Community/stakeholder engagement

As described above, the City Lab group comprises representatives from 3 community organisations and 8 Citizen Experts, who have consulted with over 50 local residents so far. The group is co-facilitated by Kate Hygate (Local Access Programme) and David Barclay (Good Faith Partnership) with coordination input/facilitation from Sally Britton (City Funds Governing Board).

5. Recommendations

We recommend that the Health & Wellbeing Board continues to monitor the progress of the City Lab Pilot, and receives a further report upon its completion in order to consider potential learnings and implications for other projects.

6. City Benefits

The project aims to support the One City Plan target to "support community assets (such as community centres/ groups) to reduce social isolation and improve mental wellbeing, focusing particularly on communities with mental health inequalities" in an area of Bristol with the highest levels of mental health issues and facing significant socio-economic inequalities.

7. Financial and Legal Implications

We believe it could be beneficial to begin to consider whether there might be resources available for similar processes to the City Lab Pilot to be conducted in other parts of Bristol.