



North Finchley Town Centre

Community Planning Summary



25TH - 26TH FEBRUARY 2022



North Finchley Town Centre Regeneration

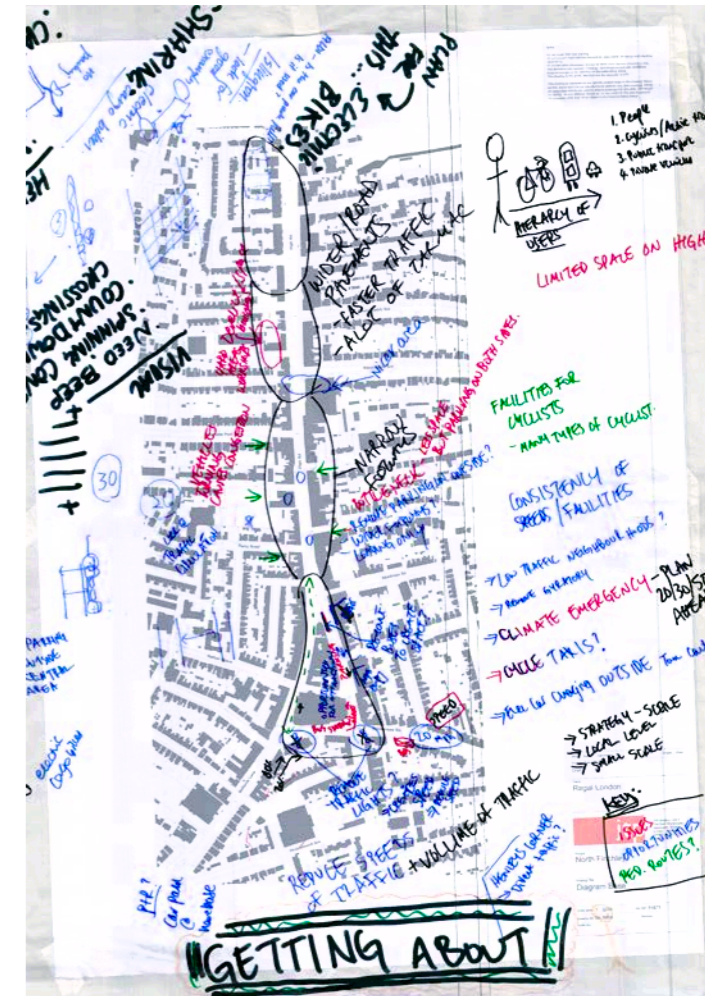
Community Walkabouts & Workshops, Friday 25 & Saturday 26 February 2022

Regal London and Joseph Partners have entered into a land agreement with the London Borough of Barnet for the regeneration of North Finchley Town Centre, one of Barnet's main town centres. Our ambitious and experienced team is committed to engaging with the community through the development of proposals for the town centre.

As a first step, members of the local community were invited to participate in workshops and walkabouts to share local knowledge and consider the future of the Town Centre. In addition, the community was invited to share thoughts by completing a short town centre survey on the northfinchley.commonplace.is website.

JTP, architects and urban designers, led the community walkabouts on the Friday afternoon and Saturday morning to consider the strengths and weaknesses of the town centre. On the Saturday afternoon, workshops were held at artsdepot, where participants shared their aspirations and ideas for improving the local area. The outputs of the workshops and survey have been assessed and analysed by the JTP team and the key themes from the engagement are presented below.

This was the first of many opportunities for the community to share views on the future of North Finchley Town Centre. We look forward to working with the community as the proposals evolve to meet local aspirations for the regeneration of North Finchley Town Centre.





The following key themes are a distillation of the survey, discussions and design workshops on 25 & 26 February. All quotes are from community participants unless otherwise stated.

Nostalgia & Pride

Participants felt that the area had declined over recent years, and long to see the vibrancy that was once there return to the Town Centre. A renewed sense of identity for North Finchley needs to be created, with a focus and intimacy people can identify with, and be proud of.

“When I say I am going out in North Finchley, people say why?”

Limited Offer

The Town Centre is seen to have a limited variety of uses and that money is leaching out of the centre as people go elsewhere to do their shopping or go to other leisure facilities. Residents want to see the curation of spaces and events that could attract more people and bring the community together.

“The High Street is not meeting the needs of many people who live here.”

Trust and delivery

Residents want to see positive, transformational change, and they valued the engagement process. However, there is a lack of confidence that the ideas of residents and businesses will be listened to and carried through in the plans. The regeneration of North Finchley presents the opportunity to build trust and connections with the local community and faith that the Town Centre will improve in line with local aspirations.

“We need a transformational project”

Environmental Quality

The High Street is generally seen as an unclean, poor quality environment, and residents want to see a more attractive, pedestrian friendly space, with more greenery and opportunities for cafe spill-out.

“It feels like a major thoroughfare, not a high street.”

Safety & Anti-social Behaviour

There is a perception that certain spaces around the Town Centre are unsafe, including in the bus station, and alleyways. Residents also voiced a concern about the prevalence of anti-social behaviour on the High Street, and feel more should be done to tackle this. The new proposals to regenerate the Town Centre should design-in a more convivial, safe and secure environment.

“It feels unsafe - it’s off putting!”

Overrun with traffic

Participants agreed that the High Road is heavily choked with cars and that air pollution is severe. There were concerns that attempts to enhance the pedestrian and cycling environment could have adverse impacts on traffic flow. A key challenge will be to develop the right balance as the proposals for the town centre evolve.

“We need to change attitudes. Why are people in a car in the first place!?”

Connectivity

There is a need for improved connections and road crossings, and enhanced accessibility for the disabled and partially sighted. Residents raised concern that there would be less opportunity for parking as a result of the street improvements.

“I am a cyclist but there are times when you need to drive - heavy shopping, young children, stinky weather.”

Enhance the artsdepot

The cultural uses delivered by the artsdepot are seen as a valuable asset whilst some of the deficiencies of the existing building are also well recognised. Residents would like to see these cultural uses having an enhanced offering. The creative arts are an important part of the town centre mix.

“Building up the cultural offer will help regenerate to town centre!”

Valued diversity

There is an appreciation of the value that young people and diverse communities bring to the High Street. Tapping into this spirit to activate diverse communities will help to inspire change.

“There’s a rich mix of communities around the High Street.”

Continuing Engagement

The opportunity to participate in shaping the plans for the regeneration of the Town Centre was appreciated and ongoing consultation with all sections of the community is important. The engagement process must capture involvement from broad-ranging groups within the community.

“It’s great that local feedback is being invited and recorded.”


JOSEPH PARTNERS


REGAL
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