South Gloucestershire Council

Staple Hill High Street - Place Shaping Plan

Public engagement report

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Background

South Gloucestershire Council is working with Staple Hill and Mangotsfield Parish Council to develop a *Place Shaping Plan* to help enhance the vitality and sustainability of Staple Hill High Street.

Through a series of engagement exercises, the council sought to understand from local people what improvements matter most to them and work together to create a plan built around the ideas, needs and priorities of the local community.

Executive Summary

The engagement exercise conducted in November and December 2025 has provided detail about how people who live in Staple Hill use their High Street and helped identify their priorities for improvements.

Key Findings

High Street usage

NOTE: The below refers to the patterns of people who completed the survey only and is not necessarily representative of Staple Hill residents more broadly. Indeed, in responding to the survey this group are indicating they have a strong connection to the High Street.

Frequency of visits: Over 75% of survey respondents visit the High Street at least once a week, mainly for smaller grocery shops, cafés, and the library. The introduction of parking charges has deterred some visitors.

Modes of access: Walking is the most common way to reach the High Street (59.2%), followed by car (35.2%). Parking charges may have influenced these patterns.

Purpose of visits: The High Street serves broader purposes beyond shopping, including socialising and accessing services. There is concern about the loss of beloved shops and the range of businesses present.

Investment priorities

Top priorities: The highest priority for investment is Fountain Square, followed by greenery (trees, planters), and shop front improvements. Public art, accessibility, and public safety are also valued, though to a lesser extent. Play areas are a lower priority for most respondents, though were important to some students taking part in the focus group.

Environmental improvements

Greening the High Street: There is strong support for more trees and greenery, with a preference for low-maintenance, perennial, and native plants. Maintenance, vandalism and accessibility (planters blocking pavements) are concerns.

Shop fronts: Many want a coordinated improvement scheme, especially in Fountain Square and the central crossroads. Restoring original features and addressing run-down or empty shops are also priorities. Some people think this shouldn’t be paid for out of the public purse.

Identity and public spaces

Public art: Murals are the preferred format, with themes celebrating local history, nature, and community identity. There is a desire to involve local artists and schools.

Fountain Square: Seen as underutilised, people think the Square could become a vibrant hub with more greenery, public art, better lighting, and events. Addressing antisocial behavior and improving the surrounding environment are prerequisites for investment.

Events and activities: Markets, music, and family events are widely supported to increase footfall and community engagement.

Accessibility and Safety

Access: The introduction of parking charges is of great concern to this sample group and many call for reduced or free parking, better public transport, and improved cycling infrastructure. Some support pedestrianisation and traffic calming measures.

Accessibility: It is clear there are significant accessibility issues on the High Street. Levelling pavements, widening footpaths, and improving crossings are key. Barriers to mobility include street furniture, dual layer pavements and uneven surfaces, and limited accessible facilities.

Safety: Lighting, police presence, and CCTV are the most requested safety improvements, but some people would also like restrictions on some businesses. There are calls for tougher action against antisocial behaviour. Improving the mix of businesses and increasing footfall would help reduce this.

Other priorities

Ultimately, people say it is the limited range of shops, cafes and restaurants which is the main factor holding them back from spending more time on the High Street. They would welcome anything the council can do to encourage new independent businesses. Introducing parking charges is seen as acting against this priority. They also think that a thorough clean-up and ongoing maintenance of the High Street would restore local pride in their area.

Conclusion

The engagement demonstrates a strong community desire to revitalise Staple Hill High Street by focusing on Fountain Square, greening initiatives, shop front improvements, supported by proactive efforts to attract a more diverse range of businesses and activities.

Accessibility, safety, and maintenance are essential to ensure inclusivity and long-term success. While there is enthusiasm for creative and environmental enhancements, addressing practical concerns - such as cost of parking, cleanliness, and antisocial behaviour – are considered more effective shorter term priorities.

The Place Shaping Plan should prioritise these community-driven insights to create a vibrant, welcoming, and sustainable High Street for all.

Engagement approach and respondents

Feedback was collected via an online survey, a focus group with students from a local secondary school and a physical map in Staple Hill library, on which people could share their ideas.

The survey was open from 14 November 2025 until 13 December 2025. It was available in online and hard copy format, with supporting information provided on a dedicated Commonplace website, and was widely promoted via all usual council communications channels, including social media and council newsletters.

326 people completed the online survey. It should be noted that the profile of the people who completed the survey are not fully representative of the local population:

- Much lower proportion of people aged under 30 than who live in Staple Hill,
- Much higher proportion of women than men,
- A higher proportion of people who self-report as having a disability,
- A higher proportion of people in white ethnic groups.

15 students from Mangotsfield Secondary school aged between 11-15 took part in the focus group, which entailed a workshop and a site visit. The results of this exercise have fed into the overall analysis, with a separate report available in the appendices.

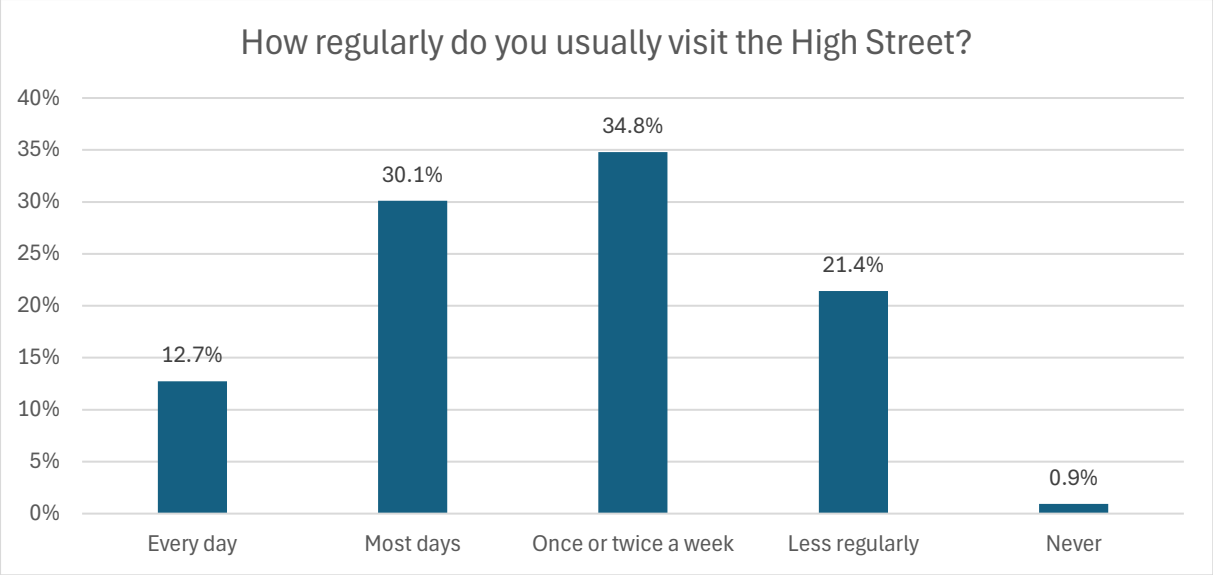
Suggestions and comments were collected on a map printout which was displayed in Staple Hill library throughout the engagement period. 54 suggestions were made.

Survey analysis

Use of the High Street

How often do people visit?

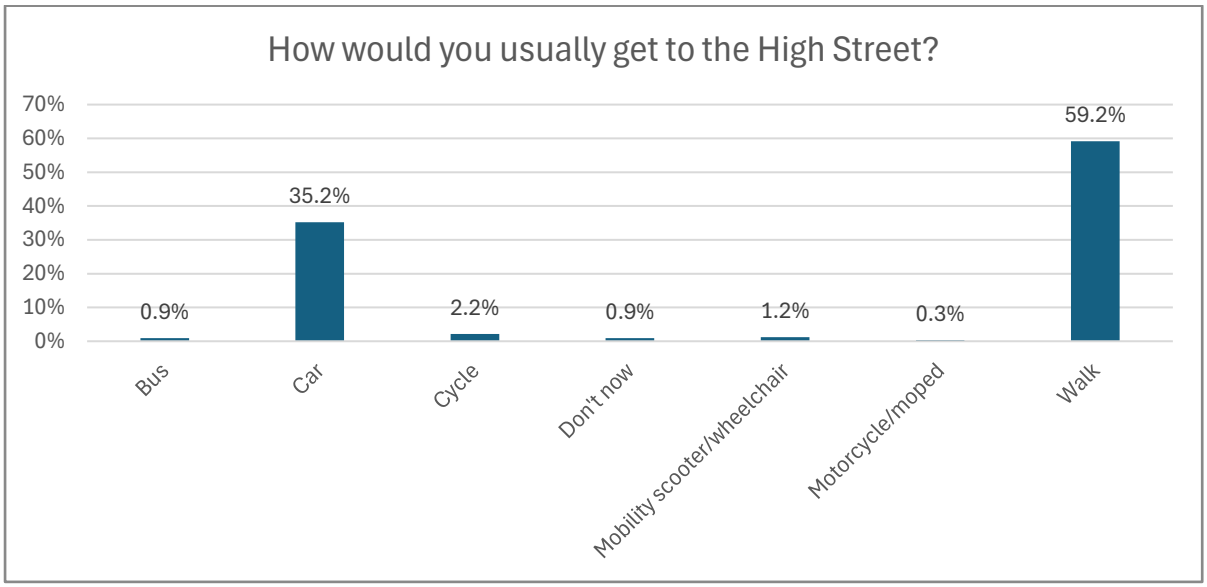
Survey respondents are regular shoppers on the High Street, with more than three quarters visiting at least once a week. One might expect this group to be regular visitors given the focus of the survey.



In their responses to later questions, several people discuss the impact of the introduction of charges to park. Some people say either they (or people in general) shop elsewhere or visit Staple Hill High Street less regularly now because they are deterred by having to pay to park.

How do people get to the High Street?

The highest proportion (59.2%) of survey respondents usually get to the High Street by walking. Next highest is people travelling by car at 35.2%.



Again, it may be that this has been impacted by the introduction of parking charges and it would be interesting to compare this with data collected before the charges were introduced.

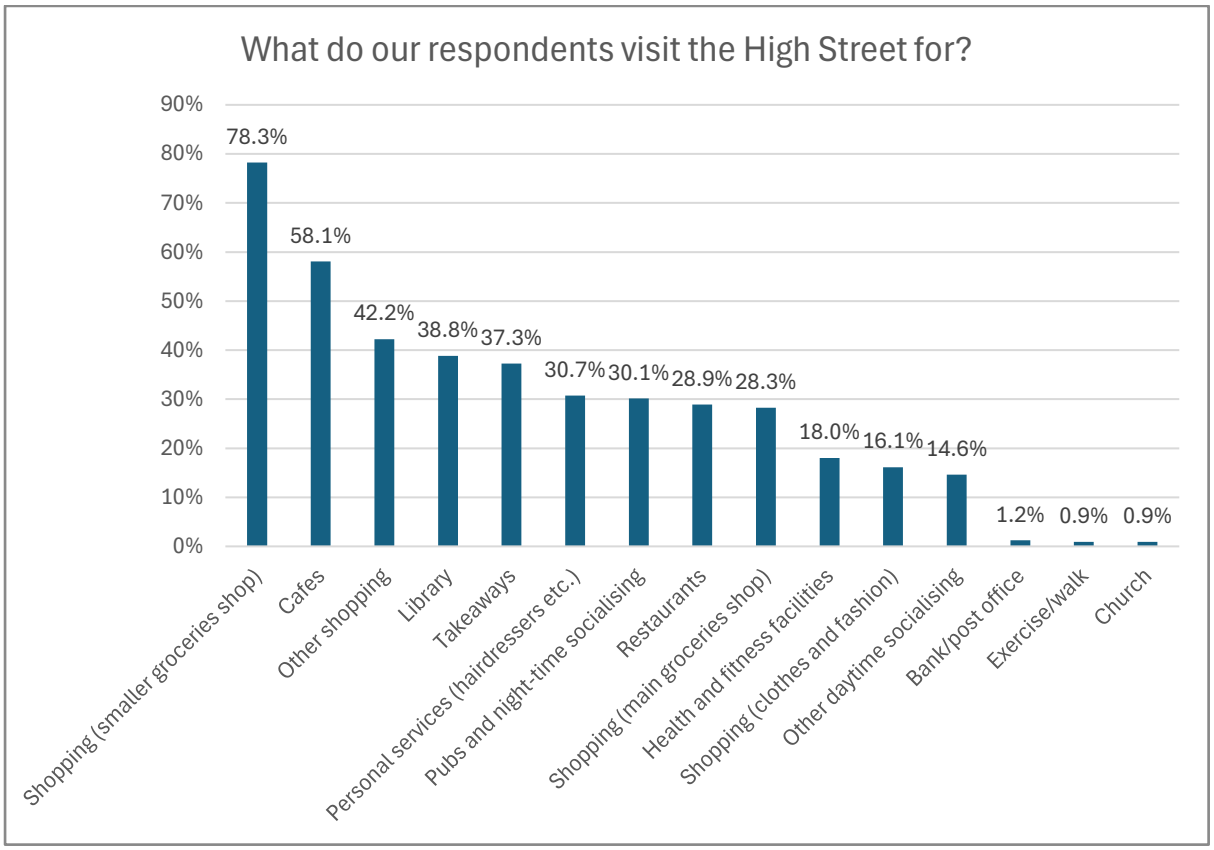
What do people visit the High Street for?

Less than a third of this group go to the High Street for their main grocery shop. However, people are much more likely to come to do smaller shops, especially for grocery items (78.3%) and other shopping (42.2%). In commentary, several people

express disappointment that several much-loved shops have closed down, reducing both the frequency of their visits and the reason for their visits.

More than half visit to go to a local café, and 38.8% go to visit the library, highlighting that high streets now have a broader purpose than simply being places where people buy things.

There are numerous comments throughout the survey about the imbalance of shops and facilities on Staple Hill High Street. People think there are too many takeaways, nailbars and hairdressers, but a fair proportion of people do use them.



It should be noted that the survey sample does not fully reflect the local population and therefore if you were to capture a broader demographic of Staple Hill's population, you might see different perspectives and visitor patterns.

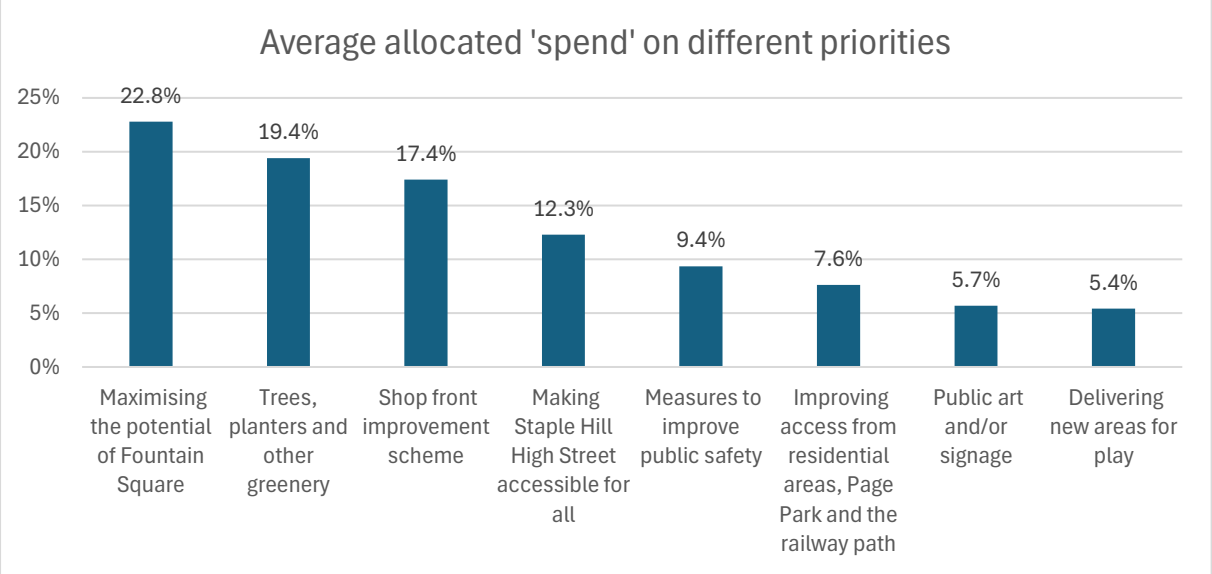
How would people prioritise potential investment?

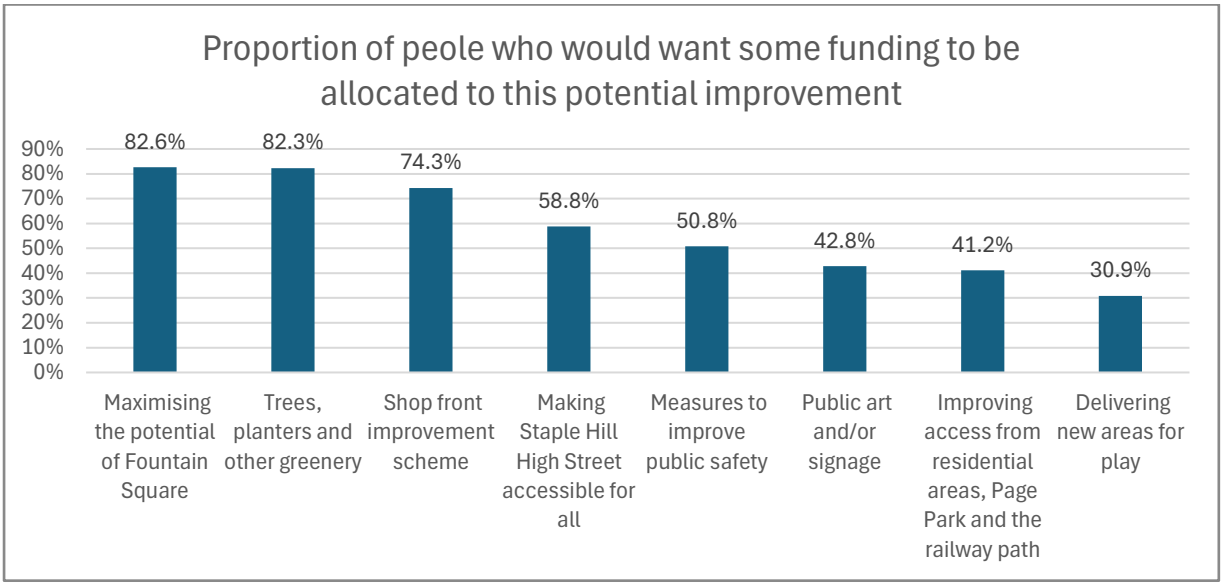
Survey respondents were asked to prioritise a 'virtual budget' across several types of improvements that the council and partner organisations could realistically deliver if funding were to be secured. Survey respondents could share their virtual investments in any denomination they chose across the following potential improvements:

- Trees, planters and other greenery
- Shop front improvement scheme

- Public art and/or signage
- Maximising the potential of Fountain Square
- Delivering new areas for play
- Making Staple Hill High Street accessible for all
- Improving access from residential areas, Page Park and the railway path
- Measures to improve public safety

Investing in Fountain Square was considered the highest priority for potential funding. Only 17.4% of people wouldn't allocate any funding for it and on average people allocated almost a quarter of their spend on what they thought could be the focal point for the High Street.





A similar proportion of people wanted spending on trees, planters and other greenery. However, they felt much less money was needed for this priority.

Almost three quarters of respondents allocated virtual investment towards a shop front improvement scheme, spending on average 17.4% of their budget.

The other priorities proved far less popular. Only 30.9% of people allocated any money towards delivering new play areas and several people commented in subsequent questions that this would not be a good use of money, on the grounds that:

- There isn't space,
- It is not safe to have children playing so near to a busy road, and
- There are already adequate facilities in Page Park/money would be better spent improving the play equipment in Page Park.

Only 41.2% of people allocated funding towards improving access to the High Street. Several people were confused why this might be needed, particularly making it easier for people to get to/from Page Park.

Less than half of people wanted money spent on public art and/or signage and only 5.7% of all investment was prioritised for it.

40% of people wouldn't want to spend money to make the High Street accessible, but the comments highlight some clear issues which need addressing to allow everyone to be able to get about on the High Street. Respondents allocated an average of 12.3% of their total budget towards this priority.

Just over half of people wanted measures to improve public safety, with just under 10% of the budget allocated towards it.

Improving the High Street environment

Through the survey, the council presented two priorities aimed at improving the High Street environment: planting additional trees, plants and greenery, and a shop front improvement scheme. People were encouraged to comment, telling us whether they supported these improvements and to explain any considerations in implementing them.

In the site visit exercise, students noted how grey the whole area was, and their top priority was to bring colour to the High Street. Suggestions included colourful crossings and road markings, colour on pavements in some areas, murals on buildings and in the alleyways, and decorating post boxes and bins.

Adding more greenery

We have seen that if we were to secure funding, a large proportion of respondents would like to spend money on introducing trees, planters and other greenery.

The clear preference in terms of the type of greenery people wanted was more trees – several people were especially inspired by the difference a boulevard of trees along the High Street could have. A couple of people commented that to make a difference, the scheme needed to be large-scale and make a statement about the area. With a smaller budget, the priority would be to concentrate improvements around Fountain Square.

Types of greenery	Number of comments
Trees	80
Planters	24
Flowers	21
Small shrubs	12
Hanging baskets	12
Herbs	6
Edible fruit	5
Wildflowers	4
Grasses	3
Green walls	2
Pocket parks	2
Water features	2
Communal gardening area	1
Living roofs for bus stops	1

Trees were considered lower maintenance than plants or flowers, though a couple of people were concerned about potential damage to pavements from tree roots. Three people questioned whether there was space for trees and some people preferred smaller specimens. One person was worried about leaves. Trees like cherries and acers offered the advantage of seasonal interest and colour.

The alternative preference was for a flower-based scheme. Flowers can be more colourful, but need watering, dead-heading etc. and are therefore higher maintenance. Maintenance is a consideration and concern for a large proportion of people – several people commented that existing planters and flower beds were not especially well cared for. The priority therefore was that budget be allocated to ongoing maintenance and that any planting should be low maintenance – for example plants which are resilient to the weather, tolerating drought, winds and heavy downpours and flooding. Downend High Street is seen as a good model for people advocating for a flower-based scheme.

13 people commented about vandalism. Some see little point in spending a great deal of money on planting if it is going to get vandalised.

Generally, flowers and plants are delivered in a high street environment through planters. 24 people wanted planters - including one person who thought the containers themselves could bring some much-needed colour to a grey, concrete environment. However, some people thought there were already plenty of planters and several people commented on accessibility issues with existing planters blocking pavements and restricting people's ability to get around.

Other requests for specific plants included herbs and edible fruit, wildflower areas or grasses, green walls, pocket parks, water features and living roofs for bus stops. Some of the young people taking part in the workshop were keen to get involved in community planting.

22 people took inspiration from Downend High Street, but others liked what was being done at Broad Meadow in Bristol and Edible Bristol.

Young people wanted more effort to be put into attracting wildlife to the High Street, for example by adding bird feeders and green walls.

The main ask in terms of attributes of any greening scheme was that it be bright and colourful and provide year-round interest. 14 people wanted pollinator friendly plants (though one person didn't like the bugs that this would attract). Picking up the maintenance point, 10 people wanted plants to be perennial, and native plants were considered more likely to be able to survive the British weather without needing too much additional care and attention.

The visuals provided in the survey were commented on. One aspect people especially liked was the image where seating/benches were incorporated within the planting scheme.

In some low traffic neighbourhood schemes, planters have been used to pedestrianise areas. Two people worried about this and asked that Staple High Street not be pedestrianised, whilst one person wanted Signal Road to be closed off to vehicle traffic.

A shop front scheme

Survey respondents also generally supported a shop front scheme. Many people commented that the proliferation of neon lights and frosted windows detracted from the area and gave it a 'seedy' reputation.

The survey asked which areas would benefit most from seeing improvements to shop fronts.

Location	Number of comments
All	52
Fountain Square	33
Library/Fountain Sq to Jason's/Victoria St	21
Central area around crossroads	11
Area around Wetherspoons	9
Page Park to Jason's/Victoria St	7
Wetherspoons to Portcullis	7
Fountain Square to Page Road	4
Near Tescos	4
The approaches (Soundwell Rd/Downend Rd)	2
North of Broad St	2
Fishponds end	2
Teewell to Pendennis	1
Page Road to Soundwell Road	1
Beaufort Road	1
Modern side	1

Unsurprisingly, the most common response was that the whole area would benefit from being tidied up. Next most popular was for the shop fronts in Fountain Square (and the flats above the shops especially) to be improved and have a more consistent theme (though as highlighted in a later part of the report, people would like to see different shops in the square.)

Other suggestions tended to be centred around the crossroads with Victoria street, either heading out towards Wetherspoons or the library/Fountain Square, but a couple of people also felt it was important that the main approaches to the High Street were smartened up.

11 people wanted the scheme to instead prioritise those shops which looked most tired and run down and three wanted empty shops to be prioritised in support of efforts to encourage new businesses to the area.

Seven people identified the number of original features which over time have deteriorated because of a lack of attention. Restoring those features could make a big difference.

Support for a scheme was not unanimous. Eight people felt that this shouldn't be a priority or shouldn't be paid for out of the public purse at all. Others wanted the current approach to be better promoted, whereby there is more of an onus on individual shops and landlords to apply for financial support to improve their shop front.

Defining and celebrating the identity of Staple Hill High Street

In this section of the survey, we were keen to capture feedback about introducing more public art to the High Street, about potential improvements to Fountain Square and whether people saw value in holding more events and activities on the High Street.

Public art

Residents of Staple Hill have a clear preference for murals. Of those expressing an opinion, most people told us they like the hedgehog mural which has been recently painted in Fountain Square and would like to see more in different places.

Format	Number of comments
Mural/mural space	33
Sculptures	11
Building art	10
Don't want graffiti/wall art	10
Rotating displays	6
Art	5
Banksy/graffiti	4
Lighting/light installations	3
Art festival	2

Designed informational signage	2
Maximise existing features	2
Statues	2
Flags/Bunting	2
Informational displays	1
Don't need signage	1
Wood carvings	1
Stone engravings	1
Yarn bombing	1
Poetry on buses	1
Music & dance	1
Displays	1
Tactile	1
Stainless steel	1
Don't want modern art	1
Trail	1

On a similar theme, ten people liked the idea of building art and four hoped that Banksy would make an appearance in Staple Hill! This kind of art is not to everyone's taste, however, and ten people specifically said they wouldn't like to see graffiti or wall art. Other suggestions include sculptures, light installations, statues, wood carvings, stone engravings, stainless steel structures, yarn bombing or poetry.

In terms of the format, as well as one-off pieces, people asked about rotating displays, festivals (several people liked Upfest), and art trails.

People had several ideas about the theme of any public art. The top priority was that it should feel local. Local history was the top preference and seven people specifically wanted a railway theme, five wanted it to celebrate Staple Hill's identity in some way, and another five said it should celebrate the diversity and inclusivity of the area. 11 people wanted it to be based on nature, which was the preference for younger people taking part in the workshop.

Theme/inspiration	Number of comments
Local history	22
Bright/Colourful	16
Like the hedgehog	14
Nature/wildlife	11
Railways	7
Celebrate diversity/inclusivity	5
Celebrate our identity	5
More like at Fountain Square	5
Tasteful/Not garish	4
Bedminster	4
Like the coloured benches	3
Celebrate local authors	2
Modern	2
Appeals to children	1

Soften brutalist architecture	1
Victoriana	1
Gromit	1
Vintage with modern twist	1
Traditional	1
Don't like the hedgehog	1
Like the giraffe near Brunt & Russell	1
Local people/celebrities	1
Montpelier	1
Central Bristol	1
Bath Milsom St	1
Kingswood	1
Corner of High St/Pendennis Road	1
Southville	1
Highline, NY	1
Totterdown house colours	1

As mentioned above, people like the recent additions to the area, particularly the hedgehog. The painted benches were less commented upon but were popular with some. Other areas to take inspiration from included Bedminster, Montpelier, Bath Milsom Street, Kingswood, Southville, Totterdown, Central Bristol and even Highline in New York!

Whatever the theme, the priority was that it be bright and colourful, without feeling garish. Sticking with the local priority, there was a strong preference to work with local artists, perhaps involving local schools and students – several of the young people the project team talked to were very keen to get involved. A few specific artists and organisations were mentioned including Banksy, Inkie and the Rising Arts Agency.

In terms of potential locations, Fountain Square was considered the most appropriate place for public art. Other suggestions included outside the gym (the gym owners completed the survey and were very keen to have the opportunity to get involved in this project in some way), at the major ‘entrances’ to Staple Hill, on bus shelters, The Oak, the side of St Peter’s Hospice shop and Beaufort Road. One young person had a creative idea for art outside the library, which could double-up as a suggestion scheme/ideas wall for books.

Only a few people saw value in informational signage or displays.

Support for money to be spent on these types of priorities was by no means unanimous. 51 people told us this was not needed and would prefer money was spent on other things. Ten people stressed the need for any new art to be maintained, and two people were concerned that this could impinge on accessibility.

Improving Fountain Square

Survey respondents felt that enhancing Fountain Square was the priority for any place shaping plan for Staple Hill High Street. The Square is one of the places where

young people currently like to hang out, and those participating in the engagement workshop and site walk agreed that it needed further investment because it was ‘Empty’ and ‘Boring’ with nothing to do.

People of all ages agreed that it was currently an under-utilised space which with new investment has potential to be a central hub and a catalyst for wider improvements.

Amongst many other words with negative connotations, survey respondents and young people described the Square as grey, concrete and uninviting. Their top priorities then were to add colour, soften the harsh concrete edges, and add a focal point.

Adding greenery was seen as the best way to soften the space and add colour by people completing the survey. More people talked about planters than trees for this space. Reinstating a fountain would not only help bring back meaning to the name of the square! but would provide a point of interest.

Ways to improve the look and feel of the Square	Number of comments
Planters/greenery	56
Hide/soften concrete	19
Fountain/water feature	17
Trees	12
Improve surrounding buildings	11
More public art	9
Colour	7
Central feature	5
Lighting	5
Natural	3
Like the hedgehog	3
Statue	2
Community garden	2
Barricades for Christmas tree	2
Pond	1
Sculpture	1
Pocket park	1
Clock	1

Other features people felt could help improve the look and feel of the space included public art, better lighting, a statue, sculpture, a clock, or a pond/water feature. Improving the surrounding buildings would also make a big difference in making the Square more appealing.

People also felt the Square was being held back by an uninspiring selection of shops. Several people’s vision was more of a European style plaza with outdoor cafes, independent restaurants and dining to attract people to use the space at more times of day and night. Providing attractive seating, shelter and shade was seen as a priority to make this new vision a reality. As highlighted earlier, people felt a shop

front improvement scheme could also make a difference, but they wanted a different range of shops and eateries before spending money on this.

The Square was seen as scruffy and attracting drunks and other antisocial behaviour. Many people felt that clearing litter and weeds and tackling antisocial behaviour should be the first step taken before new investment was considered. Other ideas to make the space more usable and welcoming included:

- Levelling the area and improving the paving (14 responses),
- Placing more bins (two responses – though many more people asked for more bins in general across the High Street),
- Adding picnic tables (three responses),
- Remove 'no ball games/skateboarding' signs (two responses),
- Adding disability friendly seating (one response),
- Addressing the 'wind tunnel' (one response).

A few respondents believed more needed to be done to attract families. A couple of people wanted to host more family friendly activities in the Square and four suggested that if the place shaping plan involved play equipment, that this was the right space for it. Three people wondered whether the square could have a sandpit in the summer, like the one in Yate – and one person had an even more ambitious plan for an ice rink in the winter!

A rejuvenated square was seen as the perfect place to hold events and activities. 31 people wanted there to be more markets or popups, potentially tying in with those held in Page Park. 17 wanted music events and festivals and another person suggested that the square could host exhibitions.

Markets, events and activities

The prospect of more markets, events and activities was greeted enthusiastically by survey respondents. Markets in particular appealed, whether that be farmers markets, craft fairs, food stalls or a combination.

Theme	Number of comments
Markets	91
Music/street theatre - Bands/Buskers/Poetry	34
Children/family events	15
Carols/Christmas events	14
Food markets/popup food stalls	14
Music events	12
Cultural events	9
Share events/activities with Page Park	9
Community events/street parties	8
Food events	8
Trails	8
Other seasonal events	7
Family/children's activities/clubs e.g. Lego clubs	6
Craft fairs	4
Events tied in with traditional holidays/festivals	4

Summer community event	3
Art displays/installations	2
Community planting/Produce shows	2
Spring event - nature theme	1
Flea markets	1
Craft activities/events	1
Chatty cafes	1

34 people talked about encouraging more music or street theatre – either at the markets or more generally to make coming to the High Street more of an event.

Several people believed that formalising this at regular music or cultural events, celebrating local people's creative skills would attract visitors. Supporting this, people commented on the success of the Christmas on the Hill event and wanted more seasonal events at other times of the year. Young people felt more could be done with decorations to make the High Street festive, and both groups agreed that the orange barriers around the Christmas tree were a real downer!

The success of events and activities at Page Park was something which people wanted to tap into.

Enhancing public spaces

The survey presented four priorities under the heading of enhancing public spaces:

- Making it easier for people to get to the High Street
- Improving accessibility to enable everyone to get around.
- Improving public safety.
- Encouraging places to play.

Improving access

The survey was conducted less than a year after South Gloucestershire Council introduced charges to use council-run car parks. In commenting on opportunities to make it easier for people to access the High Street, 99 people asked for charges to be removed or reduced, and ten others wanted the first period of parking to be free to allow for quick convenience shopping. Throughout the survey, people commented on the negative impact they thought parking charges had had for trade, with some suggesting that the most helpful thing the council could do if it wanted to support the High Street was to reverse this decision. This is not something which is within the scope of this project, but this feedback will be shared with decision-makers to help in their ongoing evaluation of parking charges. People asked for measures like a Resident Parking Scheme, to mitigate impacts like increased parking on residential streets.

Additional requests to help people get to the High Street by vehicle included:

- Wider parking bays (two responses),
- More disabled parking spaces (four responses),

- Repainting disabled parking bays (one response),
- Easier technology to pay for parking (one response), and
- Better signage to parking (one response).

Other people saw value in deterring vehicles from the High Street both to improve safety for pedestrians and to make it a more pleasant environment to spend time. Advocated measures included:

- New speed restrictions (eight responses),
- Pedestrianisation on specific days (four responses),
- Removing non-disabled parking from the High Street – one side or both (seven responses), and
- Enforcing existing parking restrictions (four responses).

Some people wanted the place shaping plan to better support use of public transport and active travel, which could be achieved by:

- Improving bus services (15 responses),
- Implementing more/better secure bike storage (eight responses),
- More cycle lanes/tracks (seven responses),
- A new tram route (three responses),
- Improving bus stops and shelters (three responses), and
- Additional bus stops (two responses).

Ten people thought access from the cycle track could be improved. One person commented on the ease of getting to the High Street via alleyways and a student taking part in the engagement workshop suggested that you might do this by opening the blocked lane by the Methodist Church. Page Park was generally considered well-connected and signposted.

Improving accessibility

Respondents felt there were many opportunities to improve accessibility. 46 people thought the priority issue to address was levelling pavements. People with restricted mobility found the two-tiered pavement outside PDSA especially problematic, but there were more general problems with uneven paving throughout the High Street.

Some people thought pavements along whole stretches of the High Street were too narrow, but there were concerns about specific areas, including:

- North/Victoria Street
- On Teewell Hill at the traffic lights by Page Park,
- Near the Hatch,
- Between the Portcullis and Old Mail junction, and
- By Pendennis Road.

Issues were exacerbated because pavements were regularly/permanently blocked by planters, street furniture, A-boards, parked cars, recycling boxes, scooters and bikes.

People with restricted mobility also found it difficult to get into some shops because of steps or raised door thresholds.

Some respondents felt there weren't enough crossing points or dropped kerbs and, in some places, kerbs aren't dropped far enough for wheelchair users. Students felt more crossings were needed to help younger kids get to school safely and new crossing points were also requested in the following areas:

- Page Road,
- Between Byron Pl and Lydney Road,
- Additional crossing on Victoria St,
- At Page Park junction,
- Near Tescos,
- Diagonal crossings at Portcullis crossroads.

Additionally, people asked if the timing of traffic lights could be adjusted and new traffic islands could be installed to allow more time for pedestrians to cross the road.

Speeding vehicles made it difficult and dangerous for people to cross the road.

Other accessibility issues/requests which were highlighted included:

- Loose slabs on the ramp outside the gym,
- Camber on pavement near old pet shop,
- Obstacles near the post office,
- Bath St not accessible,
- Badly positioned cycle parking on North St,
- Lack of public toilets/Page Road toilets disgusting,
- Lack of seating/seating too low,
- No Braille on way-finding signage.

Three people thought accessibility was very good.

Improving public safety

Different people have very different perceptions of public safety. For example, 36 of the people completing the survey felt that the area was generally safe and there were no real issues. 14 others didn't feel safe anywhere and several people said they didn't go out at night because of their concerns. The main areas where people felt unsafe were near the High Street's pubs, in some alleyways, in Fountain Square and the area around it, on the cycle path, and in Page Park, though a full list is provided below.

Where do you feel unsafe	Number of comments
Generally safe	36
Near 501	16
Everywhere	14
Fountain Square	13
Around Wetherspoons	9
Page Park	8

Cycle path	8
Lane behind Iceland	8
Alleyways between High St and Pendennis estate	7
Alleyways in general (location not specified)	7
Alleyway between Soundwell Road and Seymour Road	4
Beaufort Road	2
Fishponds end	2
Vape/betting shops	1
Unlit areas	1
Areas where there are closed down shops	1
Nelson Rd	1
Crossing at Soundwell Rd (traffic)	1
Benches near betting shop	1
Parking areas	1
Berkely Rd	1
North Street (southbound for cyclists)	1

Concerns related to aggressive and intimidating behaviour outside pubs, threat of theft/being attacked on the cycle path, antisocial behaviour (particularly in the areas around Fountain Square) and concern about walking in poorly lit areas (alleyways, Page Park).

Eight people raised road safety concerns for cyclists and pedestrians – one person brought up a particular issue for cyclists travelling southbound on North Street.

Six people mentioned the negative impact the raising of Union and St George flags was having for community cohesion locally, with some feeling intimidated by the groups putting up the flags.

People suggested opportunities to improve public safety – and perception of safety.

What would make you feel safer	Number of comments
Better lighting	58
Police presence	40
CCTV	18
Stop bikes/scooters on pavements	11
Reduce traffic	9
Tackle ASB/public drinking	8
Close/restrict 501/pubs/betting shops	9
Gentrify - new restaurants/better shops/additional footfall	9
Clean up rubbish	6
Level pavements/remove street furniture	4
Stop/limit High Street parking	4
Widen pathways	3
New crossings	3
Address pavement parking	3
20mph limit/tackle speeding	3
Close illegal businesses	2
Panic buttons	1

Lock back parking area	1
Remove frosting from shop windows	1

Improving lighting was the most frequently requested measure, whilst increased police presence and additional CCTV would also reassure people and/or reduce levels of crime and antisocial behaviour.

Most of the issues raised through the survey came under the heading of antisocial behaviour rather than crime, and tackling these issues was seen as a priority to encourage more people to the High Street.

Some people thought the type of shops and venues operating from the High Street didn't help. Staple Hill's pubs and betting shops were seen to be frequented by the 'wrong crowd' and excessive drinking incited trouble. Nine people wanted pubs and betting shops where there had been previous incidents either closed down or restricted, including imposing earlier closing times. Another nine people felt that encouraging new restaurants and shops to the area and increasing footfall would discourage some of the problematic behaviour. Tidying up litter and weeds would have a similar effect in raising residents' pride in their place.

Several people throughout the survey highlighted newer businesses which have sprung up on the High Street, which they felt could be 'fronts' for illegal activities. They wanted more frequent raids of properties and frosted glass to be removed.

The priority for several people was to address accessibility issues and reduce the amount of traffic and the speed of vehicles.

Places for play

Whilst students taking part in the workshop were quite enthusiastic about it, survey respondents ranked 'Delivering places for play on the High Street' as their lowest priority. In commentary, 74 people said that this wasn't needed or that they would prefer play spaces be kept at Page Park. The young people wanted somewhere less of a walk than Page Park for swings and climbing equipment - potentially Fountain Square - but the High Street was considered too near to the main road for younger children to be playing. The western end of the High Street was considered especially barren in terms of facilities and visual interest for young people.

Other concerns were that play equipment – or playing – could hinder accessibility and limit space for other uses. There was also a worry about equipment being vandalised.

Those who thought there might be a place for play on the High Street suggested Fountain Square and the area near the library would be the best location.

Location	Number of comments
Library/Fountain Square	58
Near primary school	3
Outside Greggs	2
Unused car park!	2

Behind Wetherspoons	2
Between Forge and Fern and Page Park	1
Part of high street furthest from Page Park	1
Near church	1
Quieter roads	1
Pendennis estate	1
Common	1

Respondents struggled to envisage how play could be incorporated into the High Street and there were fewer than ten suggestions for the type of play equipment. Options included:

- Interactive elements
- Small maze
- Climbing
- Interactive play trail
- Skateboarding
- Small activities
- Imaginative play

Young people felt the opportunities for them to hang out were extremely limited, especially if it was raining. Some went to Wetherspoons because it was dry and they wouldn't be kicked out! What they really wanted were places where they could go where there were things to do without being pressured to buy anything.

Alternative priorities for spending were to improve play equipment in Page Park – for example a BMX track or skate park, a city farm, or a family focused allotment or food growing area. A couple of people asked if the council could use its influence to encourage a play café to set up on the High Street.

Other priorities for the place shaping plan

There were three other themes which were referred to time and again throughout commentary, which residents thought could have a big difference in securing the future of the High Street.

- Supporting existing independent shops and incentivising a wider range of shops, cafes and restaurants to Staple Hill,
- Reversing the decision to impose parking charges,
- A major tidy up, clearing litter and weeds and then more frequent cleaning and maintenance of streets.

Enhancing the range of shops, cafes and restaurants

The main reason why people said they didn't visit the High Street as much as they did in the past is that there aren't the shops, facilities and venues they want. Feedback was consistent in both the young person's site visit and the survey that the council should work to encourage more independent shops, cafes and restaurants to replace some of the nailbars, hairdressers, estate agents, vape shops, betting

shops, charity shops and takeaways which currently proliferate. Young people were particularly uninspired by the choices on offer. They felt that offering more shops, facilities and activities which specifically appeal to younger people and families would make a positive difference to the longer-term prospects for the High Street.

Suggestions included:

- Offer business rates relief for new independent shops, cafés and restaurants,
- Working with landlords to lower rents for establishments which could enhance the High Street's offer,
- Discouraging businesses which detract from the area and cause social harm,
- Buying empty shops and letting out space to small businesses,
- Purchasing properties to be used as studio space for creatives,
- Providing support to prevent more independent businesses from closing or relocating,
- Providing commercial, financial and marketing advice and support to existing businesses.

An earlier section of the report considered the points raised by those wanting to remove the parking charges. In making it more expensive and inconvenient for prospective shoppers, survey respondents thought the council was harming the prospects of Staple Hill's independent retailers.

A comprehensive clean up

Investment in schemes like greening of the High Street, or painting shop fronts was welcomed. However, many people felt that the council could make a bigger difference by simply tackling issues like litter and antisocial behaviour. Many parts of Staple Hill were seen as neglected, shabby and run-down. People wanted the council to instigate a comprehensive clean-up of the High Street and surrounding areas to instil greater pride in place.

Several people thought that this is something which local groups and residents would want to get involved in and could be positive in bringing the community together and encouraging greater ownership of the High Street.

Other ideas and priorities

- Extend cycle lanes to Staple Hill
- Introduce a one-way system
- Establish a banking hub
- Remove electronic advertising hoardings
- Knock down ugly buildings on north side of High Street
- Create a Staple Hill brand/identity
- Become an eco- high street
- Erect a war memorial
- 'Sort out' old Boots premises
- Address slippery metal plates on pavements
- A buggy park

- Better maintenance of roads
- Address air quality issues
- Free to use cash machines.

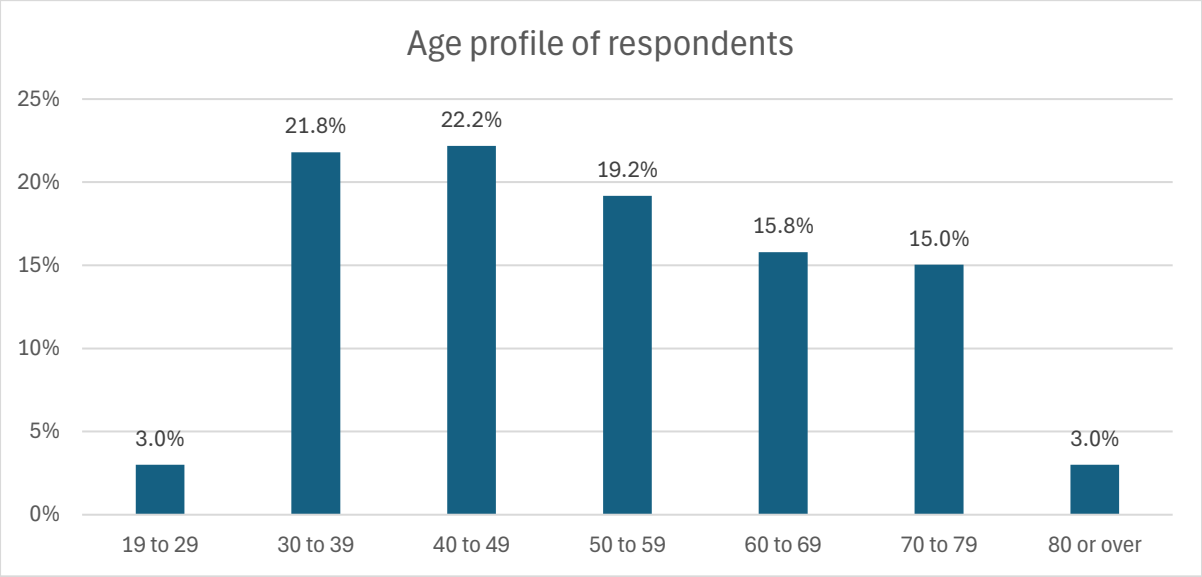
Finally, a handful of people thought that Staple Hill High Street faced too many insurmountable challenges and therefore didn’t want ‘good money thrown after bad’.

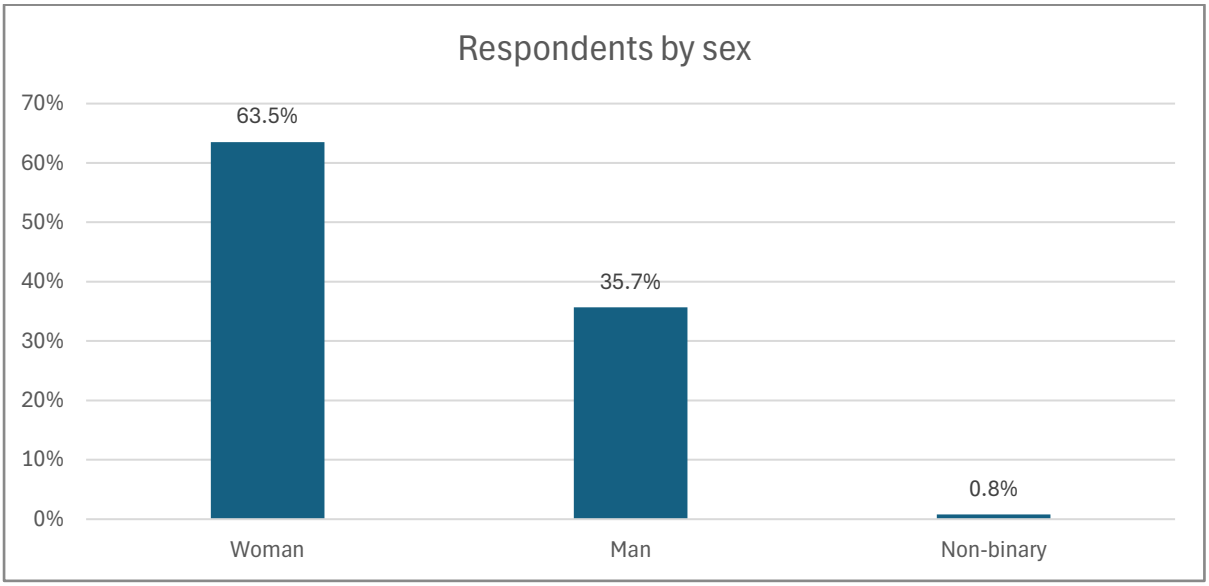
Appendix 1: Respondent profile

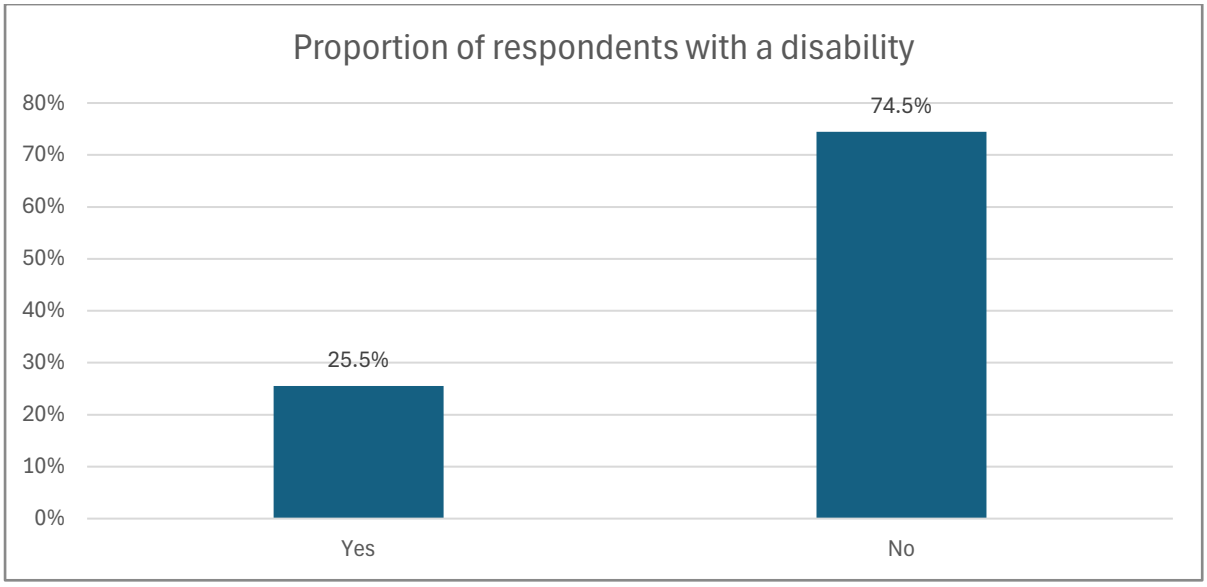
People who completed the survey are not fully representative of the local population:

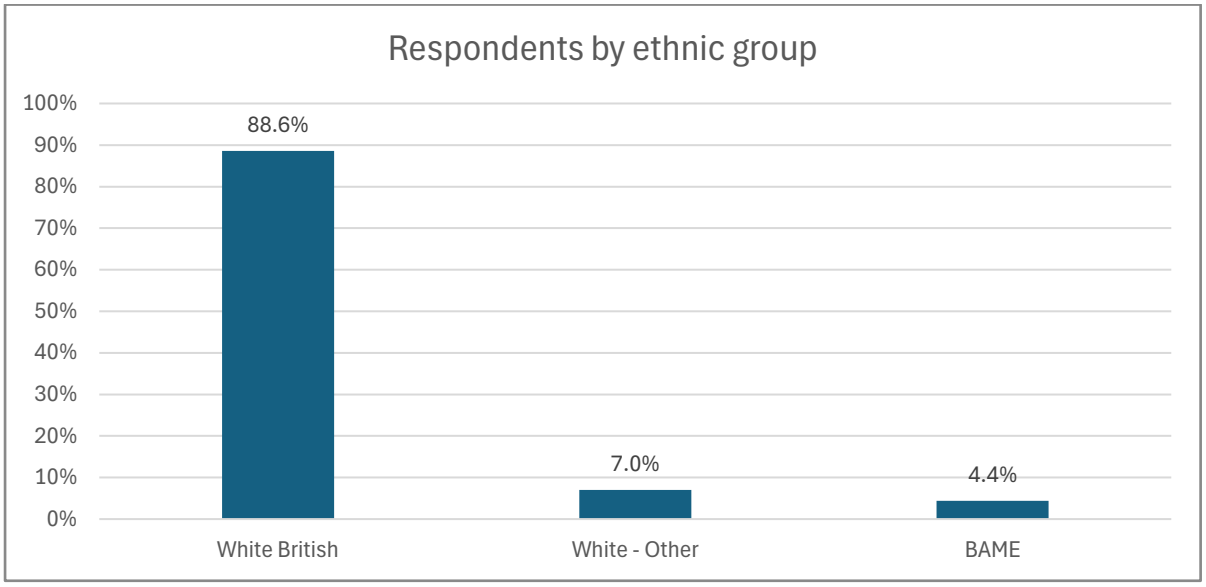
- Much lower proportion of people aged under 30 than who live in Staple Hill
- Much higher proportion of women than men
- A higher proportion of people who self-report as having a disability
- A higher proportion of people in white ethnic groups

The unrepresentative nature of the respondent profile should be considered when reviewing the responses.









Appendix 2: Summary of comments

Comments from survey

Greenery

Types of greenery	Number of comments
Trees	80
Planters	24
Flowers	21
Small shrubs	12
Hanging baskets	12
Herbs	6
Edible fruit	5
Wildflowers	4
Grasses	3

Green walls	2
Pocket parks	2
Water features	2
Communal gardening area	1
Living roofs for bus stops	1

Considerations	Number of comments
Low maintenance	24
Concern about vandalism	13
Budget for maintenance	12
Weather resilient: Drought/wind/heavy rain	11
Planters need more maintenance	5
Already lots of planters	3
Planters cause access problems	3
Enough space for trees?	3
Community managed	2
Trees that don't damage pavement	2
Leaves of trees	1
Collect rainwater	1
Solar powered watering	1
Colourful containers	1

Attributes	Number of comments
Bright/colourful	22
Pollinator friendly	14
All year colour/interest	13
Perennial	10
Evergreen	10
Native/natural	7
Seasonal flare (acer/cherry)	5
Don't want pollinators	1

Inspiration	Number of comments
Like Downend	22
Edible Bristol	1
Like Broadmeadow	1
Tie colours to events	1

Other	Number of comments
Seating	10
Focused on Fountain Square	10
Don't pedestrianise	2
Needs to be large scale/properly funded	2
Continue to Page Park	2
Pedestrianise Signal Road	1

Don't like visuals	1

Shop front scheme

Location	Number of comments
All	52
Fountain Square	33
Library/Fountain Sq to Jason's/Victoria St	21
Central area around crossroads	11
Foucs on older, rundown buildings	11
Area around Wetherspoons	9
Page Park to Jason's/Victoria St	7
Wetherspoons to Portcullis	7
Fountain Square to Page Road	4
Near Tescos	4
Focus on empty shops	3
The approaches (Soundwell Rd/Downend Rd)	2
North of Broad St	2
Fishponds end	2
Teewell to Pendennis	1
Page Road to Soundwell Road	1
Beaufort Road	1
Modern side	1

Priority for improvement	Number of comments
Neon signs/frosted glass	10
General consistency	8
Restore original features	7

Approach	Number of comments
Like Nom	2
Use local artists	1
Like St Marks Road	1
Promote local authors	1

Other comments	Number of comments
Not in favour/not a priority	8
Work with landlords to promote grant applications	2
Landlords responsible	1

Public art

Format	Number of comments
Mural/mural space	33

Sculptures	11
Building art	10
Don't want graffiti/wall art	10
Rotating displays	6
Art	5
Banksy/graffiti	4
Lighting/light installations	3
Art fesitval	2
Designed informational signage	2
Maximise existing features	2
Statues	2
Flags/Bunting	2
Informational displays	1
Don't need signage	1
Wood carvings	1
Stone engravings	1
Yarn bombing	1
Poetry on buses	1
Painted benches	1
Music & dance	1
Displays	1
Tactile	1
Stainless steel	1
Don't want modern art	1
Trail	1

Theme	Number of comments
Local history	22
Bright/Colourful	16
Like the hedgehog	14
Nature/wildlife	11
Railways	7
Celebrate diversity/inclusivity	5
Celebrate our identity	5
More like at Fountain Square	5
Tasteful/Not garish	4
Bedminster	4
Like the coloured benches	3
Celebrate local authors	2
Modern	2
Appeals to children	1
Soften brutalist architecture	1
Victoriana	1
Gromit	1
Vintage with modern twist	1
Traditional	1
Don't like the hedgehog	1

Like the giraffe near Brunt & Russell	1
Local people/celebrities	1
Montpelier	1
Central Bristol	1
Bath Milsom St	1
Kingswood	1
Corner of High St/Pendennis Road	1
Southville	1
Highline, NY	1
Totterdown house colours	1

Involvement	Number of comments
Local artists	24
Local kids/students involved	13
Upfest	3
Banksy	2
Inkie	1
Rising Arts Agency	1

Location	Number of comments
Fountain Square	3
Outside of the gym	1
Major 'entrances' to Staple Hill	1
Bus shelters	1
The Oak	1
Side of St Peter's Hospice shop	1
Beaufort Road	1

Other	Number of comments
Not needed/Waste of money	44
Needs to be maintained/vandalproof	10
Better spent on other things	7
Focus on tidying first	4
Impinge on accessibility	2

Fountain Square

Features	Number of comments
Planters/greenery	56
Hide/soften concrete	19
Fountain/water feature	17
Trees	12
Improve surrounding buildings	11
More public art	9
Colour	7
Central feature	5

Lighting	5
Natural	3
Like the hedgehog	3
Statue	2
Community garden	2
Barricades for Christmas tree	2
Pond	1
Sculpture	1
Pocket park	1
Clock	1

Shops & facilities	Number of comments
European square - outdoor cafes/dining	10
Improve shop fronts	7
Pop-ups/Market stalls (permanent)	5
Independent cafés/restaurants	4
Play area/equipment	4
Improve shops	3
Ice cream van	1

Practicalities	Number of comments
Seating	45
Tidy/maintained	17
Level/improve paving	14
Shelter/shade	9
Picnic benches	3
More bins	2
Improve accessibility e.g. from Beaufort Road	2
Disability friendly seating	1
Address 'wind tunnel'	1

Activities	Number of comments
Markets (regular)	31
More events/music	17
Family activities	2
Exhibitions	1

Other	Number of comments
Anything would be beneficial	15
Tackle ASB	6
Parking charges deter visits	3
Not needed/won't make a difference	3
Remove no ball games/skateboarding signs	2
Parking!	1
Rename it	1

Events & activities

Type of events	Number of comments
Markets	91
Music/street theatre - Bands/Buskers/Poetry	34
Children/family events	15
Carols/Christmas events	14
Food markets/popup food stalls	14
Music events	12
Cultural events	9
Share events/activities with Page Park	9
Community events/street parties	8
Food events	8
Trails	8
Other seasonal events	7
Family/children's activities/clubs e.g. Lego clubs	6
Craft fairs	4
Events tied in with traditional holidays/festivals	4
Summer community event	3
Art displays/installations	2
Community planting/Produce shows	2
Spring event - nature theme	1
Flea markets	1
Craft activities/events	1
Chatty cafes	1

Other	Number of comments
General support	8
Don't want events	3
Support for Chamber of Commerce	1
Need to test different things out	1

Play space

Location	Number of comments
Library/Fountain Square	58
Wider areas of pavement	4
Near primary school	3
Outside Greggs	2
Unused car park!	2
Behind Wetherspoons	2
Between Forge and Fern and Page Park	1
Part of high street furthest from Page Park	1
Near church	1
Quieter roads	1
Pendennis estate	1

Common	1

Type of play equipment	Number of comments
Interactive elements	2
Small maze	1
Climbing	1
Interactive play trail	1
Skateboarding	1
Small activities	1
Imaginative play	1

Other	Number of comments
Not needed/Keep it in Page Park	74
Too near main road	11
Invest in page Park instead	7
Encourage play café	2
Hinders accessibility	2
Limits space for other uses	2
BMX track in Page Park	1
Skate park in Page Park	1
City farm	1
Allotment/food growing	1
Would be vandalised	1
Pavements too uneven	1
Improve access to Page Park	1
Improve access to Railway path	1

Accessibility issues

Accessibility concerns/requests	Number of comments
Level pavements	46
Difficulty accessing shops with door thresholds	14
Need more dropped kerbs	9
Street furniture/Planters on pavements	7
Parking on pavements	6
Widen pavements	6
Remove two tier pavement/install ramps	4
More disabled parking	4
Traffic too fast to cross safely/need traffic islands	4
A-boards on pavements	3
Recycling boxes on pavements	3
Not enough crossing points	3
Cluttered pavements	2
Not enough seating	2
Seating too low	2
Prioritise pedestrians - more time to cross	2

Scooters/bikes on pavements	1
Broken glass	1
Emergency aid support	1
Difficult for sight-impaired people	1
Need public toilets	1
No covered seating	1
Want braille on way-finding signage	1
Repaint markings for disabled parking	1
Widen parking bays	1
Dropped kerbs not dropped enough	1
Speeding vehicles/dangerous driving	1

Other	Number of comments
Cars prioritised/dominate	4
Accessibility is good	3
Issues are easy to see/conduct an audit	2
Ask people with mobility needs	1

Improving access

Parking	Number of comments
Affordable/Free parking	99
Free first hour/half hour parking	10
Remove parking from High St - one side or all	7
Enforce parking restrictions	4
Need more parking	3
Wider parking bays	2
Sufficient free disabled parking	2
Signage to parking	1
Introduce an RPS	1

Public transport & active travel	Number of comments
Improve bus services	15
Reduce number of/speed of cars	8
Secure bike storage	8
More cycle tracks/lanes	7
Pedestrianise/ on certain days	4
Better maintenance of footpaths	4
Tram route	3
Improve bus stops/shelters	3
More bus stops	2
Don't want cycle lanes	1

Access	Number of comments
Access from cycle track	3
Alleyways to High Street	1

Other	Number of comments
Street lighting	4
Seating	2
Get rid of yellow lines	1
Charging for electric scooters	1
Don't pedestrianise	1

Improving public safety

Where do you feel unsafe	Number of comments
Generally safe	36
Near 501	16
Everywhere	14
Fountain Square	13
Around Wetherspoons	9
Page Park	8
Cycle path	8
Lane behind Iceland	8
Alleyways between High St and Pendennis estate	7
Alleyways in general (location not specified)	7
Alleyway between Soundwell Road and Seymour Road	4
Beaufort Road	2
Fishponds end	2
Vape/betting shops	1
Unlit areas	1
Areas where there are closed down shops	1
Nelson Rd	1
Crossing at Soundwell Rd (traffic)	1
Benches near betting shop	1
Parking areas	1
Berkely Rd	1
North Street (southbound for cyclists)	1

Issues	Number of comments
Issues at night	12
Risk to pedestrians/cyclists from cars	8
Only go out during daylight hours	7
Fights/intimidation	4
Trips and falls	4
ASB/People hanging around	3
Flags	2
Speeding cars	2
Weekends	1
Gangs with electric bikes	1

Men harassing women	1
Illegal electric scooters/bikes	1
Theft	1
Drunk drivers	1
Pavement parking	1

What would make you feel safer	Number of comments
Better lighting	58
Police presence	40
CCTV	18
Stop bikes/scooters on pavements	11
Reduce traffic	9
Tackle ASB/public drinking	8
Close/monitor 501/pubs/betting shops	8
Gentrify - new restaurants/better shops	7
Clean up rubbish	6
Level pavements/remove street furniture	4
Stop/limit High Street parking	4
Widen pathways	3
New crossings	3
Address pavement parking	3
20mph limit/tackle speeding	3
Close illegal businesses	2
Footfall improves safety	2
Panic buttons	1
Curfew pub closing times	1
Lock back parking area	1
Remove frosting from shop windows	1

Comments from library ideas wall

Theme	Number of comments
Range of shops / facilities	14
Street cleansing/better maintenance	11
Graffiti/tagging	7
Planting/trees	3
Improve fountain square	3
Parking charges	3
Events	3
Cycle infrastructure	1
Improve look	1
Seating	1
Accessibility	1

YOU&ME

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Young People’s Engagement Report

19.12.2025

1.0 Overview + Workshop Structure

2.0 Workshop Findings: Understanding Staple Hill High Street
- How young people use their high street
- Words to describe Staple Hill High Street
- Favourite places on the high street
- Which areas and what needs improving?
- What do young people want more of?

3.0 Workshop Findings: Design Ideas
- Design ideas: Public Realm
- Design ideas: Public Art
- Design ideas: Events & Activities
- Design ideas: Fountain Square focus area

4.0 Key Findings & Design Actions
- Key findings summary
- Design actions to consider taking forward

1.0 Overview

As part of the community engagement for the Staple Hill Place Shaping Plan, the design team (YOU&ME Architecture and Bath & North East Somerset Council) delivered a young people's workshop and site walk. The aim of the session was to give young people a voice in shaping the future of their High Street and to help us understand how children and young people use their high street, what they love about it and what improvements they would like to see.

The session was run on Wednesday 3rd December 9.40am - midday.

We further engaged via:

- A poster display at Mangotsfield Secondary School inviting young people to feedback, extending reach to those who didn't participate in the workshop. The poster display was a replica of the wider community engagement at the Library.
- The school included information about the wider community engagement and links to the online commonplace survey in their newsletter, extending reach to parents of the school.

Who took part?

Workshop participants:

- Mangotsfield Secondary School.
- A young people focus group was formed of 11-15yr old children that live in the immediate vicinity of the Staple Hill High Street.
- No. of participants: 15 people.

Names of pupils attending, Male (M)/ Female (F) and year group:

permission to use names pending

Workshop facilitators:

- Alicja Borkowska (YOU&ME Architecture)
- Becky Welford (B&NES Council)
- Sasha Murray (B&NES Council)
- Sarah Milne (South Gloucestershire Council)

This report has been put together by Alicja Borkowska, director at YOU&ME Architecture www.youandmearchitecture.com.

Workshop structure

The session was formed of a guided site walk followed by a workshop in Page Community Association on Page Road.

SITE WALK
Site walk along the High street starting at Page Park Clocktower and ending at Page Road Community Association. Stopping at key points along the high street including Fountain Sq, key junctions and the library, where the wider community consultation posters were on display.

Young people observed and documented the High Street using mapping, drawing and words.

DOODLE MAPS: Young people were asked to draw word map doodle drawings of High Street recording activities, public realm, greenery, sounds, colours, smells, landmarks, feelings, things they like/don't like.

DOODLE POEMS: Young people were asked to "BE A POET / SPOKEN WORD ARTIST / SONG WRITER: COLLECT PHRASES, WORDS, FEELINGS" and to write their own observations and reactions to the High Street as well as listening to others to collect sound bites and phrases.

WORKSHOP
Following the site walk, the group took part in a series of interactive workshop activities. Using a large 2.5m map with photo elevations, stickers and post-it notes, young people discussed how they currently use the High Street, identified favourite places and areas needing improvement. Short precedent examples were shared to support discussion and help young people imagine different possibilities.

In the second half of the session, participants worked in smaller facilitated groups to explore future ideas in more depth, focusing separately on public realm, public art, and events and activities. Ideas were shared back with the whole group and mapped spatially. The workshop concluded with an individual design exercise focused on Fountain Square, where young people sketched and annotated ideas for how the space could be used and improved, followed by group discussion.



High Street workshop mapping

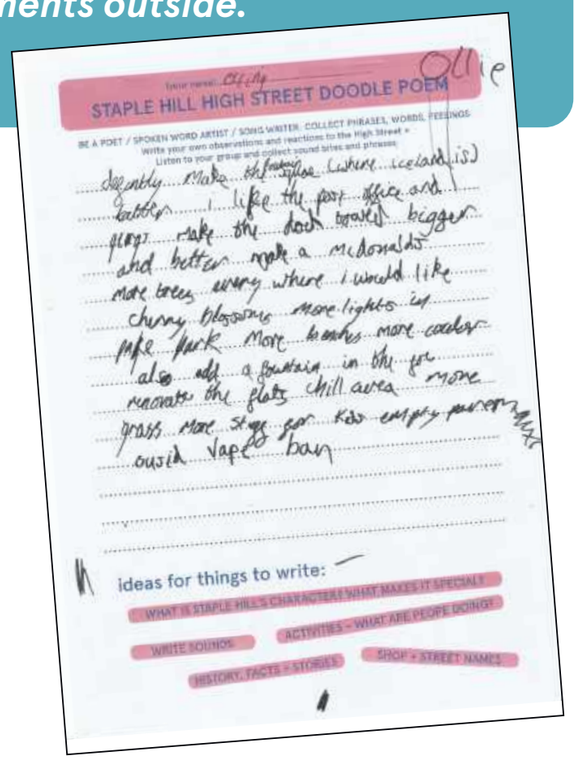


DOODLE POEM by Ollie

Definitely make fountain square better (where Iceland is),
I like the post office and Greggs, the clock tower. Bigger and better.
Make a MacDonald's.

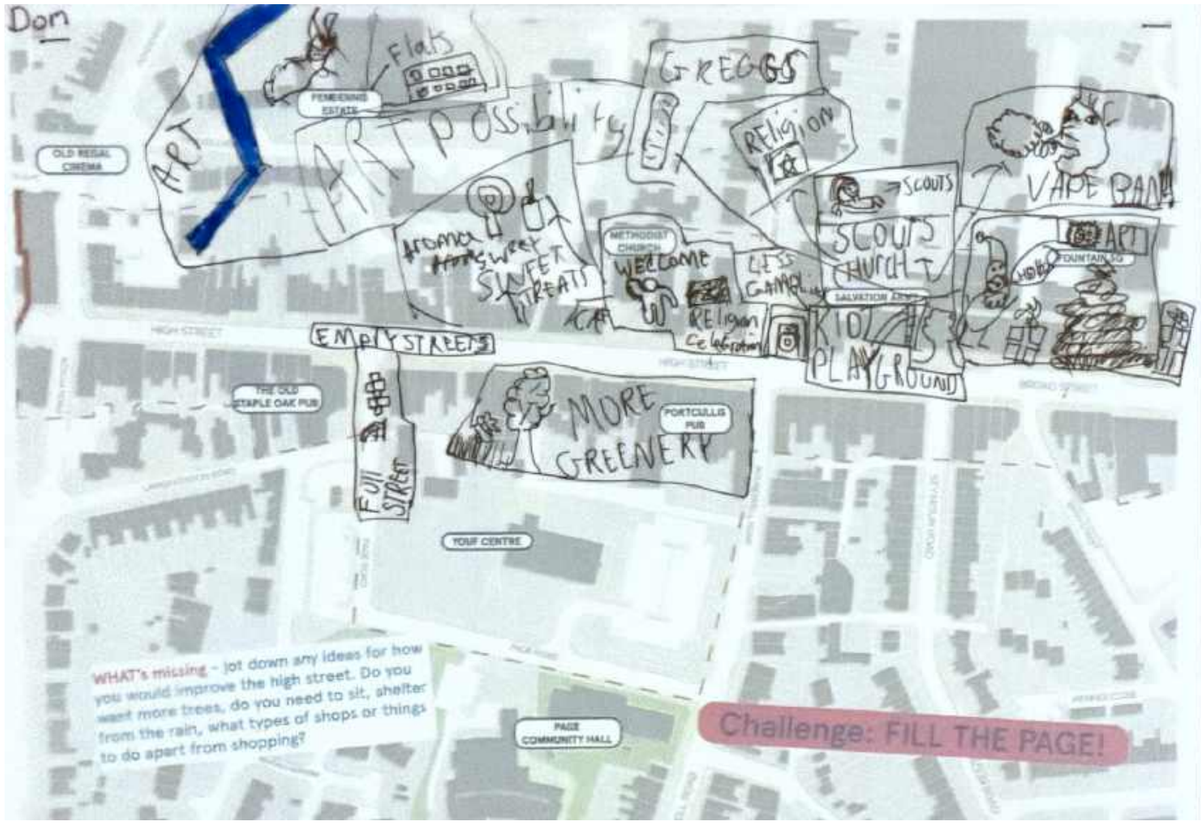
More trees everywhere – I would like cherry blossoms,
More lights in Page Park. More benches.
More colour.
Also add a fountain in the square.
Renovate the flats.

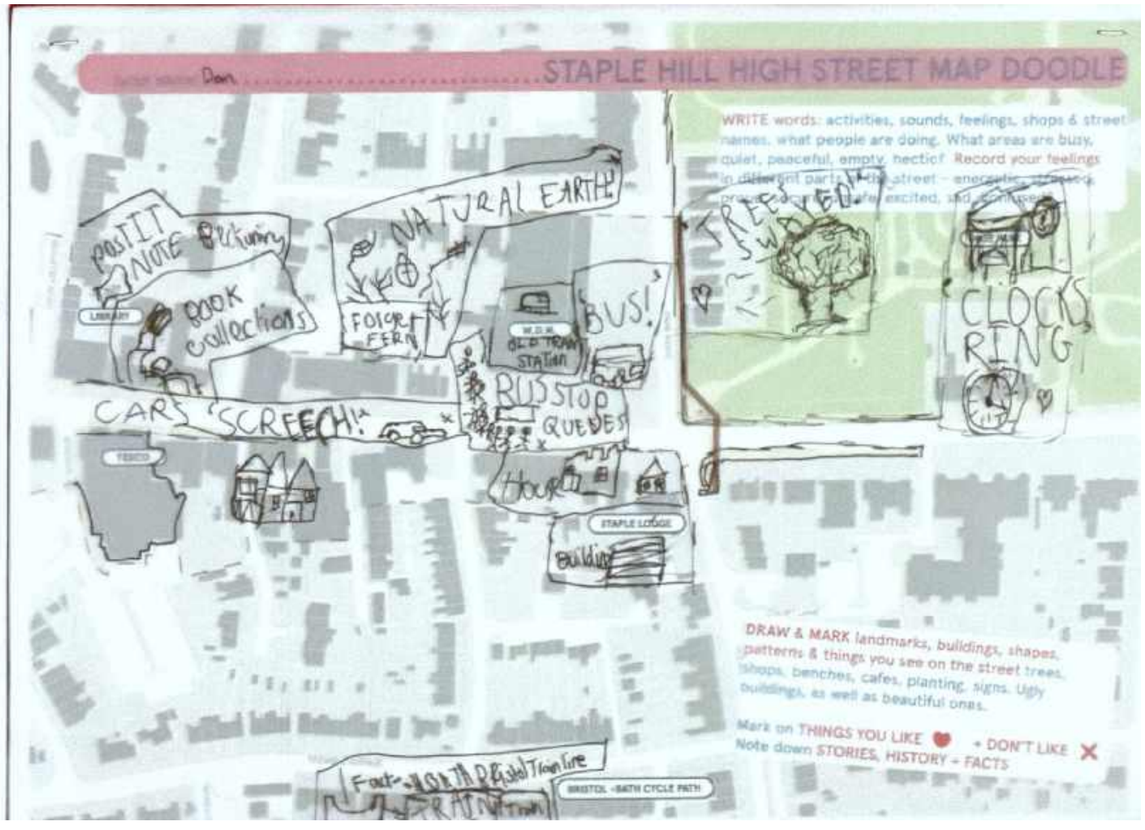
Chill area.
More grass.
More stuff for kids.
Empty pavements outside.
Vape ban.



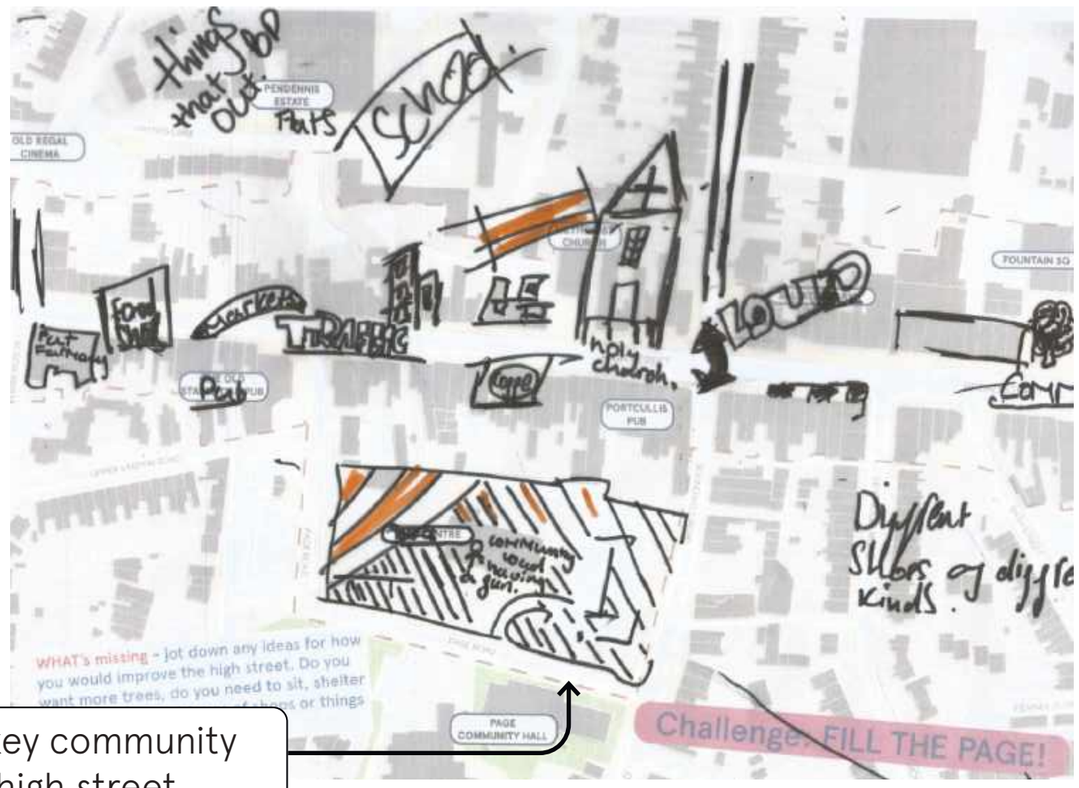
High Street site walk mapping and doodling observations

High Street doodle word map drawing by Dom & Noah









maps highlighting key community spaces off the high street

(your name)

STAPLE HILL HIGH STREET DOODLE POEM

BE A POET / SPOKEN WORD ARTIST / SONG WRITER: COLLECT PHRASES, WORDS, FEELINGS
Write your own observations and reactions to the High Street +
Listen to your group and collect sound bites and phrases

Calm and quiet
Big clock tocoer
More warm spaces
Greggs
Barking
Lights
Birds - Budgies
Good for walking dogs.
Big trees
Balls club
More fast food
A variety of plants
Transport
cars / vans - beeping
More christmas decoration.
Better lights.
cake.
Forge Fern
Library needs
renewing.
consistant
cleanness.
Be more
welcoming.
More benches.
(nicely painted).

ideas for things to write:

WHAT IS STAPLE HILL'S CHARACTER? WHAT MAKES IT SPECIAL?

WRITE SOUNDS

ACTIVITIES - WHAT ARE PEOPE DOING?

HISTORY, FACTS + STORIES

SHOP + STREET NAMES

Annie-Mae Pearce

Isis Evans

(your name)

STAPLE HILL HIGH STREET DOODLE POEM

Repaint the steps.
nice mural
uninviting
coloured
inviting
~~so~~ some things look tacky
trees around fountain square
bland and grey pavements
lots of hairdressers
lights in the windows of shops
lots of things for older people
not as much things for younger people
window decorations inviting
out dated
shops look abandoned
outdoor displays
cafe is colourful
sketchy and dirty alleyways
Sinage
more plants



DOODLE POEM by Myleigh + Rosie

Relaxing – Page park, well kept, Artisan market
More warm spaces on the high street, more charity shops.
Bird chirping. Lots of trees, old train depot.

More lively shops – outside look more interesting and in
More inviting – more benches on the high street
Better Christmas lights or just in general – nicer barriers.

Why is there no fountain in fountain square?
Fountain Square – inviting – more colour

More charity events
Nicer pubs

Nothing to do

More parking for cars.
Nice decorative buildings.
More greenery.

2.0 Workshop findings: Understanding Staple Hill High Street

How do young people use the High St?

- Shopping
- To go out for food
- For socialising, meeting friends
- As a route to walk to go to school or go to other community buildings

Words to describe Staple HIll High Street?

- Welcoming
- My home, I live here
- Community
- Shopping
- The high street looks old and doesn't draw the eye
- Plenty of shops
- Affordable
- Dirty
- Busy

Favourite places on the High Street and why?

We asked the young people to mark heart stickers on the map and discuss their favourite places and shops:

PLACES & COMMUNITY BUILDINGS

Most popular:

Page Park
- "It's a calming space", "good to walk around", "I go there to play", "peaceful with bird life and nature".
- "If I want to play on the high street I walk to the park as there isn't anywhere to play here."

Fountain Square
- "It's the only place to rest & chill on the high street."
- "The mural" – it was noted that this hasn't been graffiti-ed over and that people love it.

The library
- Only a few commented positively; many identified this as needing improvements.

Also mentioned:

Methodist Church
- "My old preschool."

SHOPS & FOOD PLACES

Most popular:

Post Office
- "I love the owner, and it's where you get your parcels."

Old Staple Oak Wetherspoons pub
- "Good food, good drinks, pool and dart board and it's warm."
- "It's cheap"

Greggs
- "It's warm and you can get cheap food"
- "make it bigger!"

Tesco
- "Good stuff to buy and it's cheap."

Also mentioned:

Guru J
- "The burgers are soo good"
- "it's too good."

Corner shop by Page Park
- "It's a family business corner shop and you can get good stuff. It's cheap and you can visit 'boss man'."

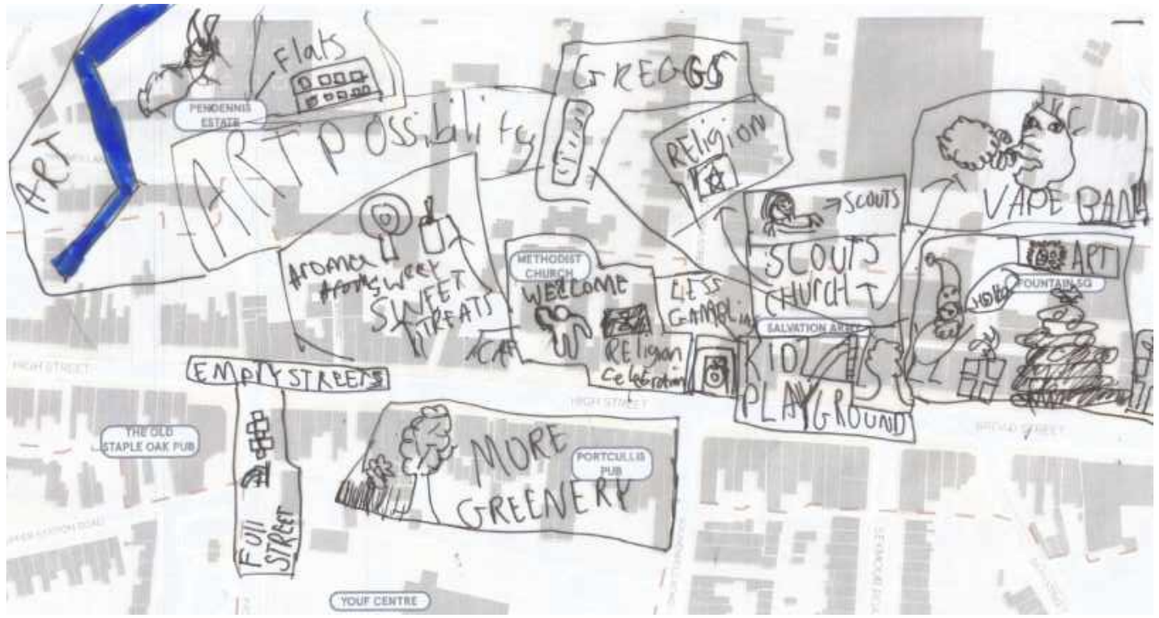
Staple Hill Chip Shop
- "Tasty, cheap and close."

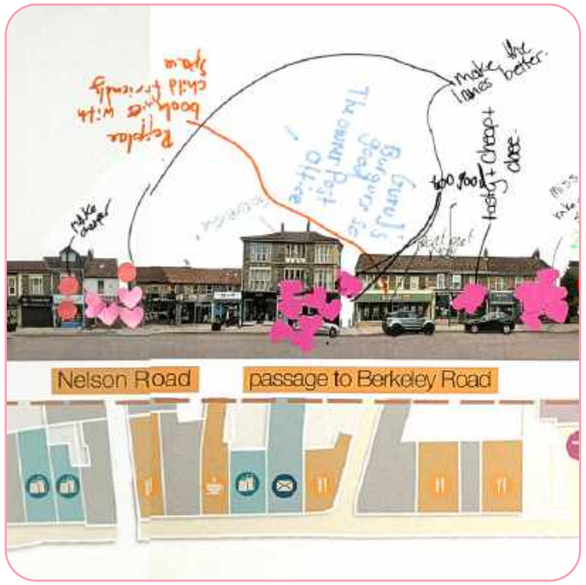
Iceland
- "I like to climb up and sit on top of the awning and look out over the square."

Jason's
- "but closes too early."

Cold Beer Cave corner shop
Miss Millie's takeaway food shop
Fresh Fruit & Veg
Nail bar
St Peter's Hospice



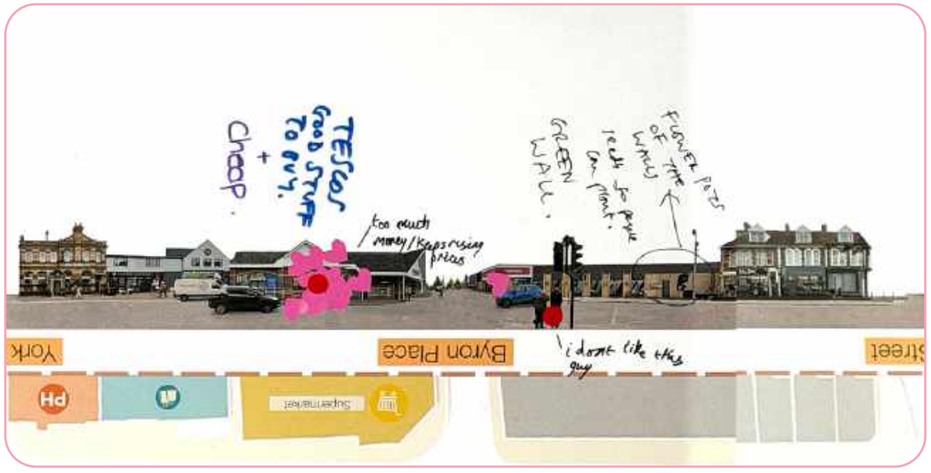












Heart stickers mark favourite places and shops

Red dot stickers mark areas or things that need improving

2.5m long workshop map with zoomed in extracts

2.0 Workshop findings: Understanding Staple Hill High Street

Which areas and what needs improving?

We asked the young people to mark red dot stickers on the map on areas or places they felt needed improving:

LANES BETWEEN HIGH STREET AND PENDENNIS ESTATE:
- "Make the lanes better."
- Discussion about safety and a recent incident involving a parent.
- Make more connections between the high street and the housing behind, one person suggested opening up the block up lane by the Methodist Church

FOUNTAIN SQUARE
- Described as "Empty", "Nothing to do, boring."
- Floor surface needs improving – cracked surfaces and trip hazards.
- "Lighting needs improving – really dull at the moment."

LIBRARY
- "I've never been to the library, probably as it's not that noticeable."
- "The library needs renewing."
- "Change the existing artwork (colourful books) to make it more enticing to get people into the library"
- "All the colours have been drained."
- "The paper above needs to be more colourful."
- "I want more books and better book choices."
- "I hate reading."

ROAD JUNCTION AT HIGH ST / BROAD ST & SOUNDWELL ROAD (outside Portcullis Pub and 501 bar)
- Reason unknown, possibly as its very narrow pavements with busy road and difficult to cross?

SHOP OFFER: Improve Range
- "Too many shops with the same thing – too many barbers and estate agents. I want more places to eat (Mac Ds!) and less gamblin"',
- Brunt & Fussell - Too many estate agents
- Too many bookies – "replace bookies with child friendly space" (Backhouse bookies)
- "Get rid of the vape shops".
- Wild yeast – we want more food options and more pastries.

SHOP OFFER: Improve Affordability
- Sweat Treats – make cheaper
- Guru J's – too expensive
- Tesco "too much money and they keep raising their prices".

SHOP OFFER: Other
- Jasons – "Closes too early"

THE PLANTERS
- Plants are dead, not colourful and too many nettles to the planters

THE COLOUR OF THE HIGH STREET:
- The tarmac of the road and crossings – "I don't like this – too much grey"

What do young people want more of?

"A MORE WELCOMING HIGH ST"

COLOUR & DECORATION
- "More art and murals."
- "More colour."
- Better and more Christmas decorations; the orange highway barriers around the Christmas trees were mentioned as not being very nice.

GREENERY
- "More trees everywhere, I would like cherry blossoms."
- "More planters, but they need to be more colourful."
- Bird feeders to encourage nature.
- Green walls.

SEATING, SHELTER AND DWELL SPACES
- Areas to sit outside and more benches - "waterproof benches", "nicely painted benches."
- "Nowhere you can go if it's raining."
- "Nowhere you can go for free."

WARM SPACES
- Children noted they go to places like Wetherspoons and Greggs because they are warm, affordable and allow them to dwell without being moved on.
- "I feel like there should be pubs for children."

PLAY, ACTIVITIES AND THINGS TO DO
- "More activities."
- "More games for children."
- "Swings, climbing and more interesting stuff."
- "We need a play area, I have to walk to the park as not really anywhere to play here."
- "Replace bookies with child friendly space."

LIGHTING AND FEELING OF SAFETY
- "More lights in Page Park."
- "More lights in the lanes to feel safer."
- Alleyways described as "dark and don't feel safe."
- Girls' focus group identified lighting at night and after school in winter as important.
- The girls group also noted that there are sometimes "a lot of drunks" on Fountain Square.

BETTER CONNECTIONS
- "Connect Page Road more with the main high street."
- "Make it safer for school."
- "A new zebra crossing on Page Road."

SHOP OFFER
- "More lively shops." A few commented on there being too many shops for elderly people (e.g. selling mobility sooters etc).
- "More food options and cafés – more fresh pastries, a patisserie!"
- "More charity shops."
- "Cheaper shops."
- A Boots or a Superdrug

OTHER FACILITIES:
- "More toilets – WCs on Page Road are disgusting."









Areas needing improvement identified by the young people:

- *The library*
- *Fountain Square*
- *The Lanes to Pendennis Estate*

3.0 Workshop findings: Design ideas

Design ideas for Staple Hill High Street

The group was split into smaller focus groups to discuss and brainstorm ideas for PUBLIC REALM, PUBLIC ART and EVENT & ACTIVITIES in more detail.

PUBLIC REALM

GENERAL
- More trees to the south side of the road
- Trees to the middle of the road to hide the traffic
- "Adding colour to the roads and cross walks"
- More hanging signs to make shops more visible when you are walking past

FOUNTAIN SQUARE
- Lights around Iceland
- More trees with benches to the bases
- Add rocks with moss and grass
- I want a fountain, a water slide
- Outlook from the square: Green wall and flower pots on the walls of the gym opposite Fountain Square – "you could have seeds so people can plant and get involved"

EASTERN END OF HIGH ST
- More benches outside WDM depot and offices

WESTERN END OF THE HIGH ST
- Need more parks and things for children to play with down this end of the High Street.
- Shops feel run down; moss on flats.

WIDER PAVEMENT BETWEEN SALVATION ARMY and LIBRARY
- Improve the entrance and pavements outside the library to make it more visible
- More café and restaurants to the with seating outside.
- Pavement outside Greggs – floor painting and seating outside with a gazebo to give a sheltered space and somewhere to eat your lunch.
- More trees to the wider pavements
- More events and stuff happening - exercise machines and chalk drawings to the floor

PUBLIC ART

Thoughts on current public art:
- Liked how the hedgehog mural links back to the wildlife of Page park- maybe a future theme to use
- Never noticed the metal artwork on the corner of Pendennis park house - not very engaging for them
- Area needs more art and colour
- A number of people noted that the artwork to the library was not noticeable and looked washed out

Where on the high street would you like to have public art?
- Fountain Square
- The library – improve the existing high level artwork and add "a book statue in front of the library, it could be an interactive noticeboard where you can write ideas for books, what genre you want".
- At key road junctions
- Mural to WDM building to show the tram history and the tram shed
- Alleyways to Penndennis Estate

Ideas for types of public art?
- "Art for everyone"
- Young people loved the idea of colourful crossings/ junctions, especially by Page road and the junction by the park
- A changing mural
- A mural they could get involved with - some of the group were really into painting and drawing and thought it was an exciting opportunity!
- Colourful signage
- Installations on walls to show more history of staple hill (like YOU&ME Architecture's hat pin factory precedent)
- Could there be a treasure hunt or arts trail to link all the artworks?

Themes for public art
- Wildlife themes:
  - Staple Hill oak and history
  - Celebrate and link to Page park's nature
  - LInk back to natural surroundings and animals of surrounding area
- Industrial history of staple hill- railway, trams
- Food - celebrating the diversity of food
- Aspirational words such as "Don't give up" quotes
- Sports - one of the group played rugby, but noted there wasn't really a local team.

How to bring colour to the high street
- Murals
- Young people liked the idea of colourful murals in the alleyways from Pendennis estate Plants and paintings of plants
- Colourful crossings,
- Decorate the bins and post boxes
- Planting
- Paintings of planting and greenery
- Glitter everywhere!

Would you be interested in being involved in future art opportunities e.g. mural residencies?
- Yes!
- Also would be interested in getting involved with community changing planters

Other comments
- We need to make Staple Hill more welcoming and have a joined up community. We need to bring more people to the high street - an attraction like artworks would be a great way to do this!

EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

What activities currently happen on the high street (beyond shopping):
- Xmas-on-the-hill
- Page Park monthly Market

Ideas for how these can be fostered and supported.
- Have a focal point that can be used for events in Fountain Square, make it movable.
- Better lighting and fairy lights to Fountain Square
- Have a annual Santa on a float that goes around the neighbourhoods

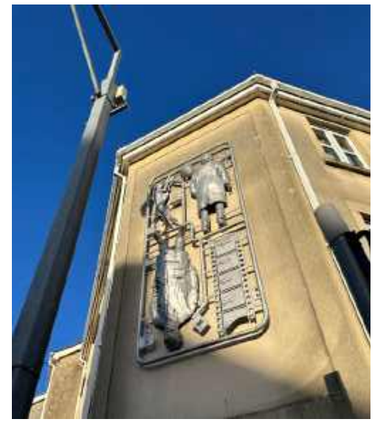
How could these events be better for you?
- Have more clothes stalls at the market

Ideas for events
- "More festivals right here! Like Xmas on the hill"
- Regular monthly events with stalls
- Events for children

Ideas for activities in Fountain Square:
- A Ferris Wheel
- Hamocks
- Climbing
- Outdoor gym

Ideas for activities along the high street:
- Bird feeders to encourage nature
- Ability to use scooters
- A zip-line along the high street to allow you to get to school quickly





Existing public art

3.0 Workshop findings: Design ideas

Design ideas for Fountain Square

Young people were asked individually to reflect on the discussions on public realm, public art and events & activities and apply these to design ideas for Fountain Square.

A worksheet with existing photos to draw over was provided together with prompts.

FOUNTAIN SQUARE

Words to describe Fountain Square now:
"Dull, nothing to do, boring"

Words to describe Fountain Square look & feel in the future:
Cute, colourful, loads to do.
Welcoming, inviting, Natural

Ideas for Fountain Square public realm:

- Seating and tables - tables to eat at, bigger benches where you can meet as group – current benches only allow for a few people.
- A sheltered space and stage that can be used for events, performances and also day-to-day activities
- A focal point - make it less empty
- A clocktower Lighting - "lights to the trees"
- Introduce nature - trees, grass, bird feeders, seeds and flowers on green wall, planters, replace the cars parked next to Fountain Square with trees!
- Clean up the buildings around the square – add flowers to them
- Flooring to be more colourful, potential to incorporate play and art
- Re-introduce a fountain with water play
- More colour
- WELCOME to STAPLE HILL sign.
- Improve signage generally e.g. make the wayfinding map more welcoming and bright and bigger.
- Nicer bins and move them so they are not in the middle of the space. Add recycling bins.
- Railings you can use for locking your bike and e-scooter area

Ideas for play:

- Play to the central podium area
- Floor art and games like hopscotch & chess on the floor
- Kid friendly outdoor exercise machines
- Climbing wall and climbing frame
- More stuff for smaller children, slides and play objects to jump over
- Zip line
- A play area with a box to hide in

Ideas for public art:

- Artwork mentioning STAPLE HILL
- Artworks with facts about Staple Hill – did you know the WDM building was a tram station?
- Adding more murals like the existing hedgehog one.
- A doodle wall.
- Artworks about wildlife and sport.

Ideas of events & activities:

- Regular monthly events
- Music events & performances
- Speakers for music
- Fairs to raise money
- Market stalls
- Pop-up food stalls
- Outdoor gym exercise machines
- Running club around the square
- Designing the square so you can use your skateboard, scooter or bike





DOODLE POEM by Isis Evans

Repaint the steps.
Nice mural.

Uninviting shutter.
Coloured benches.
Inviting smell.
Some things look tacky.

Trees around Fountain Square.
Bland and grey pavements.

Lots of hairdressers. Lights in the windows of shops.

Lots of things for older people.
Not so much things for younger people.

Window decorations inviting. Out dated.
Shops look abandoned.
Outdoor displays.
Café is colourful.
Sketchy and dirty alleyways. Signage.
More plants.

4.0 Key findings & design actions

Key findings summary

Young people use the High Street **every day** — for **shopping**, **eating**, **meeting and socialising with friends**, and as an important **route to walk** to school and other community buildings. They clearly value their High Street, describing it as **"my home, it's where I live," "busy," "welcoming," and "community."** At the same time, some felt it **"looks old and doesn't draw the eye"** and described it as **"dirty,"** showing that while they value and care about the High Street, they would like to see it improved.

Young people highlighted a number of welcoming and familiar places on the High Street — particularly **Page Park, Fountain Square**, and several well-used shops such as **The Post Office, Greggs, Wetherspoons and Tesco** — but also felt that the High Street overall lacks colour, places to sit, shelter, and spaces designed for them. There is a strong desire for **warm and/or sheltered spaces,** where they can spend time without being moved on, alongside **more affordable food options**, cafés and everyday shops. The **shop mix is seen as repetitive**, with too many barbers, estate agents, gambling and vape shops, and **not enough places to eat, sit or spend time**.

A consistent message is the **absence of play and child-friendly spaces**, meaning young people often have to walk to Page Park to play. **Fountain Square** was seen as the only space to "rest and chill" on the High Street, but is currently described as dull and lacking day-to-day activity, with a strong desire to make it more welcoming through **better lighting, seating, shelter, greenery, play** and **more regular music, performance and food events,** such as Xmas-on-the-hill.

Concerns about **lighting and safety** were raised, especially by girls, around **alleyways** linking the High Street to surrounding housing and Page Road. Young people want better lighting, routes that feel safer, and **clearer connections between the school, community facilities on Page Road** and the High Street.

Young people also want a **greener and more colourful** High Street, with more trees, planting, nature, and engaging public art. They were especially enthusiastic about the existing mural and loved the idea of **more murals, colourful crossings, and artworks** that reflects local **wildlife, food** and **Staple Hill's history**. They expressed an interest in being part of any mural projects and community planting projects.

Overall, young people want a High Street that feels more welcoming, brighter, greener and more lively, with more seating, shelter, events and activities that make it a place they want to visit, stay in, and feel part of.

4.0 Key findings & design actions

Design actions to consider taking forward

Fountain Square
Role: The main dwelling space on the high street.

Key Design Actions to consider:
- Redesign as a welcoming, active public square, prioritising staying, sitting and socialising.
- Introduce generous seating (large benches, group seating, tables) and covered/sheltered areas.
- Provide a covered structure or stage to support performances, music, markets and events (e.g. Xmas on the Hill).
- Improve lighting levels
- Introduce greenery and nature: trees, green walls, planters, grass elements, bird feeders, water feature.
- Use colourful paving and surface treatments to integrate play, art and identity.
- Integrate public art that references Staple Hill, wildlife and local history.
- Improve bins, recycling and wayfinding, including a visible "Welcome to Staple Hill" sign.
- Make the square more visible from the street by removing the parked cars

Page Park & Eastern End of the High Street
Role: Green anchor and key asset for play, nature and wellbeing; gateway between High Street and park.

Key Design Actions to consider:
- Strengthen the visual and physical connection between Page Park and the High Street.
- Extend the green character of the park into the street through trees, planting and softer edges.
- Provide playful elements along the High Street edge (stepping, climbing, ground games).
- Use public art and wayfinding to celebrate Page Park's wildlife and identity and Staple Hill Tram's history.
- More benches outside WDM depot and bus stop area

Western End of the High Street
Role: Currently less active and less green with narrower pavements; opportunity for rebalancing activity and play.

Key Design Actions to consider:
- Introduce small-scale play elements and informal activity spaces.
- Improve greening and planting to address run-down appearance.
- Add seating and social spaces to support everyday use.
- Use art, colour and lighting to refresh character and identity.
- Explore opportunities for micro-parks or pocket play spaces.
- Widen narrow pavements

Lanes & Alleyways (Connections to Pendennis Estate & housing)
Role: Important pedestrian routes currently perceived as uncomfortable and unsafe.

Key Design Actions to consider:
- Treat lanes as active connectors, not back-of-house spaces.
- Upgrade lighting to improve visibility and comfort.
- Use murals, colour and artwork to make lanes feel more welcoming.
- Introduce play and activity
- Where possible, open up blocked or underused routes

Page Road Connection (School & Community Facilities)
Role: Key daily route for young people accessing school and community buildings.

Key Design Actions to consider:
- Improve pedestrian safety (including potential zebra crossings).
- Enhance wayfinding and visual cues linking Page Road to the High Street.
- Design connections to feel direct, clear and child-friendly.

Wider Pavement Areas (Inc outside Greggs & Salvation Army)
Role: Everyday spill out spaces for eating, meeting and informal activity and improving walking experience.

Key Design Actions to consider:
- Prioritise outdoor seating and tables, especially near food outlets.
- Introduce sheltered seating (shop canopies, gazebos).
- Use colourful paving or painted surfaces to define social and play zones.
- Integrate trees and planters to improve comfort and soften the street
- Allow space for temporary activities (chalk drawing, pop-up events, small performances, markets).

Along the High Street (Continuous Interventions)
Role: Create a consistent, welcoming pedestrian-friendly experience throughout.

Key Design Actions to consider:
- Introduce regular seating
- Increase tree planting
- Add green walls
- Apply colour to crossings and junctions to improve identity and pedestrian priority.
- Integrate public art into walls, furniture, crossings and surfaces.
- Upgrade bins and street furniture, including recycling.
- Ensure the High Street supports free, inclusive use, not just spending.
- Widen narrow pavements

Events & Activities (Across Multiple Locations)
Role: Support everyday life and occasional larger events.

Key Design Actions to consider:
- Design surfaces and spaces to accommodate markets, festivals, performances and pop-ups. Provide power, lighting and infrastructure where possible.
- Ensure Fountain Square and wider pavements can support both daily use and events.
- Consider local partners to support public art programmes and getting young people involved in mural residencies, mural street art festivals etc. as well as community planting and growing initiatives.
- Explore vacant units as pop-up community spaces for young people which could provide a warm meeting spaces where children and young people can gather, sit, and socialise, particularly in colder or wetter months.
- A number of young people noted that they did not use the library and didn't read - could the library offer some of these warm spaces? Or could the library activities extend to provide more activities for youth and young people? This may already exist, so it may be a question of raising awareness.
- A number of children loved the Post Office as that was where they picked up their parcels. Is there an opportunity to use this activity to animate spaces or places? Or encourage young people to go to places where they don't usually go e.g. library?
- More WCs to support larger events/activities


SHOPPING
SOCIALISING
FRIENDS
THE POST OFFICE IS NICE - I LOVE THE
TREES
MORE ART