

Allens Cross

Greener Community Plan



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Building Greener Communities and the respective Greener Community Plans will:

- Ensure communities are more resilient to climate change, by narrowing the inequalities faced by disadvantaged individuals.
- Provide opportunity for improved quality of life through improved health outcomes, poverty relief and community engagement.
- Reduce carbon emissions through a just transition and, therefore, reduce local global warming impacts.

This project would not have been possible without funding from The National Lottery Community Fund.



Introduction

Increasing resilience against climate change is vital for our communities to limit worsening global warming, and other extreme weather events that are increasingly common. Avoiding these risks is reliant on action being taken 'against the grain'.

These actions are not just about carbon reductions and nature protection, there are social risks too. We use Bioregional's One Planet Living® framework to guide our priorities and measure our impact across environmental, nature, economic and social targets. This includes targets such as: good health, biodiverse land, strong local economies, equitable working opportunities, reduced isolation, reduced poverty and safer streets.

The climate crisis is expected to widen pre-existing social inequalities, so immediate action is necessary to avoid these worsening. In addition, there is a gap between those who make climate-based decisions, and those who will be most affected by climate breakdown. We want to bridge that gap by basing our plans on data and opinions collected by the community.

This project gathers data provided by the communities in Allens Cross, to develop a community-led Greener Community Plan that encompasses the needs and desires of the community it is based in.

We have purposely placed the plan at the beginning of the document and the supporting data and context at the end.



Why community led action plans?

- ★ The amazing community organisations in and around Allens Cross know their communities best. They have more insight of their own group of beneficiaries than anyone else. Ensuring their insights do not go unnoticed allows for a more robust plan.
- ★ By bringing together the organisations within the ward we hope to open up networking opportunities and pathways for partnership that improve services by increasing capacity across the ward.
- ★ A climate action plan has not yet been created for Allens Cross.
- ★ A community working together will have greater impact.



A climate action plan led by a community organisation ensures that it is rooted in the local area and addresses the real needs of people, bringing it's focus and relevance to their lives. A community centre like Allen's Cross involves local people who may not have thought about how climate action directly impacts their lives. But through the trust that organisations like this build with their local community these connections can be made.

Allen's Cross has a reach beyond its own space and ideas and activities like this will have a wider affect across the Ward.

Jess Allen, Northfield Community Partnership



Why community led action plans?



Whilst national climate leadership is more necessary than ever, we all have an important power in shaping the places we live in and building thriving neighbourhoods. A community climate action plan helps define what can be done, who can help, and what histories can provide the seeds for positive change.

Situating these plans in community organisations, like Allens Cross Community Association and the Springfield Project, is a way we can root solutions with the people and groups who already understand the strengths and needs of their area. Not only that, but projects like these join important connections between thriving lives, communities, and our wider planet, and help make our transition to sustainability something that happens with people, not to them.



David Evans, Birmingham City Council - Route to Net Zero

Greener Community Plan

The following plan outlines the priorities and actions that would support Allens Cross to build a greener ward for its residents.

The plan is sectioned into the One Planet Living® principles, actions, timelines and potential partners within the ward to collaborate on actioning the plan.

- Health and Happiness
- Equity and Local Economy
- Culture and Community
- Travel and Transport
- Land and Nature
- Local and Sustainable Food
- Materials and Products
- Zero Waste
- Zero Carbon Energy



This plan can be used as a toolkit for project planning and partnerships and to understand community need within Allens Cross. The plan is realistic and will be implemented by community champions at our anchor organisation, Allens Cross Community Association, as well as other partnered organisations over the three-year project.

PRINCIPLE IN ACTION	ACTION	RESOURCES REQUIRED	IMPACT	WHEN	POTENTIAL PARTNERS
Health and Happiness	Nature-connection for health: access to regular, community led outdoor social groups and/or exercise.	Staffing, training, support from community groups, volunteer support.	Engagement and provision for increased levels of happiness and wellness in the community. More socialised groups and less loneliness.	1-2 years	Allens Cross Community Association, Northfield Mental Health Hub , Northfield Community Partnership, Northfield Arts Forum (NAF).
Health and Happiness	Operate physical fitness groups outdoors for older people in the community.	Support from organisations with a focus on older people, capacity building for this organisation.	Reduction in isolation of elderly people and increased physical fitness.	1-2 years	Friends of groups, Northfield Mental Health Hub, NAF, Northfield Community Partnership.
Health and Happiness	Mental health resilience sessions for teenagers.	Appropriate staffing, training, funding, space, engagement.	Improving the poor mental health statistics for the area in young people.	2-3 years	Northfield Mental Health Hub, Allens Cross Community Association, The Hub on the Green, NAF.

PRINCIPLE IN ACTION	ACTION	RESOURCES REQUIRED	IMPACT	WHEN	POTENTIAL PARTNERS
<p>Equity and Local Economy</p>	<p>Sustainability leadership training for those within local organisations for underrepresented groups.</p>	<p>Training for leaders, funding.</p>	<p>Improvement in workplace skills and training, leading to further opportunity. Plus, improvements in sustainability planning for respective organisation.</p>	<p>1-2 years</p>	<p>Allens Cross Community Association, Northfield Community Partnership.</p>

PRINCIPLE IN ACTION	ACTION	RESOURCES REQUIRED	IMPACT	WHEN	POTENTIAL PARTNERS
Culture and Community	Celebrate the heritage of Allens Cross through annual events and involve community in the design of events.	Community engagement, space, volunteers.	Feeling of belonging and pride in their local area.	1 - 2 years	Community organisations.
Culture and Community	Community climate leadership: recruit local faith and youth leaders as sustainability champions.	Training for champions, communication materials.	Strengthened trust and representation.	1 - 2 years	Faith groups, Colleges/schools.
Culture and Community	Social-connection projects: inter-generational gardening, cultural exchange event.	Event coordination, space, volunteers, small-grants budget.	Improved social cohesion, reduced isolation, greater local pride.	2 - 3 years	All local community organisations.

PRINCIPLE IN ACTION	ACTION	RESOURCES REQUIRED	IMPACT	WHEN	POTENTIAL PARTNERS
Travel and Transport	Growing access to resources required to learn and continue to cycle, walk and use public transport.	Equipment, capital, staff, volunteers, infrastructure.	Improve physical fitness, reduce cars on road, improved wellbeing, less pollution.	1-2 years	The Hub on the Green, Cog Nation CIC Venture, The Bike Foundry, Northfield Cycles, NAF.
Travel and Transport	Improving infrastructure for residents to access public transport points.	Birmingham City Council (BCC) support, campaigning, policy change.	Safer transport and therefore increased uptake and reduced traffic when more efficient public transport networks are provided.	3-5 years	Better Streets, NCP, BOSF, BCC.
Travel and Transport	Reduce car parking spaces across the ward and replace with pocket parks.	BCC support and local consultancy on suitable areas.	Less private vehicle use and, therefore, less traffic and more enjoyable streets that residents are happy to utilise.	3-5 years	Better Streets, NCP, BOSF, BCC.
Travel and Transport	Reducing local deliveries through coordination from local businesses.	Coordination, community support, comms.	Reducing large vehicle deliveries in local areas resulting in lower congestion in high traffic areas.	2-3 Years	Local businesses and community orgs.

PRINCIPLE IN ACTION	ACTION	RESOURCES REQUIRED	IMPACT	WHEN	POTENTIAL PARTNERS
Land and Nature	Connect the organisations working towards a cleaner space.	Capacity building, litterpicking tools, engagement, volunteers.	Cleaner streets and wider recognition of impactful community groups.	1-2 years	Allens Cross Community Association, Northfield Community Partnership, NAF, The GLUE Collective, Friends of groups.
Land and Nature	Bring on board volunteers who can promote and market the use of the community nature spaces in Allens Cross.	Volunteers, staffing, engagement.	Increased volunteer opportunities and therefore better working opportunities. Plus, increased visibility and celebration of Allens Cross nature spaces.	1-2 years	Friends of groups, NAF, Northfield Community Partnership.
Land and Nature	Creation of a pocket park in the most green deprived area (consult on this).	Capital, BCC level support, campaigning, policy change, permissions.	Improved biodiversity and greening of urban spaces. Increased community involvement.	3-5 years	Northfield Community Partnership, BCC.
Land and Nature	Support Tree Board to action tree planting for shade and flood prevention.	Funding for project delivery, knowledge (experts), space.	Flood prevention and shaded streets to alleviate impact of extreme weather.	1-2 years	Birmingham Tree Board, BCC, Friends of groups.

PRINCIPLE IN ACTION	ACTION	RESOURCES REQUIRED	IMPACT	WHEN	POTENTIAL PARTNERS
<p>Local and Sustainable Food</p>	<p>Continue to run more cooking workshops within community spaces.</p>	<p>Staffing, knowledge, wider engagement, space, capital.</p>	<p>Increased knowledge in nutrition and improved skills in cooking low-cost, healthy meals, reducing diet related illness.</p>	<p>1-2 years</p>	<p>LOAF, Clean Kilo, St. Lawrence Church, St. Bartholomew's Church - food bank, BOSF, Allens Cross Community Association.</p>
<p>Local and Sustainable Food</p>	<p>Promotion of allotment spaces for shared-ownership and community-led social gardening groups.</p>	<p>Space, materials, community org support.</p>	<p>Improved physical fitness social engagement. Fresh produce available for food pantries and communities to eat.</p>	<p>2-3 years</p>	<p>Allens Cross Community Association, BCC, BOSF, Friends of groups.</p>

PRINCIPLE IN ACTION	ACTION	RESOURCES REQUIRED	IMPACT	WHEN	POTENTIAL PARTNERS
Materials and Products	Residents to have access to knowledge and workshops regarding reducing consumption of new materials.	Knowledge, staff, example materials, space, local engagement.	Knowledge to save money, buying/recycling better products that last longer.	1-2 years	Rowheath Pavilion, Sustainabrum, Attic Brewery Co.
Materials and Products	Regular swap shops set up in community spaces.	Space, volunteers, staff, materials (seed stock), local engagement.	Saving money, and avoidance of items in landfill. Improving community spirit.	1-2 years	Allens Cross Community Association, The Hub on the Green, Rowheath Pavilion.
Materials and Products	Repair cafes set up for regular fixing of items.	Space, volunteers with knowledge & expertise.	Saving money, learning new skills and avoidance of items in landfill. Improving community spirit.	1-2 years	Allens Cross Community Association, The Hub on the Green, Rowheath Pavilion, The Bike Foundry, Cog Nation CIC, Venture Bikes, Northfield Cycles.
Materials and Products	Committment by local stores to reduce plastic use and promote sustainability forward products.	Volunteer campaigning and coordination, communications.	Higher level support for a cause that can trickle down into the community, especially if residents feel like they aren't doing all the work themselves.	2-3 years	Clean Kilo, Local Businesses, Campaigners.

PRINCIPLE IN ACTION	ACTION	RESOURCES REQUIRED	IMPACT	WHEN	POTENTIAL PARTNERS
Zero Waste	Education workshops available for residents on recycling and composting.	Staff time, materials, space, local engagement.	Improved rates of recycling in the city, which are notoriously low.	1-2 years	Allens Cross Community Association (ACCA), The Hub on the Green, Rowheath Pavilion, Friends of groups (composting).
Zero Waste	Campaigns highlighting a way to consume plastic free, affordable products.	Volunteer campaigns coordination and communications.	Better health for residents and lowered use of plastics and waste.	1-2 years	Clean Kilo, Campaigners, Northfield Community Partnership, ACCA.
Zero Waste	Re-education of residents on recycling after bin strikes end.	Recycling knowledge, campaigns, community engagement.	Cleaner pathways and homes for residents, minimising waste and improving hygiene.	1 year	BCC, ACCA, The Hub on the Green, Rowheath Pavilion.
Zero Waste	Facilitation and identification of local community collections for people who do not have access to a recycling centre.	Comms coordination and local engagement.	Cleaner pathways and homes for residents, reducing smells and litter.	1-2 year	ACCA, Northfield Community Partnership.

PRINCIPLE IN ACTION	ACTION	RESOURCES REQUIRED	IMPACT	WHEN	POTENTIAL PARTNERS
Zero Carbon Energy	Local ownership of renewable energy sources (solar, community heat pump).	Community ambition, capital, space, surveys, coordination.	Cheaper, renewable energy that is more reliable and less market sensitive.	5-10 years	ACCA, The Hub on the Green, Rowheath Pavilion, BCC, Potential wider partners such as Universities (Coventry University example of good work).
Zero Carbon Energy	Aid high traffic community buildings to be retrofitted.	Capital, surveys, agreement (for disruption caused), staff.	Higher energy efficiency in buildings, lowering bills and better financial sustainability.	3-5 years	ACCA, NCP, The Hub on the Green, Rowheath Pavilion, Holloway Hall.
Zero Carbon Energy	Ensuring a warm/cool space is available for extreme weather and therefore resilience.	Space, funding, community trust and engagement.	Ensures protection of vulnerable people, whilst actions are being taken to mitigate the need.	1 year	ACCA, The Hub on the Green, Rowheath Pavilion, BCC.

The People

Building Greener Communities is supported by our anchor organisation, Allens Cross Community Association. This anchor organisation takes the lead in their ward to develop and implement a Sustainability Action Plan for their organisation, with the support from ecobirmingham.

By engaging with organisations across the Allens Cross ward, we have aimed to involve communities who experience multiple inequalities and are often excluded from climate-related decision making. These disadvantaged groups are also the most likely to be disproportionately affected by climate change, due to financial pressures, health vulnerabilities, and location-based risks.

This is particularly unjust, when the most 'advantaged' wards in Birmingham, are the highest polluters. Sustainability is not just about emissions, if it were, we would simply target those highest polluters. It is about long-term change that reflect a just society, socially and economically, and ensures our city is liveable for future generations.

Continuing to make climate decisions based on contributions from professionals, academics or advantaged individuals, creates biased decision making, and skews the potential for real change. We believe that community inclusion in climate decisions will inspire more positive action, and in turn, better implementation of the co-created action plans.

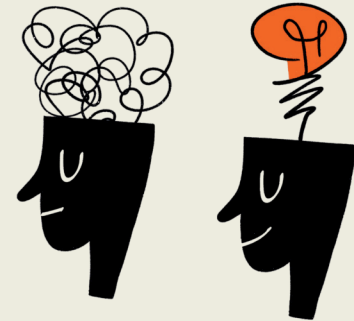


In addition, the lived experiences of our communities are the building blocks of relearning what sustainability can mean when co-created with the inspiring people we work with. We are really fortunate to have had great contributions to these plans by different organisations, beneficiaries and representatives.

A huge thank you to Emma and Jackie at Allens Cross Community Association for their ongoing support during this project, plus all of the amazing people who have contributed to this project.

The Goal

To reach a **tipping point**, where 25% of households in Allens Cross adopt actions from the Greener Community Plan or contribute towards them.



Green Community Heroes

Allens Cross Community Association

In the heart of its neighbourhood, Allens Cross Community Association reaches its community through a thriving garden, apiary, hub of activity and warm team.

Opened as the first community centre in Birmingham in 1931, it has showed itself to be a trusted pillar of the community and far reaching in its sustainable approach.

While they do not brand themselves as a sustainability-focused organisation, their work is exactly that. Encouraging a more social, active, green, and engaged lifestyle is everything we need from grassroots organisations.

We have been working together for the past 2 years, and in that time have made progress to highlight Allens Cross Community Association as an environmentally ambitious member of our city.

Fundraising to improve the energy efficiency of the building has been successful and welcomed, with more of their action plan to be implemented.



The Project

Building Greener Communities is a three-year pilot project, attempting to design a framework for service delivery and the creation of ward-level Greener Community Plans which can be replicated across the 69 wards of the city. By focusing on specific communities in Birmingham, we can get to know the needs of a community and have a greater impact.

The programme of delivery includes:

- Service delivery consisting of environmental education, cooking and gardening workshops, forest school, repair and reuse workshops, zero-waste events, and energy advice.
- Training for our Anchor Organisations and respective Sustainability Champions.
- Design and implementation of Anchor Organisational Sustainability Action Plans.
- Development of Greener Community Plans for each ward.

The Greener Community Plan represents manageable, but still ambitious, targets and deliverables for the next couple of years, which will improve quality of life through volunteering, clean-ups, local opportunities, nature-connection, and reduced emissions.

Key Priorities

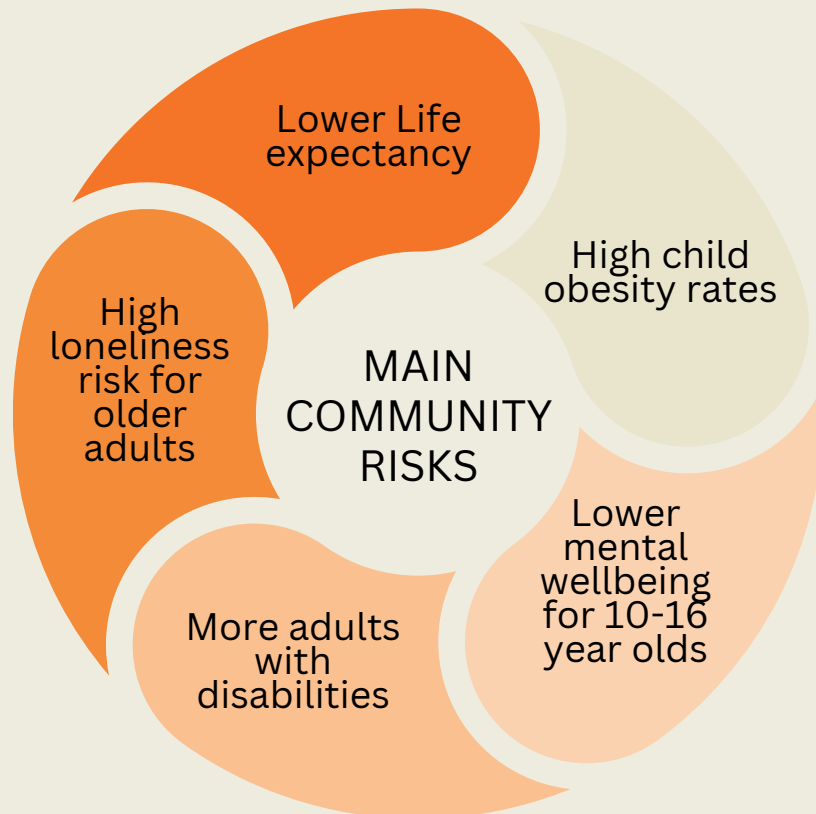
Demographic and area level data has been separated out according to the One Planet Living® Principles.

This evidence pack is informed by secondary data and community conversations over the last two years.

This gives context to the plan and identifies community need.

	Health and happiness Encouraging active, social, meaningful lives to promote good health and wellbeing
	Equity and local economy Creating safe, equitable places to live and work which support local prosperity and international fair trade
	Culture and community Nurturing local identity and heritage, empowering communities and promoting a culture of sustainable living
	Travel and transport Reducing the need to travel, encouraging walking, cycling and low-carbon transport
	Land and nature Protecting and restoring land for the benefit of people and wildlife
	Local and sustainable food Promoting sustainable, humane farming and healthy diets high in local, seasonal organic food and vegetable protein
	Sustainable water Using water efficiently, protecting local water resources and reducing flooding and drought
	Materials and products Using materials from sustainable sources and promoting products that help people reduce consumption
	Zero waste Reducing consumption, reusing and recycling to achieve zero waste and zero pollution
	Zero carbon energy Making buildings and manufacturing energy-efficient and supplying all energy with renewables

Health and Happiness



Priorities

- ★ Health-focused sustainability:
Promote community-based physical activities.
- ★ Mental health support:
Initiate community-led programmes to reduce loneliness, improve mental resilience, and provide social interaction.
- ★ Nature connection for health:
Utilise accessible green spaces and nature-based exercises.

Equity and Local Economy



More adults without
qualifications

29.8% of children in poverty

Within the 20% most deprived
wards in UK

Average levels of
economically active adults

Priorities

- ★ Skills development: Offer training to reduce unemployment and economic inactivity.
- ★ Support for low-skilled workers: Develop programmes providing educational opportunities for sustainability-focused sectors.
- ★ Equity in climate action: Address poverty by providing sustainable, affordable solutions to reduce fuel poverty.



Culture and Community



Slightly older age profile than
the rest of Birmingham

Less demographic diversity
than rest of Birmingham

Good ability to speak
English well

Priorities

- ★ Inclusive participation: Ensure the Greener Community Plan is designed with community input.
- ★ Community empowerment: Build local leadership within diverse groups to prioritise culturally relevant sustainability initiatives.
- ★ Social resilience: Strengthen social connections and improve wellbeing by encouraging community-building through volunteering and local events.

Land and Nature



Priorities

- ★ Accessible green spaces: Accessible route finding to green spaces to support the physical and mental health of disabled and older residents.
- ★ Biodiversity: Enhance local green spaces, such as pocket parks and community gardens, to improve biodiversity and provide opportunities for nature connection.
- ★ Air pollution: Bring down air pollution for the health of the residents.

**Higher than recommended
air pollution**

**Some green space but
not highly utilised**



Local and Sustainable Food



29.8% of children in poverty

High child obesity rates

Priorities

- ★ Healthy eating initiatives:
Develop healthy cooking programmes focused on affordable, seasonal foods, and high in fibre, particularly targeting families in poverty.
- ★ Urban farming:
Support local food production initiatives such as community gardens and urban farms to empower residents to grow their own food.

Travel and Transport



Priorities

- ★ Different methods of Active Travel that don't focus on cycling. Focus on walking routes, connecting most visited places.
- ★ Improving visibility and accessibility of public transport routes.

Materials and Zero Waste

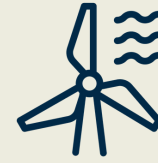


Frustration amongst communities regarding bin strikes and waste management in the city.

Prioritise

- ★ Recycling and waste management re-education.
- ★ Community asset development: recycling programmes and workshops.
- ★ Knowledge building to reduce consumption, and save more money.

Zero Carbon Energy and Sustainable Water



23.9% of households in Allens Cross are in fuel poverty, and more are suffering from the Cost of Living

Higher than recommended levels of air pollution though lower than other areas of the city

Priorities

- ★ Energy efficiency and bill reduction: improve home insulation, reduce energy consumption, and water usage.
- ★ Renewable energy access: Increase access to affordable, renewable energy sources for low-income households.
- ★ Air quality improvement: Use green initiatives like creating more green spaces to promote cleaner air.

Carbon Data

The following information explores carbon emissions within Allens Cross. While this data has not been used in isolation to shape our Greener Community Plan, it provides valuable insight into how carbon is generated locally and helps us better understand opportunities for positive change.

These insights help guide high-level actions and priorities that can support a more sustainable future for the community.

The graphs below illustrate how carbon is emitted in Allens Cross, including household data that shows how everyday activities contribute to emissions. Some carbon emissions are an unavoidable part of daily life; however, many arise from activities where small changes can make a meaningful difference. The data categorises emissions into housing, food and diet, travel, waste, and the consumption of goods. Understanding these areas helps identify where local improvements, supportive policies, and community education can help reduce emissions, contributing to healthier neighbourhoods and lower pollution for residents.

In addition, local carbon data highlights emissions across the wider ward from commercial and infrastructure-related activities such as road transport, aviation, agriculture, and industry. While these sources may seem beyond individual residents' control, this information helps identify shared priorities for each ward and supports collaboration with local businesses and organisations to reduce emissions collectively.

[Credit to the Centre for Sustainable Energy - Impact Community Carbon Calculator.](#)

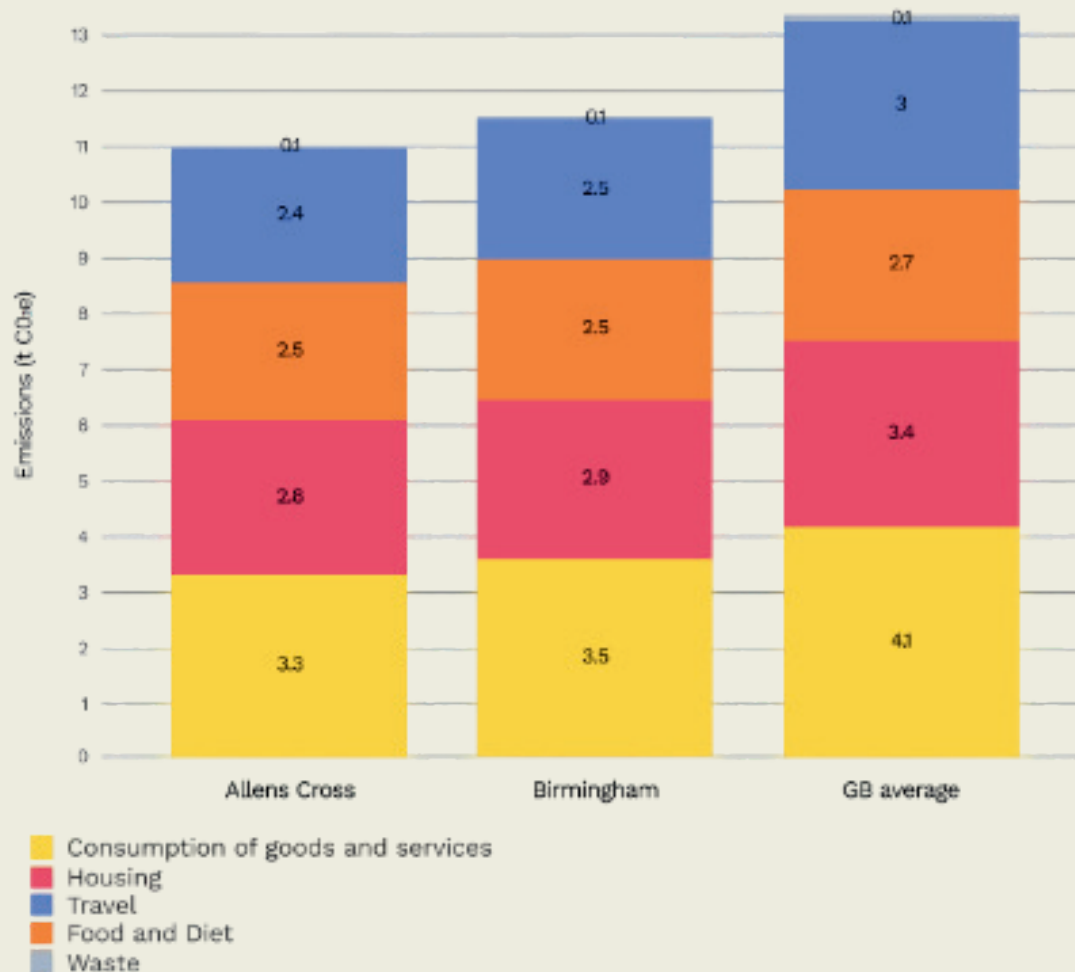
Household Carbon Data

	Total emissions (t CO ₂ e)	Per-household emissions (t CO ₂ e)	%
Total emissions	48,821	11	100
Consumption of goods and services	14,542	3.3	30
Housing	12,283	2.8	25
Food and diet	11,085	2.5	23
Travel	10,677	2.4	22
Waste	233	0.1	< 1

Breakdown

- High private transport emissions including cars and overseas flights. Providing opportunities for alternative, active travel options can help to reduce these emissions.
- Very high proportion of emissions from meat and fish consumption in diets. Working with communities to introduce affordable, and energy efficient plant-based meals into their weekly diets would reduce emissions significantly.
- Gas reliance in homes is common. Supporting domestic and commercial buildings to transition into green, energy efficient resource use is key.
- Emissions from purchase of goods is higher than use of services. We can reduce this through education in reducing consumption and opportunities to swap, repair or reuse.
- Low waste emissions within private households.

Household Carbon Comparison



This graph compares household carbon emissions with Birmingham as a whole and the GB average.

Emissions are fairly consistent with citywide levels but lower than national levels.

This indicates the economic status and relatively low population density of the ward. However, building resilience against pollution and emissions is crucial to support long term health and sustainability of the ward.

Local Carbon Data

	Total emissions (t CO ₂ e)	Per-household emissions (t CO ₂ e)	%
Total emissions	26,370	6	100
Housing	12,283	3	47
Mains gas	9,149	2.2	35
Electricity	3,098	0.7	12
LPG	35	< 0.1	< 1
Biomass	1	< 0.1	< 1
Oil	0	< 0.1	< 1
Coal	0	< 0.1	< 1
Road Transport	5,873	1.4	22
Industrial and commercial	2,807	0.7	11
Large industrial consumers	1,655	0.4	6
Mains gas	551	0.1	2
Electricity	418	0.1	2
Other Fuels	182	< 0.1	1
Aviation	2,693	0.7	10
Shipping	2,220	0.5	8
F-gases	172	< 0.1	1
Other Transport	151	< 0.1	1
Agriculture	71	< 0.1	< 1
Fuel	38	< 0.1	< 1
Livestock and crop-related emissions	33	< 0.1	< 1
Land use, land-use change, and forestry	59	< 0.1	< 1
Waste management	41	< 0.1	< 1
Diesel fuelled railways	0	< 0.1	< 1

This data tells us:

The carbon data infers the area is a residential ward, with little agricultural land, demonstrated by low agricultural emissions.

Housing emissions should be a priority. Retrofitting and reducing reliance on mains gas would significantly reduce ward emissions.

Road transport should also be a priority, reducing journeys by car will reduce pollution.

Working together within and around Allens Cross to deliver sustainable improvements will make a huge difference to the resilience of our communities to climate change.

Please get in touch with us at info@ecobirmingham.com if you would like support with a project plan or partnership.

Visit us at <https://ecobirmingham.com/> for more information and resources.

We look forward to seeing where these plans take us.

Data Sources

Birmingham City Council
Factsheets - Allens Cross

Office for National Statistics -
Local Indicators for
Birmingham - Allens Cross

Birmingham City Council -
Index for Deprivation 2019

Centre for Sustainable
Excellence - Carbon Calculator
- Allens Cross

Clean Air West Midlands