

May 2024

Portobello Conversations

**Report on community recommendations prepared
for Kensington and Chelsea Council by Thinks
Insight & Strategy**

Table of Contents

1.	Foreword.....	3
2.	Executive Summary	4
3.	Citizen Recommendations.....	6
4.	Introduction and background to the public engagement.....	10
5.	The identity and character of Portobello Road	17
6.	Topic deep dive Hostile Vehicle Mitigation	20
7.	Topic deep dive Seating	22
8.	Topic deep dive Power and water infrastructure.....	25
9.	Topic deep dive Movement through the market.....	27
10.	Topic deep dive Surfaces	32
11.	Topic deep dive Security	35
12.	Topic deep dive Lighting.....	38
13.	Topic deep dive Signage.....	40
14.	Topic deep dive Greening.....	43
15.	Topic deep dive Flooding.....	45
16.	Community involvement & topics outside of the scope of this project	47

1. Foreword

We welcome this recommendation report following the Portobello Conversations 2024, which enabled participants with differing views to discuss the issues facing Portobello Road and find common ground about what improvements could be implemented.

We understand the importance of Portobello Road's market identity, character, and heritage, which we will protect, celebrate, and enhance. Portobello Road and the Market is one of the most cherished and important international destinations in our borough and we want to ensure it remains successful for generations to come.

Kensington and Chelsea Council has asked the Portobello community to let us know what issues and improvements they would like to see addressed in the area. We've listened to what improvements are needed to the street to make it a cleaner, safer and fairer space for locals, traders, and visitors.

We will now take these recommendations, agree what to take forward and build them into concepts for implementation. We will ask the community what they think about those concepts during a public consultation later this summer.

We continue to meet with and hear the thoughts of traders, businesses and residents at our Market Street Action Group meetings, the Portobello and Golborne Management Committee meetings. We also receive feedback on live issues from our Street Trading Officers who continue to deliver the actions of the Market Plan 2022- 2027, to improve trading opportunities, conditions, and delivery.

Thank you to everyone who has already taken part and had their say in this project including members of the Portobello Engagement Oversight Panel and those who contributed to the Portobello Conversations workshops.

Your passion and love for this community is enormous and we feel the energy and emotions connected to this important area.

**Deputy Leader, Employment,
Culture and Economy**

Cllr Kim Taylor-Smith

**Lead member for Planning and
Public Realm**

Cllr Cem Kemahli

2. Executive Summary

Portobello Road is a world-renowned street market. To ensure its long-term success, Kensington and Chelsea Council (RBKC) and the local community feel it is essential that improvements are made. Any proposals must improve the infrastructure of the road, whilst celebrating the market's iconic history.

To directly inform the enhancements to Portobello Road, RBKC commissioned independent public engagement to hear from residents, traders and local business people. The engagement had one objective: to develop a set of community recommendations to feed into future improvements to Portobello Road.

We at Thinks Insight and Strategy and PlusFour Market Research designed and facilitated a series of workshops to bring community members together to discuss Portobello Road. As with all qualitative research, the purpose was to bring together a diverse group of the key community stakeholders, so that they could reach a consensus on actionable improvements and lay out the best way to move forward.

Each participant took part in three workshops, all delivered face to face in a community venue just off Portobello Road. Each workshop had its own aim:

- Workshop 1: To hear about and understand the value of, and challenges facing, Portobello Road and develop a list of priority concerns. For the residents session, this included a walk on Portobello Road.
- Workshop 2: To hear different perspectives, including similar projects from other markets in London.
- Workshop 3: To work together to develop a set of recommendations to inform change to Portobello Road.

41 participants took part in all three workshops. It was important to the Council and the Portobello Engagement Oversight Panel (PEOPL)¹ that they heard from people with a wide range of experiences, so we went out into the community to recruit participants. We worked with RBKC and the PEOPL to develop criteria in advance (for example people with a range of disabilities, people living in social housing, rented accommodation and homeowners) and invited people in the local area at random until the criteria were met. The group included 19 residents of the local area², 15 market traders, and seven local business people. Four

¹ The Portobello Engagement Oversight Panel are a group of residents, traders and business people who are responsible for overseeing discussions with the community about improvements to Portobello Road. They were involved in shaping and reviewing the design of the workshops.

² All residents lived within 900m of Portobello Road.

members of the Portobello Engagement Oversight Panel joined parts of the first and third workshops. Colleagues from RBKC and the technical team WSP also joined the workshops to hear directly from the participants. We have shared further detail on the methodology and sample in Section 4.

In addition to the workshops, we spent two days on Portobello Market hearing from visitors, local residents, business people and traders. A total of 98 participants completed a short semi-structured interview to share their views about the challenges facing Portobello Road and potential improvements.

The engagement demonstrated the importance and value of Portobello Road. The conversations between participants were lively and passionate. Participants had different views and experiences of Portobello Road but worked together in a respectful and civil atmosphere to listen to one another and develop a shared set of recommendations.

This report shares the citizen recommendations and gives an account of the conversations which led to their development. There were certain topics where there was more consensus between participants. For example, nearly all agreed that poor quality lighting on Portobello Road is a security risk and is in need of addressing, particularly toward the north end of the road. On the other hand, there were topics where there was more disagreement. For example, whilst many felt vans parked on the road during market day made it feel congested and reduced sightlines, some traders emphasised the importance of their vans being parked close to their pitch. On these topics participants worked together to find possible solutions. If agreement was not reached, we have noted this clearly in our findings. Additionally, to ensure the accuracy of this report, it was shared with all workshop participants who were invited to comment and offer feedback.

These recommendations are a starting point for improvements to Portobello Road and to continued conversations between residents, traders, businesses and RBKC. The participants expect RBKC and its contractors to consider carefully how to implement these recommendations and communicate clearly to the community how they have been taken into account. If it isn't possible to implement a particular recommendation, this should be clearly explained. Above all, the engagement showed how much Portobello Road is valued by the community who want to be actively involved in its future. Participants were keen to come back together to review the plans developed at the next stage. It will also be important for the Council to engage the wider community, with open and accessible consultation.

3. Citizen Recommendations

The participants of Portobello Conversations worked together to develop a series of recommendations. They are grouped by broad topic areas which reflected the scope for potential change proposed by the Council, adapted to reflect the views of the community. Behind these recommendations was a strong sense from participants that any improvements should respect the identity of Portobello as a street market, busy, lively, with a mix of traders and businesses, serving the community as well as being a tourist destination. Participants also discussed the needs of different sections of the market, for example the congestion in the central section required different measures to the relatively quieter north end, and better connecting the whole market was part of several recommendations (e.g. lighting, signage, surfaces).

The recommendations are as follows:

Hostile Vehicle Mitigation

- Not all residents felt hostile vehicle mitigation was necessary. If the Council feel it is necessary, then it should not interfere with the functioning of Portobello Market. For example, it should allow access for emergency vehicles, traders' vehicles, and not obstruct the flow of pedestrians.
- Following a vote, most agreed that hostile vehicle mitigation should be minimal rather than offer co-benefits. For example, there was a preference for retractable bollards or gates, rather than creating seating out of barriers.
- It was emphasised that hostile vehicle mitigation measures should be well maintained.

Seating:

- The placement of seating:
 - Should not restrict the flow of people through the market.
 - Should not limit the accessibility of the market (e.g. take up space on pavements).
 - Should be sympathetic to residents. There was a preference to use already available public spaces (e.g. Tavistock Gardens).
- Seating on Portobello Road itself should be temporary, for example, removed at the close of trading.

Power and water infrastructure

- All trading pitches should have access to electricity.
- The provision of electricity should be modernised to allow for sharing between different traders.

Movement through the market:

- Participants acknowledged that some traders need their van close to their pitch but also felt that parking arrangements could be improved. Any change should be optional and incentivised.
- Suggestions included:
 - A trader and business permit to allow parking on nearby roads. This would be cheaper than the cost to park vans on Portobello Road.
 - Changing the layout of parking so vans and pitches are in a single row. The side of the road can be swapped each week to mitigate the obstruction to businesses.
 - Increasing the availability of storage for traders to reduce the need for vans on the market itself.
- There was no agreement on further pedestrianisation of the market, but participants were generally supportive of measures to improve safety, for example matching the temporary road closures more closely with the operating hours of the market.

Surfaces

- The surface of the road and pavements need to be improved. The surfaces should be: high quality, 'grippy', level, accessible and well maintained.
- Following a vote, most wanted to keep kerbs and avoid a single level (reflecting the nature of Portobello as a street market).
- Kerbs should be an appropriate height (at the moment some are very high) and dropped kerbs on opposite sides of the road should match.
- Aesthetically, the surfaces should still look like a road to be in-keeping with the identity of the market. This means largely avoiding 'funky designs', however, subtle design to promote wayfinding is permitted.

Security

- More needs to be done to protect against day to day crimes and dangers. This includes theft and dangerous driving (e.g. from mopeds). Suggestions included:
 - Increased CCTV.
 - A visible enforcement presence.
- A lost-property hub should be created.

Lighting

- It is essential lighting is improved on Portobello Road to improve security.
 - Lights should be all the way through the market and work all year.
- Lighting should also be used to create an atmosphere and promote wayfinding. It should be used:
 - To make the market seem open and inviting, particularly at the north end and in winter.

- To celebrate different festivals, e.g. Christmas, Diwali.
- Lighting should be sympathetic to residents.
- Lighting should be in-keeping with the current style of the market and street.

Signage

- The market needs better signage. Participants recommended signage to cover:
 - Functional signage: to facilities, points of interest, access arrangements, etc.
 - Signage to promote a welcoming environment: 'Welcome to Portobello Market'; 'Market Open' rather than Road Closed; signs to encourage footfall to the north end of the market by the Spanish School.

Greening:

- Greening should not interfere with the function of the market. For example, the movement of people.
- No consensus was reached on specific greening interventions.

Flooding:

- It is essential work should be done to mitigate flooding and improve drainage. (NB. There was no consensus on sustainable urban drainage systems or the detailed design).
- Speed bumps should be revised to avoid making flooding worse.
- There should be better cleaning around areas prone to flooding.

3.1. Developing the recommendations

An account of how the recommendations under each topic were reached can be found in the following sections.

Topic deep dive	Section
Hostile vehicle mitigation	6
Seating	7
Power and water infrastructure	8
Movement through the market	9
Surfaces	10
Security	11
Lighting	12

Signage	13
Greening	14
Flooding	15

4. Introduction and background to the public engagement

4.1. Background to the 'Strengthening Portobello Market' programme and scope for infrastructure improvements

Following the flooding to Portobello Road in 2021, RBKC launched initial engagement conversations to strengthen the infrastructure of the road and market. The Council defined the scope of this project to focus solely on the physical environment of Portobello Road. It includes the following areas:

- Lighting and power supply
- Safety and security measures
- Seating and street furniture
- Surfaces and pavements
- Flooding, greening and climate resilience
- Hostile vehicle mitigation
- Street and market sections
- Road opening hours and accessibility

An important part of the development of this project – and a commitment from the Council – is to engage with the local community to understand their attitudes and needs related to the scope outlined above. This is to ensure any plans are developed in line with the expectations and with the support of the community. To that aim, the Council:

- **Set up the Portobello Engagement Oversight Panel (PEOPL)** in summer 2023. This is a group of over 20 local residents, traders, business people and community groups who are responsible for shaping and overseeing the Council's delivery of the community participation process.
- **Commissioned Thinks Insight & Strategy to deliver wider community engagement in November 2023.** Our brief was to engage a wider group of residents, traders and business people to develop recommendations for change.

This scope of work sits separately to the Markets Plan³. The Markets Plan was launched in 2022 and sets out a 5-year plan for Portobello Market covering areas such as events, support for traders, graffiti and litter and street cleaning. It is impossible to isolate the scope of the Markets Plan from the scope of this project completely. However, the design of the community engagement and the focus of

³<https://www.rbkc.gov.uk/business-and-enterprise/business-advice/markets-and-street-trading#a-idmarkets-plan-namemarkets-plan-amarkets-plan>

the recommendations are focused as much as possible on the physical environment of Portobello Road.

4.2. Methodology

4.2.1. Deliberative community engagement

We used a deliberative approach to the community engagement as we knew that people hold strong and different opinions about this topic. Deliberative engagement is an important tool for meaningfully involving communities in decision making as it goes beyond surface level insights. It places a strong emphasis on hearing from diverse perspectives, and free and fair collective discussion.

Key features of a deliberative approach include:

- Input from information sources.
- Structured, facilitated and inclusive discussion and deliberation between participants, giving people space to reflect on the issue at hand.
- Participants coming to considered judgements, linked to a goal or purpose – in this engagement that was developing recommendations to inform the improvements to Portobello Road.
- Different life experiences and circumstances are represented in the deliberative process, to ensure participants hear from and consider perspectives outside of their own.

The deliberative approach is focused on the views of the community collectively, rather than individuals or sub-groups. This is why we have reported back on where consensus was and was not reached by the collective, as opposed to drawing conclusions about specific groups of participants.

4.2.2. Involvement of the Portobello Engagement Oversight Panel

The Portobello Engagement Oversight Panel (PEOPL) are a group of over 20 local residents, traders, business people and community groups who are responsible for shaping and overseeing the Council's delivery of the community participation process.

Following an open tender process the PEOPL, in collaboration with the Council, appointed Thinks Insight to deliver Portobello Conversations.

Thinks Insight attended a total of five meetings with the PEOPL between November 2023 – March 2024. This included:

- Thinks Insight listening to the perspective of members of the PEOPL, including their hopes and 'red lines' regarding improvements to Portobello Road.
- Thinks Insight sharing the draft criteria for the sample frame and receiving input from the PEOPL.

- Thinks Insight sharing the draft questions and approach for the workshops and receiving input from the PEOPL.
- The PEOPL reviewing and sharing feedback on this report, including the option of writing a foreword.

4.2.3. Our approach to Portobello Conversations

We engaged 41 members of the local community over three phases. We used a range of approaches across the three phases to ensure all participants had the opportunity to share their own views, hear those of other people’s, deliberate on areas where there was less consensus, and hear from other information sources.

The broad structure of the sessions was as follows:

Workshop	Approach
<p>Workshop 1A: Residents Only Saturday 10th February 2024 12pm – 5pm</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Residents only) Tour of the Portobello Market. Members of the PEOPL accompanied the resident participants on a walk of Portobello Road during Saturday trading. • Discussion of the identity and character of Portobello Road, including how this may have changed over time.
<p>Workshop 1B: Traders and business people only Tuesday 6th February 6.30pm – 9pm</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion of the challenges Portobello Road is facing. • Initial prioritisation of the challenges Portobello Road is facing.
<p>Workshop 2: Residents, traders and business people Tuesday 20th February 6.30pm – 9pm</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Hall discussion where a member from each of the previous workshops shared their perspective. The floor then opened where individuals could share their view with the whole group. • Breakout tables (mix of traders, residents and business people on each table) to hear and discuss the different perspectives. • Sharing ‘inspirational’ material to stimulate discussion. This included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ An academic research project about the value of markets to local communities, with a particular focus on Queens Market in Newham.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Information about infrastructure improvements to other markets in London (e.g. Strutton Ground, Greenwich Market, Borough Market). ○ Information about what potential improvements could look like. ● Discussion about how Portobello Road is similar and different to these examples.
<p>Workshop 3: Residents, traders and business people Sunday 25th February 11am – 4pm</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Breakout group discussions to develop recommendations in response to each of the areas of the project’s scope, plus any others. ● Collating recommendations from each table to create a ‘master’ list. ● Discussing any areas of outstanding disagreement. ● Plenary discussion about the recommendations including votes on final areas of disagreement.

4.2.4. Sample for Portobello Conversations

We recruited 49 people to take part in Portobello Conversations. 41 participants took part in all three sessions:

- Seven people who worked or owned businesses along Portobello Road or the junctions.
- 15 traders on Portobello Market, including both permanent and casual traders representing a range of sectors (e.g. fresh food, antiques, hot food).
- 19 local residents, all of whom live within a 900m radius of Portobello Road. Residents were recruited to reflect the demographics of the local area (e.g. by age, ethnicity, gender, housing tenure).

We designed a sample frame, which was reviewed by the PEOPLe and RBKC. It included criteria to ensure we heard from a diverse sample, including voices that are lesser heard by the Council. For example, people with a range of disabilities, people living in social housing and people from ethnic minority backgrounds.

The sample achieved at the outset of the workshops is:

Residents	(24 recruited)
Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 9 x men ● 15 x women
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 9 x 18 – 34

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 x 35 – 54 • 7 x 55+
Ethnicity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 x Asian • 6 x Black • 1 x Mixed or multiple ethnicities • 1 x Other • 6 x White British • 4 x White Other
Long term health condition or living with a disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 x living with a long term health condition or disability themselves • 1 x caring for someone living with a long term health condition or disability
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 x homeowners • 3 x private renters • 13 x social renters or housing trust
Length of time in the area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 x less than 5 years • 3 x 6 – 10 years • 17 x more than 10 years
Traders	(16 recruited)
Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 x men • 9 x women
Core offering of the business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 x antiques • 4 x arts & crafts or design • 3 x fashion • 3 x food (including fresh and hot) • 1 x music • 1 x plants • 2 x wellness
Length of time operating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 x less than 2 years • 2 x 2 – 5 years

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 x 6 – 10 years • 7 x more than 10 years
Businesses	(9 recruited)
Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 x men • 2 x women
Core offering of the business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 x antiques • 1 x fashion • 4 x food (including retail, hot food, drinks and a restaurant) • 1 x lifestyle • 2 x wellness
Length of time operating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 x less than 2 years • 4 x 2 – 5 years • 4 x more than 10 years

4.2.5. Approach to recruitment

Participants were recruited by the team at PlusFour. The team used a variety of methods depending on the audience.

Residents:

- 500 letters were sent to randomly selected addresses using a Postcode Address File.
- Action Disability Kensington and Chelsea recruited participants living with long-term health conditions and disabilities via their networks.
- On street recruitment on a weekday evening and weekend.
- Social media recruitment via community group pages and the Council did a targeted social media campaign.
- Purchased a commercial list targeted on the outstanding criteria in the area, which we contacted via email.

Traders:

- The Market Office sent out an email to all traders on Portobello Market and the Westway Trust emailed all traders under their management.
- On street recruitment, targeted toward traders in under-represented sectors.

Business people:

- 235 letters were sent to business addresses using the PAF file.

- Social media recruitment via LinkedIn Pro.
- Email shared to the North Kensington Business Network.
- Telephone and on street recruitment.

In total:

- Over 750 people were invited to take part.
- 49 participants agreed to take part in the workshops.
- 41 participants took part in all three sessions.

Participants who took part in all three workshops received a thank you payment of £200. This was to ensure participation was as diverse as possible:

- It provides an 'incentive' for participants to reliably turn up and take part.
- It ensures we hear from a robust, rich mix of residents, traders and business people, rather than only those people who are very interested or concerned about the issue for whom an 'incentive' may be less important.
- It also ensures that nobody was prevented from taking part by their financial circumstances, for example paying for childcare or taking time out of employment.

4.2.6. Semi-structured interviews

In addition to the community engagement workshops, we conducted short semi-structured interviews with a wider audience to understand their views on the identify of the market, the challenges it faces and potential improvements.

We spent two days on Portobello Market to hear from: visitors to the market, as well as traders, business people and residents (not included in the three community engagement workshops).

The dates we spent on the market were:

- Saturday 24th February near to Tavistock Road.
- Friday 1st March near to Gails.

In total, we received 98 responses via this method.

5. The identity and character of Portobello Road

In both workshop 1A and 1B we started by exploring participants' perceptions of the identity and character of Portobello Road. The purpose of this was:

- To understand what makes Portobello Road unique and valued, i.e. what is important for any change to the road to respect.
- To understand anything that is felt to prevent Portobello Road from living up to its full potential at the moment.

5.1. Portobello is a vibrant, diverse community

There is a lot of pride in Portobello driven by appreciation for its heritage, history, art and activism. Residents, traders and business people all used similar words to describe Portobello Road. These included: lively, charming, vibrant, colourful, kooky, bustling, and diverse. There was a strong sense that the road is a hub of activity, as well as a home for people from different cultures and backgrounds.

Unsurprisingly, Portobello Market was felt to be a major part of the character of Portobello Road. Many traders and business people had 'grown up' on the market as their family business spanned back generations. Similarly, residents who have grown up in the area felt a strong connection to the market.

Residents, traders and business people were keen to stress that Portobello Road and Portobello Market is not a homogenous block. In particular:

- **Different sections of the road market have a different character.** Traders and business people mostly talked about different sections of the market selling different goods and produce. For example, the antiques sellers were typically in the Notting Hill end of the market, the fruit and veg were a little further up from that. On the other hand, residents were more likely to talk about the people and where different communities typically lived. For example, the Caribbean community and the Hispanic community.
All three groups identified the north end of the road near the Spanish School (known by traders as 'the desert') as an area of the market which receives considerably less footfall than other areas.
- **The market is different on different days.** Saturdays and to a lesser extent Fridays are much busier compared with other days of the week, these are 'show days' for the market. The residents typically felt that the weekdays are more of a 'local crowd' and tended to stay away from the market at the weekend as it is very crowded with tourists. However, the traders felt the market is too quiet on weekdays. Some feel that it doesn't

make financial sense for them to trade during the week. For traders, there is a degree of frustration towards local residents for not using the market more.

5.2. The identity of Portobello has changed considerably over time

In both workshops there was consensus that the identity and character of Portobello Road has changed considerably over time. Residents, traders and business people found it much easier to define the identity of Portobello Road in the past. In the past, Portobello Market was particularly known for fruit and vegetable stalls and antiques. Participants in all groups felt the role of the market was to serve the local community, which was perceived as culturally diverse and predominantly working class. The identity of the area as part of North and not South Kensington was important.

Nowadays, participants find it more difficult to define the identity of Portobello Road. There is a sense that gentrification in the area, coupled with the market being a growing tourist attraction, means it has changed. For example, many residents point to the existence of chain shops, cafés and expensive restaurants as examples of venues which were not there in the past. In addition, residents, traders and business people point to a number of stalls and shops which are catering direct to tourists rather than offering anything of perceived value to the community.

Residents, traders and business people were keen to stress that the identity of Portobello remains. However, the changes over time have 'diluted' the identity which makes it more difficult to say what Portobello stands for in 2024.

Many perceive this change negatively and look back with a sense of nostalgia for how things were in the past. However, this is not without exception. Some residents enjoy the amenities on Portobello today, feeling they add value to the local area. Similarly, some traders and business people feel positively about the growing level of tourism, noting that serving local residents is unlikely to provide them with sufficient financial income.

5.3. The area is run down and has been neglected by the Council

In both the initial workshops with the residents, as well as the traders and business people, there was a sense that the road is 'run down'. Many feel a degree of 'shabbiness' and the hustle of market day are an important part of Portobello's identity and strongly push back against any notion of creating a uniform identity between the different stalls and businesses, or making the area look more like other parts of the borough. However, most feel that the current set up is not ideal and *some* improvements are required, particularly to the

basics. For example, many reflect that the uneven paving means there are lots of accidents on the road.

There was a view that the Council is responsible for neglecting the area over a long period of time. Many point to a series of previous plans and consultations from which they have seen very little change materialise. In this context, many are sceptical about the intentions of this project, despite the Council's commitment to the area.

"Portobello is best known for antiques, even though there's hardly any left."
(Resident)

"It's lost its way a little bit. It's a bit run down. I can't really say what it stands for anymore."
(Business person)

"It lacks a draw for people midweek... It lacks something that makes people hang around during their lunchbreak or after work."
(Trader)

"I think it's that there is still, thank God, some of us that are like the old community – a family. As a result of that you can walk down the market and you'll inevitably bump into somebody and you can talk and catch up with each other.... I pray we don't lose that."
(Resident)

6. Topic deep dive | Hostile Vehicle Mitigation

Citizen recommendations:

- Not all residents felt hostile vehicle mitigation was necessary. If the Council feel it is necessary, then it should not interfere with the functioning of Portobello Market. For example, it should allow access for emergency vehicles, traders' vehicles, and not obstruct the flow of pedestrians.
- Following a vote, most agreed that hostile vehicle mitigation should be minimal rather than offer co-benefits. For example, there was a preference for retractable bollards or gates, rather than creating seating out of barriers.
- It was emphasised that hostile vehicle mitigation measures should be well maintained.

Initial reflections:

When the topic of Hostile Vehicle Mitigation (HVM) was initially raised in the introductory workshops, many participants were surprised that it was in scope for this project. For most safety and security was primarily linked to personal safety, vehicle movements and petty theft. Terrorism related threats were not top-of-mind. In fact, for most it appeared that terrorism was not perceived as a 'real threat', as many participants reiterated that the likelihood of a terrorist attack on Portobello Market was very slim. As such, in this introductory session, participants pushed back against the need for HVM as they felt that these anti-terrorist security measures were a waste of resources.

Some participants in both the residents workshop and the traders and business people workshop felt that the introduction of HVM could cause members of the public to feel more unsafe. This is due to visually indicating that an attack may be imminent (regardless of HVM's protective nature).

Hearing different perspectives:

In the second workshop the Council clarified that there are legal requirements from Counter Terrorism Officers to install Hostile Vehicle Mitigation (HVM) measures due to the number of visitors to the market. Framing the discussion so that participants understood that HVM measures were in fact mandatory helped open the floor for more discussion compared to session 1.

Some participants recognised that HVMs could serve a dual purpose for crowd control at key times of the year like during Notting Hill Carnival. However, they were still convinced that there were better avenues for using the limited funds available and as such most advocated for using the standard bollards which would "get the job done" at minimal costs.

In contrast, there were a few participants who were open to the idea that HVMs could add value from an aesthetic standpoint. As such, they started to envision the ways in which concrete installations could serve as backdrops for local artists' works. Or how they could serve as seating or flowerbeds to help brighten up the area.

Developing recommendations:

In session three, participants were invited to explore the practicalities and aesthetics of HVMs. In these discussions the primary consensus that emerged was that HVMs should not impede the flow and movement of people around Portobello Market. As such, HVMs could not be permanent fixtures and needed to be moveable in some capacity. This moveability was crucial particularly in case of emergencies where authorities, traders or visitors would need quick access to and from the market. Given the criteria of moveability, retractable bollards were favoured. Similarly, large concrete installations that could not be manually moved were also rejected.

Apart from the ability to be easily moved, participants expressed a clear preference for HVMs to be simple and where possible, in keeping with the look and feel of the market. Whilst some participants explored the ideas of artistic or aesthetically appealing options, most felt that a cost effective, simple option would be best. They felt that the co-benefits gained (aesthetics, seating etc.) were not necessarily needed and certainly not worth the perceived added expenditure. There were also concerns that any dual-purpose HVMs would require maintenance and there was little trust that the council would be able to consistently maintain them to a good standard. As such, they feared that in the future these HVMs would ultimately contribute to the 'run-down' feel of the market which they were hoping to improve.

After much back and forth, it was clear that most participants wanted the cheapest, simplest and low maintenance form of HVM that is available with the assurance that it is non-permanent and can easily be moved if and when needed.

7. Topic deep dive | Seating

Citizen recommendations:

- The placement of seating:
 - Should not restrict the flow of people through the market.
 - Should not limit the accessibility of the market (e.g. take up space on pavements).
 - Should be sympathetic to residents. There was a preference to use already available public spaces (e.g. Tavistock Gardens).
- Seating on Portobello Road itself should be temporary, for example, removed at the close of trading.

Initial reactions:

Very few participants in the community engagement raised a lack of seating on Portobello Road as a challenge. Those that did were mostly residents who wanted more seating to:

- Offer visitors to Portobello Market a place to sit and eat their food. Some residents were frustrated that the current lack of seating encourages visitors to seek out places to sit elsewhere, meaning some had experienced people sitting on their doorsteps or outside their houses to stop and eat food. Aside from the noise disruption, this often means litter is left behind.
- Offer older and disabled visitors a place to stop and rest. Residents feel a lack of seating can make the market feel inaccessible to these groups. This sentiment was echoed by participants who had mobility issues, who felt they would appreciate a place to rest in the market.

The lack of seating was raised as a challenge by some traders and business people, however most of this audience held the view that Portobello was a street market and therefore the continuous flow of people through the market is important. In this context, they felt additional seating was less of a priority.

Participants in all 3 audiences also voiced concern that introducing seating on Portobello Road could lead to an increase in anti-social behaviour. This was due to the perception that the Council would not have the required resource to adequately maintain or 'police' the seating, and references to previous installations that have attracted street drinking.

Even amongst residents who felt the introduction of seating would be beneficial, there was no consensus about how this should look and where it should be placed. This was explored further in workshop 2.

In contrast to those in the community engagement workshops, a lack of seating options was often raised in the semi-structured interviews during the days we spent on the market. This group of visitors wanted to have a place to stop and enjoy the market.

Hearing different perspectives

The pros and cons of introducing seating to Portobello Road were discussed in workshop 2. On one hand, participants were sympathetic to the needs of older and disabled residents who may need a place to rest when they visit the market. However, traders and some business people were resistant due to the lack of space on Portobello Road. They felt that additional seating risks taking up already limited space on narrow pavements or down the centre of the market.

Another major concern for all groups is that seating has the potential to attract anti-social behaviour to the area. Many discussed how previous benches in the area had to be removed following multiple complaints of noise disruption, litter and damage. This created a tension, in which residents were keen to have additional seating to prevent people stopping outside their houses, but also didn't want seating to be situated near their house in case it led to anti-social behaviour.

The group then discussed some potential areas as to where seating could be placed. Suggestions included existing public spaces such as Tavistock Gardens, the gardens opposite the Westway Portobello fitness club and the north end of the market near the Spanish School. This was, however, met with resistance from others who felt that this simply pushes the problem somewhere else, rather than resolving the issue itself.

With the above in mind, the group began to discuss alternative solutions for seating, including "uncomfortable seats" to deter anti-social behaviour, standing tables and temporary furniture.

Refining recommendations

By the final session, participants were somewhat open to the idea of bringing additional seating to Portobello Road, so discussion largely focussed on the practicalities of this.

The group agreed that any seating introduced to Portobello Market must not restrict the flow of people through the market. This means avoiding placing seating on the main road, pavements or on any major thoroughfares. It is essential for all that seating does not interfere with the already limited existing space and flow of the market.

Equally, decisions around seating placement needs to be done with residents in mind, to avoid creating hubs for anti-social behaviour around residential

housing. One recommendation raised is to place seating in already available public spaces, such as Tavistock Gardens. This is seen to be beneficial as it would help centralise seating away from housing and is far enough away from the road that it wouldn't interfere with the flow of the market. Whilst there was support for this idea, no final consensus on this was reached.

Finally, it was agreed that any seating introduced onto Portobello Road itself needs to be temporary. Some were positive about the idea of temporary standing tables, feeling this would reduce the time people would spend at the table, and takes up less room. To avoid disruption to residents, any seating on the road would need to be introduced only for hours of trading and removed swiftly afterwards.

8. Topic deep dive | Power and water infrastructure

Citizen recommendations:

- All trading pitches should have access to electricity.
- The provision of electricity should be modernised to allow for sharing between different traders.

Initial Reflections

In the initial session with traders and business people, as well as during the semi-structured interviews, the electricity infrastructure was raised as a challenge. The challenge was voiced by the traders, highlighting the fact that power is limited to permanent pitches and that even then there are times when the power source is not functional.

Many traders have found ways to work around a sporadic power supply, for example, by bringing their own power sources. However, all agree that the lack of power is a risk to their safety and security particularly in the darker winter months.

The water infrastructure was felt to be less concerning than electricity. However, many traders would appreciate better access to water and felt that this was particularly important for hot food retailers.

Unsurprisingly, the issue of power and water infrastructure was not raised as a challenge by residents or business people (who are not using the infrastructure on the market). However when raised they agreed that all traders should be given the resources they need to operate safely and efficiently.

Hearing different perspectives

There was less discussion on the topic of power and water infrastructure in the second session compared to other topics. This is due to it largely only affecting traders and participants starting from a point of agreement that all stalls should have access to power and water.

Nevertheless, the traders led the discussion on this issue by sharing more about the current challenge. They explained that:

- The provision of power infrastructure ceases to exist north of the Market Office, which leaves many stalls – particularly casual traders – without access to power.
- Power points are shared by traders (due to trading on different days), however only a single trader is responsible for the bill (and therefore pays for the power of others).

- Water points can be far away from their stall, which means traders must leave them unmanned and this poses a security risk.

Refining recommendations

The first key recommendation was that all market pitches should have access to electricity. This would require the provision of outlets in the north end of the market. This would directly address the challenge many traders face of having to bring their own supply and help improve the security of the market.

Participants also agreed that the current infrastructure for electricity needs to be modernised. There need to be more outlets and charging points that allow multiple people to access power simultaneously. In addition, traders wanted to see provision to share or split billing (i.e. pay what you use).

Although less important than electricity, participants wanted water points installed at various points along the road. For traders, this would mean they would not have to leave their stall unattended to access water. In addition, residents also noted that the installation of drinking water fountains or stations would also benefit visitors to the market, particularly during the warmer months.

Overall, it was fairly easy for participants to come to an agreement that the Council should prioritise improved access to power and water supply. This change would be a desirable improvement that would help traders operate more efficiently and in so doing contribute to the market's continued success.

"There's no water point anywhere and it's a nightmare... We bring 20 litre barrels with us and all the other food traders agree this is a problem"

(Trader)

"I like the idea of improving the electricity along the market and turning it into recharging points when they're not in use. I think that's a brilliant idea"

(Resident)

9. Topic deep dive | Movement through the market

Citizen recommendations:

- Participants acknowledged that some traders need their van close to their pitch but also felt that parking arrangements could be improved. Any change should be optional and incentivised.
- Suggestions included:
 - A trader and business permit to allow parking on nearby roads. This would be cheaper than the cost to park vans on Portobello Road.
 - Changing the layout of parking so vans and pitches are in a single row. The side of the road can be swapped each week to mitigate the obstruction to businesses.
 - Increasing the availability of storage for traders to reduce the need for vans on the market itself.
- There was no agreement on further pedestrianisation of the market, but participants were generally supportive of measures to improve safety, for example matching the temporary road closures more closely with the operating hours of the market.

Initial reflections

Trader parking is the area where there was the largest difference of opinion between participants. This topic raised stronger emotions compared to others, due to it affecting many of the participants' lives in a real and tangible way.

In these first sessions, each group laid out exactly how the trader parking impacted their experiences of the market. As previously mentioned, for these initial sessions we heard from traders and business people in a separate session to the residents. This meant that each group could freely share their thoughts.

In the session with residents, many complained about how the parking of traders' vans on Portobello Road limits the flow and movement of people through the market. In addition, many felt vans on the road also reduced sightlines and prevented them from seeing into businesses who operate on Portobello Road. Overall, they felt that vans negatively impact the overall ambience of the market. Some noted that vans did not park on Portobello Road in the past, and questioned why traders couldn't offload their vans and park elsewhere.

The traders had a different point of view. A handful of traders in the room (particularly those that sold fresh produce) shared that having their van close to their pitch is essential for business. This is due to constantly needing to restock

their stall throughout the day. They felt they would be unable to trade on the market without their van close by. They emphasised that visitors are drawn to the market to see the street traders, and so without traders there would be no market. Hence, they felt it was in everyone's interest to allow vans to be parked on Portobello Road.

Other traders in the room were sympathetic to both the position of residents and other traders. They acknowledged that vans on Portobello Road made it feel congested and had a negative impact on the ambience of the market. Indeed, some had taken action to either get rid of their van and use other forms of transport (e.g. an e-cargo bike) or to park their vans elsewhere after offloading in the morning. Some questioned why more traders could not adopt the same approach as them. However, they did acknowledge that this approach is not possible for all, particularly those who are older or who sell large quantities of stock (e.g. fresh produce).

Business people (who were in the joint session with traders) also voiced their concern about trader parking. Some felt that the parked vans and the lack of gaps between stalls blocked sightlines to their business on Portobello Road, resulting in a loss of sales.

Aside from the parking of vans along Portobello Road, participants in all three groups voiced other concerns about movement through the market. For example, those who have mobility issues or who are partially sighted pointed out that seating and A boards from local restaurants and cafés add clutter to the pavements. This makes them difficult to navigate and can be a hazard or mean people have to walk in the road.

In addition, all groups raised concerns about traffic management and the impact this had on safety. Concerns included:

- Pedestrians not realising the junctions that cross with Portobello Road remain open during the market. This means people can step out into the road, not knowing if a car is coming.
- Portobello Road itself opening at 4pm on market days. All groups note that there are still lots of market goers on the road at that time when it opens to vehicles.

Hearing different perspectives

In the second session, all the groups were brought together, allowing them to really listen to, question and challenge each other's opinions. This session revealed the extent of the disagreement about parking between different participants.

Many residents were sympathetic to the position of some of the business people. Residents noted that they experienced issues moving through the market and

trying to access shops, so understood why business people were frustrated by the parking.

Some residents and business people agreed that relocating the traders' vans off Portobello Road would improve the market overall. It would lessen congestion, improve the flow of people through the market, and enhance the overall ambience of the market. They also suggested that the additional space that would be gained could also be used either for providing additional pitches for traders or creating seating for the public.

Some traders continued to insist that parking their van near their stalls was non-negotiable. As one fruit and veg trader explained, he simply could not offload the volume of goods he sells at the beginning of the day due to a shortage of space on his stall. Not all residents had heard about this challenge and some were sympathetic to a degree. However, the residents still challenged these traders believing that there must be some compromise which could better serve the market.

Other traders were more open to compromise. They felt that not all traders needed their vans parked close to their pitch and so something could be done to move certain vans whilst allowing other traders to park on Portobello Road. Still, much of the table discussions ended in a stalemate with no real compromise.

This session was dominated by parking, which meant discussion about traffic management and the impact that had on the movement of people received less attention.

Refining recommendations

In the final session, the facilitators acknowledged the difficulty of the issue, and appealed to the participants to remain open minded and open to compromise.

After much spirited discussion, the following points were agreed:

- Trader parking is mostly a weekend issue. On other days the market is less busy, and therefore vans do not add to a congested feel.
- Some traders do need their van close to their pitch. After hearing more about traders' experience of selling on the market, it was agreed that some do need their vans close by if they are selling a large amount of produce on a given day.
- Other traders do not need their vans close to their pitch, but it is more convenient for them to have their van close by.

In response to points 2 and 3, a suggestion was put forward that some traders could park their vans in the nearby area rather than on Portobello Road. Importantly participants felt that any change should be voluntary so no one feels their van is being taken away from them. However, they were open to

incentivising traders to make the switch. They reasoned that they were keeping their van on Portobello Road due to the convenience it offers, so they needed to be encouraged to switch.

It was suggested that traders and business people could be issued parking permits from the Council which allowed them to park on nearby roads during the market. Participants felt that if these permits were cheaper than the cost to park vans on Portobello Road, it could be an appealing option for some traders. The hypothesis was that whilst those traders who needed their vans close by would continue to pay the higher rate, other traders would park elsewhere therefore reducing the congestion on the road.

Participants were also open to other solutions to help ease the transition away from vans. For example, some participants felt that the Council should increase the availability of storage for traders close to the market. This would help them to both operate more efficiently and foster some goodwill between the Council and traders. In addition, others suggested using existing car parks the area (e.g. near the Spanish school) for trader parking. Traders felt this was a good idea in theory, but worried about how secure it would be in practice.

Participants also suggested a change to the layout of the market to better suit the needs of both business people and pedestrians. They felt organising vans and pitches to be laid out in a single row on one side of the road would help ease congestion and allow people to move through the market much more easily. This was also particularly appealing to participants with mobility challenges as it would help make the market be more accessible as they would be moving through in a straight line.

To mitigate the impact on businesses, participants suggested the side of the street where the stalls and vans are should be alternated each week. This would ensure that business owners would not consistently lose sales because of the limited access to their stores.

At the close of the final session, all of the participants voted on the aforementioned recommendations with the vast majority finding them acceptable.

Other issues related to movement through the market were less tricky to reach a compromise. Most participants agreed that a clear path on pavements should be maintained (e.g. free of restaurant seating and A boards) to ensure the market feels less congested and easy to navigate.

Although no consensus was reached about pedestrianisation and traffic management, participants in all three groups were generally supportive of measures to improve safety. For example, more closely aligning the road opening hours with the movement of people. This view was also reflected in the

semi-structured interviews on the market, where participants emphasised cars drive too fast which risks the safety of pedestrians.

"I was just saying how infuriating I find it when someone suggests to me I can unload my vehicle in the morning, putting fruit on the ground, even in the pissing rain. If others [vendors] can, let them get on with it."

(Trader)

"There are three things on the market: stalls, vans and visitors. And we're not going to get rid of two of them!"

(Trader)

"There didn't used to be vans on Portobello. It ruins the atmosphere. There has to be something we can do."

(Resident)

10. Topic deep dive | Surfaces

Citizen recommendations:

- The surface of the road and pavements need to be improved. The surfaces should be: high quality, 'grippy', level, accessible and well-maintained.
- Following a vote, most wanted to keep kerbs and avoid a single level (reflecting the nature of Portobello as a street market).
- Kerbs should be an appropriate height (at the moment some are very high) and dropped kerbs on opposite sides of the road should match.
- Aesthetically, the surfaces should still look like a road to be in-keeping with the identity of the market. This means largely avoiding 'funky designs', however, subtle design to promote wayfinding is permitted.

Initial reflections

In the initial workshops both with residents and with traders and business people, concerns about the current state of the surfaces on Portobello Road were raised by all groups. Concerns related to:

Slippery surfaces:

- A number of traders and businesses discussed how grease from hot food waste and irregularly cleaned streets often results in highly slippery surfaces around stalls and business fronts. Many describe this as dangerous, with a few discussing how they have slipped over and sustained injuries as a result.

Uneven pavements:

- A number of residents, as well as traders and business people discussed how pavements around the market are uneven and appear to be crumbling in places. Aside from this looking unappealing, participants were worried about this creating trip hazards around the market.

Accessibility concerns:

- A number of residents with disabilities shared their experiences of the market, discussing how misaligned dropped kerbs, narrow pavements and very high kerbs in places can create major accessibility barriers, particularly during busy market times. Additionally, many of the pavements were often inaccessible as the stalls encroached on them.
- Whilst this was not an issue that many residents had considered before, they became starkly aware of the accessibility barriers after walking around the market with this in mind. As a result, this became a highly important issue for residents throughout the rest of the engagement.

Inconsistent repairs:

- One resident raised concerns about repairs to the surfaces on Portobello Road, stating that whilst some surface materials may look nice initially, when repairs take place this is often done with different materials to the original to save on costs. This is felt to lead to a 'patchwork' look, which looks messy and when repaired poorly can exacerbate other issues such as uneven surfaces. This became an important consideration for many others moving forward.

Hearing different perspectives

During the second workshop participants from all groups shared their views, with widespread agreement that improvements to surfaces on Portobello Road are crucial. A number of potential solutions began to surface which were discussed widely by the group.

One solution put forward related to a single surface approach to the market, in which kerbs could be flattened and the road would become one level. It was felt that this would create a more aesthetic look to the road, as well as creating more space, by allowing wider pavements for pedestrians and a wider berth down the central passage of the market. It was also felt by some that this would alleviate accessibility concerns.

However, there was much disagreement about this. Many felt this may create a more dangerous environment, with even less boundaries between the road and pavement. For example, a person who is partially sighted said they would find it difficult to differentiate between the road and the pavement. Others raised objections to this approach on an aesthetic basis, feeling a one level approach isn't in keeping with the history of Portobello as a functioning road and street market.

Another suggestion put forward related to decorative paving on the road around the market. There was support for this idea from some, who felt that colourful paving could act as a wayfinding solution, suggesting different zones of the market could be characterised with different colours. Others felt that colourful paving would help speak to the vibrancy of Portobello and would allow for a unique and creative look to the market.

Developing recommendations

In the final session there was clear consensus that improving the surface of the road and pavements is a top priority for Portobello. All were in agreement that surfaces need to be high quality, 'grippy', level, wider, more accessible and well maintained. Broadly, participants see this as requiring a resurfacing of the street, and increased cleaning and maintenance of the road and pavements

moving forward. This was felt to be by many participants as “the basics” the Council should offer.

However, there was less consensus on decisions relating to the one level road and to the decorative paving. Following a vote, most wanted to keep kerbs and to avoid a single level. They felt that this creates a safer and more accessible environment where there are clear distinctions between road and pavement, as well as feeling more true to Portobello’s character (i.e. as a road). This came with the caveat that work needs to be done to the pavements, to ensure that kerbs are an appropriate height and that dropped kerbs on opposite sides of the road need to be matched.

In relation to decorative paving, participants were open to the idea that it could present wayfinding opportunities across the market, feeling this would help direct tourists and create an opportunity for increasing footfall to the north of the market. However, it was strongly agreed that any paving designs would need to match the identity of the market and that overly decorative designs would be undesirable.

“We need a uniform road surface that can be repaired easily with a readily available substrate.”

(Trader)

“I find [pavements] to be really slippery. It’s easier to walk in the road quite often”.

(Trader)

“I think disabled people don’t use the market a lot. It’s not accessible. On a Saturday it’s impossible in a wheelchair. Some of the stalls are not accessible for wheelchair users and they’re very close together. It’s got worse over time.”

(Resident)

11. Topic deep dive | Security

Citizen recommendations:

- More needs to be done to protect against day to day crimes and dangers. This includes theft and dangerous driving (e.g. from mopeds). Suggestions included:
 - Increased CCTV.
 - A visible enforcement presence.
- A lost-property hub should be created.

Initial reflections:

From the beginning of this engagement process, security was one of the key concerns that both traders/business owners and residents agreed needed to be a top priority.

- Traders and businesses were particularly concerned about theft from their stalls and their vehicles, with many sharing their personal experiences of being burgled.
- Residents also shared experiences of serious issues ranging from petty theft to assault to endangerment from dangerous driving (e.g. mopeds).

The initial session allowed participants to share their experiences in a safe space and hear from those who had had similar experiences. It also helped them gain an understanding of the scale of the problem, as they no longer focused on their isolated incidents but really looked at the bigger picture to understand reoccurring challenges. They were also able to clearly identify the ways in which other issues e.g. poor lighting or the underutilisation of the north end of the market (i.e. 'the desert') contribute to creating an environment where criminality could thrive.

Security concerns were shared by participants in the semi-structured interviews. Many visitors and businesses felt theft (particularly of mobile phones) is a concern.

Hearing different perspectives:

In session 2, it was clear that both groups felt there is a need to improve the security of Portobello Road. This prepared the way to start thinking about recommendations soon into the second session. One of the most popular recommendations offered was increased CCTV, which participants felt would not only serve as a deterrent but would also help them to put together a case against regular perpetrators. The majority of the group felt that improving CCTV was an obvious benefit and this remained a key priority throughout the entire engagement.

Apart from this technology, some participants also called for an increased police presence across the market, particularly during its busiest days and seasons. While they did acknowledge that there have been recent improvements in police patrols, they felt more uniformed police would deter those who engaged in more opportunistic petty crimes and ensure the market was safer for visitors as well.

However, others were more cautious about increasing a uniformed police presence. They felt it would make the market feel *less* secure and generate an uncomfortable atmosphere. In this context, some suggested 'plain clothes' police officers or other uniformed staff or potentially volunteers to help patrol the market on busy days.

Developing recommendations:

In the final session, there was a fairly clear consensus on the need to introduce measures to promote security. Most agreed that increased CCTV would be a positive first step. Beyond that, some kind of security staff (either police or otherwise) is felt to be valuable.

In session 3, participants were able to use their time to develop more creative ideas to tackle crime. One participant proposed the creation of a multi-purpose trader hub that would not only allow traders to convene and chat in a less stressful environment (compared to the Market Office during pitch allocations, which was felt to be a difficult setting) that would also serve as a safe space for those who were victims of crime or had simply lost property. This idea was well received by other participants. Some thought this space could also be used as a lost property site. At the moment, there is nowhere they can direct market visitors to when their possessions are lost or stolen, which is a source of frustration.

Participants also suggested a variety of other security measures including:

- Equipping traders with devices which alert the police when incidences are occurring in real time

While these less traditional solutions were initially thought to be good ideas, participants felt they could be administratively and logistically difficult. As such, the general consensus remained that CCTV and security personnel remained the best options overall and should be the priority.

On reflection, the fact that all the participants had a vested interest in seeing increased security measures implemented across the market was the key reason why they were able to amicably reach an easy consensus on their recommendations regarding security.

"[We need] More security and CCTV. I give WhatsApp evidence but nothing is done."

(Business, Semi-structured interview)

"CCTV is about building a case. You can see it's the same characters over and over again"

(Trader)

12. Topic deep dive | Lighting

Citizen recommendations:

- It is essential lighting is improved on Portobello Road to improve security.
 - Lights should be all the way through the market and work all year.
- Lighting should also be used to create an atmosphere and promote wayfinding. It should be used:
 - To make the market seem open and inviting, particularly at the north end and in winter.
 - To celebrate different festivals, e.g. Christmas, Diwali.
- Lighting should be sympathetic to residents.
- Lighting should be in-keeping with the current style of the market and street.

Initial reflections:

In both of the initial workshops held separately with traders and business people and then residents, lighting was raised as a key challenge facing Portobello Road. In fact, residents reiterated that they have requested improved lighting in numerous previous conversations with the Council. From their perspective, the lack of lighting is a safety concern. This is particularly true in the north end of the market, which is felt to be very dimly lit.

Traders and business owners shared residents' safety concerns. They also felt a lack of lighting affects their business operations. For example, if lighting were improved they could trade for longer as the market would be seen as more appealing. This is particularly pressing in the winter months where many traders have to cease trading early in the afternoon due to the lack of light.

Furthermore, both audience groups felt that better lighting could help to promote wayfinding and better connect the market. As noted, many feel the north end of the market is especially dimly lit which can mean it becomes disconnected from the market as a whole.

Hearing other perspectives:

In the second session, the discussions around lighting became increasingly focused on safety. Many participants shared their personal experiences and feelings about moving through poorly lit areas in and around Portobello Road. A few women also shared the ways in which that adjusted their routes to avoid being alone in dimly lit spaces.

All participants shared the view that lighting should be one of the Council's top priorities as it would have both a significant and immediate impact on the lives of all who used and worked on the market. Participants felt that any efforts to improve lighting should begin with the north end of the market (known as 'the desert'). This would improve both the safety and security of the area, but also help connect it to the other part of the market.

Aside from the 'standard lighting', participants also felt the market could benefit from other forms of lighting to create ambience on the market. Suggestions included festoon lighting throughout Portobello Road, floor level lighting under the bridge and also festive lighting to celebrate moments throughout the year such as Christmas and Diwali.

There was also widespread agreement about using lighting to improve wayfinding (and in turn better connect the market). They felt this would encourage footfall up into the north end of the market.

Refining recommendations

In the final session where participants refined their recommendations, participants again reiterated that improvements to lighting were essential for improving the safety of the market and so must remain a top priority. They also clarified that improvements to lighting were needed all the way through the market and that they should work all year round.

In terms of the aesthetics, participants were open to the idea of lighting being used to create a more open and inviting space, particularly for events such as Christmas and Diwali. However, participants stressed that any lighting (whether seasonal or permanent) must reflect the identity of the market. To this aim, suggestions included 'Victorian lighting' (e.g. lampposts), as well as festoon style lighting.

13. Topic deep dive | Signage

Citizen recommendations:

- The market needs better signage. Participants recommended signage to cover:
 - Functional signage: to facilities, points of interest, access arrangements etc.
 - Signage to promote a welcoming environment: 'Welcome to Portobello Market'; 'Market Open' rather than Road Closed; signs to encourage footfall to the north end of the market by the Spanish School.

Initial reactions:

From the beginning of the engagement there was agreement from all groups that Portobello Road could benefit from increased and improved signage.

Residents, traders and business people discussed how current signage is often unclear or in some cases non-existent. This means the market is often hard to navigate for visitors, particularly those who have never been before. Many traders and business people explained how they spend much of their time directing tourists to "the market", amenities such as toilets, the Market Office, the "Blue Door" and other landmarks. Residents also relayed similar information, describing often getting stopped whilst on the market itself to be asked where the market is. This was similarly heavily reflected in the semi-structured interviews, largely by business people and traders.

Residents, traders and business people alike feel that the lack of signage means that visitors tend not to walk all the way through the market, particularly in the area by the Spanish School (known as 'the desert' by traders). They felt that signage directing visitors to the north end could help to connect the market and increase footfall.

Linked to this, current signs on the road aimed at traffic read as 'Road Closed', which participants feel may be misleading to first time visitors who may misinterpret this as the market itself being closed for visitors. It was felt by both groups that clear signage pointing to key destinations, such as toilets, as well as an initial 'Welcome to Portobello Market' sign would have a big impact in this regard.

A similar concern shared by both groups related to signage on the road itself. Many feel that whilst it is clear to them that Portobello Market also serves as a functioning road, many visitors aren't aware of this. This, combined with unclear signage on the road means there are often close calls with pedestrians stepping out into traffic.

Hearing different perspectives

As much of what was heard relating to signage in the initial traders and businesses workshop was echoed in the residents workshop, there was quick agreement on the issue in the second workshop.

Participants began to brainstorm some thoughts for how the signage could look, with some suggesting it would present a good opportunity to reflect the character of Portobello Market. For example, one person suggested a 'Welcome to Portobello' sign could be designed using drawings of fruit and vegetables as the individual letters to reflect its origins. Others suggested signage could be designed by local artists to help encapsulate the personality of the area.

Others discussed opportunities for the potentially misleading 'Road Closed' signs, suggesting signs instead could read 'Market Open' or similar, saying this would send the same message to road users, but would be clearer and more welcoming for visitors.

The second workshops also featured a lot of discussion around the north end of the market and the lack of footfall that often passes through. All groups agreed that signage notifying people that the market continues upwards would be a really easy solution to encouraging more visitors through.

Refining recommendations

Consensus had been reached early on in the engagement that Portobello needs improved signage. It was agreed that there is a need for more signage, which should highlight facilities, such as toilets, lost property, points of interest, access arrangements, and the route through and arrangement of the market itself, including the north end.

Similarly, participants agreed that signage could be developed to create a more welcoming environment at Portobello Market, both when arriving at the market as well as when moving through the market. The regularly raised suggestion of adding a 'Welcome to Portobello Market' sign, similar to signs at other markets such as Camden Market, was popular among participants, who felt it would make the marketing feel welcoming, as well as help with wayfinding to alleviate confusion around where the market starts.

Whilst no consensus was reached on the design of any signage, most felt that signage presents a good opportunity to showcase local talent, if it was done in collaboration with local artists or designers. Many were open to more stylised signage around the market, given it compliments Portobello's personality and heritage.

"It needs better signage. They should've kept like it was 10 years ago with more signage."
(Business person)

14. Topic deep dive | Greening

Citizen recommendations:

- Greening should not interfere with the function of the market. For example, the movement of people.
- No consensus was reached on specific greening interventions.

Initial reactions

Throughout the engagement sessions, greening was a low priority concern for participants. Very few brought up greening (or current lack of) as a concern during the initial workshops, as weight was given to other, more contentious topics. For those who did bring it up, it was raised more speculatively as a nice to have, but generally agreed that practically it is of low importance.

Hearing different perspectives

During the second workshop, information was shared with participants about greening and its use as part of flooding management. This opened up conversation somewhat as flooding is a high priority concern for many around Portobello Road, however greening was still largely rejected as participants felt there are other, more effective and less intrusive ways to manage flooding.

The key basis for the rejection of greening on Portobello Market is that there is a hesitancy towards anything that threatens to take up already limited space on the road. Participants were concerned that interventions such as planting trees, installing planters or introducing green sidewalks would take up too much space and interfere with the flow of the market.

There was slightly more openness for greening solutions that would be less intrusive in the market, such as green walls. In these cases, participants felt that green walls would have aesthetic benefits, as well as offering additional benefits such as CO2 absorption. This was considered highly important by some, particularly around the area underneath the Westway. Others felt that green walls, near the north end of the market, would be a positive addition to the area as it would help draw people into the market, and it is felt that there is more space at the north of the market for these interventions, where footfall is lower.

Others raised ideas such as hanging flower baskets on lampposts, however it was recognised that the benefits of this would be purely aesthetic, rather than offering a flooding intervention.

Refining recommendations

By the final workshop, few participants had shifted in their attitudes towards greening. Whilst recognising the benefits greening can offer as a flooding

intervention or to mitigate other environmental impacts like air pollution, most felt that there simply isn't enough space on Portobello Road for any additional greening to be added. Any interventions proposed need to be clear about their benefits, and explain how they will avoid any impact on the flow of people through the market.

There is an openness for any greening interventions that could be added without taking up space on the road itself, e.g. green walls, however the priority for all participants is that there is no interference with the flow of the market. Others raised concerns about efforts required to maintain green walls and hanging baskets and doubted the Council would have the resource to do so. As such, greening remained a low priority for most.

"It's very rare for me to be anti-greening, because I'm very green. But I just feel if we already have an issue with space then planters on the pavements just don't make any sense. But if there's a wall they can green – perfect!"

(Resident)

"It's a road first and foremost and a market on three days. So if you put too many obstacles in there, it makes the road not function on those days. It's unique in that regard, because all the other markets are basically on a square."

(Resident)

15. Topic deep dive | Flooding

Citizen recommendations:

- It is essential work should be done to mitigate flooding and improve drainage. (NB. There was no consensus on sustainable urban drainage systems or the detailed design).
- Speed bumps should be revised to avoid making flooding worse.
- There should be better cleaning around areas prone to flooding.

Initial reactions:

During the sessions, flooding was conflicting. While participants recognised that it was an important and valid problem, it was also not a day to day issue since it had been 3 years since the last flooding disaster.

Therefore, participants had varied opinions on how high a priority flooding mitigation should be. Some implied that the incidences of flooding were quite sporadic and that there are more pressing concerns to address. On the other side of the spectrum, residents and business owners who were significantly impacted and/or displaced by the flooding in 2021 were very passionate about insisting that measures need to be put in place to ensure that that level of devastation is not repeated.

Many participants used the space to emotively share their stories about the ways in which the flooding devastated their homes and their livelihoods and they were able to incite empathy in those who previously seemed less concerned. As such, by the end of the discussion there was a consensus that not only should the Council have done more to help flood victims in the past, but they have an obligation to put measures in place to prevent a reoccurrence.

Hearing different perspectives:

In the second session, participants set about trying to come up with solutions for potential flooding. In the presentations by facilitators, participants were introduced to the idea that greening could help mitigate the impact of floods. However, participants were quite sceptical about this, particularly because vividly recalled being in waist-deep water three years ago and believed that a few “well-placed plants” were insignificant when faced with that volume of flood water.

They argued that what was needed was an overhaul to the existing sewage and drainage system and that was considered to not within the scope of this project. As such, there was a lack of enthusiasm around designing solutions, as they felt that they did not have the resources to adequately match the scale of the project.

Refining recommendations

In the final session, a consultant for the technical team was on hand to help explain the ways in which greening could in fact have a significant impact on flooding, if properly installed in the right places throughout the neighbourhood. However, the participants argued that Portobello Road itself was very congested and that it simply was not feasible to add any greening that would further impede the movement of people.

There was also mixed reaction to vertical solutions like green walls as some reiterated that Portobello was well known for its iconic buildings and facades (many of which are protected) and they did not see the value in changing that aesthetic. So while participants ultimately agreed that something needs to be done to help mitigate the flooding, they could not come to a consensus on whether sustainable urban drainage should be introduced.

They did however agree that there should be better cleaning around the areas prone to flooding. Finally, after a spirited speech by a member of the PEOPLE panel, many were convinced that speed bumps need to be updated so that they don't serve as obstructions that are perceived to worsen the impact of flooding.

"You would need an absolute forest of trees to prevent the flooding. That would take up too much room. There has to be another way."
(Business person)

16. Community involvement & topics outside of the scope of this project

In addition to the topic areas that are detailed in this report, many other topics were raised which fell outside of the scope of this project.

One important theme was toilets, particularly accessible toilets. Many residents, traders and business people noted that there are very few toilets and those which are open are not accessible. There was strong consensus that more should be done to improve the toilet facilities on Portobello Road.

Most other topics largely fell within the theme of community involvement, of which is considered of high importance to those who took part. Some of the key points are detailed below.

One suggestion raised by participants was the opportunity **to engage young people further in Portobello Market**. A number of traders and business people discussed how they perceive there to be barriers for young people in gaining access to trading on Portobello Market, feeling that younger traders are often left with less desirable pitches which receive less footfall and are less well maintained compared to other areas of the market. A small number of traders and business people also raised concerns that the process of applying for pitches is often complicated which therefore acts as a further barrier for young people looking to trade on the market.

It was felt that **engaging young people through offering aid and assistance** in the process of applying for a pitch, or through helping disperse pitches occupied by young people throughout the whole market, rather than localising them in one area, would help to create a more accessible environment for younger traders, which in turn would attract other younger people to the market.

Another suggestion raised by one participant was the idea of a **'trader hub'** to be introduced to the market. This was envisioned as a place on the market that includes toilets, hot water and other basic amenities, for use by traders. This hub could also help serve as a meeting place for traders, away from the higher tensions of the Market Office, and where bulletins could be shared with any important information. This idea was popular with other participants.

A highly important and regularly raised question by most participants throughout the process related to **future engagement about Portobello Market**. All participants who took part are highly engaged and feel passionately about the market, and consider it important that engagement continues following the sessions. Many expressed interest in further meetings run by the council, to update participants on progress and to continue to seek advice on future decisions. This was both seen as important for the markets future, but was also

seen as an important way to sustain the trust built between the council and participants.

