

GROUNDWORK LONDON REPORT



Greening Phoenix Road

Community Engagement Report



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Executive Summary

To inform designs for greening and public realm improvements along Phoenix Road and Brill Place, Camden Council appointed Groundwork London to carry out initial community and stakeholder engagement to understand the needs, priorities and concerns of Somers Town communities and other key stakeholders.

Between March - July 2019 Groundwork London carried out whole-of-community and targeted engagement activities. Targeted engagement focused on groups with protected characteristics and groups whose voices are often not heard through mainstream consultation activities, including people with disabilities, black and minority ethnic residents, children, young people and older people.

In total 691 people who live, work or visit Somers Town participated in one of 22 face-to-face engagement activities or completed a questionnaire survey. This study provides answers to four key research questions.



Research question 1 (RQ1)

What are the needs, desires and aspirations of the different groups?

Functional and aesthetically pleasing:

those engaged expressed a desire for a safe, accessible and attractive public realm that is conducive to social interaction. Greening was regarded as an ideal way to add colour, character and visual appeal.

Safe walking and cycling routes are important.

It is important to those who live, work or visit Phoenix Road that it maintains its function as a route to and from work, school and transport hubs. Cyclists expressed a need for segregated cycling lanes, appropriate signage and for local roads to be well networked and signposted. Vehicular access was important to businesses and residents alike.

Pleasant green space to spend time in was identified as a key community need.

Having high quality, attractive and safe green space would help people meet their need and aspiration of spending more time outside. Air quality and the impact of construction work are key concerns. Having access to routes that lower people's exposure to air pollution and that have wider health and wellbeing benefits were desirable.

People with disabilities and older people identified wider and clutter free pavements, vehicular access, appropriate surfacing and street design (tactile paving, haptic markers, paving with edges and sloping pavement at crossings), seating or resting places and contrasting colours as important.

Most **social housing** residents do not have access to private open space and regard green and open spaces as an extension of their homes. Their priorities are: safe, attractive and functional open spaces that enable them to access their homes and local facilities easily and safely and high quality green spaces for play, rest and relaxation.

Black and ethnic minority residents expressed a strong desire for safe, attractive multi-functional spaces and emphasised space for events and activities.

Key needs of **children and young people** are attractive and safe walking and cycling routes to schools and attractive spaces to play and spend time in.

Vehicular access is important to **businesses** for the delivery of goods and to provide access for people visiting.

Research question 2 (RQ2)

How can Phoenix Road and its surroundings better meet community needs and create inclusive space for all?

From Grey to Green: a colourful and biodiverse public realm

The top improvement priority was to create a clean and green environment. Creating places for relaxation and somewhere to experience nature were high up on the community's priority list. Injecting colour through planting was consistently mentioned by all groups as a key priority. Green space animation and activities would help to build trust and maximise usage of new or improved green spaces.

Place specific and unique

Those engaged would like improvements to build on the rich history and heritage of the area and to help create a unique identity through creative means, including public art and sculptures.

Safe and accessible

Developing a safe, accessible and attractive streetscape was identified as an improvement priority by all audiences. Phoenix Road should continue to provide easy access to or from home, school and places of work. Those engaged felt that Phoenix Road and Brill Place would benefit from greening and other improvements to enhance the user experience, including segregated cycle lanes, seating at regular intervals, traffic calming measures and appropriate surfacing, street furniture and features.

Sociable and playable space

Those engaged felt that Phoenix Road and surrounding areas had the potential to become a community resource providing opportunities for socialising. Inviting seating, safe places to play and incidental play opportunities were identified as improvement priorities.

Well connected and integrated

Any improvements should be well networked and visually and functionally tie in with other improvements in the area.



Research question 3 (RQ3)

Which specific areas of Phoenix Road could work best for the delivery of public realm and greening improvements?

Locations for greening interventions were identified by the local community, including possible locations for scooter trails, a new crossing, traffic calming measures, sensory planting and outdoor play and recreation. The report contains a map identifying these locations.

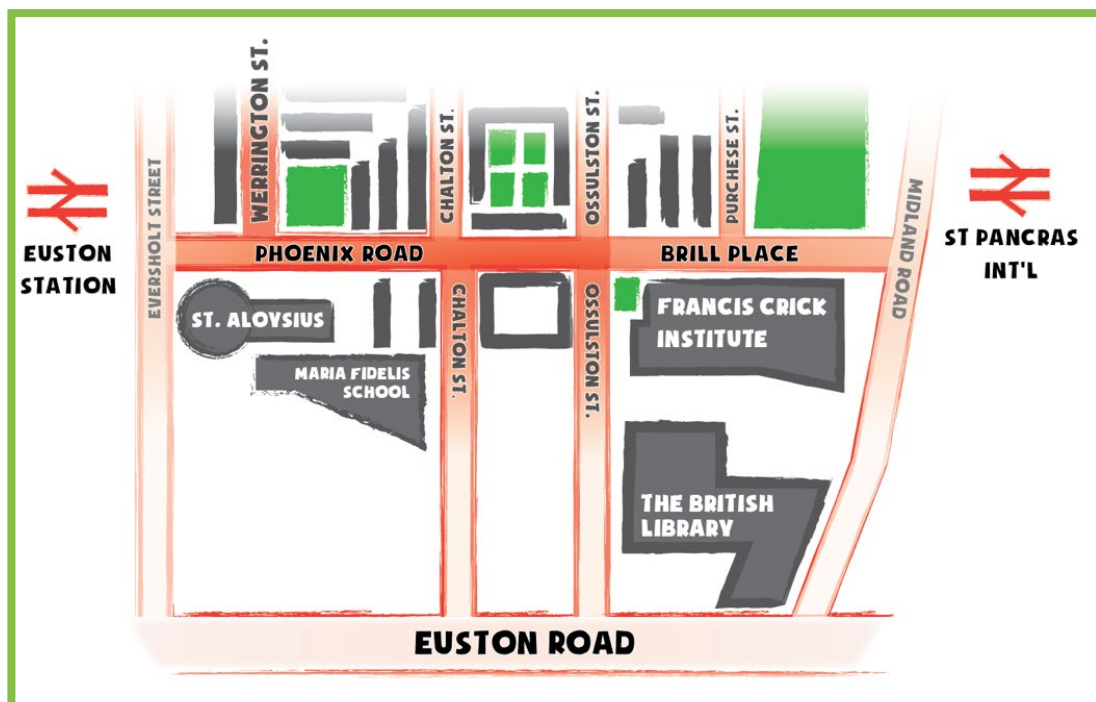
Research question 4 (RQ4)

What are the potential challenges and how might these be overcome?

Engagement fatigue, resistance to change, crime and anti-social behaviour and ensuring Phoenix Road improvements dovetail with other work in the area are potential challenges, which could be overcome through partnership and multi-agency working, as well as regular communication and engagement with the different stakeholder groups.

1. Introduction and Background

Camden Council is exploring the feasibility of carrying out greening and public realm improvements in the Somers Town area, along Phoenix Road and Brill Place between Eversholt Street and Midland Road. The below map shows the project area:



Phoenix Road within Somers Town, Camden

The provision of a green corridor arises from an assurance Camden Council secured from High Speed 2 (HS2). The assurance provides funding to make improvements to Phoenix Road.

The assurance is as follows:

“Creation of open space through green infrastructure and other enhancements of Phoenix Road potentially including a linear park and nature conservation measures... including, as a minimum, enhancing the walking route between Euston Station and St Pancras Station.”

Camden Council appointed Groundwork London in 2018 to carry out initial community and stakeholder engagement around the greening of Phoenix Road. The purpose of this engagement was to understand the needs, priorities and concerns of Somers Town communities and other key stakeholders. This study will inform the development of design proposals for greening and public realm improvements along Phoenix Road and Brill Place and other greening interventions in the area. This report sets out the engagement methodology adopted by Groundwork London, the key findings, priorities and aspirations of those who live, work or visit the area.



1.1 The Project Area

Phoenix Road and Brill Place are situated in Somers Town, Camden, between Eversholt Street and Midland Road. Please note that this report is focused on both Phoenix Road and Brill Place but are referred to collectively as 'Phoenix Road'.

The project area is nestled between King's Cross and Euston and is made up of residential buildings, restaurants, shops, offices, institutions and public open space, including green spaces. The area is undergoing large scale redevelopment, including HS2 construction and the British Library Extension. While Kings Cross and Euston are areas of major growth, Somers Town is an area where social deprivation is prevalent – 34.4% of residents live in income deprivation, and child poverty and unemployment are also high (50.7% and 10.9% respectively).

Character and History

The area to the north is predominantly residential in character with mixed use including: offices, restaurants, cafes, and educational and religious establishments. There are a number of high profile civic buildings including the British Library and The Francis Crick Institute. The area has a rich and varied history boasting listed buildings including for example, St Pancras Station. Adjacent green spaces include Purchase Street Open Space, Francis Crick gardens and the green space adjacent to Oakshott Court Estate. The former two spaces are publically accessible.

Demographics

Somers Town is home to 6,700 people and the population is projected to rise by nearly 50% by 2028. The population is young, with a median age of 29.

15.2% of residents are Bangladeshi (over double the Camden average of 6.3%). Camden Council is a major land owner in the area. Most residents live in social housing, managed by Camden Council (50.8%) and Registered Social Landlords, e.g. Origin (19%, ONS, 2001). Most residents do not have access to private open space, which reinforces the need for high quality green spaces for rest, relaxation and recreation on their doorstep (sources: Census 2011, Somers Town Neighbourhood Plan 2016-26, Camden Council, 2007).

1.2 Building on previous work and community priorities

This engagement builds on results of previous consultations and community aspirations, some of which are summarised below, and was undertaken within the context of Camden Council's strategic priorities, including reducing inequality and creating inclusive spaces that encourage people from different backgrounds to come together.

Green spaces are highly valued by the local community, and vitally important to people, especially in light of Somers Town scoring highly in terms of indices of deprivation, overcrowding and ill health. Green spaces provide multiple social and health benefits such as recreational opportunities for exercise and outdoor spaces for events and community activities. In addition green spaces deliver ecosystem services, such as improving air quality, reducing surface water run-off and addressing the urban heat island effect.

The draft Somers Town Neighbourhood Plan (2016- 2026) stresses that "growth and renewal is about people as well as place" and any work undertaken is developed on the principles of genuine and committed collaboration. Further, any plans for improvements in Somers Town should be developed in conjunction with other developments in the project area and neighbouring areas.

The Somers Town Greening Strategy (2015) sets out guiding principles for green infrastructure in the area and calls for enhancing existing and creating new green infrastructure. The aspiration is for multi-functional open spaces that are attractive, useable, safe, encourage social interaction, promote walking and cycling, improve biodiversity, improve air quality and contribute towards positive social and health outcomes.

Green space improvements should be designed to minimise ongoing maintenance and consider ways of maintaining green infrastructure in Somers Town which encourage community ownership.

Consultation carried out from 2013 to 2017 identified key concerns and community priorities. The overarching vision is a public realm that fosters social interaction, encourages walking and cycling and which contains biodiverse green spaces where people can relax, meet others, play and exercise. In June 2017, Camden Council commissioned a study to explore the feasibility of greening and public realm enhancement for Phoenix Road and Brill Place and their surroundings. This work focused on establishing the constraints, opportunities and potential priorities for improvement and investment in the area, based on an expert-led landscape assessment.

The feasibility study investigated possible changes to the area's streets to remove the dominance of vehicles in order to prioritise pedestrians and cyclists and create space for communities to enjoy. The reports were published in 2018 and suggested that this would also create a safe, pleasant walking route between Euston Station and St Pancras Station.

The five principles identified in the 2018 feasibility report have informed this engagement with local communities. A key principle was 'Put People First' and the findings presented in this report explore this further.



2. Objectives

The purpose of this engagement was to understand the needs, priorities and concerns of Somers Town communities (those who live, work or visit the area) in order to inform the design for the greening and public realm improvements along Phoenix Road and Brill Place, as well as other greening interventions within the local area.

The objectives were to:

- Identify the needs, aspirations and desires of the different audiences
- Carry out whole community and targeted engagement activities to engage as representative a sample of the local community as possible
- Reach out and give voice to groups least likely to participate in mainstream consultation activities, including groups with protected characteristics
- Identify any specific locations for greening interventions
- Identify potential challenges

3. Methodology

The purpose of this engagement was to understand the needs, priorities and concerns of Somers Town communities (those who live, work or visit the area) in order to inform the design for the greening and public realm improvements along Phoenix Road and Brill Place, as well as other greening interventions within the local area.

3.1 Overview

Four key Research Questions (RQs) were agreed for this study:

RQ1: What are the needs, desires and aspirations of different groups?

RQ2: How can Phoenix Road and its surroundings better meet community needs and create inclusive space for all?

RQ3: Which specific areas of Phoenix Road could work best for the delivery of public realm and greening improvements?

RQ4: What are the potential challenges and how these might be overcome?

The engagement strategy consisted of whole community and targeted engagement activities in order to maximise reach and representation. Engagement was carried out between March and June 2019 and engaged 691 people in total.

A questionnaire and pop-up conversation stalls were the main whole community mechanisms to engage a cross section of the local community (residents, visitors and workers).

Targeted engagement aimed at capturing the views of those whose voices may not be heard through mainstream consultation activities and consisted of focus groups, meetings, workshops, walk-and-talk site perception surveys and targeted outreach by Camden's Community Researchers.



Table 1 summarises engagement carried out:

Engagement Activity	Target Audience	Date	Number engaged
Whole Community Engagement			
Questionnaire Survey	Residents, workers	April - June	209
Conversation Stall: Chalton Market/Euston Road	Residents, workers, visitors	23 April	43
Conversation Stall: Phoenix Road /Werrington Street	Residents, workers, visitors	26 April	45
Conversation Stall: Ossulston/ Brill Place	Residents, workers, visitors	27 April	16
Conversation Stall: Outside Chalton Gallery	Residents, workers, visitors	28 April	30
Well Being Day	Residents	15 May	13
Exhibition	Residents, workers, visitors	13 July	100
TOTAL: Whole Community			456
Targeted Engagement			
Camden Cycling Campaign Focus Group	Cyclists	22 March	2
Somers Town Neighbourhood Forum	Residents	8 May	17
Royal National Institute of Blind People Walk-and-Talk	People with Visual Impairments	5 April	4
Hopscotch Asian Women's Centre Focus Group	Bangladeshi Women	5 April	5
We are Aging Better Focus Group	Older people, people with mobility issues	26 April	9
Walk and Talk: Phoenix Court TRA	Social Housing Residents	13 April	1
Walk and Talk: TRA: Walker House	Social Housing Residents	14 April	5
Regent High Workshop	School Community	2 May	30
St Aloysius Catholic School Workshop	School Community	4 April	45
Edith Neville Parent Group Focus Group	Parents	5 April	12
Community Champions Door to Door engagement	Bangladeshi and Black African residents	22 May 19 June	72
Sheltered Housing Resident Focus Group	Older residents	22 May 19 June	14
Urban Partners Meeting	Business Community	24 June	4
Plot 10 Meeting	Key Community Stakeholder	30 May	5
Global Generation	Key Stakeholder	17 April	10
TOTAL: targeted			235
TOTAL:			691

Table 1: Engagement activities carried out

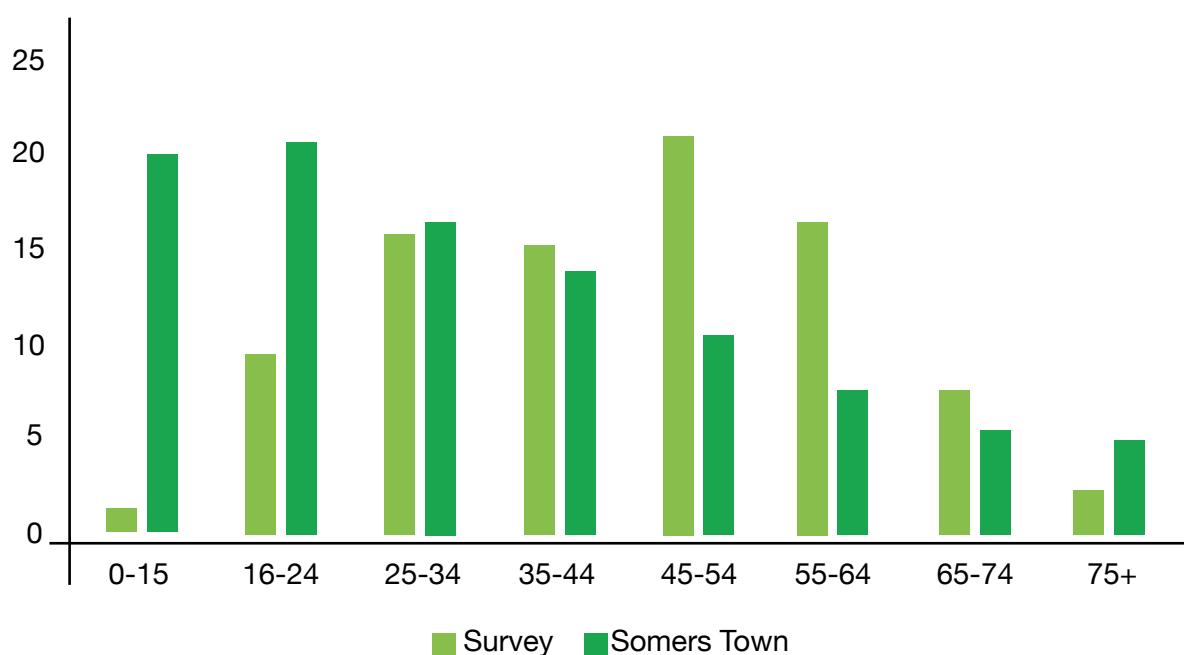
3.2 People engaged

This study aimed to engage a cross section of the local community that is as representative as possible of the local community. This section presents demographic information collated for respondents who completed the questionnaire survey.

Gender

52% of respondents were female, 47% male and 1% described their gender as “other”. This is broadly reflective of the makeup of the local population of Somers Town (47% male and 52.3% female).

Graph 1 shows the age range of respondents, compared to Somers Town overall. It shows that children and young people were underrepresented, while those aged 45-64 were overrepresented.



Graph 1: Age



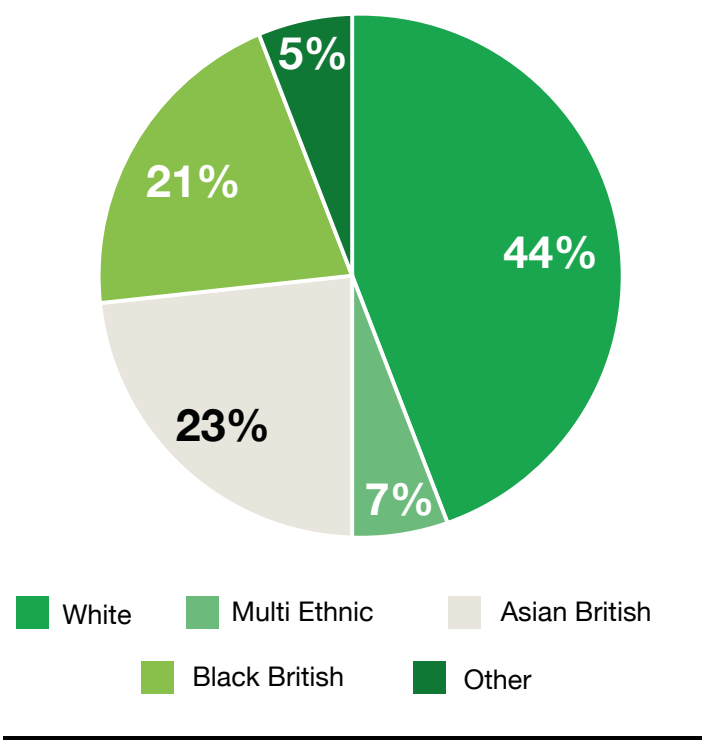
Ethnicity

44% of respondents were White, followed by British Asian (23%), while 7% were of dual heritage. This is broadly reflective of the make-up of the local community (48% for White, 29% Asian British and 5.5 % dual heritage for Somers Town overall). Black British respondents were over-represented (21% compared to 14% for Somers Town) and Multi-Ethnic (7%).

In addition to the questionnaire responses, those who participated in conversations stalls and the exhibition were from a broad cross section of the local community.

Targeted engagement focused on groups traditionally under-represented through mainstream consultation activities.

Through whole and targeted engagement activities, this study succeeded in engaging a wide cross section of residents and stakeholders, reflective of the local community.



Graph 2: Ethnicity

3.3 Data capture and analysis

The questionnaire survey was hosted on “We are Camden”, Camden Council’s consultation portal. Summary statistics from the survey provide quantitative data. Qualitative data from the survey was coded and summarised by category. These categories are summarised in Table 3. Targeted engagement activities mainly yielded qualitative data. Quantitative and qualitative data is referenced in the findings sections. More detailed information regarding methodologies, raw data and results of individual engagement activities can be found in the Appendices document.

4. Findings

In total 691 people who live, work or visit Somers Town participated in one of 22 face-to-face engagement activities or completed a questionnaire survey. This section outlines findings by the four research questions.

4.1 RQ1: What are the needs, desires and aspirations of different groups?

Data from a range of whole community and targeted engagement activities informed a comprehensive assessment of the community's needs, desires and aspirations regarding public realm and greening improvements for Phoenix Road.

4.1.1 Whole Community Engagement

Whole community engagement consisted of a questionnaire survey, conversation stalls and Exhibition Event.



Questionnaire Survey

This section provides an overview of how survey respondents currently use, experience and perceive the area.

The majority of survey respondents were regular users, with 85% visiting at least once a week. The largest group (42%) were local residents, followed by those who use the area to travel to or from work (39%), 12% who travel to or from school and 15% who work in the area.

16% of respondents use the area for leisure including; visiting the park, attending the pub, seeking entertainment, eat out, visiting a gallery and more.

Walking was the main mode of transport (77%), followed by driving (25%) and cycling (16%). 11% of respondents stated that they have a disability, in line with figures for Somers Town.

Table 2 illustrates how respondents currently perceive and feel about the area. For each question respondents were asked to rank their answers on a scale of 1 (Absolutely agree) to 10 (Absolutely disagree). A score of above 5 is a positive score (highlighted in yellow), while a score of below 5 is a negative score. 3 categories rank negatively: "lots to do" (4.2), "adequate places to stop and rest" (4.6) and "clean air" (4.7). The remaining categories have low positive scores between 5.1 - 6.2. This suggests that there is considerable scope for carry out improvements to better meet community need, which the next section will discuss in more detail.

Perceptions about Phoenix Road	Score
There are lots of things to do	4.2
I think there are adequate places to stop and rest	4.6
Air is clean	4.7
Phoenix Road is a space to be proud of	5
The area is attractive for walking	5.1
I am comfortable with the noise levels	5.4
The area is attractive for cycling	5.5
I feel that Phoenix Road and the surrounding streets are welcoming spaces	5.6
I feel safe when I walk/ cycle down Phoenix Road/ Brill Place	5.8
I feel relaxed when I use Phoenix Road and the surrounding streets	5.9
I would take part in community activities on Phoenix Road-Brill Place	6.1
Crossing Phoenix Road is easy	6.2

Table 2: Perceptions and feelings about Phoenix Road

Conversation stalls and exhibition



Somers Town Festival July 2019

Conversation stalls took place in six locations commencing in April and concluding at the Somers Town Festival in July and engaged 247 people.

The following headlines emerged:

Functional and aesthetically pleasing:

those engaged expressed a desire for a safe, accessible and attractive public realm that is conducive to social interaction. Greening was regarded as an ideal way to inject colour, character and visual appeal.

Safe walking and cycling routes are important to local people.

It is important to those who live, work or visit Phoenix Road that it maintains its function as a route to and from work, school and transport hubs. Vehicular access was important to business owners and residents alike.

Pleasant green space to spend time in was identified as a key community need.

Having high-quality, attractive and safe green space would help people meet their needs and aspirations of spending more time outside. Air quality and the impact of construction work are key concerns. Having access to routes that lowers exposure to air pollution and that have wider health and wellbeing benefits were desirable.

4.1.2 Targeted Engagement

A total of 16 targeted engagement activities engaged 239 people whose voices are frequently not fully heard through mainstream engagement activities.

As the area is home to many families, incidental play opportunities, as well as opportunities for social interaction between neighbours was high up on the agenda for this group.



People with disabilities & older people

A site analysis visit with the RNIB, feedback from “We Are Aging Better” and focus group with sheltered housing residents highlighted that people with visual impairments and mobility issues face many challenges when navigating the public realm. In order to safely and confidently use the public realm people with visual impairments expressed the need for:

- Wide and clutter free pavements: location of street furniture and signage can have an adverse effect on people’s ability to navigate the public highway. Bus stops in the middle of the pavement and electric car charging points were also mentioned as presenting obstacles.
- Vehicular access is important to people with disabilities and mobility issues.
- Surfacing: Tactile paving, haptic markers, paving with edges, steps with a 120 mm drop and sloping pavement at crossings would make it easier and safer for people with disabilities to navigate the public realm.
- Seating and resting places are particularly important to older people and people with mobility issues.
- Appropriate use of colours and contrasting colours were highlighted by people with visual impairments as desirable.

Social housing residents

70% of housing stock in the area is owned by social landlords. As such, social housing residents (tenants, owner occupiers and private renters) have a particular stake in the area. They frequently have no access to private open space and would like local open spaces to become an extension of their homes. The questionnaire survey as well as findings from the Walk-and-Talk with TRAs identified their needs and priorities: safe, attractive and functional open spaces that enable them to access their homes and local facilities easily and safely and high quality green spaces for play, rest and relaxation.

Black Minority and Ethnic Community

Targeted engagement with Black British residents echoed findings from whole community consultation. They expressed a strong desire for safe, attractive multi-functional spaces, in particular for events and activities. They would like outside spaces to provide opportunities to meet in family groups, as most live in housing without access to private open space and frequently in overcrowded housing.

The Bangladeshi community in particular highlighted concerns regarding anti-social behaviour and crime, consequently they did not feel able to let their children play outside and that local public green spaces were not accessible to them. Further, they commented on not feeling safe, especially after dark. While a high percentage of the Bangladeshi community are residents of Somers Town, most of their socialising and leisure time is spent outside of the area. Hopscotch Asian women’s centre members use Phoenix Road en route to the centre, council offices and to and from their homes. Ease of access and a pleasant experience when passing through Phoenix Road were important to them.



GREENING



PHOENIX ROAD



Children and Young People

Pupils, teachers and parents use Phoenix Road on their way to and from schools. Key needs of this group are attractive and safe walking and cycling routes to schools and attractive spaces to play and spend time in:

- Safety was of paramount importance, both in terms of safe routes to school and spaces to spend time in/ for healthy outdoor recreation:
- Speeding cars and cyclists were identified as issues which detract from their enjoyment and ability to use open spaces.
- They would like space for bikes and scooters, their main mode of transport (in addition to walking). There was a perception amongst pupils that the area is currently dominated by cars.
- They would like to use open space, e.g. Purchase Street, for play, but are currently concerned about crime and ASB.
- They felt that there was a lack of activities and amenities for children and perceived lack of good quality open space for residents to use for socialising, informal recreation or events.

Cyclists

Engagement with the Camden Cycling Campaign revealed that Phoenix Road is used by and feels welcoming to cyclists at present. It is currently not heavily used. Cyclists expressed a desire for segregated cycling lanes, appropriate signage and local roads to be well networked and signposted. Cyclists fed back that due to construction works cyclists need to be flexible and frequently change their routes due to certain roads being shut off or obstructed.

Business community

Vehicular access is important to businesses for the delivery of goods and to provide access for people visiting. Safe and attractive walking routes to and from businesses and transport hubs were also identified as priorities.



Collaborative mapping exercise with schools



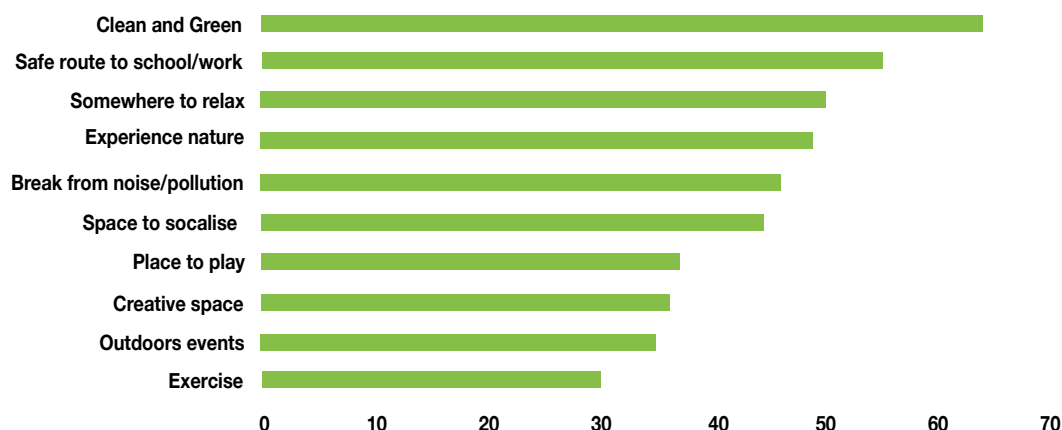
Stall at schools engaging the school community



4.2 RQ2: How can Phoenix Road better meet community needs and create inclusive space for all?

Graph 3 provides an overview of survey respondents' improvement priorities. Most popular changes include Phoenix Road to be clean and green and to become a safe route to school and work.

Imagine you could change Phoenix Road: What would it be like? (%)



Graph 3: Improvement priorities

Table 3 shows a summary of open comments from the questionnaire survey, grouped by category. These are then discussed, expanded on and supplemented with findings from conversation stalls and other targeted engagement activities.

Category	Coded Responses	Rank
Desire to safety	43	1
Desire to maintain a clean environment/remove rubbish	33	2
ASB issues (drug dealing/ drug use)	29	3
Safe play space for young people	24	4
Desire for general greening in areas surrounding Phoenix Road	24	5
Current issues with air pollution	22	6

Table 3: Qualitative data coding

From Grey to Green: a colourful and biodiverse public realm

The top improvement priority of survey respondents was to create a clean and green environment (64%). Creating places for relaxation was identified as a priority by half of all respondents, while only slightly fewer (49%) would like it to be somewhere to experience nature.

Injecting colour through planting was consistently mentioned by all groups as a key priority. Greening interventions in the area generally and along Phoenix Road in particular were important considerations. 24 and 21 people respectively added comments relating to greening Phoenix Road and the wider area to the questionnaire survey:

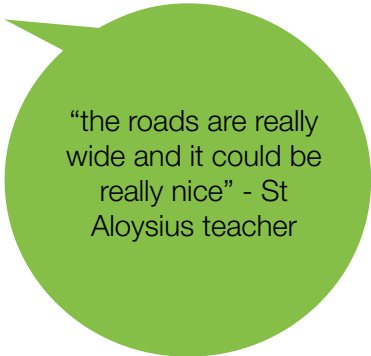
"it would be nice to see more flowers and greenery"

"I think Phoenix Road should be transformed into a more welcoming, colourful and beautiful area for residents"

"I would like more greenery around Phoenix Road, at the moment it's bland and boring"




There was a desire from those engaged to improve Phoenix Road to create a green oasis of calm to allow people to get away from the hustle and bustle of this busy area of Camden, while at the same time creating a public realm that is conducive to social interactions.



“the roads are really wide and it could be really nice” - St Aloysius teacher

More trees, better and colourful planting and clearly defined spaces for people to enjoy were high up on people’s list of priorities:



“a place that could be a great location for walking and spending time in...this could be an amazing project to give the street the attention that it merits”

The Hopscotch Asian women’s group would welcome greening to encourage slow walking and relaxation. Parents at Edith Neville School would like to see sensory planting to help mask the smell of traffic, help improve air quality and provide stimulation for all the senses.

In addition to colourful planting, raised planters, a community orchard and hanging baskets were suggested (TRAs, We are Aging better, schools).

The Somers Town Neighbourhood Forum and Urban Partners stressed that any greening interventions along Phoenix Road (and in surrounding areas) need to be well networked and developed cohesively within the context of wider regeneration and greening initiatives in the area. This was echoed by other groups engaged, including schools, the Camden Cycle Campaign and TRAs. Adenham Street and the area outside Brook House were identified as successful examples of planting schemes.

While the Bangladeshi community would welcome greening, they felt that there is a lack of trust and that any physical greening interventions would need to be complemented by activities in order to build trust and thus enable them to feel that they can access and claim ownership of open spaces.

Safe and Accessible

Safety was identified by over half of survey respondents (52%) as an important issue. 43 respondents added comments relating to safety when asked to re-imagine Phoenix Road.

Improving accessibility (32%), ease of walking and reducing noise (both at 30%) were also high up on people’s list of priorities.

Safe, attractive and user-friendly walking routes to/ from school and work were highlighted by 55% of survey respondents, pupils and parents engaged at the three schools, black and ethnic minority residents, as well as older and disabled residents.

The survey and pop-up events, echoed by focus groups, highlighted interest in improving the area for cycling. Those engaged expressed a strong preference for segregated cycle lanes to optimise safety. Additional cycling related opportunities were to improve local connectivity and coherent cycling infrastructure.

When asked to reimagine the street, 19 comments related to considering access for people with disabilities and older people. Engagement with older people highlighted seating at regular intervals as being important. Benches with high backs and arm rest would make older people more comfortable using the space, as seating would provide necessary resting places.

Those engaged value Phoenix Road as a route to and from home, school and work and felt that it would benefit from greening to enhance the user experience:

Reducing the dominance of vehicles and promoting active travel were identified by many of those engaged, in particular by those with mobility issues, visual impairments and black and ethnic minority residents. Ways in which the walking and cycling experience could be enhanced included the following suggestions: greening, signage, wide pavements, intelligent paving to demarcate space, correct and consistent use of haptic signs, textured pavements, the use of bright colour, traffic calming measures and transitional entrances.

Vehicle access was important to the business community for deliveries and customer parking. Vehicle access was also important to people with disabilities. Car owners identified a lack of car parking spaces.

"It would be wonderful to have this as a proper green route" - We are aging better

Place specific and unique


Responses suggested that building on the rich history and heritage of the area could help create a unique identity through creative means, including public art and sculptures. 36% of survey respondents would like it to be a creative space. Local residents felt that public art and bright colours would add visual interest and break up the concrete feel of the area (Phoenix TRA, We are aging better). Regents High and Edith Neville schools and the Chalton Street gallery were also strong supporters of art installations and injecting colour through carrying out place specific, creative interventions.

"I think they should add sculptures, graffiti and artworks to intrigue people" - Local young person




Sociable and playable space

Participants felt that Phoenix Road and surrounding areas had the potential to become a community resource providing opportunities for pro-social encounters. Inviting seating, safe places to play and incidental play opportunities were identified through whole community and targeted engagement as improvement priorities. When asked to re-imagine Phoenix Road, 44.5 % of survey respondents, would like it to be a place to socialise and 37 % a place to play. Incidental play opportunities and play spaces were also identified as priorities by the schools:



“create safe space where everyone can enjoy talking to one another” - Survey respondent



“a nice space for the children to play, where they can use their scooters and bikes” - Survey respondent

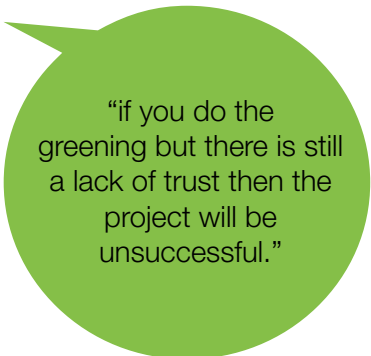
Regular activities were suggested by the Asian community and parents as being important. 35% of survey respondents would like it to be a hotspot for outdoor events.

Targeted engagement with Black British residents identified gardening/ food growing opportunities as a useful mechanism to engage young people and those without English.

30% of survey respondents would like it to be a place that offers opportunities for active recreation and exercise.

Well connected and integrated

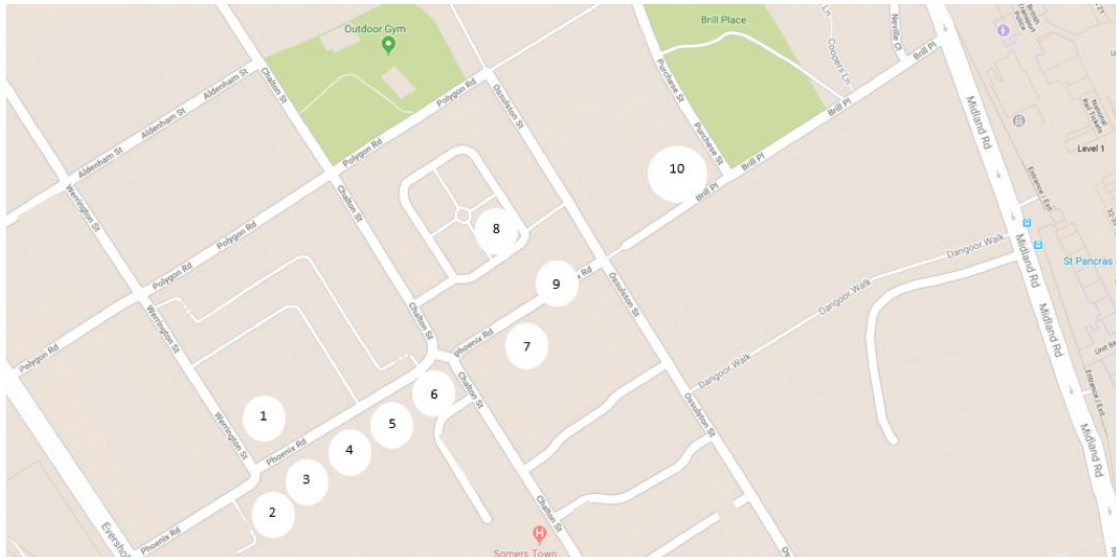
Those engaged highlighted that any improvements should be well networked and visually and functionally tie in with other work in the area. Urban Partners drew attention to links with the Well Being Walk between King's Cross and Euston, improved wayfinding and integrated public realm at either end.



“if you do the greening but there is still a lack of trust then the project will be unsuccessful.”

4.3 RQ3: Which specific areas of Phoenix Road could work best for the delivery of public realm and greening interventions?

The below map shows which areas people identified as suitable locations for transformative public realm and greening interventions.



1. Oakshott Court green space – sensitive issues surrounding ASB and noise pollution but opportunities for planting for biodiversity, play provision and outdoor space for families.
2. Scooter trails, seating for parents collecting children: space outside St Aloysius School, on the junction of Werrington Street and Phoenix Road for seating and scooter trails along the broad pavements adjacent to Oakshott Open Space.
3. Crossing for safety: opposite St Aloysius Primary School, joining the wide pavement either side of Phoenix Road near the junction of Phoenix Road and Chalton Street.
4. Planting at tree bases, suggestions for aromatic, bright plants (i.e. hollyhock). Consider risks such as misuse of flower beds for storing illicit materials (weapons/ drugs).
5. Climbers and planting on Maria Fidelis school wall adjacent to AstroTurf pitches on Phoenix Road.
6. Opportunity for hanging baskets at Brill Place and on Purchase Street.
7. Opportunities for public realm art along the widest sections of the pavement on Phoenix Road, e.g. sculptures and bespoke planters.
8. Desire for sensory planting in amongst hard wearing shrubs in the tall planters between the mature trees on Phoenix Road, Brill Place and Purchase Street Open Space.
9. Raised planters outside Walker House.
10. Opportunity for hanging baskets at Brill Place and on Purchase Street.

In addition, suggestions for outdoor play and active recreation at Purchase Street Open Space were also received.

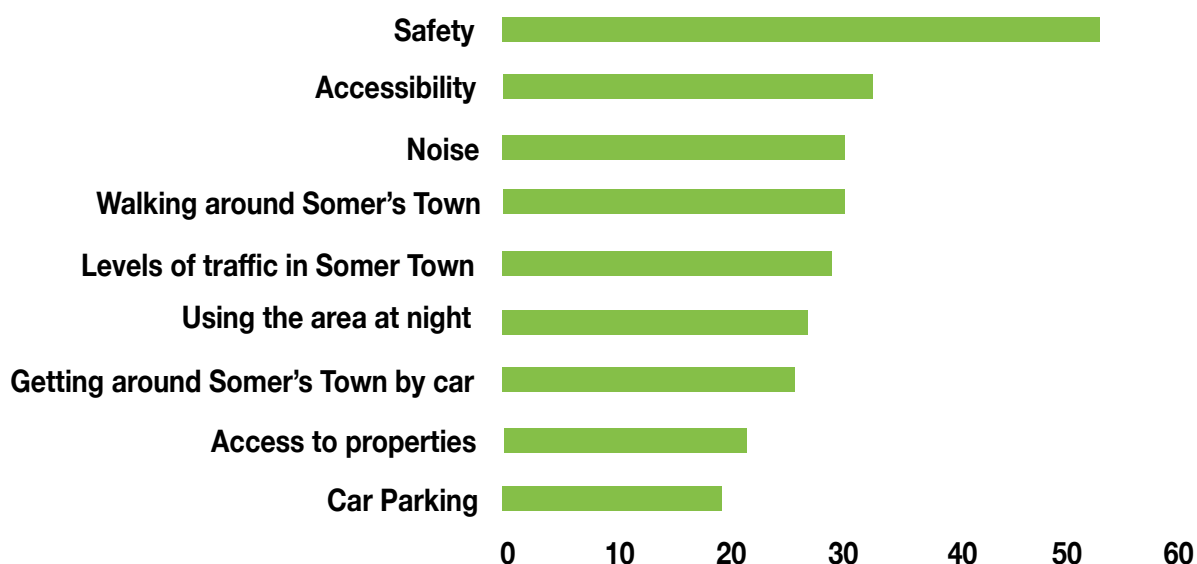
“Space to play safely, a path or stepping stones to make the route fun” - Edith Neville parent



4.4 RQ4: What are the potential challenges and how these might be overcome?

Graph 4 shows that safety was survey respondents' priority issue, mentioned by over half of all respondents (53%), followed by accessibility (32%) and walking around Somers Town (30%). All of the other categories were deemed important by 19% or more of respondents.

Most important Issues to Consider



Graph 4: Important issues for the council to consider

Table 4 summarises potential challenges during the next phases of the project and how they might be overcome.

Challenge	How it might be overcome
Engagement fatigue	Demonstrate how results of engagement are being acted upon Ongoing engagement to firm up designs Provide frequent updates
Resistance to change	Demonstrate how improvements build on the function the street currently fulfils and how changes would enhance the user experience Continue to provide access to different modes of transport and promote active travel
Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour	Provide information regarding how public realm improvements complement other efforts to address crime and anti-social behaviour in the area in the area
Perception that open space improvements are carried out in isolation	Continued dialogue with others carrying out work in the area and designs cohesively developed

Table 4: Potential challenges and how they could be overcome



5. Conclusions and Suggestions


Groundwork London achieved excellent levels of engagement and successfully overcame consultation fatigue through appropriate, timely and fun engagement activities.

Findings from this study provide insights into the needs, aspirations and improvement priorities of those who work, live or visit the area. Community priorities revolve around creating an inclusive public realm that caters for the needs of Somers Town's diverse communities. Those engaged would like to see green, biodiverse, multi-functional and aesthetically pleasing spaces for socialising, passing through and formal and informal recreation.

A green, safe and clean public realm would encourage active travel, improve the user experience and contribute towards enhanced wellbeing.

In order to maintain momentum and not lose the trust of the community, it is suggested that regular feedback is provided regarding the development of this project.

More events and activities would help to engage a wide cross section of the local community and help to not only develop and refine a shared vision for public realm improvements, but also help to bring the community together and foster social integration.



“this could be an amazing project to give this street the attention that it merits”

- Local resident

