TRANSFORM
Transform Research Consultancy Ltd

Qualitative Research
into
Getting Naturally Active and
Getting Exeter Active Projects

Final report prepared for:

Devon Local Nature Partnership
Exeter Health and Wellbeing Board
Devon County Council Public Health Team

Prepared by:

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CONTENTS

1.   Introduction

This report presents the findings of qualitative research exploring the behaviours and barriers around increasing physical activity and time spent in green spaces, as described in the Request for a Quotation (RFQ) issued by Devon County Council Public Health team.   The work was designed to explore in-depth the views of specific audiences relating to two separate, but similar projects in Devon:

- Getting Naturally Active Buckfastleigh: focusing on low income, parents and grandparents living in an area of deprivation with access to green space; and
- Getting Active Exeter: focusing on "*inactive*"[1] 30 – 50 years olds living in Exeter, both in work and/or low pay or unemployed.

1.1   Aims of the qualitative research

The RFQ stated that the overall aim of the qualitative research was to capture the knowledge, attitudes and behaviour of the two audiences described above relating to each of the "Getting Active" projects. There were many common areas to be explored with both groups, such as barriers inhibiting the use of green space and motivators encouraging use. Each of the projects also has its own set of aims, which were examined separately by the research.

For the Getting Naturally Active Buckfastleigh project these aims included:

- Perceptions of green space such as Dartmoor and Moorland;
- Frequency of access and why access (motivators); and
- Views on barriers such as lack of time, cost, transport, etc.

While for the Getting Active Exeter project they included:

- Past exercise behaviours;
- Perceived self-efficacy and barriers (cost, lack of leisure, self-confidence, access, etc.);
- Knowledge of what is available; and
- Health, fear and negative experience.

The research was also designed to build on a previously conducted literature review[2]. It was proposed that drawing together the findings from the two projects at the analysis stage, together with the literature review, would provide added value by comparing and contrasting the views of the two sets of participants, as well as providing a wider base to "test" any identified solutions.

The key outputs required from the work were the findings from the two audiences and the proposed solutions identified. These are provided both in this report that covers the objectives set out in the RFQ and in various presentations made to the client.

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[1] Defined for this research as being *less* than 3 x 30 minutes physical activity (raising the heart rate) per week.

[2] *Review of the literature concerning the benefits to health of engagement with the natural environment*, Devon Local Nature Partnership Health and Access Group. Where appropriate, this report references the findings in the literature review highlighting the similarities and differences to those found by the qualitative research, together.

1.2 Conduct of the research

Following a tendering process, Transform Research were appointed in early March 2014 to undertake the research during March and April with a completion date of 29th April 2014. The qualitative methodology used for the research involved:

- The design of two thematic topic guides to collect the views and opinions of parents, grandparents and carers on the subject matter;
- The recruitment of participants who met the following sampling criteria:
    o Undertook *less* than 3 x 30 minutes physical activity per week (that is sufficient to raise their heart rate)
    o For Getting Naturally Active Buckfastleigh: low income, parents, grandparents and carers living in an area of deprivation with access to green space; and
    o For Getting Active Exeter: "inactive" 30 – 50 years olds living in Exeter, both in work and/or low pay or unemployed.
- The conduct of focus groups and in-depth interviews in six locations:
    o For Getting Naturally Active: at Buckfastleigh Primary School, Buckfastleigh Children's Centre and Exeter Mincinglake Children's Centre (as a comparator); and
    o For Getting Exeter Active at Exeter City Council; Exeter St Sidwell's Community Centre; and Exeter Marsh Barton Trading Estate.
- In total, 76 parents, grandparents and carers were consulted during the research plus 10 children from Buckfastleigh Primary School. 65 of the adults were involved in the six focus groups listed above and 11 were interviewed alone (Appendix III contains full detail of the fieldwork); and
- The opinions and views expressed during the focus groups and the in-depth interviews were analysed to identify consistent themes, underlying issues and for "testing" the suggested solutions that emerged.

1.3 This report

This report presents the detailed findings of the qualitative research in the following chapters 2 to 6 respectively:

- The RFQ suggested the study include innovative techniques such as drawing local green space to increase insight. Chapter 2 explores the findings of this and a linked word association exercise undertaken with the participants;
- Chapter 3 reports on participation in physical activity (types, regularity, etc.) and the limiting and motivating factors influencing levels of activity;
- Chapter 4 describes the findings in terms of accessing green space in general (also the limiting and motivating factors) and Dartmoor specifically;
- Chapter 5 discusses the solutions proposed by the groups; and
- Chapter 6 highlights the key points and conclusions that can be drawn from the findings and contains recommendations for actions.

Copies of the thematic topic guides used in the focus groups and in-depth interviews are provided in Appendix I and Appendix II lists the responses given to the word association exercise. As noted, Appendix III details the conduct of the fieldwork.

2.   Word association and drawing green space exercises

The RFQ suggested that the participants in the study be asked to draw their local green space as previous research had indicated that this might provide useful insights into their views. It was agreed that this approach would be used in the three Getting Naturally Active focus groups in Buckfastleigh and Mincinglake and be augmented with a word association exercise in all six groups to provide some overall background understanding of participants' views and opinions.

These two techniques were used to "break the ice" at the focus groups and to focus the participant's thoughts on the subject matter ahead of the in-depth discussions:

- (In all six groups) Asking participants to undertake a word association exercise by writing down the first *different* word or phrase that came to mind; and
- (For the groups in Buckfastleigh and Mincinglake only) Asking the participants to draw a picture of their local "*green space*" or "*natural environment*".

2.1   Word association exercise

For the word association exercise, the participants were asked to write down the first word or phrase that came into their minds when a list of eight slightly varied items was read out to them. Participants were asked not to copy or confer and the list was read quite quickly to ensure that "first reactions" were recorded. In total eleven different items were asked about, divided between the two sets of focus groups, as shown in the table below:

Item/Groups	Getting Naturally Active: Buckfastleigh	Getting Exeter Active
Physical activity	✓	✓
(Your favourite) Leisure pastime	✓	✓
Green space	✓	✓
Natural environment	✓	✓
Park	✓	✓
Dartmoor (Buckfastleigh) / Moorland (Mincinglake)	✓	
Woodland	✓	
Paths (rights of way, footpaths, cycle paths, bridleways)	✓	
Gardening		✓
Nature reserves		✓
Beaches		✓

The replies given by the participants are discussed overleaf, though it is important to reiterate that the exercise was conducted as an "ice-breaker" and that the findings are only intended to provide background understanding about individuals' first reactions, to inform the more detailed discussions that followed in the focus groups.

2.1.1 Physical activity (All six focus groups)

All six of the focus groups were read this item first and the answers given by the participants could be classified into three main themes. The first theme involved a very literal response covering what participants thought of as *being* physical activity: the most common responses given were: *"running"*, *"walking"*, "*exercise"* followed by a less commonly mentioned range of other sports and leisure activities such as hockey, swimming, gym, tennis, horse riding and karate. It should be noted that while participants associated running, walking, etc. with physical activity this did not mean that they necessarily took part in them.

Indeed, the other two themes that emerged from the responses given reflected the participants' own attitudes towards physical activity, either positive or negative. The second, which was produced by the majority of the remaining participants, was primarily a negative association with words and phrases such as *"hard work", "tiring", "sweating", "hot"* and "*worn out*" being very commonly used.

The third theme was much more affirmative and was given by those who had positive associations with the phrase "physical activity" such as *"fun", "getting going", "good"* and *"fresh air"*. Within this group there were a few participants whose reaction was to acknowledge the value of physical exercise, but only in the context that they were not doing enough: "*I really should*" and *"I dream"* (of doing some more exercise). Only a minority of participants gave these responses.

2.1.2 (Your favourite) Leisure pastime (All six groups)

Following on from the previous item, when asked to respond to their favourite *"leisure pastime"*, around half of the participants' first reaction was to think of physical activities they actually took part in. The most common answers given were: *"walking/ walking the dog", "gym", "swimming"*, *"cycling", "horse riding"* and *"Zumba".* It should be noted that while some of these activities, such as horse riding and Zumba would clearly result in increased heart rate, further discussion revealed that the most common answers (*walking/walking the dog)* often involved a quite gentle stroll, with little strenuous activity involved.

Indeed, many of the other half of the participants identified a range of activities as their favourite leisure pastime that were often quite sedentary such as: *"watching football", "TV", "reading", "fishing", "music", "drawing", "lying on the beach"* and *"crochet".* Further mentions were made of pastimes that could have involved various amounts of physical activity, such as *"family time", "shopping", "being with friends", "relaxing"* and *"spa day".*

2.1.3 Green space (All six groups)

When asked about "green space", some very clear themes emerged from the participants replies. The most notable of these was that nearly all of the answers given could be seen as being positive in some way. The largest number of participants responded literally with answers such as *"fields", "grass", "parks", "forests", "trees"* or *"flowers"*, or identified specific locations they thought of as being green spaces: "*Dartmoor", "area of natural beauty"* and "*Bicton*" for example.

Many other participants described the activities they associated with green spaces: *"picnics", "days out", "being outdoors", "kids playing"* and *"walking/walking the dog."* Smaller numbers responded with their positive feelings about green spaces: such as *"peaceful", "stretching out", "fresh air"* and *"smiling"* or the significance and the (real or perceived) lack of green space in their locality: *"(its) important", "we need it"* and *"(they're) limited"*.

2.1.4 Natural environment (All six groups)
Perhaps not surprisingly, broadly similar answers were given when the participants were read "natural environment" as had been produced by "green space". However, whereas nearly everyone responded to "green space", it should be noted that a quarter of the participants did not respond to the phrase "natural environment" at all, as it was not something they were familiar enough with to produce any response.

Among those who did respond, the themes that emerged were again overall very positive, with the largest number of participants producing literal replies such as *"natural beauty – flowers/insects", "animals", "fields", "gardens", "water", "unspoilt countryside", "woods", "green areas", "forests"* and *"mountains"*. Again several participants also identified specific locations they thought of as being the natural environment such as *"Dartmoor", "River Dart"* and *"the (South Devon) Coast"*.

Some others responded with their positive feelings about the natural environment: *"happy"*, *"peaceful", "healthy"* and *"fresh air"* or the importance of our natural environment: *"(need to) maintain them", "needs protecting (Eco Warriors)"* and *"(keep them) pretty/natural"*.

Interestingly a small minority of participants' replied simply *"home"* or *"normality",* that is, they felt that their natural environment was being "at home".

2.1.5 Park (All six groups)
The word "park" also produced positive reactions – mostly associated with children (*"happy children", "fun for kids"* and *"children playing")* or with the facilities for children found in parks*: "swings", "slides",* and *"children's play area"* and what parks were used for: *"playing", "being fun and safe", "walking", "football", "running",* etc*.

Several participants named their local park or the park that they used with their children: *"Millennium Park", Duck's Pond Park", "Pinhoe Park", "Victoria Park", "St Thomas park"*, etc. Other participants noted the value of parks for local events: *"activities for the community"* and *"Respect festival – Belmont".* For a very small number of participants the word "park" produced a negative reaction: *"muddy", "dog mess/ rubbish".*

2.1.6 Dartmoor (Buckfastleigh groups only) / Moorland (Mincinglake group only)
The responses from the three groups to the words "Dartmoor" or "moorland" were also dominated by positive references to the perceived visual loveliness of the Moors: with *"beautiful", "green open space", "attractive"* and *"beauty/colour"* being among the most common replies.

Other participants noted different positive aspects of the moorland such as *"open space", "freedom"* and *"interesting",* alongside the natural attributes they associated with it: *"woods", "bushes", "heather", "skies"* and *"ponies".*

A few participants made reference to activities undertaken on Moorland; *"walking the dog", "walking"* and *"exploring/climbing"* while a small minority noted some of the perceived downsides: *"mud"* and *"snakes".*

2.1.7 Woodland (Buckfastleigh/Mincinglake only)
The responses to "woodland" were also predominantly positive and most interestingly they were more often than any of the other words associated with enjoyable learning and playing <u>activities</u>: *"building dens", "exploring nature", "collecting acorns, leaves", "climbing", "finding things", "having fun"* and "*hide and seek*". One parent linked it directly to the children's book: *We're Going on a Bear Hunt* and re-enacting this with their children in the woods.

Most participants identified the natural attributes of woodlands: with *"trees", "bushes", "flowers", "branches"* and *"scent"* being very common answers, whereas others noted the tranquil nature of woodland: *"peaceful", "cool"* and *"calming".* A few cited the location of specific woods they visited: "*Killerton*" and "*New Bridge woods",* while again a small minority noted potential downsides: "*mud*" and "*rubbish*".

2.1.8 Paths (rights of way footpaths, cycle paths, bridleways, etc)
(Buckfastleigh/Mincinglake only)
The word "paths" produced a strongly negative response among many of the participants. Twenty eight of the forty written responses given to this item were "*dog poo"* or "*dog mess*". This negative reaction reflected the overwhelming concern, discussed later in the focus groups that pathways (of all sorts) were too often dirty and unpleasant, and that parents and grandparents did not want to take their children along them because of this.

Many of the participants were quite animated about the situation and said that would <u>not</u> use routes that were used regularly by dog walkers. The most often expressed views were that dog owners should do much more to clear up after their animals and that councils should have more power to remove animals from those owners who did not clear up after them.

Most of the remaining twelve answers given were also negative responses to "paths"; (they are): *"not very good", "busy", "concrete", "*(need to be) *safer and more interesting"* and *"many more cycle paths needed"*. The few other answers given in these three groups were fairly neutral: such as *"buggy", "walking/traffic free", "cycling"* and "*Dartington.*"

2.1.9 Gardening (Exeter HWB groups only)

The most common responses to the word "gardening" were *"vegetables"* and *"growing your own veg",* which over a third of the participants in the three groups mentioned. Included in this category were some participants who said "*growing stuff*" and *"producing new life*." Some participants directly associated gardening with physical activities such as "*exercise*", *"cutting grass", "weeding"* and *"digging",* while one wished they were gardening again: *"used to do it – really should again"*

Other common replies that were given related to things associated with <u>gardens,</u> rather than gardening: such as *"flowers", "potting shed"* or *"weeds"* or to the more sedentary activities associated with being in a garden, such as "*sit in it"*, *"drinking"* and *"pleasure"*. One participant wrote: "*not got one*".

2.1.10 Nature reserve (Exeter HWB groups only)

The phrase nature reserve was most strongly associated with the protection of *"wildlife", "birds" (*including the RSPB) and *"animals"* (including Deer). The great majority of answers given to the phrase were covered by these three replies. As well as these replies, a few participants mentioned flowers and botany, while several others thought of Dartmoor or the zoo. One participant replied that there "*needs to be more of them*".

2.1.11 Beaches (Exeter groups only)

Not surprisingly, the replies to this category were very much dominated by the famous three Ss: "*sun", "sand"* and "*sea*". Well over half the answers given were one of these three replies, including *"good weather"* and *"sunny day"*.

A few other participants noted the activities they might get involved in at the beach such as: *"swimming", beach ball", "a nice gentle walk"* and *"surfing",* while some others mentioned the children's play aspects: *"sandcastles", "buckets and spades"* and *"(finding) seashells".* Two other participants mentioned the *"fun"* and "*fresh air*" aspects of being on the beach, while one person highlighted the "(need for) *transport* (to get there)" from the city.

> ## Summary word association findings
>
> Some words and phrases had very positive connotations:
>
> - ☺ **Woodlands:** for enjoyable activities (i.e. exploring, climbing)
> - ☺ **Parks:** for children playing and fun (i.e. swings, slides)
> - ☺ **Dartmoor/Moorland:** for natural beauty and attractiveness
>
> Others had far less positive associations for *some* of the participants:
>
> - ☹ Physical activity (seen as hard work, tiring, being worn out)
> - ☹ Footpaths (associated with dog mess and rubbish)
>
> While some produced very literal responses:
>
> - ☺ Green Space (i.e. fields, grass, parks)
> - ☺ Natural Environment (i.e. flowers, forests, animals, insects)

2.2   Drawings of green space and the natural environment

The participants in the Getting Naturally Active focus groups in Buckfastleigh and Mincinglake were asked "*to draw or colour whatever comes into your mind when you think of your nearest "green space" or "natural environment".* They were given plain paper and offered a range of art materials to use including HB pencils, coloured pencils, felt tips, water colours, paint brushes and crayons.   This approach was adopted because it was suggested in the RFQ that it might produce insights into the participants' views and thoughts.

As noted, when it was used in the word association exercise the phrase "natural environment" had resulted in quite a lot of "not answered," that is, the phrase meant little to people. This, combined with the perceived embarrassment of being put on the spot and asked to draw something, resulted in only 17 adults and 10 children from Buckfastleigh Primary School (at their Head Teacher's specific request) actually producing a usable drawing. The other adults either declined outright or just wrote down a few words saying they couldn't think of anything to draw.

Among the adults who produced a drawing, the following observations can be made:
- The most commonly drawn things were straightforward depictions of the participants' local park, usually including:
  - Swings/slides/play equipment;
  - A football pitch;
  - The (Outdoor) swimming pool in Buckfastleigh;
  - Trees; and
  - Pathways.
- Interestingly very few adults actually drew anyone in the park (although this may reflect their drawing skills more than anything else); and
- Most adults drew clear boundaries around the edge of the park (one even wrote: *"fenced and gated")*.

Among the children, the following observations can be made:
- The most commonly drawn things were also straightforward depictions, however the children focussed on the swings, slides and other equipment such as monkey bars, zip wire, etc. or on the swimming pool, rather than the park;
- Similarly none of the children drew anyone on the equipment (although this may again reflect their drawing skills more than anything else); and
- The children focussed on the play equipment to the exclusion of any natural aspect such as trees, grass, bushes, etc. or any part of the natural environment.

Summary of drawing activity

Most adults found it hard to participate in the drawing activity
- Among those that did participate, parks were predominate with equipment, football pitches, pools, trees and paths often drawn
- Among the children that drew, the focus was on the swings, slides, pitch and pool, rather than any natural elements

3.   PARTICIPATION IN PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

During the focus groups, the discussion about physical activity was preceded by a description of what was meant by the phrase for the purposes of the research:

> *By physical activity we mean all forms of activity, such as everyday walking or cycling to get from A to B, work-related activity, active recreation (such as working out in a gym), dancing, gardening or playing active games, as well as organised and competitive sport that "**increases your heart beat.**"*

Once this description had been clarified with the research participants, the discussions then focused on:

- Regularity of participation in physical activity that *increases your heart beat*;
- Description of physical activity (types, accompaniment and location);
- Motivation and benefits of physical activity; and
- Factors limiting participation in (more) physical activity.

3.1   Regularity of participation in physical activity

Given the selection criteria for recruitment to participate in the focus groups, it was not surprising that when asked *"how often do you take part in physical activity that increases your heart beat"*, the replies of most of the research participants indicated that they did not take part very often.

The participants could broadly be classified into two groups:

- **Those who did "none" or less than 30 minutes/week physical activity**
  This group made up the majority of the focus group participants who, for the various reasons discussed in section 3.4 below, did not take part in a physical activity that increased their heart beat at all or only very occasionally.

- **Those who did more than 30 minutes/week but less than 90 minutes/week**
  This group made up most of the remainder of the participants and consisted of those who did some physical activity increasing their heartbeat, but only of a limited amount each week, such as one badminton session or two swims.

(It is important to note that there was quite a lot of debate in each of the groups as to whether "walking" should be included. Many of the participants said that, in addition to the limited amount of physical activities described above that actually *increased their heartbeat*, they also walked – to work, taking their children to school or taking their dog for a walk for example. However, these walks did <u>not</u> increase their heartbeat as they were quite gentle and/or over a short distance. As such, only those walks that lasted for more than 30 minutes and/or increased the participants' heartbeats were included above as being a physical activity).

3.2   Description of physical activity

The research participants who did some form of physical activity that increased their heartbeat were asked to describe the activities in which they participated in terms of: type, location and accompaniment.

3.2.1   Types of activity

As noted above, the amount of physical activity reported by the participants overall was quite low. While quite a broad range of different activities were reported, most can be classified into one of two main groups:

- **Walking/walking the dog**
  Only those walks that lasted for more than 30 minutes and/or increased the participants' heartbeats were included as being a physical activity. Most of the participants who said that they "walked" did so at the weekends or evenings. These walks included both "leisure" walks in the countryside or on the Moors, as well as "practical" walks to the shops, work, school, etc.

- **Swimming**
  Many participants said that they liked swimming and wanted to do it more often, however most did not go more than "*once a week*" or less often. Most swimming was done at the weekends or evenings, with some at lunchtimes. The swimming involved doing lengths and/or being physically active in the water for at least 30 minutes duration.

Further to these two main types of activities, smaller numbers of participants mentioned other physical activities that they took part in, such as:

- Cycling;
- (Visiting the) Gym;
- Tennis, cricket (in summer);
- "Drop in" exercise sessions such as Zumba, Pilates, etc.; and
- Organised physical activities, such as Judo, Hockey, Football, etc.

It was notable that with the exception of the last set of activities above, very few of the participants took part in any organised physical activities, such as team sports or belonged to walking groups or swimming clubs for example. The physical activity that they were involved in was undertaken on an ad hoc, personal basis, as circumstances and time permitted (see section 3.4 below on factors limiting further participation in physical activity). Even those who went to the Zumba, Pilates, etc. sessions or the gym tended to do so on an informal basis, rather than as a regular planned activity.

Given that the many of the respondents had commitments in the daytime during the week (work, child care, etc.) it was not surprising that most the activities described above took place either in the evening or more often at the weekends (except for long walks to and from work). Some took place at lunchtimes but these were restricted.

Furthermore, there was evidence that the amount and type of physical activities were limited by the weather – several of those mentioned were clearly "summer sports" (i.e. tennis, cricket) and in Buckfastleigh the outdoor swimming pool was also only open during the summer season months. The leisure walking was also often "fair" weather only and several working respondents noted that they caught the bus to work when it rained and only walked when it was dry.

3.2.2   Location of activities
Not surprisingly the location of the physical activities undertaken directly reflected the activities themselves:

- **Walking/walking the dog**
  Most dog walking was done in the participant's local neighbourhoods or parks with some in the countryside. As noted, the participants walking for "leisure" tended to go to the countryside or on the Moors, as well as completing their "practical" walks locally for going to the shops, work, school, etc.

- **Swimming**
  Most swimming was done in local pools, such as Pyramids or Riverside in Exeter or the outdoor pool in Buckfastleigh. A few Buckfastleigh participants noted that if they wanted to swim in the winter (or in the warm) they had to go to Ivybridge, Newton Abbott or further afield.

- Cycling – on cycle routes or paths;
- Gym – local gyms and fitness clubs;
- Tennis, cricket – at local courts or clubs;
- Exercise sessions – in local leisure centres or halls; and
- Organised physical activities – wherever the teams were based.

What was noticeable about these locations was that the majority of them were not green spaces or the natural environment. Most were purpose built centres: swimming pools, gymnasiums, leisure centres, etc. The "leisure" walking and cycling in the countryside/cycle routes were the main activities undertaken in green spaces.

3.2.3   Impact of activities
When asked "*how do you feel afterwards*", the replies of the participants who took part in physical activity could easily be divided into two groups:

- **Those feeling good**: common replies by this group included: *"I feel good", "Great – healthy and relaxed", "I never think it will be worth it beforehand but after I always feel better"* and "*Breathless but pleased*".
- **Those feeling worn out**: common replies given by this group included: *"aching", "I suffer for next few days with pain in my knees", "tired", "knackered", "completely worn out"* and "*shattered*".

3.2.4   Accompaniment during activity

Given the selection profile for the two sets of participants, either being parents or grandparents with families or being of child rearing age aged 30-50 years, it was perhaps slightly surprising that quite a lot of the physical activity described above was undertaken either unaccompanied or accompanied by a colleague/friend, rather than by a family member.

Swimming, visiting the gym, exercise sessions and the organised physical activities all tended to be completed either alone or with friends/colleagues. In contrast, the cycling and walking were much more likely to be undertaken with other family members, particularly children.

 (It is worth noting that numerous parents reported swimming alone or with friends, at a different time and, crucially less often, than when they took their children to the pool for lessons or swimming sessions.   Similarly many parents reported taking their children to a whole range of physical activities – football, riding, etc. but they were left standing or sitting on the side doing nothing *"getting cold",* while their children participated in whatever the activity happened to be).

3.3   Motivation and benefits of physical activity

The research participants who said that they did take part in some form of physical activity that increased their heartbeat were asked about their motivations for doing so and what they perceived the benefits to be.

Interestingly, many of the participants who had said that they did little or no physical activity were also keen to join in with this discussion. This group often identified similar motivators and benefits as those doing more physical activity, but pointed out that different or stronger limiting factors were reducing the amount of activity they were able to participate in (see section 3.4 below).

3.3.1   Motivation

The most commonly mentioned motivating factors can be classified into three groups:

- **It is healthy**
  Most participants, regardless of the amount of physical activity they engaged in currently, agreed that it was healthy and "*good for you*". This was felt to be a very positive influence on peoples' behaviour and therefore a significant motivator for many, even those who said it made them "*worn out*". It was also linked closely with the next factor about enjoyment.

- **It is enjoyable (for some)**
  Quite a few of the participants agreed that they enjoyed physical activity, with statements such as "*it's fun"* or *"you have a good time",* although the findings of the word association exercise should be borne in mind here, as others clarified that while they agreed physical activity was enjoyable for *some* people and was therefore a motivator, it was not necessarily enjoyable for *all*.

- **I've always done it**
  A smaller group of participants, mainly those who did more exercise, said that they had always done it (either since childhood with their parents or for a long period of time) and that it had become habit. They were therefore in the habit of doing exercise so it was "easy" to continue (compared with those people who had got out of the habit and struggled to get back into it again).

A range of other factors were also mentioned as being motivators by the participants, although it is noticeable that many of these could actually be described as being the "benefits" resulting from physical activity and are therefore discussed further in the following section. The list included:

- Socialisation: Meeting friends/new people;
- Getting out/fresh air;
- Weight loss/being trim/helping with appearance;
- The competition/challenge/ego boost; and
- Feeling good about oneself.

3.3.2 Benefits

As was to be expected, and as noted above, the benefits of physical activity were often closely related to the factors motivating people to undertake it in the first place. Indeed, the most commonly mentioned perceived benefits of physical activity were described as being the health benefits – both physical and mental.

- **Physical and mental health benefits**
  Many participants acknowledged the importance of physical activity to physical wellbeing: giving answers such as *"keeping fit", "losing weight"* or *"staying in trim"*, while others noted the importance of physical activity for mental wellbeing: *"makes you feel good"*, *"helps you relax"* and *"takes you out of yourself"* being among the most common answers.

  Interestingly, quite a number of participants immediately transferred their thoughts to the perceived benefits of physical activity for *their children*, rather than themselves. This both reflected the comparative lack of activity that they were undertaking and their primary focus as parents, grandparents and carers. This group gave answers such as: *"make them healthy later in life"*, "*set them up"* and simply *"good for the kids"*.

- **Socialisation benefits**
  A lot of the participants also acknowledged the importance of "getting out" to join in physical activity in terms of meeting (new) people and/or existing friends. It was noticeable though that for some people, particularly those who were lacking in confidence in relation to joining in physical activity that this was a double edged sword – because meeting new people when doing a new activity could be a challenge as much as a benefit.

- **Fresh air/outdoors benefits**
  Some participants associated physical activity with being outdoors and hence getting some *"fresh air"*. This was particularly apparent for those who engaged in activities traditional outdoor activities, such as walking, cycling, riding and running and was seen as being a very positive additional benefit to the health and socialisation aspects noted above.

A few other benefits were noted by individuals in the groups, although these were often "inverse" benefits in that they indicated that participating in physical activity was seen as reducing the likelihood of being involved in other less healthy or unpopular activities:

> *"Keeps you out of the bar or watching TV"*
> *"Gives my partner space"*
> *"Lets me off the dishes!"*

3.4   Factors limiting participation in (more) physical activity

All of the participants in the research, regardless of whether they currently took part in any physical activity, were also asked about the factors that stopped them from doing *more* or any activity. Three key factors were identified, each of which reflected to a large extent the characteristics of the study participants. To recap, these were:

- For Getting Naturally Active Buckfastleigh: low income, parents, grandparents and carers living in an area of deprivation with access to green space; and
- For Getting Active Exeter: physically "*inactive*", 30 – 50 years olds living in Exeter, both in work and/or low pay or unemployed.

In combination, these characteristics meant that many of the participants could broadly be described as having limited disposable income and who were very busy with jobs/job seeking and family life. Consequently the key factors that they identified that were limiting their participation in physical activity were a shortage of time, the various costs of participation and/or a lack of motivation/confidence to do so.

3.4.1   Shortage of Time
This was a crucial factor for many of the participants, whether they were in work or seeking work, as they had families and other commitments. This factor can be broken down into two main interrelated issues:

- **A lack of sufficient overall time:** The difficulty of fitting (more or any) physical activity into their current busy schedule, which was often described as being "*double booked*" with school runs, work, shopping, family commitments, care for elderly relations, etc. The replies *"need for than 24 hours in a day"* and *"I simply don't have time"* were very common. It is important to note that many participants made the point that it was **since having children** that finding sufficient time for physical activity had become most difficult; and

- **A lack of opportunities at the right time:** Numerous participants also noted that fitting physical exercise into any time that they did actually have available was difficult, for instance because the leisure centre or gym did not open early enough in the morning or only offered the required exercise sessions at the wrong time of day (i.e. in the evening rather than lunchtime for example). A common reply was "*I saw Zumba on at our local hall and wanted to go, but its on at 10.30 in the morning when I'm working…*"

It was apparent that while these time issues were very significant matters to address, it was clear that for some participants it was the motivational and costs described below that were similarly significant.

3.4.2 Costs

Similarly this was seen as a very important issue, reflecting the low income of many of the participants which manifested itself in various different ways restricting participation in physical activity:

- **Participation costs:** The straightforward costs of membership for joining a leisure centre plus the session costs for a 5-a-side pitch or badminton session, for example, were a primary concern raised by many participants, both those out of work and in low income jobs;
- **Access costs:** Participation in any physical activity that involved travel required either a car (which many of the participants could not afford to own) or paying for public transport (which was perceived as being too slow and expensive) thereby discouraging participation;
- **Equipment and gear costs:** the purchase or hire of any of the required equipment for many of the possible physical activities (particularly cycles, tennis racquets, sports gear, etc.) was seen as being prohibitive by many of those on low income.

As would be expected the cost issues were among the most significant factors to those on the lowest incomes or in particularly testing circumstances, such as single parents or those living on benefits.

3.4.3 Lack of motivation/lack of confidence/out of the habit

Despite being generally reasonably well aware of the health and other associated benefits of physical exercise for them and their children, many participants noted that they did not have sufficient motivation or lacked the confidence to take part in (more) physical activity – particularly if this involved them in a new or different activity.

Indeed, many of the research participants noted that they were "*out of the habit*" of taking regular exercise. For a lot of this group, the advent of parenthood was identified as the beginning of a "decline" in their levels of physical activity as so much time was spent on the new baby. This had often set in place habits that it had not been possible to subsequently break.

The participants highlighted that the longer they had been *"out of the habit"* the harder it was for them to get back into physical activity, because of the associated loss of confidence in their physical abilities (*"I feel too unfit"* and *"I'm out of trim"* being common concerns).

For many of the mothers who participated in the research this issue was compounded by the after-effects of childbirth and concerns around self-image, weight and body consciousness.

3.4.4   Other limiting factors
Further to these three main factors limiting (further) participation in physical activity a few other factors were also noted, though these were of lesser importance overall. These are noted below:

- Having other age related interests
  Several respondents noted that as they had got older, their interests had moved away from physical activity to other interests. They saw this as a natural part of the aging process and while all of this group claimed to been very physically active when they were younger, they said they no longer felt the need to be so.

- Fewer friends doing physical activity
  Following on from the age related point noted above several other participants said that as they had got older fewer and fewer of their friends and colleagues had been regularly involved in physical activity. They had *"faded away"* or *"dwindled in numbers"* and this made it harder for those people who were still keen to continue doing it.

- Difficulty of juggling time
  This was clearly related to the issues noted above in section 3.4.1 concerning a shortage of time, though this merits separate mention because several participants said that their problem was that they had found the constant need to juggle their time to fit in sports activities *"too much hassle"* so they had *"given it up"*. This also related to the motivational issues noted above.

4. ACCESSING LOCAL GREEN SPACES

The discussions about local green space and the natural environment focused on:

- Perceptions of what constituted participants' local green space;
- Use of the green space (activity, level of use and accompaniment);
- Motivation and benefits for accessing green space; and
- Factors limiting access to green space.

4.1 Perceptions of local green space

It was acknowledged that the research participants would have a range of experiences and hence views about green space. The groups explored these experiences in terms of the research participants' local green spaces and the green spaces that they were most likely to use. Firstly they were asked their perceptions of their local green space and their replies were probed with the following queries:

- Where is the green space?
- Is it easy to get to? (How far: distance and time taken to get there)
- Is it welcoming/ of good quality?
- What do people use it for?

4.1.1 Location of participants' local green space

Across all of the six groups in Exeter and Buckfastleigh, a common theme emerged in that most of the participants regarded their "local green space" as being a nearby park or recreational area, in terms of where they lived. This was not always the closest park to their home, although it was nearly always within walking distance. This finding reflected the drawing exercise, in which participants had all drawn their local park.

In Buckfastleigh, the participants most often mentioned Victoria Park (with the outdoor swimming pool), Duck's Pond Park and the Station Road playing field. These were all regarded as being easy to get to as they were in the centre of town, although the distance to be walked to get to them varied depending upon where the participants lived: from only a few yards for those living in the town centre up to c.1.5 miles for those living on the edge or outskirts of town.

There were a small number of participants in Buckfastleigh who mentioned other locations outside the town as being their local green space: these included the grounds of the Dartington estate, Balland Lane playing fields in Ashburton and Mill Marsh Park in Bovey Tracey. These were all accessed by car and took c.10-15 minutes to reach.

In Exeter, the participants who were residents in the city mentioned nearby parks such as Mincinglake Park, Belmont Park and Stoke Hill Park as being their local green space. Again these were all thought of as being easy to get to as they were within walking distance: from within a few yards to c.1 mile or so.

As with the Buckfastleigh participants, only a very small number of the Exeter participants mentioned locations other than parks or playing fields as being their "local green space". The few locations that were mentioned were all outside the city and included the South Devon coastal footpath, Woodbury Common, the Killerton House Estate and Haldon Hill. These were all also accessed only by car and took up to 30 minutes to reach.

4.1.2   Activity and use of participants' local green space

Again reflecting the findings of the drawing exercise, and also given that most of the participants regarded their "local green space" as being a nearby park or playing field and that most were parents or grandparents, it was to be expected that the most common use of the space was for children's play activities. Nearly all of the participants in this category said that they either took or had taken their children to the local park to play on the swings, slides, etc. or to the playing fields for the football and rugby pitches, etc.

Many of the participants said that they also walked, either with their dogs or with other people (children, friends, etc.) in their local parks and playing fields. Quite a large number of the Buckfastleigh participants said that they and their children used Victoria Park for swimming in the outdoor pool in summer. Other more occasional uses of the parks in Buckfastleigh and Exeter that were mentioned by the participants included having picnics in the summer, cycling, sunbathing and reading.

It was interesting to note that, in combination with the findings from the drawing exercise, for many of both the adult participants and children the clearest associations with "local green space" were often a) with somewhere nearby (i.e. their local park) and b) with the play equipment in the park, rather than any natural elements such as trees, grass or bushes for example.

In terms of the levels of use of the local green spaces, a great many variables were identified as influencing the likelihood of participants visiting the park or playing field. Although some of the participants said they visited their park regularly, once or twice a week usually with their children, for many it was an irregular activity that took place as the result of a combination of factors. The key factors identified were:

- The weather: obviously good weather being more likely to promote a visit with bad weather putting people off;
- Holiday/term times: in term times, visits would have to be after school or nursery, but in the holidays they could be all day;
- The season: some parents visited throughout the year, but they were in a minority and many said spring/summer only; and
- Other events: what else was happening both in term of parents' availability (such as needing to do shopping) and other alternatives for the children.

Consequently it was difficult to identify any clear overall patterns of levels of use of the local parks among the participants, although the evidence indicated that use appeared to be highest during the summer (when weather was good) and when there were no other alternative activities available for children to be involved in (i.e. cubs, brownies, football club, etc.).

4.1.3 Quality of participants' local green space

When asked about the quality and welcoming nature of their local green space, the participants were overall very positive in both Buckfastleigh and Exeter. They generally reported that the parks were well maintained and that the equipment was of a good standard for their children: *"they're really nice!"*   However quite a few important caveats were expressed that should be borne in mind:

- **Dog mess and rubbish**
  This was first raised in the word association exercise and arose again in relation to the paths used to access and cross local parks and playing fields. Some parents reported that they would not go to a particular park or used a longer route to get to their local park because they knew that certain dog owners always left mess on the pathways. Many participants felt that wardens were required to more strictly enforce dog fouling rules and, if necessary, to remove dogs from "repeat offenders". Other noted that rubbish collections were need more often in parks to tidy up appearances.

- **Teenagers and older children**
  Several participants noted that their local park could become full of "*rude"* or "*scary*" gangs of teenagers who could make the atmosphere unpleasant at times, particularly for those who were with younger children or who were alone. It was thought that this was because there had been cut backs in youth clubs, services for young people, etc. and that consequently the teenagers had nowhere else to go.

- **Times of day**
  This was related to the teenager/older children issue noted above, but some parents were only happy to visit their local park at particular times of the day, such as straight after school when they knew that other parents and younger children would be there. There were other times when they would not visit because they did not feel comfortable then, such as in the evenings.

- **Play equipment and swimming pool**
  Although overall there was satisfaction with the quality of the play equipment provided in local green spaces, several parents in Buckfastleigh highlighted concerns over the state of repair of some equipment and particularly the potential closure of the Victoria swimming pool, which they understood was not going to be opened this summer as it had been sold to a private buyer.

Although these were quite significant caveats, it is worth emphasising that majority of the research participants were generally very positive about their local green spaces, i.e. their parks and that they did like using them with their children. No one said that they did *not* visit because of these caveats, only that they had to take care about when and how they visited.

4.2   Motivation and benefits for accessing green spaces

When asked about their motivation for accessing green space and the benefits of doing so, the most commonly given answers by the participants were similar to those given for participating in physical activity as described in section 3.2. This was perhaps not surprising as for many participants, the two things were interrelated in their minds. The two main areas of overlap related to the physical and mental health and wellbeing benefits as well as the *"getting outdoors/fresh air"* factor:

- **Physical and mental health motivation and benefits**
  Many participants noted the importance of green spaces for enabling physical activity for "*keeping fit", "walking"* and "*playing"* and well as for their mental wellbeing: *"you can relax there."* Others also pinpointed that they went there for the benefit of their children's health and wellbeing.

- **Getting some fresh air/outdoors motivation and benefits**
  As was to be expected, many participants associated accessing green spaces with getting some *"fresh air"* and *"being outdoors".* This was seen as both a motivating factor for visiting the park or playing fields, for example, and a positive benefit of doing so: "*I feel better after having been there*".

In addition to these areas of overlap with participating in physical activity, a few other different motivating factors and benefits from visiting green spaces were also noted by smaller numbers of the participants:

- Enabling their children to see animals (ponies in particular on Dartmoor and sheep, lambs cattle etc. in the countryside);
- Enabling their children to see flowers, heather, flora and fauna, particularly in the spring time and summer;
- Green spaces that had things to do that were age appropriate for all ("*not a lot to do for little ones in some parks"),* such as exploring in the woods; and
- Green spaces that had paths suitable for buggies such as at Holden Hill were praised as being more likely to be visited by parents with youngsters.

In summary, accessing green spaces was seen as being a very positive activity and nearly all of the participants said that they would like to do so more often than they currently did. This was particularly evident among those with their own children or with responsibility for looking after children, who felt that visiting green spaces with suitable child friendly activities more often would be a real benefit to them.

While the focus of the adult participants and children in particular was more often on the "non" green parts of the green space, i.e. the swings, slides, etc., rather than the trees, grass, bushes, etc. they nevertheless were very aware of the benefits of being in such a green space for their physical and mental health.

4.3   Factors limiting access to green spaces

All of the participants in the six focus groups were also asked about the main factors limiting them from visiting green spaces more often than they currently did. In addition, the participants in the three LNP groups in Buckfastleigh and Exeter Mincinglake were also specifically asked about factors limiting them from visiting either Dartmoor or Moorland more often than they currently did.

As noted in section 4.1 above, the most commonly visited green spaces across all the groups were local parks and playing fields. Many of the participants felt that they already visited these locations as "*often as we want to*" and did not feel that there was really anything limiting their access to these places, other than their (or their children's) desire to visit them or not. Consequently the discussions were directed towards other green spaces, apart from local parks and playing fields.

In this context, three key limiting factors were identified, each of which again reflected the characteristics of the study participants. These were:

- The practical difficulties of accessing any green spaces that were beyond a reasonable walking distance from where they lived;
- A lack of awareness of what other green spaces were available and that were suitable and accessible for all children; and
- Closely related to this, the issue of not being in the habit of visiting other "new" green spaces in the past.

4.3.1   Practical difficulties of accessing other green spaces

As highlighted earlier in this report, many of the participants in the research were either out of work or in jobs with low incomes. Several were also single parents and/or people who needed specific support, such as those with disabilities. Consequently there were a range of practical issues associated with accessing green spaces that were not within walking distance from where they lived. Some of the key ones were:

- **Transport**
  Very few of the participants who were out of work and only some of those on low incomes had access to a car at all. Some others had a car in the family but this was often used by the working partner, so it was not available during the day time. This meant that, because of the cost and time limitations of public transport, for substantial numbers of the research participants it was not straightforward to visit green spaces that were beyond walking distance. Some typical comments made by participants in this respect were:

  > "*I don't drive… my other half works six days a week, so we only got Sundays to go anywhere*"
  > "*The big issue is the distance from home. Without a car you just can't get there*"
  > "*The bus stops early… you can easily get stuck (On Dartmoor)*"

- **Cost**
  For similar reasons, cost was a concern for many of the research participants in considering accessing new green spaces – be it in terms of paying for public transport if it were available to get there and/or paying for the food, ice cream, treats etc. that would be "*needed for the children on a longer trip*".

- **Personal support/company**
  Several of the research participants were in situations where they would require support to visit green spaces further afield. This support ranged from those with wheelchairs, needing assistance with mobility and transitions between vehicles, to those who wanted company when going somewhere "new" because they had not been there before.

Dartmoor/moors issues
It is worth noting that the practical difficulties described above were common across all of the focus groups, but that they appeared to be "multiplied" when the discussions turned to the issues faced in accessing Dartmoor and/or other moorland areas. This was because of participants' specific concerns over:

- The distance/time taken to get to Dartmoor using public transport (and worries about being stranded there if the last bus was missed) from both Exeter *and* Buckfastleigh (which was felt to be very poorly served by public transport at the weekends in particular);
- The perceived "difficult" terrain on moorlands for those with any sort of mobility issue or problems, such as using wheelchairs, walking sticks or with young children in buggies;
- The lack of cover from the elements and support items (plastic macs, warm clothes) if you did not have your "*own car to retreat to*" and it unexpectedly rained and/or the weather turned poor; and
- The perceived vulnerability of people who had rarely if at all been to the moors, be they single parents, disabled people or any of those participating in the groups in term of knowing their way around and where to go for help.

4.3.2   Lack of awareness
A very common response given by the participants when the discussion moved onto the possibility of visiting other green spaces (apart from their local parks and playing fields) was "*where would we go*" or "*what green* (other) *spaces*". For many of the participants there was a general lack of awareness of other green spaces beyond their immediate localities and neighbourhoods.

Although it was clear that the participants knew of other green spaces in principle, such as Dartmoor and the South Devon coast, relatively few had visited regularly enough to either be confident about where exactly to go or what there was available to do there. For parents, grandparents and carers the issues around knowing that there would be something suitable for children was particularly important.

Indeed when talking about Dartmoor, while most participants were able to identify the names of specific popular visitor spots, such as Hay Tor, Cadover Bridge, Burrator, Hound Tor, etc. there were few mentions of any other lesser known or closer spaces and in particular what activities might be done there beyond *"walking"* or *"walking the dog"* that were suitable for families and young children.

Some very typical comments made by the respondents were:

> *"We don't our way around Dartmoor, so we follow the tourist routes…so it feels a bit pedestrian... we need to know where the interesting bits are"*
> *"I used to go there (Dartmoor) all the time before (XX) was born, but it isn't accessible with a buggy or without a car come to that"*
> *"I haven't been up there for a long time…I used to go walking with my Father as a child there but I wouldn't know where to go now that was suitable."*

This lack of knowledge about the location and suitability of points of access on Dartmoor in particular and green spaces in general was clearly an issue impeding access to them for many of the participants.

4.3.3   Not being in the habit of accessing other green spaces

Closely related to the previous point about lack of knowledge and awareness of other green spaces that they might visit, the participants raised the issue of not being in the habit of visiting other "new" green places and/or of not having done so in the past. There were several matters compounded within this subject:

- Some participants said that they had visited other green spaces such as Dartmoor in the past (i.e. when they were children themselves or before they had children), often quite regularly, but that they no longer did so;
- Other participants said *"why would we* (need to) *visit them"*, as they felt that they could either get "enough" time in green space in their local park or playing fields or they simply preferred to spend their time doing other activities; and
- For a small group of participants it was the fact that they had never visited any green spaces, as they did not regard this sort of activity as being part of what they wanted to do with their time.

Consequently the lack of "*being in the habit*" of visiting green space, as with undertaking physical exercise was seen as being a significant limiting factor. One of the participants at the Exeter Mincinglake group summed it up: "(Before today) *I'd never even think of it* (visiting Dartmoor or another green scape)."

Breaking this habit was therefore another significant barrier to overcome in increasing the likelihood of accessing green spaces.

5. EXPLORING POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

The previous chapters in this report have examined the barriers and motivating factors that influence the research participants' behaviour relating to participating in physical activity and visiting green spaces. This chapter discusses the views of all the participants, covering the parents, grandparents and carers, those without children and those in or out or work on low income in relation to possible solutions for:

- Increasing exercise and physical activity; and
- Increasing access to green spaces and the natural environment.

5.1 Increasing exercise and physical activity

The research participants were asked to discuss ways in which it might be possible to increase the amount of time they spent on exercise or physical activity. For all of the suggested "solutions" each of the groups discussed:

- How it could be set up;
- How it would work for individuals; and
- The practical aspects of implementation (Where/ what/ how).

Each of the groups also discussed which of the solutions would be most useful in enabling them to take part in exercise or physical activity more often. These discussions covered the reasons why the solution would work, how often it would enable them to take part in exercise or physical activity and whether it would it encourage the involvement of others (friends, family, children, etc.). The main suggestions and initiatives that were put forward by the groups and which are discussed in more detail below were:

- Developing further existing cycling routes (including an off-road cycle route from Buckfastleigh to Dartmoor) with associated cycling clubs;
- Establishing physical exercise activities for adults alongside their children's activities, enabling parents and carers to be active at the same time;
- Securing agreements with employers for support with employee fitness, including coordination of physical activities with work patterns;
- Subsidised physical activity sessions in sports and leisure centres and in local green spaces for those on low income;
- Establishing appropriate buddying, friendship and mutual cooperation groups to encourage and develop participation in physical activities; and
- Promoting more community activity events such as fun runs, charity walks, swimathons, etc. that were held on a regular, rather than one off basis.

Further to these various suggestions it is also worth emphasising the point made in chapter 3 that many of the research participants noted that they were "*out of the habit*" of taking regular exercise and that breaking this mould and establishing a new active routine was central to the success of any of the suggested initiatives.

5.1.1 Developing the use of existing cycling routes with associated cycling clubs (including Buckfastleigh to Dartmoor off-road route)

There was widespread support for the further development of the use of cycle routes in and around Exeter and Buckfastleigh as they were seen as safe, family friendly ways to participate in physical exercise. It was agreed that cycling was an enjoyable way to get fit and that many people who did not otherwise do any physical activity would be keen to ride. However numerous caveats were expressed that need to be considered:

- *Cost and storage of cycles*
  This was an issue for many of the low income families with limited means and small accommodation. It was suggested that reduced rental hire for those on low income would be one way of addressing this. (It was noted that the cost of hiring bikes for a family of four from Exeter Quay was £30 for half a day and £45 for the day – beyond the means of those on benefits)

- *Establishing a routine through cycling clubs*
  Many parents wanted their children to join a club that made cycling a regular activity – in the same way that swimming sessions or football training were held "*once or twice a week*". Getting the children into a routine of cycling was thought be a means of developing "*good habits*" for later in life.

Despite these caveats, there was clear agreement though that development of cycling routes would enable the involvement of all groups: i.e. friends, family, children, etc. It would also, if the routes ran to the right places, increase access to Green spaces and the natural environment, as well as increasing physical exercise

Further to these suggestions, there was particularly strong support in the Buckfastleigh groups for the development of a new off-road cycle route to Dartmoor. The current Dartmoor Way "cycle route" involves negotiating along the narrow and winding Duckspond Road, Wallaford Road and Bossell Road. Crucially as well as being difficult to negotiate safely with children, the Dartmoor Way at this point *encircles* the Moor, rather than enabling access onto it. The roads that go from Buckfastleigh onto the Moor, such as Hockmoor Hill, Merrifield Road and Hembury Cock Hill are all similarly narrow and winding, often busy with traffic in the summer months. (One participant who had lived in Buckfastleigh all her life stated that as a child she had often ridden up to the Moor, with her parents, but would not do so now with her own children because the roads were far too dangerous).

It was also felt that the development of a new off-road route should be linked to establishing a cycling club for young people in the town. It was noted that not everyone could afford bikes and that the club could provide subsidised hire for local residents (or even "season" tickets) as well as services to visitors.

There was general consensus that the provision of such an off-road route would greatly increase the regularity of cycling, however the precise extent of this increase was often dependent upon other imponderable factors such as the weather, or the establishment of the cycling club (i.e. if this ran weekly or monthly for instance).

5.1.2   Physical exercise activities for adults linked to children's activities

This suggestion involved collaboration with local sports and leisure clubs, as well as children's centres and schools, to organise and run adult exercise activities alongside children's activities, thereby enabling parents and carers to participate in physical activities at the same time. Currently many parents take their children to physical activities, such as swimming, football, netball, etc. and stand or sit at the side talking among themselves. Many thought that this was a wasted opportunity.

While it was accepted that for many of the children's activities it was not possible or appropriate for the parents to join in the same activity, it was felt that there were often chances for the adults to join in something. Furthermore creating an opportunity for physical activity for adults did not have to be limited to being linked only to those children's activities that involved physical activity for the youngsters.

It was thought that many parents would welcome this opportunity and several examples of schemes that had been used before were put forward:

- Buggy fit (for those with small children in buggies);
- Sling fit (for those with babies still in slings);
- Parents swimming sessions simultaneously with children's swimming lessons;
- Parents jogging sessions at Exeter Arena simultaneous with kids evenings;
- More crèche and Pilates sessions in leisure centres; and
- Joint tennis coaching sessions.

The point was made that it is often at the stage when children are young that parents *"get out of the habit"* of regular activity and that it was therefore very important to tackle this by offering appropriate opportunities before it was "too late".

5.1.3   Working with local employers to promote workforce fitness

There were various aspects to this proposal, all of which were underpinned by the following three key points put forward by existing employees:

- Those who are in work spend most of their time either at work or on their way to and from work so there is very little time available to them during the working week for physical exercise – so any activities need to be focussed on when they are available;
- For public sector and major private sector employers, assisting the fitness and health of their employees should be regarded as being a "public good" goal as much as financial efficiencies and carbon reduction targets (in terms of long term savings to the NHS); and
- The identification of specific local opportunities and locations relevant to each employer, such as local leisure centres, adjacent parks, etc. on which activities could be based should be promoted, supported and subsided to encourage participation, possibly including more flexi time or "exercise" allowances.

Two of the key components that were suggested for enabling employees to undertake more exercise were the appointment of an "activity/exercise coordinator" in each major employer in the city and the establishment of much closer collaboration with existing local leisure, swimming and sports centres:

- **Activity/Exercise coordinator and motivator**
  Especially in Local Authorities, and also in large private sector employers, the allowance of just a small amount of an individual employee's "official" work time to coordinate and arrange workplace activities involving as many staff as possible, such as walking groups, 5-a-side, jogging groups, dance, yoga, Zumba, etc., was thought to be a cost effective and supportive means of promoting exercise. It was emphasised that these activities should try to appeal to as many employees as possible and not be limited to the "sporty" ones only.

  In Exeter City Council it was also noted that in the past most of these activities had been organised either by an "Active for Life" organiser or individual staff members "*off their own back",* but that these had now ceased or been dropped because of the increasing pressure of work load and limited time. This meant that employees suffered a "double whammy" of working under more pressure and much harder as well as taking less exercise. (Following the Focus Group in ECC, it is understood that the walking group that had been defunct for several years has already been re-established by interested individuals).

- **Collaboration with local leisure, swimming and sports centres**
  It was noted by numerous employees that discount schemes and reduced entry programmes had operated in the past, but no longer seemed to be in operation. This was regarded as being a "false" saving, simply creating greater problems for the public purse (in the case of LA employees) and for private businesses (in terms of absenteeism and sickness) in the future.

  It was felt that particularly in the case where leisure centre and swimming pools were being run either by or on behalf of LAs there must be a way of incentivising employee use of them and also extending this to their families. Some suggestions included:

  - Free/reduced swimming before work or at lunchtime*
  - Reduced rates for LA employees/those on low income*
  - Targeted activities promoted in the workplace (i.e. "ECC swimming gala")

  (N.B. These requests for free/subsidised rates* should be considered in the light of the further comments made below in section 5.1.4).

It was thought that often many of these suggestions were actually already in existence and had either *"fallen by the wayside"* or been dropped because of the cut backs. Reinstating them might often be all that was required for many employers where they had simply fallen by the wayside. For those that dropped them because of cut backs, demonstrating the longer term economic value of good health would be necessary.

5.1.4   Subsidised physical activity sessions in leisure and sports centre

To reiterate, the two key target groups for the research were:

- o For Getting Naturally Active Buckfastleigh: low income, parents, grandparents and carers living in an area of deprivation with access to green space; and
- o For Getting Active Exeter: "inactive" 30 – 50 years olds living in Exeter, both in work and/or low pay or unemployed.

As such, it was not surprising that for many of those in these groups the cost of participating in organised sessions in their local sports and leisure centres or elsewhere was felt to be a major inhibitor. Consequently many requests for reduced rates for Zumba, swimming, five-a-side, horse riding, etc. were made by the research participants for themselves *and* their children as noted in the previous sections. These requests varied from "*make it all free for all*" to a sliding scale of subsidies relating to each individual's level of income.

It is important to note, however, that the detailed discussions about this "solution" revealed that reducing cost alone was not the single answer to increasing activity for many. While some participants felt that cost was the main issue for them, there was wider agreement that while cost was a significant issue, it was part of a broader set of inhibitors that needed to be tackled jointly to increase participation.

Most of the people on low incomes, in or out of jobs in the focus groups accepted that they needed as much support with ***motivation*** as with addressing the cost issue to actually increase their likelihood of participating. Having the motivation and desire to do something were usually regarded as being as equally important as having the ability to pay for it.

This is why the establishment of buddying, friendship and cooperation groups to inspire and motivate people to participate in physical activity were felt to be very important (see following point 5.1.5 below). The participants felt that these "support groups" needed to be developed in tandem with reducing cost, if people were to succeed in increasing the amount of physical exercise they undertook.

Nonetheless, it was clear that cost was a significant barrier to participating in many specific types of physical activity, particularly those where large initial expenditure was required for the purchase of equipment, kit, membership fees, etc., such as with tennis, cycling or golf and/or where participation involved travelling to remote locations that needed a car, such as surfing, hang gliding, etc.

Consideration should therefore be given to appropriate ways in which physical activities and exercise might be subsidised for the inclusion of a wider set of demographic groups than are currently involved.

5.1.5 Buddying, friendship and cooperation groups to promote physical activity

As noted above, for many of the participants in the research focus groups, addressing the motivational aspects of taking part in physical exercise were a key component in increasing the amounts of exercise undertaken. Various suggestions were made for this, many of which revolved around the idea of having friends or relatives who encouraged and supported the individual as well as taking part themselves.

Particularly popular ideas in this respect were buddying, friendship and cooperation groups designed for, and to encourage and enable, participation in physical activities, especially with potentially "solitary" physical activities such as swimming, gym, walking, running, etc. Often these included the notion of a "pool" of supporters who could provide the encouragement and support if other people were not available.

Some examples of the comments made by the numerous participants supporting this idea were:

> *"It's better to do things in a group or with friends…so you're "shamed" into doing it and couldn't wuss out of it….getting gentle peer pressure would help – and it's more fun like that!"*
> *"That actually did work for me (in the past)…I shared a lift to work with someone and we used to always stop at the gym on the way home, so I had to go even if I didn't want to, or make my own way back"*
> *"Yes getting a* "Mr Motivator" *in would work for a lot of us...we need to help motivate each other as well though and that (buddying) would be a good way of doing it here"*

This support network notion was suggested in several groups and had quite widespread support, but would clearly need careful establishment and tailoring to enable it to work in a variety of situations. For instance:

- ***In workplaces:*** It was envisaged that establishing a buddy/friend network could also form part of the work of the activities coordinator/motivator described in section 5.1.2 above in both public sector and large private workplaces. It was felt that these activities would either have to be focussed on the lunchtime and pre-after work period, or in specific agreed "activity" breaks or periods; and
- ***In the community:*** The establishment of such networks would need to be run through existing local groups, outreach centres, schools, sports centres, etc. that had strong links with the community already. These would also benefit from having an identified "lead motivator." It was felt that they would function best in the evenings or at weekends to attract maximum support.

Finally in this respect it was noted that often *"overcoming yourself"* was the hardest thing in either starting or going back to physical activity and that this was why a buddy or friend could be so important: *"When I actually got there I enjoyed it...beforehand I had nearly talked myself out of it, but my friend made me go…I'm glad they did now."*

5.1.6   Community and charity events focussed on physical activity

Many of the participants in the focus groups were keen to be involved in more community based activity events such as fun runs, charity walks, swimathons, etc. However, it was recognised that these needed to be established and run on a regular basis, rather than a one off, ad hoc basis if they were to have any value in terms of maintaining or improving physical fitness.

Several suggestions were made in this respect such as:

- Monthly nominated charity activity event (with weekly training);
- Weekly local community run; and
- "Fitness" challenges for fund raising.

One further specific example was noted that could be worth pursuing – in the main park in Exmouth every Saturday morning a community fun run is held that is open to all and "not competitive" in any way. This has apparently led to many people of all different ages and abilities joining in who would not otherwise have got involved in running or jogging.

While it was known that the Active Devon[3] website listed "running for everyone" the crucial point was a "community run" was with people who knew each other, lived together and who would support and motivate each other to continue with the activity in the future. It was this personal contact and interest that made the key difference to increased participation and involvement. Furthermore it was apparent that the potential community based activities did not need to be limited to simply runnig or jogging – they could include virtually anything.

As such it was apparent that "doing something for their community" or with others from the same community was a very powerful motivator and that this could inspire lots of participants to get involved in physical activity. The key challenge was identifying a way in which this could contribute to regular physical activity. The issue of coordinating these activities would need to be considered alongside the involvement of local community leaders or representatives to ensure that they were run regularly and maintained.

Lastly in this respect, a very important point about community based activities was ensuring that they were entirely inclusive in nature. This was seen as being significant both for overcoming issues around lack of fitness, the appropriateness of the activity for different groups and improving community cohesion.

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[33] http://www.activedevon.org/page.asp?section=0001000100290002&sectionTitle=Running+for+everyone

5.2 Increasing access to green spaces and the natural environment

The research participants were also asked to discuss ways in which it might be possible to increase the amount of time spent in green spaces and the natural environment. This increased access was not just for exercise, but also to be physically active and enjoy the other benefits of visiting such places. Again for each of the suggested "solutions" all six of the focus groups discussed:

- How it could be set up;
- How it would work for individuals; and
- The practical aspects of implementation (where/ what/ how).

Each of the groups also discussed which of the solutions would be most useful in enabling them to access green space and the natural environment more often. These discussions covered how often it would enable them to access green space and the natural environment and whether it would it encourage the involvement of others (such as friends, family, children, etc.).

The main suggestions that were put forward by the six groups build on the motivators and barriers identified in the earlier section and are described in priority order below:

- Increased information and awareness about what is available in green spaces and the natural environment, particularly Dartmoor and moorland;
- Establishing and promoting access to more child/family based learning and action activities in the local woodlands and forests;
- Establishing coordinated visits to key natural assets (Dartmoor, South West Coast, etc) run through local community groups for local people;
- Developing links with potential transport providers (bus, coach, taxi, car share, etc.) to identify ways in which access issues can be overcome;
- Addressing vulnerability and isolation concerns in perceived remote natural locations such as Dartmoor, Exmoor, etc.; and
- Addressing safety and cleanliness concerns in accessing local green spaces (teenagers, litter, dog mess, graffiti, etc.).

5.2.1 Increasing awareness about green space and the natural environment
As was evidenced in section 4.3.2, many of the research participants were not fully aware of either green spaces beyond their immediate neighbourhood and/or the offer of areas such as Dartmoor and the South West Coast path. Consequently, increasing the amount of information about them and hence awareness of what was available was felt to be a good means of promoting use.

It was suggested that the information could be provided in a variety of ways – posters, flyers, "*info sheets*", hand-outs, etc. linked to a website with full details. Different formats to suit different groups would also be needed (i.e. written in Plain English, with large font, Braille, audio options, etc.). Four main outlets for disseminating this information were identified, reflecting the backgrounds of the participants:

- Via workplaces and business forums, for those in employment;
- Via schools and nurseries, for parents, grandparents and carers;
- Via community centres, halls, drop in centres, for specific local groups; and
- Via local newspapers, websites, for the whole community.

It was emphasised that many participants felt that such information would be most effective and best received if it were tailored to specific activities that suited the participants' own circumstances, rather than being "*generic catch-all*". Some suitable activities are proposed in the following sections 5.2.2 and 5.2.3.

It is also worth emphasising the finding that many participants needed to understand more about what a "green space" was and the associated benefits of visiting one.

5.2.2   Developing child/family activities in local woodlands and forests

The research demonstrated the participants' very positive reactions to the "pull" of woodlands and forests, in terms of learning, exploring and "doing" activities. The participants agreed that this should be built upon with both the further promotion of existing activities and the development of new ones.

It was noted that the Forestry Commission have just launched Gruffalo Activity trails[4] and that this included Haldon Hill. This was praised as being a good means of encouraging the interest and involvement of younger children, which when combined with the Go Ape activities available on the Hill gave a range of experiences (albeit some more costly than others) for different children/teenagers.

Other participants noted that "forest schools" had been run in places like Longleat and Sherwood Forest for school children and wondered if such a scheme could be developed closer to home. They were particularly keen on aspects such as:

- Learning wood craft/survival skills;
- Participating in outdoor activities and games in a different situation;
- Either going with existing friends or meeting and getting to know new ones.

The development of such schemes based on learning and physical activity in *local* woods such as Stoke Hill Woods in Exeter or the various woodlands around Buckfastleigh were felt to be a potentially positive step forward in this respect, because of the issues of accessing green space that required a car.

5.2.3   Developing coordinated visits to key natural assets

In order to address the combined barriers to accessing green space and the natural environment caused by a lack of transport, awareness of where to go and confidence to go alone, the suggestion was made that coordinated visits should be established. These could be run through recognised community groups and centres as appropriate to target specific groups of local people, such as residents of a particular area, etc.

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[4] http://www.forestry.gov.uk/gruffalo

While a degree of financial subsidy might well be required to assist with paying for coaches, minibuses, entry, etc. the initial conversations in the groups revealed that many participants would be prepared to pay what they could afford toward the cost.

It was felt that the development of such a coordinated visit scheme would provide a complementary activity for several of the proposals already put forward:

- In terms of increasing awareness *and* understanding of key natural assets (as discussed in section 5.2.1), as people would be taken to visit places they would not otherwise have visited, while also learning about other natural assets;
- In terms of being an obvious activity to be organised and run by any appointed activity coordinator (as described in section 5.1.3), particularly at the local community group level; and
- In term of furthering the development of buddying and friendship groups (as described in section 5.1.5) in that the buddying/friendship could incorporate visiting natural assets as well as taking part in (more) physical activity.

As noted, a core element of the success of such as scheme was felt to be the need to "keep it local", in terms of being arranged and run for similar groups of people from the same neighbourhoods or community.

5.2.4   Developing links with transport providers/schemes for car sharers

A key barrier underpinning many of the access to green space-beyond-walking-distance issues was the lack of a car for many of the participants. Consequently the development of "*transport to green spaces schemes"* was felt to be an important component of improving the likelihood of access. Various suggestions were made for ways in which this issue could be addressed. These included the following, though it is important to note that each would need to be appraised further:

- Developing links with established transport providers (bus, coach, taxi firms, etc.) to identify if there were ways of running coordinated and subsidised services to green spaces and/or the natural environment from particular local communities or localities of interest;
- Establishing "*green space car share*" schemes on the lines of the existing journey to work car shares, except focussed on weekends and/or evenings that were intended for accessing key natural assets, such as Dartmoor, Exmoor, the South Devon coast, etc.; or
- Working with schools and colleges to identify ways in which their minibuses and coaches (which were often left unused in car parks at the weekends) might be put to use with the local community to help address the access issues.

5.2.5   Addressing vulnerability and isolation issues in remote natural locations

A significant barrier that was raised by some of the participants were their concerns about their perceived vulnerability and isolation in remote natural locations such as Dartmoor, Exmoor, etc. that they were not familiar with. It was acknowledged that addressing these concerns was not a straightforward matter, though it was thought

that some of the other suggestions made (buddying up and having more information about where to go for help, etc.) would begin to help in this respect.

A few further suggestions that were made:

- Clarification on who was available for support: warden, ranger, etc.;
- Help points for those who got lost or needed assistance; and
- Improved mobile phone coverage or an alternative means of contact.

It should be emphasised that while these concerns were very significant barriers for those participants who raised them they were a comparatively small number.

5.2.6   Addressing safety and cleanliness concerns in accessing local green spaces

Two interrelated sets of concerns about safety and cleanliness were discussed by the focus group participants in terms of increasing their likelihood of accessing their local green spaces:

- The need to address both cleanliness (such as litter, dog mess, graffiti, broken bottles, etc.) and maintenance (up keep and repair of the children's play equipment, benches, cutting the grass regularly, etc.) issues on a regular and thorough basis; and
- The need to address safety concerns, relating to isolation and time of day (i.e. the presence of "gangs" of teenagers and/or older children, drug use, women alone, etc.)

While it was accepted that in many respects that local authorities did a lot already to counter these problems, any further improvements that could be made would be welcomed, particularly in regards of the dog mess and teenager issues.

One specific request made was for the reinstatement of park keepers who were known and recognised by their local community, rather than the contractor's teams who "*came and left before you knew it*". A physical presence of someone known to local people in the park, albeit not in the form of an authority figure, would be welcomed by many of the focus group participants in this respect.

6.   CONCLUDING COMMENTS

This chapter summarises the findings of the research before making some concluding comments and recommendations for action.

6.1   Key findings: Physical Activity

6.1.1   Key barriers to increasing physical activity
Three main sets of barriers were identified by the research participants as limiting the likelihood of them doing (more) physical activity:

i)   Shortage of time
-    ***A lack of sufficient overall time:*** The difficulty of fitting (more or any) physical activity into busy schedules full of school runs, work, shopping, family commitments, care, job search, etc.; and
-    ***A lack of opportunities at the right time***: Numerous participants also noted that fitting physical exercise into any time that they did have available was difficult because of the timing of sessions and opening hours.

ii)   Costs
-    ***Participation costs:*** The costs of membership and the session costs were a primary concern for many participants, both those in and out of work;
-    ***Access costs:*** Participation in physical activity that involved travel required either a car or paying for public transport discouraging participation;
-    ***Equipment and gear costs:*** the purchase or hire of the required kit for many activities such as cycling, etc. was seen as prohibitive.

iii) Lack of motivation/lack of confidence/out of the habit
A lot of participants said they did not have sufficient motivation or confidence to take part in (more) physical activity. Many also noted that they were "*out of the habit*", with the advent of parenthood often identified as the beginning of a "decline" in their levels of physical activity.

6.1.2   Key benefits and motivators for increasing physical activity
A range of significant benefits and motivating factors were identified by the research participants as being associated with (more) physical activity:

i)   Health benefits
The physical benefits of activity such as losing weight, keeping fit and improving appearance were all recognised by most participants as well as the mental health benefits such as feeling good about oneself and relaxing. These aspects were therefore the most significant motivator for many, even those who said physical activity made them "*worn out*".

ii) Enjoyment (for some)

Quite a few of the participants agreed that they enjoyed physical activity, with statements such as *"it's fun"* or *"you have a good time"*, although others clarified that while they agreed physical activity was enjoyable for *some* people and was therefore a motivator, it was not necessarily enjoyable for *all*.

iii) Habit/regularity

A smaller group of participants, mainly those who did more exercise, said that they had always done it (either since childhood with their parents or for a long period of time) and that it had become a habit for them.

iv) Socialisation

Some of the participants identified the social benefits of physical activity – that is, meeting others and being able to get to know them.

v) Getting out /fresh air

Others felt that the benefits lay in simply being able to get outdoors and have *"some fresh air in your lungs"*, especially after being "*stuck in the office.*"

6.1.3 Suggested solutions for increasing physical activity

Six main solutions were put forward by the research participants and discussed in the focus group with their peers. These can be summarised as:

- Developing existing cycling routes (including an off-road cycle route from Buckfastleigh to Dartmoor) with associated initiatives such as cycling clubs to cover issues around;
    - Cost and storage of cycles; and
    - Establishing a routine of cycling;
- Establishing physical exercise activities for adults alongside their children's activities, enabling the parents and carers to be active at the same time, building on existing ones and developing new ones;
    - For those with babies/small children: Buggy or sling fit;
    - For those with older children: joint swimming or jogging;
- Securing agreements with major local employers for support with employee fitness, including coordination of physical activities with work patterns, possibly including;
    - Appointment of an Activities Coordinator/Motivator; and
    - Developing links/activities with local sports and leisure clubs;
- Subsidised physical activity sessions in sports and leisure centres and in local green spaces for those on low income/out of work;
- Establishing buddying, friendship and mutual cooperation groups to encourage participation in physical activities, possibly run by Activities Coordinators in work and Community Champions locally; and
- Promoting more community activity events such as fun runs, charity walks, swimathons, etc. to be held on a regular, rather than one off basis, with a strong community focus to engender participation.

6.2   Key findings: Accessing Green Space

6.2.1   Perceptions of local green space
Most of the research participants identified their "local" green space as being somewhere within walking distance such as the neighbourhood park or playing fields. Both the adults and the children in particular associated these local green spaces with play equipment (such as swings, slides, monkey bars, etc.), rather than with any natural elements such as trees, grass, bushes, etc.

6.2.2   Key barriers to accessing (other) green space
Five main sets of barriers were identified by the research participants as limiting them from accessing green space, particularly any space beyond the immediate walking distance of their local park or playing field:

i)   Lack of transport
Very few of the participants who were out of work and only some of those on low incomes had access to a car. Others only had very limited access on occasional days. This was felt to be a very significant barrier for accessing any green space beyond walking distance.

ii)   Cost
Cost was also a major concern for many participants in considering accessing green spaces further afield – be it in terms of paying for public transport and/or paying for the food, ice cream, drinks, etc. that would be "needed for the children on a longer trip" or day out.

iii) Need for personal support and/or company
Some participants required support to visit green spaces such as help with mobility issues, wheelchairs and transitions between vehicles. Others wanted company when going somewhere "new" because they had not been there before and were not comfortable.

iv) Lack of knowledge about green spaces and what to do in them
Many participants were unsure of the specifics of where to go and what to do when considering visiting other green spaces beyond their immediate localities and neighbourhoods, such as Dartmoor or Exmoor. This lack of knowledge about suitable green spaces was clearly impeding access.

v)   Not being in the habit of accessing green spaces
Not being in "the habit" of visiting green space, as with undertaking physical exercise was a significant limiting factor. Breaking this habit was therefore another major barrier to overcome in increasing access to green spaces.

6.2.3   Key benefits and motivators for accessing green space
Two key sets of benefits from accessing green space were identified by the research participants that overlapped with those identified for participating in physical activity:

i)   Physical and mental health benefits

Many participants noted the importance of green spaces for enabling the various forms of physical activity that helped them and their children to "*keep fit",* while others also noted its value in improving their mental wellbeing by reducing stress and relaxing them.

ii) Getting some fresh air/being outdoors

Many participants highlighted the benefit and value of getting *"fresh air"* and *"being outdoors"* that came with visiting green spaces*.* This was both an important motivating factor for actually visiting a green space and a positive benefit of doing so.

As well as these key benefits, a few other different motivating factors for accessing green spaces were also noted, such as enabling children to see animals and flora and fauna as well as providing a range of interesting things to do*,* like exploring in the woods.

Overall, accessing green space in general was seen as being a very positive activity and nearly all of the participants said that they would like to do so more often than they currently did. This was particularly the case among those with children, with forests and woodlands being highlighted as particularly enjoyable places to visit.

6.2.4   Suggested solutions for increasing access to green spaces

The main suggestions that were put forward by the research participants built on the motivators and barriers identified above. They can be summarised as:

- ➢ Providing increased information and awareness about what is available in green spaces and the natural environment, especially Dartmoor and moorland. This needed to be:
    - ▪ Tailored to particular audiences; and
    - ▪ Targeted on specific priority groups;
- ➢ Establishing and promoting access to more child/family based learning and action activities in the local woodlands and forests that were of interest to a wide age and ability range by;
    - ▪ Learning lessons from Sherwood, Longleat, etc.; and
    - ▪ Emphasising the powerful "pull" of woodlands and forests;
- ➢ Establishing coordinated visits to key natural assets (Dartmoor, South West Coast, etc.) run through local community groups for local people in an assisted and subsided manner;
    - ▪ Designed to help inform as well as visit; and
    - ▪ To be as inclusive as possible;
- ➢ Developing links with potential transport providers (bus, coach, taxi, car share, etc.) to identify ways in which access issues can be overcome;
- ➢ Addressing vulnerability and isolation concerns in perceived remote natural locations such as Dartmoor, Exmoor, etc.; and
- ➢ Addressing safety and cleanliness concerns in accessing local green spaces (teenagers, litter, dog mess, graffiti, etc.).

6.2.5   Summary of children's views

As noted in the introduction, as well as the adult research participants, ten children from Buckfastleigh Primary School also contributed to the research. While they did not take part in a full length focus group, a good discussion was held in which they did put forward their views on many of the key issues and joined in the art exercise. This section summarises their contributions.

Overall the barriers that the children talked about were the same as those identified by their parents and carers: albeit phrased in a slightly different way: "*I can't get there"* (to the Moors) or "*I've got no one to go with.*" Similarly the children also recognised the same health and "*fresh air*" benefits as the adults. In terms of the various suggested solutions that were put forward, the children expressed the most support for two particular ideas:

- ➢ The development of an off-road cycle route from Buckfastleigh to Dartmoor with associated initiatives such as cycling clubs to cover the issues of cycle hire, storage, road safety training, etc. and
- ➢ Establishing and promoting access to more child/family based learning and action activities in the local woodlands and forests that were of interest to a range of ages and abilities.

Underpinning both these solutions was the strong desire that any activities in green spaces that they participated in would be more fun if they were accompanied by their friends. The children were very keen that they could either take their friends with them or meet their friends at the activity. This needs to be a cornerstone of the development of any buddying and friendship motivational groups that are developed – ensuring that it is not just the parents and carers who can "buddy up", but their children as well.

In terms of the exercise to "draw their local green space", the following observations were made about the children's contributions:

- o The most commonly drawn things by the children were straightforward depictions of the play equipment in their local park, such as the swings, slides, monkey bars, zip wire, etc. or of the local swimming pool (in Victoria Park), rather than the park or playing field itself;
- o Indeed, the children focussed on the play equipment to the exclusion of drawing any of the natural elements that could be found in the park or playing field, such as the trees, grass, bushes, etc.; and
- o None of the children drew any of the other green spaces in the "natural environment" around Buckfastleigh that could be considered as being local, such as nearby fields or woods, or even Dartmoor itself.

It is also very important to emphasise that the children were very disappointed that the swimming pool appeared to be being closed down, as they all had very positive memories of playing there in previous summer holidays and were not sure where they would be able to go to swim once it was shut.

6.3   Concluding comments

It is useful to discuss these key findings in the context of the key aims of the qualitative research which was to capture the knowledge, attitudes and behaviour of the two audiences for the "Getting Active" projects. To reiterate these were:

- Getting Naturally Active Buckfastleigh: focusing on low income, parents and grandparents living in an area of deprivation with access to green space; and
- Getting Active Exeter: focusing on "*inactive*" 30 – 50 years olds living in Exeter, both in work and/or low pay or unemployed.

With both of these two audiences the research explored the barriers inhibiting the use of green space and limiting physical activity, alongside the motivators encouraging use and increasing likelihood of activity. In addition, various separate issues were examined with each audience, such as perceptions of Dartmoor and Moorland for the Getting Naturally Active Buckfastleigh project and past exercise behaviour for the Getting Active Exeter project.

What was most striking about the findings that covered the same core research aims was the consistency of the evidence reported by the two audiences. That is, that despite being categorised into two potentially very different audiences in terms of their age, geography and levels of physical activity, the answers given by the participants were bound by the more "powerful" factors that they shared in common:

- Having little time available, due to parenting, work, job search, etc. and the lack of suitable options in the time they did have available;
- Having low levels of income, particularly disposable income for spending on transport getting to green space or membership fees for physical activity; and
- Having limited motivation, confidence and/or support for engaging in exercise or accessing green spaces beyond their immediate locality.

Motivation, confidence and support
It is worth highlighting this issue as in many ways it underpins many of the solutions suggested by the participants. As noted, and intriguingly, it was found that many of the participants were well aware of the benefits of physical activity and the value of accessing green spaces, yet only actually engaged in minimal amounts of either.

A lot of participants explained this apparent contradiction as being the result of them either being out of the habit of exercise or not knowing which other green spaces to visit. Others felt they needed some "support" either motivationally or practically to be able to start exercising again or to visit new green spaces. One less politely said he knew the value of keeping fit, but needed *"a kick up the backside"* to do so.

While these were different perspectives, they often came down to the similar issue of people needed a helping hand or (gentle) push to encourage them to become involved in things that they felt apprehensive about. It was agreed that having a friend, colleague or neighbour to do these activities with made them more appealing, whether they were seen as off-putting or not. Many participants said that they needed a "motivator" or even someone who would "*shame them into more exercise*".

Lack of time

This was clearly a very significant issue for the participants, reflecting their busy lives and high levels of other commitments, and many of them highlighted it first as being the major barrier to them undertaking more physical activity. It was also noted as an issue in finding time to find out about accessing a suitable green space further afield outside of the participants' usual "known" neighbourhood and area.

Given this, it was not surprising that many of the solutions put forward by participants often involved flexibility in combining their existing main time consuming activities, such as work or parenting, with more physical activity or accessing green spaces in some way. This puts an onus on working with employers and support services (such as schools, children's centres, etc.) to identify ways in which people can be involved in more physical activities, without impacting negatively on their main activities.

Securing the support of both public and private sector employers for the ideas put forward may involve making a case to demonstrate the longer terms benefits to an organisation of improved employee fitness and hence, for example, less sick absence and improved staff relations. In other cases some employers may already be aware and simply need encouragement from employees to (re-)establish schemes and activity coordinators as suggested.

The financial cost of participating in physical activity or accessing green space

Having insufficient income, particularly disposable income for spending on transport to get to and from green space or on leisure club membership to get fit, for example, was a recurring theme throughout all of the focus groups that were held. This is not surprising in itself, as the target audiences were those on low income or benefits, many living in deprived areas with limited access to transport.

However the two ways in which this issue most commonly manifested itself – either an inability to afford transport (either a car or suitable public transport) to access green space or an inability to afford the cost of participating in many of the regular physical activities undertaken by others (either membership or session fees, cycle purchase or hire, etc.) – meant that these people were often being doubly excluded from involvement in physical activity and accessing green space.

Working with local sports and leisure centres together with transport providers and coordinators to explore and discuss the possible solutions identified by the participants will be the first step in investigating whether they are feasible. Most are likely to require some form of subsidy or financial support so will require considerable "selling" in the current financial climate. However it may be possible to find other ways of addressing the issue such as through the *green-space-car-share* idea or via a community lets system to enable time in kind to be exchanged.

6.4   Key recommendations

As described in the previous sections, the research identified a series of potential interlinked solutions for increasing physical activity and improving access to green space among the target audiences. The key recommendation of the research is that these solutions are taken forward in a coordinated manner with the appropriate authorities and organisations as identified.

It is known that some of the proposed solutions dovetail or overlap with existing plans and initiatives already underway and that it should therefore be possible to integrate them with these activities in a relatively seamless and straightforward manner. Some of the others will require further exploration and assessment as they either have potentially significant cost and time implications or they need additional testing to fully assess their potential impact and value.

The following bullet points are designed to help focus the development and implementation of the solutions in the most effective manner possible:

- **Segmented targeting of two interlinked audiences**
  - o   Low income parents and grandparents (for Buckfastleigh); and
  - o   30-50 year olds in work or low pay/unemployed (for Exeter).

- **Use of tailored communication to raise awareness of green space**
  - o   The audiences need materials tailored towards their needs and interests; and
  - o   Ensure that these are available online via suitable websites.

- **Publicity promoting physical activity**
  - o   The phrase "physical activity" produces a negative reaction in many people;
  - o   Focus instead on positive outcomes: friendship, fun, health, happiness, etc.

- **Working with public and private employers**
  - o   Collate evidence on economic/social value of a "healthy workforce"; and
  - o   Highlight success of existing and previous workforce schemes.

- **Working with community organisations and outreach groups**
  - o   Providing the assistance to enable local groups to deliver solutions; and
  - o   Ensure they are embedded for long term sustainability.

- **Working with sport, swimming and leisure centres and clubs**
  - o   Identifying the issues and challenges for increasing physical activity; and
  - o   Assess and seek to implement viable solutions put forward.

- **Working with natural asset and green space guardians**
  - o   Identifying the issues and challenges for access raised; and
  - o   Assess and seek to implement viable solutions put forward.

Appendix I: Topic guides (EHWB and LNP)

Introduction and thanks: Getting Exeter Active (Exeter Health & Wellbeing Board)

Thank you for attending this focus group today and agreeing to help with the research. I am Nigel Tremlett, the facilitator for the session today. I am from *TransForm Research*, an independent research organisation that has been commissioned by the Exeter Health and Wellbeing Board to conduct the study as part of their work into understanding behaviour relating to physical activity.

I hope that you find this a useful session and we are very grateful for your contributions. We are holding a number of sessions around Exeter to collect the views and attitudes towards physical activity. Before we start, I just need to quickly run through some practicalities…

- Tea and coffee is available…when/where and we will finish at…am/pm
- The fire exits are located…/etc.
- **Please speak one at a time** – everyone will have the opportunity to talk.
- **We are collecting a range of views** covering different attitudes to green space and physical activity.
- **Your views and opinions will be completely anonymous.** No individuals will be identified in the findings of the research.
- I will be recording the session to make note taking easier. Could I confirm that everyone is happy with that please?

Ice breaker and word association

Ask all

1. I'd like to start by asking each of you to introduce yourself briefly. But we're going to do it slightly differently to normal with a quick word association exercise. I'll give each of you a sheet of paper – and for each word or phrase I read out, I'd like you to write down the first *different* word or phrase that comes into your mind. No copying! GIVE OUT PAPER AND READ OUT:

   Physical activity
   Beaches
   (Your favourite) Leisure pastime
   Green space
   Natural environment
   Park
   Gardening
   Nature reserves

Thank you. Now, I'd like to go around the group - please tell me your name and home postcode – and read out your answers … GO THROUGH ALL GROUP MEMBERS…

PROBE AS NECESSARY: Is that positive or negative?

Perception of own behaviour - physical activity

Ask all

2. By physical activity we mean all forms of activity, such as everyday walking or cycling to get from A to B, work-related activity, active recreation (such as working out in a gym), dancing, gardening or playing active games, as well as organised and competitive sport that *"increases your heart beat."* How often do you take part in physical activity that *"increases your heart beat"?*

    - Less than 30 minutes/week?
    - More than 30 minutes/week?
    - More than 90 minutes/week?
    - 150 mins/week (Chief Medical Officers recommendation for mental/physical health)
    -
    What sort of exercise is this?
    - o Where do you do this exercise? (Outside? Green space?)
    - o Who do you go with?
    - o What motivates you to do this (health, fresh air, childhood memories, etc.)?
    - o When in your day (pick up cycling to work)
    - o How do you feel (afterwards)?
    - o Do you participate in organised exercise charity events/park runs? E.g. Run for Life

    Ask all

3. What are the factors stopping you doing (more) physical activity?

    PROBE AS NECESSARY:
    - o Cost
    - o Lack of time
    - o Past exercise behaviour/ not in habit
    - o Ease of access/ Don't know where opportunities are/what is on offer
    - o Social support
    - o Self confidence/ perceived self-efficacy
    - o (Lack of) Childhood memories/experiences of being physically active
    - o Physical environment (perceived and objective)
    - o Poor mental health

    Ask all

4. What (would motivate you /help overcome the barriers) to take part in more exercise than you do now?

    PROBE AS NECESSARY:
    - o More support? (What sort?)
    - o Help with access/ cost?
    - o Difficulties in incorporating it with work patterns?
    - o Knowledge of what's available /where it is?
    - o Greater knowledge/ understanding of health benefits?
    - o Buddying up? (Who, how?)
    - o Childcare?
    - o Anything else?
    - o An organised weekly run?

    IF NOTHING WOULD MOTIVATE: Why is that?

Exploring possible solutions for increasing exercise

Ask all

5. Now I would like us to discuss ways in which it might be possible to increase the amount of time we spend exercising. You have mentioned… (GO THROUGH MAIN BARRIERS AND MOTIVATORS MENTIONED AT Q3 AND Q4 IN TURN). How could we overcome… (BARRIER) or increase (MOTIVATOR)?

    PROBE FOR EACH SOLUTION:
    o   How would that be done?
    o   How would it work for you?
    o   Where/ what/ how?
    o   Are there any other things that would work as a solution (Either for overcoming a barrier or increasing a motivator)?

Ask all

6. Which of these solutions would be most useful in enabling you to take part in physical activity (more often)?

    PROBE:
    o   Why is that?
    o   If it were introduced how often would you take part in physical exercise?
    o   Would it encourage you to bring others (friends, family, children, etc.)?

Perceptions of local green space

Ask all

7. Do you access your local green space/ natural environment or travel to a green space?

    IF GO TO LOCAL GREEN SPACE OR OTHER GREEN SPACE, PROBE AS NECESSARY:
    o   What do you do there? (dog walking,?)
    o   Who do you go with? (does this change depending on activity, day of week?)
    o   What motivates you to go there (health, fresh air, childhood memories, etc.)?
    o   What other green spaces do you go to? Does your activity change?

    IF HARDLY EVER/NEVER GO TO GREEN SPACE, PROBE AS NECESSARY:
    o   Why don't you go there/to any green space?
        ▪   Cost
        ▪   Lack of time
        ▪   Not in habit/past behaviour
        ▪   Don't know where/what it is
        ▪   Support
        ▪   Self confidence
        ▪   (Lack of) Childhood memories/experiences of green spaces
        ▪   Green space not well maintained or welcoming?
        ▪   Anti social behaviour

    o   What is the **main** barrier to you using (each of your different) green spaces more often?

Ask all

8. Now thinking about how often you visit your green space/ natural environment, what would motivate you to use it more than you do now? Not just for exercise but to just to be physically active and enjoy the benefits?

   PROBE AS NECESSARY:
   o   More time/support?
   o   Help with access?
   o   Knowledge of what's available /where it is /where it goes to?
   o   Great knowledge/understanding of health benefits?
   o   Anything else?

Ask all

9. Finally, can I just check is there anything else that anyone would like to raise in relation to visiting green spaces/ the natural environment and or physical activity? I have some health care information sheets that you can read and take away as well as a contact point for any specific queries or concerns that you may have. Thank you for your time.

<div align="center">End and thank</div>

Introduction and thanks (Devon Local Nature Partnership)

Thank you for attending this focus group today and agreeing to help with the research. I am Nigel Tremlett, the facilitator for the session today. I am from *TransForm Research*, an independent research organisation that has been commissioned by the Public Health team in Devon County Council with the Devon Local Nature Partnership to conduct the study as part of their work into understanding behaviour relating to physical activity and using green spaces/ natural environment, such as the countryside, beaches, parks, playing fields, etc.

I hope that you find this a useful session and we are very grateful for your contributions. We are holding a number of sessions around Exeter/Buckfastleigh to collect the views of a range of people. The purpose of today is to find out about your views and attitudes towards your local natural environment and green spaces and to talk about time spent on physical activities of different sorts.

Before we start, I just need to quickly run through some *practicalities…*

- Tea and coffee is available...when/where and we will finish at...am/pm
- The fire exits are located.../etc.
- **Please speak one at a time** – everyone will have the opportunity to talk.
- **We are collecting a range of views** covering different attitudes to green space and activity.
- **Your views and opinions will be completely anonymous.** No individuals will be identified in the findings of the research.
- I will be recording the session to make note taking easier. Could I confirm that everyone is happy with that please?

Ice-breaker/Art work /Background questions
To start I'd like hand out some paper, drawing and colouring materials and ask you to draw or produce a picture of your local "green space" or "natural environment". Please use these materials to just draw or colour whatever comes into your mind when you think of your nearest "green space" or "natural environment". It can be a simple sketch or something more colourful and adventurous if you are feeling "arty". (If you really can't draw then please write down the words that come into your mind when you think of "green space" or the "natural environment").

While we are doing that, I'd like to collect a few background details about each of you. I'll go around the group and could you please tell me your name, postcode and how often you do thirty minutes exercise (enough to make your heart beat faster) each week. I'll start on my left… GO THROUGH ALL GROUP MEMBERS WHILE THEY ARE DRAWING/COLOURING…

Word association

Ask all while continuing with art work
1. While you are still drawing, I'd like to read out a few words/phrases to you and for you to tell me or write down the first words that come into your mind when I read them out. For each word please let everyone have their say.   READ OUT EACH WORD:

   Physical activity
   Dartmoor (for Buckfastleigh) / Moorland (for Mincinglake)
   (Your favourite) Leisure pastime
   Park
   Woodland

Green space
Natural environment
Paths (rights of way footpaths cycle paths bridleways)

PROBE AS NECESSARY: Is that positive or negative?

Perception of local green space

Ask all while continuing with art work
2. As a group you will have had a range of experiences of green spaces. We want to explore these different experiences and what you think about your local green space and the green space you are most likely to use. Now, I'd like to ask about what you think about your local green space?

    PROBE AS NECESSARY:
    a. Where is it?
    b. Is it easy to get to? (How far: distance and time taken to get there)
    c. Is it welcoming/ of good quality?
    d. What do people use it for?

    Ask all while continuing with art work
3. How often do you access your local green space or travel to a green space?

    IF GO TO LOCAL GREEN SPACE OR OTHER GREEN SPACE, PROBE AS NECESSARY:
    a. What do you do there? (dog walking, etc.?)
    b. Who do you go with? (does this change depending on activity, day of week?)
    c. What motivates you to go there (health, fresh air, childhood memories, etc.)?
    d. What other green spaces do you go to? Does your activity change?
    e. How does being in the "green space/natural environment" feel?

    IF HARDLY EVER/NEVER GO TO GREEN SPACE, PROBE AS NECESSARY:
    a. Why don't you go there/to any green space or natural environment?
        i.   Cost
        ii.   Lack of time
        iii. Not in habit/past behaviour
        iv.   Don't know where/what it is
        v.   Support
        vi.   Self confidence
        vii. (Lack of) Childhood memories/ experiences of green spaces
        viii. Distance and ease of access? (main road)
        ix.   Green space not well maintained or welcoming?
        x.   Anti social behaviour

    b. What is the **main** barrier to you using your local green space?
    c. And the main barrier for Dartmoor/ moorland? –
        PROBES:
        xi.   Any perceptions of 'you need stuff' /be heavily prepared for Dartmoor?
        xii. It is just for tourists?
        xiii. Any happy experiences?

Ask all while **finishing** *art work*

4. (If you could be finishing your masterpieces please) What do you think of as being the benefits (or might you if you don't) of using the green space?

   PROBE AS NECESSARY:
   a. Type of physical health benefits?
   b. Type of mental/ emotional health benefits?
   c. Other benefits…?

   PROBE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN DARTMOOR AND LOCAL GREEN SPACE:
   d. Are the benefits different for local parks and Dartmoor?
   e. Do people make a difference?

   Ask all

5. Now thinking about how often you visit your green space/ natural environment and Dartmoor what would motivate you to use it more than you do now? Not just for exercise but to just to be physically active and enjoy the benefits?

   PROBE AS NECESSARY:
   a. More time/support?
   b. Help with access?
   c. Knowledge of what's available /where it is?/where it goes to?
   d. Great knowledge/understanding of health benefits?
   e. Anything else?

   IF NOTHING WOULD MOTIVATE: Why is that?

Exploring possible solutions for accessing green space

Ask all

6. Now I would like us to discuss ways in which it might be possible to increase the use of local green spaces and DARTMOOR/ moorland. You have mentioned… (GO THROUGH MAIN BARRIERS AND MOTIVATORS MENTIONED AT Q3, Q4 AND Q5 IN TURN). How could we overcome… (BARRIER) or increase (MOTIVATOR)?

   PROBE SOLUTIONS – For Example
   - Community Groups/ events
   - Going with friends
   - Guided trips/ walks
   - Animal related activities – dog walking/ bird watching etc
   - Organised family activities
   - Help with transport and access
   - Subsidised activities/ assets etc
   - Improved local green space – maintenance?
   - More information on walks and activities – online?

   PROBE FOR EACH SOLUTION:
   a. How would that be done?
   b. How would it work for you?
   c. Where/ what/ how?
   d. Are there any other things that would work as a solution (Either for overcoming a barrier or increasing a motivator)?

Ask all

7. Which of these solutions would be most useful in enabling you to access your green space and Dartmoor (more)?
PROBE:
    a. Why is that?
    b. If it were introduced how often would you go to your local green space?
    c. Would it encourage you to bring others (friends, family/etc.) and or do other activities (bike, scooter, skateboard, kite flying, etc.)?

Perception of physical activity

Ask all

8. How often do you take part in physical activity that "increases your heart beat" such as jogging, football, rugby, netball, cycling?
- Less than 30 minutes/week?
- More than 30 minutes/week?
- More than 90 minutes/week?
- 150 mins/week (Chief Medical Officers recommendation for mental/physical health)

PROBE AS NECESSARY:
    a. What sort of physical activity?
    b. Where do you do this?
    c. Who do you go with?
    d. What motivates you to do this (health, fresh air, childhood memories, etc.)?

Ask all

9. What (would motivate you /help overcome the barriers) to take part in more exercise than you do now?

PROBE AS NECESSARY:
    a. More support? (What sort?)
    b. Help with access/ cost?
    c. Difficulties in incorporating it with work patterns?
    d. Knowledge of what's available /where it is?
    e. Greater knowledge/ understanding of health benefits?
    f. Buddying up? (Who, how?)
    g. Childcare?
    h. Anything else?

IF NOTHING WOULD MOTIVATE: Why is that?

Ask all

10. Finally, can I just check is there anything else that anyone would like to raise in relation to visiting green spaces and or physical activity? I have some health care information sheets that you can read and take away as well as a contact point for any specific queries or concerns that you may have. Thank you for your time.

End and thank again

Appendix II: Word association responses

Word association: LNP (Buckfastleigh groups plus Exeter Mincinglake group)

1. Physical activity

   B1: Walking/running, running, walking, running, walking, exertion, energy, sports, karate, exercise, tennis, keeping horses and dogs, sports, running, running, fun

   EM: Exercise, tiring, fresh air, worn out, weight loss, feeling fresh, walking, school, running, hockey, exercise, running

   B2: Hot, exercise, exercise, tiring, running, worn out, keep fit, sweating, hard work, games, loosening up

2. Dartmoor (for Buckfastleigh) / Moorland (for Mincinglake)

   B1: Beauty, bushes, walking, taking the dog for a walk, beautiful, beautiful, green, open space, moors, moors, moors, beauty, green open space, beauty/colour, ponies, freedom

   EM: Woods, green, interesting, mud, muddy, heather, Dartmoor, snakes, walking, walking, (being) outside, walking

   B2: Ponies, green, walking, moors, outdoors, open air, nice, skies, attractive, beautiful, clear

3. (Your favourite) Leisure pastime

   B1: Family time, shopping, n/a, n/a, walking, watching football, walking, Zumba, horse riding, walking, reading, working outside (with horses), walking, walking, football, walking,

   EM: Swimming, (going to the) spa day, shopping, TV, crochet, swimming, cycling, walking, swimming, hockey, walking, gym

   B2: Drawing, shopping, driving, family, watching TV, walking, reading, walking, shopping, n/a, relaxing

4. Park

   B1: Children, fun + safe, children's play area, swings, millennium orchard, swings, Victoria park, children, Duckspond park, swings, greenery, happy children, teenagers, open space to play, swings, n/a

   EM: Slides, fun, fun, grass, muddy/dog mess/rubbish, walks, fun for kids, Pinhoe Park, swings, swings, playing, play, swings

   B2: Green, swings, swings, children playing, slides, play area, Duckspond, swings, kids running, fun, play

5. Woodland

   B1: n/a, trees, n/a, trees, peaceful, flowers, cool, den building, new bridge (woods), trees, trees and bushes, building dens, trees, explore nature, trees, scent,

   EM: Fun, n/a, exploring, trees, muddy/dog mess/rubbish, (We're Going on a) Bear Hunt, Killerton, trees, trees, trees, acorns collecting leaves, flowers,

   B2: Trees, playing, trees, finding things, leaves, trees, branches, nature, outdoor, exploring, climbing

6. Green space

   B1: Picnics, field, picnics, fields, limited (lack of), n/a, open (space), peaceful, millennium green, grass, area of natural beauty, important, Dartmoor, fresh air, fields, stretch out,

   EM: Room, walking, picnics, days out, muddy/dog mess/rubbish, picnics, Bicton, flowers, grass, smiling, running, football

   B2: Kids playing, grass, green, grass, outdoors, n/a, fresh air, fields, trees, cricket, park

7. Natural environment

   B1: n/a, Dartmoor, n/a, Dartmoor, life, habitats, n/a, natural beauty – flowers/insects, River Dart, n/a, green area, maintain them, countryside, unspoilt, n/a, birds singing

   EM: Animals, woods, n/a, fields, pretty/natural, days out, countryside, mountains, peaceful, happy, animals, fields

   B2: Water, animals, leaves, lake, n/a, fields, n/a, day trip, country, green, n/a

8. Paths (rights of way footpaths, cycle paths, bridleways)

   B1: Dog poo, dog mess, dog poo, dog poo, cycle exercise, dog poo, many, more cycle paths, Dartington, paths in fields, dog poo, (make them) safe and interesting, dog poo, dog poo, not very good, decisions /choices

   EM: Dog poo, dog poo, dog poo, dog mess, dog mess, safety, poo, cycling, busy, buggy, walking/traffic-free, concrete

   B2: Walking my dog, bikes, dog poo, concrete, dog poo, dog poo, dog mess, walking, dog poo, horses, messy

Word association: EHWB (Exeter City Council, Marsh Barton and Sidwell Street groups)

1. Physical activity
   ECC: Hard work, hard work, tired, running, exercise, gym, fun, hard work, running, being lazy
   SID: Fitness, walking, work, dream, length/boring, I really should, n/a, swimming, exercise, walking, running, Ugh!
   MB: Gym, hard work, sport, good, walking, gym, exercise, sweating, gym, exercise, hard work

2. Beaches
   ECC: Sun, swimming, sun, sand, sand, sandcastles, beach ball, sun, fresh air, sunshine,
   SID: Sea, sandcastles, good weather, walking, pretty, a nice gentle walk if sand firm, beaches, Newquay (holiday), swimming, seashells/buckets and spades, (need for) transport (to get there)
   MB: Sun, fun, sunny day, sand, swimming, surfing, sand, sea, sun, walking, fresh air

3. (Your favourite) Leisure pastime
   ECC: Swimming, walking, being seated, swimming, walking, music, lying on beach, walking the dog, walking, eating cake
   SID: Music, eating and drinking, (watching) films, knitting, reading, crafting, n/a, watching TV, walking, knitting, walking the dog, walking
   MB: Fishing, judo, gym, walking, gym, reading, weight training, rugby, walking, TV, being with friends

4. Green space
   ECC: Grass, trees, development, Dartmoor, field, Dartmoor, fresh air, parks, walking dog, fields,
   SID: Forest glades, natural environment, fields, grass, forests, ahh!, green spaces, garden, games, grass, river, calmness,
   MB: Park, park, fields, walking, cardio, grass, fields, fields, forest, leaves, outdoors

5. Natural environment
   ECC: Home, flowers, surroundings, fresh air, field, gardens/grass, walking, n/a?, healthy, coast,
   SID: Woodland, normality, polluted, home, David Attenborough, needs protecting (Eco Warriors), n/a, ocean, n/a, gardening, river and valleys, green fields,
   MB: Home, bird sanctuary, forest, n/a, Dartmoor, fresh air, home, woodland, nature, greenery, n/a

6. Park
   ECC: Playing, swings, kids, children, swings, football, swings, green space, play, car (park),
   SID: Football, activities for community, car (park), St Thomas Park, cycle paths, Respect Festival, parks, swings, picnics, children/swings/slides, Belmont park, children,
   MB: Green, children's play area, n/a, walking, trees, running, playground, swings, slides, playing, fields

7. Gardening
   ECC: Flowers, cut grass, exercise, potting shed, mud, vegetables, vegetables, veg, relaxation, trowel,
   SID: Flowers, producing new life, weeds, n/a, growing your own veg, used to do it – really should again, gardens, flowers, plants, vegetables, allotment,
   MB: Growing stuff, sit in it, drinking, pleasure, digging, cutting grass, not got one, weeds, vegetables, flowers, n/a

8. Nature reserves
   ECC: Flowers, animals, animals, botany, birds, walks, wildlife, gardens, wildlife, deer,
   SID: Wildlife, (preservation of) wildlife, protected, Dartmoor, birds, needs to be more of them, n/a, RSPB, animals, RSPB, place (?) need to get to over the river (?)
   MB: Birds, zoo, walking, n/a, old, birds, frog spawn, birds, n/a, animals, wildlife

Word association: Combined (All groups)

1. Physical activity

   B1: Walking/running, running, walking, running, walking, exertion, energy, sports, karate, exercise, tennis, keeping horses and dogs, sports, running, running, fun

   B2: Hot, exercise, exercise, tiring, running, worn out, keep fit, sweating, hard work, games, loosening up

   EM: Exercise, tiring, fresh air, worn out, weight loss, feeling fresh, walking, school, running, hockey, exercise, running

   ECC: Hard work, hard work, tired, running, exercise, gym, fun, hard work, running, being lazy

   SID: Fitness, walking, work, dream, length/boring, I really should, n/a, swimming, exercise, walking, running, Ugh!

   MB: Gym, hard work, sport, good, walking, gym, exercise, sweating, gym, exercise, hard work

2. (Your favourite) Leisure pastime

   B1: Family time, shopping, n/a, n/a, walking, watching football, walking, Zumba, horse riding, walking, reading, working outside (with horses), walking, walking, football, walking

   B2: Drawing, shopping, driving, (with) family, watching TV, walking, reading, walking, shopping, n/a, relaxing

   EM: Swimming, (going to the) spa day, shopping, TV, crochet, swimming, cycling, walking, swimming, hockey, walking, gym

   ECC: Swimming, walking, being seated, swimming, walking, music, lying on beach, walking the dog, walking, eating cake

   SID: Music, eating and drinking, (watching) films, knitting, reading, crafting, n/a, watching TV, walking, knitting, walking the dog, walking

   MB: Fishing, judo, gym, walking, gym, reading, weight training, rugby, walking, TV, being with friends

3. Green space

   B1: Picnics, field, picnics, fields, limited (lack of), n/a, open (space), peaceful, millennium green, grass, area of natural beauty, important, Dartmoor, fresh air, fields, stretch out

   B2: Kids playing, grass, green, grass, outdoors, n/a, fresh air, fields, trees, cricket, park

   EM: Room, walking, picnics, days out, muddy/dog mess/rubbish, picnics, Bicton, flowers, grass, smiling, running, football

   ECC: Grass, trees, development, Dartmoor, field, Dartmoor, fresh air, parks, walking dog, fields

   SID: Forest glades, natural environment, fields, grass, forests, ahh!, green spaces, garden, games, grass, river, calmness

   MB: Park, park, fields, walking, cardio, grass, fields, fields, forest, leaves, outdoors

4. Natural environment

   B1: n/a, Dartmoor, n/a, Dartmoor, life, habitats, n/a, natural beauty – flowers/insects, River Dart, n/a, green area, maintain them, countryside, unspoilt, n/a, birds singing

   B2: Water, animals, leaves, lake, n/a, fields, n/a, day trip, country, green, n/a

   EM: Animals, woods, n/a, fields, pretty/natural, days out, countryside, mountains, peaceful, happy, animals, fields,

   ECC: Home, flowers, surroundings, fresh air, field, gardens/grass, walking, ?, healthy, coast,

   SID: Woodland, normality, polluted, home, David Attenborough, needs protecting (Eco Warriors), n/a, ocean, n/a, gardening, river and valleys, green fields,

   MB: Home, bird sanctuary, forest, n/a, Dartmoor, fresh air, home, woodland, nature, greenery, n/a

5. Park

   B1: Children, fun + safe, children's play area, swings, millennium orchard, swings, Victoria park, children, Duckspond park, swings, greenery, happy children, teenagers, open space to play, swings, n/a

   B2: Green, swings, swings, children playing, slides, play area, Duckspond, swings, kids running, fun, play

   EM: Slides, fun, fun, grass, muddy/dog mess/rubbish, walks, fun for kids, Pinhoe Park, swings, swings, playing, play, swings

   ECC: Playing, swings, kids, children, swings, football, swings, green space, play, car

   SID: Football, activities for community, car (park), St Thomas Park, cycle paths, Respect Festival, parks, swings, picnics, children/swings/slides, Belmont park, children

   MB: Green, children's play area, n/a, walking, trees, running, playground, swings, slides, playing, fields

Appendix III: Fieldwork summary

Numbers of participants interviewed at each location in groups and individually

Buckfastleigh Primary School	16 + 10 children
Buckfastleigh Pre-school and Children's Centre	13
Exeter Mincinglake (Willowbrook School)	14
Exeter City Council	10
St Sidwell's Community Centre	12
Marsh Barton Business Estate	11
Total	**76 adults + 10 children**

Numbers of word association exercises completed in each group

Buckfastleigh Primary School	16
Buckfastleigh Pre-school and Children's Centre	11
Exeter Mincinglake (Willowbrook School)	12
Exeter City Council	10
St Sidwell's Community Centre	12
Marsh Barton Business Estate	10
Total	**71 adults**

Numbers of drawing works completed in three relevant groups

Buckfastleigh Primary School	12 + 10 children
Buckfastleigh Pre-school and Children's Centre	0
Exeter Mincinglake (Willowbrook School)	5
Total	**17 adults + 10 children**