

# NORTH FINCHLEY TOWN CENTRE

North Finchley Public Realm  
Design Framework -  
Shared Community Principles



momentum  
transport consultancy



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**BARNET**  
LONDON BOROUGH

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The Draft Principles have been prepared by Soundings as part of the North Finchley Public Realm Design Framework. Soundings is working with Momentum Transport Consultants for Barnet Council

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This commission seeks to work with the local community to develop a Town Centre Public Realm Design Framework – a set of shared community principles that will guide future public realm improvements to the streets and public spaces across the town centre.

The aim is to unlock the delivery of the public realm as identified within the North Finchley Town Centre Supplementary Planning Document, to create an improved setting for people to live and visit, and for businesses to thrive within the town centre.

It is being co-developed with the local community, businesses, organisations and council officers to ensure that the design framework builds on local knowledge and expertise, and reflects the aspirations to deliver lasting and deliverable change.

Community engagement has provided over 3,300 comments and engaged with over 350 people.

This document presents the outcomes of the first and second stage of engagement carried out between June to December 2022. This has established four guiding principles for the town centre that will inform project proposals.

The principles are also informed by studies carried out by the project consultant team to assess the public realm, its streets and spaces, play and green infrastructure from a quantitative, qualitative and spatial perspective.

Four Principles have been generated:

**PRINCIPLE 1** - To make North Finchley a safe and accessible place for all to spend time in by:

Creating a better environment for walking and cycling; improving space for all pavement

users; supporting and developing the local bus network; rationalising roads, car use and deliveries

**PRINCIPLE 2** - To reinforce North Finchley as a place with a strong, sustainable identity by:

Strengthening local identity, creating a town centre focus while adding a variety of smaller spaces to explore across the town centre; using lighting to enhance the special character of spaces; and creating an attractive, safe and maintainable environment to spend time in.

**PRINCIPLE 3** - To make North Finchley a vibrant community destination throughout the day and evening by:

Making the town centre a destination to gather to play, share culture, enjoy events, and visit markets; supporting social life and a cohesive community; providing a space for all.

**PRINCIPLE 4** - To make North Finchley a greener, cleaner and healthier town centre by:

Encouraging walking and cycling and use of public transport; injecting greenery into the town centre; bringing people closer to nature; introducing sustainable drainage to manage water; helping address climate change and reducing pollution. The council, businesses and residents will collectively take responsibility for maintaining cleanliness and making North Finchley a place everyone can be proud of.

### Next steps

These principles will form the basis of the North Finchley Public Realm Design Framework. The draft of this will be shared with community in the Summer.

# 1.0 INTRODUCTION

In April 2022 Barnet Council appointed Momentum Transport consultants and Soundings to develop a Public Realm Design Framework for North Finchley Town Centre

This document is part of a wider piece of work launched by Barnet Council to develop a Public Realm Design Framework for North Finchley Town Centre. Developing this framework together with the local community is key to programming, structuring and guiding future improvements to public spaces in the town centre, ensuring it is a vibrant place to live, work and visit for all.

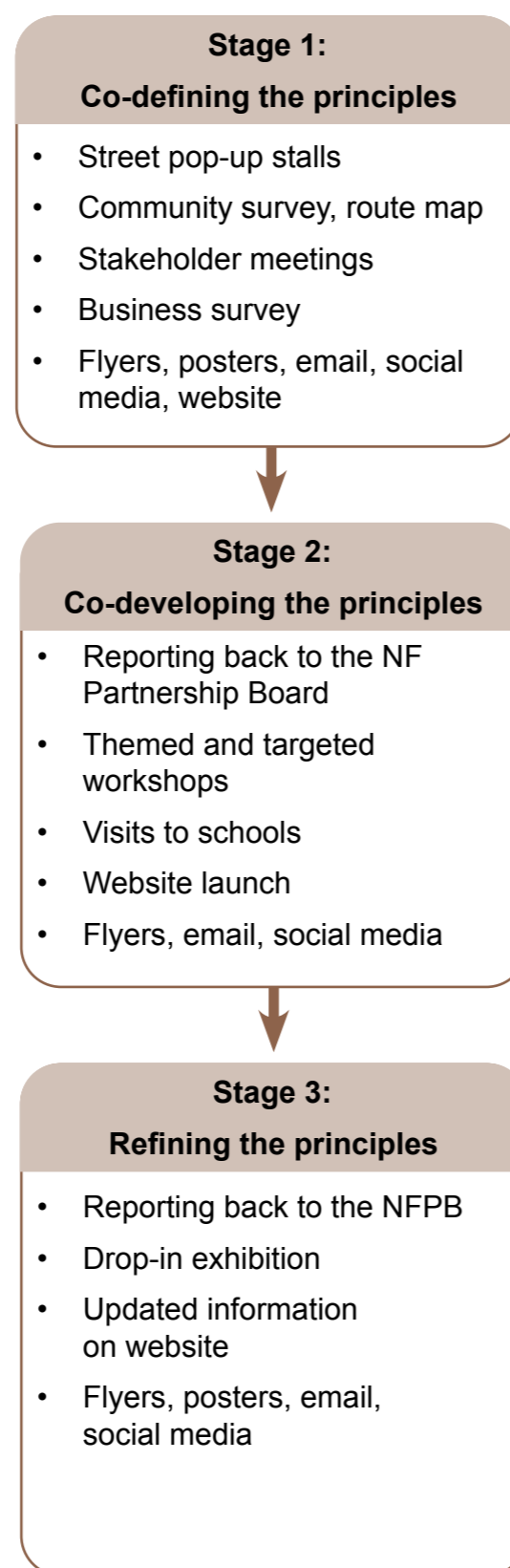
For context, the public realm refers to all spaces outside and between buildings, including parks, streets, pavements and playgrounds, serving a critical role in our health and well-being and profoundly shaping our day-to-day experiences.

In summary, delivering this project will involve the three stages listed below:

Stage 1: Co-defining the Principles

Stage 2: Co-developing the Principles

Stage 3: Refining the draft Framework



Following the initial stage of co-defining the draft community principles, we explored them further through workshops in November as part of the second stage of engagement. The outcome of this will be used to produce a draft Public Realm Design Framework for further refinement with the community.

Once it has progressed through these three stages, the final Public Realm Design Framework will reflect the guiding community principles and identify ways to create a setting that supports an equitable, accessible, sociable and resilient town centre. It will act as a subsidiary document to the existing North Finchley Town Centre Framework (2018) [SPD], providing Barnet Council with a clear and deliverable proposal and an associated phased programme to deliver a successful public realm in North Finchley Town Centre in accordance with the objectives of the SPD.

## How the draft principles have been developed (methodology)

The draft principles, and draft sub-principles, have emerged through analysis of findings from a combination of:

- public realm community engagement
- primary research (Baseline Report)
- previous community engagement

These findings have been used to understand the issues and opportunities relating to the public realm in North Finchley Town Centre.

Stage 1 public realm community engagement was carried out from May-July 2022. See appendices for a summary engagement report.

It includes various community outreach conducted through in-person events, business

surveys, online surveys, and one-to-one stakeholder meetings, including conversations with TfL.

In addition, primary research carried out by the consultant team from May-June 2022 is summarised in the appendices. These include in-depth public realm and place audits as well as in-depth transport studies.

This document also incorporates the findings of community engagement relating to the town centre, including:

- the North Finchley Town Centre Framework SPD (2018),
- Creative Placemaking Report (March 2022), and
- engagement by the Council's development partner Regal JP North Finchley (Spring 2022).

Stage 2 public realm community engagement was carried out from November-December 2022. Details of the events and the outcomes can be found in this report.

## Barnet policies informing the principles

Three of the four draft principles of the Framework also align with the SPD objectives:

- Town Centre Movement
- Town Centre Places
- Town Centre People

The fourth principle aligns with the Local Plan goal to work towards Town Centre Sustainability and the Council's declaration of climate emergency, made in May 2022.

## Key findings from Stage 1 of public engagement: co-defining the draft principles for the North Finchley Public Realm Framework

Over 3,300 comments were collected, and these have been databased and categorised into topics. The chart to the left presents these topics in order of the number of comments received in percentage of the total from the most to the least, a combination of likes and dislikes.

## Stage 2 engagement: co-developing the principles

Testing and refining each principle with the community through a series of themed street workshops, discussions and stalls. Findings for each principle and the revised principles can be found in each Principle chapter:

Principle 1 - page 22

Principle 2 - page 32

Principle 3 - page 42

Principle 4 - page 52

## Stage 3: Producing the North Finchley Public Realm Design Framework

The draft Public Realm Design Framework will build on the findings of Stages 1 & 2. The draft framework will be shared with the community in Summer 2023.

## Breakdown of comments by topic

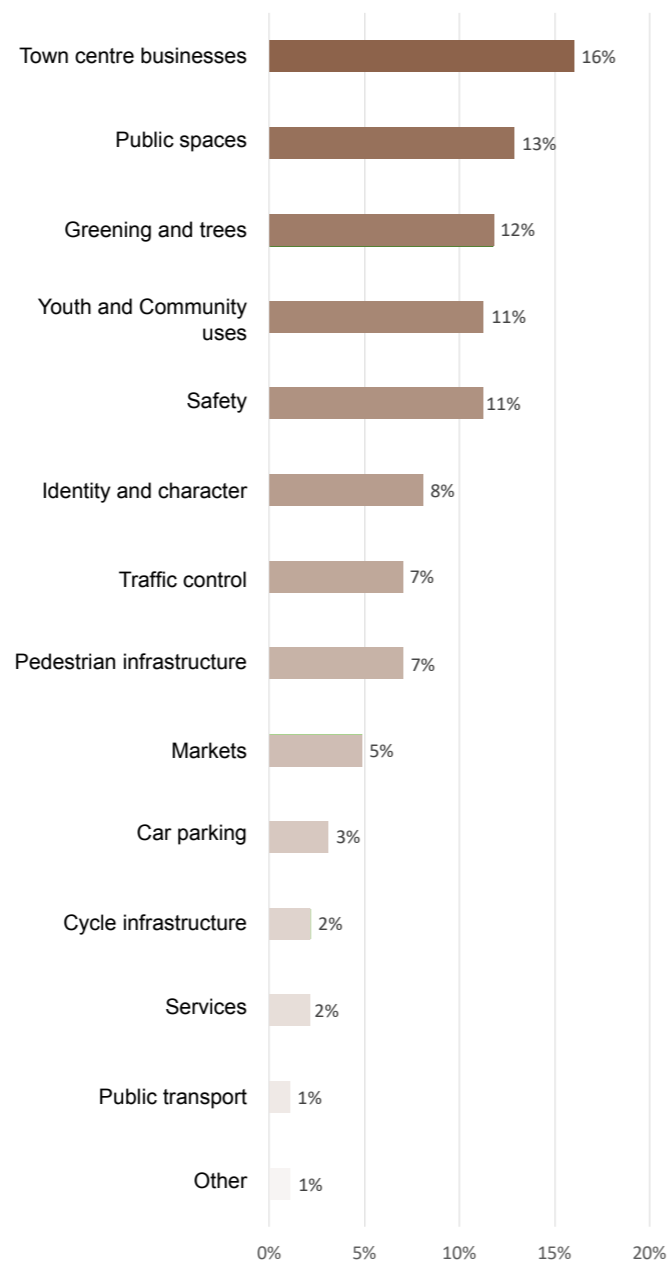


Diagram shows the most talked about topics from the 3,300 comments received during the Stage 1 engagement



Place

## 2.0 SUMMARY OF STAGE 1 ENGAGEMENT: CO-DEFINING THE PRINCIPLES

### Stage 1 Engagement

During June and July 2022, Soundings and officers from the council have carried out a series of public engagement activities, business surveys and conversations with key local stakeholders such as heads of schools, faith leaders, inclusivity and cycling groups.

The purpose of this stage of engagement was to begin defining the principles that will constitute the public realm design framework.

For more detailed information on the engagement methodology refer to Appendices document.

### Engagement objectives

The aim of the engagement has been to:

- Build on previous work by DPQ and the SPD, amongst others
- Broad and inclusive reach
- Identify and target any under-represented groups
- Understand how people currently move around the streets / public realm, by foot, by cycle, by public transport and by car.
- Understand desire lines, destinations, challenges
- Understand local needs and aspirations for improved connectivity, improved comfort and safety
- What they feel about the town centre environment generally and what would improve this experience
- What activities are missing and what are the communities needs for public spaces that would attract more people to come more often and spend more time here
- Use information to inform and develop a set of high-level principles for early work on the draft Public Realm

### Communications and outreach

The following communications streams were used to promote the consultation and encourage people to get involved:

- 3 Mailing list emails
- 109 new mailing list subscribers

- 50 posters distributed to high street businesses to put up in windows
- Over 100 businesses were flyered and spoken to
- 16 Social media posts (Instagram and Facebook (outreach of 270+ followers)
- 180 project info flyers distributed
- 40+ stakeholder emails

### Who participated and how

Providing demographic data was optional, with around 165 people (including businesses) leaving their details. Overall the statistics show a good representative mix.

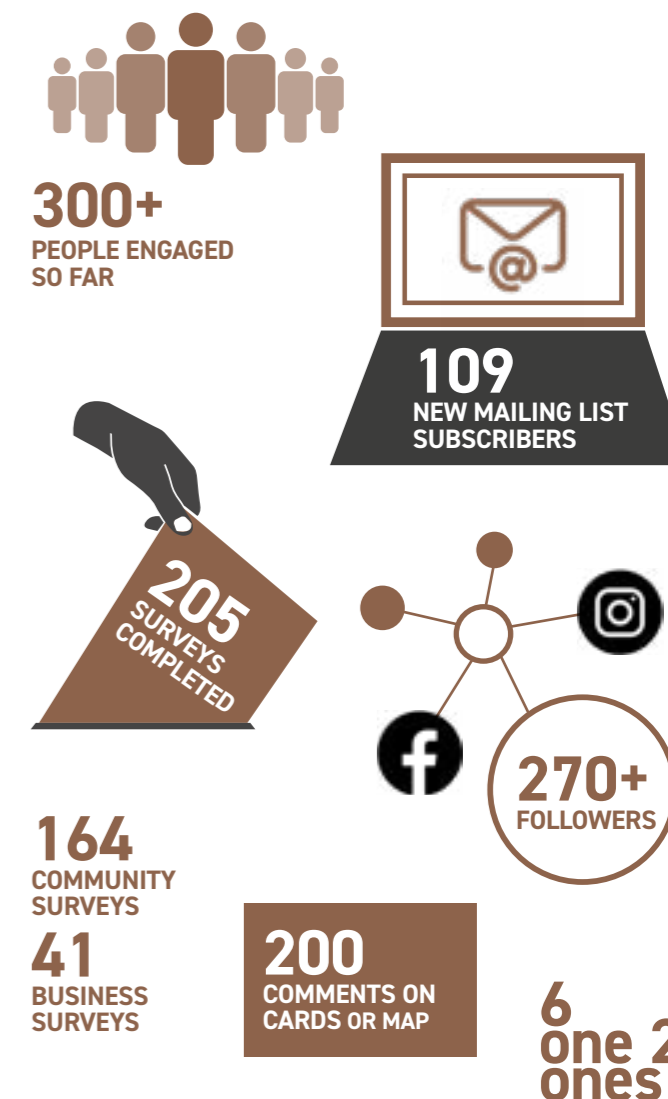
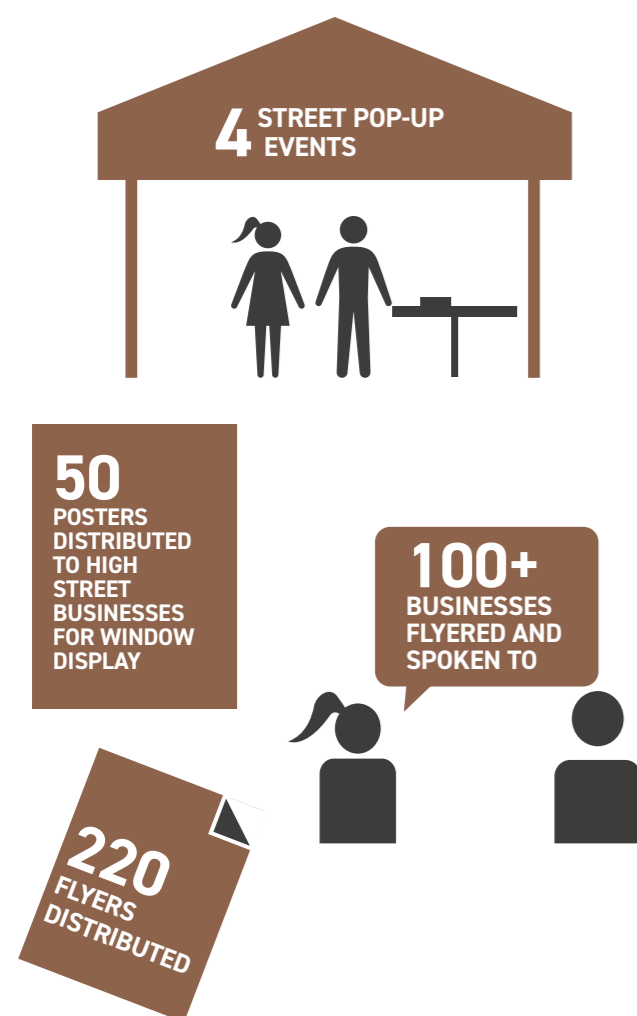
The population of Woodhouse and West Finchley is diverse with a BAME population of 37.6% and 39.2% respectively. The Northside Primary School children speak 43 languages. Of those who responded to the demographic survey 62.5% said they were white British, Irish, European or white other and those responding as Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic made up 26% of respondents and 11.5% not saying. Although not proportionate the number of BAME and other provides a reasonable representation of the community.

Most respondents were between the ages of 35-64 years old (65%). However, there were more young people reached at the street pop-up events, with nearly one in five participants under the age of 35.

30% of respondents stated they were Christian, whilst 48% said they had no religion, or preferred not to say and these tended to be the minority groups with 10% Muslim and 5.5% Jewish made up the majority of the remaining respondents.

9% said they had a disability and over 50% of respondents were women and 38% were male.

There were a variety of ways people could share their opinions from quick and easy to more detailed responses. Colourful questionnaires and a large aerial map of the area drew attention and provided a focus for discussion. The team helped people complete surveys if wanted and offered a friendly and welcoming feel to ensure people felt included and their views mattered.



### 3.0 CO-DEFINING THE DRAFT PRINCIPLES

#### Four emerging principles for the Town Centre

Based on what the community and businesses and stakeholders have told us, we have drawn out insights about the place around how people move or would like to move around the town centre, how the public realm makes them feel now and how this could be better, and what sort of spaces they would enjoy spending time in and what they would like to do there. The outcome is four guiding principles that are strong and clear goals, respond to community need and aspiration and address the challenges identified.

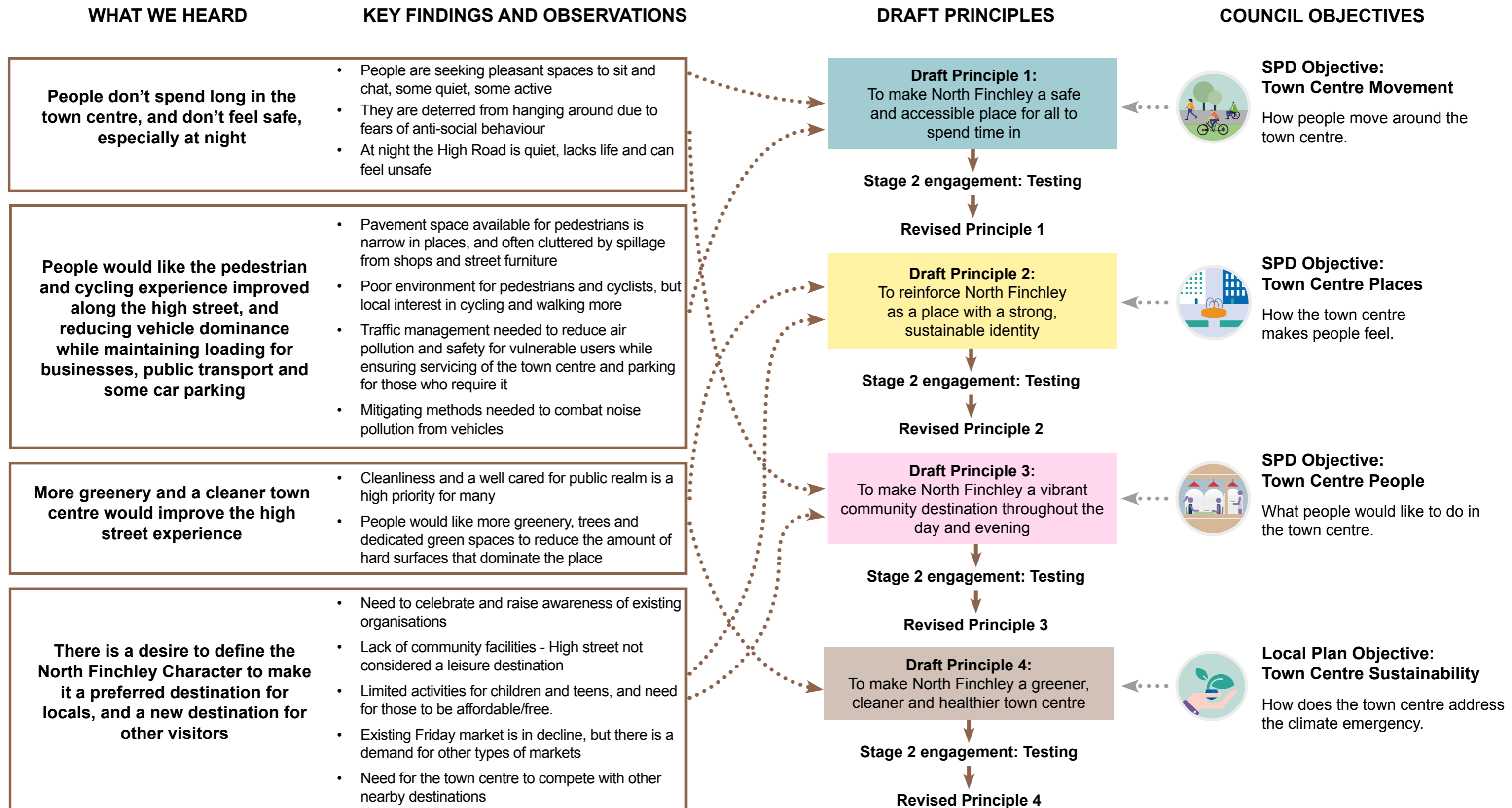
The diagram over the page summaries how what people have told us has been translated into **Four Principles** and how these also respond to the objectives set out in the Town Centre SPD and Local Plan; as well as the findings of public realm audits, analysis and observational studies carried out by Soundings and the Momentum team. It also includes findings from the Creative Placemaking Strategy engagement findings completed in March 2022

See over for diagram



Engagement

# DRAFT PRINCIPLES



## 4.0 SUMMARY OF STAGE 2 ENGAGEMENT: CO-DEVELOPING THE PRINCIPLES

### Stage 2 Engagement

To explore each principle further Soundings carried out a range of public engagement activities during November and December 2022.

Four public workshops were held in November 2022, each tailored to the four principles and included walkabouts, table discussions (around a large aerial map of North Finchley) as well as the use of bespoke objects to physically test and identify opportunities for public spaces and greening within the town centre. The workshops were a fun and creative way for the community to test the principles on the ground.

Continued conversations were also held with key local stakeholders such as faith leaders and inclusivity groups and stalls were set up in various community spaces to garner a range of response to the draft principles.

The purpose of this stage of engagement was to refine the principles that will constitute the public realm design framework.

For more detailed information on each principle please refer to the pages below where the testing methodology and outcome of each principle is explained further.

Principle 1 - page 20

Principle 2 - page 30

Principle 3 - page 40

Principle 4 - page 50

### Engagement objectives

The aim of the engagement has been to:

- Refine the principles with the community
- Better understand how people currently move around the streets / public realm, by

foot, by cycle, by public transport and by car

- Understand desire lines, destinations, challenges
- Further understand local needs and aspirations for improved connectivity, improved comfort and safety
- How to improve people's experience in
- Further understand what activities are missing and what are the communities needs for public spaces

### Communications and outreach

The following communications streams were used to promote the consultation and encourage people to get involved:

- 4 emails to mailing list (300+ subscribers)
- Over 50 flyers distributed in various businesses in the town centre
- 13 Social media posts (Instagram and Facebook (outreach of 430+ followers)
- 15+ stakeholder emails
- Talking to local businesses

### Who participated and how

Over 30 people attended the workshops

Meetings were held with accessibility advisors Inclusion Barnet, as well as the Finchley Reform Synagogue Kindergarten group, Ukrainian group, and mother and baby group.

The team also met children and families at the Northside Primary School Christmas fair and will be conducting a workshop with senior school students from Dwight school in January.





## 5.0 DRAFT PRINCIPLE 1:

### Make North Finchley a safe and accessible place for all to spend time in

#### What we heard during our engagement with the community and businesses

##### 1. Safety and ASB:

11% of all comments were about safety. There is a large perception of anti-social behaviour in the area discouraging people from spending more time, particularly in the evenings. Lighting on side streets is considered poor, particularly the route from Woodside Park Station, restricting walking after dark.

*"I'd like to see traffic calming measures put in place to stop drivers speeding: the area north of Sainsbury's up to Whetstone is particularly affected by this at present."*

Safety concerns also relate to pedestrians and cyclists in the area, due to dangerous driving, driving through pedestrian crossings or lights, and speeding. The junction between the High Road and Kingsway is identified as a challenge for crossing – with many students of Woodhouse College using this for accessing the bus station.

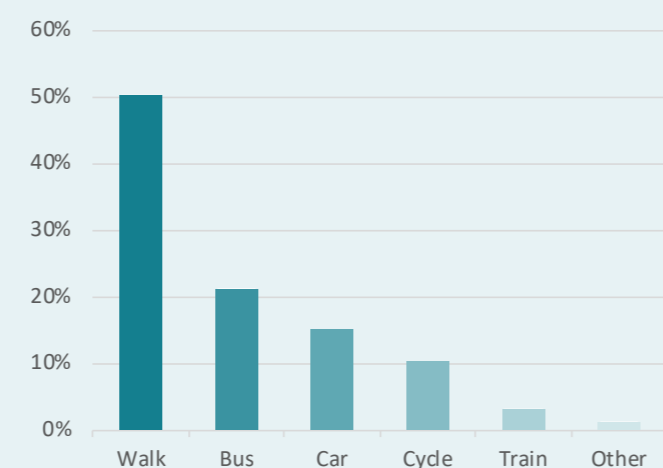
*"Due to recent incidents, North Finchley is being seen as an unsafe area...most of our shows revolve around kids, this aspect impacts our number of visitors and the demographic we attract to the venue."*

Some businesses said their staff raise concerns about anti-social behaviour mostly in the evening and night time. As a result of this and the lack of footfall many businesses close around 6pm.

##### 2. Getting to the Town Centre:

###### How do you usually travel into North Finchley Town Centre?

163 responses, 251 comments



50% of all comments stated participants usually walk into North Finchley town centre, followed by bus (21%), car (15%), cycle (10%), Train (3%) and other modes (1%), such as using a walker.

**2.1 Walking** - The majority of people we spoke to (50%) had come on foot from the local area with 20% coming by public transport and 14% by car from the wider area. Many would prefer to walk or cycle (60%) but said without cycle lanes or safe cycle parking, cycling was not an attractive option.

Many enjoy walking for leisure in nearby green spaces but signage could be better

*"I'd like the town centre to be more people-focused, and provide easier, more integrated and safer routes for active travel (walking, scooting and cycling) in order to encourage more people to take up these means of transport."*

*"Yes, a security guard or good CCTV camera to ensure the safety of public/visitors and staff."*

**2.2 Cycling** - There is a growing interest in cycling, from keen cyclists as well as families. This is for both journeys to school and work as well as for leisure. Currently cyclists avoid the High Road due to the dominance of traffic creating a hostile unsafe environment.

**2.3 Public transport / bus connections** - are considered vital for businesses to connect people with the town centre.

**2.4. Vehicle users and parking** - Only 5% of comments from the public were about parking, though vehicle users spoken to would not favour a reduction in car parking.

For businesses parking and access for deliveries is a priority. Many would like short-stay free parking spaces though the data suggests differently many believe any reduction in car parking is bad for business.



##### 3. Pedestrian experience & access

**3.1 Accessibility** - Spillage from shops (and scooter use) especially in areas where the pavement narrows make access difficult especially for the elderly, those with pushchairs or with mobility issues, Wheelchair users and those with mobility issues noted lack of seating and that their needs need to be accommodated with better access and places to rest and even, uncluttered pavements.

**3.2 Places people are not comfortable** - The community identified places such as Lodge Lane car park, Tally Ho Corner/ Kingsway, delivery scooters outside McDonald's and the corner of Percy Road as areas which are "intimidating" or "dangerous", especially for women. Respondents suggested that delivery drivers should have alternative places to wait off the High Street.

*"Traffic wardens/lack of free parking that makes our shop inaccessible for our customers."*

## Spatial analysis of North Finchley Town Centre and observations from street pop-ups

- The high street has a large mix of street furniture, utility boxes, public art and spillage from shops that clutter the pavements; this disrupts accessibility and pedestrian flows, particularly where pavements are narrower.
- The public realm around the Bus Station, with its narrow pavements and turning buses are a safety concern.
- Clear pavement widths along the length of the high road are needed, especially at pinch points, to assure ease of pedestrian flow in two directions.
- There is a substantial amount of on-street car parking. A recently completed survey suggests 60-75% usage.
- Poor cycle infrastructure and poor cycling safety and a need for improved facilities to support active travel and local aspirations.
- There are multiple side streets from the east and west that meet the high road that disrupt north south pedestrian movement, easing this with level cross overs would prioritise and ease pedestrian flows.
- Multiple jaywalking/desire lines observed on High Road and Ballards Lane gyratory suggest the need for more intermediary crossings, not only at traffic lights - e.g. adjacent to bus stops, or key side street / thresholds.
- Arrival into the town centre is unmarked and signage to the underground station and other valuable assets such as green spaces is needed to help people get around.



Narrow pavements by the bus station / Aldi store



Shop spillage on High Road



Cyclists on pavements, street furniture & utilities

- The closest Tube station, Woodside Park, has minimal bus interchange causing it to remain disconnected from the town centre.
- TfL Personal Injury Collision data confirm the junction at High Road and Kingsway as a road safety black spot in the area.
- There is a lot of movement and manoeuvring of vehicles by cars parking and at side roads impacting the main north-south traffic flow. The High Road changes width along its length which also cause considerable queuing.
- No provision for PVHs and only location for taxis for pick up / from is at the Tally Ho.
- Current issues with delivery vehicles on the High Road.

## Street lighting

- The brightness levels between Ballards Lane and High Road and the surrounding side streets is pronounced and creates a strong visual contrast between the areas of commercial activity and the more residential areas.
- While this level of visual brightness is typical, the edges of the zones are clearly defined. This emphasis is at the expense of streets that connect people to the High Road as tributary routes feel unwelcoming.
- Woodside Park Road acts as a primary route connecting people to the Underground and would benefit from strong visual connection to the High Road.
- Lighting is functional for pedestrians and vehicles but does not encourage dwelling.



Typical side street



High Road

## PRINCIPLE 1 - OVERALL FINDINGS

- **ASB on the high street stops people from visiting or lingering. Some crossings are dangerous and other areas need more crossings to increase connectivity**
- **Safety at night is a concern, especially in places which lack life or have little footfall - need to increase active frontages, night time economy, address deliveries**
- **Improved connection to the underground station needed and a less hostile environment around the south of Ballards Lane impacting the bus station**
- **Pavement space available for pedestrians is too narrow, and often exacerbated by spillage from shops: needs de-cluttering and prioritising all pedestrian users**
- **Demand for cycling and active travel requires infrastructure to enable this**

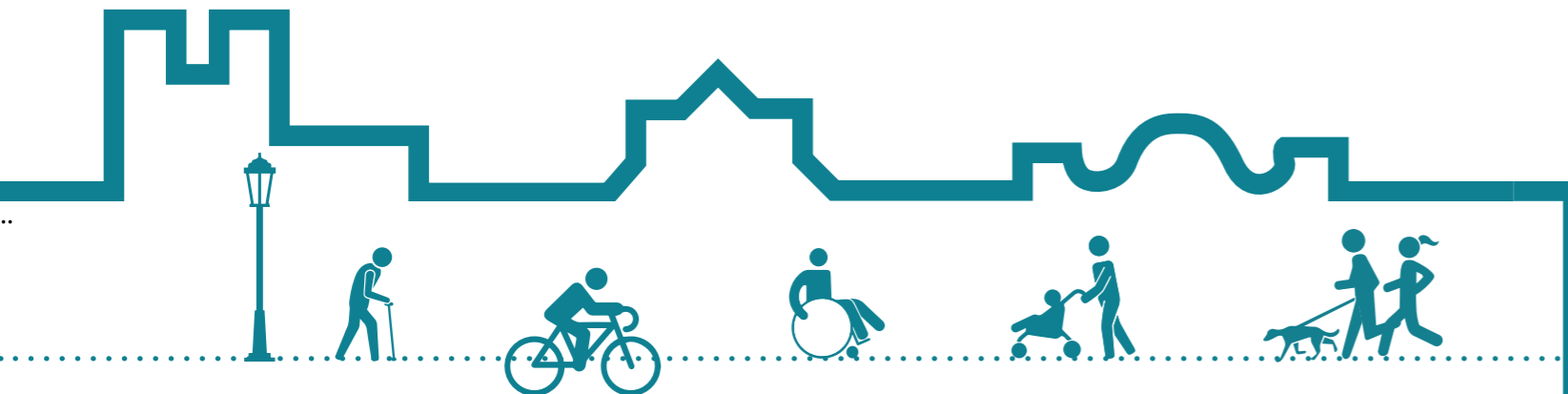


### SPD objective addressed by this draft principle : Town centre movement

Encouraging longer dwell times in the town centre, improved and welcoming public realm, address vehicle dominance, considered town centre car parking, improved bus services and stops, and avoidance of rat running in nearby streets.

# DRAFT PRINCIPLE 1 (a response to the findings summarised here)

## Make North Finchley a safe and accessible place for all to spend time in



### We need to:

- **Improve space for all pavement users**
  - Prioritise pedestrians along the High Road and Ballards Lane
  - Increase pavement widths wherever possible by de-cluttering the high street to improve pedestrian experience and aid navigation
  - High quality public realm for pedestrians, reducing car dominance of the high road
  - Accessible pavement space, level crossing of side streets where possible, 'Copenhagen style', where pavement material continues across side streets.
  - Improve zoning - pavements should allow for business activation, clear walkways and then a furniture/greening zone.
  - Provide regular places to stop and rest for those who need
  - Improve after-dark safety on routes to the high street, with better lighting
  - Mobility options for shoppers
  - Better signage to help people get around, either to green spaces, or the station, anchor shops, places of worship or schools etc
- **Improve environment for active travel**
  - Create better environment for cycling, cycle lanes, parking and maintenance
  - Facilitate safe crossing of high street at frequent intervals to improve connection between both sides.
  - Slow traffic to safe speeds, way finding and improved public realm
- **Support and develop the local bus network**
  - Connect the north high street with more buses, link to the station to encourage use for commuting and evening visitors
  - Ensure safety and accessibility for all bus users. Kerb levels and double kerbs can make accessing buses difficult for those with wheel chairs and prams.
- **Manage vehicular traffic**
  - Managing car use and parking demand
  - Avoid rat running on residential streets
  - Reduce on-street parking for visitor cars, except for disabled use and servicing
    - Consider innovative delivery systems such as virtual loading bays
    - Slow traffic to safe speeds
    - Provide space for taxis and PHVs
- **Opportunities to create visual emphasis / hierarchy to highlight landmarks, gateways and heritage** and aid wayfinding
- **Side streets** - (especially key streets such as Woodhouse) Consider wrap around lighting at smaller scale on side streets and wayfinding moments with integrated lighting and public art at threshold spaces

## How we tested Principle 1



### Purpose of the exploratory

We discussed and shared thoughts on how to:

- Create a better environment for 'walking' (eg new & improved crossings / de-cluttering / wayfinding / lighting / surface materials)
- Create a better environment for cycling (eg cycle lanes, parking, coordination with deliveries, buses, scooters)
- Create an accessible town centre for all (arrival experience, gateways, landmarks, views and vistas, design for those with mobility issues)

### Who this activity was aimed at

Anyone interested in improving walking & cycling in and around the town centre. We had people bring their cycles and buggies.

### Street Session 1 took place

**Date:** Saturday 12 November

**Location:** North Finchley - Nether Street / artsdepot

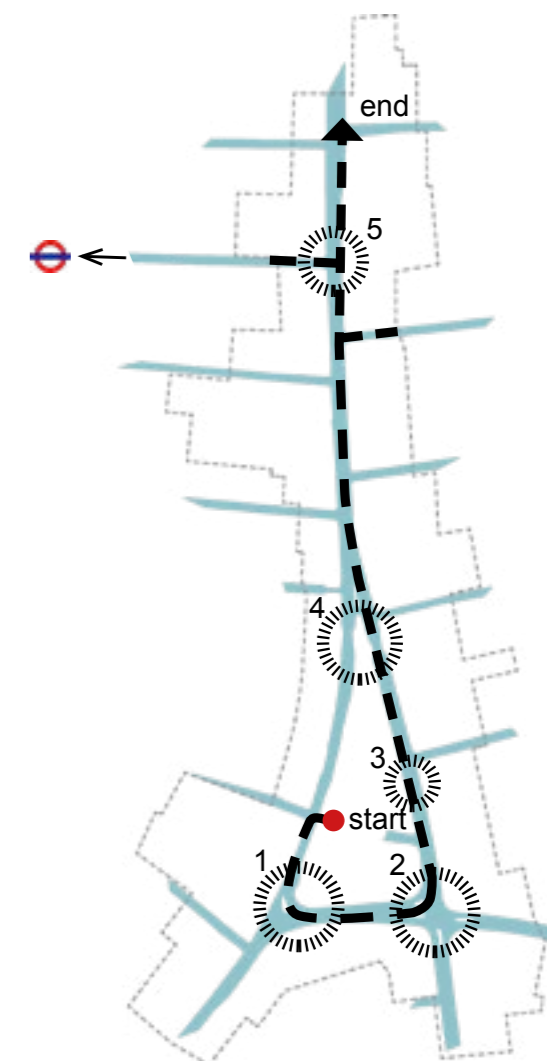


Group discussion at the end of the Street Session at Holybella Cafe.

### What we did

A group walkabout around the town centre with the following stops:

- 1 Ballards Lane, Kingsway junction
- 2 High Road, Kingsway Junction
- 3 Desire line crossing
- 4 Tally Ho corner
- 5 High Road



# WHAT WE HEARD – STAGE 2 ENGAGEMENT

“ If I knew there was a simple walking route to and around the town centre (eg 20 mins) I would get out more. ”

“ I like the idea of the Town Centre as a space just to move through and around. Somewhere pleasant to be. Not just somewhere to go to get something. ”

“ Need wider and better maintained pavements which currently can be unsafe especially for people with disabilities. People tend to walk at different speeds, which often means people walk on the road to get around. ”



“ You feel like you’ve got hazards to encounter before you even get in here. It’s not easy to get into. ”  
on Bus Terminus

“ Need segregated cycle lanes. It’s the only way to make it safe. ”



“ It doesn’t feel safe in here. ”  
on Bus Terminus

“ The lighting outside the bus depot and the blackness of the building façade does not present a welcoming image or point to what goes on in the rest of the High Street. ”



Poll from Instagram (northfinchleytowncentre)

# REVISED PRINCIPLE 1

## Make North Finchley a safe and accessible place for all to spend time in

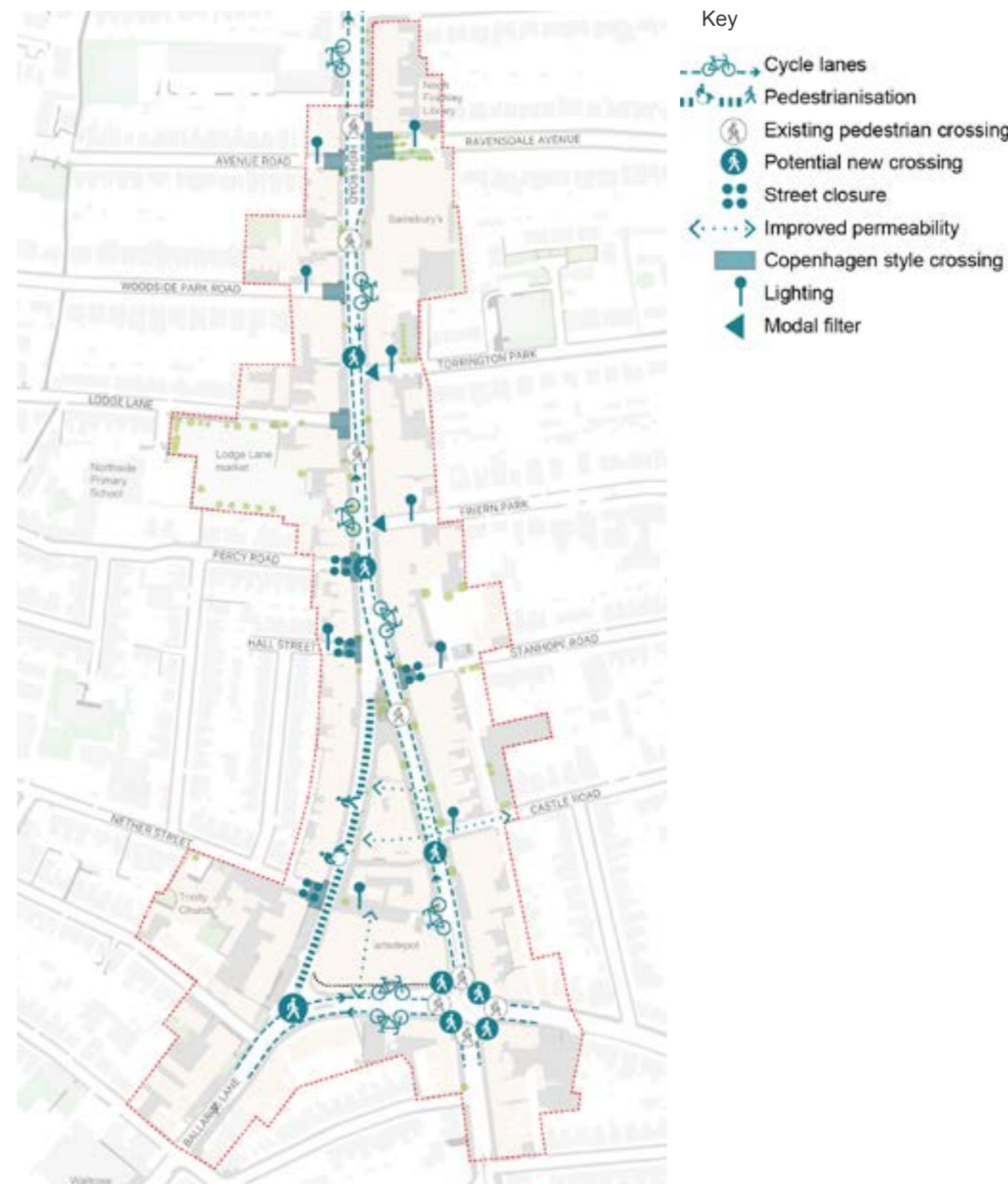
Based on what we heard and discovered in the testing process the draft principle has refined to the following (blue boxes denote changes from Stage 1 engagement):

Here are a some potential opportunities we're exploring based on what you've told us...

We need to:

- ▶ **Improve space for all pavement users**
  - > Prioritise pedestrians along the High Road and Ballards Lane.
  - > Increase pavement widths wherever possible by de-cluttering the footways, and extending into the road, to improve pedestrian experience and aid navigation.
  - > Improve zoning - pavements should allow for business activation, clear walkways and then a furniture/greening zone.
  - > Make sure the town centre remains accessible to those with mobility issues (elderly, families with push chairs, or disabled).
  - > Create a leisure (wellness) walking route around the town centre linked to new public spaces and enhanced facilities, for a slower paced walk.
- ▶ **Create an accessible town centre**
  - > Provide regular places to stop and rest for those who need, away from the road ideally. Availability of benches and places to sit is critical for an accessible town centre, helping people to be active by visiting the town centre will make people feel better.
  - > Better signage to help people get around, either to public transport, green spaces, anchor shops, places of worship or schools etc.
  - > Aid wayfinding and a sense of arrival, through highlighting local landmarks and heritage assets, planting and public art. (consider changing the name of the station to North Finchley).
  - > Improve after-dark safety on routes to the high street, with better lighting, especially from Woodside Park Station and on side streets.
  - > Use public art and lighting installations and lighting stepping stones to makes safe threads into the residential side streets.

- ▶ **Improve environment for active travel**
  - > Create a better environment for cycling with segregated cycle lanes, well located cycle parking, training and maintenance support.
  - > Signpost local cycle routes on Nether Street and potentially others to create a network of links, tied to local facilities.
  - > Slow traffic to safe speeds.
  - > Facilitate safe crossing of high street at frequent intervals to improve connection between both sides.
  - > Accessible pavement space, level crossing of side streets where possible, 'Copenhagen style', where pavement material continues across side streets.
- ▶ **Support and develop the local bus network**
  - > Connect the north high street with more buses, link to the station to encourage use for commuting and evening visitors.
  - > Ensure safety and accessibility for all bus users by providing where possible level access and addressing safety issues identified at the Bus Terminus.
- ▶ **Manage vehicular traffic**
  - > Manage car use and parking demand - retain disabled parking and servicing for businesses along the High Road and provide space for taxis and private hire vehicles.
  - > Measures to avoid rat running on residential streets.
  - > Consider innovative delivery systems such as virtual loading bays and address delivery bikes on the High Street by providing alternative parking where possible.



## 6.0 DRAFT PRINCIPLE 2:

### Reinforce North Finchley as a place with a strong, sustainable identity

#### What we heard during our engagement with the community and businesses

##### 1. Environment:

Cleanliness is an issue for most people, the place feels 'shabby', the shop fronts poor and spilling out of goods onto the street a nuisance. Tally Ho corner is degraded by pigeons. The town centre is very grey, traffic dominated and hard as an environment.

**1.2 Inhospitable environments** - The area around the Bus Depot is windy, unattractive and inactive, especially at night time.

*"Could create a pedestrian space here (Ballards Lane) with activities. Something to make it feel like a community hub."*

**1.3 Safety and ASB** - affect how people feel about the town centre as a destination. Concerns vary from drugs and related crimes and activity, the recent murder on Ballards Lane, to negative perceptions with some of the street café culture (which some people describe as male dominated) and delivery bike riders. More community and cultural interaction through shared events would help break down misconceptions.

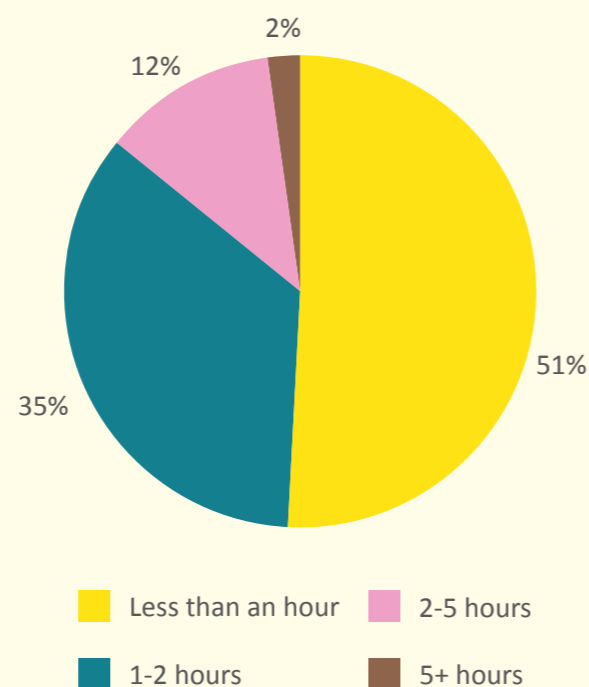
**1.4 Vacant shops** - The increasing number of empty shops give a bad impression and feeling of decline, as well as poor quality shops and an increasing number of charity and grocery shops. (Others see the charity shops as an attraction and reason to visit)

##### 2. Dwell times:

Over 50% of people interviewed spend one hour or less in the town centre and only 14% spend over two hours. More things to do, re-kindling the historic festivals and growing the cultural life and a greener high street supported by good quality public spaces would encourage people to spend longer.

#### How long do you usually spend in the town centre when you visit?

149 responses



*"More trees, more comfortable seating areas along the high street and tidying up - compare between here and Whetstone or Mill Hill (the others look better)."*

**2.1 Green assets** - Some popular green assets nearby (eg Friary Park, Victoria Park), but they are a 15 minute walk away and there is a want to stitch these in to create walking trails in and around the the town centre.

*"Whetstone is more developed with wider pavements and better dining options... It has a more diverse offer on the high street, not just veg stores or pound shops."*

##### 3. New public spaces:

13% of overall comments made relate to a desire to see new or improved public spaces in the town centre, such as a town square for gathering, social life, markets or events. There is not enough seating and it is often poorly located, orientated (facing the street) and maintained. More public benches and places to sit would encourage people to occupy the town centre and dwell longer.

Many people (23%) would like a place to sit and chat, to enjoy a coffee and socialise outdoors. To support town centre businesses, people suggested decreasing traffic congestion, encouraging independent businesses, and extending business hours into the evening.

**3.1 Quiet spaces** - Others would like quiet places to sit and rest, to allow them to stay longer in the town centre, and enjoy their leisure time there.

**3.2 Young people and play** - Suggestions for youth and community uses included having more community events, music events, outdoor events, performances, and more for young families and children.

##### 4. Character & identity:

Whilst some people and newcomers value North Finchley for its diversity and mix of affordable and independent food offer many say the town centre has lost its identity and there's no longer local pride from residents -

**4.1 Heritage** People remember the Gaumont Finchley and its Art Deco style and believe the place can be rejuvenated.

**4.2 Dance & Performance** There is a growing theme of dance, music and performance that will give North Finchley a strong Identity making it a place of animation, interactivity and dynamism that can inform the design of new public spaces and lighting.

**4.3 Businesses** - say their customers are the thing they like most about being located in North Finchley. Having regular customers in the local community is a plus.

There are also many comparisons to other town centres, which have attractive and accessible public realm, which create a nicer shopping and leisure environment for locals.

*"We're really enjoying being in North Finchley. It's a vibrant, diverse, multicultural place."*



The Gaumont Finchley 1937-1987  
Image credit: dusashenka

## Spatial analysis of North Finchley Town Centre and observations from street pop-ups

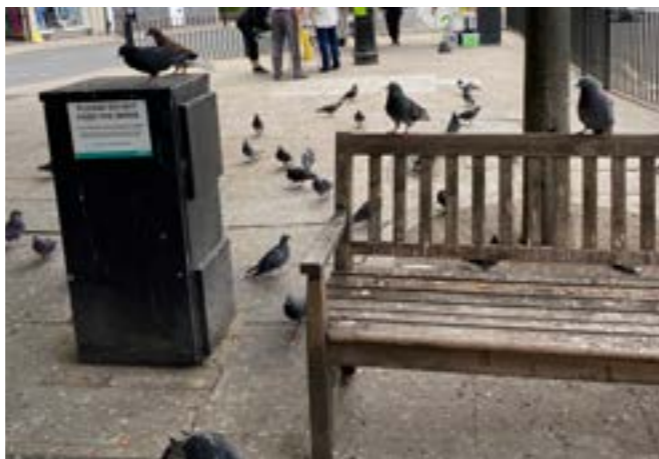
- There is no sense of arrival into the town centre. Strong gateways encourage visitors and enhance the appeal of the town centre. The arrival from the Woodside station is particularly unannounced as it follows a residential street.
- Residential streets abut the high street along its length, creating a number of thresholds, some with positive corners with wrap around active frontages and outdoor seating, but others are vehicular dominated junctions.
- While the town centre is busy with foot and car traffic, there is a lack of attractive places for people to pause, sit, socialise or spend time on the high street. Seating is poor, and not well positioned.
- Public realm spaces such as the areas in front of North Finchley Library, the YVA building (Starbucks), Sainsbury's, Tally Ho Corner and the forecourt to the artsdepot are harsh and unwelcoming and underutilised.
- There is a legacy of Art Deco architecture and attractive parades on the high street. These have the potential to add pockets of character but lack cohesion resulting in a disjointed high street.
- The high street has several attractive heritage buildings and potentially attractive spaces. However, the town centre as a whole has seen better days. Clutter and poor maintenance mask its strengths.
- There are a number of public art and memorials in the town centre celebrating heritage and community. These could strengthen the area's character, make the public realm more attractive.



Example of attractive architectural parades along the High Street



Advertisement structures create visual and physical barriers to pedestrian flow on high street



Benches at Tally Ho Corner

## Lighting study insight

The artsdepot entrance on Nether Street is a promising public space. At night it is dominated by street lighting and lacks human scale public furniture and feature lighting.

Windswept and littered, the space can be readily transformed into a more inviting space for people. Access from the east is for the buses and service vehicles.

## Placemaking

The Tally Ho corner has the promise of an identifiable local landmark and successful public space. However at night the space is dark and lacks presence. Public seating is in shadow and covered in bird droppings.

## Night identity

Dominated by street lighting and over-lit shop fronts as well as media screens.



Benches at Tally Ho Corner - uplighters don't work

## Sense of community (DPQ survey)

21% of respondents couldn't think of where to find a strong sense of community in the town centre and 13% didn't answer. People identified Bohemia, the Library and places of worship as playing an important role in community life.

20% of respondents felt that a quick improvement would be at Tally Ho Corner

## New public spaces

People would like to see:

- a central park / garden
- a seating area maintained and well lit
- More seating spilling out on to the streets

Public realm between between Lodge Lane car park and Sainsbury's could be improved where there are deep pavements.



Entrance to artsdepot - lacking human scale

## PRINCIPLE 2 - OVERALL FINDINGS

- Demand for a focus to the town centre for the community with a variety of pleasant places to sit and chat, some quiet, some active
- High street considered not well maintained, cleaning up and addressing poor environments (such as wind tunnels) would make big impacts
- De-cluttering the foot ways will improve overall experience, aid accessibility and enhance walking and connectivity.
- Town centre needs to compete with other nearby destinations and have a strong sense of identity, clear gateways and improved public realm



### SPD objective addressed by this draft principle: Town centre places

Objective 2 of the SPD is about delivering new public spaces, reducing conflicts between transport modes, increased greening, high quality urban design and development of town centre gateways.

## DRAFT PRINCIPLE 2 (a response to the findings summarised here)

### Reinforce North Finchley as a place with a strong, sustainable identity



#### We need to:

- **Strengthen local identity**
  - Celebrating past and growing a strong narrative for the present and future based on local assets
  - Create strong arrival experiences and mark entrance to the town centre with landmark structures enhanced through public art, maintaining long vistas and views promoting North Finchley's identity
  - Employ distinctive local materials and design palette that are robust and maintainable in the long term
  - Signage, wayfinding and public art used to communicate the ambitions for North Finchley and provide information on heritage, sustainability features and plants
- **Create a town centre focus**
  - Create new public space to gather and dwell in - a flexible new public space / town square
  - Increase maintainable public space in the town centre
- **Add depth and variety to the high street to create interest**
  - Provide a range of smaller public spaces of differing scales along the length of the high street to create interest
  - Explore potential uses of spaces off the high street to provide a range of experiences and opportunities
  - Use meanwhile activities to test new ways of using public space
- **Create a variety of public spaces**
  - Create opportunities for people to meet, chat, and sit and occupy the town centre without having to buy something
  - Bring diverse community together in public spaces
  - Provide infrastructure to support the cultural vision and action plan (performance, dance and music)
- **Create an attractive environment for people to dwell and spend time**
  - Mitigate wind tunnel effects
  - Create quiet spaces to sit and spend time
  - Ensure public spaces are well located to maximise comfort with both direct sunlight and shade and shelter.
  - Improvement of existing public spaces (for example, Tally Ho Corner), and the provision of new
- **Feature lighting to enhance key public spaces, aid wayfinding and bring to life inactive frontages**
  - Provide alternate visual emphasis at Tally Ho Corner, artsdepot entrance, new illuminated wayfinding devices
  - Invest in new lighting as a means of signalling council investment and intention. Possibly at the Tally Ho Corner to create a better seating area and sense of identity and focus. Also at the artsdepot and bus station.

## How we tested Principle 2



### Purpose of the exploratory

We discussed and shared thoughts on:

- Where to create new public spaces in the town centre – from pocket parks to large gathering spaces, from action packed to quiet and calm.
- Who will be using the spaces for what (from solitary, social, family, community, leisure and play or business related)
- How can spaces reflect the unique identity of North Finchley and its emerging vision
- How can lighting and public art contribute to the quality of the space

### Who this activity was aimed at

Anyone interested in creating new and improved public spaces in the town centre.

### Street Session 2 took place

**Date:** Saturday 19 November

**Location:** North Finchley – Tally Ho Corner

### What we did

We used small stools and other small objects such as plants and a small rug to represent the idea of occupying public space. The objects helped us look at some potential new spaces and explored:

- Where to locate a bench / place to sit in the space
- What the challenges might be (eg street clutter, pavement widths, space for business activation etc)
- What direction are we looking in and why (is there a view?)
- What is the micro-climate and how does this affect the position?
- What is the look and feel – how can materials, and lighting and public art reflect identity



Instagram post used to encourage people to the Street Session



# WHAT WE HEARD – STAGE 2 ENGAGEMENT

“ There is real issue with isolation - having a range of public spaces that people can enjoy and be free to use and some quieter spaces would be good. ”

“ Making the public spaces clean would be transformative. ”

“ Pleasant places to rest usually involve some green space, or at least some nice space. Just a bench on high street won't do it. ”

“ These buildings [on the high street] area really very beautiful buildings but they haven't been maintained. ”

“ It makes such a difference being even just a few metres off the high street. It's much quieter. It also feels warmer and more sheltered here. There's no wind tunnel. ”  
on Torrington Park road

“ Seating and greenery at Tally Ho corner will only work if you pedestrianise Ballards Lane. Otherwise its too noisy for people to sit here. ”  
on Tally Ho Corner

“ The availability of benches and places to sit is critical for an accessible town centre. Some days I need to be able to stop and pause. So the more I feel that I can be active [visiting a town centre] the better I feel. ”

“ Signage and helping people see artsdepot's entrance is critical. ”

“ I want the space to be nice and beautiful, somewhere to be proud of and for everyone. ”



Poll from Instagram (northfinchleytowncentre)

## REVISED PRINCIPLE 2

### Reinforce North Finchley as a place with a strong, sustainable identity

Based on what we heard and discovered in the testing process the draft principle has refined to the following (yellow boxes denote changes from Stage 1 engagement):

Here are a some potential opportunities we're exploring based on what you've told us...

We need to:

► **Strengthen local identity**

- > Celebrating the past and growing a strong narrative for the present and future based on local assets and diverse identity. This can happen through the design of the public realm and a growing local day and evening economy. Retaining historic buildings, and arts venues along with the memories they hold.
- > Create strong arrival experiences. Mark entrances to the town centre and make key facilities clearly visible, welcoming and easy to access. Use strong identifiable design that reinforces the local identity.
- > Employ distinctive materials and design palettes for key public spaces, continued elsewhere to connect inside and outside across the wider public realm. Materials should be robust and maintainable.
- > Use signage, wayfinding and public art to communicate the ambitions for North Finchley and provide information on heritage, sustainability features and plants.

► **Create a town centre focus**

- > Create a new public space to gather and dwell in eg a flexible new public space or 'town square' bringing people together, promoting social integration and creating a healthier, more liveable town centre.

► **Add depth and variety to the high street to create interest**

- > Increase and make more accessible, maintainable public space in the town centre, including streets, squares and internal public spaces (eg the artsdepot, the library, shopping arcades and faith/community centres). Consider potential roof top gardens to contribute to the public experience.
- > Ensure internal public spaces are visible from, and animate, the street.

- > Provide a range of public spaces of differing scales along the length of the high street and set-back for variety and differing uses/needs.
- > Explore potential uses of spaces off the high street to provide a range of experiences and opportunities, including lanes, courtyards and mews.

► **Create a variety of public spaces**

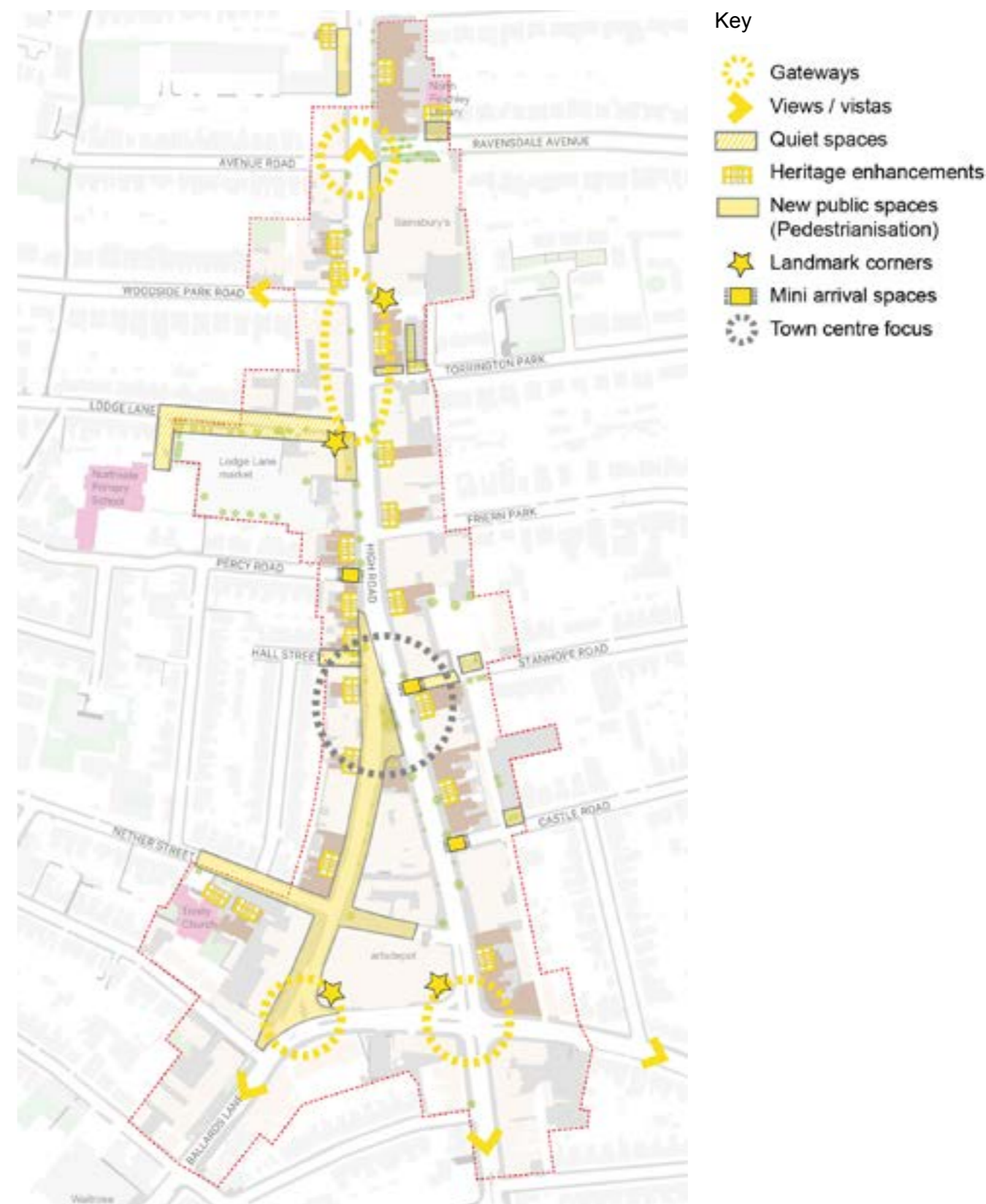
- > Create opportunities for people to meet, chat, sit and occupy the town centre, for solo, family and group scale events. Include opportunities for play, exercise, screenings, markets, drifting.

► **Create a comfortable environment for people to dwell and spend time**

- > Mitigate wind tunnel effects.
- > Provide barriers and buffers to traffic noise, and carefully locate quiet, attractive public spaces with improved air quality.
- > Locate public spaces to maximise comfort with both direct sunlight, shade and shelter.
- > Make a cleaner and healthier town centre through social media campaigns, businesses, schools and community responsibility.

► **Use feature lighting to enhance key public spaces, aid wayfinding and bring to life inactive frontages**

- > At key entrances and public spaces supplement street lighting with feature lighting to animate, illuminate and mark the town centre's unique characteristics.



## 7.0 DRAFT PRINCIPLE 3

**To make North Finchley a vibrant community destination throughout the day and evening**

### What we heard during our engagement with the community and businesses

#### 1. Not enough to do:

There is feedback that the current town centre does not provide enough draw for locals, who other than quick errands, seem to choose other town centres to spend more time in than North Finchley, despite living in the local catchment; simply not enough to do.

Mixed views on quality of shops – though consensus is that shops are poor quality and lack variety, there are also a few cafes that are much loved by the people.

**1.1 - The artsdepot** is isolated and although quite a few use it, the widely held view is that it does not connect with North Finchley as a place or engage with the local community.

Very few places for young people and teenagers to hang out.

*“More entertainment for young people and children, better recreational facilities.”*

**1.2 - Lack of play spaces** - for and children, with the Percy Road Playground the only space currently available close by.

*“Make it greener with more playgrounds and spaces for adults to hang out/sit - the playground on Percy road is the only playground around, it’s small and feels unsafe at night.”*

**1.3 - Parks** too far away; not much space for play beyond organised classes and groups

Though some people value the range of places to eat during the day, North Finchley is not an evening destination for most. Evening activity is concentrated to zone just north of Tally Ho Corner.

*“More opportunities for cultural and community activation in public spaces.”*

#### 2.0 Markets

The market has declined over past decade, and particularly since Covid. Only on Fridays, number of stalls dwindling and little aspirational. Hidden in Lodge Lane car park. Respondents have identified the demand for improved markets that appeal to a wider audience, with many suggestions that these could be French/farmer style markets, food stalls and host community events.

*“Food cart areas or market stall area to encourage small local businesses.”*



Performance at the artsdepot



#### 3.0 Opening hours

46% of businesses who participated said they would consider opening later into the evenings, however this was conditional on measures being implemented to make the area safer for customers and staff at night time, and for business owners to operate.

Businesses also note that declining footfall is something that prevents them from opening later, and if other businesses were open later, they would too.

*“We reduced our hours since Covid and footfall doesn’t encourage us to open later.”*

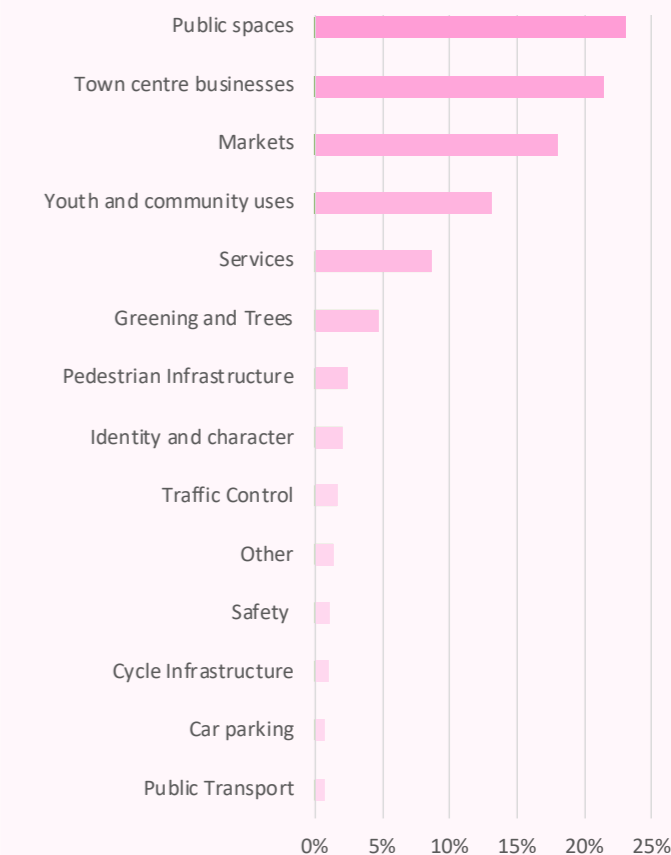
#### 4.0 Music and festivals

Many people have strong and fond memories of the Finchley Music Festival and parades through the high streets - they would like to see the return of this kind of community event.

*“Give us a fixed open market area.”*

### What would you like to do in the town centre?

122 responses, 299 comments



Most people want public spaces to enjoy, a more varied retail offer, markets and things for families and young people to do.

#### 5.0 Youth and community facilities

There is a lack of community facilities to attract families to the area, including play spaces or spaces for events. Attracting more families to the town centre would activate the high street and make it livelier and safer for all.

## Spatial analysis of North Finchley Town Centre and observations from street pop-ups

- While many frontages on the high street are active during the day, the town centre is significantly different in the evenings and at night, when few businesses are open and some frontages are closed with shutters
- Consideration needs to be given to which areas are sunny / shaded areas. Some public spaces have been identified as wind tunnels, an effect exacerbated by their hard surfaces and frontages, and a lack of greening
- Diversity was mentioned in previous engagement as one of the town centre's most celebrated characteristics. This is visible in the public realm in mix of signs, scripts, colours, tastes and smells experienced on the high street
- Evening economy - this happens in small bursts along the high street; currently the main focus is just north of Tally Ho Corner. Streets are well lit. At night there is little human activity visible in the public realm
- Potential for public realm to provide desired spaces for community activity and encounters
- Street life is becoming more evident along the High Road and Ballards Lane, with new independent cafes, bakeries and restaurants and associated street seating
- The public realm lacks the infrastructure to be able to host the events, and the larger spaces for gathering to host public gatherings and events here



*The Grand Arcade is the only off high street space*



*Positive frontage wrapping round to side street*

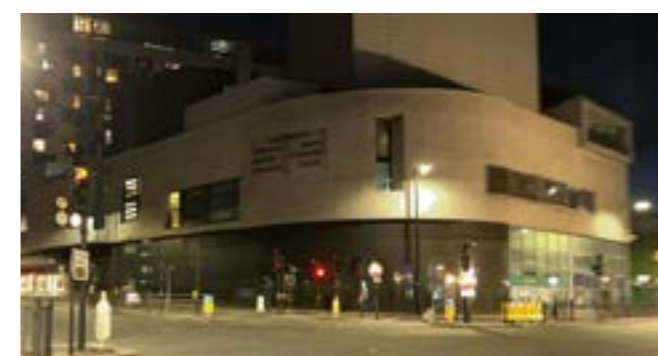


*North Finchley town centre at night - large space*

## Lighting study insight

The artsdepot street frontages along Kingsway, Ballards Lane and the High Road present long stretches of inactive facade. This emphasises the singular nature of the ground level usage. The street facade and tall mass of the building are the primary architectural elements giving identity to the southern edge of the North Finchley Town Centre.

Opportunities include light and art installations on inactive facades to explore the cultural vision for North Finchley



*Inactive Bus Station facade*

## Cultural placemaking (DPQ survey)

Through engagement the community have identified they would like to see the following Cultural Activation within the public realm.

- Live music and busking
- Arts and crafts and learning
- Exercise classes
- Cinema / film clubs and screenings
- Leisure centre activities
- Social and community activities
- More events at the artsdepot

## Increasing creativity, culture and community life through:

- Markets (eg farmers)
- Carnivals / festivals / live music
- Activities for the young
- Community centre / hub
- Green space / community garden in the town centre

## Business responses

The majority of businesses said they would support community events

## PRINCIPLE 3 - OVERALL FINDINGS

- **Lacking in variety of shops**
- **Lack of facilities - high street not considered a leisure destination**
- **Limited activities for families, children and teens, and need for these to be affordable / free**
- **The existing Friday market is in decline, but there is demand for other types of markets**
- **Need to provide infrastructure from stages and screens to plug and play technology to enable the cultural ambitions of the public realm**

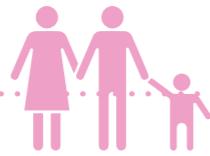
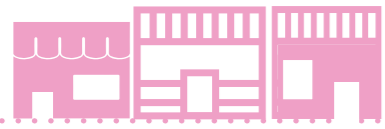


### SPD objective addressed by this draft principle: Town centre people

Objective 3 of the SPD is about increased footfall and town centre vitality, mix of housing and improved community facilities

## DRAFT PRINCIPLE 3 (a response to the findings summarised here)

**To make North Finchley a vibrant community destination throughout the day and evening**



### We need to:

- **Accommodate and encourage a range of activities**
  - Use vacant shop spaces to activate, complement and enhance the public realm
  - Support the local creative and business community with event infrastructure in public space
  - Attractions to bring interest and focus to the town centre
  - Enhance existing and create new public spaces at different scales and locations that support a variety of activities, including quieter spaces that are free to enjoy individually and in small groups
- **Activate the public realm**
  - Arts depot and other local cultural organisations
  - Meanwhile uses
  - Markets of all types
- **Provide for play**
  - Integrate play through imaginative means, in the public realm
  - Consider informal play routes through the town centre

- Provide a destination 'play' space at the heart of the town centre which is safe for families to use
- **Provide affordable space for young people**
  - Provide spaces where young people [16-21yrs] are welcome and their activities catered for
- **Celebrate diversity**
  - Create flexible public spaces that can be programmed for a variety of events
  - Reflect local community demographics in materials, street furniture, signage
  - Shared community facilities for events and cultural activities
- **Seating**
  - Provide public seating areas with lighting integrated to make spaces for people
  - Seating with clearly defined role, from pausing on the high road whilst shopping, space for lunch breaks and informal working, quiet contemplation, watching people and performance and for large gatherings.

## How we tested Principle 3



### Purpose of the exploratory

We explored potential locations for the cultural action plan and what is needed to enable them:

- Markets
- Carnivals / festivals / live music
- Activities for the young
- Community centre / hub
- Green space / community garden in the town centre
- Leisure centre activities
- Play, sport, fitness
- Cinema, film, screening
- Social gatherings and meeting

### Who this activity was aimed at

Anyone interested in testing the ideas suggested by people for the town centre.

### Street Session 3 took place:

**Date:** Saturday 19 November

**Location:** North Finchley – artsdepot cafe

### What we did

Based in the artsdepot café and on location in the town centre we:

- Tested locations
- Explored what is needed to enable the activity
- Invited the London Studio dancers to respond through dance and to explore the scene



Instagram post used to encourage people to the Street Session

# WHAT WE HEARD – STAGE 2 ENGAGEMENT

“ There are not many places you can go meet as a community. ”

“ Bringing markets will bring people. Some activity will get people. Think it will help business. ”

“ Need a hub space – for now and after – an information point. ”

“ Need places for teenagers to retreat – a lot need a creative outlet. ”

“ Tally Ho is so gloomy – they don’t even bother turning the lights on. How great would it be if there were fairy lights in the trees - like in the pub [next door]. ”  
*on Tally Ho Corner*

“ Too windy – need a canopy. Could be a quieter green walkway especially if Ballards lane is closed ”  
*on Nether Street*

“ The focal point doesn’t need to be something physical that’s built, it needs to be an activity like a market. ”

“ If it was a town centre square it would need a focal point. This could be a stage, a fountain, a canopy, the existing gass lamp post, a community noticeboard, etc ”  
*on Tally Ho Corner*



Poll from Instagram (northfinchleytowncentre)

# REVISED PRINCIPLE 3

## To make North Finchley a vibrant community destination throughout the day and evening

Based on what we heard and discovered in the testing process the draft principle has refined to the following (pink boxes denote changes from Stage 1 engagement):

Here are a some potential opportunities we're exploring based on what you've told us...

We need to:

► **Accommodate and encourage a range of activities**

- > Use vacant shop spaces and ground floor public spaces to activate, complement and enhance the public realm.
- > Support the local creative and business communities via a cultural vision and action plan, introducing infrastructure in public spaces for events.
- > Bring interest and focus to the town centre with attractions such as water features, large screens and a flexible event space.
- > Provide a family of street furniture that is recognisable and adaptable to be used in different locations.

► **Activate the public realm**

- > Support the artsdepot and other local cultural organisations (eg London Dance Studio, dance schools, faith groups, schools) to extend activities into the public spaces and within the public spaces of the artsdepot.
- > Establish a new street market space for North Finchley that can host a number of specialist markets, eg Christmas Markets, and be used for other activities when not operating as a market.
- > Use meanwhile activities to test new ways of using public space.
- > Make businesses more visible as part of the town centre animation. Introduce a business and creative hub at the northern end of the high street, using the site of the telephone exchange and industrial buildings behind. Consider having another market here, in the set-back space along the High Road.

> Integrate plug and play light and sound for events, festivals (eg Christmas, Diwali, Eid, Hanukah) and interactive installations.

► **Provide for play**

- > Integrate play through imaginative means as part of the public realm, with multiple types of play and interaction.
- > Consider informal play routes through the town centre and the opportunity to create school / play streets linking to the various local schools.
- > Provide a destination 'play' space at the heart of the town centre which is safe for families to use.

► **Provide affordable space for young people**

- > Provide spaces where young people [16-21yrs] are welcome and their activities catered for and local economic providers with affordable food and activities.

► **Celebrate diversity**

- > Create flexible public spaces that can be programmed for a variety of events.
- > Reflect local community demographics in materials, street furniture, signage.
- > Support shared community facilities for events and cultural activities.

► **Access, inclusion and equality**

- > Provide public seating areas with integrated planting and lighting to make spaces for people and wildlife and encourage biodiversity.
- > Seating that could accommodate different uses eg resting while shopping, taking a lunch break, informal working, quiet contemplation, people-watching, performance, and large gatherings.
- > Free WiFi and access to public toilets, through local shops with clear signage.



**Key**

- ★ Cultural / civic use
- Vacant shops / wayfinding
- Place activation:**
- ★ - performance (lighting)
- - seating
- - market
- - play
- - active frontages

## 8.0 DRAFT PRINCIPLE 4

### To make North Finchley a greener, cleaner and healthier town centre

#### What we heard during our engagement with the community and businesses

##### 1. Traffic Control

8% of comments were about the need to control traffic in the town centre. People were mostly concerned with improving / reducing noise and air pollution created by vehicles and heavy congestion along High Road. Respondents said this made the town centre a less enjoyable place to spend time in.

*"I would like to have more restaurants with outdoor seating, but without so much traffic noise & pollution."*

##### 1.1. Deliveries

Numerous uncoordinated deliveries to and from businesses. Business deliveries often in front of business.



##### 2. Greening

15% of respondents said that greening and trees would improve the public realm along the North Finchley high street. This includes suggestions of trees, green spaces, flowers and shrubs.

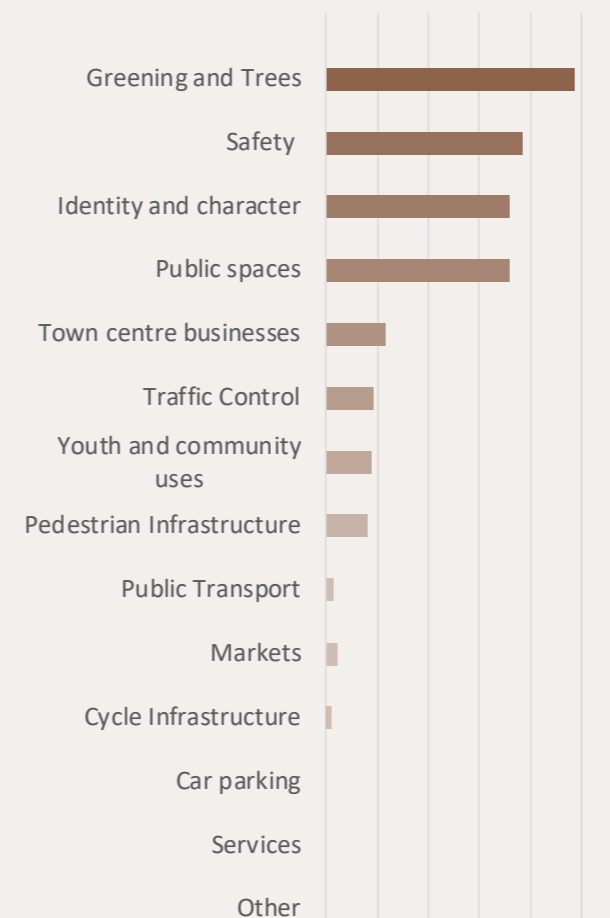
**2.1 People want more trees** along the high street. There is a potential to create quieter / greener spaces just off the high street and around junctions to reduce impact of the roads

Nearby green spaces are popular but not on doorstep.

**2.2 Encourage biodiversity** - almost a quarter of all comments referred to aspects of greening and trees contributing to them enjoying a public space. Specifically, general greenery, trees and flowers to encourage biodiversity were mentioned, as well as places with options of sun and shade.

#### What qualities help you enjoy a public space?

151 responses, 301 comments



The qualities people said helped them enjoy a public space most was Greening and Trees (24%)

##### 3. Improved public spaces

Many respondents would like new or improved public spaces in the town centre. This would be mostly to provide a place to sit and socialise without having to go to a cafe or restaurant.

Seating was an important part of this, as a current lack of seating in the town centre prevents people from staying longer.

There was also mention of public amenities such as water fountains or toilets would make people stay in the town centre for a longer period of time.

*"Much less traffic, cleaner air, wider pavements, remove parking, new bike lanes throughout, more pedestrian crossings, especially on all side roads."*



*"Given the amount of traffic on the high road I think pavements need to be widened and create some 'green' barrier between the road and the pavements. A green area, centrally located, would also benefit the wellbeing of the residents."*



## Spatial analysis of North Finchley Town Centre and observations from street pop-ups

- Although there are some street trees along the high street, there is a significant lack of greening, vegetation or biodiversity. This exacerbates the dominance of hard surfaces within the town centre, which absorb and retain heat.
- Green Infrastructure within Public Realm – street facing greenery = 4% of Public Realm (= 96% Road / Pavement / Car Park). In the next stage we will use the GLA's Urban Greening Factor calculator to assess the amount and quality of the green infrastructure of North Finchley and consider ways the regeneration project can support increasing the greening of the public realm.
- The extensive hard surfaces indicate a lack of sustainable drainage and threat of flooding and need for improved water management.
- Current green infrastructure is mainly trees and many are at the end of their lives, although there are recently planted Ginko trees on Ballards Lane.
- In urban areas greening aspiration can be limited due to significant utilities running along the A-road. A Utilities survey has been completed and will inform the engagement event as to where trees can be planted.
- The A1000 (the High Road) is a major route into and out of London. North Finchley is outside London's Ultra Low Emission Zone (border is North Circular). A GLA air quality monitoring station is located near Northside primary school, due to the levels of pollution.
- The town centre includes several micro-climates and wind tunnels. Consideration needs to be given to which areas are sunny / shaded areas and how to address hostile environments such as by the bus station.
- Council commitment to installing 116 electric car charging points, with 44 already installed across the borough.



Signs of greening - Parklet on High Road



Bleak environment of the Bus Station



High Road lacks greenery and is car dominated

## Cultural placemaking (DPQ survey)

- Need to support the creation of biodiversity through the creation habitats - see wayfinding strategy town centre ribbon.
- Need to consider pollinator trails along the high street length to support animals to move through the town centre.



Future green space and biodiversity enhancement at Northside Primary school



Mature American Sycamore tree on the High Road



Map showing trees along the high street and areas where there is currently no greening space other than temporary parklets

### Council objective addressed by this principle: Town centre sustainability

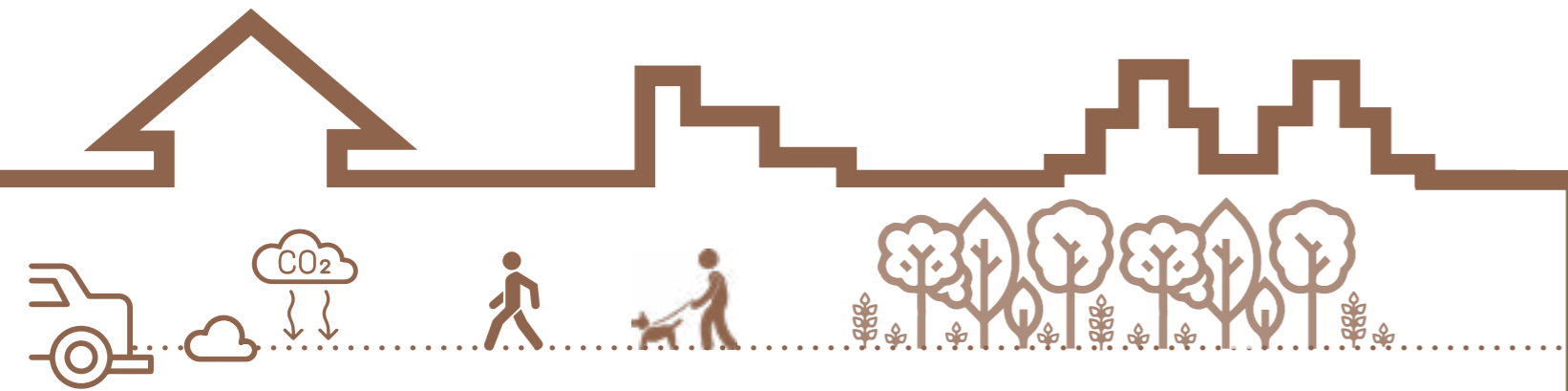
Barnet Council declared Climate emergency on 24 May 2022. This recognises the existing commitment to the Air Quality Action Plan 2017-2022, existing target to plant 4500 new trees over the next five years, and installing electric vehicle points across the borough.

## PRINCIPLE 4 - OVERALL FINDINGS

- **People would like more greenery, trees and dedicated green spaces to make hard surfaces less prominent**
- **Traffic management needed to reduce air pollution**
- **Greening measures such as rain gardens and permeable surfaces to reduce water run off and provide water retention**
- **Mitigating measures needed to combat noise pollution from vehicles**

## DRAFT PRINCIPLE 4 (a response to the findings summarised here)

### To make North Finchley a greener, cleaner and healthier town centre



#### We need to:

- **Support active and sustainable travel**

- Create better environment for cycling
- Facilitate safe crossing of high street at frequent intervals to improve connection between both sides

- **Support biodiversity**

- Green corridors
- Better links to existing green spaces further away

- **Enhance wellbeing**

- Improve air quality
- Encourage active travel by encouraging pedestrian and cycling experience

- Improve access to nature
- Reduce wind tunnel effect

- **Waste / repair / recycling**

- Responsible choice of materials, including reuse
- Shared use of spaces
- Consolidate waste management

- **Implement measures to reduce climate change**

- SuDs / anti-flooding
- Heatwave cooling, noise pollution and air quality
- Address climate emergency through introduction of green infrastructure

- **Environmental improvements and wellbeing, including safety and attractiveness**

- Develop an appropriate palette of materials
- Improve pedestrian and cycling experience
- Improve lighting on side streets
- Address climate emergency through introduction of green infrastructure
- Design and manage light across the town centre to promote safety, ambience and sustainability
- Improved wayfinding to nearby green spaces to improve access by foot, bike etc

- **Quick wins**

- Meanwhile projects
- Cleanliness, place lighting

- **Wayfinding**

- Use greenery and biodiversity as wayfinding device
- Stitch nearby green spaces together increasing access to nature
- Improve walkability of the town centre

## How we tested Principle 4



### Purpose of the exploratory

We discussed and shared thoughts on location about where it might be possible to green the high street, increase biodiversity, clean up by:

- Planting a tree
- Greening the high street
- Widening the pavement
- Other green infrastructure (eg green walls, planters, green roofs)
- Increasing biodiversity

### Who joined

Anyone interested in creating a sustainable future for the town centre, enhancing well being, greening the town centre and addressing climate emergency.

### Street Session 4 took place

**Date:** Saturday 12 November

**Location:** North Finchley - Nether Street / artsdepot

### What we did

There was a group walkabout the town centre with tools (chalk and plant on wheels and green mats) to locate ideas.



Instagram post used to encourage people to the Street Session

# WHAT WE HEARD – STAGE 2 ENGAGEMENT

“ Less clutter and more greenery are conducive to good mental health. ”

“ Love the idea of a green carpet, with rain gardens and sustainable drainage, drought resistant planting and a variety for all year interest. ”

“ Wildlife-friendly planting clusters are generally joyful. ”

“ I see a wasted space here. You could create a simple terrace with some sort of a cover. ”  
on Stanhope Road car park

“ You could put hanging baskets all along the railings, or hedges – they absorb so much more pollution. ”  
on Tally Ho Corner

“ The space outside the artsdepot is not attractive – a green buffer to separate and screen the service street – trees / plants could be in planters so they can be moved later. ”

“ A buffer of planters between pavement and road would make it feel safer and more protected. ”  
on Kingsway

“ Maintenance is a huge issue – walking past dead plants is really depressing. ”



Poll from Instagram (northfinchleytowncentre)

# REVISED PRINCIPLE 4

## To make North Finchley a greener, cleaner and healthier town centre

Based on what we heard and discovered in the testing process the draft principle has refined to the following (brown boxes denote changes from Stage 1 engagement):

Here are a some potential opportunities we're exploring based on what you've told us...

We need to:

► **Improve the public realm environment**

- > Enhance existing greenery (trees, parks and gardens) to improve the public experience of North Finchley town centre and make it more pleasant to visit.
- > Minimise environmental impact by specifying responsibly sourced materials with low carbon content.
- > Design and manage light across the town centre to promote safety, ambience and sustainability. Consider impact on wildlife.

► **Support biodiversity**

- > Devise a clear planting strategy, setting out aims for improving biodiversity, enhancing sensory experience and providing year-round interest.
- > Use robust and informal planting to minimise management and maintenance, and to address climate change.
- > Devise a spatial strategy to enable green corridors with better links to existing green spaces further away, increasing access to nature.
- > Provide green roofs within new developments and retrofits to increase biodiversity.

► **Address climate emergency and limited resources**

- > Design the public realm to play a positive role in rainwater management. Avoid run off and flooding by providing rainwater retention through permeable paving, rain gardens, and attenuation to create a sustainable drainage network (SuDS).
- > Plant new trees to increase carbon capture, including larger trees or green walls for shade, shelter and noise

dampening.

- > Restrict vehicular access where possible.
- > Consolidate waste management, re-use and circular economy.

► **Enhance health and wellbeing**

- > Use planting strategy to buffer noise and pollution from the High Road and make more pleasant places to dwell.
- > Improve air quality, through restricting vehicular access.
- > Connect people to nature, encouraging walking, inclusion and access.
- > Promote community wellbeing through enhanced social interaction and engagement.
- > Provide spaces to learn and develop skills and increase awareness of environmental issues.
- > Improve walkability of the town centre.

► **Support active and sustainable travel**

- > Facilitate safe crossing of high street at frequent intervals to improve connection between both sides.
- > Create better environment for cycling.
- > Reduce wind tunnel effect and make it safer and more comfortable to move around.



Key

- Trees
- Green street
- Living wall
- Lack of greening
- Existing trees

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