COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

9

Community engagement is a central element of this place-shaping plan. The previous engagement responses were initially reviewed to understand whether local priorities have shifted over recent years.

The Council has already delivered several initiatives in response to earlier feedback, but further work is needed to build on this progress.

This section first summarises the findings from engagement activities since 2021, followed by the outcomes of the 2025 engagement programme. These insights will inform the vision set out in the next section of this document.

"Ugly shop signage, unusable square, screened off shop fronts"

"Great range of shops, friendly, helpful"

"It's old, time to update a few things especially the pavements."

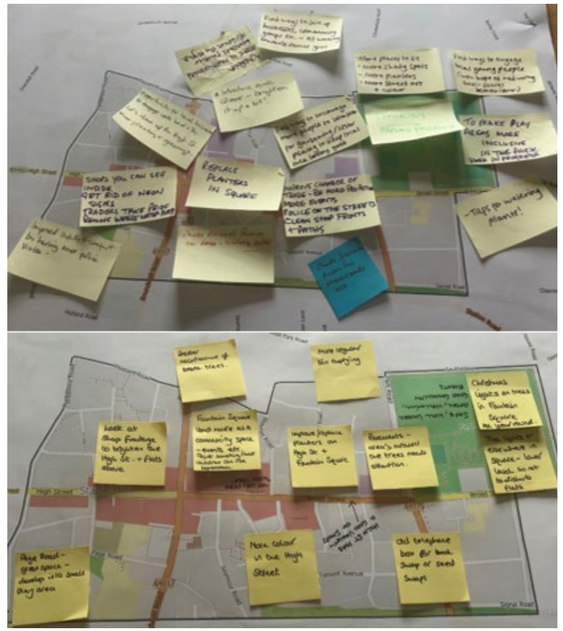
- Community outreach respondents
Staple Hill Engagement Output Report 2021



"Help Us Thrive" Local Campaign, 2020



Supported projects following 2021 engagement



Stakeholder workshop, July 2025

Previous community engagement

Previous community and stakeholder engagement has been conducted by the council to find out people's opinions and feelings on Staple Hill high street, including their priorities for future facilities and improvements.

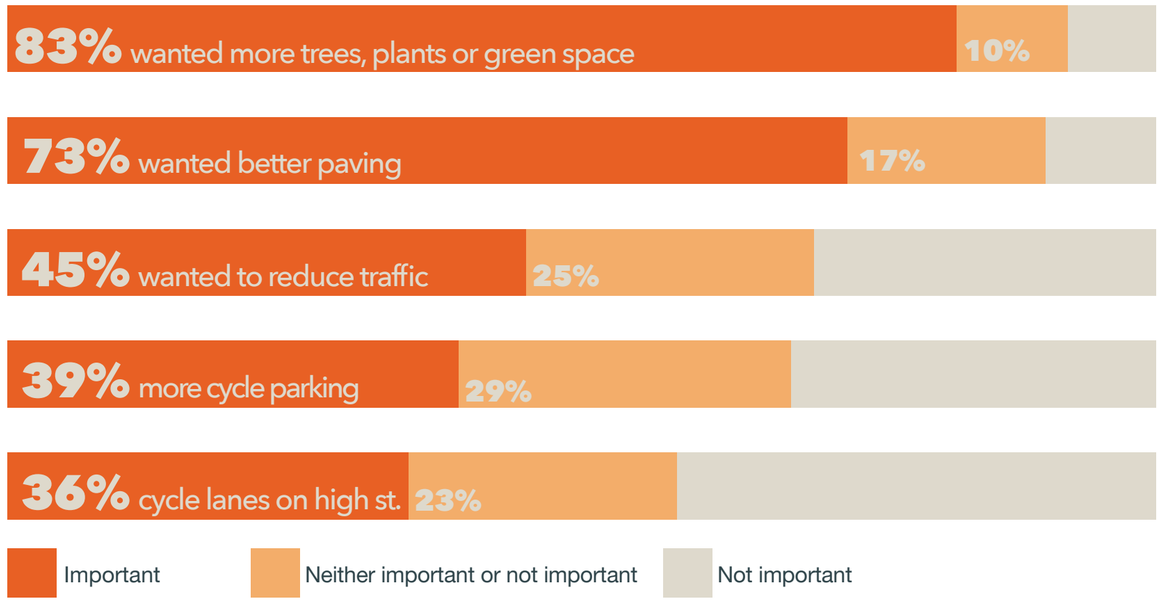
An online survey conducted by the council in 2021 gives a good benchmark of issues that have affected the high street before and during the COVID-19 pandemic, such as antisocial behaviour and general appearance issues. There was a strong desire for more independent businesses, with 94% of respondents agreeing this was important.

More recently in 2025, a stakeholder workshop involving local councillors, parish councillors and other key community groups highlighted similar issues- the architecture is tired, the pavements need improving, there is a lack of high-quality maintained greenery and there is a lot of litter present.

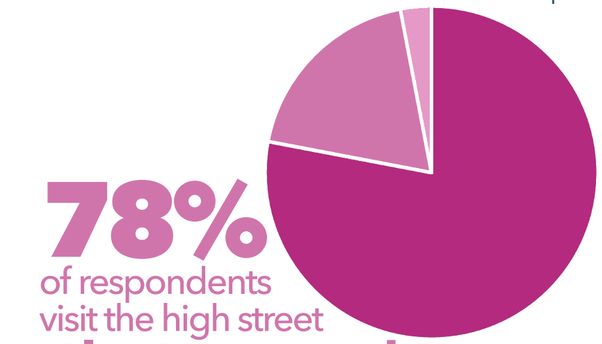
Page Park has always been mentioned positively throughout as a key asset to the area and high street, with people wanting more events in the square, public art, and more greening along the high street.

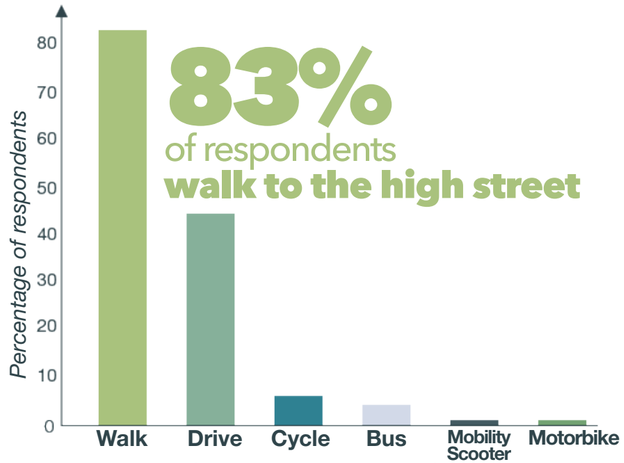
The demographics of the existing surveys showed lower levels of engagement from young locals, encouraging more diverse outreach and engagement methods.

How important is it to improve the following features of Staple Hill high street?



Staple Hill Engagement Output Report 2021





Staple Hill Engagement Output Report 2021

Do you have any favourite places in Staple Hill?







Community engagement

In November 2025 a fresh engagement programme was launched, using suggestions from earlier consultations. The engagement questions focused on key place-shaping interventions.

The process aimed to include input from a cross-section of ages and demographic groups.

Over November and December 2025, there were multiple different ways people could share their views through an online public survey, a library installation, and a focussed youth workshop for 11-16 year olds from a local secondary school.

Participants were invited to share what matters most to them within these focus areas:

- **Street Greening**
- **Creating an Identity**
- **Play Opportunities**
- **Accessibility**
- **Shop Front Improvements**
- **Movement & Access**

LIBRARY ENGAGEMENT INSTALLATION



YOUNG PERSONS WORKSHOP



ONLINE SURVEY





Library poster



Street elevation with interactive stickers

> "I love the library and charity shops. There should be more events in the square and library" Survey respondent, Library Installation

Community engagement results

The engagement exercise conducted in November and December 2025 provides detail about how people who live in Staple Hill use their high street and helped identify their priorities for improvements.

It was available in online and hard copy format, with supporting information provided on a dedicated Commonplace website, resulting in 326 respondents.

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.

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



59% of respondents usually **walk to the high street**

35% usually **drive**



“Make it more visually appealing - the kind of place people want to spend time and come and take photos”

“Art celebrating the history of Staple Hill”

“Make it quirky, green and encourage independent shops.” Survey comments, online survey 2025

The highest priority for investment ranked by respondents-

1. Fountain Square



2. Greening



3. Shop front improvements



What people want more of on their high street-



Trees
80 comments



Markets
91 comments



Better lighting
58 comments



Murals
33 comments

Youth workshop summary

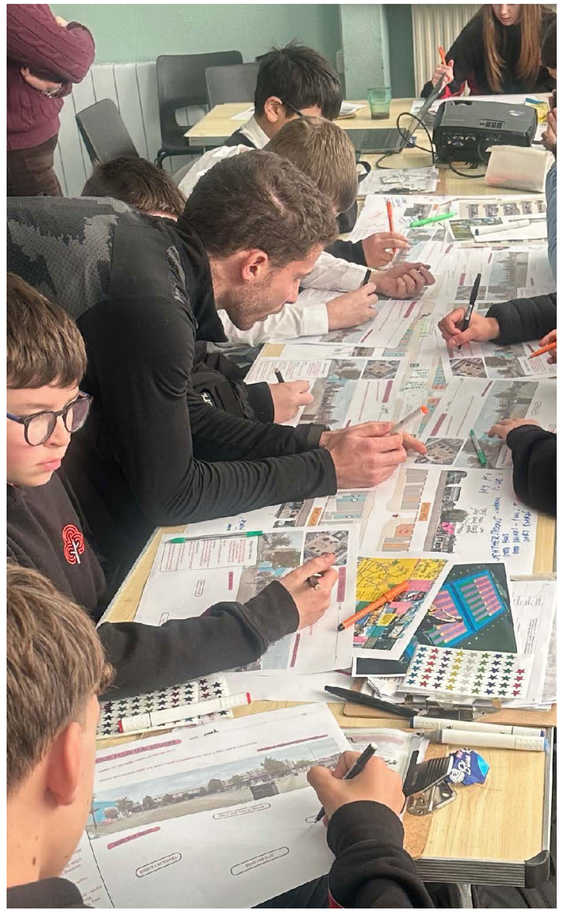
As part of the community engagement the design team (YOU&ME Architecture and Bath & North East Somerset Council) delivered a young people's workshop and site walk. The aim of the session was to give young people a voice in shaping the future of their high street and to help us understand how children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

A focus group of 15 students from Mangotsfield Secondary School was formed of 11-15yr old children that live in the immediate vicinity of the Staple Hill high street.

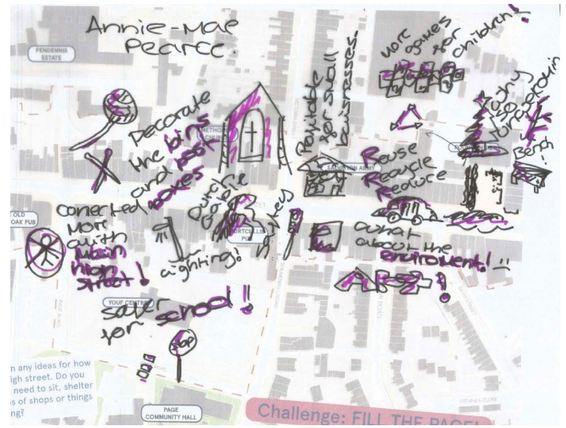
The session began with a guided site walk along the high street followed by a workshop in Page Community Association on Page Road. Young people observed and documented the high street using mapping, drawing and text.

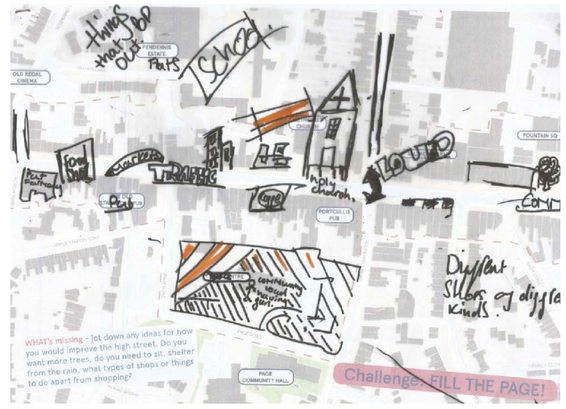
Using a large 2.5m map with photo elevations, the students discussed how they currently use the high street, identified favourite places and areas needing improvement. In the second half of the session, participants worked in smaller facilitated groups to explore future ideas in more depth, focusing separately on public realm, public art, and public events and activities.

The students were eager to have their voices heard and be involved in the future of their local high street.

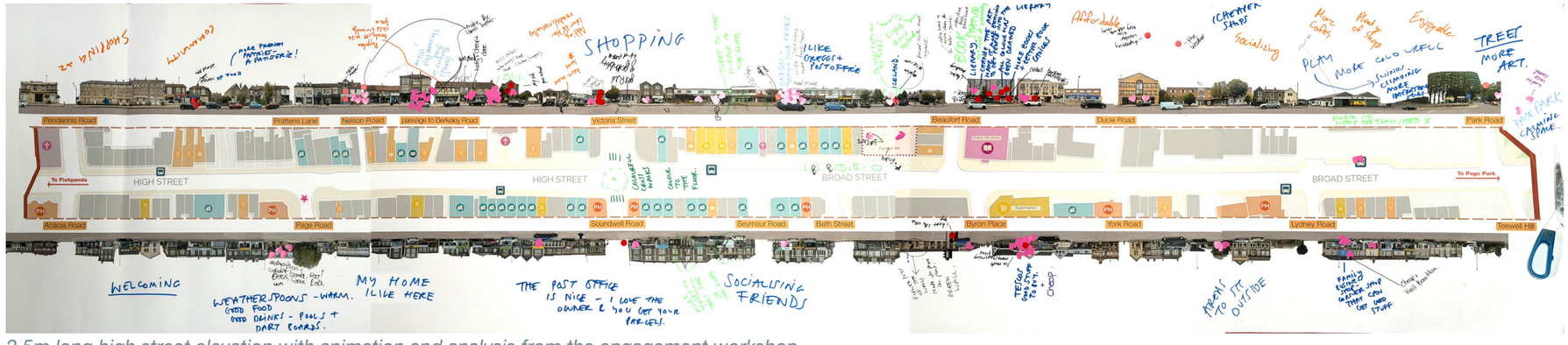








Doodle maps created on the site walk, documenting key sights, sounds and feelings of the high street.



2.5m long high street elevation with animation and analysis from the engagement workshop.

A greener high street



There is strong support for more trees and greenery, with a preference for low-maintenance, perennial, and native plants. People want to celebrate the existing nature and greenery of Page Park along the length of the high street, with more colour and biodiversity. Planters be well-kept and must keep the street accessible to all .



Trees 80 comments
Planters 24 comments
Flowers 21 comments

"Tree planting is important to mitigate climate change and provide shade in increasing temperatures"
-Online survey respondent

Fountain Square re-imagined

Seen as underutilised, people think the Square could become a vibrant hub with more greenery, public art, better lighting, and events. Addressing antisocial behaviour and long term maintenance must be considered within the regeneration of Fountain Square. People's priorities are to add colour, soften the harsh concrete edges, and add a focal point.

"“Empty” “Nothing to do, boring.”"
-Youth Workshop response



Young people described Fountain Square as **grey, concrete and uninviting**

More markets & events



People want more markets, events and activities to support local independent businesses and bring more people to the area. People commented on the success of the Christmas on the Hill event and wanted more seasonal events at other times of the year. Fountain Square is identified as a great place to host a variety of events if improved.

"More community events, more to do."
-Online survey respondent



Markets 91 comments

Music & Street theatre 34 comments

Children's events 15 comments

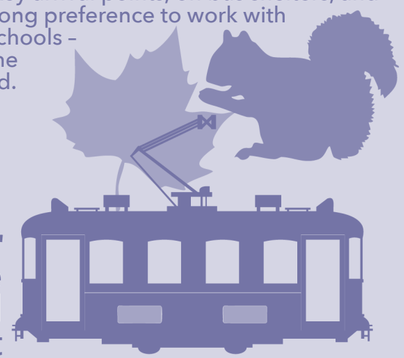


Public art with a strong local identity



People want more colour and public art on their high street. Murals were the most popular idea, with areas suggested such as Fountain Square, outside the gym, at the key arrival points, on bus shelters, and colourful crossings. There is a strong preference to work with local artists and involving local schools – several of the young people in the workshop wanted to get involved.

“More art and murals.”
“More colour.”
-Youth Workshop response



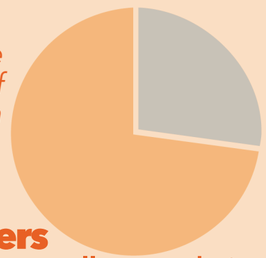
Local history, colour and nature were the most commented themes for public art

A better looking high street



At the moment, people have agreed that high street improvements are needed along the length of the high street, with Fountain Square as another key area for improvement. People want original features restored, with more colour on the high street.

"The Victorian parts if they were restored [...] would really pop if they emphasised their Victorian fronts in a fun and bright way."
-Online survey respondent



Almost **three quarters** of respondents allocated virtual investment towards a shop front improvement scheme.

A safer and more accessible high street

People feel that there are many opportunities to improve accessibility- most thought the priority was levelling pavements and improve street lighting. People with restricted mobility found the areas of two-tiered pavement especially problematic, with concern for pavements blocked by bins, A-boards, scooters and street furniture.

"Better lighting - once dark the feel of this area changes. A lot of the overhanging shelters block light and it feels so concrete."
-Online survey respondent





Students felt **better crossings** and **improved alleyway lighting** are needed to help people get to school safely