

# Community-led Television, Local Voice and Climate Change

2022

Report for Liverpool City Council and Liverpool City Region  
Combined Authority

16 August 2022



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# Executive Summary



## Introduction

In the first half of 2022, Edge Hill University and the University of Liverpool, in collaboration with Love Wavertree CIC and the British Academy, ran a project that aimed to understand how communities can find shared understandings of sustainable futures. Elke Weissmann, Edge Hill University, and Belinda Tyrrell, University of Liverpool, first conducted a survey, then a series of interviews before embarking on four climate assemblies with local citizens based around the themes of food, housing, transport and business. These assemblies were filmed by Edge Hill University students under the guidance of Phil MacDonald, a local filmmaker and research assistant on the project. In addition, we filmed four community projects: Litter Clear, Love Wavertree Food Club, Wavertree Garden Suburb in Bloom and Aigburth Community Cycle Club. We screened the resulting programmes at Wavertree Town Hall and made them available via YouTube and ran another survey after the screening. The following executive summary lays out our key findings.

# Findings

It's not just about climate change: a holistic approach is needed.

We set out to find out about climate change, but soon realised how closely intertwined the solutions to climate change were with issues of social justice and community. Moreover, we realised that to address these issues, specific facilitators of communication were needed: good quality spaces where communities can meet and connect emotionally; community-led media that educate and inform the local community about the issues and solutions to them; and community-led media to represent the local community and the hard work they do so they can gain a sense of value and pride.

## Key Recommendations

01

**Policy needs to be focused on facilitating participation and activating communities.**

Local communities are often better placed to provide responses to problems because they have lived/are living through the challenges policy makers are trying to address. Their knowledge of the locality can offer new approaches to addressing needs. A co-design approach to policy is therefore to be prioritised. In Liverpool, there is clearly a shift happening towards such an approach. This could be extended with further funding and listening workshops (where the focus is on enabling communities to present solutions to local problems and share approaches). However, barriers to participation need to be recognised, and they often run along societal lines. A 'trust anchor' – a group who has developed the trust of those in the community who are marginalised – could help break down these barriers. Thus, it is important to develop strong and lasting relationships with local community groups.

02

**Local communities and community groups can help, but they cannot replace statutory services or take responsibility for regulation.**

Local community groups have started to step into the breach where local and national services have been reduced or have not fully addressed persistent problems. Their contribution needs to be valued and acknowledged, but they should not replace services such as the Job Centre or the One Stop Shops. As we seek to recover from the pandemic and try to address the societal challenge of climate change, aging populations and the cost of living crisis, it is vital that cities return services and communities more strongly into neighbourhoods, built around the 15-minute city. This requires approaches that include local and national policy interventions and statutory support.





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# Key Recommendations Continued

## 03

The role of space design and the role of local media needs to be considered in the attempts to activate communities.

Historically our high streets provided not just services but places to meet. Over time the prioritisation of vehicles has led to both physical and psychological barriers to bringing people together. Communities build around motorways are harder to bring together than communities that have functioning, pedestrian- and cycling-friendly high streets. In order for them to reach their full potential, communities need to have access to good information and education which local public service media can provide. But it is also important to recognise the role of representation in motivating communities to continue to do the valuable and imaginative work they do, towards addressing often persistent local challenges.





## BACKGROUND ON WAVERTREE

The Wavertree neighbourhood in the City of Liverpool, covering the wards of Picton and Wavertree, has a population of over 30,000 people. Located to the south of the City Centre the area's community assets include parks, schools, a library, sport centre, surgeries, several shopping streets and the large Wavertree Playing Fields. Picton Road which is a major route in and out of the city centre runs through the neighbourhood.

Along the route of the 79 Bus from Edge Hill in the North towards Queens Drive in the South the socio-economic structure of the neighbourhood changes significantly. These differences are evidenced by the key statistics for the areas. Liverpool City Council (2021) provides the following information in profiles for the wards of Picton and Wavertree.

### PICTON

- It has a high proportion of residents in the 16 - 64+ age group, compared with England
- A large majority (47.7%) of residents live in privately rented accommodation
- Average house prices are lower than the average for Liverpool
- Unemployed benefit claimants as a percentage of working age population is high (12.5%), when compared with England (>8%)
- Life expectancy is low, compared with England
- The number of children living in Absolute Low-Income Households (47.7%) is significantly higher than the average for Great Britain (15.20%)
- Ranked 11 overall (1 = most deprived, 30 = least deprived) Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2019 (IMD 2019)



## WAVERTREE

- It has a high proportion of residents in the 65+ age group, compared with Liverpool
- A large majority (57.51%) of residents are owner occupiers
- Average house prices are higher than the average for Liverpool
- Unemployed benefit claimants as a percentage of working age population is low (7.6%), compared with Liverpool (8.0%)
- Life expectancy is higher than the rest of Liverpool
- The number of children living in Absolute Low-Income Households (18.6%) is lower than the average for Liverpool (23.70%)
- Ranked 21 overall (1 = most deprived, 30 = least deprived) Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2019 (IMD 2019)

## COMPARISON

These statistics point to two quite different wards, which is also evident in the profiles of shops and bars along the three main shopping streets: Smithdown Road is a vibrant, buzzing street with many trendy shops and bars, attracting the large student population that lives on the southern edge of Wavertree. Lawrence Road, which runs through the middle of Wavertree, has a large proportion of shops catering to ethnic minority needs, including Halal food and specialist clothes shops. Wavertree High Street, which is part of the old village of Wavertree, has a town hall which now houses a restaurant and venue, the local library and the former One Stop Shop and is the local shopping street with most visible changes over the last three years with businesses moving towards greater diversity as the local pubs have now largely closed.

The profiles of the neighbourhood points to a diverse population which brings together a range of cultural heritage, who have different experiences and knowledge to share. Bringing these together in a way so that power is balanced and respect maintained can have multiple benefits for the wider community. However, this requires significant preparatory work which includes engagement with the diverse range of community groups, schools and other community centres. Whilst such a holistic engagement was beyond the scope of this project, what this project nevertheless made evident, is that specific, action-focused projects have the power to facilitate greater cohesiveness, thus empowering local communities to be part of the solution that climate change requires.



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# Project Design



## 01 Existing Knowledge

To find out about existing knowledge in the community we disseminated a survey both online and in hardcopy. We also conducted some follow-on interviews.

## 02 Citizen Assemblies

We invited participants to take part in four citizen assemblies organised around the themes of food, transport, housing and business. These as well as local community project were filmed.

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## 03 Programmes

The eight programmes showcase the conversations at the assemblies as well as local initiatives including Litter Clear, Wavertree Garden Suburb in Bloom, Love Wavertree Food Club and Aigburth Community Cycle Club.

## 04 Surveys

After the screening in Wavertree Town Hall and online, we followed up with a survey to gain an understanding of what audiences took away from the programmes and the process of the assemblies.



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# Existing Research



## Climate Change, Local Communities and Local Media

There is no question that climate change is becoming an increasingly important topic for the media, which, however, struggle to find ways to communicate the issues in ways that encourage people to take action (Smith, 2022). Research into how the media represent climate change has so far largely focused on news media (e.g. Boyce and Lewis, 2009; Gavin, 2009; Pinto et al., 2019). In addition, issues with the (lacking) sustainability of media production and consumption have been addressed in the literature (Maxwell and Miller, 2012; Lopera-Marmol and Jimenez-Morales, 2021).

A key problem for the media however remains how to talk to audiences about climate change. Some innovative ways have been trialled in Norway where narratives about climate change have been adapted (and coordinated) to speak to the specific national and regional concerns, thus facilitating a greater sense of immediacy (Furuseth et al, 2020). Such nationally specific messages are certainly important, but are not the only things requiring consideration: as Gary Braasch (2013) suggests, it is important to shape narratives in multiple ways to encourage action, including how the story is framed: 'Heeding the social scientists' warnings about the helplessness-inducing effects of negative images means that more pictures are needed of specific solutions and adaptations that will shape the world of tomorrow' (ibid: 38). Thus, he recommends that media narratives should be focused on small-scale positive images rather than global images of catastrophes.



One element that Braasch highlights is the need for images of local action. As we will go on to emphasise, this includes micro-local action. However, in the UK, the media are largely operating on a national or even transnational scale, allowing little space for micro-local community representation. Regional newspapers have seen a sharp decline since 2005 (Ponsford, 2021), while the BBC and other public service broadcasters have often been criticised for being too London-centric (Day, 2009). Some regulatory initiatives, such as the de-centralisation of BBC production into the nations and regions and the relocation of Channel 4 to Leeds were meant to counteract this bias. However, these initiatives cannot unmake the loss of regional infrastructure that the conglomeration of the ITV franchises have caused (Spicer, 2021; for an insightful discussion of the decentralisation initiatives of the BBC see Noonan, 2012).

Importantly, the focus on regional representation and infrastructure does not manage to fully appreciate the increasing need for micro-local representation. This term emerged in a conversation with Nick Andrews, Head of Commissioning of BBC Cymru Wales (2022, personal communication with Elke Weissmann), who was reflecting on the increasing wish of (Welsh) national audiences to see their specific patch, including specific housing estates in Cardiff, represented. Such a focus on micro-local representation is in line with post-national developments as they have been discussed amongst others by Saskia Sassen (1999, 2002, 2003). Sassen emphasises that national citizenship is increasingly undermined not just from without through the impact of global capitalism, but also from within as local activism creates stronger, local bonds. This is also emphasised by Simon Avenell (2015) who argues that local identities remain intact in the process but at the same time connect to transnational imaginations of citizenship as local struggles are experienced in a global, comparative context.

Such local activism that operates in a global context is particularly evident in the area of climate change which has attracted locally acting but globally networked communities of action such as the School Strike for Climate and Extinction Rebellion. As Neil Gunningham (2019) suggests, such groups also seem much more able to pressure national governments into action. It is these locally acting sub-groups that have the potential to offer much more encouraging images of climate action, to use Braasch's (2013) phrase. However, it is also important to recognise that local groups may operate independently from such global networks, and thus specific micro-local approaches need to be taken. In this regard, literature on community filmmaking and local television needs to be considered.



Community filmmaking has attracted some research particularly in the area of making diverse voices heard which are often conceptualised as operating in counter-distinction to the mainstream (see Malik et al., 2017). Nevertheless, such a focus has also been connected to spatial dimensions (e.g. Chapain and De Propis, 2009; Comunian, 2011). Eileen Leahy (2017) describes in particular the role of such filmmaking practices in reclaiming micro-local spaces for the local community and their role in claiming forms of capitalist regeneration for marginalised groups. Community filmmaking practices, therefore, is understood as central in strengthening local communities and their ability to participate in local public life. Whilst this is often understood as operating counter to mainstream narratives, Alistair Scott (2017) shows that it can be an extension of existing networks and narratives, particularly when such local initiatives are part of a larger infrastructure of public service television. In the United Kingdom, both the BBC and Channel 4 are governed by statutory remits that requires them to represent, reflect and serve the diverse communities in the UK. As Scott shows, when such a remit is brought into local television, local television can support and reflect local communities.

However, local television has not been developed in such a way everywhere. Instead, there are different systems across the world: in Germany, the 'Open Channels' largely offer open access television where local community groups can produce and deliver content that is then shown on local television (see Breunig, 1998). Canada and the USA have similar systems in place but focus more strongly on media literacy (Higgins, 1999; King and Mele, 1999). Crucially, unfortunately, such channels are struggling to retain their funding as new media seem to render local initiatives obsolete (see Būsow and Nieland, 2021).

Our project however suggests that such local public-service oriented initiatives could become central in the process of engaging local communities in climate action. More importantly, within a holistic system that recognises the existing strengths and weaknesses of local communities, local television could become a central element in helping to strengthen the sense of community, address issues of climate change and create a fairer society.



# Methods



## Overview

The project is a collaboration between Dr. Elke Weissmann from the Television Studies Research Group at Edge Hill University, Belinda Tyrrell from the Heseltine Institute for Public Policy, Practice and Place at the University of Liverpool and Love Wavertree CIC. As such it straddles several institutions and several disciplines: media studies, politics and social sciences, as well as active community engagement.



The Television Studies Research Group is focused on the promotion and expansion of television studies as a subject area. One aim is to push the boundaries of television studies as a discipline by conducting research that is not often at the centre of attention of television studies. The focus on local and community-led television in this project fits perfectly into its remit.

The Heseltine Institute for Public Policy, Practice and Place at the University of Liverpool is focused on research into public policy with a focus on Liverpool and issues of community, climate change and sustainability.

Love Wavertree CIC was set up in July 2019 in response to the persistent portrayal in the local media of Wavertree as deprived, dirty and down on its luck. In contrast to this portrayal in the media, Wavertree residents felt strongly that there were key assets in the area, including a beautiful old village heart and a strong sense of community, that made the neighbourhood a great place to live in. First events set up were a litter pick and a car free day, whilst activities since then have similarly had a focus on sustainability and regeneration: this includes an air pollution monitor at a shop now occupied by Love Wavertree, a food club that works with Fare Share and hence combats food waste, school uniform and prom dress recycling clubs as well as micro-grants given out to smaller community groups to green up alleys, plant trees and other activities connected to sustainability.

The three organisations collaborated with each other in terms of the organisation of the assemblies, as well as the distribution of surveys and recruitment of participants. The assemblies were used a method of engaging residents of Wavertree in a conversation about their community and issues related to climate change which has become more widely used in democratic processes (King and Wilson, 2022). The presentations from practitioners/policy makers were an opportunity for participants to hear about different approaches to what could be done to address climate change.

We structured the assemblies so participants felt able to share, build trust and explore opportunities for collaboration. Although the contribution of the presenters was important, all participant contributions were of equal value.

The assemblies provided a shared platform for discussion of the individual and collective action which could be taken to address climate change and its public policy implications. Across the assemblies, there were lively and equitable discussions which demonstrated the wide range of existing activity happening in area. In addition, shoots of collaboration were formed for example participants offering their skills and practical resources, formalised groups offering to work together.



The assemblies were filmed and edited into four thirty-minute episodes, while four local climate action projects were also filmed and edited into four 10-minute episodes. These were then screened in a public screening at Wavertree Town Hall which was followed by a survey.

We worked with Love Wavertree and their networks to advertise the assemblies. As part of our community survey we also asked residents to register for the assemblies. The surveys helped us understand what was already happening locally, what were the issues that mattered to residents and the change they wanted to see. In addition, the surveys showed us existing understandings of climate change and where they came from.



## Project Activities and Time Line

The findings from our initial survey identified some micro-projects which already have an impact locally and the knowledge gained from the survey guided our approach to the assemblies and the films. The surveys particularly impacted on how we wanted to approach the films: where we had planned initially to film some lifestyle programmes that highlights the little steps that could be done by individuals to act against climate change, it became clear that it was much better to focus on the community as a whole and emphasise different projects and community efforts that were already taking place. In response to feedback we kept these a bit shorter (10 minutes instead of 30 minutes) and created additional social media-friendly outtakes that focused on key messages.



Activity	Details	Timeframe
Preparation	Survey design and organisational meetings with collaborators	January and February
Surveys and Interviews	Community level survey and individual interviews	February and March
Assemblies	Food, Transport, Housing and Business	April and May
Filming and editing	Filming and editing of programmes including local climate action projects	March to July
Post-screening survey	Has the process and the programmes had any influence on people's thinking?	May-July

The shared values of the group, the desire to come together to share skills, knowledge and experiences and implications for policy are considered in later sections of this report.

# Locating the Project within Policy and Governance Frameworks



Our project takes place in the Liverpool City Council Boundary. The city itself is part of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) which covers St Helens, Halton, Knowsley, Wirral, Sefton and Liverpool. The total population of the area covered by the LCRCA is 1.6 million.

LCRCA has been responsible for local decisions on skills, transport and infrastructure since 2015 and has begun to demonstrate the effectiveness of devolution in tackling long-standing challenges and improving outcomes for the local area.



The Metro Mayor and combined authority have a devolved investment fund, which it uses to finance infrastructure projects such as an ultrafast broadband network spanning the Liverpool City Region. LCRCA is empowered to develop a statutory spatial development strategy for the region, but only with unanimous agreement of all the local councils. For planning applications of 'strategic importance' to the region, the combined authority can take on the role of a local planning authority. Lastly, they propose the budget and transport plan for the combined authority, but these require the support of two-thirds of the constituent authorities.

Liverpool City Council and LCRCA link back to the UK Government policy and regulative framework.

The layers of governance are shown below as figure 1.

## Geographic Governance Level

National

UK Government

City Region

Liverpool City Region  
Combined Authority

Local Government

Liverpool City Council

Neighbourhood

Wavertree

Figure 1: Geographic Governance





Between these different layers of governance there are a number of areas of policy overlap relating to sustainability and resilience. As one of our aims is to influence local policy development, it is important that we situate our project within the relevant policies. In the next paragraphs we identify ways in which our project both compliments and can inform policy development and interventions.



In 2019, LCRCA became one of the first areas in the country to declare a Climate Emergency, committing to becoming net zero carbon by 2040 (LCRCA,2019). Since then it has published its Year One Climate Action Plan (LCRCA, 2021) and the long-term strategy Pathway to Net Zero (LCRCA, 2022). Developed after consultation with residents, the Pathway sets out the LCRCA long term vision for achieving this goal across the thematic areas of housing, transport, work and neighbourhoods.

"We need to think carefully about how we want to use our neighbourhoods in the Liverpool City Region, how much land we want to use for biodiversity, leisure, growing food, producing energy, buildings and roads" (LCRCA, 2022)

The LCRCA's Pathway to Zero is a framework for future priorities and investment decisions, and conversations with government in its Plan for Prosperity, which aims to deliver a "Fairer, Stronger, Cleaner Liverpool City Region", which aims to maximise prosperity for all people and communities. Under the strand Thriving, Sustainable and Resilient Places, there is a commitment to adopting a long-term approach to placemaking and regeneration, supported by participatory models of community engagement. This commitment provides the space for communities and the approaches we have used in our project to become a core part of investment and policy decisions.

Liverpool City Council has recently approved an action plan for achieving its goal of becoming a net zero city in 2030 (Liverpool City Council, 2022a). It sets out actions to reduce emissions in relation to buildings and heat, power supply, transport and waste, while recognising the concurrent need to improve the city's resilience to the expected impacts of climate change, such as flooding.

Its City Plan (Liverpool City Council, 2022b) sets out the City Council's vision for working with community, voluntary, public and private sectors. Focused on six priority areas of health, education, neighbourhoods, economy, culture and climate, the plan aims to bring together the collective resource of partners to create transformational change. The themes of the plan resonate with those which came up in our citizens assemblies, particularly around the desire to create safe, inclusive and welcoming neighbourhoods, or as the report puts it: 'work with communities to stimulate belonging, cohesion and neighbourhood pride' (Liverpool City Council, 2022b).

These themes of coproduction between communities and policy makers are reflected within the UK Government's 'Levelling Up White Paper' (UK Government, 2022). The paper, which sets out the framework for addressing social and economic issues which have resulted in geographic inequalities in the UK, attempts to bring the community into policy making. It suggests Community Covenant approaches, which would be agreements between councils, public bodies and communities themselves to empower communities to shape the regeneration of their areas and improve public services.

Figure 2 overleaf situates our pilot within the relevant policies

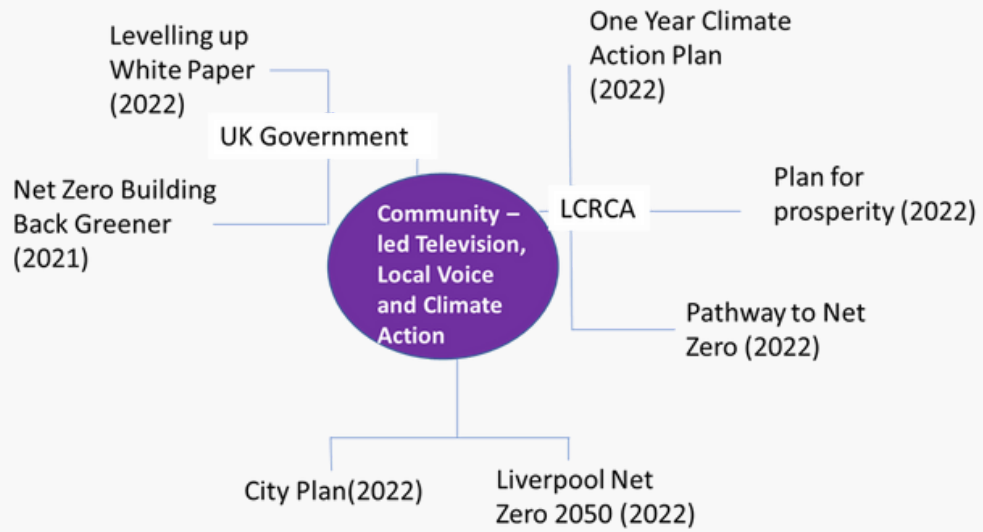


Figure 2: Policy and Governance Map

While we recognise that our project was small in scale, these policies provide an opportunity for policy makers and communities to engage in meaningful dialogue, using novel mechanisms to engage communities and disseminate key messages.

# Locating the Project within Existing Media Initiatives



Liverpool remains a city with a strong sense of local identity/ies that is partially shaped by existing media infrastructure. In contrast to other cities in the UK, it retains a strong local press with the Liverpool Echo which remains an important newspaper in the region. However, as elsewhere (Ponsford, 2021), its viability and structure has come under significant threat in an environment of general decline of regional newspapers. Alternative newspapers have hence emerged, including the Liverpool Post, an online newspaper aiming to regenerate local journalism on limited budgets.



Liverpool does find good representation in local radio, with particularly BBC Radio Merseyside aiming to represent the variety of local voices and concerns, whilst other radio stations, such as Radio City also present local concerns. Local podcasts such as The Anfield Wrap, although based around Liverpool Football Club, offer another level of local representation that helps shape local identity. On television, too, Liverpool has seen an increased representation, partially through locally filmed documentary series such as Ambulance (BBC, since 2016) and Hospital (BBC, since 2017) which followed the Liverpool ambulance service and the work of different hospitals respectively for one season. Liverpool is often also the home city of popular entertainers such as John Bishop and Lee Mac, as well as entrants of reality TV shows, one of whom, Mark Lutton who was a contestant on The Great British Bake Off in 2020 comes from Wavertree and has been involved in local initiatives. In addition, Liverpool has seen an enormous amount of drama and fiction film filmed in its streets, largely through the work of Liverpool Film Office (Roberts, 2016). Some of these dramas are about Liverpool, such as the successful Time (BBC, 2021) and The Responder (BBC, 2022), but are for obvious reasons not able to capture the whole complexity of Liverpool's diverse communities.

Partially in order to counter the under- and mis-representation of these diverse communities, there is also a strong tradition of community-led film making and television in Liverpool, with the most successful and well-known example being Toxteth TV. Toxteth TV emerged to give voice to marginalised communities who had been represented in very negative ways in relation to the Toxteth Riots. Toxteth TV continues to focus on training and giving access to the industry through film-making, though its activities are limited due to resourcing issues.

In the early 2010s, the government, through the regulator Ofcom, granted a number of licences to set up local television stations. In Liverpool, this was granted in 2012 to Bay TV which produced a number of small-scale programmes including talk shows and news bulletins for Liverpool. By 2021, however, the licence was in the hands of a small-scale franchise 'Local TV' which broadcast mostly reruns of Judge Judy as well as an hour worth of daily news bulletins. Attempts to get in touch with Local TV Liverpool have been unsuccessful, suggesting issues with staffing which inevitably has an impact on what stories are covered by the production team.

Similar issues with getting local news sources interested in local community events are also evident with The Liverpool Echo and The Liverpool Post, pointing to comparable issues in terms of resources there. However, it also points to larger problems connected to representing different voices, actions and events across Liverpool which continues to be driven by an understanding of Liverpool that is not as inclusive as it should or could be. Stories about climate change seem to be particularly difficult to sell to any other media outlet than BBC Radio Merseyside who interviewed the principle investigator and the research assistant on 10 June 2022.

The approach taken by this project was what Malik et al (2017) define as community filmmaking. As they argue community filmmaking practices are very diverse, 'ranging from filmmaking as everyday cultural practice for multiple communities and cultural groups so that they may engage in forms of self-representation, to films that are about local communities and have been produced for and screened to wide audiences, including on national television' (ibid., 1-2). We took a mid-way approach, focusing on films about local communities, but were led by the local community about what should be filmed. Thus, we created four 30-minute films about local climate assemblies and four 10-minute films about local community activism connected to climate change. The assemblies were organised and initiated by Love Wavertree, while the community activism represented a more diverse range of groups, including Wavertree Garden Suburb in Bloom, Litter Clear, Love Wavertree and Aigburth Community Cycle Club.

The programmes were filmed and edited by Edge Hill University students who gained valuable professional experiences, and were coordinated and supervised by Phil MacDonald, a professional camera man and also resident in Wavertree, and Elke Weissmann. They were uploaded to the Institute of Social Responsibility's YouTube channel and shared through social media, a newsletter and a screening.







# Findings

The cross-disciplinary approach enabled us to gain a holistic understanding of both the challenges faced by local communities and solutions that could be implemented. Thus, we were able to highlight not just issues that need to be addressed through policy and local action, but also how communication sits within it.

## Three Branches of a Sustainable Community

The project was particularly focused on climate change as a sustainable development goal. However, as the project developed it became increasingly clear that other aspects, such as food poverty, health inequalities, life expectancy, quality of life, mental health and many more intersect so strongly with this goal that they need to be understood as co-dependent. We have grouped these into three 'branches'. Like branches on one tree, they are intricately interconnected. If one breaks off, the others suffer. We have grouped them in the following way:

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# Community

- sense of belonging,
- mental health
- identity



# Climate Action

- net zero
- climate action
- sustainable futures



# Social Justice

- health
- poverty
- social exclusion

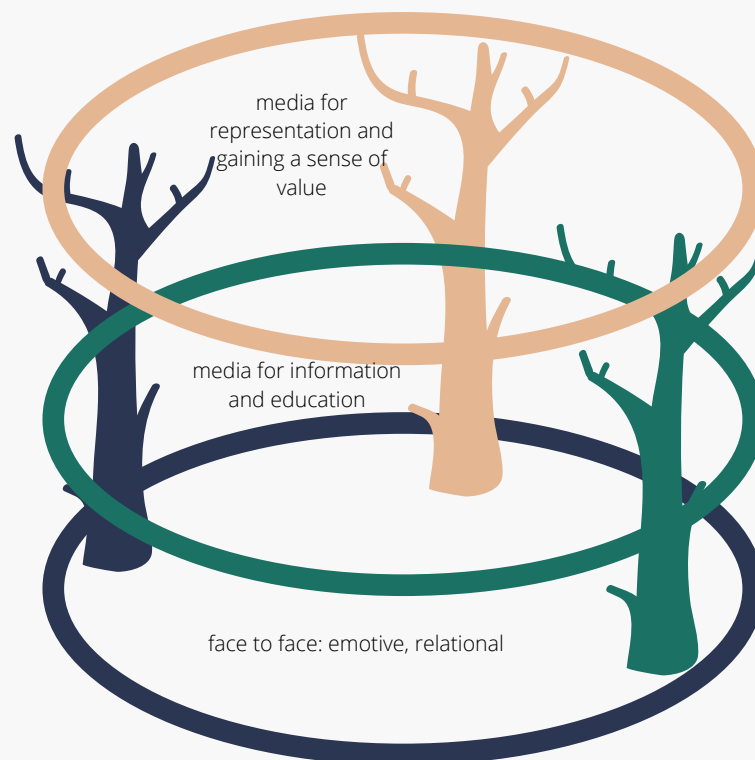




These three branches operate in conjunction with each other: when aspects of net zero are considered, such as the retrofitting of houses in order to bring them up closer to a passive house standard, then it becomes clear that the resourcing of this needs to operate at a community level to make it financially viable. By doing so, however, individuals benefitting from the retrofitting also find that issues of fuel poverty can be addressed.

A key finding of our research is the need for better communication to hold these branches together and allow them to thrive. Communication here is not just about direct, interpersonal communication, but requires other levels to be involved. Again, we have separated these key levels and functions of communication out into three rings surrounding the branches and holding them together, thus making the branches stable and sustainable: if they branches are to grow, they need to come together and be held together by the three layers of communicative facilitation.

# Three Layers of Communicative Facilitation



For communities and individuals to thrive, for climate action to be effective and for key social problems of our current social environment to be solved, then, these communicative levels also need to be taken into consideration. This too will require a holistic strategy that involves local street design as much as support for local media initiatives, including local television. Self-representation appeared as a particularly important theme in our findings that fed back into emotive and relational experiences: seeing yourself, a friend or a neighbour represented on television had a beneficial effect on people's emotional sense of well-being that enthused and inspired them to become more involved.

# Detailed Findings



A key finding from our survey is that the local community does not have a sense of any pro-active policy from Liverpool City Council (LCC) or the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA). The local policy frameworks described earlier have the potential to address this, but it's important that opportunities for meaningful engagement are consistently and equitably offered. In part this was based on experiences of what must now be considered PR disasters including the redaction of an installed pop-up cycle lane on West Derby Road which was pictured in the local newspaper, The Liverpool Echo, with a local councillor holding up the wands in celebration.



This seems to have led to a perception in residents that, to put it in the words of one respondent, the council had done **'Nothing, they have done nothing'**. In particular, traffic was mentioned as a key problem area. As another respondent said: **'Virtually nothing to improve cycling or recycling. The council does not or cannot prioritise these due to issues of funding'**. The issue of funding was mentioned by several respondents, suggesting that a consistent narrative of underfunding which is regularly highlighted in the local press has led to a perception of a city council unable to act. This is in opposition to significant investment, particularly in the city centre, to improve cycle infrastructure.

Instead, local community groups are seen to be strongly proactive on climate change. Probably as a result of the survey being distributed with the help of Love Wavertree, the community interest company was the most-mentioned organisation trying to act on climate change. But other groups were also mentioned such as micro-groups formed around alleys to green them up, Wavertree Garden Suburb in Bloom, and Good Gym. Wavertree Garden Suburb in Bloom is a group of residents of the Wavertree Garden Suburb who have come together to maintain the overall area, with specific focus given to the public greenspaces, including Northway Park and the gardens of the Institute. Good Gym, which operates nationally but has a subgroup in Liverpool, is a group of volunteers who meet up at events where they exercise by helping out with local projects that need 'hands on' work. This includes litter picking, gardening, but also setting up of community events.

This perception is most likely compounded as a result of where respondents find their news and other stories about climate change. The Liverpool Echo, which is the key local news outlet, was only mentioned by two people as a source for stories about climate change. The Guardian whose political commentator George Monbiot has been very outspoken about climate change was mentioned 15 times, while the BBC News website was mentioned 14 times. All contributors felt that television and other media outlets could do more to explain and inform audiences about climate change.

These findings impacted on the design of the assemblies which gave us an opportunity to speak about climate change and local climate action with people from across the Wavertree community. In these conversations, what became increasingly clear was that issues of climate change could not be divorced from issues of social justice and from issues of a sense of a healthy community. This enabled us to develop a complex picture of what we want to call a 'sustainable community'.

The following pages list problems and solutions identified by the community to tackle issues of sustainability. We will then put forward some ideas on specific actions to tackle existing problems in the Liverpool City Region which we feel our project could inform.

# Problems and Solutions

Below is a list of all problems and solutions that were recommended by citizens, arranged in line with the area of issue. Out of all these problems and solutions follows a series of direct policy and strategy recommendations for LCC and LCRCA on the one hand and Love Wavertree and other community groups on the other.

PROBLEMS	SOLUTIONS
<p><b>WASTE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Litter (packaging, food waste)</li> <li>• No clarity as to how and what to recycle</li> </ul>	<p><b>WASTE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regulation (against certain kinds of packaging)</li> <li>• Better education on recycling</li> <li>• Refill stations for bottles</li> </ul>
<p><b>COMMUNITY</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to educate older people</li> <li>• Need to find the enablers</li> <li>• Lack of volunteering hours – people as a resource</li> <li>• Presumptions about sections of community</li> <li>• Experience of powerlessness</li> <li>• Lack of spaces to mingle and get to know each other</li> <li>• Social hubs closing</li> <li>• Lack of combined approach (businesses too small to tackle problems individually)</li> <li>• Engaging people</li> <li>• Belonging – how to bring people into the discussion</li> <li>• Students and relationship with the local community</li> <li>• Competition for resources</li> <li>• Too much top down not enough engagement</li> <li>• Anti social parking e.g pavement</li> </ul>	<p><b>COMMUNITY</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Food Store/Supermarket (e.g. Walton)</li> <li>• Sharing food – food shopping coops (e.g. to reduce food waste of pre-packaged food)</li> <li>• Community composting</li> <li>• Develop Network of Community Groups</li> <li>• Gamification of exercise (and active travel)</li> <li>• Recycling requires good communication</li> <li>• 'Pain in the Ass Day': getting everyone who shops in a supermarket that day to unpack their shopping in the supermarket and leave the waste for the supermarket to sort.</li> <li>• Paying back individuals' skills into the community</li> <li>• Using different types of messaging e.g. could a similar approach to Couch to 5k be used for environmental issues/5 minute change what can you do /Change which is small and doable</li> <li>• People Initiate change – localisation model</li> <li>• Linking up groups and individuals</li> <li>• Taking small regular action and celebrating wins</li> <li>• Dignity and Respect</li> </ul>



## PROBLEMS

### EDUCATION AND TRAINING

- Requirement for upskilling
- Lack of knowledge about growing your own food
- Education of Environmental Reporting Standards.
- New Skills needed
- People using cars for short journey's e.g. school run
- Behavioural change

## SOLUTIONS

### EDUCATION AND TRAINING

- Get into schools early
- Education about sell by, use by
- Health initiatives as far as education is concerned
- Education of community about food sharing and/vs food bank
- Wavertree Windowsill Gardens: initiative to teach locals to grow food on windowsills and teach growing skills
- Information sharing via the community (what works, what doesn't)
- Surveying parents what would enable them to drop off their children in ways other than cars?
- Asking for skills, bring others into the conversation
- Reflecting on learning from other work
- Pilot Projects
- Sharing data and learning between pilot projects
- Improve Carbon Literacy of Residents e.g. by doing this you gain this
- Early education on green issues
- Training for Housing Association Staff/Policy makers.
- School run guided/ led walking trail (replacing car journeys)
- Carbon labelling of food including restaurants and take-aways

### INFRASTRUCTURE

- Housing Stock, old poor quality
- Flooding
- Lack of walkability
- Residential/commercial properties turning green spaces into parking
- Public Transport (good links into city centre but not many cross-city access points)
- Street Design (refresh footprint)

### INFRASTRUCTURE

- Spaces to be quiet
- What is there? Keeping things local
- Roof Insulation
- Bike storage
- Greening of Streets/Alleys
- Bike friendly venues
- Café's/pubs/shops (working in a similar way to dog/pet friendly venues)
- Empowering people to make decisions
- Service based on people's needs
- Return to traditional ways of doing business – i.e. community-centred
- Jobs that meet the needs and come out of local cultures, creating a sense of inclusion



## PROBLEMS

### POLICY AND REEGULATION

- Politics (with a capital P – sometimes hindering local initiatives)
- Measurement for Social and Private Landlords – right to rent
- Value of change – who gains
- Spatial Planning/Cross policy area gaps (need to anticipate issue and plan action)
- Green issues seen as a bolt on at the end.
- Traffic Management
- Pavement should be equal to road

## SOLUTIONS

### POLICY AND REGULATION

- Reduce packing (need to pressure/regulate food producers)
- Use of existing brown land (and perhaps some green) to grow food or as temporary green spaces
- Recycle bins as well as litter bins on roads (example: Germany)
- Create incentives to enable businesses to change practices (pots of money, grants, etc.)
- Coordinate shop developments to meet needs of community
- Use the local community to listen into needs, knowledge and skills
- Politics (can regulate, can create incentives, can create information sharing opportunities)
- Bottle Scheme
- School traffic could be reduced through enabling and encouraging active travel, closing road, spread-out drop-off
- Packaging could be colour-coordinated nationally to coincide with the relevant bin (e.g. red label on glass goes into red bin).
- Regulation of big industry: they should not be allowed to create so much waste through packaging.
- Policy – Social Landlord White Page – more engagement with tenants
- Better/different types of consultation with communities
- Map of group and resources e.g. tool library
- Communities and Policy makers engaging with research expertise
- Design fit for how we live
- Equity between pedestrians and motorists
- Making walking routes safe and attractive
- 15 minute neighbourhood model
- Regular car/traffic free days
- Planters and greening
- Better Design: What works elsewhere and how could this be applied in different areas
- Reusing vacant retail space differently in the short term e.g. community bike storage.
- Levy for people to turn gardens into additional parking where space has been provided already.
- Low traffic neighbourhoods
- Bike and active travel strategy.
- Traffic Impact factored into multiple policy domains
- Bike Storage



## PROBLEMS

### ECONOMIC

- Lack of resources
- Cost of Living
- Accessing waiting for work
- Cost and Location of heat/air ground/pumps.

## SOLUTIONS

### ECONOMIC

- Creation of new jobs
- Local jobs in a 15-minute neighbourhood
- resilient community and economy by developing businesses and infrastructure in line with local needs
- Loyalty of customers in a local community
- Businesses as embedded in the community: creating customer relations and supporting the local community/responding to their needs

As can be seen from the above, the list of solutions is significantly longer than the list of problems identified. This suggests that the community itself with its local knowledge, understanding of place, lived experience and social capital is a crucial resource to tackle the combined place-sensitive and persistent issues working against a sustainable community. In the next section, we are consolidating the problems and solutions into specific suggestions for policy actions for the LCRCA and LCC and Love Wavertree and other community groups.





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# Recommendations

## Recommendation 1

All policy needs to be place sensitive, which can be best achieved by empowering local communities to suggest solutions. We found that local communities are already working hard towards a more sustainable future which includes both environmental and social elements. However, a key issues is that these initiatives often operate in silos and without knowledge of each other. As a result, a key policy recommendation is to facilitate knowledge exchange through local space planning, event facilitation and local media initiatives.

## Recommendation 2

The assemblies proved to be an incredibly successful mechanism to bring people together, but there are place-sensitive issues around social and economic barriers to engagement which need to be considered and which would need longer-term engagement and planning. Our recommendation is that Love Wavertree continues to work with the researchers to examine this and find solutions to it. This could then operate as a case study for other areas of the city.

## Recommendation 3

**Planning:** The way neighbourhoods are planned can support or restrict levels of interaction and increase or limit the formation of community bonds which have been identified as a key element of delivering improved outcomes in both local and national policy. Therefore, it is essential that policy makers seek to have meaningful discussions with communities, this may include using mechanisms such as citizen assemblies, listening events and citizen researchers. Having the 'space' to speak with each other as part of everyday life within the neighbourhood was something seen as important by those who participated across the assemblies. Many of those who participated felt that those public and social spaces for casual interaction were missing within their neighbourhood.

The development of such spaces requires the radical de-centring of the car as the main mode of transport in Liverpool. Spaces need to be taken away from car transport and storage and handed over to local communities. This approach is in line with concepts of the 15-minute neighbourhood/city which reduces the need for car journeys but also enables local neighbourhoods to thrive as businesses find local customers, and local residents find their public spaces re-become places to see and connect emotionally and relationally with their neighbourhood. To facilitate the 15-minute city, approaches to planning the high street should consult with the community, engage more creative approaches such as the one-pound shop initiative recently started by Liverpool City Council (BBC, 2016) and should enable the use of empty shops for pop up initiatives, including as community venues. In addition, active travel, which in contrast to car journeys makes people's faces visible to each other, is also important not just from the points of view of a reduction of environmental impact and the improvement of people's health, but also in relation to community building.



## Recommendation 4

Both national and local policy makers have recognised the important role communities can and should play in addressing economic, environmental and social challenges. As part of our survey we were able to identify a number of small groups who have been active within their neighbourhood or in some cases their connected streets. These groups, including Love Wavertree, Litter Clear, Good Gym, Lawrence Road Residents and many more, are vital assets, connecting social/ cultural, economic and environmental concerns, to create a clear identity around which sustainable and thriving communities can be built. However, it is important to recognise that many groups are operating within constraints including capacity of volunteers. Although it is encouraging that the LCRCA and City Council operate small grant programmes to support these groups, it would be useful to think about other mechanisms to build capacity.

This can again be achieved by dissemination of information about the initiatives through push media such as community-led television which enables people to find out about these initiatives. Importantly, they also give the opportunity for self-representation which validates the work that the groups are doing and inspires others to become involved too. Thus, community-led television can function as a crucial platform to help support the growth and sustainability of community projects and thus support local communities with issues around volunteer hours, etc. Neighbouring councils, such as St Helen's, have adopted a localities model which maps both the assets and the gaps existing in local neighbourhoods to both utilise assets and fill potential gaps. Such an approach is both systematic and includes a long-term vision which creates the basis for longer-lasting change than a short-term approach focused on addressing specific problems at one time can create.

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## Recommendation 5

**Community Experience as Knowledge Asset.** There is a wealth of local knowledge, cultural understanding and skills within not just Wavertree but across the city region. Bound in reciprocity the network of local community groups can offer both deep engagement with and solutions to challenging issues. The perspective that members of the community can offer, one which provides novel approaches, is a valuable tool in breaking down policy silos, enabling connections to be made between different areas of public policy, potentially maximising resources and creating sustainable outcomes for local communities

This requires both regular listening exercises (such as through community engagement as is being used by the LCC), but also an effort to coordinate between the groups. They need to see initiative by the LCC and the LCRCA and have access, ideally, to a map of community groups for knowledge sharing purposes. There are local initiatives already taking place to map green businesses and community groups, such as Transitions Liverpool CIC, but this requires more support and a more systematic approach. How to gain information was regularly mentioned as a problem by assembly participants, pointing to the need for a central hub of information. This is likely to require a website which is searchable and lists different community efforts, groups and knowledge bases, but should also be disseminated via push media such as newspapers, radio and television as audiences do not always know what they need to search for. As long as most of the local media are in commercial hands, there is no requirement placed on them to deliver that information. It is for that reason that we believe a public service focused, community-led approach would be ideal in that it can showcase the existing knowledge asset and push it out to a wider community.

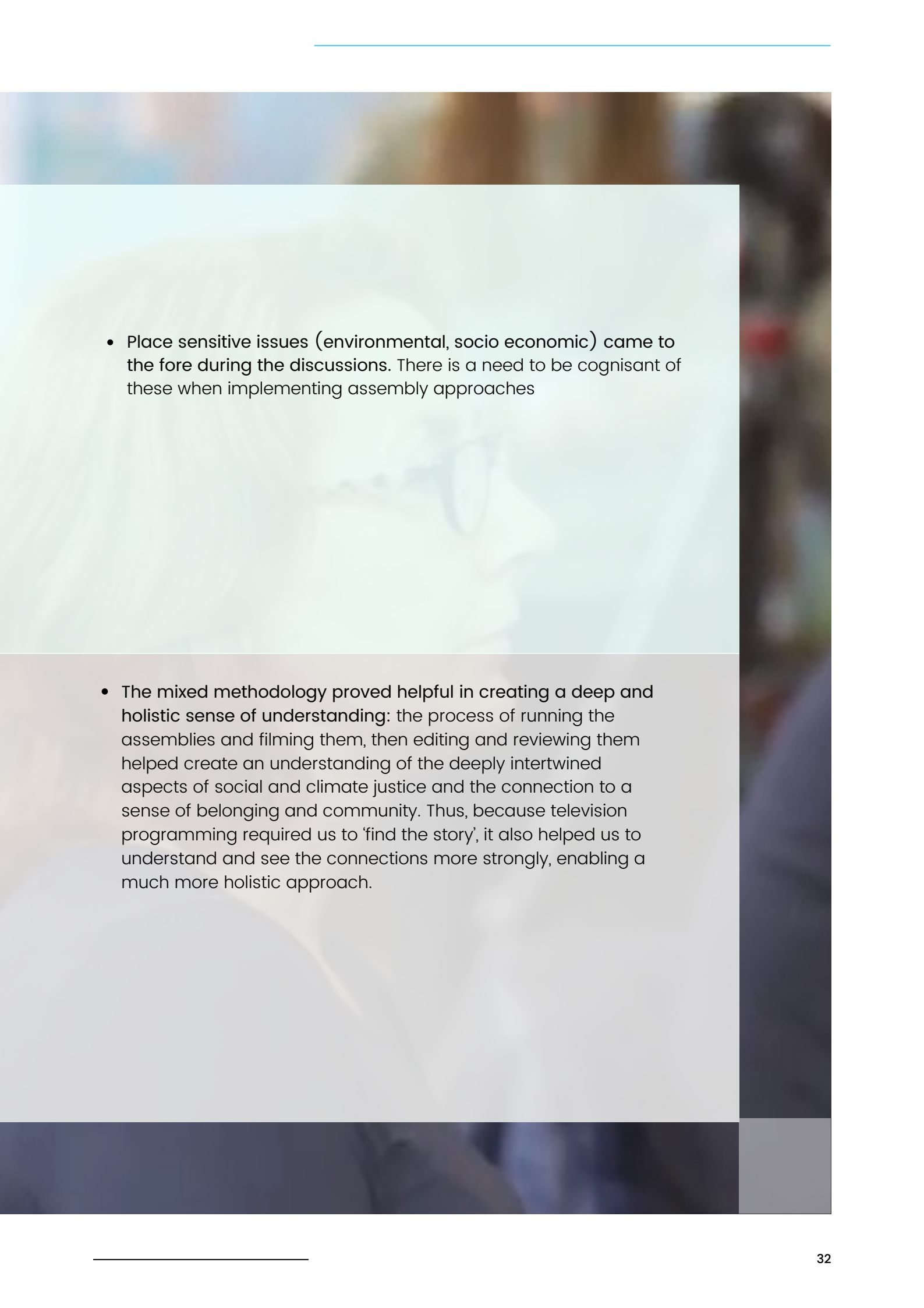




## Key Lessons for Policy Recommendation

- For us as researchers, we realised very quickly how many different initiatives existed, and how much there was a desire of people to share knowledge and combine efforts. Our project became a nodal point to bring different activities and initiatives together. People wanted to find a way of expressing themselves to feel heard but also to share and connect with others. This points to **the need for a systematic approach of coordination and facilitation of knowledge sharing which would support the sense of system change that is already occurring**: we could see that local people were taking things back into their own hands, but were struggling with resourcing and information finding.
- There are very specific policy recommendations that were suggested by participants of the assemblies, such as the banning of plastic bottles in favour of refill stations or the closing off of streets to car use. These are excellent suggestions and highlight the potential of utilising community knowledge for policy development. We have here put a **greater emphasis on the larger, systematic approach than the individual recommendations** (though we hope these come out of the list of recommendations) because the larger strategic changes will facilitate a more environmentally and socially sustainable community in which such policies will be less controversial than the currently often appear. In addition, we strongly believe that **in order to facilitate change towards greater sustainability, a longer-term commitment, rather than piecemeal approach is needed.**

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- People felt a sense of belonging but also an urge of having a deeper sense of wanting to belong and how to reimagine neighbourhoods to create community. This became a central theme of discussions. This can only be facilitated by **empowering communities to take ownership of local spaces.**
  - There was a real sense of hope and a real wish to be a part of changes to make the community a better place. This included businesses, local residents, community action groups and policy makers. It was inspiring, but also highlighted how much energy there is currently that needs to be brought together to harness its full potential.
  - **Social Capital: Sharing of skills, knowledge and physical resources** e.g. tools was something participants were either doing, wanted to be part of or wanted to see happen more widely.
  - 
  - The small number of participants in assemblies (max of ten per assembly) raises a question about why some choose to participate and others don't. This in turn brings up questions that are related to perceptions of power dynamics between politicians and citizens or more basic group dynamics. People are pressed for time, but they often also did not feel qualified to comment, pointing to the need to think through how to involve participants. It takes time to involve participants, speak to them in such ways that are meaningful to them and develop the networks to enable participation. **We would recommend that future projects of this kind are given a bit more time. Our recommendation is to develop the question of barriers to participation as a central theme for the next stage of research with Love Wavertree.**

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- Place sensitive issues (environmental, socio economic) came to the fore during the discussions. There is a need to be cognisant of these when implementing assembly approaches

- The mixed methodology proved helpful in creating a deep and holistic sense of understanding: the process of running the assemblies and filming them, then editing and reviewing them helped create an understanding of the deeply intertwined aspects of social and climate justice and the connection to a sense of belonging and community. Thus, because television programming required us to ‘find the story’, it also helped us to understand and see the connections more strongly, enabling a much more holistic approach.



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# Legacy and Next Steps



The project has made visible the potential of the local community to be part of the solution. In the process of engaging with the local community and policy makers, a real sense of the potential for positive change towards a more sustainable future became visible. Our findings will be shared with Liverpool City Council and City Region Combined Authority, as well as with local community groups, including Love Wavertree and Litter Clear and further engagement with them will be a central aim for us as researchers and as individuals. We were also able to attract additional funding to support a recent graduate to continue work on the footage that was created as part of the project. Her work includes the development of shorter social-media friendly content in order to disseminate the project further. In addition, our conversations with local community groups and institutions such as schools have made visible the wish for wider face-to-face dissemination via screenings and talks which she is organising. For the researchers, the project enabled an enormous expansion of our horizons. We felt that the interdisciplinary approach and the multi-tiered methodology gave us such rich, deep and holistic insights that we felt should build the foundations of future projects. We have started speaking to Love Wavertree to see if we want to expand this project to include other Liverpool-region-based community groups such as Homebaked in Anfield and The Dusty Teapot in New Brighton. Our aim is to set up a local network meeting to bring these different community groups together in September, share our findings and plan the next stage which would facilitate asset sharing, community building and self-representation. Such a larger project should ideally also include the regulator Ofcom and local media companies, including the Liverpool Post and BBC Merseyside/North West who have shown initial interest and featured this project already.



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# Thank You

This report is an outcome of the British Academy-funded project Community-led Television, Local Voice and Climate Change



**Elke Weissmann**

Edge Hill University, Department of English and Creative Arts



**Belinda Tyrrell**

University of Liverpool, Heseltine Institute



**Emails**

[weissmae@edgehill.ac.uk](mailto:weissmae@edgehill.ac.uk); [belinda.tyrrell@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:belinda.tyrrell@liverpool.ac.uk)