

CENTRE FOR LONDON

High streets and placemaking in Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea

Nicolas Bosetti and Claire Harding

About the authors

Claire Harding

Claire is Research Director at Centre for London. She joined the Centre in 2020 and is responsible for our research programme. Before joining Centre for London, Claire worked at Coram Family and Childcare, and she has also previously worked in mental health and local government consultancy.

Nicolas Bosetti

Nicolas is Head of Data and Insight at Centre for London. He is chiefly interested in cities, governance and regional economic development, and at Centre for London he has co-authored reports on inequality and social mobility, city planning, and sustainable transport. Nicolas has an MSc in Urban Policy.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to our current and former Centre for London colleagues who assisted with this research: Kieran Connelly, Jo Corfield, Josh Cottell, Sana Ikram, Denean Rowe, Rob Whitehead and Jon Tabbush.

Foreword

High streets are crucial for the lives of local residents, providing vital services to our communities.

In Kensington and Chelsea, we're lucky to have some of the most famous high streets in London, from King's Road to Portobello Road, attracting visitors from all around the world.

High streets everywhere have faced a range of challenges in recent years, from the closure of many high-profile brands, the rise of online shopping, lack of investment and of course the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. It is the Council's mission and responsibility to provide the support and tools to help them to survive and thrive in the coming years, making sure they are fit for purpose now and in the future. We must make sure that high streets in the borough continue to serve local communities, while attracting domestic and international tourists, retaining the reputation of being world-class shopping destinations.

Since 2020 our officers have researched and introduced new ways to support our high streets. From making al fresco dining an option for more hospitality businesses through innovative pavement licensing, to making busy areas such as Portobello Market and Thurloe Place pedestrian only at crucial shopping hours.

The independent data gathered by Centre for London in this report allows the Council to learn from temporary interventions introduced during the pandemic and see if there is value to maintaining and building on them post-Covid. We can gain insight into what works and what we can improve upon with outdoor hospitality and seating, pedestrianisation and greening.

Our Planning and Place teams will be working with local communities on how we support the unique town centres across the borough. We are already talking to residents and businesses to get their views on local high streets and this, combined with the data and research from Centre for London, provides clear direction on how we can move forward.

High streets are an integral part of our borough to sustain the local economy, employment and quality of life. The more we can invest in them now, the better shape they will be in for the coming years and better equipped to adapt for any new future challenges.

Cllr Catherine Faulks

Lead Member for Economy, Employment and Innovation

Introduction	5
Placemaking principles	8
The placemaking context	9
The placemaking toolbox	10
High street action plan: Portobello Road	14
High street action plan: Notting Hill Gate	25
High street action plan: Gloucester Road	36
Case Studies	48

Introduction

About this report

High streets are at the heart of local communities – 70 per cent of residents in Kensington and Chelsea live within 200 metres of a high street – and for many people their importance has increased through the pandemic as we have been staying local more. New licenses for al fresco dining, and changes to make walking and cycling easier have had a significant impact on high streets around London. The project examines the effects of temporary pandemic-era interventions into place shaping on the borough's residents and businesses and, in partnership with local people, propose a longer-term plan for the borough.

This report is for phase 1 on the project. It looks at RBKC's high streets and how they can recover from the pandemic, with in-depth looks at three very different high streets in the borough to create high street action plans, and a set of case studies with ideas and inspiration.

What happens next

In phase two of the project, we will focus on sustainable transport in the borough - looking in general at the balance between different modes of transport in and around high streets, and specifically at active travel and modes of travel along High Street Kensington. This part of the work will be completed in summer 2022. For more information please see <https://www.centreforlondon.org/project/place-shaping-kensington-chelsea/>.

About Centre for London

Centre for London is the capital's dedicated think tank. Our mission is to develop new solutions to London's critical challenges and advocate for a fair and prosperous global city. We were commissioned to deliver this work by the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea in summer 2021.

How we created this report

This report is based on a number of different sources of information:

- Consultation with residents conducted on behalf of RBKC
 - o Conducted by Mutual Gain: a series of workshops with groups of residents in different parts of the borough, conducted online due to the pandemic
 - o Conducted by Commonplace: an online engagement platform producing quantitative data on residents' views about high streets in the borough
- Two reference groups of people with particular knowledge and expertise in the area
 - o A local reference group of individuals and organisations based in the borough, including resident groups, third sector bodies, and businesses and cultural organisations
 - o An expert reference group of professionals from outside RBKC with experience of placemaking for high streets and/or in sustainable travel
- "Borough walks" around high streets in RBKC with councillors, officers,

and Centre for London staff - to discuss the strengths and challenges for different areas in the borough, and for placemaking as a whole

- On-the ground research by Centre for London staff in the three high street action plan areas - Gloucester Road, Notting Hill Gate, and Portobello Road
 - A review of key internal RBKC documents, including some produced in house and some commissioned from other external organisations
 - A literature review of reports and documents related to placemaking and high streets outside of RBKC
 - Statistical data from the ONS and GLA on RBKC's population, for the high street action plans

Placemaking Principles

Good high streets combine retail, hospitality, culture and essential services in a concentration that is compelling and sustainable.

The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea want their high streets to:

- Be places people want to **visit and to stay**, with facilities which encourage people to spend time there and to connect with others
- Adapt and change based on **involvement from the community**, and on learning from what has worked here and elsewhere
- **Work for everyone**: from babies to teenagers to working-age adults to older people
- Be **healthy places**, which encourage active travel, and with as little traffic noise and pollution as possible
- Have their own **individual character** based on their unique history and geography
- Be part of the **solution to the climate crisis**: reducing emissions and adapting to changing conditions, and with plenty of plants and green space
- Be **places for culture**, art, festivals, events and activities: during the day and into the evening

RBKC don't control every aspect of their high streets: they have limited influence over which businesses choose to open here, over the location and traffic management of major roads, and over our public transport connections. Wherever they can, they will work with partner organisations as well as the local community to make change happen.

These principles inform the placemaking action plans in the sections below, and will also be used during phase two of the project where Centre for London will look at the connection between high streets and active travel.

We have collected a group of case studies which illustrate each of these principles – they are set out in the final section of this report.

The Placemaking Context

This project is about placemaking for local high streets: the ways that local authorities and their partners can change local high streets to make them places that people want to come and to stay. Placemaking for high streets is particularly important in the recovery from the coronavirus pandemic, as this has changed the way that many people use high streets. They include:

- People spending more time in the area near their homes, rather than travelling for work or other purposes
- People spending more time outdoors, including dining outdoors – either because they were required to by law, or because they prefer to so they can reduce infection risk
- People using active travel (bikes or walking) in preference to public transport
- Fewer international tourists travelling to the UK, and more UK residents taking holidays within the country

These changes are still happening in RBKC and in other high streets across the UK and overseas, and we don't yet know what impact they will have in the long term. However, it does seem likely that trends towards more home working, and towards a preference for outdoor dining when the weather allows it, will continue at least in the medium term. An increased preference for active travel is also likely to continue, driven in part by people seeking environmentally friendly transport options, in part by ongoing reluctance to use crowded public transport services, and in part by measures taken by government at various levels to discourage driving.

The Placemaking toolbox

Local authorities have different tools at their disposal to shape their places. These include strategic decisions like how much housing to build in and near high streets, whether to incentivise companies to move into their borough, whether to bid for major infrastructure projects, and so on – these are largely outside the scope of this project. They may also be able to make changes to high streets using assets they already own, in particular public buildings – this could be to the use of the building itself, to the use of its grounds, or to how it looks.

Potential partners will vary slightly for different high streets, but may include:

- Business Improvement Districts, if one is active or developing in the area, or business forums
- Amenity societies and other groups which represent local residents
- Organisations which are led by and work with specific groups, in particular young people
- The local NHS, notably if it has a high street presence
- Transport for London, principally on bus routes and the strategic road network
- Local cultural and religious groups, especially if they have a high street building

Some of the key practical interventions that local authorities can make are:

Table 1

Area for change	Examples
Pavement space and kerbside use	Al fresco dining space on pavements Restrictions on parking on kerbs
Managing driving	Speed bumps and speed limits Pedestrian and bike crossings Restrictions to reduce or control flow of traffic on side roads
Road space	Road closures (temporary or permanent), including space for dining Bike lanes and advanced stop lines Bus lanes Pavement widening which takes from road space Parking policy and smart kerb management Note that cycling and active travel will be covered in more detail in phase 2 of the project

Table 1

Area for change	Examples
Transport facilities	<p>Changes to bus stops (and train/tube/tram, but this is rare)</p> <p>Bike parking, bike hire docks and scooter hire bays</p> <p>Car parking</p>
Walking routes	<p>Maps and wayfinding</p> <p>Pedestrian routes for culture, art and heritage</p> <p>Pedestrian routes for green space or less traffic</p>
Public art	<p>Murals</p> <p>Sculptures and statues</p> <p>Water features</p> <p>Temporary art on hoardings or vacant properties</p>
Festivals and events	<p>Religious or cultural celebrations</p> <p>One-off markets and shopping events</p> <p>Historical events and anniversaries</p>
Plants and greenery	<p>Planters and hanging baskets</p> <p>Trees</p> <p>Green walls</p> <p>Micro-parks</p> <p>Green benches</p>
Visual identity	<p>Streetlamp and public transport banners</p> <p>Messaging on public buildings</p> <p>Design-led hoardings and banners</p>
Use of vacant space	<p>Displays on windows and temporary hoardings</p> <p>Meanwhile use by community groups</p>
Public facilities	<p>Public toilets and baby changing</p> <p>Community toilet scheme in shops and cafes</p> <p>Water fountains/water bottle refill points</p>
Places to stop	<p>Benches and picnic tables</p> <p>Low walls</p> <p>Small green spaces</p>

Table 1

Area for change	Examples
Places for children	Playgrounds Bike and skate parks Fountains
Safety and security	CCTV Policing, street wardens and other personnel Regulation and enforcement
Lighting	Street lighting Lighting of public buildings Christmas lights and similar
Climate resilience	Trees for shade Built structures for shade Permeable surfaces for water run-off
Accessibility	Dropped kerbs Ramped access Tactile pavements

The following high street action plans are derived from this placemaking toolbox. The areas for action plans were chosen by RBKC in discussion with Centre for London. The same format could be used to create future action plans for other high streets in the borough, and to update these plans.

RBKC intend to consult on these action plans with local groups, and to maintain them as live documents once they are published.

High street action plan: Portobello Road

About the area

Portobello Market straddles Golborne and Colville wards. The area attracts around 100,000 visitors a week to its weekend market, with a broad range of retail and hospitality options, catering from local essential needs to high end specialty shops and restaurants. It is globally famous for the Notting Hill Carnival, and has a rich Afro-Caribbean heritage.

It is a very mixed area socio-economically: qualification levels are lower than in RBKC as a whole, and deprivation levels well above the national average. Between one third and one half of residents have a Level 4 qualification, lower than the RBKC average – and levels of disability and life-limiting illness are higher than in RBKC overall.

Table 2: SWOT Analysis

Strengths

Strong brand and reputation attracting visitors from outside area

Financially self-supporting market

Historic frontages / colourful and characterful architecture e.g. Victorian streetlamps, iron balconies

Eclectic retail mix and variety, essentials and specialist, and cultural anchors

Good vehicle management, closures to road traffic etc.

Community feel: diversity of incomes, age, ethnicity ('melting pot')

Strong stallholder organisation and traditions

Own website to support branding and promotion

Proximity to Golborne Road market

Weaknesses

Some shop fronts in very poor condition

Vacant units, including consecutive vacancies

Some arcades feel closed off, with confusing, hidden entrances

Road dressing e.g. bunting is tired-looking

Issues with graffiti and litter, and street crime

Market pitches acquisition and retention mechanism sluggishness may limit potential for retail change and dynamism

Polluted area under the Westway, breaks the flow and feel of the road

Absence of public seating

Low levels of evening activity

Dependence on tourists

Opportunities

Further spotlight historic architecture, particularly if issues with building facades are fixed

Meanwhile use of vacant units, through better engagement with landlords

Collaborations between street vendors and shops, e.g. there was a collaboration between Devlins (long-standing vegetable stall) and Honest Burgers (mid-range chain)

Increased spending from visitors with broader/better offer of services and retail

Promote heritage as 'green lane' (exploiting historic roots as a green lane)

Build on existing brand by increasing provision of cultural events

Threats

Rival attractions offer more pleasant retail experience, easier to navigate

High rents reduce diversity of retail offer

Lack of coordination between different types of traders

Ongoing subdued international visitors

Tourist focussed shops risk overwhelming 'character'

Brand and reputation isn't strongly resonant with younger people

Density of vacancies becomes worse, and spiral of decline

More specialist shops convert to online retail

Tension between neighbourhood and visitor attraction functions

Resistance to more cafés/out

Why do people visit Portobello Road?

Neighbourhood basics and attractions

Like all high streets, Portobello Road is used by a wide range of people and for a wide range of purposes. We have categorised the shops and services available in Portobello Road in two categories: neighbourhood basics, and attractions:

- **Neighbourhood basics** are what people who live and work in the area use fairly frequently: they will typically use the ones which are convenient to them, and choose based on quality, price or personal taste if several are close. They are crucial to most high streets – if the range of local basics that people need is not there, people will go elsewhere, or leave sooner.
- **Attractions** are things that make people choose to visit Portobello Road, and that people probably use less frequently. The most important of these in Portobello Road are the market, specialist shops, and the hospitality offer.

For these travel times, ‘short’ usually refers to up to fifteen minutes, ‘medium’ to up to two hours, and ‘longer’ to more than this (sometimes a day or more in the case of international tourists). This will of course vary with people’s preferred modes of transport, and when they are combining several activities into a single trip: for example, diverting to a shop on the way to visit a friend, or choosing to walk rather than take the bus to get some exercise.

Table 3

	Category	Unit count	Typical travel distance
Neighbourhood basics	Transport links – bus, train, tram	<p>2 Tube stations within 5 minutes of each end of the area</p> <p>Buses across the area, but no buses on Portobello Road</p> <p>3 sets of bike racks</p> <p>Very walkable during traffic restricted hours (largely 10am-4pm)</p> <p>No e-scooter or e-bike parking bays</p> <p>1 docked (TfL/ Santander) cycle bay</p>	Shorter distance
	Everyday shops – supermarket, post office, pharmacy	16	Shorter distance
	Charity shops	5	Short or medium distance

Table 3

	Category	Unit count	Typical travel distance
Neighbourhood basics	Everyday dining – coffee shops, sandwich bars, casual restaurants, local pubs	46	Shorter distance
	Commercial services – gym, estate agent, hairdresser	7	Short or medium distance
Attractions	Public services – school, GP, Job Centre, library	4	Shorter distance
	Essentials market stalls	10	Short or medium distance
	Specialist shops – florist, clothes shop, bookshop	72	Medium distance
	Specialist dining – high end restaurants, unusual cuisines, cocktail bars	9	Medium distance
	Hotels	0	Longer distance
	Culture - galleries, museums, concert halls, clubs	5	Longer distance
	Attractions market stalls (note: many of these are extensions of shops onto proprietary pavement space)	22	Medium distance or longer distance
	Vacant units	20	N/A

Competitor analysis

The competitors for visits to Portobello Road are different depending on whether people’s primary reason for visiting is for **neighbourhood basics** or **attractions**. Competition is about whether people visit Portobello Road instead of other places, but it is also about people spending longer in Portobello Road rather than moving on to another place, or going home and using online shopping or deliveries instead.

Table 4

Primary reason	Why they might choose Portobello Road	Why they might choose elsewhere	Main competitors
Neighbourhood basics	<p>Proximity and convenience</p> <p>Community, and range of shops serving different communities</p> <p>Traffic free</p>	<p>On market days – to avoid the crowds, better access</p> <p>On non-market days – for cheaper alternative, more variety, better quality options</p>	<p>Ladbroke Grove</p> <p>Notting Hill Gate</p> <p>Golborne Road</p> <p>Westbourne Grove</p> <p>Online ordering for meals and groceries</p>
Attractions	<p>Heritage</p> <p>Atmosphere / Buzz</p> <p>'Instagrammable'</p> <p>Product range</p> <p>Brand</p> <p>Range of hospitality and other retail in surrounding area</p>	<p>Poor wayfinding from Notting Hill Gate, unclear beginning and end</p> <p>Better public transport access</p> <p>Easier wheelchair and buggy access</p> <p>Wider product choice</p> <p>Poor public facilities (benches, toilets)</p> <p>Concerns about street crime</p>	<p>Direct</p> <p>Camden Market</p> <p>Borough Market</p> <p>Columbia Road Market</p> <p>Brick Lane / Spitalfields</p> <p>Broadway Market</p> <p>Brixton Market</p> <p>Covent Garden</p> <p>Greenwich Market</p> <p>Indirect</p> <p>Other major day time tourist attractions in London e.g. Southbank, London Eye, Buckingham Palace, major museums and galleries</p>

Who we could collaborate with

For **local visitors**, most collaboration is likely to be through local consultation and engagement with businesses, stallholders, residents and employers – we discuss this in more detail below. Building new housing or office space will also bring more local visitors to high streets, but this is not part of this paper.

For visitors to our **key attractions**, Portobello Road could partner with others in the borough, e.g. Harrods, and the wider city and region to make it more attractive to visitors from London and beyond, and to create visitor itineraries within RBKC and neighbouring boroughs. There may also be scope to partner with Golborne Road and the Westway Trust market to attract visitors to both sites.

The placemaking toolbox in Portobello Road

Some of the tools in the placemaking toolbox (described above) are already in use in Portobello Road. There is scope to use them more and there may be scope for others to be used for the first time.

Some of these topics will also be covered in the upcoming Markets Action Plan (which was not complete at the time of writing), and our suggestions have been informed by the consultation for the Plan.

Table 5

Area for change	Current situation	Options for change
<p>Road space</p> <p>Note that cycling and active travel will be covered in more detail in phase 2 of the project</p>	<p>Market stalls on either side of the road</p> <p>Car/van access to antiques stall holders only on market days in some sections</p> <p>Car parking for residents with permits</p> <p>One way system, road closure from past Elgin Avenue/Colville Terrace</p> <p>Stall spots</p>	<p>More road closures, more of the time</p> <p>Permanent changeable street bollards</p> <p>Tighter parking restrictions</p> <p>Changing road surface to make more pedestrian and cycle friendly</p> <p>Chicanes and planter to slow traffic and green environment</p> <p>Charging points for electric vehicles (from wheelchairs to vans)</p> <p>Better bike, e-bike and e-scooter parking</p>
<p>Pavement space</p>	<p>Wide pavements, 2 metres in some places, but often encroached on by shop stalls</p> <p>Large black bollards along pavement edge – some used to advertise free WiFi and tags</p> <p>Almost exclusively stepped paving</p> <p>Some limited al fresco dining, mostly cafes</p>	<p>Reduce retail spill over to free up pavement space</p> <p>Increase al fresco dining space in pavements with adequate space, or use road space to extend pavements or dedicate new temporary (or part time) road areas for dining</p> <p>Levelling roadways to pavement level</p>
<p>Managing driving</p> <p>Note that cycling and active travel will be covered in more detail in phase 2 of the project</p>	<p>Pedestrian and cycle zone, Mon-Sat, 10am to 4pm</p>	<p>Increase length of pedestrianised periods</p> <p>5 mph speed limit to all vehicles (perhaps only when road is in pedestrian/cycle mode)</p>

Table 5

Area for change	Current situation	Options for change
Transport facilities	<p>3 set of bike racks</p> <p>1 TfL/Santander Cycle Hire</p> <p>No buses directly on Portobello Road</p> <p>No e-scooter / e-bike parking or facilities</p> <p>No obvious use of cargo bikes</p>	<p>More bike racks</p> <p>Encourage more cycling and scooting in appropriate areas sensitive to dense market day pedestrian use, including through better signage.</p> <p>Secure bike hangers, including for e-bikes</p> <p>Secure private e-bike parking</p> <p>More car club options in the vicinity including designated bays, EV charging points</p>
Walking routes	<p>Pavement drops at traffic lights</p> <p>As a linear area walking routes fairly clear</p>	<p>More and better signage, particularly from Notting Hill Gate station</p>
Public art	<p>Some public art, especially around mid-section and under Westway. Also connecting section to Golborne Road.</p> <p>Some uncommissioned graffiti</p> <p>Tired hoardings and buntings</p> <p>Good Notting Hill Carnival history mural, people taking photos by it</p>	<p>Increase public art/signage related to the Portobello identity</p> <p>More 'instagrammable' public art</p>
Plants and greenery	<p>Very little council planted, some supplied by local shops and pub</p>	<p>In street planters (chicanes)</p> <p>Support shops to deliver greener frontages: climbing plants/hanging baskets</p>
Visual identity	<p>No signature welcome/entrance from Notting Hill Gate</p> <p>Union Jack branding and banners – for international audience mainly</p>	<p>Commission new identity branding, and signature entrance art and signage</p>
Use of vacant space	<p>Car-free section with market stalls</p> <p>Empty shop fronts, boarded up</p>	<p>Invest in animation of meanwhile space, perhaps through intermediary</p> <p>Free lets to artists/galleries, performance pieces, pop up shops, repair shops, vintage clothing, other circular economy activities</p>
Public facilities	<p>4 public toilet kiosks</p>	<p>Scheme to encourage use of public and hospitality/retail toilets (e.g. as done in Frome and other parts of London)</p> <p>Better parent/baby changing facilities</p>

Table 5

Area for change	Current situation	Options for change
Places to stop	No on-street seating except for commercial/paid	<p>New public benches in areas of free space, e.g. area around Colville Primary School cul-de-sac, at Tavistock Road plaza</p> <p>Public chess boards and/or table tennis tables</p>
Places for children	<p>No public facilities for children</p> <p>Some child friendly cafes and a toy shop</p>	<p>Public benches (see above)</p> <p>Small scale play items, e.g. climbing frames, climbing wall segments, toddler scale exploration and discovery options/ platforms, green themed points of interest for children, e.g. Bee Hotel</p> <p>Blue ribbon safe cycling loop (off Portobello Road)</p>
Safety	<p>Big CCTV on corner of Westbourne Park Road</p> <p>Some old properties in need of repair may present a health and safety risk</p> <p>Market area beyond the Westway could feel unsafe at night</p> <p>Feels fairly safe during the day, many eyes on the street, active frontages</p> <p>Some visible petty drug dealing and usage</p>	<p>Better lighting around the Westway, potentially encouraging some pavement trade to ensure eyes on the street</p> <p>Investment into building frontages to restore facades</p>
Lighting	<p>Lighting looks poor under the Westway – flood lights x4</p> <p>Vintage-style lampposts, reasonably frequently distributed</p>	<p>Improve lighting under the Westway with more people-friendly lights</p> <p>Consider creative light installations as part of revived public art offer</p>
Climate resilience	<p>No obvious solar panels or EV charging points</p> <p>No planting</p> <p>No EVs, car club or scooter/bike bays</p> <p>Some businesses focused on low impact/ sustainable products</p>	<p>Recycling site could be an opportunity for climate messaging</p> <p>More planting – see above</p>
Accessibility	<p>Some dropped pavements</p> <p>Mostly raised kerbs</p> <p>Shops often have steps, making wheelchair access tricky</p> <p>Difficult to move wheelchairs on the pavement on market days</p>	<p>Levelled road junctions</p> <p>Clearer signage for free disabled toilet cabins</p> <p>Reconsider bollard use in car free mode if main aim is to protect pedestrians from cars. More open streetscape is more accessible and more flexible.</p>

Top five possible interventions

Based on the placemaking toolbox above, these are our top five proposed interventions for Portobello Road. They are ordered by scale, with the highest investment and highest impact options first:

Table 6

Possible change	Who could make the change
Remodel the street surface of Portobello Road for better accessibility, more pedestrian use, and easier use for bikes and scooters	<p>RBKC, in consultation with local resident and business groups</p> <p>Any changes to docked bike hire or e-scooter hire would need to be in collaboration with Transport for London</p>
<p>Invest in branding, artwork and signage to update image and encourage visitors (for example, as has been done for Camden Lock) – moving beyond the Union Jack branding, which is not distinctive.</p> <p>Consider allied marketing campaign to attract potential international and domestic visitors in conjunctions with e.g. Visit London</p>	<p>RBKC, in partnership with business groups – including any possible future BID.</p> <p>Partnering with groups working with young people, or with local colleges, could be particularly effective for developing a fresh and inclusive visual identity while providing employment and development opportunities</p>
Install more public benches, particularly in shaded areas, e.g. around Tavistock Road	RBKC, possibly with sponsorship from local businesses, or in collaboration with a future BID
New push to activate vacant retail units by pressing for better understanding of beneficial owners, and by further engaging specialist meanwhile use intermediary organisations	Landlords, RBKC
Increase the number of trees and planters in the area, improving look and feel and providing more shade, considering shop frontages for vertical options, and wider areas such as Tavistock Road, and around the Westway.	<p>RBKC in public realm, perhaps coordinating with local organisations. It may be possible to coordinate with local schools for themed planters linked to curriculum goals (e.g. growing food, supporting pollinators)</p> <p>Businesses on shop fronts, coordinated by local groups or a future BID</p>

Assessing the cost, timescale, ease of delivery and scale of outcomes for these changes

This section looks at the possibility of implementing these changes.

- Cost means the direct cash cost of making the change to the council and its partners, not including consultation or engagement costs.
- Timescale means how long the change would take to implement from the point that the decision had been made

- Decision making challenge means how long it would take to engage with people on the change, and how controversial or complex the decision might be
- Disruption means how much impact there would be on users of the high street while the change was being made
- Impact means the scale of the difference the change would make

Rankings are compared to the other changes suggested in the table. In some cases the changes could be made at different scales (e.g. more or fewer places to sit) – in these cases we have taken a mid scale assumption as our starting point

Table 7

Measure	Cost	Timescale	Decision making challenge	Disruption	Impact
Remodelling street surface	High	High	Medium	High	High
Invest in branding, artwork and signage and campaign	Low	Low	Medium	Low	Medium
More benches	Medium	Medium	Low	Medium	Low
Activate vacant retail units	Medium	High	High	Low	Medium
Trees and planters	Medium	Medium	Low	Medium	Medium

Measuring the impact of these changes

The overall aim for the proposed changes taken together is to increase both footfall – the number of visitors – and dwell time – how long each visitor spends here.

Revenue and footfall for individual businesses and market traders, obtained from managers and stallholders, can be a good proxy indicator for this, or it may be possible to use credit card spending data. In both cases, transaction counts are a better indicator than total spend volumes, as these are heavily influenced by a small number of high cost transactions (such as jewellery) rather than smaller transactions (such as cups of coffee or books). Market retail volumes may also change around the Christmas period and reduce during spells of bad weather – they may be more volatile than for shopping areas which are largely indoors.

Public transport data or bike hire figures from TfL can also be useful to assess visitor numbers, although the lack of bike docks on Portobello Road itself, and the fact that Notting Hill Gate station also serves shopping areas to the south of it, makes this more complex: comparing data from days the market is open to days where it is not may be helpful for this.

Some of these changes can also be assessed through specific measures, such as visitor reviews and vacancy rates. These are set out below.

Table 8

Measure	What success would look like	How we could measure it
Remodelling street surface	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Better feedback from people who use the area 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Visitor feedback – this could be through surveys or by tracking public ratings on Google or TripAdvisor Feedback from local business groups and amenity societies
Invest in branding, artwork and signage and campaign	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Increased visitor numbers More organic/unpaid promotion of the area (Specifically for better signage from Notting Hill Gate): increased footfall on this route into the market Better outcomes for local businesses 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Increased visitor numbers – this could be measured through passenger numbers at Notting Hill Gate on market days Count of social media mentions, especially on Instagram Manual or CCTV count of footfall on the route from Notting Hill Gate Reduction in vacant units
More benches	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> New benches being well-used Increased dwell time overall 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Time benches are used – this could be through existing (anonymous) CCTV or visual counts Overall dwell time in the market – this could be through Google “typical time spent” data
Activate vacant retail units	Vacancy rates decrease	Count of unit vacancy rates
Trees and planters	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Numbers of plants on the market Overall feedback on look and feel of the market 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Manual count of plants User feedback

Inspiration

We think case studies which might be particularly relevant to Portobello Road are:

- 100 Gates project, NYC
- Manchester’s seven day licensing
- Carnaby Street bike hubs

All these case studies, and others, are included at the end of this document.

High street action plan: Notting Hill Gate

About the area

Notting Hill Gate sits across four wards – Norland, Campden, Pembridge and Holland. There are distinct differences between them: deprivation levels, as measured by the ONS's index of multiple deprivation, range from the fourth decile (around average levels of deprivation) to the eighth (below average). Some of the areas to the north are among the most deprived in the country, and some of those to the south are among the wealthiest.

The high street itself is a major east/west thoroughfare (although not a TfL red route) – this presents particular challenges for high street placemaking as traffic noise and pollution are high. However, the sheer number of people passing through by road and public transport mean there are real opportunities to draw more visitors in and encourage them to stay longer.

Table 9: SWOT Analysis

Strengths

Great connectivity with tube and buses means lots of potential customers are passing through

Close to both office and residential space, giving access to a range of customers

Close to Portobello Market

Diversity of retail offer and price points, every day and specialist

Strong and unique specialisms (interior, antiques and jewellery trade)

Busy and animated street on a weekday

Broad avenues give sense of space

Shelter under building arches

Opportunities

Encourage people who are passing through to stop and spend time here

Some areas have wide pavements, which could be used for tree planting and al fresco dining (provided traffic and air pollution can be managed)

Opportunities to introduce more trees and planting

Improve provision of bike parking, dockless bikes and scooters

Weaknesses

Heavy car, HGV and bus traffic creates issues of noise, pollution and makes the streets very hard to cross

Narrow pavements in places give a hectic feel

Lack of places to stop comfortably

Does not have a strong individual identity, and can feel rather overshadowed by Portobello and Kensington High Streets

Threats

Fewer office workers impact on revenue for existing businesses

Concern about noise and air pollution leads people to choose other retail destinations, particularly as other areas change how street space is allocated to prioritise active travel

Vacancies in office and retail buildings increase and make the area feel run down

Scarce tree cover means the heat bounces back on the road and buildings, and would become very uncomfortable on hot days

Why do people visit Notting Hill Gate?

Neighbourhood basics and attractions

Like all high streets, Notting Hill Gate is used by a wide range of people and for a wide range of purposes. We have categorised the shops and services available in Notting Hill Gate in two categories: local basics, and attractions:

- **Neighbourhood basics** are what people who live and work in the area use fairly frequently: they will typically use the ones which are convenient to them, and choose based on quality, price or personal taste if several are close. They are crucial to most high streets – if the range of local basics that people need is not there, people will go elsewhere, or leave sooner.
- **Attractions** are things that make people choose to visit Notting Hill Gate, and that people probably use less frequently. The most important of these in Notting Hill Gate are the furniture and antique shops, the theatre and cinema, and some fine dining options. Notting Hill Gate is also very close to Portobello Road, which is a tourist attraction in its own right.

For these travel times, ‘short’ usually refers to up to fifteen minutes, ‘medium’ to up to two hours, and ‘longer’ to more than this (sometimes a day or more in the case of international tourists). This will of course vary with people’s preferred modes of transport, and when they are combining several activities into a single trip: for example, diverting to a shop on the way to visit a friend, or choosing to walk rather than take the bus to get some exercise.

Table 10

	Category	Unit count	Typical travel distance
Neighbourhood basics	Transport links – bus, train, tram	Bus stops: 6 Coach stops: 1 Underground station: 1 Santander cycle dock: 1	Shorter distance
	Everyday shops – supermarket, post office, pharmacy	25	Shorter distance
	Charity shops	2	Short or medium distance
	Everyday dining – coffee shops, sandwich bars, casual restaurants, local pubs	40	Shorter distance

Table 10

	Category	Unit count	Typical travel distance
Neighbourhood basics	Commercial services – gym, estate agent, hairdresser	31	Short or medium distance
Attractions	Public services – school, GP, Job Centre, library	3	Shorter distance
	Specialist shops – florist, clothes shop, bookshop	70 (cluster of furniture and antique shops, and particularly costume jewellery).	Medium distance
	Specialist dining – high end restaurants, unusual cuisines, cocktail bars	11	
	Hotels	None, but some close by	Longer distance
	Culture - galleries, museums, concert halls, clubs	3	Longer distance
	Vacant units	18	N/A

Note: This is based on Notting Hill Gate, Pembridge Road and Kensington Church Street.

Competitor analysis

Our competitors for visits to Notting Hill Gate are different depending on whether people’s primary reason for visiting is for **neighbourhood basics** or **attractions**. Competition is about whether people visit Notting Hill Gate instead of other places, but it is also about people spending longer in Notting Hill Gate rather than moving on to another place, or going home and using online shopping or deliveries instead.

Table 11

Primary reason	Why they might choose Notting Hill Gate	Why they might choose elsewhere	Main competitors
Neighbourhood basics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transport links Large offer of coffee shops and supermarkets Pubs on Kensington Church Street 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More pleasant environment with less noise and pollution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kensington High Street Portobello and Golborne Road Online orders or home deliveries, or home high streets for office workers
Attractions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gateway to Kensington Gardens and Hyde Park, Portobello Market Theatre, cinema Large specific retail offer (high end furniture, jewellery) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Larger and different retail offer on Oxford St and in Shepherd's Bush. Tourists may choose historic high streets like Marylebone or Bloomsbury if these are more welcoming places to stay 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oxford Street Shepherd's Bush Marylebone, Bloomsbury

Who we could collaborate with

For **local visitors**, most collaboration is likely to be through local consultation and engagement with businesses, residents and employers – we discuss this in more detail below. Building new housing or office space will also bring more local visitors to high streets, but this is not part of this paper.

For visitors to our **key attractions**, Notting Hill Gate could partner with others in the region to make our wider area more attractive to visitors from London and beyond – in particular, it could work with Portobello and Golborne markets, and other local culture-based organisations such as the Tabernacle Arts Centre to create a more integrated and unified visitor experience. We discuss this further in our Portobello Road action plan.

The placemaking toolbox in Notting Hill Gate

Some of the tools in the placemaking toolbox (described above) are already in use in Notting Hill Gate. There is scope to use them more and there may be scope for others to be used for the first time.

Table 12

Area for change	Current situation	Options for change
Road space	3 lanes of traffic on Notting Hill Gate	Reduce traffic on Notting Hill Gate, particularly of larger vehicles which dominated the area when combined with the narrow pavements along much of the street. This is a TfL bus route served by 8 different bus routes.
Pavement space	E-Bikes parked on undesignated pavement space (seen three times) Pavement widths vary hugely: around 3m on Pembridge Road and Notting Hill Gate, but up to 11m in some places where buildings have been set back	Improve public space by Newcombe House – a large piece of public art takes up most of the space, which is otherwise underutilised
Managing driving Note that cycling and active travel will be covered in more detail in phase 2 of the project	Narrow unprotected bike lanes on Notting Hill Gate. No bike lanes on Pembridge Road and Kensington Church St, and one way system on Church St. Broad corners allow fast turns which may be unsafe	Work with partners to explore ways to provide more protected and segregated cycle lanes
Transport facilities	Generally very good public transport connections by bus and tube, and docked bike. Currently no e-scooter hire docks	Improve area for cycling by looking at reallocating street space to cycling and other micromobility Add parking spots for e-scooters to the area (this may be difficult because of the narrow pavements in most of the area)

Table 12

Area for change	Current situation	Options for change
Walking routes	<p>Kensington Church St and Notting Hill Gate are hard to cross – low number of crossings and staggered crossings mean there are long wait times</p> <p>Walking London signage available after exiting tube station</p> <p>On-street van loading obstructs view and makes road crossing more difficult</p> <p>Likely to be difficult for those with impaired mobility</p>	<p>Dedicated bookable loading space for deliveries</p> <p>Improved consideration of people with disabilities at crossing points, including changes to timings of crossing signals and improvements to traffic islands</p> <p>Consider expanding pavement space at key intersections to reduce speed for turning vehicles and facilitate crossing for pedestrians</p> <p>Simultaneous 'X-style' crossing for pedestrian across the junction would improve safety and could reduce waiting times</p>
Public art	<p>Sculpture on the pavement in front of Newcombe House</p> <p>Sculpture on building façade above tube station</p>	<p>Given existing pressures on public space, there are opportunities for mural or façade art and lighting art (for building on streetscape)</p>
Plants and greenery	<p>Some trees, mostly deciduous, mix of mature and young. More planting on West side of Notting Hill Gate.</p> <p>Tree planting generally irregular, some trees look unhealthy</p>	<p>Comprehensive tree planting along the road could offer shade in summer, give a calmer and greener feel, add to the sense of place, conceal any unsightly façades or building work, and provide separation between road and pavement</p>
Visual identity	<p>Mix of building styles and heights, some historic Victorian terrace or anchor buildings (theatre), modern (Newcombe House) and contemporary</p> <p>Some building façades in need of renovation</p>	<p>Trees, lighting, public art on facades would help (see relevant sections for these)</p> <p>Tall buildings could offer rooftop type attractions to visitors</p>
Use of vacant space	<p>Around half of vacant units had some signs of redevelopment or construction</p>	<p>Small empty shops and office buildings offer meanwhile use opportunities, for public facilities for example</p>
Public facilities	<p>One public toilet provided within a bus stop</p>	<p>Consider a community toilet scheme</p>
Places to stop	<p>Two seating areas on Notting Hill Gate – 4 benches by Waterstones and</p>	<p>Existing and additional planters could have a wide ledge to double up as seating</p> <p>Additional seating could be provided around existing as well as additional trees</p>

Table 12

Area for change	Current situation	Options for change
Places for children	<p>Kids Club at the cinema, and some family friendly shops and cafes</p> <p>Though slightly further away, Kensington Gardens is a destination for children and families</p>	<p>Areas where pavement space is wider could offer children safer spaces to play</p>
Safety	<p>While traffic islands make road crossings safer in theory, staggered crossings lead to long waiting times, and lead many people to cross outside green lights – increasing risks of collision with turning vehicle.</p> <p>Left turns and one way system increase risks of road accidents with cyclists</p> <p>The area feels vulnerable to the snatching of phone or valuables: the pavement is narrow in places, while traffic speeds are relatively high and generally there is a lack of buffer between pavement and roadway (such as trees or planting)</p>	<p>See ‘walking routes’ above for improved safety at road crossings</p> <p>Expanding pavement space and buffers from road traffic might help pedestrian feel safer from valuables snatching from vehicles</p>
Lighting	<p>Lighting focuses on the roadway rather than the pavement – especially on Notting Hill Gate</p> <p>Tree canopy may also block lighting from reaching the pavement</p> <p>Tall lighting fixtures give a colder, unpersonal feel</p>	<p>Design lighting for pedestrians first</p> <p>Considering fixtures that reinforce historic character</p> <p>Consider lighting as public art to liven up public spaces at night</p>
Climate resilience	<p>Arcades offer shelter from harsh weather conditions</p> <p>Lack of tree cover and planting increase heat radiation from road and building</p>	<p>Increase tree cover on Notting Hill Gate</p>
Accessibility	<p>No lifts out of the tube station</p> <p>Crossings have not been upgraded to help partially sighted or blind people.</p> <p>Narrow traffic islands and crowds mean makes crossing difficult or stressful for people with mobility constraints</p>	<p>Add lifts to the station: this is the responsibility of Transport for London</p> <p>Improved road space – see above</p>

Top five possible interventions

Based on the placemaking toolbox above, these are our top five proposed interventions for Notting Hill Gate:

Table 13

Possible change	Who could make the change
<p>Upgrade street lighting to improve pedestrian experience after dark – for instance by introducing lighting for pavements and fixtures that improve the pedestrian experience and reinforce the heritage feel of the area (such as human scale lighting fixtures or warmer colour temperatures)</p> <p>In the meantime, working with businesses on their public facing lighting could improve coherence of lighting and avoid contrasts that make it more difficult for people to see</p>	<p>RBKC, collaborating with local businesses and/or emerging BID to enhance appearance between public realm and shop fronts</p> <p>Transport for London would need to be involved with any changes to lighting on the Notting Hill Gate roadway</p>
<p>Meanwhile uses of vacant retail units to provide public toilets, visitor information, space for start-up retailers</p>	<p>RBKC, by publicising opportunities through their networks (local resident and business groups, on their website), and working out what public services may be lacking locally or would attract more visitors to the high street</p> <p>Often understanding who owns the space is essential – and in the case of absent or delinquent landlords, RBKC could consider a compulsory purchase of the retail unit as a last resort. Some of this role could be played by a BID, and RBKC could support its establishment</p>
<p>Improve pedestrian crossings and change traffic lighting timing to avoid traffic build up at Notting Hill Gate</p>	<p>RBKC, Transport for London</p>
<p>Provide additional seating, both through public space and al fresco dining</p>	<p>RBKC for benches</p> <p>RBKC in collaboration with local businesses for al fresco dining</p>
<p>Planting more trees, and caring for existing trees</p>	<p>RBKC, possibly collaborating with businesses/the emerging BID, and local community groups</p> <p>Businesses on shop fronts, coordinated by local groups or a future BID</p>

Assessing the cost, timescale, ease of delivery and scale of outcomes for these changes

This section looks at the possibility of implementing these changes.

- Cost means the direct cash cost of making the change to the council and its partners, not including consultation or engagement costs.

- Timescale means how long the change would take to implement from the point that the decision had been made
- Decision making challenge means how long it would take to engage with people on the change, and how controversial or complex the decision might be
- Disruption means how much impact there would be on users of the high street while the change was being made
- Impact means the scale of the difference the change would make

Rankings are compared to the other changes suggested in the table. In some cases the changes could be made at different scales (e.g. more or fewer places to sit) – in these cases we have taken a mid scale assumption as our starting point

Table 14

Measure	Cost	Timescale	Decision making challenge	Disruption	Impact
Lighting upgrades	High	Medium	Low	Medium	High
Meanwhile uses	Medium	High	High	Low	Medium
Improving crossings	High	High	Medium	High	High
Additional seating and al fresco dining	Low	Low	Medium	Low	Medium
Tree planting	Medium	Medium	Low	Medium	Medium

Measuring the impact of these changes

The overall aim for the proposed changes taken together is to increase both footfall – the number of visitors – and dwell time – how long each visitor spends here.

Revenue and footfall for individual businesses on the high street, obtained from their managers, can be a good proxy indicator for this, or it may be possible to use credit card spending data. In both cases transaction counts are a better indicator than total spend volumes, as these are heavily influenced by a small number of high cost transactions (such as jewellery) rather than smaller transactions (such as cups of coffee or books).

Public transport data or bike hire figures from TfL can also be useful to assess visitor numbers, though it is harder to use for Notting Hill Gate as people come to the station for work, to visit the area itself, and as a gateway to Portobello. The introduction of the Ultra Low Emission Zone and possible related changes to driver behaviour, increase in cycling since the pandemic, seasonal changes to cycling (less popular in winter) also make it harder to use transport numbers as a proxy for footfall.

Some of these changes can also be assessed through specific measures, such as pedestrian accident rates and footfall data for new routes. These are set out below.

Table 15

Measure	What success would look like	How we could measure it
Lighting upgrades	People spend more time in the area after dark	Measure visitor numbers or transaction volumes, particularly in dining and cultural venues
Meanwhile uses	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. New up-and-coming businesses build and audience and look for permanent home in K&C 2. Reduction in vacant unit numbers of high street 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tracking 'alumni' from meanwhile retail space 2. Vacant unit counts
Improving crossings	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. More people visit the area 2. Reduced traffic accidents, especially on Notting Hill Gate 3. Improved experience for people with disabilities and mobility issues 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Measure visitor numbers, through manual or CCTV counts 2. From TfL London Collision Map data (it may be preferable to use 2019 as the basis of comparison because of the impact of the pandemic) 3. Consultation and community engagement, particularly with vulnerable groups who may struggle to use existing crossings
Additional seating and al fresco dining	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use of public seating 2. Use of al fresco options 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Manual or CCTV count of time that benches or extended planters are in use 2. Feedback from businesses on value of al fresco dining (this may need to run in spring and summer)
Tree planting	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improved feedback from residents 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Resident surveys, similar to recent Commonplace project. Note that visual impact would change over time as trees mature

Inspiration

We think case studies which might be particularly relevant to Notting Hill Gate are:

- Argentina's 9 de Julio Avenue
- Westminster Council's lighting strategy
- Nudge Community Builders, Plymouth

All these case studies, and others, are included at the end of this document.

High street action plan: Gloucester Road

About the area

Gloucester Road is a high street of two halves, bisected by the busy Cromwell Road: the area to the south is dominated by the station and feels like a busy transport hub, and the area to the north is quieter, with mostly independent shops and cafes. Tourist numbers are much lower than for nearby South Kensington and Kensington Gardens, and the area has a neighbourhood feel which is perhaps unusual in given how central it is.

The area to the south of the Cromwell Road is in Courtfield ward, and to the north is Queen's Gate. Both wards are relatively wealthy, with low levels of unemployment and exceptionally high student populations (19 per cent and 15 per cent respectively, compared to 10 per cent in the borough as a whole). Qualification levels are well above both the RBKC and national averages.

Table 16: SWOT Analysis

Strengths

A range of shops, cafes and restaurants, from everyday basics to specialists

Includes key local services: Post Office, supermarkets, pharmacy

Attractive and interesting architecture, with pleasant planting schemes

Good range of al fresco dining options, some with shade/rain cover

Good public transport links

Weaknesses

Split by busy and noisy Cromwell Road – can feel unsafe to cross

Area just south of Cromwell Road feels rather busy and rushed

Shopping centre between Gloucester Road station and its exit onto Cromwell Road presents a blank face to the road

Lack of street signage, particularly to nearby attractions

Limited public seating

Lack of green space – the local gardens are residents' only

Opportunities

Increase footfall by promoting walking to Gloucester Road from the South Kensington museums and Kensington Gardens – using signed walking routes and maps

Add pedestrian crossing towards north end of road to facilitate pedestrian flow

Use public art and lighting to draw attention to architectural features

Add more seating to improve dwell time

Threats

Loss of independent shops makes the area feel less characterful (possible if landlords seek higher rents)

Footfall decreases with changes to local population

Increased promotion to tourists causes tension with local population

Large vacant unit at Victoria Grove junction is not filled

Why do people visit Gloucester Road?

Neighbourhood basics and attractions

Like all high streets, Gloucester Road is used by a wide range of people and for a wide range of purposes. We have categorised the shops and services available in Gloucester Road in two categories: local basics, and attractions:

- **Neighbourhood basics** are what people who live and work in the area use fairly frequently: they will typically use the ones which are convenient to them, and choose based on quality, price or personal taste if several are close. They are crucial to most high streets – if the range of local basics that people need is not there, people will go elsewhere, or leave sooner.
- **Attractions** are things that make people choose to visit Gloucester Road, and that people probably use less frequently. The most important of these in Gloucester Road are the specialist shops.

For these travel times, ‘short’ usually refers to up to fifteen minutes, ‘medium’ to up to two hours, and ‘longer’ to more than this (sometimes a day or more in the case of international tourists). This will of course vary with people’s preferred modes of transport, and when they are combining several activities into a single trip: for example, diverting to a shop on the way to visit a friend, or choosing to walk rather than take the bus to get some exercise.

Since the areas to the north and the south of Gloucester Road are rather different in character, we have counted units separately for both areas.

Table 17

	Category	Unit count		Typical travel distance
		South of Cromwell Road, including the shopping centre	North of Cromwell Road (inc. Kynance Place)	
Neighbourhood basics	Transport links – bus, train, tram	1 tube station, 1 e-scooter trial parking space, 1 bike hire rack, bus stops for 49 bus route (plus tour buses), various bike hoops	1 bike hire rack, bus stops for 49 bus route, various bike hire loops	Shorter distance
	Everyday shops – supermarket, post office, pharmacy	6	9	Shorter distance
	Charity shops	0	3	Short or medium distance

Table 17

	Category	Unit count		Typical travel distance
		South of Cromwell Road, including the shopping centre	North of Cromwell Road (inc. Kynance Place)	
Neighbourhood basics	Everyday dining – coffee shops, sandwich bars, casual restaurants, local pubs	18	10	Shorter distance
	Commercial services – gym, estate agent, hairdresser	14	15	Short or medium distance
Attractions	Public services – school, GP, Job Centre, library	0	0	Shorter distance
	Specialist shops – florist, clothes shop, bookshop	3	7	Medium distance
	Specialist dining – high end restaurants, unusual cuisines, cocktail bars	5	7	Medium distance
	Hotels	2	3	Longer distance
	Culture - galleries, museums, concert halls, clubs	0	1	Longer distance
	Vacant units	3	2	N/A

Competitor analysis

Our competitors for visits to Gloucester Road are different depending on whether people's primary reason for visiting is for **neighbourhood basics** or **attractions**. Competition is about whether people visit Gloucester Road instead of other places, but it is also about people spending longer in Gloucester Road rather than moving on to another place, or going home or to their place of work and using online shopping or deliveries instead.

Table 18

Primary reason	Why they might choose Gloucester Road	Why they might choose elsewhere	Main competitors
Neighbourhood basics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attractive architecture Good range of food and shops Good transport options Quieter and less traffic than some other local high streets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of green space and places for children to play Noise and pollution from Cromwell Road Lack of places to sit Area around the station can feel busy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online shopping and food delivery Depending on location and needs, some or all of: South Kensington Earls Court Kensington High St
Attractions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quieter than other areas of the borough which are popular with tourists Interesting architecture Easy to reach from other local attractions Specialist shops and dining options 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not aware that it's there, or what it offers Smaller selection of shops than other independent retail dominated high streets Visitors arriving at the station do not see the best of the street 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other high-end independent retail dominated high streets Within RBKC: Church Street, Portobello Outside RBKC: Marylebone High Street, Hampstead, Richmond, St Christopher's Place

Who we could collaborate with

For **local visitors**, most collaboration is likely to be through local consultation and engagement with businesses, residents and employers – we discuss this in more detail below. Building new housing or office space will also bring more local visitors to high streets, but this is not part of this paper.

For visitors to our **key attractions**, Gloucester Road could partner with others in the region to make our wider area more attractive to visitors from London and beyond. In particular, there is potential to work with the groups which promote the South Kensington museums and Hyde Park/Kensington Gardens to signpost people coming to these attractions to also visit Gloucester Road, particularly if they are looking for a quieter place for a meal, a coffee or drink, or some shopping. This could help increase total time spent in RBKC.

The placemaking toolbox in Gloucester Road

Some of the tools in the placemaking toolbox (described above) are already in use in Gloucester Road. There is scope to use them more and there may be scope for others to be used for the first time.

Table 19

Area for change	Current situation	Options for change
Road space	<p>Road space is fairly generous due to the width of the road – there is space for traffic flow and parking</p> <p>No current traffic calming or traffic restricting measures</p> <p>Centre of road is given over to parking on Queens Gate Gardens and Elvaston Place – this is confusing on first sight as traffic movement isn't clear</p>	<p>Options for managing driving around Cromwell Road junction are discussed in the separate WSP report</p> <p>Replace road-centre parking with trees and plants, to improve look and feel at junctions and contribute to reduction in traffic in the borough</p>
Pavement space	<p>Pavements are generally fairly wide, with some al fresco dining space</p> <p>Refuse waiting for collection sometimes disrupts pedestrian flow</p> <p>Pavement space on Cromwell Road junction disrupted by left-turn lane</p>	<p>Pavement space allows for more seating options – these are described below</p> <p>Options for Cromwell Road junction are discussed in the WSP street space report</p>
<p>Managing driving</p> <p>Note that cycling and active travel will be covered in more detail in phase 2 of the project</p>	<p>Bike box at crossing of Q15 bike route (but no other bike lanes or boxes)</p> <p>Light-controlled crossing at Cromwell Road/Gloucester Road crossing (Cromwell Road is a TfL road)</p> <p>Some pedestrian crossings on Gloucester Road, but none to the north end of road</p>	<p>Improve Cromwell Road crossing, adding pedestrian signals to eastern side, adding space to traffic islands (this is the responsibility of TfL)</p> <p>Road improvements to south end of road as per WSP streetscape study and proposals</p> <p>Add zebra crossing to north end of road</p>
Transport facilities	<p>Area is generally well served by public transport, has good bike parking for private and shared bikes and new e-scooter parking (although not always easy bike riding – see above), and some car parking</p> <p>Signage on exit from the station isn't very clear for new visitors</p> <p>Station façade is attractive and historic, but the adjacent shopping centre detracts from it</p>	<p>Improve signage within and immediately outside the station for easier orientation</p> <p>Review data on e-scooter trials to help decide on future use in the area</p>

Table 19

Area for change	Current situation	Options for change
Walking routes	<p>Pedestrian signage in the area is fairly minimal – there are TfL maps inside and outside the station but not elsewhere</p> <p>For new visitors, it is not obvious how quick it is to walk to the South Kensington Museums, or to Kensington Gardens</p> <p>TfL maps do not show that the green space around Gloucester Road is largely private gardens, not open to the public</p>	<p>Signed walking routes to museums along side streets, avoiding the Cromwell Road by starting at Queens Gate Gardens or Stanhope Gardens</p> <p>Similar signed walking route to Kensington Gardens, starting north up Gloucester Road</p> <p>Maps are designed by TfL and are consistent across London, so any changes to how green space is shown would need to be by their mapping team</p>
Public art	<p>Sculpture and streetscaping to north end of road, at Kensington Gate junction</p> <p>Interesting architectural features, including the archway at the entrance to Kynance Place, but these do not have interpretative signage</p>	<p>Murals on wall of shopping centre to north of train station, to add visual interest and promote the street.</p> <p>Possibility of interpretative signs near key architectural features, perhaps as part of walking route (see above)</p> <p>See also lighting, below.</p>
Plants and greenery	<p>Attractive street planting by businesses and residents, especially at entrance to Stanhope Mews</p> <p>Some trees by the street</p> <p>Little publicly accessible green space – the nearby garden squares are private</p>	<p>Replace road centre parking with plants on Elvaston Place and Queen's Gate Terrace (see above)</p> <p>Lack of public access to green space is hard to resolve, but signage to Kensington Gardens could help some visitors</p>
Visual identity	<p>North end of road, particularly on western side, has a strong architectural identity from terraces of shops.</p> <p>No 'Gloucester Road' identity from public or private signage, apart from on station frontage</p>	<p>Use lamppost banners (if feasible for this type of lamppost) to promote Gloucester Road identity, both north and south of Cromwell Road – this could be particularly helpful if linked to a walking route from museums/ Kensington Gardens</p>
Use of vacant space	<p>Street has relatively low vacancy rates, though there is a large vacant unit on the Victoria Grove junction, and one in the shopping centre. There is a risk in particular that shopping centre vacant units could increase, threatening the viability of the centre</p>	<p>If shopping centre vacancies persist or increase, work with landlords on community art displays or meanwhile use approaches</p>
Public facilities	<p>1 public toilet kiosk, not wheelchair accessible – reports from elsewhere in RBKC suggest that it may be rarely used</p> <p>No public water fountains</p> <p>Plenty of litter bins, but not recycling facilities</p>	<p>Possibility of moving public toilets to shopping centre, with landlord agreement – this would give more space for disability access and baby changing</p> <p>Consider community toilet scheme, particularly for north end of street</p> <p>Consider water fountains – station concourse is a possible location</p>

Table 19

Area for change	Current situation	Options for change
Places to stop	<p>A few benches outside the station (well-used during the day of our visit) but none elsewhere</p> <p>Some al fresco dining options, but these are largely attached to fairly high-end restaurants, and unlikely to be used for a casual coffee stop</p>	<p>Existing and additional planters could have a wide ledge to double up as seating</p> <p>Additional seating could be provided around existing as well as additional trees</p>
Places for children	<p>No play facilities, apart from a paid for ride-on-car in the shopping centre</p> <p>No adjacent accessible green space</p> <p>Some child-friendly restaurants close to Natural History and Science Museums, both popular with families</p>	<p>Lack of public green space limits options</p> <p>Could make street signage (described above) to museums and Kensington Gardens child friendly</p> <p>May be scope for family space in shopping centre, if there are vacant units (see above)</p>
Safety	<p>Traffic movement, particularly at the busy Cromwell Road junction, feels unsafe for pedestrians and cyclists (see above)</p> <p>Area generally feels safe from crime, although pickpocketing and harassment are risks in all high streets</p>	<p>See above on Cromwell Road junction</p>
Lighting	<p>Attractive, vintage-style lampposts are placed consistently along the road</p> <p>Fairly high degree of ambient light from shop fronts and residential properties above them</p> <p>Public sculpture to north end of road has uplighters to highlight it at night</p>	<p>Possibility of using feature or spotlighting to subtly highlight key architectural features, such as the arch at Kynance Mews</p>
Climate resilience	<p>Limited seating options in shade</p> <p>Area and tube station has been vulnerable to flooding</p> <p>Limited green space to act as permeable surface in heavy rain, though there is some in private squares</p>	<p>Add more shaded seating options (see green space)</p> <p>Flood defence work needed for the wider area, requiring expert input</p>
Accessibility	<p>Most crossings have tactile surfaces and dropped kerbs</p> <p>Narrow traffic islands, particularly on Cromwell Road junction, are particularly difficult for wheelchair users</p> <p>1 wheelchair accessible telephone kiosk</p> <p>No public disabled toilet</p> <p>Underground station does not have disabled access</p>	<p>See above on disabled toilets and on Cromwell Road crossings</p> <p>Station accessibility is the responsibility of Transport for London</p>

Top five possible interventions

Based on the placemaking toolbox above, these are our top five proposed interventions for Gloucester Road.

Table 18

Possible change	Who could make the change
<p>Improve the crossing with Cromwell Road, including pedestrian signals on all 4 sides or a 4-way crossing, as set out in WSP options paper</p>	<p>Transport for London – Gloucester Road is a strategic road and a red route</p>
<p>Create a signed walking route to and from the South Kensington Museums, along Stanhope Gardens and/or along Queens Gate Terrace to avoid the busy and dangerous Cromwell Road, using a mix of station, signpost and pavement signage, with indications of time needed to walk. Signage could be themed (e.g. dinosaur footprints to the Natural History Museum) to increase appeal to children and families</p> <p>Create a similar signed walking route to/from Kensington Gardens and Kensington Palace</p>	<p>RBKC could implement this change itself, but the impact could be increased by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Working with TfL to promote walking routes from within the station (as for the Holborn/Covent Garden route) - Working with the Museums to promote the walking route from them back to Gloucester Road - Working with the Royal Parks to promote signage to Gloucester Road and other destinations from within Kensington Gardens - Working with shopping centre owners to introduce a mural which promotes the road and its connections (see below) - Working with other local businesses, such as estate agents, to add walking route promotion on shop fronts and hoardings
<p>Replace the road-centre parking on Queen's Gate Terrace and Elvaston Gardens with trees and plants, increasing green space and making roads feel less cluttered, and reducing wider traffic and air pollution by discouraging car journeys</p> <p>For first time visitors, it may not be obvious at first glance that the cars are not going to move as you cross the road</p>	<p>RBKC could make this change – though it would probably promote some local opposition</p>

Table 18

Possible change	Who could make the change
<p>Create more seating areas – possible sites include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Around the sculpture at the north end of the road, making use of the shade from the trees 2. In the yard to the south side of St Stephen’s Church (currently blocked off) – these would be shaded by trees and surrounding buildings 3. Along the wall between Kynance Place and Kynance Mews – these would be shaded by the wall during the sunniest part of the day 4. Adding to the existing seating in front of the station, creating a more convivial space by placing benches facing towards each other 	<p>RBKC for benches</p> <p>RBKC in collaboration with local businesses for al fresco dining</p>
<p>Add a mural to the wall of the Gloucester Arcade shopping centre which faces onto Gloucester Road – this is currently a rather blank façade and detracts from the architecture of the station building</p>	<p>The landlords of Gloucester Arcade would need to give their permission</p>

Assessing the cost, timescale, ease of delivery and scale of outcomes for these changes

This section looks at the possibility of implementing these changes.

- Cost means the direct cash cost of making the change to the council and its partners, not including consultation or engagement costs.
- Timescale means how long the change would take to implement from the point that the decision had been made
- Decision making challenge means how long it would take to engage with people on the change, and how controversial or complex the decision might be
- Disruption means how much impact there would be on users of the high street while the change was being made
- Impact means the scale of the difference the change would make

Rankings are compared to the other changes suggested in the table. In some cases the changes could be made at different scales (e.g. more or fewer places to sit) – in these cases we have taken a mid scale assumption as our starting point

Table 19

Measure	Cost	Timescale	Decision making challenge	Disruption	Impact
Improved crossings at Cromwell Road	High	High	Medium	High	High
Signed walking route to museums and/or Kensington Gardens	Low	Medium	Medium	Low	Medium
Replace road centre parking on Queen's Gate Terrace and Elvaston Place	Low	Low	High	Medium	Medium
Increase number of places to sit	Medium	Medium	Low	Medium	Medium
Add mural to Gloucester Arcade shopping centre	Low	Low	Medium	Low	Low

Measuring the impact of these changes

The overall aim for the proposed changes taken together is to increase both footfall – the number of visitors – and dwell time – how long each visitor spends here.

Revenue and footfall for individual businesses on the high street, obtained from their managers, can be a good proxy indicator for this, or it may be possible to use credit card spending data. In both cases transaction counts are a better indicator than total spend volumes, as these are heavily influenced by a small number of high cost transactions (such as jewellery) rather than smaller transactions (such as cups of coffee or books).

Public transport data or bike hire figures from TfL can also be useful to assess visitor numbers, though it is harder to use for high streets like Gloucester Road which are within easy walking distance of many people's homes and places of work, and of other visitor attractions. The introduction of the Ultra Low Emission Zone and possible related changes to driver behaviour, increase in cycling since the pandemic, seasonal changes to cycling (less popular in winter), and the closure of the Piccadilly Line at South Kensington, which may be displacing some passengers to Gloucester Road, also make it harder to use transport numbers as a proxy for footfall.

Some of these changes can also be assessed through specific measures, such as pedestrian accident rates and footfall data for new routes. These are set out below.

Table 20

Measure	What success would look like	How we could measure it
Improved crossings at Cromwell Road	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lower rates of accidents involving pedestrians 2. Better experience for people with disabilities and mobility issues 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Using TfL's London Collision map to compare accident rates before and after change (It may be better to use 2019 as the comparison, as traffic flow has changed significantly during the pandemic. Note that the introduction of the ULEZ in October 2021 may also impact on traffic levels, and thus on accident rates) 2. Consultation and engagement with representative groups
Signed walking route to museums and/or Kensington Gardens	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of pedestrians walking along the route, before and after new signage is added 2. Increased footfall and/or spend in shops close to the start/end point of the route 3. Increased number of TfL journeys where passengers exit the network at South Kensington and re-enter it at Gloucester Road, or vice versa 4. Number of noise/litter complaints made by local residents, to see if increased tourist visits are causing issues 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Manual count, or count from CCTV cameras 2. Information from business owners, collected by RBKC officers 3. Information from TfL (note that the closure of the Piccadilly Line at South Kensington may impact this measure) 4. Count of complaints received by councillors and the council, before and after change made
Improving crossings	Improved feedback from residents and other local stakeholders	From exercises similar to recent Commonplace consultation
Additional seating and al fresco dining	Measure use of benches	Manual or CCTV based count
Tree planting	Difficult to assess direct impact beyond visual changes, but together with other changes to the area it could increase footfall and spend, as set out above	

Inspiration
 We think case studies which might be particularly relevant to Gloucester Road are:

- Oxford Broad Meadow
- Morningside Merchants, NYC
- Barcelona's superblocs

All these case studies, and others, are included at the end of this document.

Case Studies

RBKC want our high streets to be places where people want to visit and to stay, with facilities which encourage people to spend time there and to connect with others

100 Gates project, NYC

The 100 Gates Project aims to build an ‘open-air gallery’ across New York City. As an alternative to illegal graffiti, local artists are commissioned to decorate businesses’ roll-down security gates, deterring illegal graffiti. The project currently operates in the East Village, the Lower East Side, East Harlem, Staten Island, and Little Caribbean, in Brooklyn. The artwork is often related to the storefronts’ occupier but also includes abstract pieces, all of which help to populate the sometimes imposing night-time street scene of New York City and introduce colour and vibrancy to neighbourhoods without encouraging tagging and illegal graffiti.

Carnaby Street bike hubs

After a shop front in Shaftesbury’s portfolio in Carnaby Street became vacant, they installed a free bike storage facility, open from 7am-9pm, 7 days a week, with 24/7 security. Now shoppers, local workers, and tourists can cycle to the shopping district without the need for potentially cramped public transport or polluting car or taxi travel, and leave their bikes, safely and freely, in the unit. It does not require any re-allocation of public space to accommodate the bicycles. Carnaby Street shares many of the vulnerabilities of RBKC’s shopping areas, including a heritage appeal.

RBKC want our high street to adapt and change based on involvement from the community, and on learning from what has worked here and elsewhere

Nudge Community Builders

Union Street in Plymouth had been a local nightlife centre, fuelled by the local naval base, but had seen a troubling increase in vacancies as industry declined. After a crowdfunding campaign, a local group called Nudge Community Builders purchased an empty shop and created a multipurpose community space. Seeing the space’s popularity, they have purchased vacant pubs, empty buildings, out-of-use cinemas and nightclubs and created ‘alternative shopping arcades’ and meanwhile spaces for local businesses and startups, along with permanent spaces for local charities. Local residents can now cheaply hire community spaces, test out business ideas, and visit vibrant markets in a street that had been in serious decline. Using community share investment, they are now planning to buy a historic art deco cinema on the street and transform it into a buzzing local arts venue, while promising a return of over three per cent to investors.

Hackney’s Parklet policy

Taking advantage of the fact that around 70 per cent of its residents do not drive a car, Hackney Council created a programme for local residents to create their own ‘community parklets’ on street parking spaces. If sufficiently popular among residents and considered viable by the council, local people receive small grants of up to £250 to create miniature green spaces, alongside free planters and a parking suspension. However, residents themselves design and maintain their parklets entirely

independently, arranging their own planting and up-keep. In a borough attempting to reduce the dominance of parked cars on its kerbs, the project enables residents of all ages to design their own public spaces. Existing parklets, like that on Colvestone Crescent in Dalston, have become popular meeting spaces for children and parents, helping to build community spirit during the pandemic while allowing social distancing.

RBKC want our high streets to work for everyone: from babies to teenagers to working-age adults to older people

New York High Line

An icon of urban regeneration, the High Line is a linear public park built on the site of a disused section of railway running through Manhattan. After threats of demolition, a Friends of the High Line campaign pushed for its renovation, and from 2006, it was transformed into a lush urban park, which has helped to redevelop many surrounding buildings and attract millions of visitors a year. Rain and storm water is diverted from the overburdened sewer system into planting beds, while its biodiverse planting schemes are matched with art installations, from murals, to sculptures, to sound installations, along with facilities that welcome children and young people. A play area includes see-saws and a musical ‘chime bench’ for children to play on. Unlike many urban regeneration projects, teenagers are explicitly catered for at the High Line – High Line Teens provides paid employment for local teenagers in horticulture, public art, and civic engagement work, while providing careers advice and support.

South Korea’s School Zone Improvement Project

In response to an unacceptable level of pedestrian deaths among children, the South Korean government implemented a project in several Korean cities to create safe routes from children’s homes to their schools and nurseries by combining physical infrastructure, like speed bumps and fences, with bans on parking on roads leading up to schools, ‘school zone’ signs, and children’s murals. Part of a wider policy push, the project has seen children’s traffic deaths decrease by 95 per cent between 1988 and 2012.

Singapore Community Gardens

In Singapore, around 80 per cent of the population lives in public housing projects, largely in high-rise estates. The Singaporean government has introduced two major schemes to enable community gardeners to cultivate plots of varying sizes on and around these housing projects, but also hospitals, universities and schools. Community in Bloom has so far enabled 1,400 community gardens, involving 36,000 gardeners, while Allotment Gardens include 1,050 plots in 11 parks. Often initially led by elderly residents, the projects have seen increasing involvement from young people in recent years. State funding and equipment provision enables low individual costs of entry but maintains significant autonomy for community groups, which have grown anything from food, to ornamental flower shows, to organic installations. Rather than a one-and-done conception of consultation, followed by implementation, Singapore’s Community Gardens enable a continuous process of making and remaking on the part of residents.

RBKC want our high street to be healthy places, which encourage active travel, and with as little traffic noise and pollution as possible

Utrecht Stationspleininstalling

In August 2019, Utrecht built the single largest cycle garage in the world, integrated into its central train station. Three floors of cycle parking are all fully accessible by bike, due to the use of ramps, and the garage's bottom floor has integrated access to train platforms, allowing simple, stress-free bike storage for train travellers. Solving the 'last mile' problem in active travel, when travellers are prevented from utilising purely low-carbon transport by the distance between public transit and their homes and offices, the station now receives 40 per cent of its visitors by bike, a number which is only likely to grow as the cycle garage grows in popularity.

Buenos Aires' 9 de Julio Avenue

One of the major road entrances to the city, Buenos Aires' 9 de Julio Avenue was once among the widest avenues in the world, with 20 vehicular lanes. To combat road deaths, air pollution, and poor public transport take-up, the city council installed a large, 24-hour bus corridor through the centre of the thoroughfare, including green pedestrian lanes. Bus travel times were reduced by 50 per cent and CO2 output by 5,612 tonnes a year. On a bus line that makes use of the lane, road accidents were reduced from eight a month to one a year, and further into the city, narrow streets that had previously been heavily used by buses were able to be entirely pedestrianised. The process required no permanent road closures.

Barcelona's superblocks

In response to pollution issues, a lack of green space, and crippling urban heat effects, Barcelona City Council has, since 2016, installed 'superblocks' in small city neighbourhoods, in which cars, aside from speed-limited residents and deliveries, are barred from grids of blocks.

One perimeter road surrounds each block, allowing only low-speed traffic – the council plans to transform these routes into 'green corridors', with extensive planting. Though there was initially significant controversy in Poblenou, the first neighbourhood to receive a superblock, they have become widely accepted, particularly throughout the pandemic, though their future is under discussion. Mixed use activities take place across the blocks and cycling and bus networks are shaped to fit them. Without explicitly banning cars from the city centre (as have, in effect, Oslo, Norway, and Pontevedra, Spain), the city council eventually plans to extend the project to almost 70 per cent of the city.

RBKC want our high streets to have their own individual character based on their unique history and geography

Morningside Merchants

In Morningside Heights, a historically working-class area of New York City now home to Columbia University, local merchants have been combatting the influx of multinational chains through a small business association, called Morningside Merchants. During the pandemic, pressures on small

businesses operating in an overheated real estate market threatened many with closure, causing the City Council's Department of Small Business Service to step in to offer business support and advice. The coalition aims to continue this work, while promoting Morningside Heights to residents and visitors and performing services like pavement cleaning. Unlike Business Improvement Districts, which represent all local firms, small business associations, like Morningside Merchants, work explicitly to assist small businesses in danger of failure. The City's involvement in the project demonstrates the latitude for local government to facilitate this kind of self-organisation in service of its policy goals.

Stockton-on-Tees' shopping centre demolition

The city of Stockton-on-Tees has suffered from painful economic decline since the onset of deindustrialisation in the 1970s and has recently seen many of its department stores, central to its retail offer, close. Rather than combat this, the borough council has decided to accelerate this transformation by purchasing the entirety of the Castlegate shopping centre and the Swallow Hotel, with plans to demolish it and replace it with a large park, a library, and a leisure centre. In place of simply acquiescing a slow decline, the project aims to accept the radical changes in retail patterns that seem unlikely to reverse and intentionally reshape Stockton town centre into an open space for events and social life, rather than largescale chain retail. The project, financed by Future High Streets Fund, has been matched by high street renovations including a significant regeneration of the historic Globe theatre and the installation of The Hub, an active travel centre that provides free bike storage and cycling advice.

RBKC want our high streets to be part of the solution to the climate crisis: reducing emissions and adapting to changing conditions, and with plenty of plants and green space

Hillingdon's Eastcote Town Centre Rain Gardens, **Chicago's Washington Park Rain Gardens,** **Rotterdam's Waterplein Benthemplein¹**

Rain gardens have become increasingly popular in cities around the world, combining efforts to increase climate and social resilience through creating multi-functional public spaces. In Eastcote Town Centre, Hillingdon Borough Council planted 15 linear rain gardens, underpinned by a Sustainable Drainage Systems approach, to combat the area's vulnerability to regular flooding due to heavy rainfall. The gardens were combined with social seating, tree planting, and new paving, and the project won the Institute of Civil Engineers London People's Choice Award in 2021. Local schools now use the project for educational visits.

In the South Side of Chicago, the Washington Park Rain Garden project took a different approach. On the site of a previously vacant lot, the project, driven by a community group, combined a public art installation, art incubator, and community space with a green stormwater collection project. The project's street furniture and amenities were designed by local artists, working with local students in a Design Apprenticeship Program.

In Rotterdam, the Waterplein Bethemplein reduces stress on the city's sewers during heavy rainfall by allowing excess water to collect in ponds

1. Peinhardt, K. (2021). Resilience through placemaking: Public spaces in Rotterdam's climate adaptation approach (No. 1/2021). Discussion Paper.

in the centre of a popular public square. In dry weather, the ponds act as tiered, amphitheatre-style spaces for children to play and play sport. It was conceived through a set of co-creation workshops with nearby students and teachers, members of nearby church members, theatres, gyms, and local residents.

Oxford's Broad Meadow

As the pandemic sparked demand for outdoor space for socialising, Oxford City Council moved to address the lack of free, attractive places to sit in the historic city centre by installing 'Broad Meadow'. Broad Street is a major high street and transport route, passing several major colleges of the city's university. Starting in March 2021, the council undertook a rapid procurement process and an intensive consultation process with local stakeholders to build an experimental urban green space with facilities for children and families in the middle of the street. Planters, micro-lawns covered with wildflowers, and street trees were installed, and cars barred from the street, while cycle flows were channelled through the fringe of the Meadow.

Engaging over 60 stakeholder organisations within a month, the council took local concerns into account, working with disability charities to move disabled parking and local businesses to minimise waste and delivery inconvenience. 24/7 security added expense but calmed concerns about anti-social behaviour, while fears of vehicle-pedestrian conflicts proved unfounded and shared bicycle-pedestrian space was used in an orderly, safe fashion. The Meadow enjoyed enormous popularity while open, attracting over 100,000 visitors, and is thought by the council to have improved footfall to local businesses, despite having been implemented in only 3 months. Results from a consultation exercise involving over 1000 residents showed 87% of respondents stating that its impact on the city was positive, along with 80% backing the permanent pedestrianisation of Broad Street in its entirety. The scheme's success has led both the City and County Council to support steps towards full pedestrianisation in the coming years.

RBKC want our high streets to be places for culture, art, festivals, events and activities: during the day and into the evening

Philadelphia City Hall Courtyard

Philadelphia City Council transformed the empty courtyard of their City Hall into a public performance space with seating and shade. They used rain-water-collecting umbrellas to maintain a rain garden behind the stage, employed local designers for custom-made furnishings, and put up welcoming signs in multiple local languages. It is now popularly used for concerts, beer gardens, children's festivals, and political rallies. 2,600 people took part in the 'placemaking visioning process' in the run up to the project and planners installed feedback posters at a popular travelling beer garden. What once was an official, intimidating space has taken on a public life of its own.

Manchester's 7-day licensing and out-of-hours team

Manchester, well-known for its vibrant and diverse nightlife, committed to create a multi-departmental out-of-hours team in 2016, encompassing policing, licensing and waste management,

and homelessness capabilities. The changes have meant that complaints of excessive noise and other violations can be responded to as and when they occur, rather than the next day. A three-shift system allows licensing and out-of-hours staff to be present late into the night, working out of police stations which are open for twenty-four hours a day. Manchester's progress demonstrates a model of managing a popular nightlife economy, while safeguarding the interests of local residents.

City and Westminster's comprehensive lighting strategies to guide use of public and private lighting

Urban lighting is a key policy problem for placemaking and town centre management, with uncoordinated private light sources causing light pollution, wasting energy, and failing to take advantage of the safety and wayfinding benefits of an organised illumination strategy. Among London boroughs, only the City of London and the City of Westminster have comprehensive lighting strategies that both inform municipal strategies and the regulation of private sources. The City was able to reduce its energy costs for street lighting by half after its City Lighting Strategy revealed that nearly 20 per cent of its municipal lighting was unnecessary, whether due to excessive lighting on underused streets or the impact of local private sources of light. Across London, supplementary planning documents can be used to coordinate private sources of light in new developments. Outside of London, Glasgow, Paris, Seoul, and many other cities have comprehensive lighting strategies. With a coordinated lighting strategy, boroughs can increase their capacity to deter crime and help grow a healthy evening economy, while maintaining the safety of visitors and residents, and saving costs.

Open Access. Some rights reserved.

As the publisher of this work, Centre for London wants to encourage the circulation of our work as widely as possible while retaining the copyright. We therefore have an open access policy which enables anyone to access our content online without charge. Anyone can download, save, perform or distribute this work in any format, including translation, without written permission. This is subject to the terms of the Centre for London licence.

Its main conditions are:

- Centre for London and the author(s) are credited
- This summary and the address centreforlondon.org are displayed
- The text is not altered and is used in full
- The work is not resold
- A copy of the work or link to its use online is sent to Centre for London.

You are welcome to ask for permission to use this work for purposes other than those covered by the licence. Centre for London gratefully acknowledges the work of Creative Commons in inspiring our approach to copyright.

To find out more go to creativecommons.org



Published by:

Centre for London 2022
© Centre for London.
Some rights reserved.
32 - 33 Hatton Garden
London, EC1N 8DL
T: 020 3757 5555
hello@centreforlondon.org
centreforlondon.org
Company Number: 8414909
Charity Number: 1151435

About Centre for London

We are London's think tank.

Our mission is to develop new solutions to London's critical challenges and advocate for a fair and prosperous global city.

We are a politically independent charity.

We help national and London policymakers think beyond the next election and plan for the future.

We have ideas with impact.

Through research, analysis and events we generate bold and creative solutions that improve the city we share.

We believe in the power of collaboration.

We bring together people from different parts of the city - with a range of experience and expertise - to develop new ideas and implement them.

As a charity we rely on the support of our funders.

Our work is funded by a mixture of organisations and individuals who share our vision for a better London.

Find out more at [**centreforlondon.org**](https://centreforlondon.org)