



# Hounslow Public Realm Design Guide



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# Introduction



# Introduction

This Hounslow Public Realm Design Guide (HPRDG) provides a framework for shaping public spaces in the London Borough of Hounslow. The public realm is essential for forging community ties, promoting healthy lifestyles, supporting vibrant urban life, boosting the local economy, and meeting environmental challenges.

Well-designed public space benefits everyone. Connected streets and spaces encourage walking, wheeling, cycling, and other sustainable transport modes to reduce reliance on cars, enable regular physical activity, lower carbon emissions,

## Challenges

Feedback from residents highlighted that Hounslow’s public realm suffers from persistent neglect, uneven upkeep, and a weak sense of identity. In the Let’s Talk Hounslow survey that was undertaken during the early engagement stages of this project, 80% of respondents reported that they were unsatisfied with the quality of the borough’s public realm. Many streets, pedestrian walkways, alleyways, and shop fronts are viewed as unkempt or have un-characterful signage, poor lighting, and incoherent street furniture, making public spaces feel unattractive and unsafe to use. Cracked and uneven pavements create trip hazards, particularly for those with mobility challenges. As a result, clear strategies for management and maintenance should be factored into design from an early stage.

There are concerns about social exclusion; areas of the Borough that suffer from a civic infrastructure deficit and an inadequate public realm. Young people report a lack of safe gathering spots, the elderly share concerns about broken pavements and limited access to public toilets, and many people expressed pervasive fears around pedestrian safety and antisocial behaviour that deter many from using shared spaces.

Green infrastructure throughout the borough also needs improvement. Trees, planting strips, and green edges often suffer from poor-quality soil and neglect, reducing shade, biodiversity and climate resilience.

Finally, due to funding constraints, maintenance is inconsistent, with responsibility for upkeep unclear. As a result, new or renovated spaces do not always deliver sustained benefits. All this significantly undermines well-being and community interaction, which affects economic prosperity.

and improve air quality. Inclusive design enables cultural expression, helps reduce crime, and strengthens belonging. Environmentally conscious design can improve biodiversity and reduce noise pollution.

As the borough grows, new developments must enhance the public realm, not simply in appearance but in long-lasting performance. Success depends on strong oversight, clear roles for delivery and upkeep, and a committed maintenance strategy to ensure spaces remain safe, usable, and loved for years to come.

## Aims

The HPRDG aims to create joyful, vibrant, and sustainable public spaces that:

- celebrate cultural diversity, foster social cohesion and belonging,
- cultivate accessible and inclusive places,
- create sustainable places that are resilient to, and mitigate against, climate change,
- promote health and wellbeing through active lifestyles,
- support economic vitality and
- have long term value.

The goal is to encourage residents to participate in the rich tapestry of collective public life, moving beyond their homes into welcoming, inclusive spaces. The guidance connects with and coordinates the work of different teams within the council that strive to improve the borough’s public realm. It also provides a framework for public, private, and community actors outside the council that deliver public spaces in Hounslow.

Our public realm impacts our whole community, and therefore it is vitally important that the views of residents and other community groups shape the design guidance in this document. We consider it paramount to identify the challenges and collaboratively develop the aspirations. Therefore, this document has emerged from an extensive internal and external engagement process; details of this can be found in the engagement section.



*Vibrant*



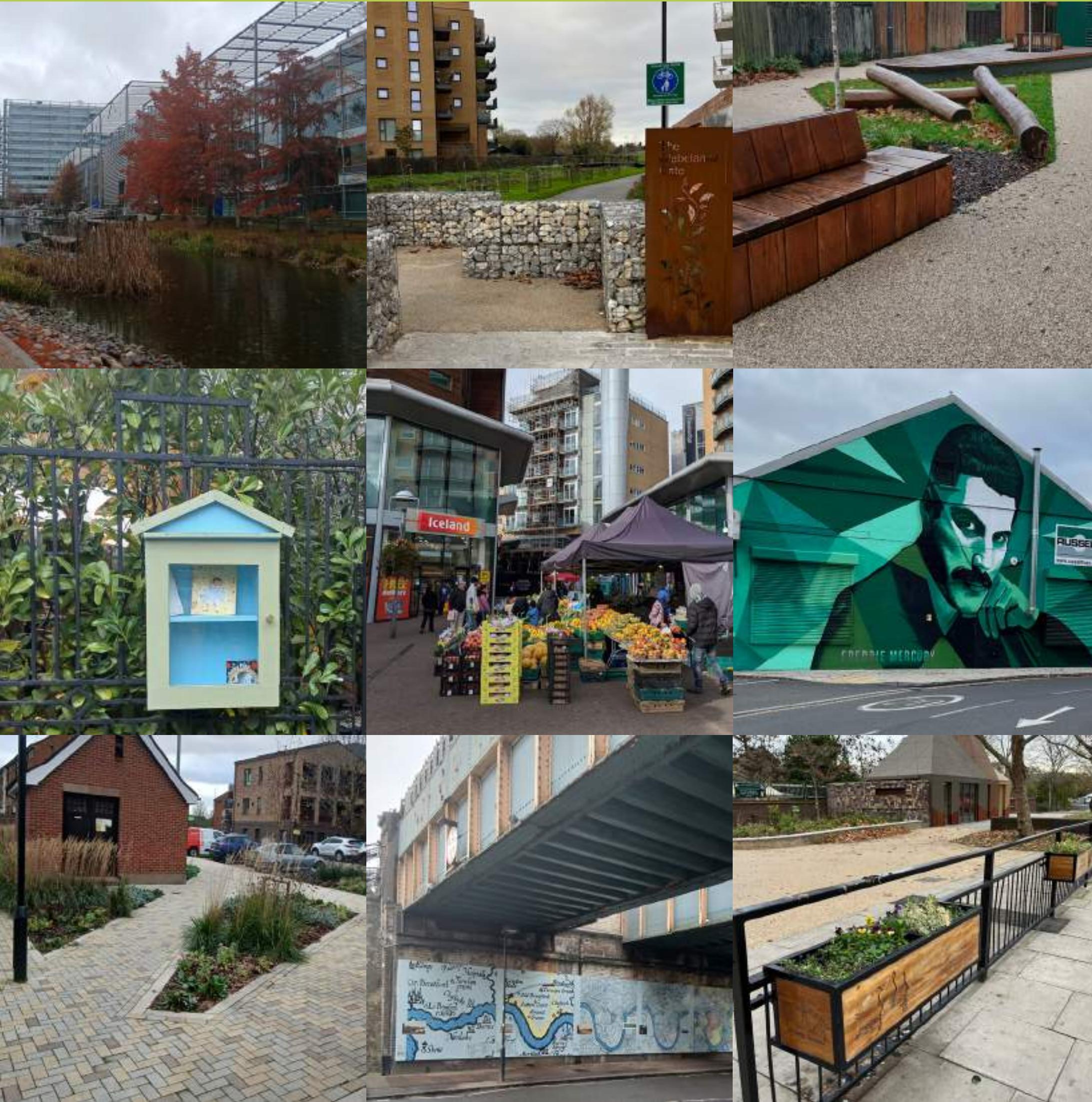
*Safe*



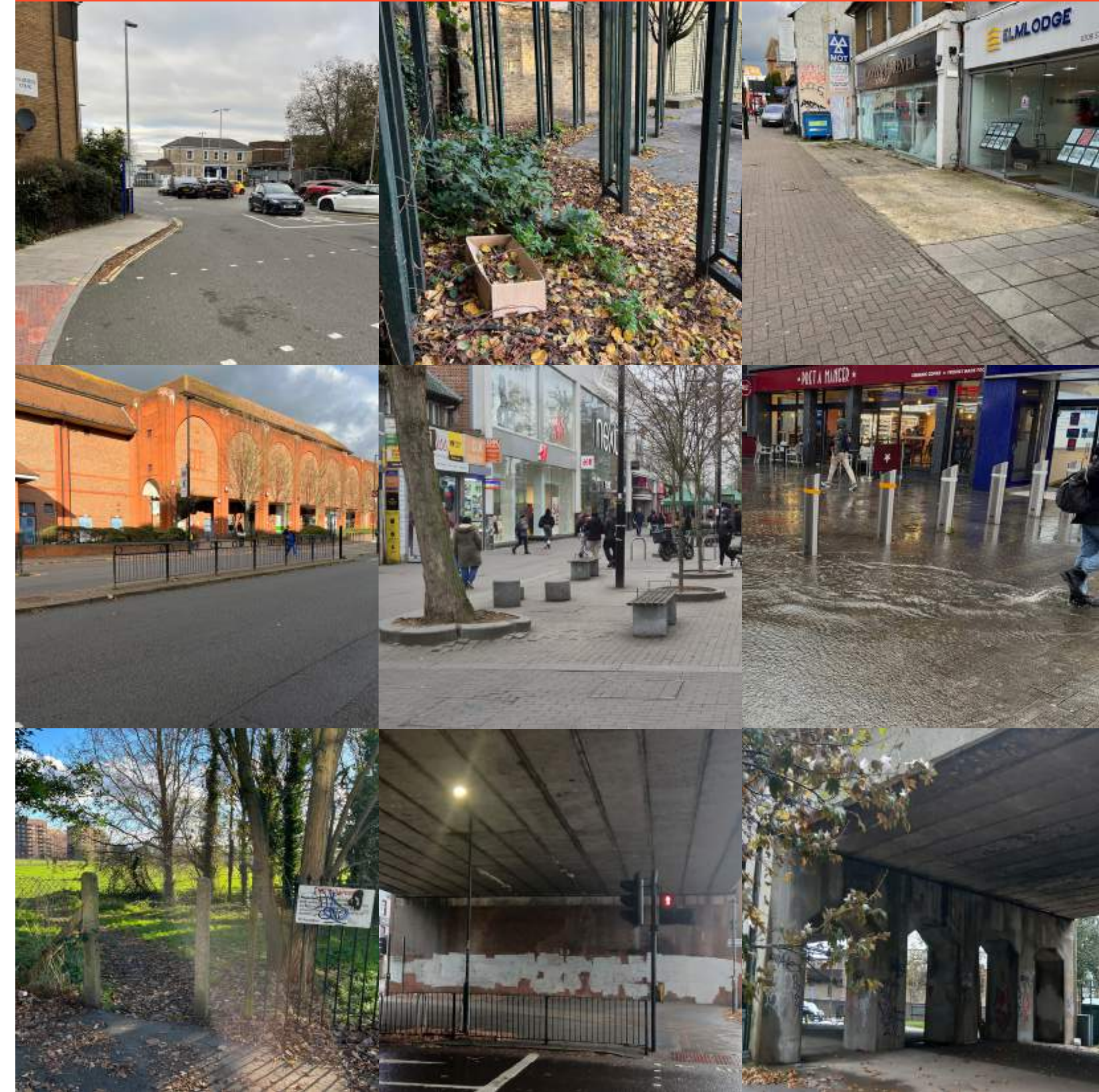


# Introduction

Good examples of public realm  
in our borough...



Public realm challenges  
in our borough...





# Introduction

## Scope

To avoid duplicating existing guidance, the HPRDG does not cover parks, kerbsides, or communal amenities within housing areas for which guidance and vision documents already exist. Furthermore, the guidance does not develop engineering standards, details of materials and also excludes details of maintenance and management protocols from its scope.

**01** The first part of the document outlines the aims and objectives of this study, providing a detailed overview of the scope of the guidance and the extensive engagement process which has informed the design approach of the HPRDG.

**02** The second part of the document provides thematic guidance on the key design interventions and opportunities facing public realm spaces within the borough. Providing specific advice on promoting healthier, inclusive and resilient design interventions throughout Hounslow.

**03** The third section details the implementation and delivery of the document's design guidance through an exploration of 12 common typologies: kinds of spaces found throughout the borough, like market squares, high streets, and park entrances.

The guidance is illustrated throughout with good practice and includes suggestions of projects that could be considered by the Council and other providers. Illustrations in the document are not intended to be proscriptive or design proposals, but illustrate design scenarios that apply the principles in this document.

## Status and who is this guidance for?

The HPRDG outlines the council's design aspirations for the public realm to assist the planners, highways and transport professionals, developers, councillors, architects, consultants, community organisations, and residents involved in conceptualisation, planning, delivery, and maintenance of the Borough's public realm. High-quality public realm is achievable when it is carefully designed from the outset and therefore, this is an important tool for planning and designing public realm interventions.

This document is not policy or a supplementary planning document. It is a guidance document intended to guide decision makers and those designing public realm and development proposals. The guidance in this document should be considered alongside statutory documents like the [Hounslow Local Plan](#), the [Character Sustainability and Design Codes SPD](#), the [Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation SPD](#), and detailed engineering and building regulation guidance. The HPRDG is an aspirational guide that aims to support the whole community to create the highest-quality public realm possible.



*Unite*





# Policy context



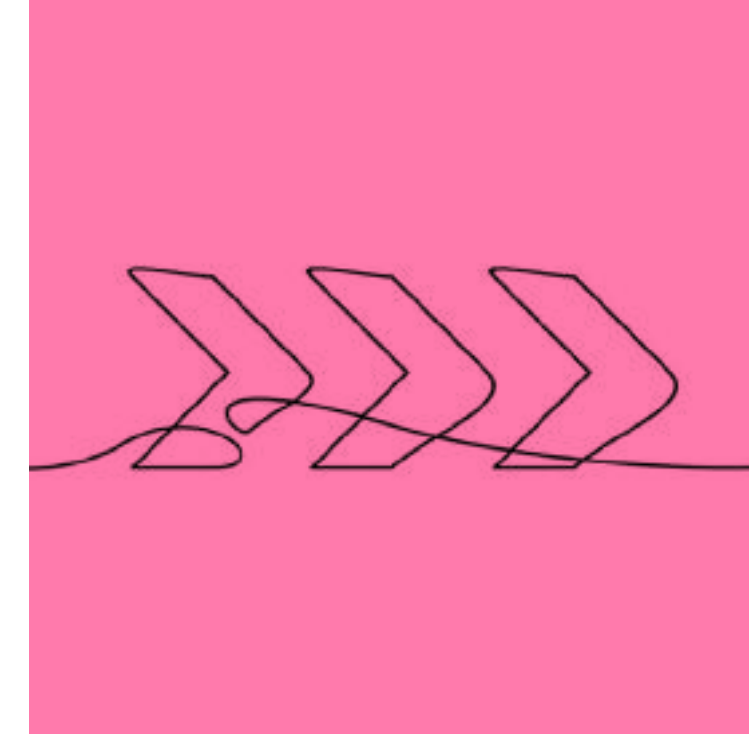
## National context

At a national level, the [National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF\)](#) promotes the creation of high quality and sustainable places, noting that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, and creates better places in which to live and work. The NPPF states that design guides provide a local framework for creating beautiful and distinctive places with a consistent and high standard of design, also noting that design policies should be developed with local communities so that they reflect local aspirations. At paragraph 139, the NPPF states that where development is not well designed it should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design, which includes local design guidance. Whilst not containing any specific policies on the public realm, the policies in chapters 8 (Promoting Healthy and Safe Communities), 9 (Promoting Sustainable Transport), 12 (achieving Well-Designed and Beautiful Places), 15 (Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment), and 16 (Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment of the NPPF are relevant to public realm initiatives.

The NPPF states that design guides should be consistent with the principles set out in the [National Design Guide](#) and [National Model Design Code](#). The National Design Guide addresses how we recognise well-designed places using ten key characteristics that mutually support one another, one of which is 'public spaces'. The National Model Design Code expands on the ten characteristics of good design set out in the National Design Guide, setting out clear design considerations for local planning authorities to consider when developing local design guides and codes. The HRPDG has been written in response to these.



*Place*





# Policy context



## London context

The adopted [London Plan 2021](#) includes policy D8 Public Realm that asks Development Plans and development proposals to encourage and explore opportunities to create new, well-designed public realm. Other policies which are relevant to public realm design include, policy S6 Public Toilets, which requires that large areas of public realm provide and secure the future management of free publicly accessible toilets and free changing places toilets that are available 24 hours a day. Policy D5 Inclusive Design concerns the design of inclusive neighbourhoods that take into account London’s diverse population; spaces that facilitate social interaction and inclusion, and are safe and welcoming for all users. The policy also requires collaboration with local communities in the development of planning policies. Finally, Policy GG1 concerns inclusive growth to deliver strong and inclusive communities,

[The Mayor’s Expanding London’s Public Realm: Design Guide](#) provides guidance for the design of internal, semi-internal and external public spaces in London to offer further guidance on Policy D8.

The [Mayor’s Transport Strategy](#) (2018, updated in 2022) uses the Healthy Streets approach as the framework to put human health and experience at the heart of planning the city. The Healthy Streets Approach focuses on improving local environments by providing more space for walking and cycling and better public spaces where people can interact, prioritising better and more affordable public transport and safer and more appealing routes for walking and cycling and ensuring new developments are planned so that people can walk and cycle to local shops, schools and workplaces and have good public transport links for longer journeys.

[Transport for London’s Streetscape Guidance](#) (2022) provides the tools to apply best practice design principles for the design of London’s streets and spaces.



## Local policies and strategies

Relevant local policies and strategies include:

[Hounslow Corporate Plan](#) (2022) Ambitious for Hounslow is the borough’s corporate plan from 2022-2026, which sets out a plan for delivering a greener, healthier, cleaner, thriving, safer and liveable borough. It commits to increasing the proportion of journeys made through active and sustainable means, improving air quality, improving street cleanliness, reducing violence against women and girls, tackling anti-social behaviour and ensuring that our neighbourhoods are liveable.

[Hounslow Local Plan \(2015\)](#): The Hounslow Local Plan (2015-2030) sets out the strategic framework for spatial development across the borough. Public realm design is addressed in Policy CC2 Urban Design and Architecture, which requires that new development enhances the public realm through active frontages, legibility and permeability, promotes inclusive and safe environments and integrates green infrastructure. Policy EC2 Developing a Sustainable Local Transport Network requires developments to be designed in a way that supports active and sustainable travel and policy GB4 encourages the integration of green infrastructure into the public realm. Policies TC2 & TC3 support public realm improvements in town centres to enhance local character and identity. [The emerging Local Plan 2020-2041](#) will update the above policies, strengthening the focus on high-quality, integrated and accessible public realm design.

[Hounslow Character, Sustainability and Design Code Supplementary Planning Document \(SPD\) \(2024\)](#): This SPD introduces borough-wide design principles and common considerations that should be integrated in all design proposals in Hounslow. Area and neighbourhood-level design codes set out requirements to improve character, connectedness and sustainability.

[Hounslow Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Supplementary Planning Document \(2025\)](#): This SPD facilitates the delivery of sustainable, zero-carbon buildings which are adapted to the changing climate. This complements the broader design guidance for new developments set out in the new Hounslow Character, Sustainability and Design Codes SPD (2024).





# Policy context

[Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy \(2021\)](#): The GBI Strategy will support and help to deliver projects associated with the improving the borough's green and blue infrastructure. It identifies key interventions to improve access to nature, green recovery, and climate resilience.

[Hounslow Transport Strategy \(2025\)](#): The Hounslow Transport Strategy (2025) sets out the vision for the transport network in Hounslow to be safe, inclusive, efficient, healthy, and green and sets targets to increase the number of active and sustainable trips per year. There are a number of detailed action plans and documents to support delivery of the transport strategy, including the Kerbside and Parking Strategies and the Walking and Wheeling Action Plan.

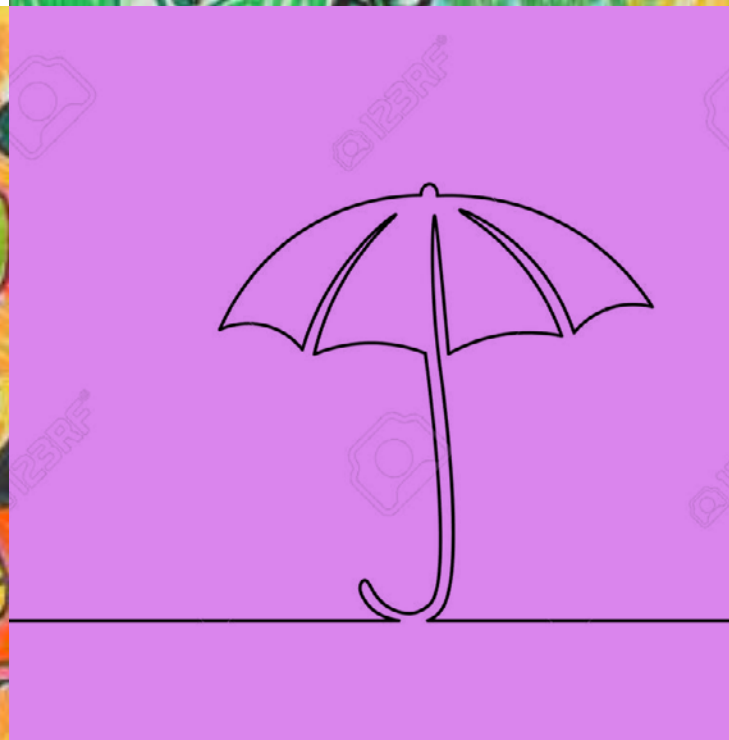
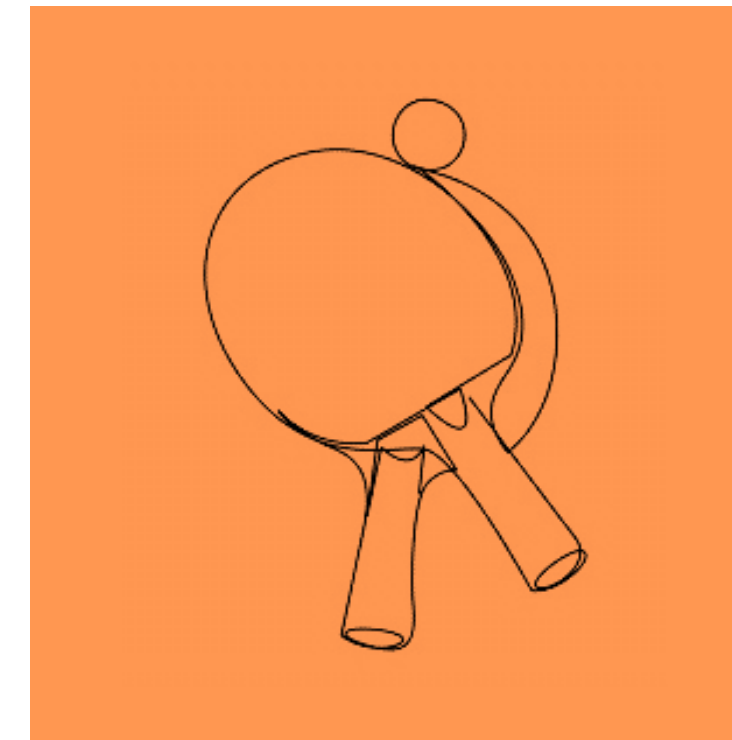
[Kerbside](#) and [Parking](#) Strategies: The Kerbside and Parking Strategies denote how Hounslow's parking and kerbsides are used, to ensure streets and public areas are designed for all ages, abilities and incomes, whilst building resilience to poor air quality and climate change.

[The Walking and Wheeling Action Plan](#): This plan supports the Transport Strategy, setting out the measures to increase walking and wheeling within the borough to create liveable places and vibrant communities by reducing traffic and improving air quality and wellbeing.

[Street Scene Design Guide \(2018\)](#): The Hounslow Street Scene Design Guide gives guidance on the acceptable materials and design for streets within the Borough and is one of the key policy documents which is to be adhered to by the Service Provider.

[Hounslow Children and Young People's Plan \(2023\)](#): The engagement work undertaken on this plan tells us that Children and Young people consider safety to be one of their key concerns. As part of a commitment to a safer Hounslow, the plan sets out the priority to make improvements to local areas where women and girls feel unsafe and use an area-based model to keep our public spaces safe for children and young people.

[Town Centre Masterplans](#): Masterplans for [Brentford](#), [Hounslow](#) and [Feltham](#) all support public realm improvements to reinforce the town centres as the focus of the borough's social and commercial life. In Brentford, the plan sets out to achieve this through continuous active frontage, and articulated facades, high quality planting and surfacing, integrated signage, lighting and street furniture. The masterplan for Hounslow supports urban greening and improved links to larger green spaces. The masterplan in Feltham identifies the disjointed nature of public realm and makes recommendations for improvements in the public realm, especially in regard to linkages to the town centre.





# Engagement and consultation

## Introduction

Hounslow is one of London's most culturally diverse boroughs: around 40% of the borough's residents were born outside the UK, and some 188 languages are spoken here, yet this rich diversity is seldom reflected in the design of its public spaces. Similarly, Hounslow is among London's greenest boroughs, with approximately 1,200 hectares of green belt land- placing it in the top fifth of London in terms of green space. Despite this, the average resident moves less and weighs more than their London counterparts.

Adopted in 2022, [Hounslow's Corporate Plan](#) aims to address these realities through inclusive and sustainable interventions. Envisioning a borough 'that is bustling, vibrant, and busy', full of inspiration and opportunities where everyone can live well and thrive. To foster pride in local places, it adopts a One Hounslow ethos that sees people as active co-creators rather than passive recipients of policy. It commits to a place-based approach, working within the borough's many distinct localities, and to collaboration, engagement, and co-production as guiding principles for delivering services and shaping public spaces.

The Public Realm Design Guide's engagement methodology embraces the radical potential of the aims of the Corporate Plan, understanding that if the Hounslow's public spaces are to respond to the needs and aspirations of the borough's diverse residents, they must be involved in shaping it. If Hounslow is to be an inspirational place to live, work, and spend time, everyone must feel welcomed and see themselves represented as part of the wider community.

This guidance is shaped using data collected from consultations with the public and external and internal stakeholders as a contextual framework for creating the design themes and selecting the typologies within this document.

## Methodology

Internally, meetings were held with more than 60 officers across 20 council teams on 25 separate occasions, which also included feedback sessions during directorate-level senior leadership team meetings. A working group was constituted with one member from each of the council teams to develop the document collaboratively and to ensure internal integration. Three working group meetings to discuss the draft guidance enabled feedback on the process, content and internal integration.

Other professional stakeholders have been involved in the process, including Transport for London, Metropolitan Police, Secure by Design and Hounslow Highways to ensure integration with guidance, practices and codes at national, regional and local level PFI.

The public engagement undertaken during summer 2024 centred around a hands-on, co-design approach which emphasised face-to-face street-level interaction and civic engagement. Events were held with community groups, residents, and visitors in various strategic locations across the borough such as civic buildings, schools, high streets, public squares and marketplaces. Moving beyond a presentational, question-and-answer format, the HPRDG has been shaped by creative group meetings and workshops, place-based engagement events to understand opinions about specific place types within the borough.

Meetings with the social and the community organisations included one-to-one meetings with the equality groups, in addition to an in-person half day workshop convening about 30 members from six equality groups to share problems and challenges that they face and their aspirations for the public realm in Hounslow through a co-design workshop session.

Nine meetings with social and community groups helped to include the different ways of collaborative working with local communities as well as to document the current challenges in the public realm and possible ways forward.

These were supplemented by public engagement work at 13 'pop-up' locations around the borough where over 700 people shared their thoughts and opinions on Hounslow's public realm. The locations were chosen to align with the typologies and with opportunities for improvements in the public realm.

To broaden participation, we used augmented reality (AR) technology as a co-design tool and a conversational aid to allow non-technical participants to join in design conversations. To understand whether the AR tool would meet the design needs of young people, we held scoping workshops with two groups of school age children, asking them to design public realm typologies using a range of craft materials. Their designs and feedback were used to curate objects which could be placed in the AR tool to design different public spaces. The AR objects were also curated to include patterns and designs that are recognised by different cultures and ethnic groups.



*Ask*





# Engagement and consultation

This technology was also used at a further five workshops with children aged 13-18, where they used tablets to design Hounslow's spaces. The 3D rendered assets were shaped by the findings of the scoping workshop, and included chessboards that represented public entertainment, trees and planters to represent urban greening, hydration points, lighting, directional signage, clean air zones, alcohol free zones and signage for public toilets, light-up rubber ducks that represented public art displays and innovative seating, public Wi-Fi and various shapes to stand in for any other ideas. A red x was also provided so that participants could indicate the desire to remove elements that already existed. The playful nature of this exercise meant that a wider range of people, more diverse in age, education, and ethnic background, were able to input into the design guide than is typical of online or question-based consultations.

The AR technology on tablets was used at the pop-up events, where participants digitally shaped the place they were in, adding elements they wished to see, like benches or water fountains, designing their ideal space in real time. Screenshots of the designs were captured and the images were interpreted by the team and incorporated into the design guidance in this document.

A local artist and students from Cranford Primary School collaboratively developed the paintings and drawings used in this document, reflecting their experience, impressions, and aspirations for the public spaces in Hounslow.

Finally, to capture the voices of those that prefer to engage online, a survey was conducted that had a total of 55 contributors.

The final consultation on the document took place in November 2025, through an online Let's Talk Survey, which asked people to comment on the document and whether the contents was reflective of earlier feedback. A total of 21 responses were received and responses have been used to fine-tune the design guidance.

## Results

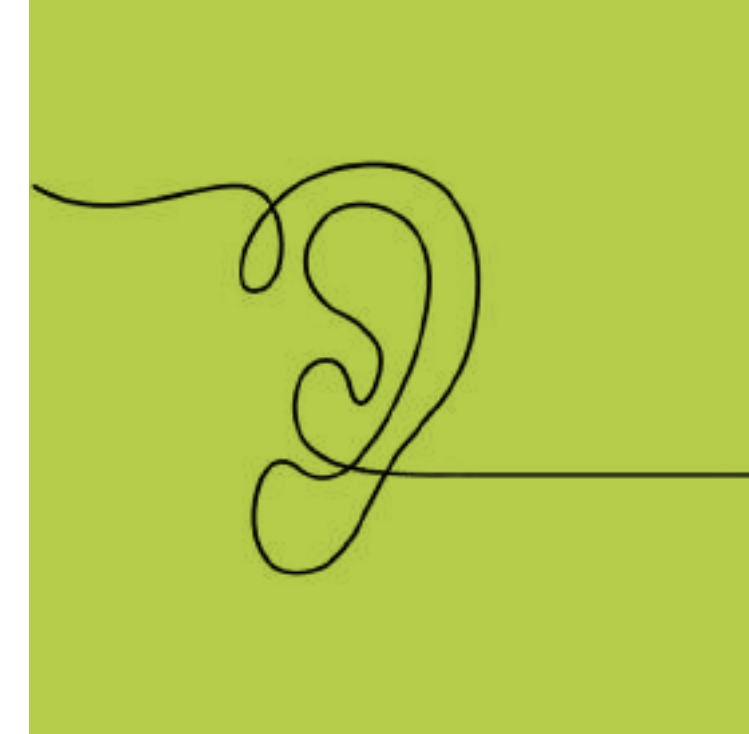
The engagement strategy set out to achieve an increase in the number of responses from those in the 13-18 age category as a percentage of the total responses from overall public realm design guide engagement process. In respect of this, the AR co-design project increased the total number of responses from young people to 18% of the total responses to the Public Realm Design Guide. This is successful as it represents a huge increase in the number of responses to a planning consultation by young people in comparison to our baseline data, where just 2% of the responses were from young people. 57% of the students were from between the ages of 12-15 and 43% from the ages of 15-17. Achieving 18% of responses from young people between the ages of 13-18 is more representative of Hounslow's population, where 20.6% of the population is below the age of 18.

The strategy also set out to achieve an increase in the percentage of people engaged from BAME ethnic backgrounds (as a percentage of those involved in the AR co-design workshops). In respect of this second metric, as a total percentage of the AR co-design workshop participants, 30% were from a BAME background, 17% were White British and 53% stated that they preferred not to say. Removing the students in the prefer not to say category, 92% of those who provided ethnicity data were from a BAME background. This represents an improvement on previous planning consultations where 9.6% of responses were from those of a BAME background and works towards receiving a spread of responses that are more proportionate of Hounslow's diverse population, where 55.8% of Hounslow's population are from BAME background.

The council's engagement methodology reached a range of communities throughout the borough and has championed co-creation through a socio-cultural approach to community engagement and design guidance. Both the form and the content of the guidance have been profoundly shaped by the engagement approach and sets the standard for the council and local communities' expectations for public realm engagement and consultation. Therefore, it should be used as a guide for developers, urban designers and architects delivering public realm projects in Hounslow.



*Let's talk*





# Key takeaways

The HPRDG reflects the needs and aspirations of a large section of Hounslow’s communities. The thematic sections of the document, as well as the 12 typologies, have emerged from the consultation process and have been shaped by internal stakeholders, external partners, and the wider community.

The document’s engagement methodology provided vital insights on community needs and aspirations for the public realm in Hounslow. The lessons learned from the consultation process has been summarised into key takeaways that highlight the findings from the consultation process. This should be used by developers and designers as a guide to ensure that their delivery and consultation on public realm projects is comprehensive and reflective of Hounslow’s community expectations and needs for the public realm. More information on the key takeaways can be found at the start of each theme in the next section.

## People, Cultures & Communities

The consultation process with community groups, residents and internal and external stakeholders highlighted that:

- Public space should be vibrant and connected to the wider community through promoting spaces that create cultural and intergenerational connection and community engagement.
- Public spaces should be able to accommodate a variety of uses and should be a space for social, cultural, health-related and civic engagement.
- Spaces should be activated through art, culture, and murals that celebrates the cultural diversity of Hounslow.

## Inclusive Places

Throughout the public and internal consultations community groups and residents emphasised that:

- Public spaces should accommodate families and young people through creating active spaces that promote intergenerational design features and play.

- The provision of accessible toilets, seating and drinking fountains was one of the most popular talking points across the consultation with residents, community groups and visitors. These groups emphasised the importance of these features in creating inviting and comfortable spaces for a range of users, most notably the disabled and elderly users.
- Disability groups emphasised that public spaces should be legible and accessible to a range of disabled users through clear wayfinding, easy to navigate pathways, wheelchair accessible design and consistent pavement widths.

## Environmental Sustainability

Sustainability, urban greening, and celebrating existing green spaces was a focal point of the consultation. Respondents noted:

- Support urban greening projects through promoting tree planting, flowerbeds and sustainable and active design in the public realm.
- Existing green spaces were popular choices for recreation. The public realm should maintain and celebrate existing green spaces to promote positive mental wellbeing and facilitate comfortable use.
- The public realm should balance the needs of vehicle users, cyclists and pedestrians through creating sustainable infrastructure and taking active steps to reduce pollution and congestion.

## Public Health, Safety & Security

Many residents who took part in online consultation and street pop-ups highlighted safety and security as a main challenge for Hounslow’s public spaces. Respondents emphasised that:

- Public spaces should incorporate enhanced lighting, open design, and crime prevention methods to ensure the public realm is accessible and safe at night.
- Public space design should address the needs of groups such as the LGBTQ+ community, and women and girls to ensure that these spaces are holistic in their design and safety approach.
- It was highlighted that public space should have safety measures such as police or community-led safety programs.

## Enabling Economic Vitality

Respondents from the community workshops and street level pop-up events emphasised the importance of economic flexibility:

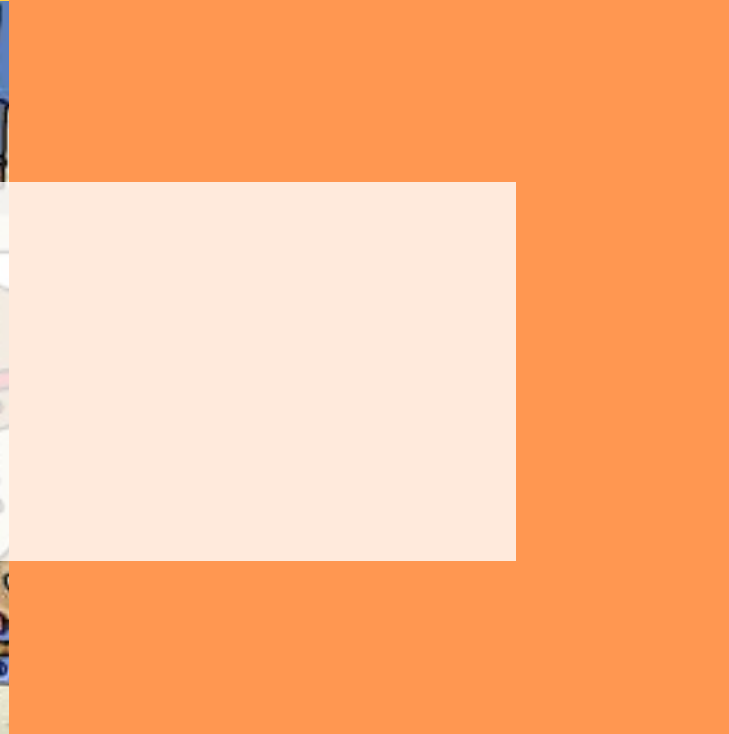
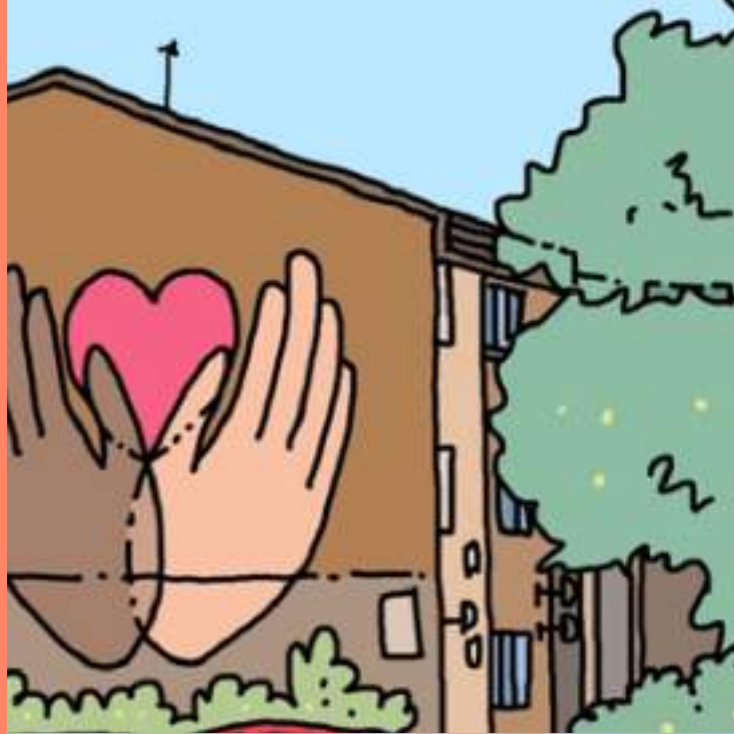
- Public spaces should have cafés, pop-up spaces, and infrastructure that encourage spaces for ‘meeting’ and ‘dwelling’ to promote social engagement.
- Public spaces should be economically accessible to the local community through promoting accessible spaces for local business interests and affordable shopping options for residents.
- Attention was called to the lack of well-integrated and multi-use public space in Hounslow, and flexible space that had economic, social, recreational and cultural facilities was supported by respondents.

## Life Cycle & Maintenance

Throughout the consultation process, residents, community members and the public noted that social and physical accessibility was a key issue facing Hounslow’s public spaces:

- There was a strong desire from youth groups to empower young people and community members to participate and actively contribute to decision making and the maintenance in the public realm.
- The public realm should be clean, durable and designed to ensure maintenance is easy and effective to tackle perceptions of neglect.
- Disability groups and respondents highlighting the needs of elderly residents emphasised that the public realm should remain accessible and inclusive to those with mobility aids and wheelchairs through replacing broken and uneven paving, addressing tree roots that break tarmac in walking areas and regular maintenance pavements and sidewalks.





# Thematic Design Guidelines





# 1. People, cultures, & communities

Hounslow's [Thriving Communities Strategy 2024–2028](#) aims to foster a more connected, inclusive, active, mutually respectful, and resilient community. It emphasises collaboration between the council, voluntary and community sector organisations (VCSE), businesses, and residents to encourage social action and community-led decision-making for a healthier, safer, greener, and more inclusive Hounslow.

The strategy commits to ensuring that community assets, facilities, and spaces are accessible, affordable, and flexible. It pledges to collaborate on using public and commercial spaces for community and voluntary sector uses, aiming for equitable access and stronger neighbourhood infrastructure.

Well-designed public realm supports these aims by fostering social cohesion and community belonging, enhancing wellbeing, and reducing isolation. The guidance in this document will shape a public realm that offers informal meeting places, hosts cultural or volunteering events, and visually reinforces neighbourhood diversity, enabling the expression of diverse cultural identities, promoting positive social interaction between different groups, and promoting participation and co-design.

As recognised by the [Character, Sustainability and Design Codes SPD](#), and the [Characterisation and Growth Study](#), Hounslow has been shaped by centuries of built and intangible heritage. These layers of lived experience and architectural heritage are part of what makes Hounslow unique, and all public realm schemes should sensitively and creatively respond to these past legacies, linking Hounslow's diverse present and future with the stories of the past. The Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service (GLAAS) are able to provide advice on schemes involving archaeology to ensure its long-term contribution to the public realm.

Public art commissioned and/or adopted by the Council should follow the Council's Public Art Policy. This gives the Council's expectations of the conception, development, maintenance, and end of lifespan decommissioning of public art that is to be adopted by the Council, that is located in Council-owned public spaces.

## Key Takeaways

- Cultural events, music performances, and dedicated spaces to celebrate African culture and the contribution and histories of black women within the local borough were highlighted as key points during the consultation.
- Residents noted that amenity spaces for young people such as youth clubs, community facilities for religious and cultural events, and accessible space were the most important to users when using public spaces.
- Elderly people, newcomers to the community, and certain ethnic minorities were highlighted as groups that suffered from social isolation and loneliness. During the consultation a desire for socially inclusive, and welcoming events and spaces were highlighted as important for creating multicultural learning and social inclusion.
- Public spaces should be activated through curated spaces for community led exercise and recreation to promote health and wellbeing. Basketball courts, spaces for yoga and low impact sports, play facilities, and health and wellbeing events should be integrated into the public realm.
- There was a strong desire from the street led consultation and the work with community groups for more civic events. Bell Square has been highlighted as an example of a successful public space that has been activated through cultural and civic event programming.

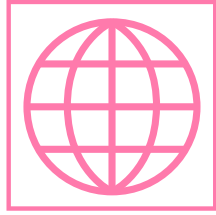


*Belong*



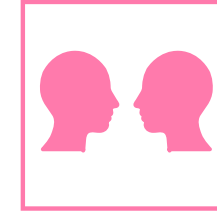


# 1. People, cultures, & communities



## A. Expression of Cultural Diversity

- Expressing local histories: Public realm design should celebrate the rich cultural heritage of Hounslow's diverse communities, multicultural identities and immigration histories. This could be done through murals, public art, performances spaces, and curated activities that honour local heroes and histories, for example Sir Mo Farah in Feltham or Vincent Van Gogh in Isleworth. While culturally responsive public art should reflect the borough's evolving multicultural identities and immigration histories.
- Recognising heritage: Public realm schemes should have regard to the borough's built and intangible heritage (as defined by ICOMOS). Following the guidance set out in the [Character, Sustainability and Design Codes SPD](#), and the [Street Scene Guide](#), all interventions should be shaped by an understanding of the character of the place where they are located.
- Wayfinding: Systems should include cultural identity markers such as sculptures, murals, and historical and accessible signage. Local communities should be invited to develop creative wayfinding and to help develop an understanding of locally important sites.
- Activating spaces: Public space design should facilitate activation through public art, cultural festivals, pop-ups, and free events (e.g., performances in Bell Square, canal festivals in Brentford, high street activation events).
- Pride & belonging: Public spaces should foster pride and belonging by being unique and meaningful to residents, acknowledging the past while celebrating contemporary diversity. Green spaces can house community gardens and host traditional cultural and historic events. Street furniture that features culturally significant designs can enhance place identity. Consider working with local artists and partners to ensure that designs are representative of communities and support the local economy.
- Youth culture: Youth involvement in the public realm should be encouraged through art pop-ups, galleries, and performance spaces that showcase emerging talent and youth culture.



## B. Promote Social interaction and cohesion

- Location, visibility & accessibility: Locate public spaces in central, prominent, and easily accessible areas within neighbourhoods. Ensure these are visible from the street to support wayfinding and encourage gathering. Where these are within buildings or complexes, ensure entrances are clear and welcoming presenting seamless connections to the public street.
- Social inclusion & belonging: Design public spaces to promote social mixing and foster a sense of belonging. Implement inclusive seating arrangements and design to support multigenerational use. Cater to a range of demographics such as teenagers, the elderly, and families using flexible and varied public spaces that support coexistence across different age groups. For example, a public square might feature shaded seating for older adults, seating that faces each other or an open lawn for teenagers to gather or play informal sports, or a dedicated play area for children with a water feature. Public installations that invite conversation and participation can tackle social isolation.
- Cultural expression & identity: Incorporate celebratory decorations in high-footfall areas of public realm during key seasons to foster community spirit and attract visitors. Ensure that public events reflect local traditions and contemporary cultures within Hounslow.
- Design cultural, historical, and faith-based walking trails and include culturally responsive public art and installations that reflect the borough's diverse heritage and evolving multicultural identities. Commission local artists from diverse ethnic backgrounds to shape artistic expressions.
- Recreation, activation & flexibility: Design plazas and green spaces that integrate art, seating, and areas for public performances and informal gatherings. Ensure event spaces are flexible and adaptable for various cultural and community uses. Local organisations should be encouraged and supported to organise events and activities to showcase local artists and cultural heritage.

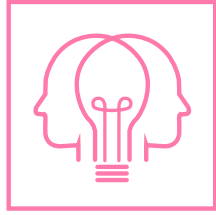


*Stories*





# 1. People, cultures, & communities



## C. Co-design with People

- Community-led initiatives: Include and support community murals and other creative ways of working with infrastructure, such as finding alternative uses for telephone boxes (mini libraries, for example), and decorating signal boxes, and other utilities. Support and encourage community-led management of urban elements such as planters.
- Participatory design: Following the example set by the PRDG, ensure that public engagement is central to all cultural space developments and use effective and exciting tools such as co-design workshops, digital planning tools (Augmented Reality, for example), and multi-stakeholder collaboration to shape how public spaces evolve and ensures representative participation.
- Public notice boards: Promote the use and management of public notice boards by residents or local businesses in high streets, public buildings, and neighbourhood centres.
- Community public space champions: Establish and promote maintenance grant schemes for community – local government collaboration.
- Community-based trusteeship: Encourage local communities to adopt and monitor public spaces through programmes like public space guardians.

## Place-based considerations

### Brentford

- Public art should express Brentford's cultural heritage – events, murals, and creative installations can strengthen local identity, for example, the Brentford Art Trail has been positively received.
- Place-making interventions that recognise the industrial past, creative present and future ambition of this iconic area are encouraged.

### Cranford and Heston

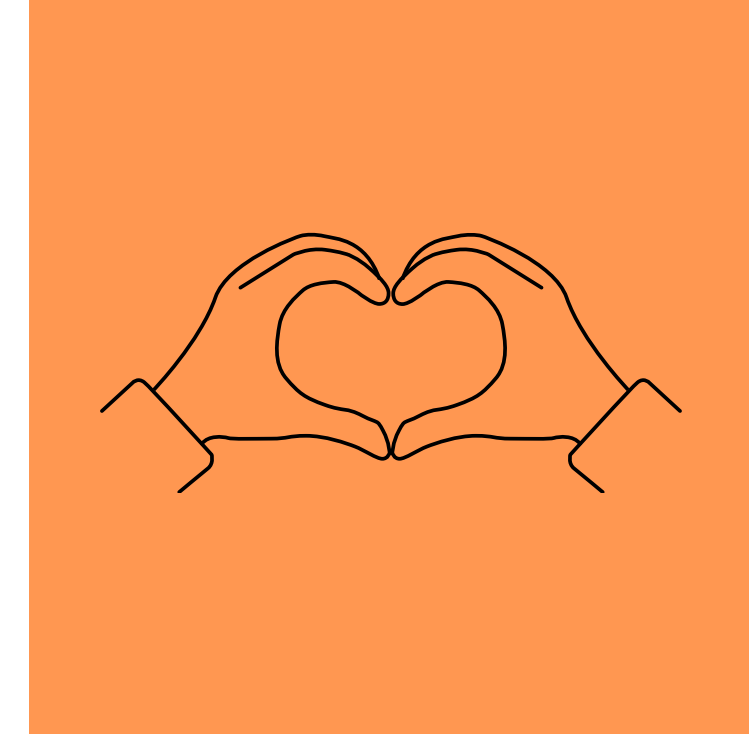
- Encourage community development of pocket parks and seating areas, and the maintenance of existing public spaces.

### Hounslow Town Centre

- Temporary cultural installations, such as open-air cinema, arts festivals, and pop-up exhibitions and the existing successful events at Bell Square, are successful options that can revitalise public spaces.
- There are opportunities, especially associated to redevelopment proposals, to enhance green amenity space within the Town Centre and include culturally inspired seating and non-invasive planting to make spaces more inviting and inclusive.

### Isleworth & Osterley

- Encourage community development of pocket parks and seating areas, and the maintenance of existing public spaces.

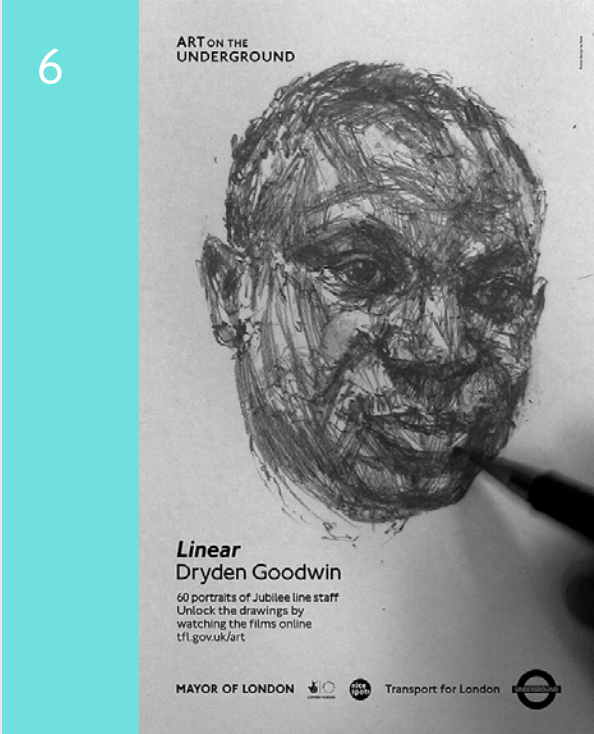




# 1. People, cultures, & communities

Good precedent examples *(see P. 83 for details)*

**1. City Benches (Aldgate) –**  
Benches throughout the public realm that promote social interaction and artistic expression (LFA pop up benches 2021)  
Imaginative designs created by emerging international and interdisciplinary architects and designers. Responding to the post-Covid reality, the benches aimed to draw diverse users back into the public realm, providing safe and inviting urban spaces for social interaction.  
[https://www.londonfestivalofarchitecture.org/lfa-competition/city-benches/?utm\\_](https://www.londonfestivalofarchitecture.org/lfa-competition/city-benches/?utm_)





## 2. Inclusive places

Hounslow's [EDI Strategy and Action Plan 2024](#) emphasises embedding inclusivity throughout the borough's planning, programmes, operations, delivery, and culture. It aims to reduce inequality in the most deprived areas, enabling a fairer, more equal and more socially cohesive Hounslow.

To achieve these objectives, the public realm should be inclusive of, accessible to, and co-designed with equality groups within the borough. This section outlines measures to ensure that the public realm is welcoming, accessible and usable for all individuals and groups.



### A. Accessible and Inclusive Design

Innovative solutions to ensure that public space is accessible to all should include:

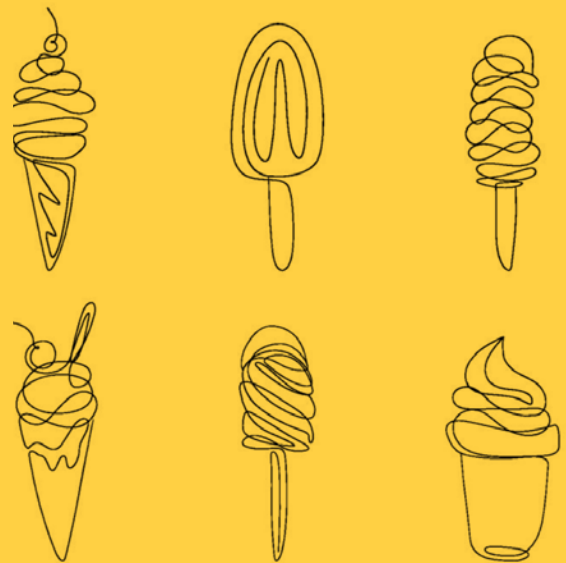
- Circulation & movement routes that are wide, step-free, and obstacle-free to accommodate wheelchairs, mobility scooters, pushchairs, and groups moving side by side. Street furniture, information kiosks, utilities infrastructure, planting, and signage should be planned and positioned in a coherent and consolidated manner, avoiding desire lines, to create an easy to navigate public realm.
- Design of street furniture should consider visually impaired users – incorporating colour contrasts to improve legibility and avoiding 'floating' designs that may not be noticed by those using assistive canes. Features such as low bollards that are in a similar colour to the pavement should be avoided as they may be problematic for the visually impaired.
- Surfaces & paving that prioritise stability, safety, and inclusivity by using contrasting tactile paving, such as blister, directional, and corduroy, to support vision-impaired users in recognising changes in level, direction, or crossings. Materials must be slip-resistant, durable, and have level finishes to reduce trips and falls for older adults, people with disabilities, and those with mobility challenges.

### Key Takeaways

- There is a growing desire for active spaces for families and young people. Residents felt the borough lacked integrated infrastructure such as seating, play and entertainment facilities for children, and child and elderly friendly spaces. Feltham High Street was praised as a positive example for its convenient spaces for families and free parking.
- Public spaces such as women-only spaces and breast-feeding facilities were also highlighted as key areas of discussion from youth groups. Existing breast-feeding facilities were said to feel unsafe and poorly maintained.
- The public realm should take an intergenerational approach to youth spaces to encourage social cohesion and community building. Integrated indoor and outdoor youth spaces could provide recreational space and platforms for community stewardship and youth led engagement programmes. Youth spaces are especially deficient in the West of the borough and youth spaces should meet the needs of a range of age groups.
- The lack of accessible seating, public toilets and drinking fountains was a focal point throughout the consultation. Public parks were highlighted as key area of inaccessibility with poor entrance gates and a lack of toilets making them inaccessible to wheelchair users, the elderly and disabled people.



*Variety*





## 2. Inclusive places

- Ensure wheelchair users can freely navigate, use, and enjoy the public realm. This includes gently graded routes, and entrances with automatic or easy-open doors. Facilities such as toilets, seating, and shelters must be designed with inclusive dimensions that allow transferring in and out with mobility aids. Engagement with wheelchair users during design and post-occupancy evaluation is essential to address lived experience and refine accessibility.
- Sustainable solutions such as permeable paving and drainage systems should be integrated without compromising accessibility for mobility aids.
- All junctions and crossings should ensure step-free access, with dropped kerbs and smooth transitions. Crossings in high-traffic areas should include longer signal timings and audible or tactile indicators for accessibility.
- Pedestrian and cyclist movement should be balanced to reduce conflict, including avoiding shared-use pathways in high volume areas. Where shared-use pathways are unavoidable, they should be designed in a way that encourages slower cycling (such as unsegregated shared use paths).
- Designate specific cycle, e-bike, and e-scooter hire locations that do not impede pedestrian movement. Amenities such as charging points for mobility devices and micro-mobility docking areas, such as for e-scooters and bikes, should be located within reclaimed carriageway space rather than pedestrian footways. Refer to the Council's [Walking and Wheeling Action Plan](#) for more information.
- Ensure even lighting on pavements avoiding dark spots that make navigating the public realm more difficult for people with vision impairments.
- Seating & resting points should be provided at regular intervals, especially at prominent locations, such as outside shops, public transport connections, and places of interest, positioned to allow those in wheelchairs and with other mobility aids to navigate easily. Benches should be designed with backs, arms, and appropriate seat heights to assist mobility-impaired people in sitting and standing.
- Seating should be located in safe, comfortable, and sociable locations with good lighting and natural surveillance. Where possible, sheltered seating should be provided, particularly for older adults and those sensitive to weather exposure, ensuring comfort and accessibility throughout the year.

- Wayfinding & information systems should be inclusive and multi-sensory, incorporating braille signage, tactile maps, audio guidance, high-contrast colours, and large-font signage. Designs should avoid visual clutter and ambiguous symbols that may confuse or overwhelm users. Consistency in symbols, materials, paving, and lighting supports legibility and orientation, while familiar design elements create a sense of continuity. Digital tools such as QR codes and wayfinding apps could be integrated alongside traditional signage to broaden accessibility and meet diverse user needs.
- Sensory-sensitive environments should be designed to support neurodiverse people and those living with dementia. Public squares could include quieter areas and sensory gardens, while design should minimise overstimulation through controlled lighting, reduced visual stimuli, and sound-absorbing materials in busy environments. Dementia friendly design requires legibility, consistency, familiarity, and comfort, delivered through clear landmarks, simple layouts, low-contrast lighting, frequent resting points, and familiar symbols. Integrating community art, cultural references, and recognisable local landmarks helps with orientation, legibility, and inclusive environments.
- Design lighting appropriately for the use of the space, ensuring that low footfall areas such as underpasses and alleyways are particularly well-lit. The public realm should be designed to include clear sightlines and pathways, passive surveillance, active frontages, and overlooked routes, alongside the inclusion of amenities such as toilets, seating, shelters, and rest points.
- Integrate safe and pleasant breast-feeding spaces with privacy, shade, and seating in public spaces, or install signage and wayfinding details to nearby facilities. Specialist equalities advocacy and campaign groups, such as Make Space for Girls, should be consulted on any public realm interventions.
- Enable children to move, play, and explore safely and independently while supporting families with pushchairs. This requires safe walking and cycling routes separated from traffic, step-free access, wide pavements, and smooth surfaces to accommodate pushchairs, scooters, and small bikes. Play opportunities should be integrated into everyday spaces, alongside green areas for exploration, with seating





## 2. Inclusive places

for carers, baby feeding facilities, toilets, water features, hydration points and shaded areas. Good sightlines and lighting ensure visibility and security, and designs should balance flexible play and social interaction with safety. Children and family members should be involved in testing proposals and play should cater to a range of young age groups to create layers of social integration and points of meeting.

- Inclusive public realm design, outlined above, can support older people's comfort, mobility, and social participation. This should be enhanced by events programming and activation of the space should create welcoming, intergenerational spaces where older people feel a sense of belonging and visibility.
- Provide public toilets for people who need to frequently access them. These facilities should be included in new public spaces with clear signage. [The Character, Sustainability and Design Codes SPD](#) offers further guidance on public toilet design.
- Public realm initiatives should prioritise addressing areas of public space deprivation, providing inclusive spaces. Investment programmes should focus on providing, maintaining and improving public spaces in neighbourhoods suffering from civic infrastructure deprivation, to promote social cohesion, economic vitality and healthy spaces.
- **Designing for Women and Girls**
- Promoting gender-inclusive, intersectional design. Provisions for teenagers in public spaces are usually considered in terms of a small age range and include facilities limited to skate parks and sports pitches, which are usually dominated by boys. This is not because girls do not want to use these facilities, but because these spaces are often territorialised by the dominant group. Designing for teenage girls often improves the design of space for vulnerable users overall.

It is important that public realm design specifically considers the needs of women and teenage girls, through:

- *Engaging with woman and girls early in the design process, to ensure their aspirations for Hounslow's public realm are considered.*

- *Ensuring design teams are diverse, multi-disciplinary and representative of the local area to understand the intersectional challenges faced by women.*
- *Considering inclusion of play and leisure facilities popular with girls, such as including swings appropriate for a range of age groups, ground trampolines, age-appropriate adventure equipment and outdoor gym equipment that is sociably arranged to encourage girls to participate in physical activity,*
- *Inclusion of walking loops with no dead-end paths, ensuring several visible entrances and exits to a space,*
- *Include spaces that have amenities to allow girls to linger such as sociable seating arrangements that face each other, lit with soft, playful and colourful lighting and in view of high footfall areas to improve perceptions of safety, and include free Wi-Fi and charging points,*
- *Pedestrian and cyclist movement should be balanced to reduce conflict, including avoiding shared-use pathways in high volume areas. Where shared-use pathways are unavoidable, they should be designed in a way that encourages slower cycling (such as unsegregated shared use paths).*
- *Breaking down spaces into smaller areas so no one group dominates the space,*
- *Ensuring proximity to free public-toilets,*
- *Using features that encourage self-expression such as platforms to encourage performance,*
- *Being in proximity to, but clearly distinct from play areas for younger children,*
- *Being located close to transport and community hubs, with clear signage to nearby destinations,*
- *Including statues and art that feature and tell the stories of real (not just fictional) women and girls and name squares, streets and buildings after real female figures.*
- *There are many excellent publications that offer more information on designing for girls in public space, such as:*  
[Her City, Cities Alive: Designing cities that work for women](#)  
and [the resources library curated by Make Space for Girls.](#)



Play





## 2. Inclusive places

### Projects and precedents

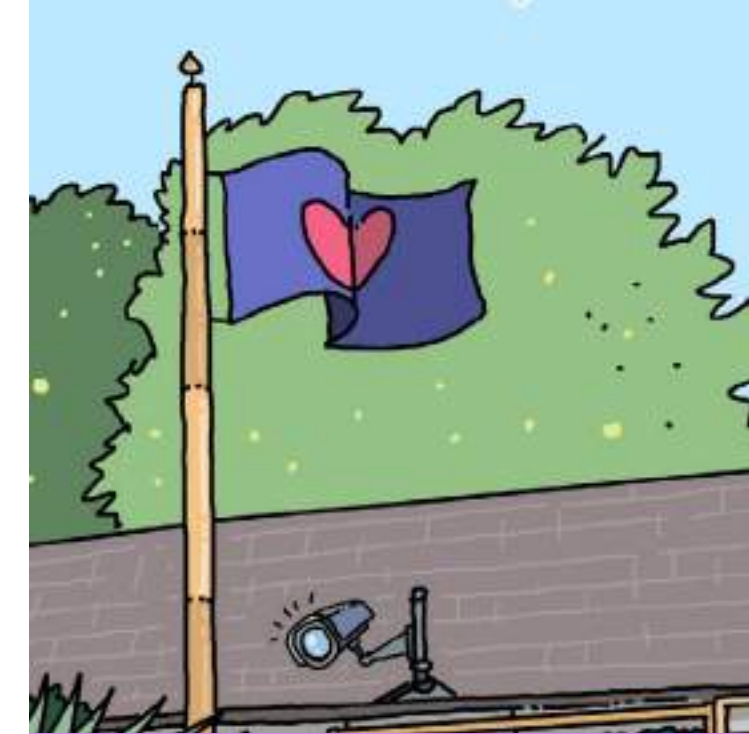
#### Public Toilet Provision

Public toilet provision in areas of high footfall allows vulnerable groups to participate in public life, supporting the wellbeing of people with medical conditions, the elderly and families with young children. Good quality and numerous public toilet facilities allow areas to be enjoyed by more people and for longer periods of time. There is no duty on local authorities to provide public toilets, however, the Council plays a significant role in ensuring a suitable provision. To increase the provision of public toilets in high footfall areas in Hounslow, it is suggested that the Council take the following steps (in line with recommendation in [AgeUK's London Loos](#)):

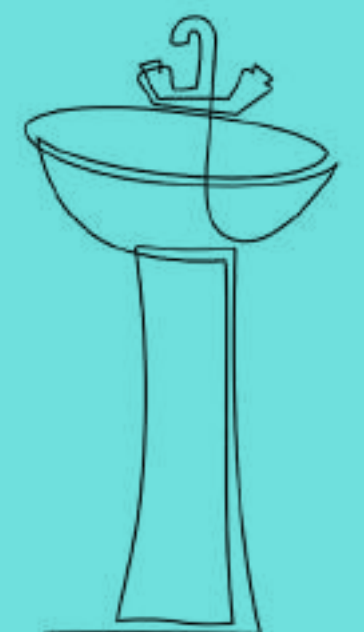
- Undertake a needs assessment, mapping existing public toilets and their types to understand gaps in provisions. Work with communities to understand needs and with partners to understand solutions.
- Ensure that any engagement is undertaken with a diverse group of residents, including older residents, those with disabilities and families.
- Develop a strategy for public toilet provision across the borough as part of the Council's public health responsibilities.
- This strategy should involve an action plan to improve information on provision, including signage, websites/maps to raise awareness of existing facilities.
- It should also involve setting out how public toilets can be provided within budgetary constraints, such as through establishing a Community Toilet Scheme (where the Council actively manages a scheme that establishes the use of toilets in local businesses in return for an annual payment). The strategy should identify priority locations to establish a good geographical spread of facilities.

#### Richmond Community Toilet Scheme:

The [Richmond Community Toilet Scheme](#) opens the use of toilet facilities in a range of approved local businesses and other organisations during opening hours. This is free for the public and without expectation of buying goods. Participating premises keep toilets safe, clean, hygienic, easily accessible and well stocked. In return they receive an annual payment (£800-£1000 + VAT). Participating businesses display a sticker on their window to indicate that they are part of the scheme. The scheme is actively managed by council to make sure there is a good geographical spread of well-maintained facilities at all times of the day and evening. Leaflets to explain how it works are available in libraries, sport centres, council buildings, other locations and the Council have a map-based tool on their website to show locations.



*Consult*





## 2. Inclusive places

### Place-based considerations

#### Brentford

- Accessibility Improvements: Consider undertaking an accessibility study to improve the Town Centre experience for users with impaired mobility.
- Wayfinding and Connectivity: Improved wayfinding could help to connect key destinations, such as cultural centres and transport hubs, and ensure people with disabilities can navigate the area more easily through active travel.

#### Chiswick

- Balancing Heritage and Accessibility: Consider how accessibility enhancements can conserve or enhance heritage character, such as discreet ramps and improved pathway surfaces.
- Community Representation in Public Spaces: Ensure that local public realm initiatives reflect the diverse demographics within Chiswick.

#### Feltham

- Family-Friendly Facilities: Consider how new developments can introduce more public toilets, baby-changing stations, and designated breastfeeding-friendly spaces.
- Cultural Representation: Cultural and historical markers can create a sense of local identity and pride.
- Safety for Women and Girls: Improved street lighting, especially around underpasses and transport hubs, and consideration of gender-sensitive design can make public spaces feel safer, particularly for women and vulnerable groups.
- Social Inclusion: Seating and gathering spaces encourage interaction across diverse community members, including young people, elderly residents, and parents with children.

#### Golden Mile Corridor (Great West Road)

- Pedestrian and Cyclist Safety: Consider how new developments can improve connections between new and existing communities and green spaces by implementing safer crossings, improved cycle lanes, and better walking and wheeling routes.

- Inclusive transport access and connections around transport infrastructure: Work with TfL to improve transport connections that serve marginalised communities along the Corridor and to address poor connectivity between the northern and southern parts of the Corridor.

#### Heston and Cranford

- Investing in Deprived Areas: Where possible, prioritise Council infrastructure funding to ensure these neighbourhoods in this area receive improvements, to address the lack of public realm improvement projects due to fewer large-scale redevelopment opportunities.
- Addressing Connectivity Barriers: Improved lighting and safety around underpasses can make them more accessible as well as address poor connectivity due to major roads and underpasses creating physical barriers. Assess how the public realm, including footways, can be made more inclusive for people with impaired mobility.

#### Hounslow Town Centre

- Accessibility Improvements: Consider undertaking an accessibility study to improve the Town Centre experience for users with visual impairment or other disabilities. For example, focusing on the accessibility of the existing street bollards, footway surfaces and materiality, level changes and street furniture.
- Seating and Social Spaces: Provide well-lit, safe, accessible and diverse seating arrangements catering to different users, including older people and families.
- Crime and Safety Measures: Consider how public spaces could be designed or retrofitted to improve perceptions of safety and minimise antisocial behaviour, without the need for over policing.
- Cultural Representation: Public art and wayfinding elements that reflect Hounslow's diverse communities, such as multilingual signage and locally relevant public art.

#### Isleworth

- Enhancing Wayfinding and Connectivity: Clear signage and digital navigation tools could make the area easier to navigate through active travel.
- Promoting Inclusive Public Spaces: Multi-use community spaces can cater to diverse populations, from elderly residents to young families.



*Pride*

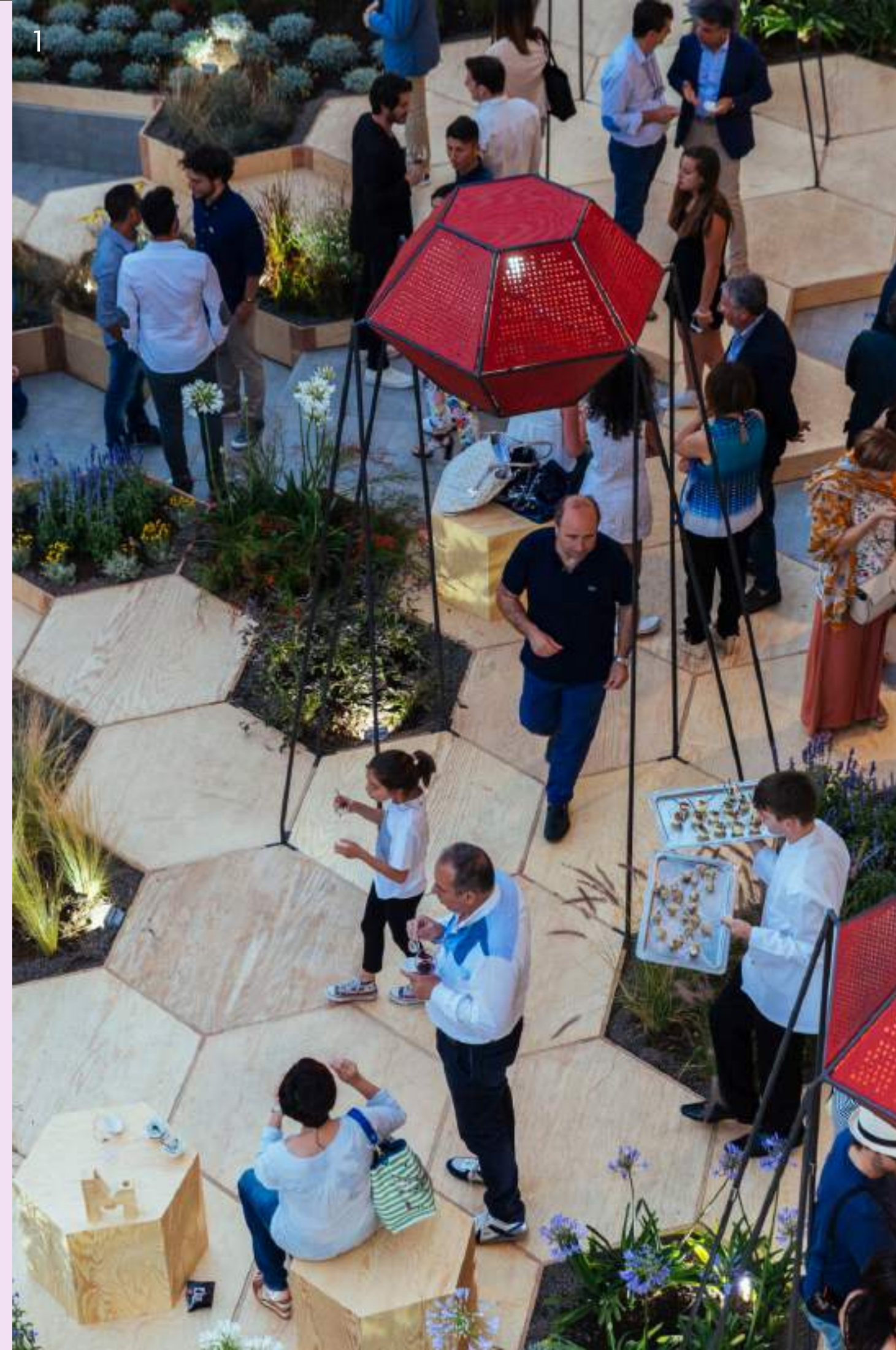




## 2. Inclusive places

Good precedent examples

(see P. 83 for details)



**1. Zighizaghi, Favara** – Multi sensory urban garden that combines nature, maths and architecture to create a space that is supportive of neurodivergent users and invites interaction from across the community.

Modular construction allows for flexibility and reparability; automatic irrigation techniques and native plant species mean that the garden is climate-appropriate and adapted to its location.

<https://bigsee.eu/zighizaghi-favara/>





### 3. Environmental sustainability

The London Borough of Hounslow declared a Climate Emergency on 18 June 2019, setting the intention to decarbonise council operations by 2030, influencing wider Borough emissions, and build climate resilience. This commitment anchors the borough's environmental agenda and underpins subsequent plans and programmes. This aspiration is supported by the [Green & Blue Infrastructure \(GBI\) Strategy 2021–2030](#), [Air Quality Action Plan \(2023–2028\)](#), the [Local Flood Risk Management Strategy](#) and the [Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation SPD](#). Together, these create a coherent background for the PRDG to ground its commitments and aspirations for climate, ecology, health and place.

This section outlines the design guidance for delivering aspects of these strategies through sustainable public realm design. The goal is to create public spaces that contribute to environmental sustainability, are resilient to climate change, and enhance mental health and well-being through accessible, nature-rich public spaces.

#### Key Takeaways

- Protection from motor vehicles, electric scooter and cyclists was highlighted within the top three safety concerns during the public consultation and was a recurrent talking point during the street level engagement. Community programmes on safe cycling and road safety, public transport initiatives and promoting respectful use of shared spaces were key recommendations from the street pop-ups.
- The importance of parks such as Lampton Park and Heston Park was highlighted during the street pop-ups, showing the importance of Hounslow's green spaces as a key characteristic of the borough and the wellbeing of residents.
- During the street pop-ups consultation it was noted that residents were keen to have wildlife and green projects that promote education and community stewardship. Green spaces being community hubs for fitness, recreation, and community events was also mentioned as a popular option during the street led consultation.
- Using community gardens or orchards as safe spaces for groups such as refugees or women was recommended during the street pop-ups as a way to build socially cohesive and accessible environments within the public realm.



*Green*



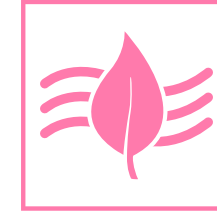


### 3. Environmental sustainability



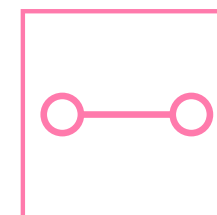
#### A. Biodiversity & nature

- Interventions should recognise nature's right to exist and the interdependence of all animals. Sustainable and biodiverse spaces could be crafted through rewilding, and biodiversity-led projects in the public realm such as cultivating wildflower meadows and orchard meadows, using of pollinator-friendly native planting, and by installing bird and bat boxes, bug hotels to promote insect life, hedgehog highways, swift bricks and log piles, to support urban wildlife.
- The use of artificial lawns is strongly discouraged to protect soil health, biodiversity, and natural infiltration.
- Diverse, native planting in public realm schemes is promoted, including flowerbeds, shaded areas. Use of perennial shrubs, wildflowers and deep-rooted species enhances drought resilience and biodiversity.
- Expand habitat by promoting planting of wildflowers in underused roadside verges, traffic islands, and other residual spaces, without disrupting road safety and traffic visibility. Encourage mowing strategies that enable the establishment of wildflowers.
- Encourage pocket parks and community-led greening and food-growing initiatives within neighbourhoods.



#### B. Urban greening & environmental benefits

- Promote public realm initiatives that green the urban environment. Urban greening promotes natural cooling, reduces air and noise pollution, and improves mental and physical health. This includes expanding the tree canopy in ways that facilitates cooling using slow growing, heat resistant trees. Consider planting strategies that use deeper pits and the use of root barriers or bags to avoid damage to pavements, roadways and boundary walls.
- The use of greening on façades facing the public realm, and gardens and green roofs on the rooftop level public realm is promoted, as in the Mayor of London's [Expanding London's Public Realm Design Guide](#).
- Limiting the conversion of entire front gardens for parking. Guidance on how to accommodate driveways within front gardens can be found in the [Character, Sustainability and Design Codes SPD](#). A project to promote de-paving of front gardens may be of benefit to areas suffering from surface water flooding.

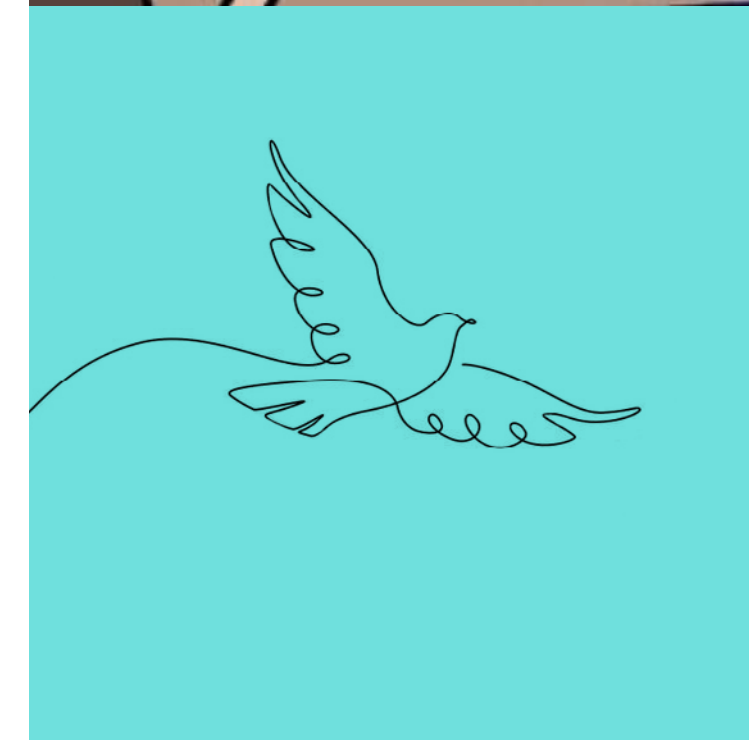


#### C. Connectivity & public realm enhancement

- Proposals should consider how they can interconnect green spaces across the borough by active and sustainable travel. Seamless integration between parks and urban spaces can be achieved through designing transitional elements at park entrances and edges, like coffee kiosks, seating, wide pavement design, public art and greening.
- Encourage the creation of green spaces and parklets on streets. Create informal seating and amenity space with greenery, bike racks, artwork, or play facilities. Refer to the council's [Parklets Design Guidance](#) for further information.
- In car-dominated major corridors (like A4, M4, A312, A316), integrate green walls and planting that can trap air and noise pollution, for example evergreen shrubs with rough texture in multiple layers.

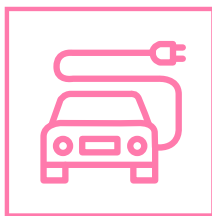


*Air*





### 3. Environmental sustainability



#### D. Climate mitigation and adaptation

- Align public realm design with existing climate-related strategies ([Hounslow Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy](#), [Climate Emergency Action Plan](#), [Nature Recovery Action Plan](#), [Character, Sustainability and Design Code SPD](#), [Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation SPD](#)).
- Promote low-carbon mobility through supporting infrastructure for electric vehicles (EV charging points, E-Cycle and E-scooter hire), integrated public transport, safe and pleasant walking and wheeling infrastructure, cycle friendly infrastructure, and car-sharing facilities.
- Promote sustainable transport networks through integrating public transport, pedestrian and cycling infrastructure within main public spaces. Where new public space is proposed in a development, it should be well-connected to areas of high footfall, and local green spaces.
- Durable, sustainable materials such as wood, natural porous stones, resin-bound aggregates, permeable paving, compacted gravel, terracotta, porcelain, clay, recycled metal, low carbon steel is encouraged for use in the public realm, prioritising low embedded carbon, reuse and circularity.
- Street furniture could be powered by low-carbon energy solutions, such as solar-powered lighting.
- Adaptation measures such as weather-resilient planting, reduced hard surfaces, and cooling strategies such as shaded seating and water features should be incorporated into public realm design.
- Rain gardens, swales, and permeable pavements should be introduced or retrofitted to prevent urban flooding and improve stormwater management. SuDS features could be integrated into leftover spaces, parks, and roadside verges to maximise environmental benefits.

- Riverbank design should incorporate flood resilience measures, including repairing and maintaining riverside walkways, improving accessibility and ecological health of water systems. Nature-based solutions, biophilic design and an ecosystem approach are promoted wherever possible. For more detailed guidance see the [Environment Agency's TE2100 plan](#).
- To reduce dependency on plastic bottle drinks, publicly accessible drinking water fountains/taps should be installed in busy locations.

#### Place-based considerations

##### Cranford and Heston

- Tree canopy coverage is low in Cranford – increasing urban greening will help reduce heat retention and improve air quality.

##### Golden Mile

- Ensure development incorporates greenery and trees to tackle the urban heat island effect. Refer to the [Great West Corridor Masterplan](#) and emerging GM100 Vision for specific project ideas.



*Nature*





### 3. Environmental sustainability

Good precedent examples *(see P. 84 for details)*



**1. Water Squares (Rotterdam)** – Squares that prevent flooding by storing rainwater during heavy rainfall which can be used during the summer / dryer months. The squares double as seating areas and provide spaces for recreational activities such as basketball.

<https://www.forbesindia.com/article/lifes/what-are-water-squares-and-how-can-they-help-prevent-urban-flooding/77477/1>





# 4. Public health, safety and security

The Hounslow [Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy \(2023-2026\)](#) highlights that the borough continues to face health inequalities, which are driven by wider social and physical determinants, including environment, housing, and connectivity. Hounslow’s approach to addressing this is place-based and life-course oriented, emphasising early intervention and creating environments that promote physical activity and social connection. It commits to engaging underrepresented populations in shaping policy and services, ensuring that the design of public spaces supports all residents’ and users’ mental well-being through opportunities for social interaction to reduce isolation, accessible routes to green/open spaces and features that support physical activity and mobility for all ages. Elderly residents are particularly vulnerable with high rates of falls, loneliness and social isolation. The public realm can also be challenging for those with dementia.

Hounslow commitment includes promoting healthy advertising on the Council’s own boards, in accordance with aims of the [Advertising Code of Conduct](#).

Accessible, socially enabling, and health-promoting public realm is paramount in supporting these commitments.

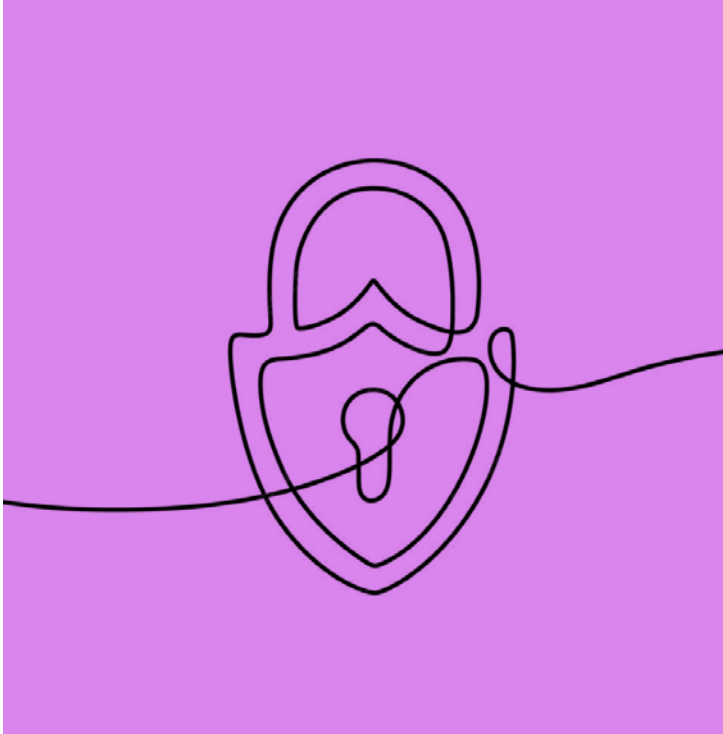


## A. Active, social & contemplative life

- Promote active and healthy lifestyles through constructing continuous, connected, safe, and well-lit walking and cycling networks. Encourage long-distance walking through curated faith and history trails. The inclusion of community gardens, orchards in residential public realm may help to promote healthy eating habits.
- Ensure that public space design is laid out in a manner that facilitates sun exposure in the winter, such as orientating public spaces away from taller buildings that would block sunlight. Include outdoor play and exercise facilities in public spaces and orientate these to allow sun exposure in the winter, and shade in summer via deciduous trees or shelters. Promote flexible space designs that facilitate tai chi and yoga sessions, dance lessons, and exercise classes.

## Key Takeaways

- Youth groups highlighted that school entrances could be used as social hubs for young people to promote wellbeing and social interaction. Improving school entrances, creating integrated play, seating and social areas could help young people face challenges with mental health and wellbeing.
- Approximately 40% of respondents during the online consultation disagreed that they felt safe and secure in Hounslow’s public realm. Adequate lighting was voted as one of the most important safety aspects of public space. High streets and squares with poor lighting such as Bell Square have been highlighted as hubs of antisocial behaviour.





## 4. Public health, safety and security

- Where space is available, create sports and exercise facilities such as football pitches, basketball and pickleball courts, callisthenics and gym equipment, bowling, climbing walls, areas for seasonal skating rinks, table tennis. These should be located in well-connected places on/near high streets, neighbourhood centres and transport hubs. Where sports facilities are proposed, regard should be had to Sport England's Active Design Checklist.
- Incentivise participation in social life by providing flexible public spaces in new development like plazas, open-air theatre, squares, or stages that can host events, markets, performances, and informal gatherings during different times of the day, week and year. Integrate appropriate forms of social seating such as picnic tables or circular seating.
- Promote the use of the space to community groups, to enable community-led events, friendship buddy groups, markets, concerts and festivals to draw people out and promote social interaction.
- Integrate cafés, kiosks, and other opportunities for informal socialising in public spaces to encourage people to dwell and interact with each other. Ensure public spaces include healthy food kiosks or signage promoting outlets with fresh food. Promote alcohol-free public spaces using legal instruments in areas where anti-social behaviour creates problems to ensure social spaces are welcoming to all.
- Promote contemplative spaces by creating seating integrated into the landscape and through design that includes quiet, calm, and nature-rich spaces, using planting and ponds that attracts birds, insects and other animals. Planting can be used as an air and noise pollution buffer to busy roads, in addition to the use of sound-absorbing surfaces and materials to create quietness. Adequate setbacks from busy roads should be provided for walking paths and cycleways. Designing in these buffers and setbacks is particularly important for schools and other establishments where children spend time to limit the impacts of air pollution on health.
- To allow quick responses to cardiac emergencies, accessible defibrillators should be installed in high-footfall areas.



### B. Safety & security

- In locations with higher historic crime rates, targeted interventions should be considered to improve security without making spaces feel over policed. These could include improved lighting and visibility, activation of ground-floor uses and location of windows in residential development to facilitate natural surveillance, ensuring clear sightlines through use of low hedges and other appropriate planting, and facilitating pop-up events where feasible. Integrate unobstructed (by buildings or tree canopies) CCTV in strategic locations. Apply 'Secured by Design' (SBD) principles in a creative manner in all public realm projects and to reduce opportunities for crime.
- Provide safe knife disposal kiosks in low-footfall areas to discourage weapon carrying.
- Conduct terrorism risk assessments for all new major public spaces and schemes and to enable resilience to terrorism threats by using integrated, creative Hostile Vehicle Mitigation (HVM) measures and aligning with the duties under Martyn's Law. Prefer subtle, blended protective features over overt, fortress-like security.
- Install multiple bus stops for each direction near schools to reduce conflicts among young people by avoiding bottlenecks. Ensuring clear visibility, adequate spacing, and sightlines between opposed stops can improve perception of safety and reduce opportunities for bullying or anti-social behaviour.
- Enhance street lighting in underpasses, alleyways, and other poorly lit but high footfall areas, as well as public transport hubs and station exits. Enhance visibility with clear sightlines, wide footpaths, and shared-use spaces. Reduce overgrown greenery near pathways, which can create hiding spots or obstruct visibility. Promote natural surveillance and community participation as alternatives to excessive security lighting.



*Relax*





## 4. Public health, safety and security

- In areas with a high concentration of food outlets, provide areas that can be used by delivery-mopeds that are separate from pedestrian walkways. Clear sightlines and physical separation (e.g. planters) are design measures that can be used to reduce risk of conflict.
- Provide secure, visible, robust and well-lit cycle parking and ensure their placement conveniently links with amenities and transport hubs but does not impede pedestrian movement. The provision of CCTV surveillance in cycle parking locations can deter thefts. More guidance on cycle parking provision can be found in the [Character, Sustainability and Design Code SPD](#).
- Where there is evidence that a concentration of licensed premises is persistently contributing to crime, disorder, public nuisance or other harms in public spaces, designating the area as a Cumulative Impact Area under [Hounslow's Statement of Licensing Policy \(2020-2025\)](#), should be considered to enable tighter control of new licences, variations and conditions.

### Place-based considerations

#### Cranford

- Consider how public realm design, retrofit and management can improve perceptions of safety and anti-social behaviour, for example, though implementing targeted Public Space Protection Orders in areas where public drinking is associated with anti-social behaviour.

#### Hounslow High Street

- Pedestrianised areas need better safety management, consider how public realm design or retrofit can prioritise walking and wheeling and reduce conflicts with delivery mopeds, e-scooters and e-bikes.
- Ensure emerging public realm interventions create a safe and welcoming nighttime environment.



## Views



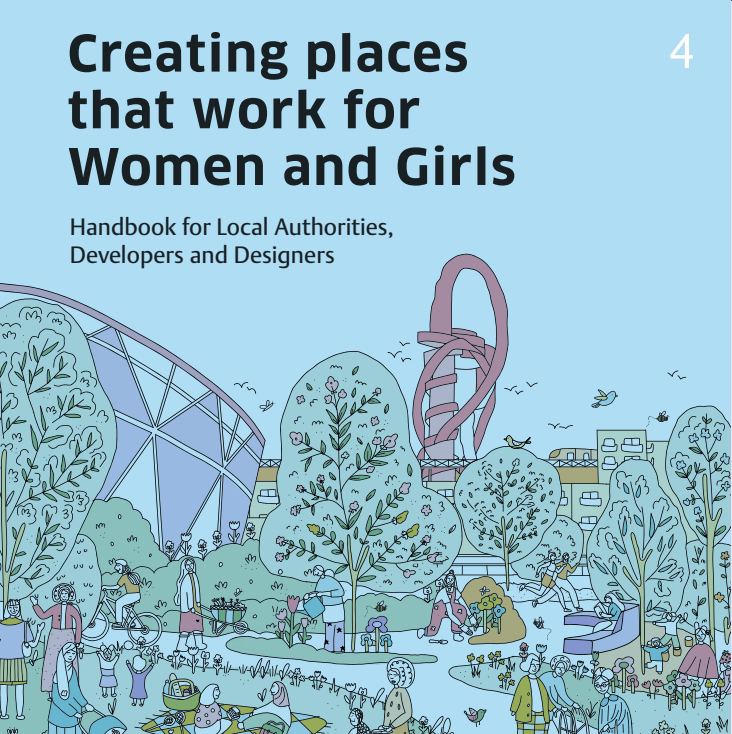


# 4. Public health, safety and security

Good precedent examples *(see P. 84 for details)*

**1. Gender inclusive design:  
Reumannplatz, Vienna**  
This city centre square was redesigned in a gender sensitive way and includes the Mädchenbühne (girls' stage), which is a performance space that can be used by everyone, but was requested by girls of the nearby school when asked what they wanted in their local square.

Photo with creative commons  
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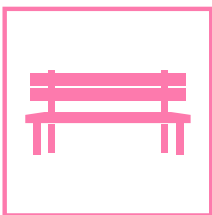




# 5. Enabling economic vitality

Economic success is a key goal of Hounslow’s core policies and strategies. Hounslow’s [Corporate Plan](#) commits investment to make places greener, healthier, cleaner, thriving and liveable for residents and businesses alike. The [Hounslow: Prosperity & Place](#) framework commits to retaining and growing economic activity, especially for small businesses. The emerging [Local Plan 2020–2041](#) plans for growth in homes and jobs, supports regeneration in priority areas and embeds a strong sustainability and placemaking approach. The [Business Case for Growth](#) report translates strategy into an investment programme to secure jobs and renew high streets, with place quality fundamental to investor confidence. Town-centre visions emphasise streets, squares, frontages and wayfinding as catalysts for footfall, confidence and investment. The [Town Centre Masterplans](#) identify location-specific spatial priorities to strengthen identity, attract visitors, and support local businesses.

A common theme across these documents is the recognition that attractive, inclusive and accessible streets and public spaces are central to a stronger local economy, and there is a clear commitment to deliver these spaces.

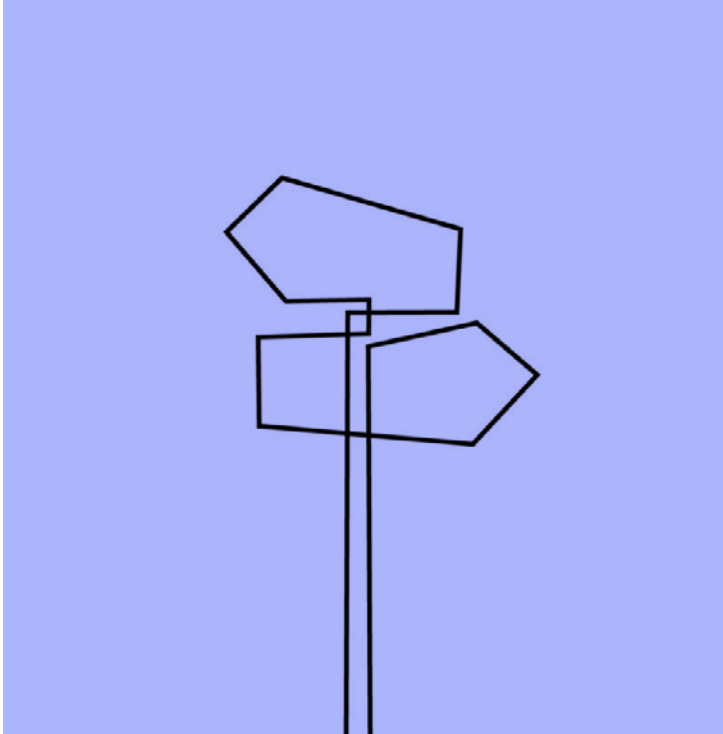


## A. Place activation, amenities & identity

- Promote welcoming amenities in every economic cluster (high streets, parades, markets, office/industrial parks), such as a mix of generous seating in the sun with shade or canopies for hot weather, hydration points, play facilities, greenery and SuDS. Interventions that convert grey to green in commercial areas are supported, such as the introduction of planting and green amenity space.
- Promote the upgrading of existing civic spaces/squares with seating, public art, temporary shading, innovative greenery and children’s play facilities to increase footfall and dwell time.
- Encourage temporary markets, pop-up events, and street performances on high streets and neighbourhood areas, especially during cultural festival seasons. Celebrate Hounslow’s culinary diversity by supporting and advertising street food, food markets and festival weekends.

## Key Takeaways

- The Right to Sensory group emphasised the importance of safeguarding local businesses from gentrification. Community markets, local shop loyalty schemes and events that support small business were raised during the street pop-up events as social recommendations. Brentford Market was cited as an example which could benefit from affordable shopping options as it is currently not affordable to residents.
- More cafés, healthy food stalls and social spaces were highlighted by respondents during the street pop-up events. A desire to attract visitors, improve the aesthetic and economic value of public spaces would serve the wider needs of the community. Data collected from the street-pop up noted that areas such as Brentford and Chiswick had more of these facilities. Therefore, efforts to provide these economic improvements should be directed to Hounslow and the west of the borough.





## 5. Enabling economic vitality

- Use public art, curated hoardings during construction, and multilingual wayfinding to strengthen identity and pride in local retail centres.
- Consider how building orientation can minimise negative microclimate impacts like blocking existing sunny spots on high streets and commercial areas and creating wind canyon effects. Provide social seating at sunny spots for people across age groups to sit and enjoy the sun.
- Promote appropriate lighting, natural and active surveillance to enable late evening and nighttime economic activities along commercial streets and town centres.
- Medium and large mixed-use developments along high streets should contribute positively to the public realm. Consider including new publicly accessible squares, public art, active streets, play areas, and green spaces that are well integrated with the existing high street and public spaces. There should be a clear division between private amenity space for residents and publicly accessible space.
- A clean, litter free public realm is more attractive to spend time in. This can be achieved through the use of durable materials, rodent-resistant materials and an adequate provision of well-positioned litter bins for residents, businesses and other users. Regular servicing can also contribute to these aims. For more detail see the [Recycling and Refuse Guidance](#) and the [Character Sustainability and Design Codes SPD](#).



### B. Streets, connectivity & comfort

- Explore the creation of joined-up walking, wheeling and cycling networks linking town centres, transport hubs, offices and industrial areas.
- Upgrade stations and transport hubs as welcoming gateways to commercial areas with clear wayfinding and signage to commercial destinations.

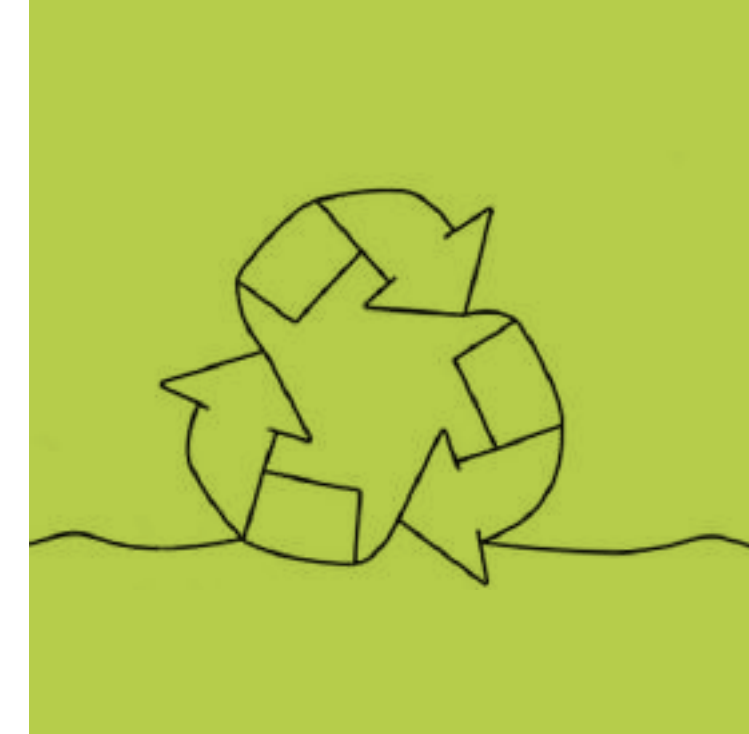


### C. Business ecosystem, affordability

- Protect low-income support services (e.g. food banks), value retail (food kiosks, street markets) and affordable food arcades on high streets that serve local need. Through planning negotiations promote uses such as community kitchens, maker spaces, youth/charity uses and a complementary mix of activities within public spaces. Promote targeted and sustainable support to revive struggling anchor retailers that can drive local footfall.
- Upgrade neighbourhood parades through shopfront improvements, the provision of public art, children's play and family spaces, community noticeboards, seating areas in sun and shade and greenery.

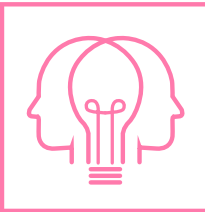


*Refine*





# 5. Enabling economic vitality



## D. Co-design and collaborative management

- Explore early engagement with local business associations (e.g. Chambers of Commerce) or business collectives when designing proposals for upgrades to high streets, shop parades, commercial frontages and new mixed-use developments that significantly affect the public realm. This ensures that business needs, footfall patterns, servicing, and visual identity are integrated from the outset.
- Where possible, encourage the formation or involvement of Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) or similar local business collectives in concentrated commercial zones to collaborate with the council to enhance the public realm, according to the guidance in this section.

## Place-based considerations

### Brentford

- Encourage development to integrate Brentford’s Town Centre with the waterfront, improving riverside activation through, for example, better lighting, active frontages, floating markets, pop-up cultural events, and better seating could make it a stronger community hub.

### Chiswick

- Build upon existing successes (e.g., Chiswick Business Park, Chiswick Flower Market).

### Hounslow Town Centre

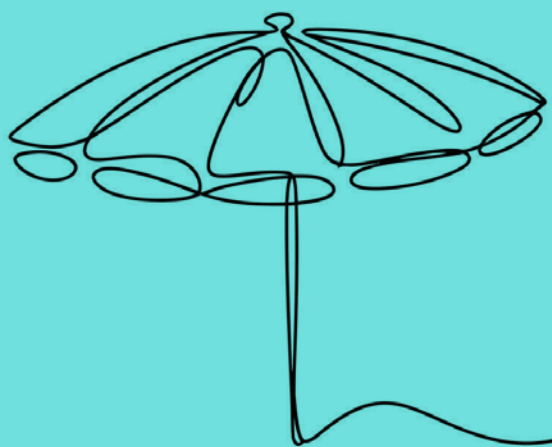
- Consider how development could address the Town Centre holistically, creating a welcoming environment that could increase footfall and enhance economic opportunity. For example, through shopfront improvements, introducing greenery and amenity space, and creating flexible spaces which could host commercial and community uses.

### Isleworth

- Enhancing South Street’s public realm, promoting local shopping areas, and integrating small green spaces to encourage social and economic activity.



Elevate





## 5. Enabling economic vitality

Good precedent examples *(see P. 85 for details)*



### 1. Altrincham Town Centre Public Realm Improvements

Public realm improvements throughout the town centre have included rebalancing the movement network in favour of walking and cycling, tackling drainage challenges through the introduction of rain gardens, upgrades to surfaces, tree planting, street furniture and lighting and working with local artists to reinforce the town's cultural heritage. The investment in the public realm has played a role in improving the desirability of the town centre, with vacancy rates decreasing from 30% in 2010 to 8.1% currently.

<https://www.planit-ie.com/case-studies/altrincham-town-centre>





# 6. Lifecycle and maintenance

Critical to public realm success is that any interventions are well maintained and long-lasting. A number of Council documents outline strategies to ensure the long-term success of assets. The [Asset Management Strategy](#) underscores that asset investments should reduce maintenance burdens while enhancing accessibility, and value to communities. The emerging [Local Plan 2020-2041](#) sets the expectation that new development uses high-quality, sustainable and durable materials, and that public realm enhancements are maintained to a standard that preserves character, usability, and safety over time. [The Character, Sustainability & Design Codes SPD \(2024\)](#), emphasises design robustness, adaptability to changing needs and resilience to environmental challenges.



## A. Evidence-based approach

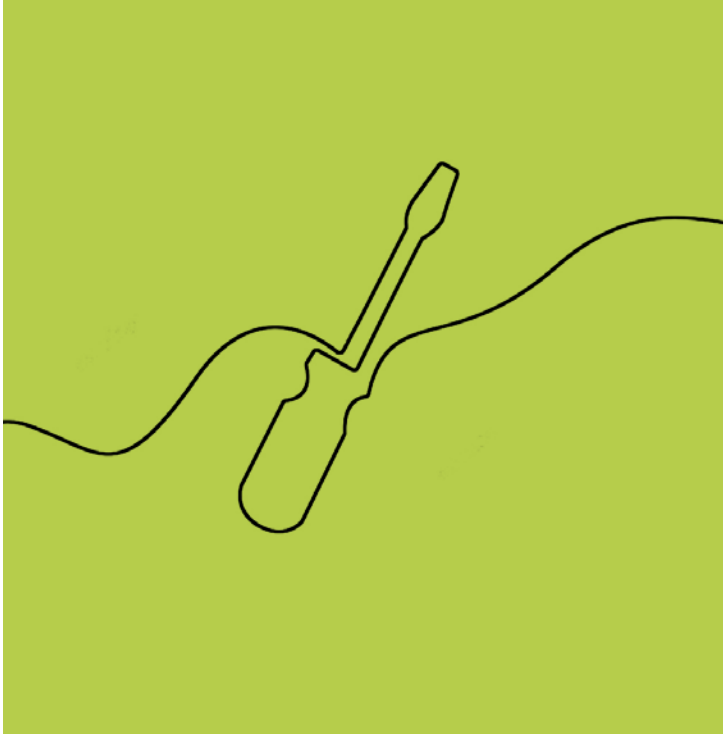
- Undertake ground-condition audits before any tree or planting scheme to ensure suitability for healthy growth and long-term rooting.
- Undertake a life-cycle audit of materials, maintenance, replacement cycles, and operational protocols to demonstrate optimisation of whole-life costs and carbon.
- Demonstrate how furniture and fixtures are designed, based on usability and accessibility audits of the sites.
- Integrate one-year post-occupancy evaluation in the contract process after the first year of use, to understand the heat comfort, drainage, wind comfort, material wear and vandal-resistance of designs. Incorporate these findings for future schemes and updated standards.

## Key Takeaways

- The data collected from the street pop-ups and community groups showed a desire for a framework for community participation, maintenance and ownership of public realm projects. Civic and community partnerships should therefore be explored with the council.
- The presence of litter and overflowing bins was a key concern highlighted by residents and should be addressed within the maintenance strategy of public realm projects.

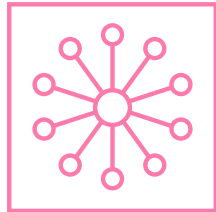


Care



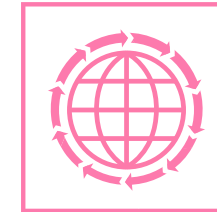


## 6. Lifecycle and maintenance



### B. Co-ordination with relevant existing actors and frameworks

- Comply with the Hounslow [Street Scene Design Guide](#) (SSDG) standards for streetscape materials, details and furniture palettes to secure uniformity, repairability and cost-effective maintenance. Use the SSDG standard details unless a justified exception is approved.
- More guidance on robust materials, long-life detailing, and climate-resilience can be found in the [Character, Sustainability & Design Codes SPD](#) and the [Climate Change Mitigation & Adaptation SPD](#).
- New public realm improvement schemes of new project proposals are encouraged to coordinate at an early stage with the Council's Highways, Transport, Urban Design, Parks, Public Health and Equalities teams, National Highways, TfL and the PFI service provider to agree standards, inspection regimes and adoption implications.
- Design and management of any new public space must accord with the [Public London Charter](#) principles, [Expanding London's Public Realm Design Guide](#), [TfL's Streetscape Guidance / Streets Toolkit](#).
- Apply [DfT's Inclusive Mobility Strategy](#) (tactile paving, widths, crossings, gradients, seating) across all footway and space designs, and ensure maintenance standards protect accessibility over time.
- Use the [National Model Design Code](#) as a reference for coding robust, maintainable public realm standards.



### C. Resilience and life cycle

- Adopt circular economy principles from the outset and reuse materials such as reclaimed bricks or crushed concrete as aggregate, and recycled rubber or plastic, and salvaged timber for benches, planters, shelters, signage, bollards, and public art.
- Consider how existing urban infrastructure can be upcycled, such as converting underused or disused rail tracks into linear walks, adapt decommissioned building parts into landmarks or artwork, use old shipping containers as kiosks, use recycled materials for play areas and creative furniture.
- Enable zero-waste public spaces through provision of separated recycling, food waste, and refuse bins.
- Use repairable, reusable, or modular furniture rather than single-use plastics or fragile composites, and complete a materials passport for each element, to include the origin, recycled content, disassembly method, and the end-of-life route.
- Source transparently through conducting a local salvage audit, prioritising locally sourced or EPD-declared materials to cut transport emissions and support circular supply chains.
- Operationalise circularity by including repair, refurbishment, and part-replacement clauses in contracts. Each element should have a design lifespan, with cleaning schedules, inspection and repair protocols appended.
- Promote a culture of reuse in public spaces through supporting upcycle events, charity stalls, clothes swaps and flea markets to normalise circular behaviours.
- Use durable, cost-effective materials with proven vandal resistance and long life (e.g., York stone paving, granite kerbs in priority areas instead of short-life precast concrete). Prioritise whole-street enhancements over piecemeal repairs to avoid a maintenance patchwork. Standardise street furniture to a borough palette (per [the SSDG](#)) so parts are interchangeable, and replacements are swift.



*Plan*





## 6. Lifecycle and maintenance

- To ensure that public realm interventions are resistant to wind, rain and sun exposure, use materials that are resistant to thermal expansion, UV bleaching, moisture, frost and frequent wet/dry cycles and ensure columns/fixings/coatings are rated for corrosion and wind load. Use modular design with replaceable parts, so localised damage does not require whole-unit replacement.
- Integrate green infrastructure maintenance. Select low-maintenance, native, drought-tolerant species and diverse tree mixes. Ensure that the plant choices have realistic maintenance schedules.
- Ensure that public art has a robust finish, such as the use of mosaics and durable media over finishes that need regular renewal.



### D. Maintenance resources

- Comply with the [Hounslow Street Scene Design Guide \(SSDG\)](#) standards for streetscape materials, details and furniture palettes to secure uniformity, repairability and cost-effective maintenance. Use the SSDG standard details unless a justified exception is approved.
- More guidance on robust materials, long-life detailing, and climate-resilience can be found in the [Character, Sustainability & Design Codes SPD](#) and the [Climate Change Mitigation & Adaptation SPD](#).
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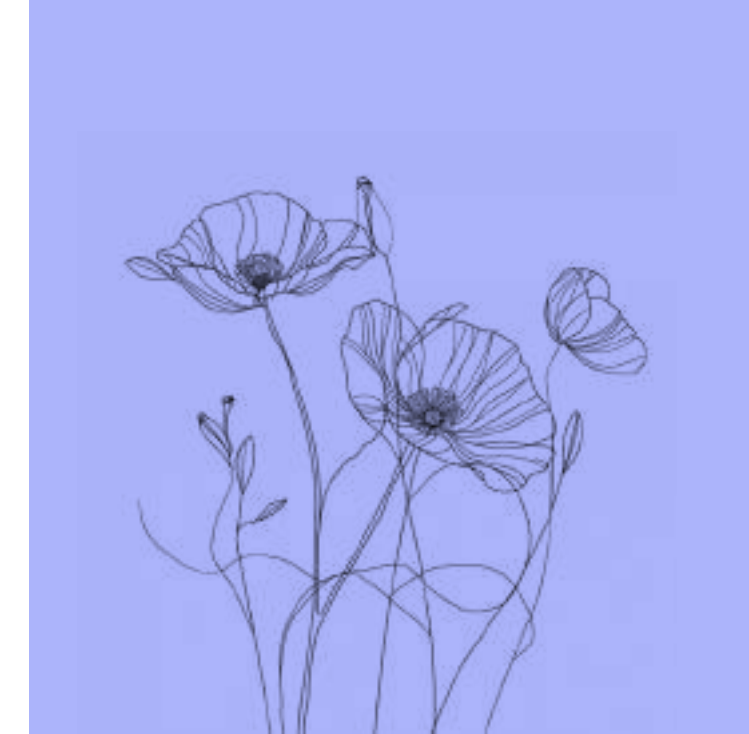


### E. Co-management

- Explore co-management models with the community to maintain green infrastructure. Ensure that roles are clearly defined (inspection, watering, litter removal), with grants or materials support. Promote public realm champions in high-footfall areas and neighbourhood centres.
- Work with partners to minimise street clutter through avoiding and removing unnecessary bollards, kiosks and advertisement panels. Remove redundant telecoms boxes or convert them for community uses (book-swap libraries, defibrillator stores). Remove or replace damaged or redundant side-guard rails, signal boxes and other infrastructure/utilities that impede safe pedestrian movement and legibility. Where removal of redundant items is not possible, consider how community art (e.g., murals on signal boxes) can be used to enhance appearance and reduce vandalism.
- Leverage high-street partners and BID's for day-to-day enhancements (seating, planting displays, cleaning, small repairs) and joint promotions that respect standard palettes and maintenance regimes.
- Include penalties for maintenance contract breaches.



*Robust*





## 6. Lifecycle and maintenance

### Place-based considerations

#### Brentford

- Public realm interventions associated to new development should be climate resilient, integrating SuDS and considering their impact beyond site boundary.
- Create maintenance strategies to ensure coordination between the Council, developers and other stakeholders.

#### Cranford and Heston

- Neglected spaces in Cranford and Convent Way suffer from poor investment – residents have reported crumbling pavements and lack of public furniture.
- Implement maintenance strategy for Cranford and Heston's public realm including housing estates.
- Ensure that permeability is considered in public realm upgrades to address surface water flooding issues.

#### Hounslow Town Centre & High Street

- Public realm interventions associated to new development should be climate resilient, integrating SuDS and considering their impact beyond site boundary.
- Create maintenance strategies to ensure coordination between the Council, developers and other stakeholders.

#### Chiswick

- Create a long-term strategy to address maintenance of Chiswick's street trees.

#### Hanworth

- Ensure that permeability is considered in public realm upgrades in Hanworth.

#### Hounslow West

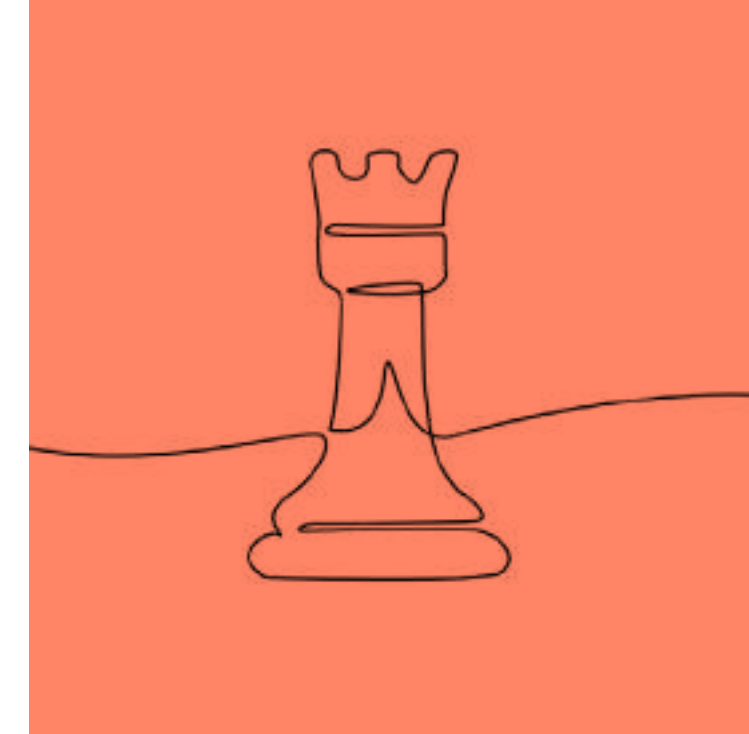
- In collaboration with landowners and other stakeholders, implement maintenance strategy for Hounslow West's public realm particularly around the Station entrances.

#### Isleworth

- Implement maintenance strategy for Isleworth's public spaces.

#### Osterley

- Ensure that permeability is considered in public realm upgrades in Osterley.





## 6. Lifecycle and maintenance

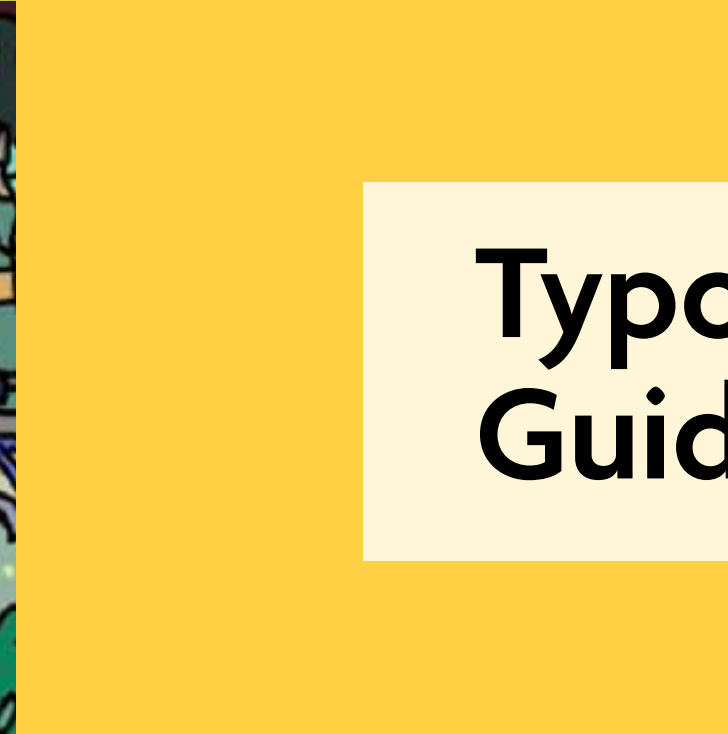
Good precedent examples *(see P. 85 for details)*



### 1. Green hoarding pilot, Tower Hamlets

As part of the Council's updated Code of Construction Practice (CoCP), requirements were introduced on the greening of construction hoardings. This has transformed graffiti covered hoardings into wildflower walls, enhancing biodiversity, enhancing appearance of the local area and improving perceptions of safety.





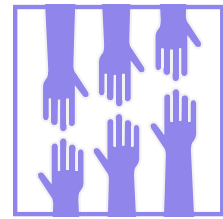
# Typology Design Guidance





# Public squares and plazas

Public squares animate Hounslow's town centres as gathering points. They function as civic anchors and open-air cultural stages and support retail footfall, express diversity, and reinforce local identity. For example, Bell Square catalyses the town centre as an outdoor arts venue where free performances including theatre, circus, dance, and visual installations are hosted regularly. Over the years, it has attracted local and international performances, strengthening community bonds and cultural pride. Similarly, the church square

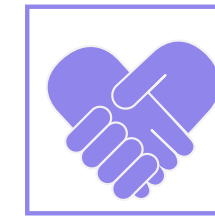


## People, cultures & community

- Be designed in a way that supports cultural expressions through the programming of temporary events, such as performances, art exhibitions, faith gatherings, craft exhibitions, storytelling, food markets, and civic festivals. Consider how infrastructure in these spaces can facilitate such events, including moveable street furniture, electrical connections, rigging for lighting, and security around crowds.
- Reflect culturally relevant artistic expressions in paving, lighting, signage and seating (e.g. murals, engraved plaques, story trails, poetry, language scripts) reflecting local history and aspirations, symbolic forms, and aesthetic references. Promote community murals, cultural mascots, cultural landscaping, and community notice boards.
- Encourage the creation of a digital presence in squares, for example, through QR codes and digital art to disseminate information such as calendar of events and promote social media interaction. Consider adding creatively designed event notice facilities.
- Following guidance set out in the [Character, Sustainability and Design Codes SPD](#), ensure the adjacent buildings have active edges that animate the square by housing either public, or inclusive and affordable commercial programs like libraries, civic centres, community rooms, community cafés, gyms, and cinemas.
- Consider using loggias, arcades, verandas, or other transitional spatial elements on these buildings, using architectural elements to create seamless transitions with adjacent buildings.
- Develop a co-design and participatory design and management program with communities. Enable local schools, arts groups, and residents to co-create events. Establish 'Friends of the Square' groups or local stewardship collectives.

along Hounslow High Street is an important place for gathering and social life.

Good public square design aims to establish identity, enhance activation, and improve accessibility and inclusivity. An improved sense of place could draw people in to dwell in the square and encourage the programming of events, social uses, and activities. Design and physical layout should provide equitable access for all and attract different user groups.



## Inclusive Places

- Squares and plazas should be easy to access and use, to attract and facilitate use by everyone. This can be achieved through a safe, intergenerational, intersectional, and inclusive design and management approach, as outlined in the Thematic Design Guidance section.
- Consider the inclusion (even if temporary and seasonal) of interactive elements like water features and restorative green spaces to attract children and families.
- Feature shaded areas that appeal to a range of age groups, including seating for older adults, an open lawn for teenagers to gather or play informal sports, and a dedicated play area for children with a water feature.
- Ensure these spaces feel safe to use at night, especially for women and families.
- Design considerations include incorporating adequate lighting, clear sightlines, and overlooking.
- Relevant legal provisions, like Public Space Protection Orders or alcohol-free zones, could be explored in areas where there is an issue with anti-social behaviour.
- Co-develop design interventions through equalities workshops and use pop-up events or time-limited trials to seek feedback before making interventions permanent.
- Introduce symbols that explicitly promote Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, such as LGBTQ+ pride flags.



*Join*

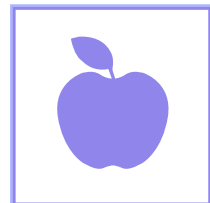


# Public squares and plazas



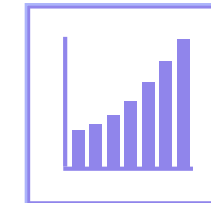
## Environmental sustainability

- Integrate landscape-design approaches: promoting biodiversity and introducing greenery and sustainable drainage, and water features where appropriate, relevant and feasible.
- Consider the use of hardy plant species in high-footfall edges and movable planters for greenery to facilitate flexible uses of squares.
- Ensure that the location and orientation of the open spaces and surrounding buildings enable direct sunlight in winter and shade in summer. Integrate elements that provide shade and protection from rain, such as trees or pergolas, or umbrellas for seasonal comfort. Consider provisions to create temporary shade during the summer.
- Promote environmental education events on public squares and plazas.



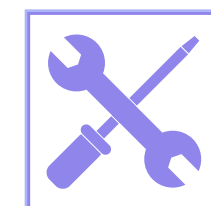
## Public health, safety and security

- Include informal seating circles and embedded play objects (e.g. giant chessboards, permanent card tables) and encourage associated events (chess or scrabble championships etc.) to promote social interaction.
- Use tree planting to filter out air and noise pollution from surrounding traffic corridors.
- Ensure ambient lighting and clear sightlines for safety and comfort at night.
- Ensure there are always adequate waste-disposal facilities, such as well-designed litter bins. Consider that during events there will be an increased demand for refuse facilities, and therefore there is a need for the refuse strategy to consider event days to ensure litter does not adversely impact on character or enjoyment.



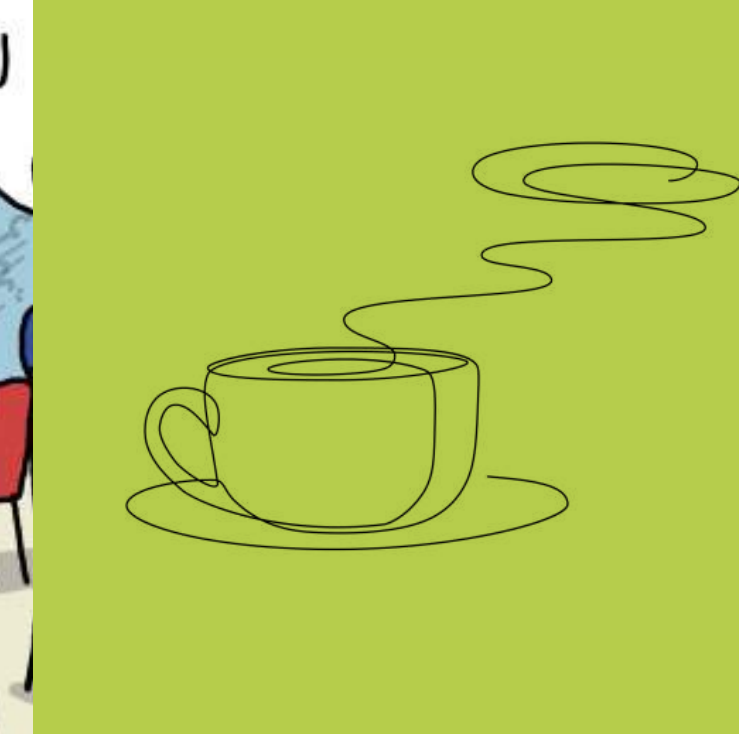
## Enabling economic vitality

- Encourage active edges with a complementary mix of uses, such as food kiosks and mobile libraries. Provide adequate infrastructure including electric points, WiFi facilities, water connections and temporary seating.
- Ensure attractiveness for wider participation, integrating programmable lighting to support the evening economy, and encouraging market operators and local businesses to co-manage and animate the space.
- Promote temporary seasonal celebratory decorations, such as for Diwali, Vaishaki, Eid, Christmas, Halloween, or cultural New Years, to encourage visitors.

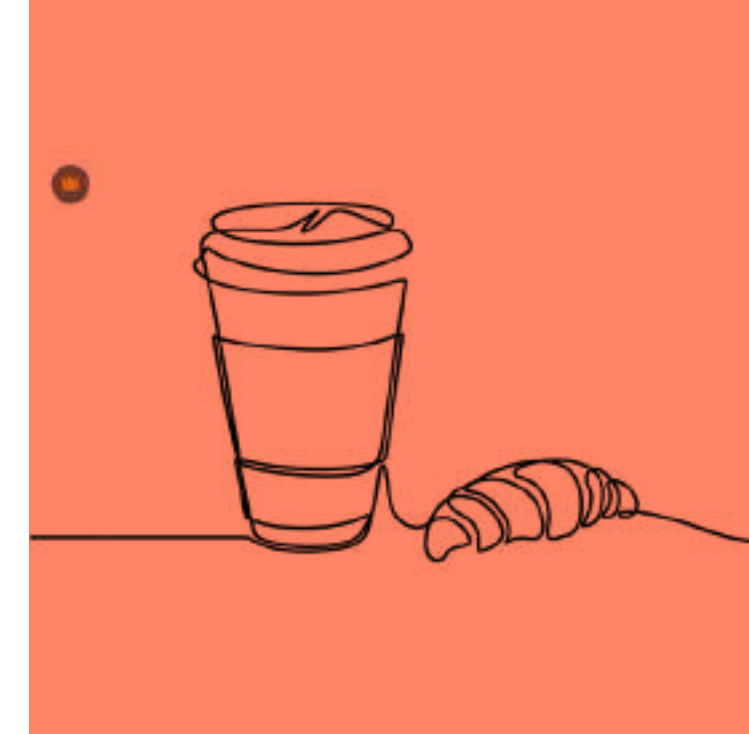


## Life cycle and maintenance

- Ensure a sustainable maintenance regime is in place for cleaning, repair, replacement, and rejuvenation that accounts for higher usage during events.
- Ensure that anti-terrorist/Hostile Vehicle Mitigation architecture to prevent dangerous vehicular movements is seamlessly integrated into the public realm (such as through the use of sculpture).



*Meet*





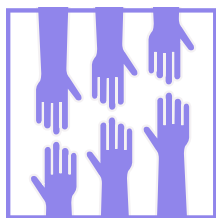




# High streets

High streets in Hounslow, Brentford, Chiswick and Feltham are centres of Hounslow’s public, commercial, and civic life. They are major retail anchors and shopping centres, host hundreds of thousands of weekly visitors, and are sites of new major mixed-use development projects. These streets support a vibrant mix of local shops, cafés, services, and cultural venues, acting as social and economic connectors. They are places of community events and performances and play a strategic role in regeneration and investment. Despite their importance, a range of challenges undermine their vitality and

sustainability. Tired façades, traffic dominance, and a poorly defined public realm weaken their appeal and affect safety, while cluttered pavements, inconsistent street furniture, and minimal greening reduce comfort. Vacant units, underused premises, and maintenance issues impact the character of streets, and antisocial behaviour deters evening use. A pedestrian-first approach is essential to thriving town centres and activating public spaces with markets and performances will draw footfall and support local commerce. effective maintenance programs will enhance their sustainability.



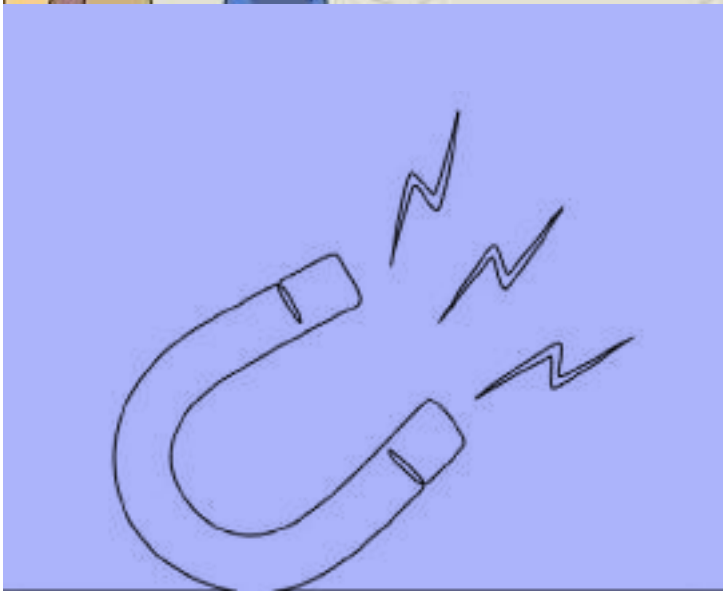
## People, culture and community

- Design should emphasise high streets as arteries of urban life, supporting commerce, culture, and social interaction.
- Include space for informal events, markets, street festivals, and community-led performances.
- Embed cultural celebration through street events and public art. Use murals, sculpture, and local art to reflect community identity.
- Provide community noticeboards and display panels along appropriate frontages.
- Encourage inclusive and diverse programming in collaboration with local traders.



## Inclusive Places

- Ensure clear, level access to all shops and public facilities, including areas for safe and secure cycle parking and mobility hubs.
- Where possible, seek to introduce wider pavements, dropped kerbs, tactile paving, and seating with armrests, using linear benches that do not impede pedestrian flow.
- Prioritise access for mobility-restricted users, children, and carers with buggies, using wide, clear footways, unimpeded by street furniture or other on-street uses.
- Use legible signage, including wayfinding to key destinations, like transport nodes, parks, institutions and improved public toilets.



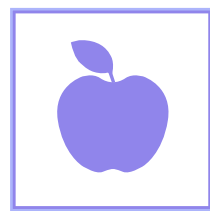


# High streets



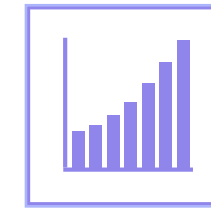
## Environmental sustainability

- Integrate trees, planters, and shaded rest spots.
- Where appropriate, introduce SuDS (Sustainable Drainage Systems) in tree pits and planting strips.
- Balance appropriate functional lighting with greenery to promote night-time use. Light fixtures should be placed at a moderate height and have warm tones to illuminate footways, façades, gathering spaces, while minimising glare and light pollution.



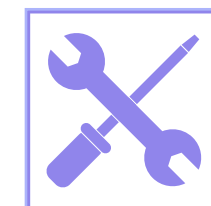
## Public health, safety & security

- Provide hydration points, bins, and seating at visible spots and regular intervals.
- Provide a rubbish disposal strategy for houses above high streets and establishments to ensure rubbish does not spill over to the high street.
- Ensure even and low-glare lighting, and active frontages for safety. Avoid deep recesses near shopfronts and maintain clear sightlines at crossings.



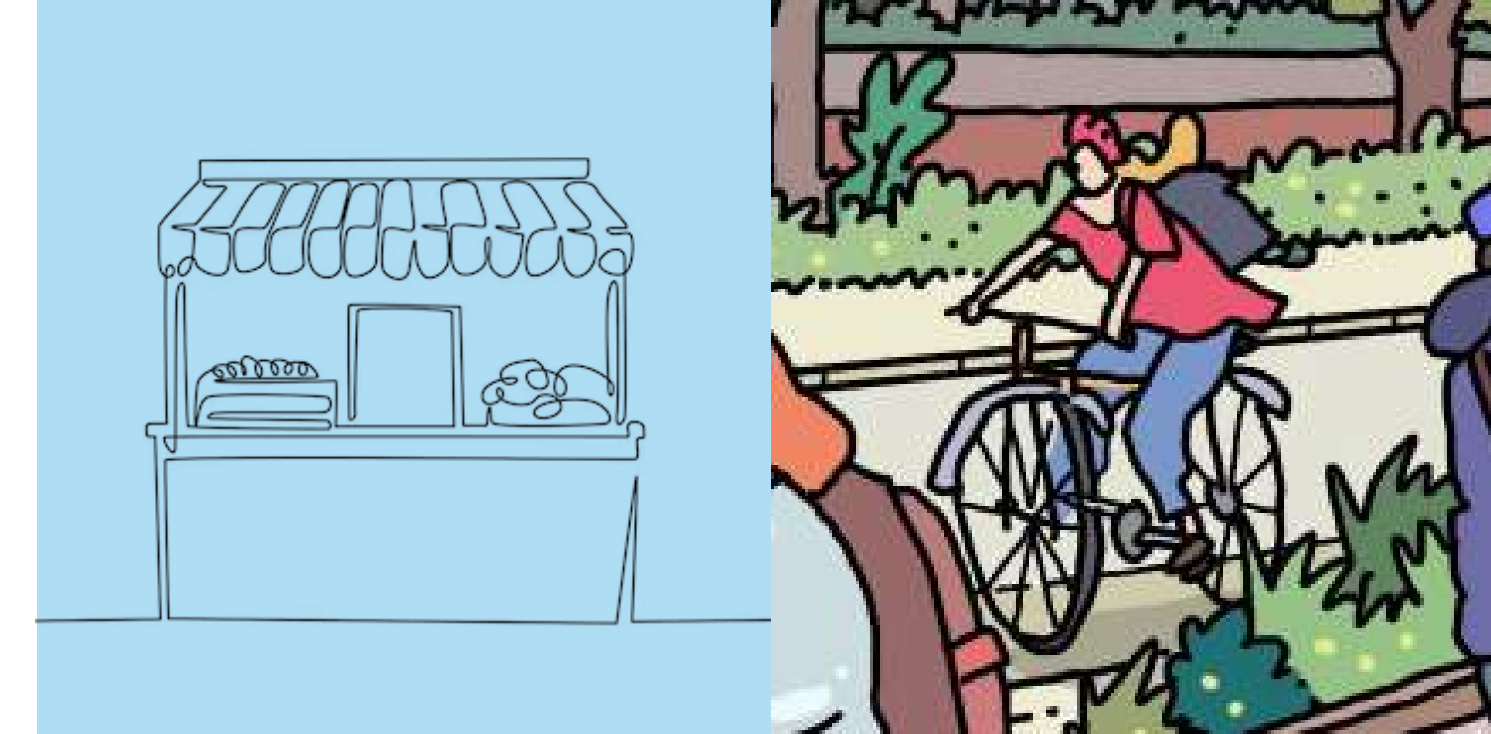
## Enabling economic vitality

- Promote retail diversity with street vending, weekday and weekend markets, cultural food arcades, pop-up stalls, food carts, al-fresco licenses, small shops and spill-out spaces.
- Encourage late-night economies through extended hours, lighting and visible seating areas.
- Stalls should be placed and serviced in ways that do not negatively impact on footways or desire lines.
- Encourage shopfront improvement programs and 'shopfront pride' schemes. Involve local traders in co-design and seasonal programming.



## Life cycle and maintenance

- Provide adequate access for servicing the shops and uses, and maintenance of the street furniture and assets.
- Ensure a sustainable maintenance regime is in place for cleaning, repair, replacement, and rejuvenation in collaboration with local BID or 'Friends of the High Street' groups.
- Use low-maintenance, durable paving and street furniture due to maintenance related issues associated with high footfall.
- Ensure appropriate, native tree species and planting methods. Large-canopy tree species can impact on vehicular traffic and disrupt paving so their use in design should be carefully considered to maintain a smooth travel experience.
- Ensure the design complies with the updated [Hounslow Street Scene Design Guide](#), where there is a change, adequate reasoning should be provided in agreement with Transport and PFI partners – Hounslow Highways.
- Ensure that Hostile Vehicle Mitigation architecture is seamlessly integrated into the public realm (such as through the use of sculpture).



*Lead*



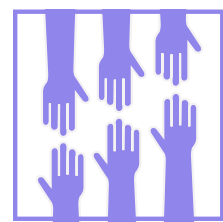






# Market places

The markets in Hounslow, from food stalls at The Centre in Feltham to Chiswick High Road Flower Market are key anchors of public life, economic exchange, and local identity across the borough. They provide direct retail routes for producers and small traders, animate town centres, foster social interaction and cultural diversity, and generate footfall and spending in surrounding shops. Market places also cater to diverse demands, supporting a wide range of eating, shopping, and socialising. Their offer includes fresh produce, household items and clothes, artisan goods and crafts, street food, and seasonal and cultural events.

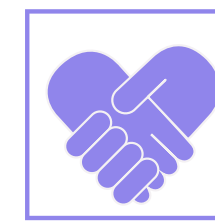


## People, cultures & communities

- Design should enable marketplaces as social and cultural anchors, through:
- Promoting community-led market days, and civic events (e.g., school fairs).
- Ensure character and heritage is reflected in the design of the market place, such as historic paving materials, plaques, and QR-code trails to narrate the place's story.
- Commissioning local artists for market branding, murals, and sculptures.

However, there are many challenges to their sustained vibrancy and functionality. They are prevented from achieving their full potential by ageing infrastructure, compromised parking access, business conflicts, litter, a lack of maintenance, fragmented responsibility, and conflict between servicing and pedestrian needs.

High-quality public realm design shaped by strong stakeholder coordination is key to their success.



## Inclusive places

- Promote toilet access schemes for the visiting public and the market-stall workers.
- Ensure level, step-free access and accessible market stalls for all users through the integration of lower-height tables and ensuring that the layout of the market is wide enough to accommodate wheelchair, mobility scooter and pushchair users.
- Incorporate seating that is inclusive for wheelchair users, the elderly, and those requiring mobility supports, to facilitate outdoor dining associated with the market.
- Incorporate dropped kerbs at the key intersections that link with surrounding movement networks.
- Declutter the space, removing unnecessary signs, bollards and unused street furniture and relocate any furniture that blocks pedestrian movement.
- Consider the placement of permanent or semi-permanent market stalls so they do not impede pedestrian movement or desire lines.



*Buzz*

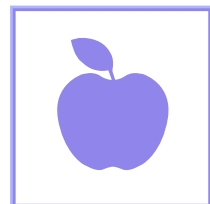


# Market places



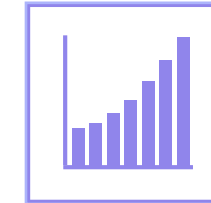
## Environmental sustainability

- Where market stalls are permanent installations, consider the inclusion of solar panels on the canopies to generate electricity for stall users and lighting. Ensure any permanent stalls are resistant to high winds and rain to reduce replacement frequency.
- Permanent or semi-permanent market stalls may include retractable structures or canopies. These features can be opened or closed based on weather conditions. It is important that their maintenance is factored in and that they do not obscure views of surrounding buildings.



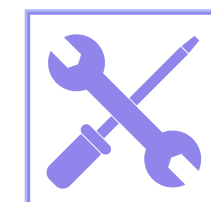
## Public health, safety & security

- Consider other uses outside of market hours, such as using the space for wellbeing classes; the temporary shading provided by semi-permeable retractable canopies may facilitate this.
- Have a clear distinction between surrounding vehicular networks and the pedestrianised market space.
- Refuse needs are likely to be higher on market days and therefore the space may need larger capacity waste storage than other areas; this should be factored into the design to avoid the need for unsightly temporary waste measures.
- Integrate safe and prominent cycle parking for visitors and traders to encourage the use of cargo bikes for the transport of their goods and ensure any new market spaces are connected to established public transport networks and cycle routes.



## Enabling economic vitality

- Integrate power points, water taps, and anchor fixings for trader infrastructure. Allow spill-out dining from adjacent cafés and bakeries.
- Maintain a managed stall layout to avoid visual clutter, encourage visibility of stall frontages and permeability through the space.
- Incorporate secure storage space for equipment to be stored overnight.
- Have a clear vehicular movement plan and servicing strategy so that deliveries, loading and unloading and other vehicular movements required to service stalls are clear to all users and avoid obstructing pedestrians and traffic.

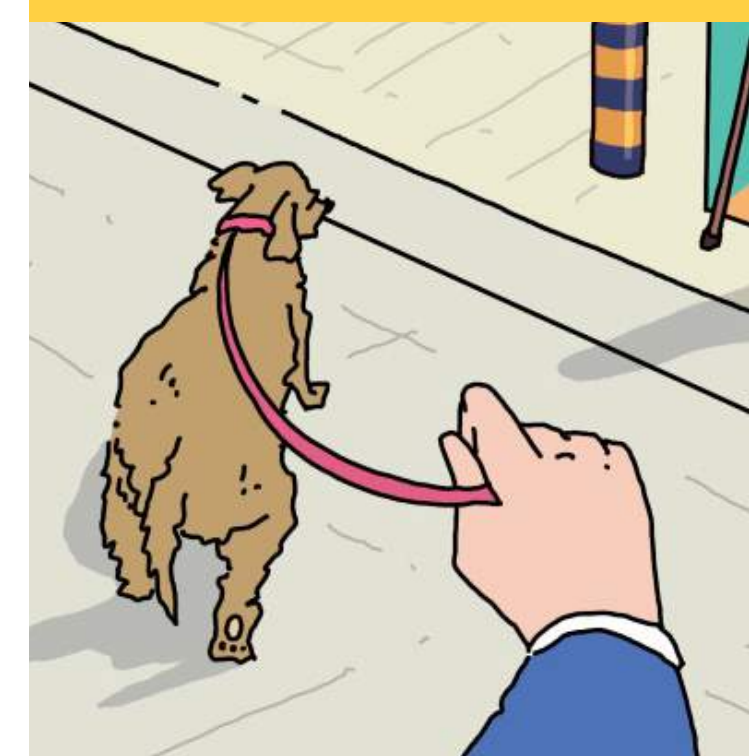


## Life cycle and maintenance

- Maximise passive surveillance via active shopfronts and glazed building edges.
- Use lighting that supports both day and night markets. Avoid blind spots behind stalls or fixed infrastructure.
- Enable a 'Friends of Market' group to manage planting and co-design events.
- Consult existing users and traders before making changes and test proposals through pop-up events.
- Incorporate sufficient drainage to avoid puddling of rainwater, which would be particularly detrimental to market days.



*Browse*









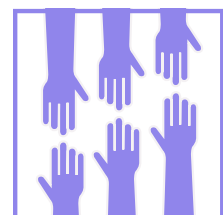
# Shop parades and neighbourhood centres

Local shopping parades facilitate everyday life in neighbourhoods: they allow residents to access daily goods and services without having to travel far, support independent small businesses, and help distribute commercial activity equitably across urban areas. These parades strengthen social interaction and contribute to a sense of identity, belonging and ‘localness.’ They also relieve pressure on town centres by absorbing some of the commercial demand. Their location makes them more accessible by active travel, and these forms of travel should be encouraged by the public realm design.

Yet these spaces face many challenges. They are often degraded by litter and

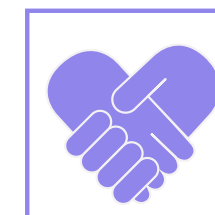
by servicing or refuse activity that overloads pavements, reducing cleanliness and obstructing movement. Many parades lack dedicated space for children or young people and are dominated by vehicular traffic and car parking. Public realm elements can be cluttered and not well maintained. On narrow streets especially, negotiation is needed between servicing and delivery demands, and pedestrian amenity to avoid conflicts.

To revitalise them, public realm improvements are essential. The goal should be to transform these parades into more welcoming, greener, and engaging places where people can sit, meet, and connect, and not simply pass through.



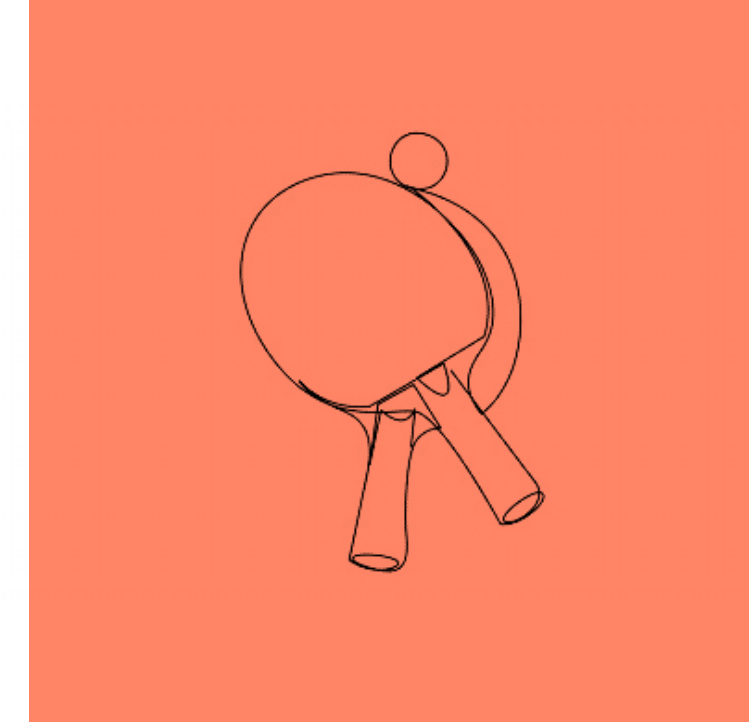
## People, cultures & communities

- Where feasible, extend pavements at shop parades, to encourage social uses such as outdoor café seating, markets, pop-up stalls, or community events and celebrations along with shopping uses. Promote play and game facilities for all ages on the shop parade plaza. Where widening is not possible, consider the inclusion of parklets to create more flexible space.
- Install community noticeboards and interactive displays to reflect local identity. Incorporate storytelling, public art, poetry, and co-designed features.
- Support community-led interventions such as murals, and evening and weekend events to facilitate social interaction.



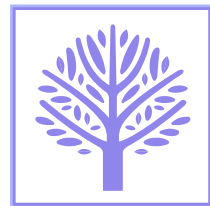
## Inclusive Places

- Ensure clutter-free, inclusive, and well-marked pedestrian routes. Prioritise route continuity across driveways and side roads.
- Provide shaded rest points and meeting areas for all age groups and abilities that are well-lit at night to support their use in the evening.
- Ensure design details emphasise and enhance the character of the neighbourhood, through the use of characterful materials and landscape design.
- Ensure an appropriate refuse strategy for shops and houses above shops, so that refuse and servicing does not impede the use of the street. This could include rear service access, clearly marked shared service bays, or dedicated refuse storage areas.
- Provide signage and wayfinding that integrates the neighbourhood with the main destinations nearby.



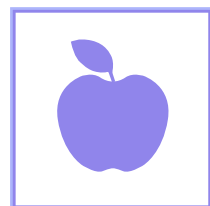


# Shop parades and neighbourhood centres



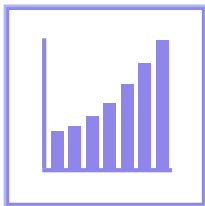
## Environmental sustainability

- Introduce SuDS features like stormwater planters and permeable paving where feasible to reduce flooding from surface water run-off.



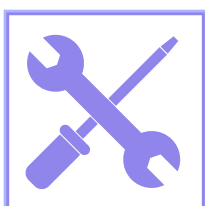
## Public health, safety and security

- Consider the installation of drinking fountains, litter bins, EV charging, and access to power to facilitate events.
- Create a buffer from high traffic corridors, if nearby, using a robust, native planting strategy to filter noise and air pollution.
- Include sufficient safe cycle parking in convenient and prominent locations to enable local people to cycle to local facilities and discourage car use.
- Improve signage and connectivity between neighbourhood centres and surrounding areas to make them more accessible.



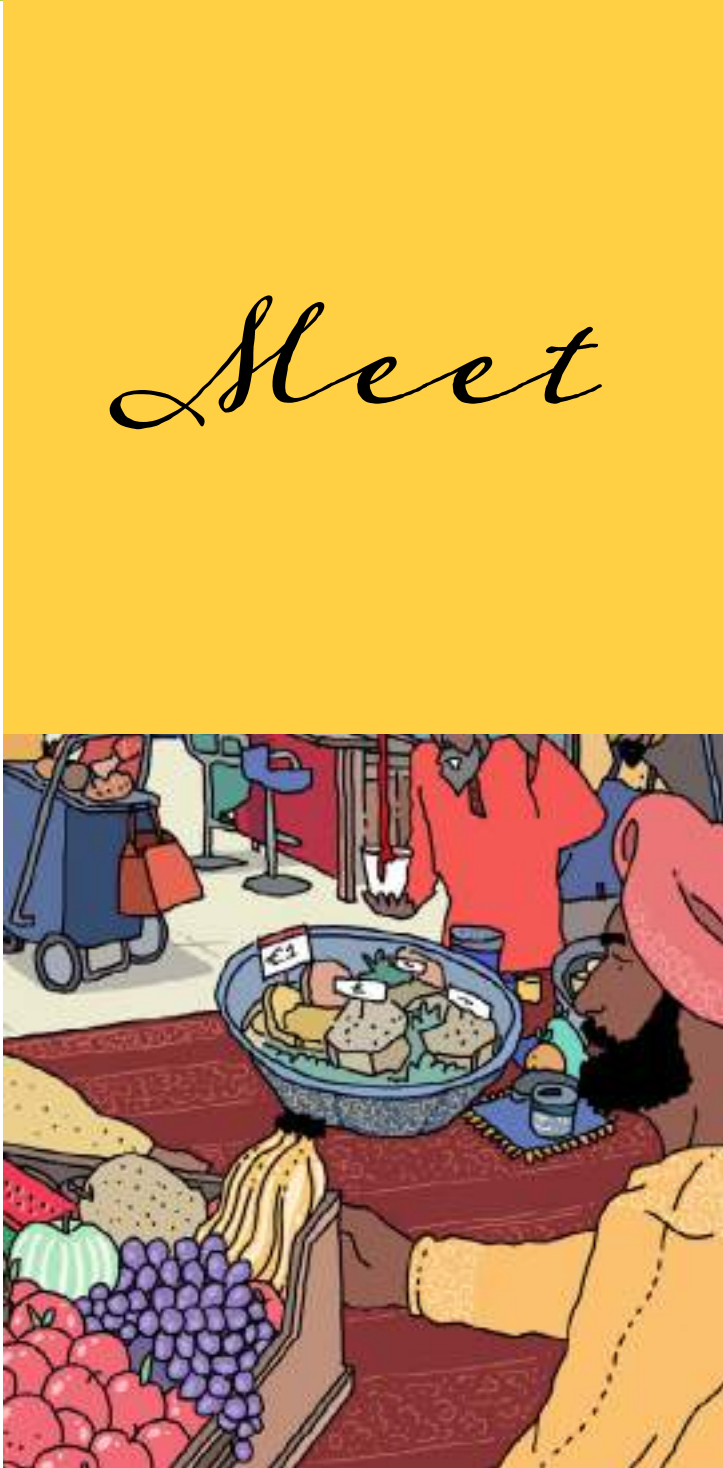
## Enabling economic vitality

- Ensure that local centres have a diverse offer, including co-working space, flexible community space, childcare facilities, exercise spaces, health infrastructure and food stores.
- Provide grants or co-funding options for façade improvement in parallel with public realm works.
- Encourage public realm designs that support casual socialising, such as al-fresco café space, public seating and greenery.
- Enhance the visual appeal and functionality of shop parades to attract visitors and support local businesses.



## Life cycle and maintenance

- Promote Neighbourhood Pride Programs to encourage local stewardship through involvement of shopkeepers, community and business associations.













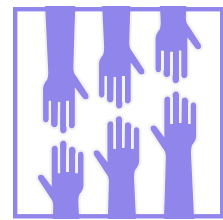
# Major crossings and underpasses

Major crossings, such as those along the Great West Road, are pivotal linkages for everyday life, used by the whole community. But as the major roads function today, they behave more like a hostile traffic barrier than connectors: their scale, speed, noise, and pollution rupture the spatial life of communities. They are unsafe to cross and unattractive to move along.

The [Hounslow Transport Strategy](#) flags major roads as causes of physical or psychological severance. Disrupting social cohesion and connectivity. Crossings are often inconveniently located or poorly designed and lack clear wayfinding, which discourages walking and cycling. Underpasses suffer from neglect: they

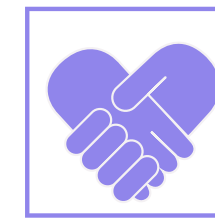
tend to feel unsafe, are visually uninviting, and are poorly integrated into surrounding land uses. These deficiencies compound issues of accessibility, especially for children, older people and those with mobility needs, and contribute to negative perceptions of the public realm along these routes.

The Hounslow Transport Strategy seeks to reduce severance along major roads by introducing safer, more comfortable crossings, traffic-calming measures, and enhancing pedestrian and cycle connectivity across barriers. Major road crossings should be safe, clean and legible serving both commuters and locals, reinforcing connectivity rather than severing it.



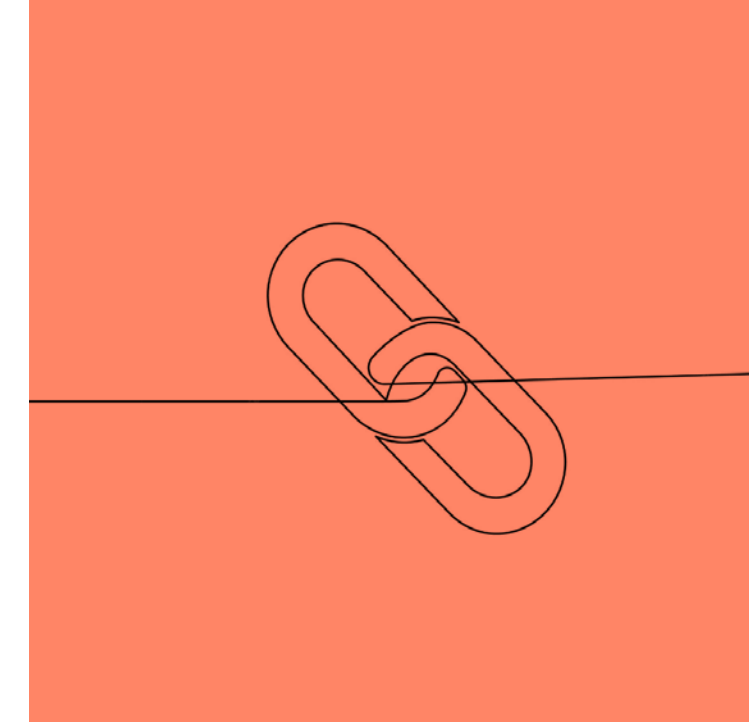
## People, cultures & communities

- Busy pedestrian crossings and underpasses that are transitions between different public, communal or civic functions should be designed to create links between neighbourhoods. They should be accentuated and celebrated as more than just traffic junctions on movement corridors. Use murals, painted columns, multilingual signage, public poetry, heritage motifs, lighting and digital projections (approved within road safety standards) to reflect local identity and to brighten concrete-heavy environments. Conversations with National Highways, Transport for London or Hounslow Highways at an early stage are important to understand the areas which can be painted and where greening can be located.
- Support community-led art initiatives and encourage partnerships with local artists, schools, local businesses and residents' groups. Collaborate with communities when planning new interventions to understand any key issues and include vulnerable users in conversations.
- Ensure such crossings and underpasses conveniently link with surrounding movement networks to key destinations.



## Inclusive places

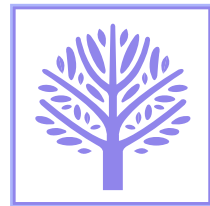
- Design for all ages and abilities, including mobility-impaired users. Ensure step-free crossings with tactile paving and smart signals. Provide wide refuge islands for comfort and safety. Include accessible seating and rest points near forecourts or bus stops.
- It is particularly important that underpasses and crossings are well-lit, with lighting that feels appropriately bright to ensure safety, but with a managed transition from adjacent areas. Lighting solutions should eliminate dark spaces and could be artistic and reinforce local identity. Integrate natural lighting within underpasses through the use of skylights or light wells where possible.



*Link*

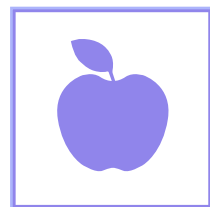


# Major crossings and underpasses



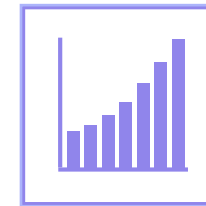
## Environmental sustainability

- Introduce greenery at ground level where possible. Species that thrive in shaded areas may be appropriate.
- Where feasible and safe, create thick green buffers with plant species that can survive in harsh environments beside carriageways/edges of private development to mitigate air and noise pollution from traffic and present a pleasant public realm.
- Promote use of SuDS and greening where appropriate along the traffic corridor to reduce flooding from surface water runoff.



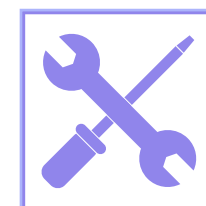
## Public health, safety & security

- Consider widened footways for pedestrian comfort. Ensure surfaces are slip-resistant, especially on ramps used to access underpasses, and use double-sided handrails. Use clear sightlines to improve safety, especially for vulnerable people such as children and wheelchair users.
- To improve safety, avoid creating isolated areas with poor natural surveillance. Where these are unavoidable, consider the use of clearly visible CCTV.
- Encourage active travel through legible crossings and cycle-friendly design.
- Incorporate passive recreation features, such as playful floor markings and sensory art. Avoid features that encourage lingering in polluted areas.
- Use materials that reduce noise reverberation to ensure a more pleasant acoustic experience and put in place a clear maintenance strategy for these.



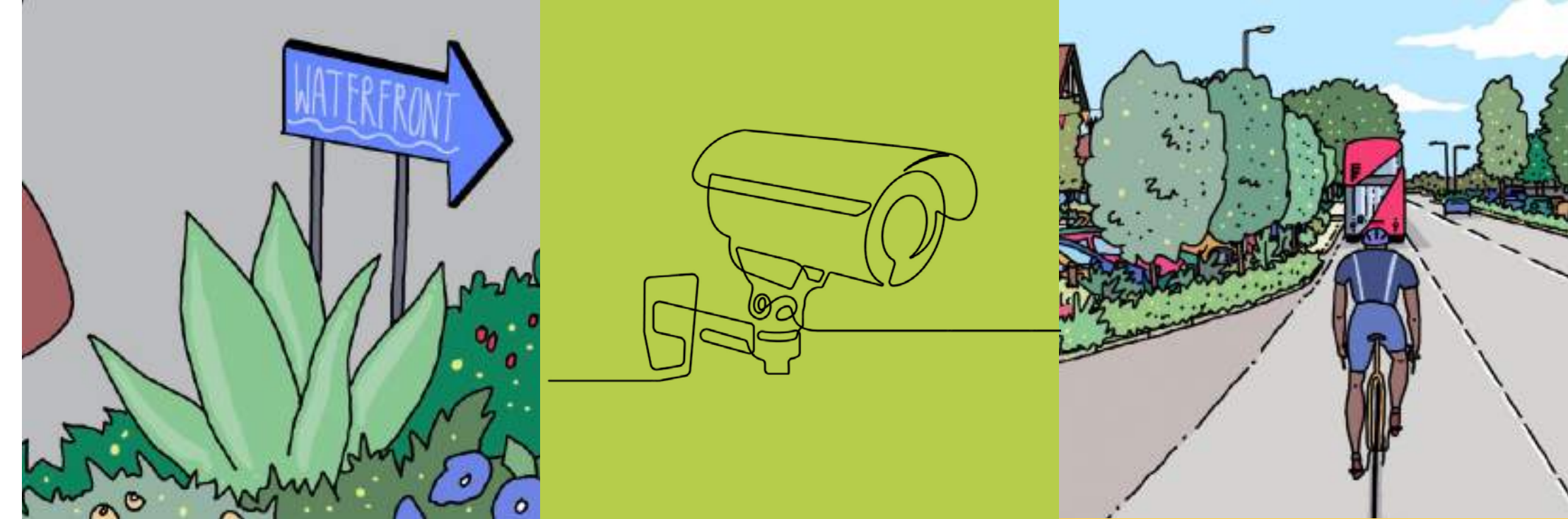
## Enabling economic vitality

- Include wayfinding to nearby destinations, such as local parks, amenities and town centres through the use of creative signage options.



## Life cycle and maintenance

- Lighting should be easy to maintain and vandal-resistant to ensure longevity and reduce disruption, maintaining safety for users.



Utilise









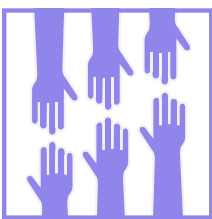




# Waterfronts

Hounslow’s waterfronts are residential, social, environmental, community, and economic anchors, integrating nature into urban life. Comprising of river edges, canal links, and historic water channels, they are used for walking, cycling, boating, leisure and fitness. They host cafés, restaurants, riverside seating, boating clubs, boat dwellers, and green spaces, drawing people to pause, live, socialise, exercise, and enjoy landscapes. Canals are traditionally multi-functional spaces, with transport, residential, industrial, and leisure uses, which should be considered and conserved in public realm projects. These uses can make canal sides especially susceptible to negative impacts from development, and any proposals should be careful not to harm the integrity of the waterway. Early engagement with the Canals and Rivers Trust is recommended.

Ecologically, these are vital habitat and biodiversity networks, they contribute to flood resilience and connect natural systems across the borough. Many new high-density housing projects and proposals are positioned along these edges, leveraging views, access, and amenities, and the use of these spaces will increase significantly. Therefore, they present a significant opportunity to develop an



## People, cultures & communities

- Ensure public access along water edges and create direct routes to water edges, wherever feasible, from parallel routes.
- Disruption to waterside paths through private enclosures should be avoided to ensure continuous public access with connections to other walkways and paths, and open spaces. Interventions and new development along the water’s edge should ensure connectivity, a generous public realm and an active edge.
- Design walkways, seating zones, café terraces, performance spaces, and landscapes along the water’s edge. Promote public art that integrates local social and water-related histories and reflects diverse community identities linked to the river, canal and water. Include interpretation of historical trade, migration, and natural change along the river.
- Support wayfinding that promotes walking loops with heritage trails and civic stories.

interlinked, continuous and rich corridor that can transform the public space experience in Hounslow.

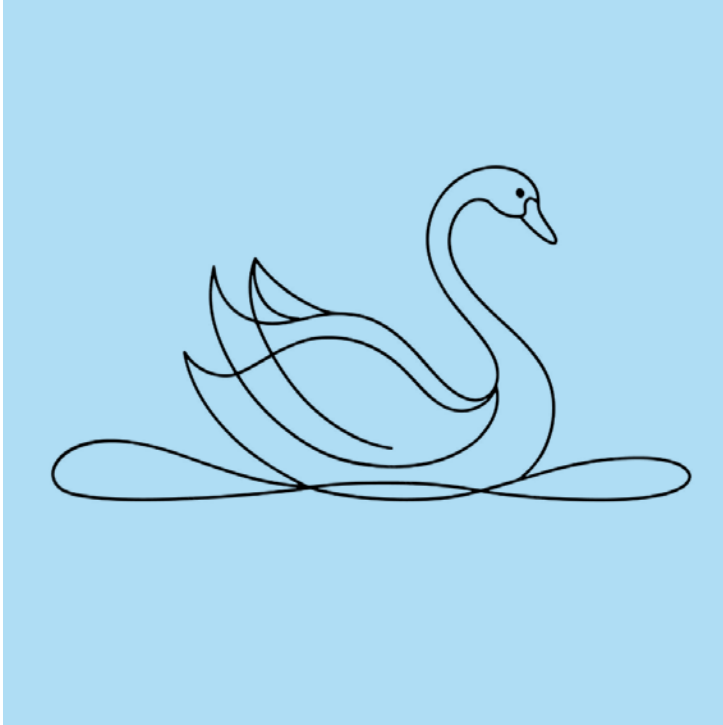
However, there are many challenges, including broken, non-continuous river walks that interrupt pedestrian and cycle connectivity along the river and other waterways. Some areas along the water’s edge are poorly lit, perceived as neglected and unsafe, with antisocial behaviour that discourages wider community use. Overshadowing by buildings and poor maintenance of adjoining spaces create uninviting environments. Environmental quality is also often poor: tree planting and greening are inconsistent, and there is inadequate upkeep of planting. The lack of amenities such as seating, toilets, and clear wayfinding further diminishes its usability, while fragmented maintenance and fly-tipping contribute to perceptions of decline.

To transform them into vibrant, safe, and inclusive public spaces, it is essential to reinstate continuous, well-connected river walks and cycle routes that link neighbourhoods, town centres, and existing amenities in line with the [PLA’s Thames Vision 2050 plan](#).



## Inclusive places

- Provide continuous, step-free paths with tactile paving for walking, wheeling, and cycling along the waterfront.
- Promote diverse kinds of spaces such as play spaces for children, young adults and families, calm and reflective spaces, and sensory trails. Play spaces should be assessed and designed to minimise the risk of young people being in close proximity to the edge of waterways.
- Integrate amenities along the water’s edge, such as toilets, baby-feeding facilities, cafés, and integrate events space that will draw all users to visit the waterside public spaces.



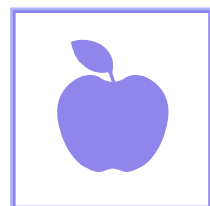


# Waterfronts



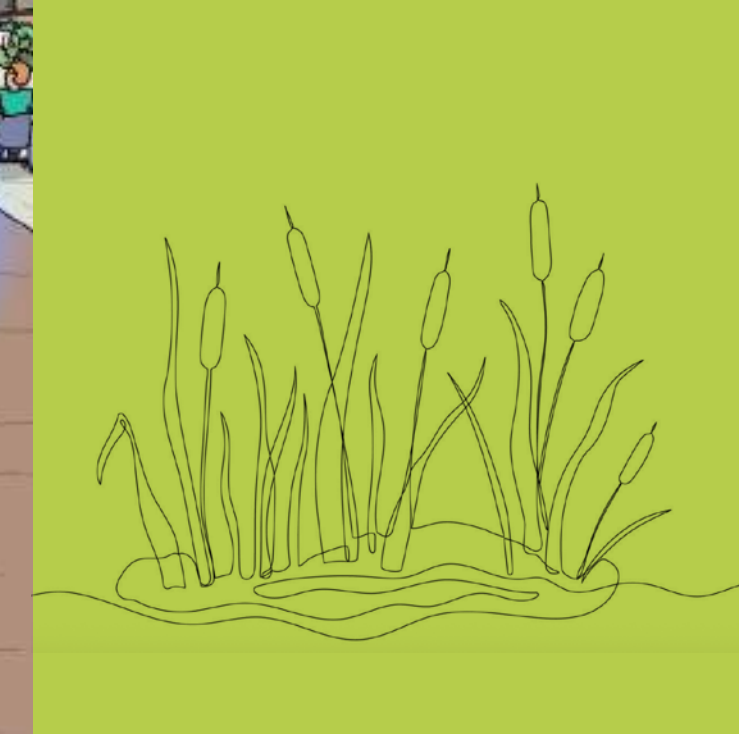
## Environmental sustainability

- Where appropriate, use nature-based solutions to stabilise banks and avoid disruptions to pathways, such as coir rolls, live staking, tree revetments, reed beds and riparian planting. Create tiered terraces for biodiversity and safe public interaction with water. Link planting strategies with borough-wide biodiversity action plans and SuDS strategies. Ensure that species are native and non-invasive. Refer to the [Estuary Edges Guidance](#), which outlines some methods and principles that have been used to reverse the impacts of encroachment and/or soften banks in urban estuaries through clever reconstruction or refurbishment techniques which add value to the development potential of the site.
- Include amphibian shelters, aquatic habitats, and pollinator corridors. Use planting palettes that include flood-tolerant, native species and seasonal variation.
- Integrate lighting that is bat sensitive, has no negative impacts on river ecology, is pedestrian scaled and does not impact on the amenity of boat dwellers.
- Ensure that the public realm is protected from potential flooding and other impacts due to climate change.
- Design appropriate setbacks for maintenance, biodiversity Interventions and ecological connectivity.
- Use flood-tolerant surfaces and robust planting suited to annual flooding.

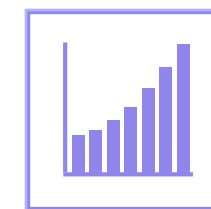


## Public health, safety & security

- Integrate water fountains, seating, lighting, and shade at key rest nodes and intersections to make the space attractive and comfortable.
- Design for passive uses and wellbeing to allow activities, such as reading, sketching, socialising, and quiet reflection.

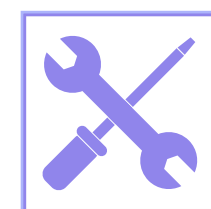


- Support active travel, create space for exercise and fitness, and leisure through generous wide pathways, age-friendly outdoor gyms, wayfinding and signage to major destinations and transport nodes.
- Integrate appropriate riparian life-saving equipment (such as life buoys) as part of any waterside development in line with the [PLA's A Safer Riverside guidance](#). Consideration should also be given to the promotion of appropriate suicide prevention measures (such as CCTV or signage) in line with the [PLA's Drowning Prevention Strategy](#), which sets out practical steps to be taken to improve waterside safety.



## Economic vitality

- Design flexible platform decks with power access for events and vendors.
- Design to enable flexible uses, such as riverside markets, food trucks, community events and performances. Enable food and beverage licenses along the water edge.
- Use high-quality materials and signage to enhance identity and attract visitors.

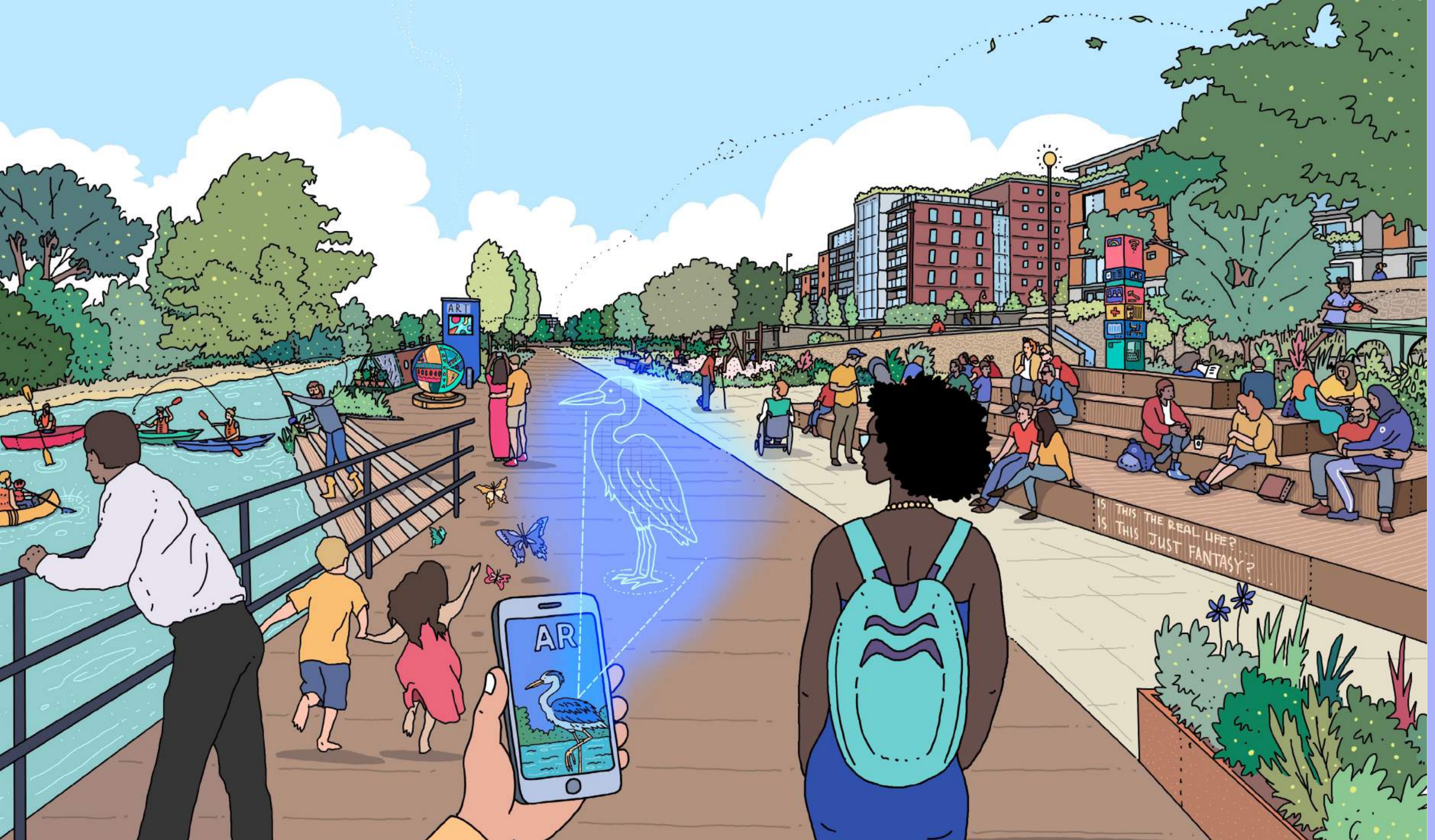


## Life cycle and maintenance

- Build for robust management: integrate inspection routes, maintenance access, and power/data infrastructure.
- Plan for long-term stewardship: define roles for the Council, community, and private partners.









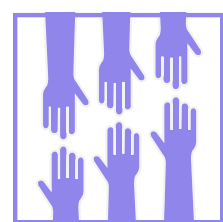
# Transit hubs: train, tube and bus stations

Tens of thousands of people use transit hubs like the Underground, national rail, and Overground train stations in Hounslow every day. However, as the [Hounslow Transport Strategy](#) identifies, the public realm around transit hubs and transport nodes faces a number of interconnected challenges. Many station precincts and interchange areas are characterised by weak connectivity, outdated street surfaces, poor accessibility, and unclear wayfinding, which reduces their legibility and functionality. Amenities such as lighting, seating, shelter, and accessible infrastructure are often lacking, worsening the perceptions of safety and accessibility. Splintered governance and coordination, and inconsistent responsiveness lead to variable standards and piecemeal interventions.

While there may be significant operational and heritage constraints at transport hubs, there is an opportunity to make these spaces more responsive to the aspirations of the Borough’s community. Hounslow’s Transport Strategy proposes

a shift toward the Healthy Streets principle in favour of walking, wheeling, cycling, and public transport. It proposes upgrading station precincts and interchange areas through improving accessibility, circulation, surfaces, lighting, and wayfinding to create a more legible, inclusive, and welcoming public realm.

Improvements to hubs and public realm are to be integrated into new development around stations so that, as new housing, employment, and higher density development is delivered, the supporting transport and public realm infrastructure is delivered in tandem. Station entrances are often a gateway to a place, reinforcing and fostering local culture and community identity and therefore good public realm design is important to ensure positive lasting impressions of a place for visitors and everyday users. When planning for transport hubs, regard should be had for Transport for London’s design standards, maintenance strategies, and safety plans.



## People, cultures & communities

- Integrate murals, public poetry, heritage motifs, and digital projections to reflect local character and involve the community in their design and creation. Showcase and maintain original features, especially at Hounslow’s Listed Underground and rail stations including Chiswick Rail Station and Boston Manor and Osterley Underground stations.
- Ensure forecourt space and amenity is adequate for the number of people using the station.



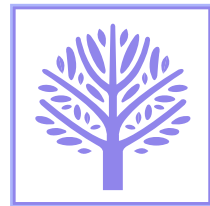
## Inclusive places

- Strive for step-free access from the entrance to the platform. Design for mobility scooters, wheelchairs, and pushchairs, ensuring ample space in the station forecourt to enter and exit without interruption.
- Enable provision of accessible seating, shelter, hydration points and public toilets.
- Use BSL, tactile, multi-lingual, colour-coded signage and audible announcements for inclusive wayfinding.
- Consider the provision of free Wi-Fi to enable journey planning.



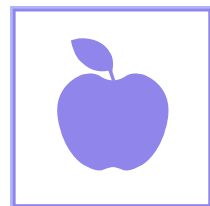


# Transit hubs: train, tube and bus stations



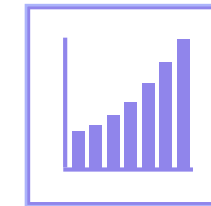
## Environmental sustainability

- Integrate SuDS, rain gardens and permeable paving at station entrances to reduce flooding.
- Use green buffers between traffic and pedestrian areas, utilising pollinator-friendly and climate-resilient and/or native planting. Where space is limited, consider vertical planting.



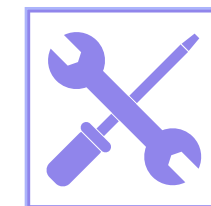
## Public health, safety & security

- Include ample secure bike parking areas and seamless pedestrian movement to promote active travel.
- Ensure station entrances are well-lit to support evening and nighttime safety.
- Prioritise clear sightlines, avoiding blind spots, for passive surveillance for safety. Design interventions could include the use of glazed elements.
- Where hostile vehicle mitigation is needed, ensure that this does not impede pedestrian and wheelchair movement and access. Consider all users in their design, ensuring that any bollards are not trip hazards. Consider the use of passive measures such as trees and benches.



## Enabling economic vitality

- Where possible, design wide pavements at entrances for small markets, food trucks, and pop-up vendors.
- Include electrical and anchor points for temporary infrastructure.
- Support commuter-focused retail and encourage local independent retailers (e.g., breakfast and coffee kiosks).
- Improve wayfinding outside stations to local town and neighbourhood centres, signposting to clean air and green routes for both pedestrians and cyclists.



## Life cycle and maintenance

- Integrate the placement of digital screens that can be seen from entrance forecourts to indicate train times, destinations and travel disruptions.
- Promote community stewardship through local partnerships and 'Friends of' groups.



*Enhance*









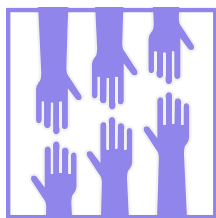
# Park entrances

Hundreds of thousands of people visit the more than 160 parks and open spaces in Hounslow each week. Parks play a central role in the urban life of many groups of people, yet the entry to these parks often face issues of legibility, accessibility, safety, connectivity and user comfort, preventing seamless links between parks and everyday neighbourhood life.

They are often poorly integrated into surrounding streets and neighbourhoods, resulting in a lack of visibility, poor wayfinding and weak permeability; they can also feel hidden, unattractive, or disconnected from main routes, which discourages use. Many gateways double as carpark approaches and suffer from

surface water puddling and parking-pedestrian conflicts. Entrances often suffer from deteriorated surfaces, lack of lighting, or inadequate thresholds, making access difficult for people with reduced mobility, carers with pushchairs. Visibility for night-time users is also an issue. Some entrances are overwhelmed by adjacent traffic or vehicular driveways, creating conflict between vehicles and pedestrians at entry points. Others lack amenity features and fail to present a welcoming entry experience, so crossing into the park feels abrupt or unsafe.

Park entrances act as thresholds between urban life and nature and therefore their design should foster identity and encourage their use.



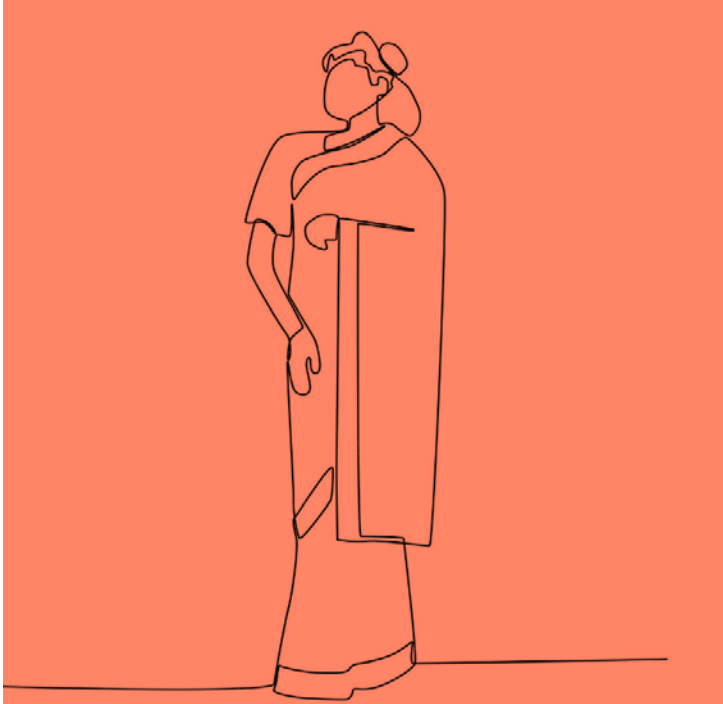
## People, cultures & communities

- Integrate community noticeboards to display maps, showcase local events and community initiatives.
- Support public art and murals to reflect local identity. Enable community gathering spaces at entrances (e.g. small plazas, shaded rest areas).
- Encourage Friends of the Park groups to co-design and steward entrances.



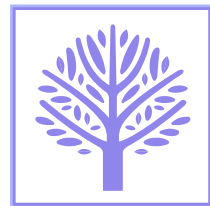
## Inclusive places

- Provide seating and places to rest for elderly and mobility-impaired users. Consider the inclusion of accessible public toilets in high-traffic areas.
- Design for pushchairs, wheelchairs, and mobility scooters, ensuring wide and step-free entrances. Consider the integration of pushchair parking.
- Use multilingual signage and inclusive wayfinding, signposting to key destinations within the park and other local amenities.
- Prioritise installing new entrances or upgrading entrances near under-served communities or areas of deprivation.



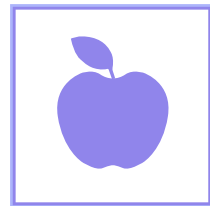


# Park entrances



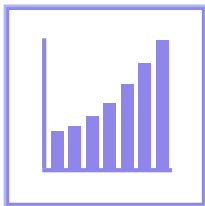
## Environmental sustainability

- Frame entrances with climate-resilient and/or native tree planting, flower beds, and rain gardens, without harming visibility.
- Consider the use of more durable paving, combined with SuDS, to reduce flooding and the pooling of water at entrance points.



## Public health, safety and security

- Provide drinking fountains, safe, overlooked cycle parking, dog waste bins, and litter bins in proximity to entrances.
- Include shaded rest areas for all-weather usability and social interaction.
- Integrate low-level lighting to improve evening visibility.
- Integrate play, fitness, or cultural features at the threshold to extend the welcome zone.



## Enabling economic vitality

- Use branded signage, totems, and gateway features to enhance visibility and identity.
- Improve connectivity to nearby transport routes, schools, and activity hubs. The shortest and most pleasant connections can often be through open spaces, and therefore it is important that key destinations are well signposted, and entrances are conveniently placed for these destinations.
- Entrances can act as catalysts for wider park improvements, increasing footfall and local value.



## Life cycle and maintenance

- Use durable, low-maintenance and park-appropriate materials (e.g. brick, resin-bound gravel, coated timber).
- Include modular planting beds, automatic irrigation, and anti-graffiti surfaces.

Nature



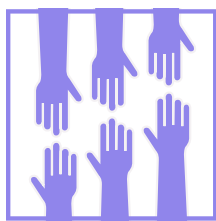






# Civic buildings

Hounslow’s civic buildings, including public libraries, leisure centres, council-run public halls, museums, art centres, and a growing network of Community Hubs, are key destinations for social, cultural, civic and community activities in the borough. These activity generators attract tens of thousands of visitors across identity, ability, age and gender groups every week.



## People, cultures & communities

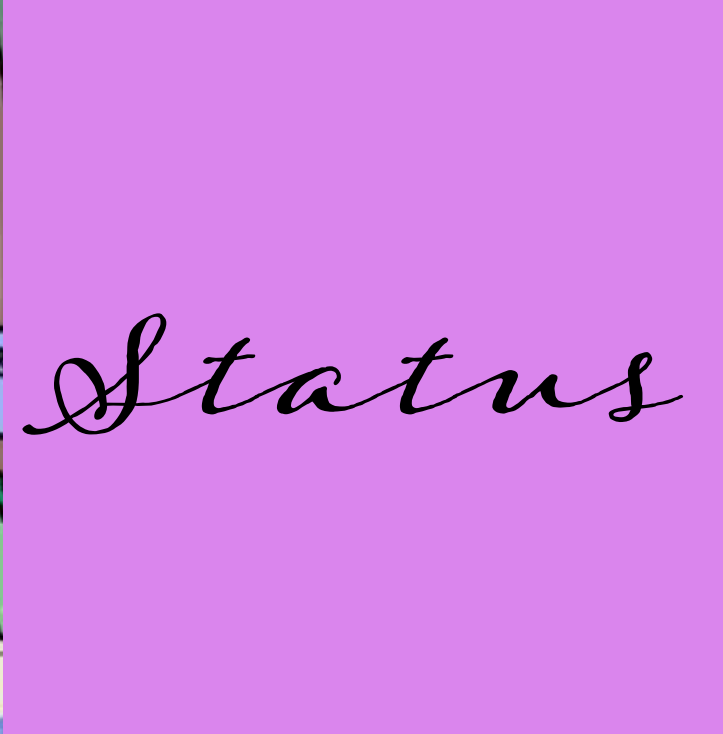
- All civic spaces should have seamless landscaped transitions to the public access, enabling public access between connected streets. Design generous thresholds and distinctive materials/sculptures in forecourts that signal civic importance. Forecourts should not be parking dominated.
- Use active frontages with seating, Wi-Fi zones, and spill-out areas for informal gatherings.
- Incorporate murals, mosaics, and public art that reflects and celebrates local history, culture and diversity.
- Design flexible event spaces with adequate infrastructure that can host performances, exhibitions, and seasonal markets. Encourage co-management and programming with local groups and nearby civic organisations.
- Encourage community involvement in design and maintenance (e.g., ‘Friends of’ groups).
- Include community rooms, public noticeboards, and pop-up learning spaces.
- Public realm event programming should bring together people across age groups, community, ability, race and ethnicity, gender and sexuality, and other identity categories.
- Incorporate celebratory public lighting on building façades, using energy-efficient lighting.
- The architecture and urban landscape should be distinguished from the surroundings to establish its presence in the townscape.
- Provide clear signage and public communication to help wayfinding to local landmarks, markets, institution buildings, and internal layout/facilities.

The public realm surrounding these buildings is often underwhelming, therefore, activating these spaces as everyday gathering places through good public realm is an opportunity to make them people-friendly destinations and a source of pride for the borough.



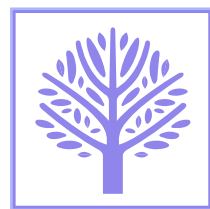
## Inclusive places

- Ensure step-free access, level thresholds, and accessible well-signposted amenities, including public toilets, water fountains and seating.
- Provide clear wayfinding and tactile paving for visually impaired users.
- Design for intergenerational use: seating, informal play for children and gathering spots for teens.
- Include sensory planting and shaded seating to support neurodiverse and elderly users.
- Ensure public toilets and water fountains are accessible, inclusive and well signposted.



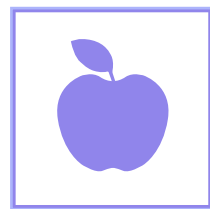


# Civic buildings



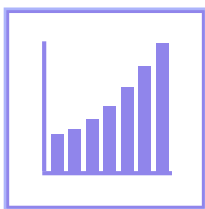
## Environmental sustainability

- Integrate pocket parks, hardy and durable flowering plants/trees with seasonal interest, rain gardens, and climate-resilient and/or native planting.
- Use natural materials (brick, stone, timber) that are durable and low carbon.
- Provide shelters, lighting, and green infrastructure that support year-round use.



## Public health, safety & security

- Consider the inclusion of outdoor classrooms, gyms, walking loops, and informal play areas to enhance diversity of use of the space and signal towards its civic function.
- Encourage integration of free Wi-Fi, supporting digital access.
- Design spaces that encourage dwelling, reflection, and social interaction.
- Have spacious entrances to allow for pushchair parking.
- Integrate safe cycle parking and tool stations and ensure that the space is well integrated to nearby active and sustainable travel networks.
- Promote natural surveillance through active frontages and well-placed windows.



## Enabling economic vitality

- Activate spaces with cafés, markets, mobile services, and spill-out zones.
- Encourage business sponsorship or co-management of civic spaces.
- Use public art and lighting to enhance the evening economy and cultural tourism.



## Life cycle and maintenance

- Include local community groups in the maintenance strategy.





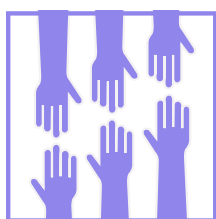




# Educational establishment entrances

Hounslow has close to a hundred schools and educational establishments which tens of thousands of people use visit every day.

There are persistent public-realm problems at school entrances that make them unfriendly, including car-dominated drop-off and pick-up areas that cause congestion and road safety issues, alongside poor air quality around the gates, narrow or uneven footways, barriers to step-free access, and a lack of safe crossings that deter children and families from walking or wheeling, and wayfinding and lighting issues that undermine real and perceived safety.



## People, cultures & communities

- Use school entrances as civic thresholds, designing forecourts that reflect local identity and promote interaction between parents and caregivers, staff and students. Allow space for pop-up kiosks and stalls for events or drop-off times.
- Involve students in co-designing murals, floor graphics, and street furniture, such as displaying artwork along fences or gates.
- Where new developments are near schools or along key walking routes to schools, consider inclusion of informal play-on-the-way features, such as stepping blocks, chalk zones, or balance logs.
- Encourage use of the outdoor entrance space for welcome festivals, language celebration days, and mobile libraries.
- Encourage student- and community-led greening initiatives.
- Use outdoor entrance space for mobile libraries or learning pods.

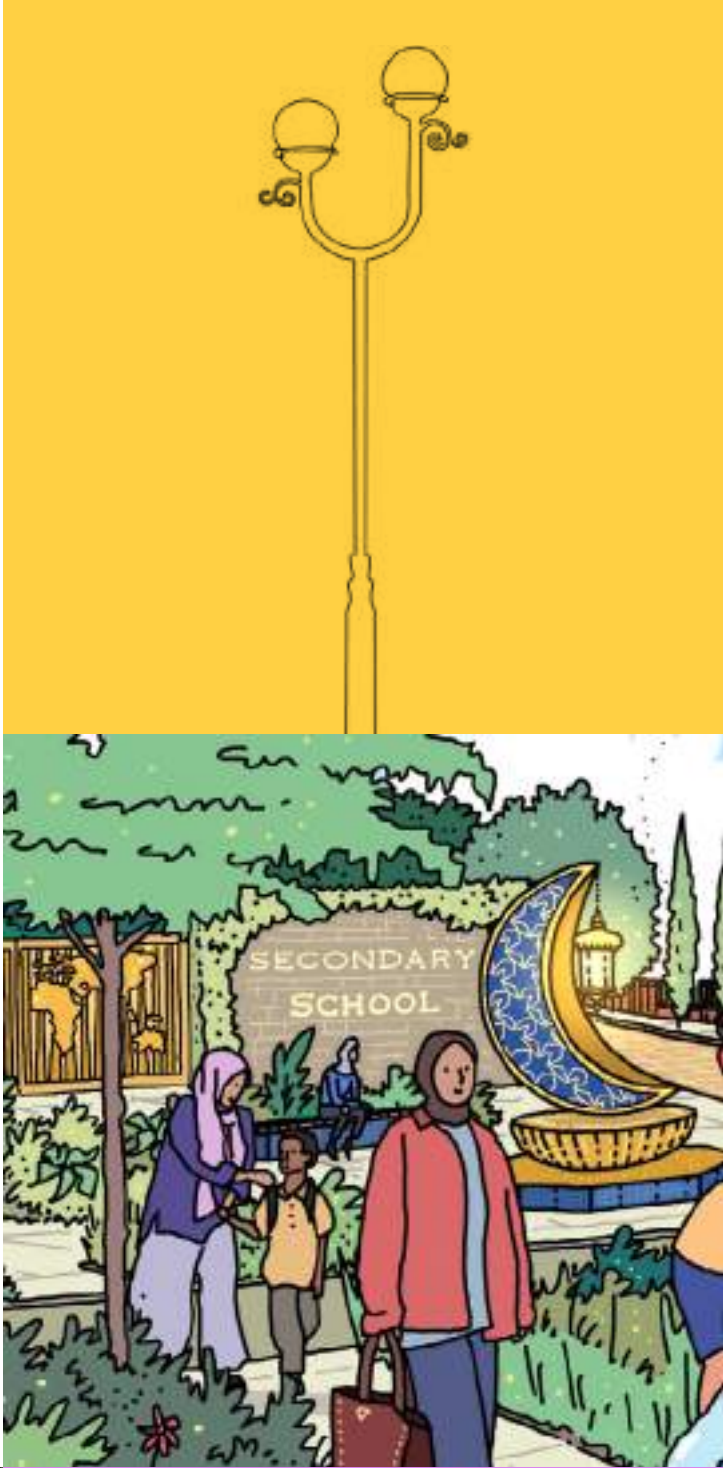
The Borough’s [School Streets Programme](#) highlights traffic, safety, and air-quality problems, and the [Transport Strategy](#) calls for less congestion around schools and safer, more people-friendly approaches. The [Walking and Wheeling Action Plan](#) prioritises upgrades to crossings, dropped kerbs, barrier removal and clearer wayfinding near schools, while the School Crossing Patrol Service underscores ongoing safety risks at specific sites.

A healthy, inclusive, and inspirational public realm approach for school entry is fundamental to inspiring creative and innovative minds, inclusive access and enabling social connections.



## Inclusive places

- Design school entrances to serve all ages and needs through having uncluttered, generous footways that accommodate buggies, wheelchairs and scooters. Ensure entrances are clutter-free with coherent paving, appropriate lighting, clear edges, robust seating, weather appropriate shelter and simple, high-contrast wayfinding. For primary schools, add lower-height signage and for secondary schools plan for surges in activity with wider approaches, multiple desire-line entries and direct links to buses. For SEND/neurodivergent users, provide low-stimulus, step-free routes with level rest points, clear contrasts and pictograms. Design should follow the inclusive guidance set out in Part 2 of this document.
- Add raised zebra/parallel zebra crossings on desire lines, use traffic calming measures. Utilise the School Streets programme to remove through-traffic, reducing exposure to road danger and pollution. Ensure that local stakeholders are engaged in the design of school entrances and nearby schemes.
- Provide secure, weather-sheltered storage for scooters, bicycles, adaptive cycles (e.g. cargo bikes), and prams within the school premises and close to the entrance.



*Safety*

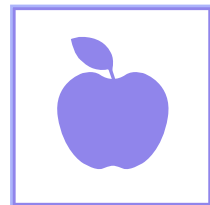


# Educational establishment entrances



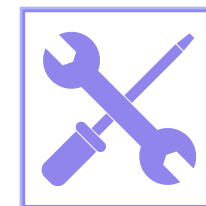
## Environmental sustainability

- Consider how boundaries are designed along roads to reduce pollution exposure, such as incorporating hedges and trees. Consider use of other measures to reduce vehicular pollution, such as anti-idling campaigns and other behavioural-change initiatives (like walking buses).
- Work with schools to appoint ‘school environment champions’.



## Public health, safety & security

- Ensure entrances are clearly located and align with unobstructed sightlines to allow the safe supervision of children.
- Consider locating entrances and play areas away from heavy vehicular traffic. Where this is not practicable, use design measures to prioritise pedestrians, such as raised tables, build-outs near entrances, zebra crossings and bollards.
- Ensure connected walking routes between schools, residential areas, established public transport networks, and amenities and services that are consistently and amply lit.
- Continue School Street closures at the start and end of the school day to reduce traffic.
- Provide seating for caregivers to wait and socialise at drop-off and pick-up times that is sheltered from harsh weather conditions.
- Include water fountains and accessible resting spots and space for informal play.
- Consider use of planning policy to reduce the number of hot food takeaways and other health-harming uses in proximity to schools.



## Life cycle and maintenance

- Provide litter bins at entrances and along key routes and encourage waste education with signage.
- Collaborate with Parent Teacher Associations or student councils to understand maintenance concerns.



*Protect*



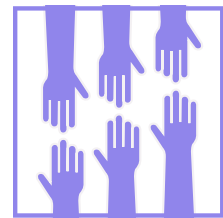






# Faith buildings

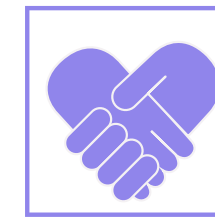
Places of worship are a big part of Hounslow's everyday civic life and the local voluntary-services ecosystem. [Hounslow's Thriving Communities Strategy](#) identifies about 140 faith-based organisations in the borough, which are visited by tens of thousands of people every week. These institutions are explicitly recognised as partners in building cohesion and delivering community support. Many of them run community kitchens, food banks, and other community support facilities, including youth, cultural and welfare activities. They function as trusted, hyper-local hubs that reduce isolation, improve wellbeing, and knit diverse communities together. Faith buildings act as spiritual centres and community hubs in Hounslow.



## People, cultures & communities

- Design forecourts and adjacent spaces to accommodate ceremonial gatherings, like weddings and funerals. Ensure lighting supports evening services and festivals.
- Include community noticeboards and co-designed art or planting features.
- Support unique cultural expression through various elements such as paving patterns, murals, multilingual signage and culturally sensitive wayfinding.
- Consider the use of water as a public element, referring to its integral connection with faith and ritual.
- Enable community-led stewardship through partnerships with faith leaders and congregants.
- Encourage shared use of public realm for multi-faith community events and seasonal programming. Consider how not fencing off faith spaces may encourage wider use of the space and cultural integration.

However, the public realm around these buildings often needs significant improvement. For example, faith venues in Hounslow face peak-time surges of cars that overwhelm limited parking and kerbside space, causing spill-over traffic and crowding. There are safety and comfort issues that persist around many sites, including poor lighting and perceptions of anti-social behaviour in nearby streets. Unique public realm design around these institutions provides an opportunity to showcase Hounslow's cultural diversity as well as emphasise the social, cultural and community roles they play in the Borough.



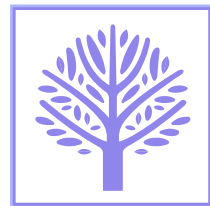
## Inclusive places

- Provide convenient access and covered parking for mobility scooters and pushchairs.
- Design quiet zones and reflection gardens for spiritual calm and inclusivity.
- Encourage respect of cultural etiquette through, for example, the use of signage discouraging inappropriate behaviours, for example smoking or alcohol consumption.



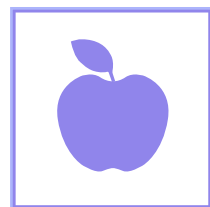


# Faith buildings



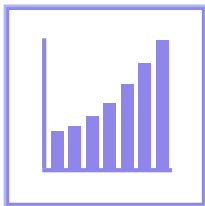
## Environmental sustainability

- Introduce symbolic and seasonal planting that reflects cultural values.
- Incorporate SuDS features and rain gardens to reflect environmental stewardship and contribute to improved drainage.
- Use permeable, robust surfaces for forecourts and gathering areas.



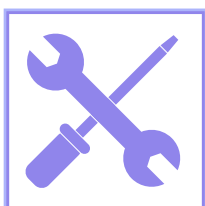
## Public health, safety & security

- Provide shaded seating and tranquil planting. Use trees for shade and enclosure without obscuring entrances.
- Include drop-off zones and safe congregation areas for large events and design for safe movement during celebrations and religious events like Diwali, Eid, Easter, and Vaisakhi.
- Ensure suitable, convenient walking and wheeling routes to nearby destinations and residential areas.
- Integrate hostile vehicle mitigation infrastructure in a sensitive and unobtrusive manner.
- Design in a way that is considerate of surrounding residential developments, reducing potential acoustic disturbance. Consider the use of planting, absorbent surfaces or vegetated mounds to absorb sound.



## Enabling economic vitality

- Faith buildings contribute to local vitality through events and footfall, ensuring their connectedness to local destinations through convenient walking and wheeling routes is of importance to the local economy.
- Design forecourts that can support temporary markets or cultural festivals that contribute to the wider community.



## Life cycle and maintenance

- Use durable, low-maintenance materials suitable for high footfall and event use.
- Support volunteer-based maintenance and gardening projects linked to faith groups.









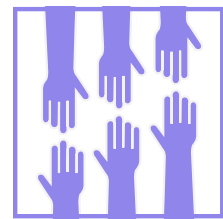
# Masterplanning public realm in large sites

Large-scale developments, those delivering a significant number of homes or other mixed uses, create new streets, plazas, squares, and pedestrian corridors. They are often located adjacent to key urban sites such as important pedestrian routes and local main roads, high streets, transit hubs, parks, waterfronts, and local centres. These developments have high population densities that generate significant movement, traffic, and social activity. Without careful design, they risk becoming isolated enclaves: poorly integrated with surrounding networks, disconnected from local character and economy, and not capitalising on opportunities for wider area regeneration.

Public realm guidance for large scale developments aims to ensure they contribute positively to townscape legibility, permeability, civic amenity,

community well-being and economic integration. These developments must foster interaction, inclusion, safety, and enhance local identity, supporting diverse populations through accessible, welcoming, and well-connected places. As many of these areas include publicly adopted streets and squares, their design must align with future highway standards requirements, including local palettes and [Street Scene Design Guide](#) standards.

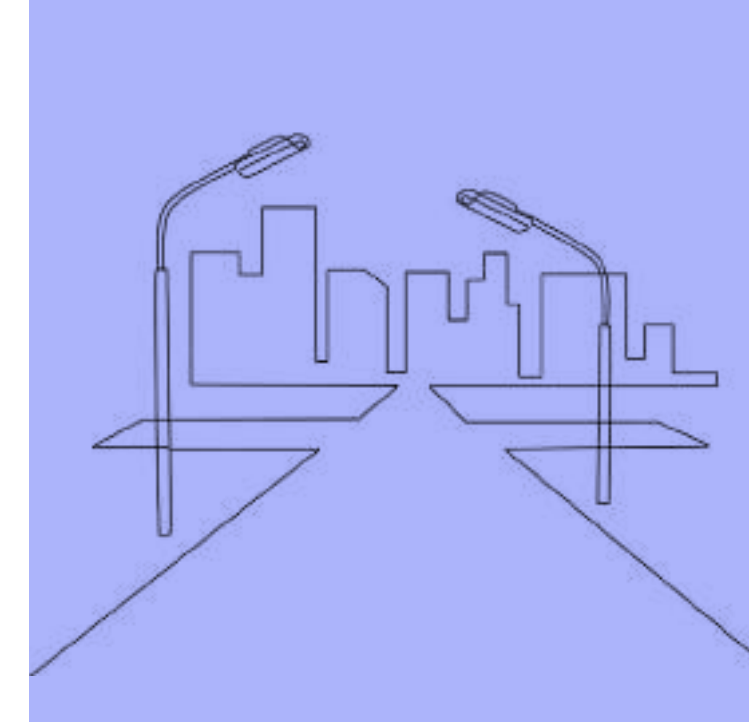
Environmental resilience is also critical. Issues such as carbon reduction, sustainable drainage, and urban heat island effects must be addressed through integrated green infrastructure, such as tree planting, rain gardens, porous paving, and shading strategies. Well-designed public realm within tall building clusters is not merely a visual asset; it is the backbone of social life, climate resilience, and urban comfort.



## People, cultures & communities

- Embed a rich mix of civic, cultural, retail, market places, and workspace uses alongside housing, to support vibrant daily life.
- Place civic anchors (e.g. libraries, community halls, interfaith spaces) in central, visible, and accessible locations.
- Design forecourts for public buildings, venues and civic spaces with adaptability and flexibility to accommodate everyday uses, community events and temporary activities.
- Incorporate neighbourhood-scale gathering points within each development cluster like small plazas, amphitheatres, and festival-friendly streets that support cultural expression and public life.
- Design for vibrancy: ensure footfall, social interaction, and safety by making active ground-floor frontages face high streets, squares, parks, waterbodies, communal open spaces, and streets.
- Design active community and cultural uses like galleries, community kitchens, cafés, community access rooms, libraries or creative workshops on the ground floor.

- Structure the masterplan around a civic and cultural spine with porous connections to adjacent neighbourhoods. Use open, visible, and centrally located public spaces to enhance accessibility and inclusivity.
- Employ public space hierarchies including squares, greens, courtyards, and incidental spaces to foster social interaction and inclusivity.
- Incorporate corridors for cultural parades, seasonal festivals, or civic events. Prioritise clear sightlines, view corridors, and connections to landmarks and characteristic skylines.
- Ensure open spaces have significant sunlight and daylight during the major portion of the day, are exposed to the sky, and are spacious enough to avoid overcrowding while supporting density.
- Define public-communal-private transitions with welcoming design features like verandas, loggias, low walls, hedges, arcades, or planted buffers as appropriate. Avoid defensive or blank edge conditions and ensure buildings engage with public spaces positively.
- Allow overlap between residential, commercial, and civic uses through shared spaces and semi-public thresholds.
- Include space for community tool sheds, maintenance kiosks, and adaptable use areas.
- Ensure visual and spatial permeability while maintaining residential privacy and safety.
- Ensure that cycle routes throughout the site link with existing public transport networks, cycle routes and nearby destinations, such as local or town centre services, amenity space, transport hubs, residential development within and surrounding the site and employment hubs.



*Vision*



# Masterplanning public realm in large sites

- Install social anchors, community chalkboards, book swap shelves, and seating for all age groups, to spark interaction.
- Design sensory or cultural/faith gardens and landscapes, such as tree groves, edible gardens, themed plantings, to support ecology and multisensory engagement and contemplation.
- Provide infrastructure that embeds art into the urban fabric. Provide infrastructure for rotating exhibitions, performances, and street art.



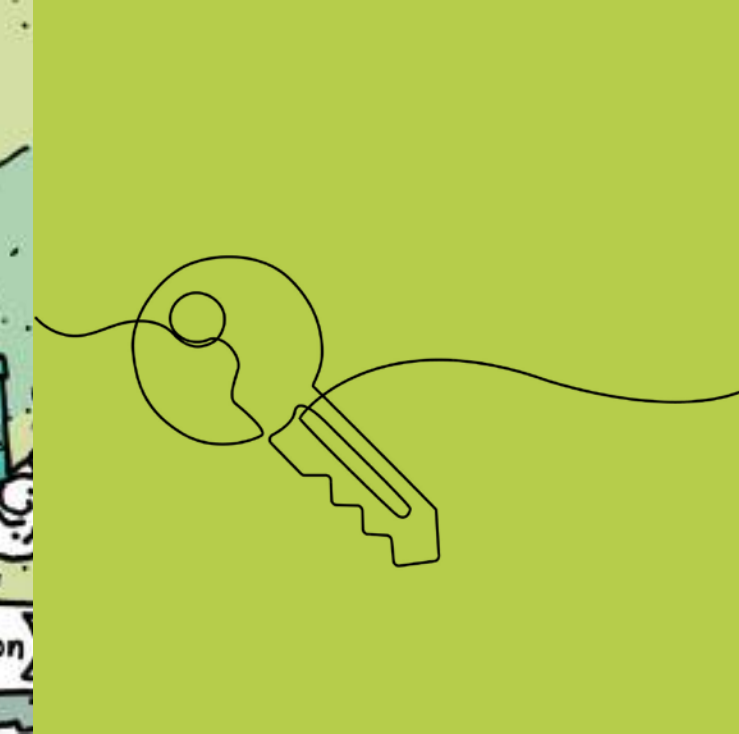
## Inclusive places

- Distribute accessible toilets, changing places facilities, and rest zones in key locations.
- Avoid creating overly exposed or overly enclosed public spaces, balancing openness with refuge.



## Environmental sustainability

- Embed blue-green infrastructure throughout and promote biodiversity in the design of public space.
- Incorporate spaces for urban food production, biodiversity education, and climate awareness.
- Design the solar orientation and landscaping of public spaces for climate change realities.
- Align taller buildings with view corridors or public space anchors.
- Provide green thresholds that filter runoff and offer shade.
- Integrate green roofs and terraces overlooking public spaces.
- Integrate environmental messaging into artwork – e.g. rain-activated poems, solar lit installations.
- Activate podium roofs with food growing, workshops, nature play, or event spaces
- Define responsibility for SuDS and green infrastructure from day one, ensuring no ambiguous ownership and mandate ecological maintenance plans in planning applications.

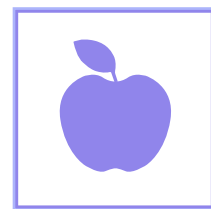


## Access



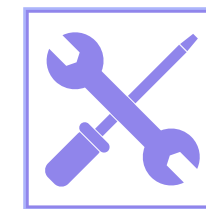


# Masterplanning public realm in large sites



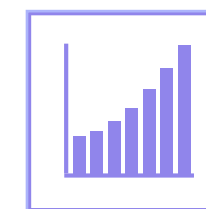
## Public health, safety & security

- Design active life and fitness infrastructure like climbing walls, outdoor gym, and looped walking circuits. Include informal play elements, storytelling corners, shaded seating, and social sports. Ensure play and relaxing spaces are suitable for all ages, abilities and genders ensuring safety, accessibility, and generational inclusivity.
- Integrate secure cycle parking in convenient locations for amenities, public space and commercial premises for both visitors and residents.
- Ensure that cycle routes throughout the site link with existing public transport networks and cycle routes and local destinations.



## Enabling economic vitality

- Promote economic integration of the site with the neighbourhood through complementary uses.
- Prioritise pedestrian connectivity between housing, amenities, and transit.
- Create a looped and permeable movement network that drives footfall through local businesses.
- Design streets and squares as economic platforms – provide power, water, and storage infrastructure for pop-up traders.



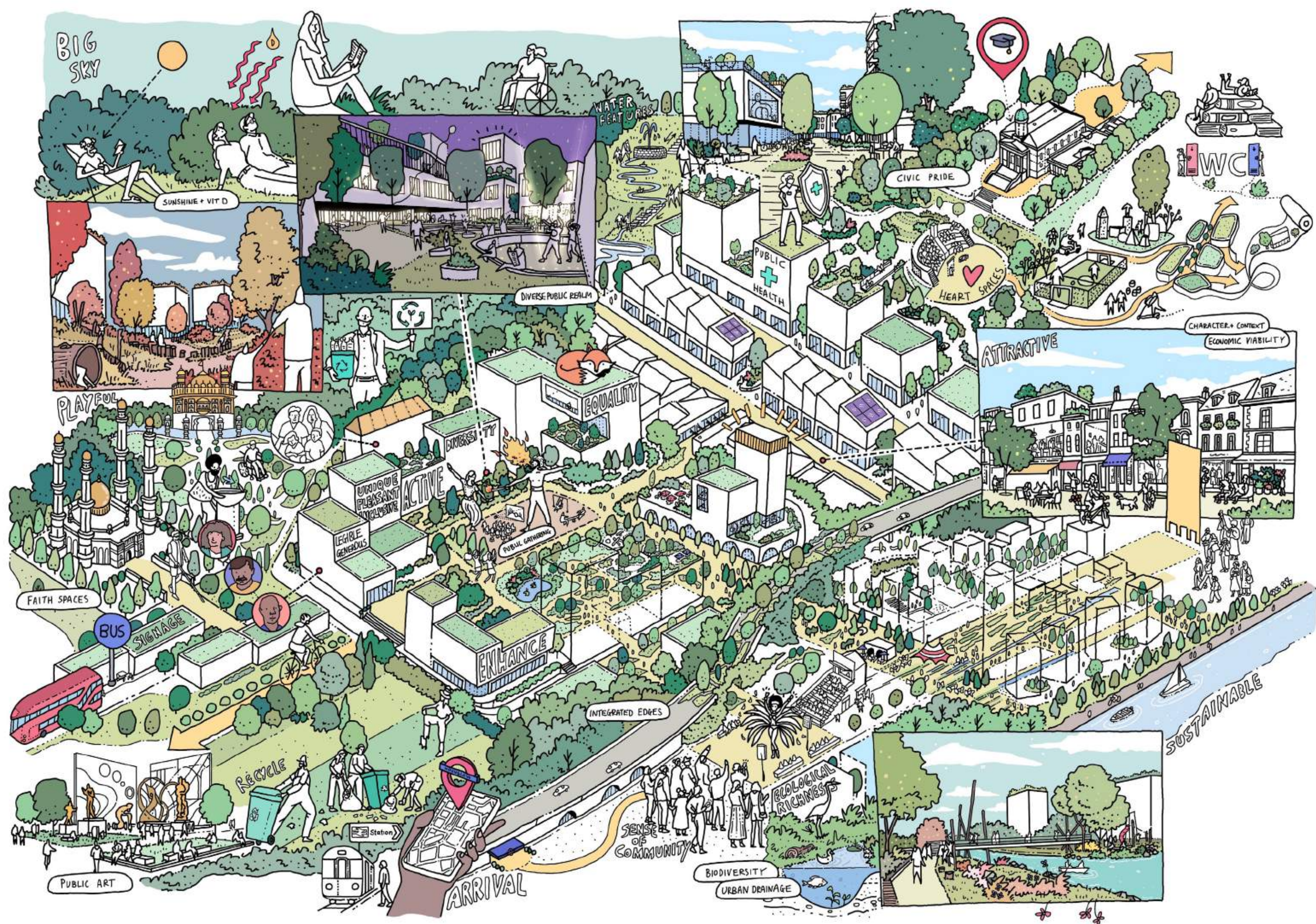
## Life cycle and maintenance

- Avoid over-complicated paving geometries and custom furniture unless funded for long-term care.
- Ensure access routes for maintenance vehicles without compromising pedestrian quality.
- Allow visual access into courtyards and servicing areas to support informal monitoring.
- Include infrastructure to enable flexible use of public spaces (e.g. plug-and-play event zones).

*Enjoy*









# Glossary

**Public realm\***

The public spaces around the borough, that users engage with every day, especially places in which people spend time rather than simply traverse. In this document, public realm is classified into 12 types: squares and plazas, market squares, high streets, shop parades and neighbourhood centres, park entrances, major road crossings, educational establishment entrances, faith buildings, civic buildings, waterfront spaces, major redevelopment sites, and transport hubs.

**Active travel\***

Walking and cycling as opposed to motorised transport for the purpose of making everyday journeys.

**Amenity**

Element of a location or neighbourhood that helps to make it attractive or enjoyable for residents and visitors.

**Areas of deficiency in access to public open space**

Areas lacking in sufficient publicly accessible open space.

**Augmented reality\***

Technology that overlays images, sound and text onto the real world through smart phones and tablets. For the PRDG, tablets were used by participants to redesign spaces using digital assets to create a vision for public spaces within the borough.

**Built environment\***

The city space as it is experienced for work, living, and play.

**Business Improvement District (BID)**

A defined area in which a levy is charged on all business rate payers in addition to the business rates bill. This levy is used to develop projects that will benefit businesses in the local area.

**Circular economy WWW**

An economic model in which resources are kept in use at the highest level possible for as long as possible in order to maximise value and reduce waste, moving away from the traditional linear economic model of ‘make, use, dispose’.

**Community engagement\***

The PRDG has been shaped by extensive community engagement, which aimed to understand the wants, needs, and aspirations of local residents to create innovative design solutions for the public realm in Hounslow. A summary of engagement can be found both in the introduction and the accompanying Engagement Report.

**Desire lines\***

Unplanned routes through spaces that are commonly used, they are usually the shortest, fastest, or most pleasant route.

**Developer contributions (CIL/Section 106)\***

Financial contributions made by developers to improve the infrastructure in areas around development. Some of this money can be used for public realm improvements.

**Green infrastructure**

Comprises the network of parks, rivers, water spaces and green spaces, plus the green elements of the built environment, such as street trees, green roofs and sustainable drainage systems, all of which provide a wide range of benefits and services.

**Green roofs/walls**

Planting on roofs or walls to provide climate change, amenity, food growing and recreational benefits.

**Green space**

All vegetated open space of public value (whether publicly or privately owned), including parks, woodlands, nature reserves, gardens and sports fields, which offer opportunities for sport and recreation, wildlife conservation and other benefits such as storing flood water, and can provide an important visual amenity in the urban landscape.

**Greening**

The improvement of the appearance, function and wildlife value of the urban environment through use of vegetation or water.

**Health inequalities**

Health inequalities are systematic, avoidable and unfair differences in mental and/or physical health between groups of people. These differences affect how long people live in good health and are mostly a result of differences in people’s homes, education and childhood experiences, their environments, their income, jobs and employment prospects, their access to good public services and their everyday opportunities to live healthier lives.

**Heritage assets**

Valued components of the historic environment. They include buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes positively identified as having a degree of historic significance meriting consideration in planning decisions. They include both designated heritage assets and non-designated assets where these have been identified by the local authority (including local listing) during the process of decision-making or plan making.

**Historic environment**

All aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged, and landscaped and planted or managed flora.

*\*Definitions are taken from London Plan 2021, unless marked with \**



# Glossary

## Impermeable surfaces

Mainly artificial structures (such as pavements, roads, driveways, parking areas and rooftops) that are covered by materials impenetrable to water (such as asphalt, concrete, brick and stone). Impermeable surfaces also collect solar heat in their dense mass. When the heat is released, it raises air temperatures (see ‘Urban heat island’).

## Inclusive design

Inclusive design results in an environment which everyone can use, to access and benefit from the full range of opportunities available; confidently, independently, with choice and dignity, which avoids separation or segregation and is made up of places and spaces that acknowledge diversity and difference, meeting the needs of everyone in society.

## Inclusive neighbourhoods

An inclusive neighbourhood is one in which people can live and work in a safe, healthy, supportive and inclusive neighbourhood. An inclusive neighbourhood will ensure that people are able to enjoy the options of easy access by public transport and active travel modes (walking and cycling), to services and facilities that are relevant to them. It will also allow people to safely and easily move around their neighbourhood through high quality people focused spaces, while enjoying barrier free access to surrounding areas and the wider city. They should have safe and easy access to a network of open spaces which meet their recreational needs to enhance health and wellbeing, as well as welcoming easily accessible communal spaces which provide opportunities for social interaction.

## Legibility\*

The ease with which public spaces can be understood and navigated. Legibility can be improved through wayfinding, clear pathways, and good sightlines.

## Main town centre uses

Retail development (including warehouse clubs and factory outlet centres); leisure, entertainment and more intensive sport and recreation uses (including cinemas, restaurants, drive-through restaurants, bars and pubs, night-clubs, casinos, health and fitness centres, indoor bowling centres and bingo halls); offices; and arts, culture and tourism development (including theatres, museums, galleries and concert halls, hotels and conference facilities).

## Microclimate\*

Localised changes in weather and temperature, especially caused by buildings, roads, waterways, and other elements of the built environment.

## Mixed-use development

Development for a variety of activities on single sites or across wider areas such as town centres.

## Open space\*

All land in Hounslow that is predominantly undeveloped other than by buildings or structures that are ancillary to the open space use. The definition covers the broad range of types of open space within the Borough, whether in public or private ownership and whether public access is unrestricted, limited or restricted.

## Soundscape

The overall quality of an acoustic environment as a place for human experience. Soundscape design might include preserving, reducing or eliminating certain sounds or combining and balancing sounds to create or enhance an attractive and stimulating acoustic environment.

## Sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS)\*

Using sustainable drainage techniques and managing surface water run-off from buildings and hardstandings in a way that reduces the total volume, flow and rate of surface water that runs directly into drains and sewers.

## Typology\*

A specific type of public realm (high street, public square etc.) or architectural form (flats, terraced houses etc.).

Urban greening |Urban greening describes the act of adding green infrastructure elements Due to the morphology and density of the built environment in London, green roofs, street trees, and additional vegetation are the most appropriate elements of green infrastructure in the city.

## Urban heat island

The height of buildings and their arrangement means that while more heat is absorbed during the day, it takes longer to escape at night. As a result, the centre of London can be up to 10°C warmer than the rural areas around the city. The temperature difference is usually larger at night than during the day. The Urban Heat Island effect is noticeable during both the summer and winter months.

## Walking and wheeling\* |

People walking or moving with wheels at walking pace. This could be using a wheelchair or mobility scooter, travelling with a pushchair or with luggage, but it does not include cycling.

## Wayfinding\*

Systems, including digital programmes or physical signage, that guide users through spaces.



# Good precedent examples

## 1. People, cultures, & communities

**1. City Benches (Aldgate)** – Benches throughout the public realm that promote social interaction and artistic expression (LFA pop up benches 2021)

Imaginative designs created by emerging international and interdisciplinary architects and designers. Responding to the post-Covid reality, the benches aimed to draw diverse users back into the public realm, providing safe and inviting urban spaces for social interaction.

[https://www.londonfestivalofarchitecture.org/lfa-competition/city-benches/?utm\\_\\_](https://www.londonfestivalofarchitecture.org/lfa-competition/city-benches/?utm__)

**2. Schouwburgplein Theatre Square (Rotterdam)** – Public square located near Rotterdam’s busiest ports, busy shopping area and cultural hub. Includes space for music performance and cultural events, flea market/ pop up markets, integrates creative lighting that denotes the ‘harbour character of the area’. The street lamps/ interactive elements of the environment can be moved to facilitate open art exhibitions.

<https://www.atlasobscura.com/places/schouwburgplein-kinetic-lamp-posts>

Photo: “GraphyArchy - Wikipedia 00323” by GraphyArchy is licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0.

## 3. Northampton Market Square QR Code Project (Northampton)

Project that uses QR codes to unveil the history of and medieval items found on the site.

<https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/news/qr-codes-unveil-history-northamptons-market-square>

Photo: “Northampton Market Square - geograph.org.uk - 5301260” by Roy Hughes is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0.

**4. Southbank Centre** – Modified social benches – benches that challenge the amount of space we put between each other.

<https://www.southbankcentre.co.uk/activity/jeppe-hein-benches/>

Photo: “Modified social benches” by Paul Gillett is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0.

**5. Street Libraries** - Chiswick High Street (street library next to Villa di Geggiano), Lewisham Phone box Library (Lewisham).

<https://londonist.com/2016/05/the-story-of-london-s-smallest-library>

## 6. Dryden Goodwin 60 portraits of Jubilee line staff

(Southwark Underground station) – Intimate and diverse portraits of underground workers.

<https://art.tfl.gov.uk/projects/linear>

Photo: “File:Linear Dryden Goodwin.jpg” by Dryden Goodwin is licensed under CC BY 3.0.

## 2. Inclusive places

**1. Zighizaghi, Favara** – Multi sensory urban garden that combines nature, maths and architecture to create a space that is supportive of neurodivergent users and invites interaction from across the community. Modular construction allows for flexibility and repairability; automatic irrigation techniques and native plant species mean that the garden is climate-appropriate and adapted to its location.

<https://bigsee.eu/zighizaghi-favara/>

<https://www.designboom.com/architecture/ofl-architecture-zighizaghi-garden-milia-shop-favara-italy-11-11-2016/>

Photo: Giuseppe Guarneri

**2. Kennington Oval Reimagined (Kennington)** – Creation of children-friendly and green public space for visitors and families to dwell outside of local schools and within the wider community (UNICEF UK Child Friendly borough). It includes pavement space for murals and art by children, planters that double as seating areas and play features near the seating.

<https://www.meristemdesign.co.uk/case-study/kennington-oval-reimagined>

Photo: courtesy of @meristemdesign

**3. Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park (London)** – A range of signage integrated in the public realm to create a connected environment, including vertical signage, Legible London Signage, low-level step-free signage & finger posts.

<https://www.appliedinformation.group/projects/queen-elizabeth-olympic-park>

<https://www.queenelizabetholympicpark.co.uk/sites/default/files/attachments/18-085.%20Wayfinding%20strategy%20Annex%20A.pdf>

Photo: Applied Information Group

**4. The Southbank (London)** – Clink Street paving changed from cobbles to smoother materials to allow wheelchair users to use the street paths. The colour palette matches the historic cobbles and includes benches with back and arms rests for older and disabled people.

Photo: “Clink Street” by Bods is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0.

**5. Happy To Chat benches schemes** – New Walk, Leicester. Benches that have a recognisable design that signify that those sitting on them would like to talk with others, connecting people to improve mental health and wellbeing and make people feel less lonely and more connected with communities.

Photo: Parks Leicester City Council



# Good precedent examples

## 3. Environmental sustainability

**1. Water Squares (Rotterdam)** – Squares that prevent flooding by storing rainwater during heavy rainfall which can be used during the summer / dryer months. The squares double as seating areas and provide spaces for recreational activities such as basketball.

<https://www.forbesindia.com/article/lifes/what-are-water-squares-and-how-can-they-help-prevent-urban-flooding/77477/1>

Photo: De Urbanisten

## 2. Cheonggye Stream in Seoul, South Korea

Restoration of a natural stream over a highway, that has restored the riparian ecosystem of the stream, revived the area's history and culture and provided a boost for the local economy.

<https://www.archdaily.com/1020945/re-naturalization-of-urban-waterways-the-case-study-of-cheonggye-stream-in-seoul-south-korea>

Photo: “Cheonggye Stream” by Kimmo Räisänen is licensed under CC BY 2.0.

## 3. Cambridge Central Mosque

The Islamic garden at the entrance to the mosque is open to all and provides a quiet transition from the city to the prayer space. It features running water, curved benches where visitors can sit and enjoy the flowers and the shade of the trees. Planting includes yew hedges, naturalistic perennials and damask roses giving and striking a harmonious balance between Islamic structure and relaxed English herbaceous and naturalistic planting.

Photo: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Cmglee\\_Cambridge\\_Mosque\\_front.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Cmglee_Cambridge_Mosque_front.jpg)

## 4. Paddington Basin Redevelopment, Paddington, London W2

The redevelopment of Paddington Basin includes Merchant Square pocket park, London's first floating pocket park located along Regents Canal. Key features include: Bug hotels and bird boxes have been placed on a floating pocket park within the square.

The park has ultra-sonic units that control algae in waterways in an environmentally friendly way. The canal's excess duckweed is turned into compost and 50% of bio waste on the estate is turned into compost.

<https://merchantsquare.co.uk/>

“GOC: Paddington Basin, London” by Peter O'Connor aka anemoneprojectors is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0.

## 4. Public health, safety and security

### 1. Gender inclusive design: Reumannplatz, Vienna

This city centre square was redesigned in a gender sensitive way and includes the Mädchenbühne (girls' stage), which is a performance space that can be used by everyone, but was requested by girls of the nearby school when asked what they wanted in their local square.

Photo with creative commons licence: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=104829725>

Photo: “2020 09 11 Wien 155225 151 (50383848997)” by János Korom Dr. >17 Million views from Wien, Austria is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0.

### 2. Lighting improvements under elevated highway: Terry Spinks Place, A13

This project transformed an unwelcoming concrete pedestrian underpass unto a public space as part of the Hallsville Quarter Development. Lighting is used in a clever way to illuminate the space and create a sense of place and enclosure. Graphics are introduced into the space with their use on the columns.

Terry Spinks Place

Photo: Light Follows Behaviour

<https://www.lightfollowsbehaviour.com/projects/terry-spinks-place>

## 3. Old Street Station Entrance

This project transformed the station with a landmark entrance and pedestrianised public realm, incorporating a glass structure that maximises daylight and incorporated a green roof. The innovative paving draws in pollution from the air which is then drained away. The 360 degree lighting modules for good visibility and accent lighting for walkways supporting safer passenger journeys.

<https://wwparchitects.com/projects/old-street-station/>  
<https://www.schreder.com/en/projects/lighting-enhances-safety-design-old-street-station>

Photo: Alex Bland from Alex Bland Photography. Reference from <https://uk.schreder.com/en/projects/lighting-enhances-safety-design-old-street-station#group=nogroup&photo=0>

## 4. Creating Places that Work for Women and Girls:

Handbook for Local Authorities, Developers and Designers (London Legacy Development Corporation)

This publication details how urban design can benefit women and girls and address gender disparities. One of the key ways to do this is through co-design processes with women and girls, with an intersection approach with different age groups, ethnicities, disabilities and socio-economic factors. Through such participation communities are empowered to participate in the future.

[https://lldc-meetings.london.gov.uk/documents/s69840/Item%2017a%20-%20PUBLIC%20-%20Appendix%201%20090524\\_DRAFT%20LLDC%20Women%20and%20Girls.pdf](https://lldc-meetings.london.gov.uk/documents/s69840/Item%2017a%20-%20PUBLIC%20-%20Appendix%201%20090524_DRAFT%20LLDC%20Women%20and%20Girls.pdf)



# Good precedent examples

## 5. Enabling economic viability

### 1. Altrincham Town Centre Public Realm Improvements

Public realm improvements throughout the town centre have included rebalancing the movement network in favour of walking and cycling, tackling drainage challenges through the introduction of rain gardens, upgrades to surfaces, tree planting, street furniture and lighting and working with local artists to reinforce the town's cultural heritage. The investment in the public realm has played a role in improving the desirability of the town centre, with vacancy rates decreasing from 30% in 2010 to 8.1% currently.

<https://www.planit-ie.com/case-studies/altrincham-town-centre>

Photo: ©Planit

### 2. Birmingham 18th Street Underpass, Alabama (USA)

This project used a computerised LED light system to accentuate the Art Deco architectural details and improve the connection between two major city areas. The use of dynamic, coloured lighting helps enhance the mood and perception of safety in the tunnel.

<https://www.colorkinetics.com/global/showcase/lightrails>

Photo: "Light Rails - 18th Street Underpass" by ShanMcG213 is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0.

### 3. Gigantium Urban Space, Aalborg, Denmark

A former loading area was transformed into a new plaza, using red paving and playful white lines that divide the plaza into flexible spaces designed for different types of creative games, inviting visitors to hang out or play sports.

Photo: Rasmus Hjortshøj - COAST from <https://divisare.com/projects/467351-jaja-architects-rasmus-hjortshoj-coast-gigantium-urban-space>

## 6. Life cycle and maintenance

### 1. Green hoarding pilot, Tower Hamlets

As part of the Council's updated Code of Construction Practice (CoCP), requirements were introduced on the greening of construction hoardings. This has transformed graffiti covered hoardings into wildflower walls, enhancing biodiversity, enhancing appearance of the local area and improving perceptions of safety.

Photo: London Borough of Tower Hamlets 2023

### 2. Walthamstow High Street, London, E17

One of London's busiest high streets, hosting Europe's longest outdoor street market (over 1 km).

Key features include:

- Accessibility upgrades: wider pavements, tactile paving, improved crossings, public toilets, and cycle facilities.
- Climate resilience: tree planting, SuDS planters, and durable paving that has been designed to support tree growth for the next 100 years.
- Public health: hydration points, seating, improved lighting, and natural surveillance.
- Economic vitality: daily markets, evening events, shopfront improvements, and trader-led programming.

<https://greenblue.com/gb/case-studies/walthamstow-high-street-london>

Photo: GreenBlue Urban



# Support team

## London Borough of Hounslow would like to thank...

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