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COMMUNITY



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The RSA

We have Power as a Community

“I think we realised that we do have power as a community. There are things that we can do. We don’t have to wait on the council, we can organise meetings as a group”.



The RSA worked with residents in Nechells, Birmingham to see whether a deliberative process could be used to explore and respond to realities and challenges people might face in the specific place they live. We drew strongly on deliberative methods, and in particular the citizens’ assembly model, to work at a more localised level and to answer the specific



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challenge of residents playing a more active role in decision-making around their homes and neighbourhoods.

The Nechells Knows Community Assembly responded to the question: *what do we need from our home and neighbourhood, now and in the future, for everyone in Nechells to live a good life?* 18 residents came together over 8 sessions contributing 245 hours of time to deliberate on the question and developed 48 recommendations which were shared at a resident-led Sharing Event. These recommendations were a mix of ones that residents could catalyse themselves, ones that need some external support, such as funding or advice, and ones that needed to be taken up by other stakeholders, like the local council or local organisations. Recommendations were grouped around four themes: Having a neighbourhood that is nice to look at, Creating different community spaces for residents to come together, Making our streets safer and more walkable and finally Creating a more positive narrative about Nechells.

Without being funded or directed by a local authority or other decision-making body, the Community Assembly could not follow that typical route to impact. However, lots of great outcomes came out of the Community Assembly, including some unexpected ones, creating exciting channels for impact. One of the most positive, immediate, and still evolving outcomes of the Community Assembly was a clear sense of building community power and community organising throughout the process, and an active interest from most of the group to stay engaged in trying to make positive change in their neighbourhood.

You can read the full report [here](#).

By developing a community assembly model in this way, which is hyperlocal, and resident led as opposed to local authority commissioned the RSA has developed a participatory model is hopes to explore and test elsewhere.

For further information contact:

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