001 Why does participatory data collection matter?

Toyebat: I would like to see people who are working with communities involving them from the beginning and like throughout the process and trying to bridge the gap between finding out stuff and then executing stuff or solutionising so that they can have ownership of decisions and things that happen to them.

Eve: There are things we can all do to create safe, joyful and welcoming streets, parks and public spaces. where all women and girls feel they belong and are invited to be active. Hi, I'm Eve Holt, Strategic Director for Greater Manchester Moving. In this series, you'll hear about the work we've been doing with people and partners in Trafford, Greater Manchester, to trailblaze a different approach to street harassment, and gender based violence in public spaces.

(We live here, our families are here, and we want this to be a safe space for our children to grow up as well.)

Eve: Join us on a joyful journey of discovery, as we share what's been happening, differences making, and all we've learnt along the way. Across eight episodes, we dive into each of the key elements of the approach.

Maps of bystander training, community street art, co-designed walking maps, parties in the park, to participate policymaking and public campaigns. You'll hear from lots of the people and partners involved, including local citizens, community leaders, politicians, commissioners, sports organisations, artists, comms experts, facilitators, performers and many others who have all been playing an active role as part of a whole system approach to women's safety Shifting the dial from fear to freedom.

Episode introduction

So in this episode, the first of series two, we're exploring all things data, to include what counts as data, who gets to decide how it can be collected and how it can be used to inform local community action. I speak to colleagues at Open Data Manchester or ODM for short, one of our key delivery partners who steered and expertly managed our data-led approach.

They give you the full lowdown of how they worked with people locally to gather experiential data and insight.

Sam: What was important for us for this project was to be able to get a sense of the North Trafford area from the lived experience of the people who live and work there, the people who come and visit there, and from that get a better sense of what could be done to make the place feel like a safer and more joyful place for everybody.

Eve: I also chat with Sue, a North Trafford resident who participated in one of the ODM walkabouts, sharing how she felt and experienced her local area.

Sue: What I'd like to see would be a community place where people could meet to talk about the area and to activate things in the area and bring different nationalities and ages. I think getting together informally is a really good way of spreading community spirit.

Eve: We were determined from the very start at the Right to the Streets initiative that the first-hand experiences of local women and girls were at the centre of all decision-making.

This starts with decisions around what data is collected, by what process and for whom. Data comes in all sorts of forms and guises. There is the stuff you can count, like crime statistics, and the stuff that you can't easily count, like people's feelings and perceptions of safety. Our work is founded on the belief that both are important, as is the relationship between them.

ODM helped us from the start to think about what data is already available that can help inform local decisions and actions around safety. They also helped us to look beyond such statistics and work with local people to gather a rich array of insights to inform the work of the Right to the Streets Partnership.

This episode is full of learning and takeaways that can be applied in any field and community.

Interview 1

So, I'm at ODM's office, which is situated in the historical Hollyoake House in Manchester. The building was built in 1906 as the headquarters of the Cooperative Union, now known as Cooperatives UK. It seems very apt to be having this conversation here today, the home of one of the world's biggest people-powered movements, talking about another movement for good.

So I'm joined by three members of the ODM team who have all been instrumental in guiding our approach to data.

Sam: My name is Sam Milsom from Open Data Manchester.

Prisca: I'm Prisca from Open Data Manchester.

Toyebat: And I'm Toyebat from Open Data Manchester.

Eve: I start by asking Sam, the Programme Development Manager, just what is Open Data Manchester.

Sam: Open Data Manchester, we're a not-for-profit CIC, actually formed way back in 2010 now. And our mission is to promote responsible and ethical data practice. And a big part of the work that we do is working with communities, so working with people to help them understand, access, use, and just better represent themselves within data that is about them. And where they live, and that sort of thing.

Eve: So when we talk about data, people often have a whole load of set of ideas about what data is and what counts. So can you give people a taste of what data are you looking at?

Sam: So, I mean, our name is Open Data Manchester. So primarily we were set up to promote the use of open data, which is essentially just data that has been collected, and it is openly available for anyone to access, use, share, that sort of thing.

So it'll come with what's called an open data license. And a lot of government data is open data. So things like the census that came out last year, so demographics information on anything from down to how many people live in a street. To how many tree protection orders there are. And often you can access and download this openly online and anyone can use it.

Now, obviously, it's used to provide services, but people can use it for private reasons as well. So, you know, people use apps like City Mapper or the TFL apps, they're all open data. So some of the data that we hope would have been useful for this project would be things like the official crime stats. So all crimes that have been reported to the police should be openly available for anyone to access.

So you've got official stats like that, but open data and data can be anything, it can be, if you run an event and you use something like meetup or Eventbrite. How many people have signed up to it? How many people actually turned up to it? So in projects like these data, we say data is never like the answer in and of itself, but it will help you to answer questions and it will help you to maybe form better questions.

But hopefully what data will do is to provide evidence so that you can go and gain some knowledge, some insight and then take the right action. A lot of what we do when we work with communities of people is to sometimes help them collect their own data. Because what you might find is that there is information that you want.

So how busy is your street? In Manchester, a lot of the Bee Network coming in, a lot of cycle lanes. What we sometimes find is that residents are concerned about the number of cars going down their street, but there's no official data on that. Department of Transport, Manchester City Council. They don't have the resources to go and do a traffic count on every single street.

So what we might do is go and help residents to do their own collect their own data so that they can hopefully better represent themselves. Because often a lot of the official stats, it is a case of data being collected by local government, public organisations, and there's an extractiveness to that and they're collecting what they want to collect.

So a lot of the work that we do is to help communities collect their own data about things that matter to them, about things that are relevant to them. Sometimes we help them to find stuff that already exists, but we do often quite focus on the things that might not exist. So in the scope of Right To The Streets, and this is something that Open Data Manchester is really interested in. It's not just about hard numbers, number of people, but it can be about people's experience. It is about how people feel about a place, what they think, making sure that they feel that they can be better represented within that. So we like to try and have a focus on people's lived experience because that one person walking down the street can end up in a spreadsheet just as a number one, but there is so much life that they have so much experience around that.

Eve: In terms of Right To The Streets and creating spaces that are welcome and joyful for women and girls. And for everyone. Why does that particular subject matter? Why did you get involved in this project?

Sam: A lot of the work that we have done in the past has been around mapping the urban environment and people's experience of that. A project we did in Stockport a few years ago was to map the streets of the town centre from the point of view of people with mobility impairments. So wheelchair users, visually impaired, and we were able to record the routes that they took the places they avoided the things that in the urban environment that worked for them, the things that didn't work for them.

And it was able to feedback and inform to the local council to help them to create a more inclusive. urban environment for which they can move freely around because as we know if you make the urban environment more accessible for the wheelchair user, it's going to be more accessible for the able-bodied person.

So there's a similar element with the Right To The Streets project. Certain things we know work and certain things we know don't work. I mean, I'm obviously coming at it from the point of view of cis-gendered white male, but I know that there are still certain places that I will avoid at night time, maybe at certain times of day, maybe certain types of weather for me, sticking up CCTV doesn't really make a difference, but quite often that's the go-to for people interventions.

It's not going to work for everyone. It's not going to work for everyone from different backgrounds. It's not going to work for people who come from different lived experiences. What was important for us for this project was to be able to get a sense of the North Trafford area from the lived experience of the people who live and work there, the people who come and visit there and get a sense of where do they go, where do they enjoy going, where don't they want to go and why, how do they make them feel and from that get a better sense of what could be done to make the place feel like a safer and more joyful environment for everybody.

Eve: So Prisca and Toyebat, you really have been leading on this project and turning all of that context as to why into practice and bringing it to life in North Trafford over the last twelve months. So can you tell us what that looks like in practice? What have you been doing?

Toyebat: So we started off doing these three-hour workshops, which we called Walkabout Workshops, where we planned like a three-hour workshop where we've invited women and girls in the area to come and look at some old maps of the area to begin with, compare the past to how it is now.

And then we would ask three questions revolving around the themes of safety, being active, and a sense of belonging in the area. So yeah, we would just note down what people were saying as they were answering. And then we would like bring people's attention to some maps that we had on the table for them to actually plot their own routes.

And we left it like completely up to them to like either circle places of interest, note places that they take often, frequently, or that they might avoid to get their lived experience of the area and their perceptions. And then we would go out for a walk. So we would either do this by picking one of the routes that people had mapped out.

Or just going out and, like, intuitively walking. And then we would come back, have some tea, some biscuits, and reflect on, like, the journey that we took together. But oftentimes, like, we would be speaking whilst walking out, and, like, pointing things out, the streets and things like that.

Eve: And I joined you for one of those walkabouts, and it was fab, and how quickly a conversation opened up. Can you tell us about any of the things that you heard during those sessions or that you learned along the way?

Prisca: Some themes that came out from the conversations were around lighting, for example. A lot of parks dim the lights at night, and that's something that might make them feel uncomfortable. Or some parks have high fences that makes them feel isolated from the street, so they don't exactly know what's happening outside of the park.

We talked about the way that vehicles are parked, and that can be an obstruction to people that are walking down the street, or wheeling down the street. And we talked about safety in general and how people might feel safe when they're cycling or when they're walking or when they're pushing their prams with their children in.

Eve: So those are some examples of some of the things that people notice that get in the way of them feeling safe and that they're welcome and that they belong. Any particular themes in terms of things that people found were positive attributions of a place?

Prisca: Yes, we asked this through the conversations, but also through a survey that we put out and we asked people how they describe their favourite streets.

And when we asked that, a lot of people mentioned greenery and green spaces. They mentioned safety as a whole, but they also mentioned community. So they really liked when you can walk down the street and people smile at you. You walk past the shop and there is a lot of people having chats or you walk past the park and you see children playing and that really makes you feel like the place is alive and you're part of it.

Eve: And was there anything in the process, I guess, from the point of people arriving in the room and looking at maps to having a conversation around the maps, to going out for a walk and then coming back. Did you notice anything shift, I guess, in terms of how people articulated for them, what Right To The Streets means?

Prisca: I think there's two levels to this. I think one was a lot of people haven't been asked the questions that we were asking. So often you just ask what makes you feel safe and people just look at you like, what are you talking about? Am I supposed to know the answer to this?

So there was that and people entered it with that mindset and then go out thinking these are the things that I should be thinking about. These are the things that I need to be talking about with people. But then also within that, there's the very specific things that people told, the stories that opened other people's eyes to different experiences.

And so we had people mention how they felt safer cycling than walking because they would be quicker and they would be able to run away from danger. And that really sparked different thoughts about how they make themselves feel safe for women and girls within the conversations that we were having.

Toyebat: And I remember someone saying that we were at Old Trafford Bar and they said, because we took that walk, that they could probably walk home now that they've like connected the area together, which I think was quite nice.

Eve: I remember that conversation because I was there. Yeah, and I remember her just having that sudden, almost light bulb of, wait a minute, I've got to get off at this tram regularly.

And she said that she always felt quite disorientated there, hadn't really realised how close it was to home and that suddenly seeing it in a different light, paying attention helped to kind of go, Oh, I could get a Beryl Bike from here in future to get home.

Woman in group: The more familiar with that Bee being a landmark actually over there. I know, Oh yeah, this is by the Trafford Bar tram stop, but it's only taken me in the last sort of year to figure that out. And I didn't realise there was a Beryl Bike stop. And I actually think now, I'm thinking actually, if I did find myself having to get off here, before getting to Chorlton, I might just use a barrel bike, like carefully on the pavement, to get into Chorlton, because there's, I know that there's places…

Eve: I guess I noticed it was in that session where we had, I think it's about two and a half, three hours, the difference between, I guess, the start of the conversation where like to Sam's point before people's go to often is CCTV is lighting and like bright lighting or cutting back greenery towards the end of the conversation.

It felt like that's when we started to tease out people going, Oh, actually it's the conversations I have on the way. It's who I see. And that sense that you talk about that. community and about things about somewhere actually looking and feeling attractive, but it often felt like it took a while, like of you guys asking questions and seeing it before people maybe shifted a little bit from, oh, safety, this means quite top-down surveillance style for sponsors to something that's a far more everybody community place-based response.

Toyebat: Yeah. I think initially when you ask the question, 'what makes you feel like you can be safe or unsafe', people are just prone to go to unsafe first because it's just so not relevant but it's the first thing that comes to mind but then after people have given that response it's well, 'what makes you feel safe?' and just inviting that I think sometimes just a little a gentle reminder is needed that you're not always in a state of feeling anxious or unsafe But because it is, such a big feeling, it is what comes to mind first, so that sometimes you may forget, or may, like, take for granted the times that you do feel safe.

Eve: So, you've got all that information, or data, if you want to call it data, from all those people. What did you do with it?

Prisca: So we created different personas or profiles that give an idea of the people that we spoke to. So we created six of these and they represent different people that we spoke to.

So we have some maybe young girls in college or some retirees that spend their days walking around and going to the sports village. We share this with the partners and with other creative organisations as well. We created different

maps. where we plotted points of the places that people mentioned a lot, whether it was positive or negative.

And then we put that into a digital map as well so that everyone will be able to go on it and see what people have said and see where people feel safe or where people see a lot of green so that they know that they can go there if they want to spend some time in the green.

Toyebat: And then from the like responses that we got during the walkabout workshops, we were able to see the language that people use to describe things or just point things out.

And then with the themes, we use this information to develop a place review. It was initially called 'Place Audit', but speaking our language that wasn't very accessible for everyone. So it was renamed 'Place Review', which is something that can be used to assess the needs of an area or a street or a space to see what improvements it may need.

Eve: What are you hoping will happen with those Place Reviews? How are you hoping they'll be used?

Prisca: We created it with a couple of uses in mind, but we really want people in the community to take it and make the use that they need to take out of it. We thought it'd be a good way for people to quantify the things that they see and doing it in groups or with other people so that they can have some, I guess, more statistical evidence that they can bring up to the people that they need to make changes because it might be that they can't fix everything. Sometimes you have to go to the council or to other organisations for help, but as I said, we want people to take it and just do with it what they want to do with it and what they need to do with it.

Eve: Obviously wanting to create a tool that is useful for people to pay attention to the things that both hinder and help a sense of safety and well-being and welcome and yet in doing that obviously you are drawing attention to things that maybe are negative.

And that in itself can shift people's own experience of place. The more you pay attention to something, the more it grows, the more you start noticing the cracked pavements and the dog poo and all the things that get in the way of sometimes joy. And then that also mounts up as sense of things that you really want people to change and to fix.

So there was some really interesting conversations we had around how do we create a really honest, useful tool that helps people create a really true reflection and, notice all the things in the place that make a difference. And yet how could that possibly get in the way of their experience and take away a sense of power. I mean, I don't know any reflections on wrestling with that cause that felt like a really interesting conundrum and tensions in that whole process.

Toyebat: I think by going back and adding sections about reflection and just exploring the area to soften the review. So with the exploration pages, it's like, one of the prompts are, 'name three places that you would recommend to someone else to go to'.

And then also, reflecting on what you can do on your own, what you can do collectively. And what you need to advocate for, I guess. But yeah, like you said, it's just being honest. And in the beginning, we do have a bit, which gives a disclaimer that these feelings of negativity may occur, but there are activities to dissolve this also.

Eve: So I think you navigated that really well in coming to something that feels like it balances all of those different tensions and needs.

Prisca: I was thinking that that's the good thing about being a multi-partner project because the place review isn't the only tool that will come out of it and so people will be able to choose what they feel comfortable to do.

The Place Review is in itself a bit of a call to action so the people that will be attracted to using it will also be those that already know that there will be some stuff that will be hard to look at and that they know that that's a step within addressing it.

Eve: Again, all of the stuff that you've done has helped, I think, make all aspects of the project feel really rooted and relevant to people in this place, in this neighbourhood, which has been really valuable.

Is there anything else in perspective of, I guess, this sort of, so what, like, what have either you learned as, as individuals, as Open Data Manchester, or anything else that you've heard that other partners or people involved as participants have learned through this process?

Sam: I think this speaks a little bit to the Place Audit, actually, because we were originally going to try and do a pre-existing place or that, I think it was like a Gell Institute one, but we found very, very quickly that it wasn't representative.

It was very much a checklist of how people, how many people do you count? How many people lying on the floor? This, that and the other. And it was when you look at the people who created that Place Audit. It was never going to be representative of the area that we're working in. So I think it was really, really important for us to develop our own one that was relevant for the project, but also the people there.

So as Toyebat and Prisca spoke really well to it is the language used, the issues raised are all as representative as we were able to make it. But I think something I'm very aware of is that we didn't get to speak to every corners of the community. That's always going to be a difficult thing.

We like to involve the community in all aspects. It's very much a co-design, co-creation process. Something that I think the whole project itself was really strongly rooted in the project as a whole. But that in itself is really, really difficult. There's always going to be that self-selecting audience or the loudest person in the room and there's always going to be the people who aren't in the room.

So I think just constantly having an awareness of who isn't in the room, who aren't we talking to, who aren't we engaging, having a disclaimer about certain things, having that awareness can be really challenging but it is also really, really important.

Prisca: I think, acknowledging that people will have different experiences about the same thing.

And so something might make someone feel safe and another person feel unsafe. And so we also had to grapple with that and try to make it as wide as possible so that everyone can feel that they can put their own experience within the place review.

Eve: That's a really important point, and it came out quite a lot, didn't it?

And I think people just even noticing that and realising that not everyone experiences streets and places the same as them, and obviously there's a gendered perspective, which has been a real focus of this project, and I think has really helped some people to open their eyes and go, wow, I had no idea that women and girls experience this or took on such safety work just to go down the street, for example.

But then as you said before, Sam, that also in terms of taking a more intersectional approach across all different types of lived experience, it really does differ in terms of people and how they relate and how they feel in place. Was there any surprises or anything that particularly stood out to you at any point or to anyone who was involved?

Toyebat: People are also very similar as well, as they are very different. Yeah. Some things were like, they were just said again and again and not even just in the same sessions, but in different sessions. Things like parks and the maintenance of them or people using them. So like if a park is poorly maintained, then it's not going to be used.

Which will then make it like an unsafe place, because there aren't people to see if anything goes wrong, or there were shady people who were there.

Eve: So in terms of what next, there's been a whole load of learning. There's been things that have changed and adapted along the way. You've got some great resources that are coming out.

I guess I know I'm sat here in your office and I've got in front of me, one of the graphics that you guys have created before around sort of levels of deprivation across different parts of England local authorities. And that is an example for me one of the things that I know I love about Open Data Manchester is the, as well as thinking about different ways to gather data and insight and shifting the power dynamics about who gets to ask what questions and hold that information, is you're constantly looking at creative ways to then also share that information and to make that more accessible and engaging for others.

So is there anything from either that you are going to do or that you'd like to see that helps think about all that information that you've gathered and more that will follow that helps make that engaging for others?

Sam: We are in the process of creating this digitised map, which will have a lot of the routes and things that have come up from the project so far, not just the work that we've done, but we're hoping that the partners have done as well. So the locations of the arts exhibits and photographs and stories to accompany them, locations of things like the Beryl Bikes. So that's being built as we speak now. I hope to continue to develop that. It's a nice accessible thing for everyone and hopefully even maybe even expand the area once the project has ended. It's something that is going to be a resource that is openly available to the community to use.

The other thing is we've got a Lego map, a 3D printed Lego map of the area, where I suppose what we might be doing is asking people, it's essentially just a map on a table with a Lego base of the area.

And we might have different coloured Lego bricks. We might ask a question such as, 'How safe do you feel?', or 'How much on a scale of zero to ten?'and then you get a Lego brick and you put it on the area. And that's just quite a nice, fun, interactive way to build up a picture of how people feel about the area, but again, is a quite hands-on, slightly more concrete way of understanding what's going on.

Eve: I was going to ask when is the Lego coming out? I'm looking forward to playing with the Lego.

Sam: And the place reviews as well, even though these ones are specific to the project at North Trafford, it is very much the methodology of creating that. And that is a tool and a resource that can be used by other people in the area and surrounding areas.

But what we hope is that it will also be a resource for other people in other areas outside of Greater Manchester. It could be that the methodology of creating it exists now and it is absolutely could easily be replicated elsewhere.

Eve: And you've got some Joy Diversion walks coming up, so can you tell us a little bit about, again they're another form of walkabout, what's different about those?

Sam: Yeah, they're very, very similar to the Walkabout setups, but whereas the Walkabouts that Toybat and Pliska carried out very much had a specific mission, were asking very specific questions. These are much more family-friendly, open to everyone. We start with the old maps of the area from a hundred years ago.

People look at them and they see what's interesting, what's the same, what's different, and they form teams. And they set their own missions. So it's a bit of like a 'choose your own adventure'. Then they go out for a couple of hours and explore it. And we give you backpacks with things inside of it, and you can go and take photographs and pick up things and bring them back and share them.

We get people to set their own missions. So some of the ones we've had in the past are, 'I'm going to go from A to B, but I'm only going to use streets that are on this map from 150 years ago' and just see what happens and they go on

meanderings and, and we come back and we just sort of talk about what we found and how we shared them.

So they're much more open, they're much more, as we say, family-friendly, open-ended, everybody's welcome to come to them. But they're a really, really nice way to connect with the area, whether you're, you've been there all your life, whether you're new to the area, whether you just pass through the area, they're just really fun ways to explore and discover the area and see what's out there and see what's interesting and see what's fun.

Eve: So I hope the people listening, it's helped them to think that data can be fun. It can be creative. It can be open. It can be something that they gather that they own that helps inform their decisions.

Toyebat: I would like to see people or other projects, organisations or people who are working with communities, involving them from the beginning and like throughout the process and trying to bridge the gap between finding out stuff and then executing stuff or solutionising.

I think it's important that you centre these things on the people that you. are working with or working for and have them a part of the process so that they can have ownership of decisions and things that happen to them.

Prisca: I feel like this is very idealistic, but I want to see those people being listened to as well as people do put a lot of time and effort into making their own areas better and making the world better.

So I'd like to see more people that have the power to change things, listening to those people and making the world better.

Eve: A big thanks to Sam, Prisca and Toybat for sharing their fascinating Right To The Streets journey.

You heard how important it is to listen, really listen, to people who live, work, visit and play in the communities where you're taking action. It's a huge and common theme, not just throughout these Right To The Streets episodes, but across the whole GM Moving podcast.

Interview 2

So let's put that into practice right now and hear from one of the many people who took part in ODM's community mapping and walkabouts.

This is Sue.

Sue: I'm Sue Morford. I live about a 15 minute bus ride from Gorse Hill. But I use theGorse Hill area for the sports centre and sometimes shopping and meeting friends. I also learned to swim in Stretford Sports Center, and my children did too. So we've known the area for more than 50 years. As I'm 77, a retired special needs teacher.

Eve: I start our conversation with Sue on her iPad and me, dialing in for the Greater Manchester Moving headquarters by asking how she first heard about the opportunity to contribute to some community mapping.

Sue: I had a letter. Well, an email come through. I think it was Trafford, one of the departments in Trafford, inviting me to participate. But I also found a poster in the sports centre, which was talking about community mapping. And I thought, oh, that's interesting. So that's how I came into it.

We met in Trafford College on a very wet day, looked at old maps, which was really fascinating because those who was in the group and the leader all had different bits of information about the area. And in one case, no information about the area.

And it was wonderful to be able to see what had happened between the maps being made and the place now, for instance, Colgate-Palmolive was a big factory then, but it's now turned into something else.

And we shared lots of information about ourselves and our attitudes towards sport and fitness. I was able to tell them of a safe walk in lots of directions from the bridge at the beginning of Gorse Hill. You can walk or cycle or wheel right from there, right round to the Trafford Centre and beyond, on a safe, good path. And the same... the other direction, you can actually go into Manchester and come out near the Bridgewater Hall.

And they found that fascinating because they'd not experienced that. But things have changed quite a lot, obviously.

When we went on the walkabout, we went in the quadrant area and Talbot Road looking at things and the one thing that stood out for me was that when we were

new to the area we went Tempin Bowling on that road leading down to the quadrant.

The bowling alley turned into B& Q and then since then it's been derelict and it's such a shame that there's a decent area there that's been derelict for good while. It could be used for something community-based and make a good central point. So, and apart from getting very wet, it was a good experience.

Eve: And how, for you, has that experience of doing that walkabout, has it made you think any differently about the local area, about your experience of the local area?

Sue: Yes, because there's some lovely bright spots just as you're coming into Gorse Hill and then further on down Chester Road almost opposite the Sports Centre where little areas have been developed with plants and small artworks.

And that really is a bright thing to look at.

Eve: So I guess for you, what makes a route feel safe and more than that, what also makes it feel like actually, you know, a joyful space that you might want to walk or wheel or cycle?

Sue: I actually spoke to a friend of mine who lives in Gorse Hill, right in the hub of it.And she was saying that she thinks it's a good area to be. Likes the community spaces, the green community spaces. Particularly Nansen Road Park, where she walks her dog and she goes walking and sometimes jogging and running. So she finds that it's a really good space. She thinks that it's quite a safe place to be for her.

There are various places where she could go for assistance if she needed it. Shops that are open in the day, shops that are open in the evening, and she'd, feel she could knock on neighbourhood houses, so it's quite safe. The one thing she did say was that it was such a shame that the lollipop lady had been taken away from the school. She really encouraged the children to be safe on the roads, and it's a mission, she felt. Also the things like the outdoor area at Stretford High School allows people in to play football when the school's not open. So that's another good example of keeping fit and healthy.

Eve: If you think about our streets through the lens of an older person, anything that particularly stood out for you that maybe you had a, you know, your thinking was different to others and why is it important to then listen to older people?

Sue: The road surfaces or footpaths and surfaces are reasonably good, but the older you get, the more you want a good surface to walk on. I think I would feel safe, but I don't think I'd be able to feel so safe of an evening. But that goes for any, any area that you're in, but plenty of shops on an even, one level are good.

Street lighting again is important because the older you get the more light you need to see clearly. But the parks would be the same, you know, still using the park, good visibility there so you don't feel threatened. And of course if you want to swim or do anything active then you've got the sports centre as well.

Eve: In terms of what next, having taken part in the Walkabout, I mean, have you got any ideas of things that you'd like to see happen or anything that you've done as a consequence?

Sue: What I'd like to see, I think, and this, my friend also said this, would be a community place where people could meet to talk about the area and to activate things in the area. She suggested maybe somewhere like the Scout Hut that's in Gorse Hill or even a room in the church that's on Chester Road, might be a central place to gather people together and bring different nationalities and ages in. And I think getting together informally is a really good way of spreading community spirit.

Eve: When you describe, you know, this need for another community space, really, that sounds really important. So any other ideas, thoughts you have about what would make the difference? What would be somewhere that people would want to go to and you think would help activate in your words?

Sue: I talked about the space where the bowling alley had been. If that was, that could be developed into a community area, a community building, where you could have classes of an evening, classes during the daytime, sort of leisure activity classes, learning classes. Whatever they used to do at North Trafford College, in the way of learning, that's gone by the board now for new technology.

Eve: You talked about the conversation with your friend. Is there anybody else, I guess, that you've ended up having conversations with since the walkabout? That's it's inspired another conversation with others really around, what we could do to make our streets and spaces more friendly and active and safe.

Sue: I've told quite a lot of people about what I've, what I've done. Not necessarily in Gorse Hill area, but people who are friends from where I live. And we're very interested, and I think it's something that could be developed as

a, more than a pilot scheme, into trying other neighbourhoods as well. It'd be good if this could be developed into something for all the other communities around Trafford, to get a more cohesive, safe area, well cared for area.

Hopefully one day, it's good to be part of the beginnings of it.

Eve: Such a joy to speak to Sue. She's so busy and active. I love it.

Outro

So that's it for this episode. A big thanks for listening.

Crime stats are important and can be a key catalyst for action, particularly by police and local authorities. So we need to make it easier for people to report crimes and to access local data. But we've heard that crime stats on their own, don't tell the whole story.

We know that data gathering and use can often feel like an extractive process, which leaves people feeling powerless to act. It doesn't need to be like that. We've seen that by working with people and partners in a more participatory way, we can create more generative spaces for them to tune into their own experiences and to hear from others around them.

And we can gather data and insight in a way that then increases personal and collective agency for change, and which can help tell a much richer and fuller story.

This is just the end of the beginning. One year in, we've already seen impacts and ripples from the Right To The Streets approach and partnership.

Wherever you live, work and play, and whatever your role, this is now our invitation to you to join us as a movement for change, for safer, more welcoming and joyful streets, parks and public spaces. This is just the start of the conversation. We'd love to hear from you. What data do you look to? What data would you like to be able to access that isn't currently available? What counts? What matters?

Whatever it is, let us know and we'll share your thoughts on future episodes of this podcast. We've got a few ways you can get in touch. Tell us on social media we're on Facebook and Twitter. Simply search 'GM Moving'.

Finally, a big thanks to everyone who's contributed to this episode.

This podcast is one of many ways we are spreading the Right To The Streets conversation and learning. We've created an array of resources for people and partners to use, free of charge. These are all available via the GM Moving website and resource hub, including Right To The Streets games, literature review, infographics, blogs, webinars, animations and reports.

Thanks to everyone involved, including Trafford Council, Open Data Manchester and all the other GM Moving partners. And thanks to funding from the Home Office, which has supported the work through the Safer Streets Fund.

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