Gospel Oak & Haverstock Neighbourhood Assembly

Assembly Report
What is this report?

This report summarises discussions by the Gospel Oak & Haverstock Neighbourhood Assembly from their 7 sessions in 2020-2021. The raw notes from these discussions have been sorted by the facilitation team, before common themes and recommendations across groups were identified. These common themes are what is included in this report.

The report was regularly circulated to all Assembly members to ensure their discussions are accurately captured. We will also be sharing these findings more widely after Assembly members have had the chance to review.
Background on the Neighbourhood Assembly
Moderator’s Note

In early 2020, Camden Council began establishing a Neighbourhood Assembly to bring residents’ perspectives into the creation of a Community Vision for Gospel Oak & Haverstock. Thousands of letters were posted to homes across the local area, inviting residents to join an Assembly that would meet five times in-person over the spring. Hundreds of residents volunteered, offering up their time and perspectives. Barely a month away from the first Assembly meeting, COVID-19 emerged and the country entered into its first lockdown. Camden Council and the FutureGov facilitation team pivoted, exploring different ways to plan and deliver a virtual Assembly for the first time. Five in-person meetings became seven online sessions that took place over the course of autumn and winter 2020 into spring 2021.

Personally, I looked forward to the Tuesday nights with the Gospel Oak & Haverstock Assembly. Assembly members gathered virtually to provide feedback on broad ideas and later, draft elements of the Community Vision. They were incredibly committed to the process, and their efforts were substantial. This group of people asked difficult questions, pushed the Council and the facilitation to team to give them clarity. They brought with them so many lived experiences -- some were lifelong Camden residents, others were new to the neighbourhood. Some knew the planning process inside and out, while others were learning as we progressed. All of them brought unique and valuable perspectives, along with a shared desire to improve their neighbourhood. Their check and challenge, their priorities are what you will read in this report.

The Assembly Members were incredibly generous with their time and such a valuable asset to the Council, and I encourage the Council to continue involving the Assembly in their Community Vision development. I look forward to hearing what insightful and thoughtful perspectives this group has on the Community Vision when it is published this autumn.

Eva O’Brien, FutureGov
Moderator & Lead Facilitator, Gospel Oak & Haverstock Neighbourhood Assembly
What is the Gospel Oak and Haverstock Neighbourhood Assembly?

The Gospel Oak & Haverstock Neighbourhood Assembly is a group of 30 people from across the Gospel Oak and Haverstock area who are all interested in the future of their neighbourhood. They have been randomly selected using a method called sortition and are representative of the area in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, and housing tenure. They bring with them a unique set of experiences based on the lives they’ve lived. The Neighbourhood Assembly has been convened to help Camden Council write a Community Vision for the Gospel Oak and Haverstock neighbourhood.

An Assembly is a group of people brought together to give advice on a specific issue or topic. As a group, an Assembly reflects the demographics of an area, typically in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, and other important factors specific to the topic of that assembly. Governments all over the world have convened assemblies to help them make choices about climate emergencies, healthcare, transportation planning, and many other issues. Camden Council has convened assemblies to involve citizens in Climate Change and Health and Care issues. Assemblies have become an important part of modern democratic processes.

As a result of the COVID-19, meetings that were originally intended to be held in person were instead held online. Training and equipment were made available to members who required support to ensure that all had an equal opportunity to attend meetings and contribute fairly.
Who were the Gospel Oak & Haverstock Neighbourhood Assembly members and how were they selected?

The Gospel Oak & Haverstock Neighbourhood Assembly was selected using a method called **sortition**.

Sortition is an approach that uses random selection to bring together a group of people that reflect the demographics of an area. With the Gospel Oak & Haverstock Neighbourhood Assembly, the demographics of the group broadly reflect the census data of the area.

Camden Council partnered with Sortition Foundation who were responsible for the selection of the Gospel Oak & Haverstock Neighbourhood Assembly.

Sortition Foundation sent 6,000 letters to random households across the neighbourhood, inviting residents over the age of 16 to volunteer for the Assembly. Residents then volunteered by posting back a letter or registering online. When they volunteered, residents were then entered into a pot. Thirty residents were then randomly selected from that group that reflected the demographics of the area, in terms of gender, age, housing tenure, and ethnicity. As a result, the Assembly was demographically representative of the Gospel Oak & Haverstock area.
Who were the Gospel Oak & Haverstock Neighbourhood Assembly members?

**Gender**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Selected</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Other</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
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</table>

**Age**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target</th>
<th>16-24</th>
<th>25-44</th>
<th>45-64</th>
<th>65+</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<th>Selected</th>
<th>16-24</th>
<th>25-44</th>
<th>45-64</th>
<th>65+</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Who were the Gospel Oak & Haverstock Neighbourhood Assembly members?

**Housing Tenure**
- **Target**
  - Owner Occupied: 19
  - Social Rented: 5
  - Private Rented: 6

- **Selected**
  - Owner Occupied: 20
  - Social Rented: 4
  - Private Rented: 6

**Ethnicity**
- **Target**
  - White: 17
  - Asian: 5
  - Black: 2

- **Selected**
  - White: 15
  - Asian: 6
  - Black: 2
A Community Vision for the Gospel Oak and Haverstock neighbourhood

Camden Council is developing a Community Vision for Gospel Oak and Haverstock. This will be a planning framework that will help to define a vision for the future of the neighbourhood and support its regeneration. A Community Vision provides guidance to help coordinate development and investment in an area by setting out the Council's and community's long-term vision for the area to help shape the neighbourhood's future. Community Visions should include the voices and opinions of residents, which is why the Assembly has been convened.

In 2013, the Gospel Oak and Haverstock community gave a great deal of feedback about what they saw as the biggest issues in the neighbourhood, helping to draw up seven main priorities for the area. In 2015 and 2016, Camden Council then held a further consultation which was originally planned to inform the Gospel Oak Planning Framework. Uncertainty over plans for West Kentish Town and Wendling and St Stephen’s Estates meant that the Council decided to focus on these estate projects and gather feedback needed to develop those plans so that they better meet residents’ needs. Now that these estate redevelopment projects have received approval from Cabinet to proceed, focus has been turned back to the wider Gospel Oak and Haverstock area.
Working with the community to form a Community Vision

The Assembly is part of a larger engagement approach to involve residents in writing a Community Vision that reflects their needs and wants. The first period of wider public engagement ran between 30 October 2020 and 11 January 2021, included an online survey and relaunched project website. Further targeted engagement activities are planned for summer 2021 to ensure the Council gives everyone a chance to have their say. This feedback will be used to draft the Community Vision.

Forming the Vision

- Wider public engagement
  - Neighbourhood Assembly S1-4

Drafting the vision

- Targeted engagement
  - Neighbourhood Assembly S5

- Neighbourhood Assembly S6

Refining the vision

- Formal consultation
  - Neighbourhood Assembly S7

Community Vision Adoption

Autumn 2020
Winter 2021
Spring 2021
Summer 2021
Autumn 2022
Winter 2022
Executive Summary of Assembly Discussions
### Session 1 - Principles

**What principles are important to us when making decisions about planning?**

The following six principles were identified by Assembly members as most important to them - listed in no particular order

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Efficiency and cost-effectiveness</strong></td>
<td>Spending should be done in the most cost-effective way and have the biggest possible impact. Ongoing maintenance of any new development should be factored in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Safety</strong></td>
<td>Recommendations should aim to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour and make the community feel safer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Supporting healthy communities</strong></td>
<td>Social cohesion and mental health should be improved and encouraged through neighbourhood redevelopment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sustainable and positive for the environment</strong></td>
<td>Redevelopment should be environmentally friendly and built for the long term.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Accountability, with measurable impact</strong></td>
<td>The Council should be held to account for development promises that are made through increasing transparency and resident voice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inclusivity and accessibility</strong></td>
<td>Programmes, spaces, and services should be designed and implemented to serve the entire community.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What should these developments provide for the wider community?

The following four areas were the assembly's priorities for the benefits to be secured from the combined estate regeneration schemes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community facilities and provision</th>
<th>Enhanced parks and green space</th>
<th>Safer environment</th>
<th>Local economy and employment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There should be a wide range of activities and facilities for Camden’s diverse community, with a focus on younger and older people.</td>
<td>Parks and green space should be improved with the goal of making them safer for residents. This should also improve biodiversity and mental health and reduce fly tipping.</td>
<td>Community safety is a high priority, in particular better lighting and safer streets. Improved green spaces and better community provision would also improve this.</td>
<td>Queen’s Crescent should be an economic hub for the area, with a focus on The Queen’s Crescent market.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Session 3 - Priorities for community provision

### Key themes for investment in community facilities in the local area.

The following were highlighted across groups as being of key importance when considering investment in local community provision.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Making facilities open and welcoming to all</th>
<th>Intergenerational spaces and activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improving accessibility</td>
<td>Maintenance and sustainable operation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safer environment</td>
<td>Build on and complement existing provision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult learning</td>
<td>Spaces and facilities for young people</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Session 4 - Queen’s Crescent

The following points were some of those noted across groups when seeking to define the neighbourhood centre:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Function / purpose</th>
<th>Measuring success</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diverse and multicultural</td>
<td>Local essentials and services</td>
<td>Create a more attractive and safe street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community feel</td>
<td>Library acts as a hub for the community</td>
<td>Greater footfall and pedestrian focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A place to work, stay and grow</td>
<td>Cafes and restaurants also focal points</td>
<td>Fewer empty shops, greater variety of stalls and shop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affordable</td>
<td>Mosque is also an important community hub</td>
<td>Economic success of the centre</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What specific aims and designs standards should be incorporated into the Community Vision?

The following four priorities were identified by Assembly members as most important to them - listed in no particular order

The diversity of the area is appealing, but community cohesion and connectedness is lacking
Diversity is one of the most appealing aspects of the neighbourhood, and this diversity should be supported and maintained.

Affordable housing is crucial in keeping the neighbourhood diverse
There should be more affordable housing in the area that meets the needs of residents and residents should be involved in the design of that housing.

Focus improvements and regeneration efforts on benefitting area residents
The priority should be on providing benefits for residents, rather than attracting visitors to the area.

Public services and facilities in the neighbourhood should be well-maintained and enhanced rather than only building new facilities
Community safety should also be prioritised in the maintenance of public services and facilities.
Session 6 - Draft Development Principles

What elements of these principles align with the Assembly's recommendations and what needs to be changed?

**Delivering the homes we need**
An important principle that could be strengthened and clarified, with detail about affordable housing to be included.

**Making the best use of land**
Appreciated the protection of open spaces and the effort to connect green spaces, but should also include detail around longevity.

**Creating a healthy and safe neighbourhood**
An important principle that could be amplified (especially around anti-social behaviour) and could benefit from less technical language.

**Fostering a strong and inclusive community**
Should ensure residents are involved in the development process and that spaces are future-proofed and flexible.

**Supporting an inclusive economy**
A physical jobs hub may be useful if it provides authentic job opportunities and serves young people.

**Creating a sustainable and resilient neighbourhood**
Will improve quality of life for residents, but the language could be more ambitious.
Building off of their principles for Community Provision, do these areas meet the Assembly’s expectations? Where can they be improved?

**Session 7 - Draft Community Provision areas**

- Make the area feel safer
- Improve youth facilities and opportunities
- Repurpose Carlton School as an integrated education & community hub
- New and enhanced community facilities
- Improve youth facilities and opportunities
- Improve sports, recreation and play facilities
Assembly Recommendations
Assembly Recommendations:

Assembly Principles
This session was focused on introductions and urban planning. The session began with introductions and a welcome from Councillor Beales (Cabinet Member for Investing in Communities, Culture and an Inclusive Economy), and an orientation. The Assembly discussed why a Community Vision is being written for the neighbourhood, what an Assembly is, why Camden Council convened this group, and how information will be provided to them.

The Assembly members then broke into smaller groups to discuss who they are and why they volunteered for the assembly. The Assembly heard from Stefan Webb, Place Director at FutureGov who explained the basics of urban planning.

Following a short question and answer period with Stefan, the Assembly had a discussion about principles. During the coming months, the Assembly will be making a number of recommendations to Camden Council. These need to be joint decisions made by the entire group. To help do this, Assembly members needed to agree the principles for what they consider most important. The principles highlighted as most important to Assembly members are set out on the following page.

Slides from Session 1 can be found here.
Session 1 - Principles

The following six principles were identified by Assembly members as most important to them:

**Efficiency and cost-effectiveness**

Spending should be done in the most cost-effective way and have the biggest possible impact for residents. New developments should be affordable and benefit the whole community, not only those who live there. The long-term implications of spending decisions should also be considered by decision-makers.

**Safety**

Recommendations should aim to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour. The built environment, in particular parks, lighting, and green space, should be used to make the community feel safer. Young people in particular should be considered in redevelopment to prevent their involvement in crime.

**Supporting healthy communities**

Social cohesion should be improved and encouraged through neighbourhood redevelopment. In particular, young people should be supported. Residents’ mental health should also be a priority. Collectivity and familiarity amongst people is very important.

**Sustainable and positive for the environment**

What is good for the environment will also be good for the health of the community. Materials and methods used in redevelopment should be environmentally friendly. Whatever is built or designed should be useable for decades to come, and should be flexible enough to adjust to changing community needs.

**Accountability, with measurable impact**

Residents’ voices should be heard and listened to in the redevelopment process. Money should be reasonably and transparently spent, and residents should be made aware of that spending. The Council should be held to account for development promises that are made.

**Inclusivity and accessibility**

Programmes, spaces, and services should be designed and implemented to serve the entire community. These should be easily accessed by as many people as possible; age, gender, abilities, and social status should not act as a barrier. Residents should not be forced out of the area due to development, increasing costs or a lack of services for them. Power and decision-making should involve as wide a variety of residents as possible, with Assemblies such as this being one method of engagement.
Assembly Recommendations:

Estate regeneration
Session 2 - 22 September 2020

This session was focused on new homes and estate regeneration. The session began with introductions and a recap of the draft principles that were produced from Session 1. Assembly members first heard from Alan Wito, Principal Conservation Officer from Camden Council on the history of the Gospel Oak and Haverstock area. The Assembly then heard from Nick Phillips, Associate Director at Metropolitan Workshop, an architecture firm that has worked in the area. Nick introduced the idea of estate regeneration to the Assembly.

John Diver, Planner at Camden Council then introduced the Community Investment Programme to the Assembly, before setting out the overall level and nature of development anticipated in the area in more detail. These estate sites are at various stages of redevelopment. This means that some of the anticipated benefits for the neighbourhood from these schemes are yet to be delivered, for instance on obligations secured through a planning permission that has not yet been fully built out. The presentations were followed by a brief question and answer period, and Assembly members then broke into small groups for discussion.

In those small groups, Assembly members discussed two questions:

1. What their hopes and fears were regarding estate regeneration in the area, and
2. What should these schemes provide for wider local community, and what their highest priorities for estate regeneration were.

Slides from Session 2 can be found here.
Session 2 - Hopes and fears of estate regeneration

Estate regeneration should produce:

- Spaces that are inviting to all members of the community and that encourages community cohesion, in particular between young people and the elderly. Spaces should also be flexible so they can be used in a variety of ways by many residents. Spaces should also be inviting, appealing, and feel safe for people to use.

- More housing that meets residents’ needs and encourages people to stay in the area over a long period of time. In particular, estate regeneration should produce housing that is affordable, safe, accessible, and can accommodate large families.

- Housing should be built to last for many years, and should feel unified across developments to avoid a patchwork feeling.

- More facilities that are well-maintained, inviting, and useable by many groups within the neighbourhood.

Estate regeneration should avoid:

- Creating a lack of affordable housing that forces people out of the neighbourhood due to increasing costs.

- Resulting in housing that does not meet the needs of neighbourhood residents, have long-term staying power, or feel unwelcoming.

- Putting additional strain on local services such as GPs and schools. With an increase in population, additional services should be added into the area or existing services should receive more support.

- Increase the cost of living and taxes for residents when the benefits are not experienced by them directly. These benefits should be clearly conveyed to residents.

- Regeneration that comes at the cost of neglecting existing facilities, areas, and housing within the neighbourhood.
Session 2 - Priorities for estate regeneration

The Assembly outlined the following as their priorities for how estate regeneration funding should be spent. These priorities aren’t currently tied to a specific location.

**Community facilities and provision**
There should be a wide range of activities and facilities for Camden’s diverse community who have varying needs. Activities should be inclusive and encourage intergenerational mixing. The two priorities within this area are youth provision that is accessible and relevant to young people, and support for older people, namely food and social provision.

**Enhanced parks and green space**
Parks and green space should be improved, especially existing spaces with the goal of making them safer for residents. Cosmetic additions such as new trees and planters will improve the look and feel of spaces, but the focus should be on improving biodiversity and reducing carbon emissions in the neighbourhood. These improvements could ideally reduce fly tipping, benefit residents’ mental health, and benefit children growing up in the neighbourhood.

**Safer environment**
Community safety is a high priority, in particular better lighting and safer streets. Improved green spaces and better community provision would also result in improved safety in the neighbourhood.

**Local economy and employment**
Queen’s Crescent should be an economic hub for the area. The Queen’s Crescent market in particular could be an economic hub, potentially by making it more affordable for residents. Economic drivers such as creating affordable coworking spaces for residents or job training for local residents, are high priorities for Assembly members.

**Other priorities** that were mentioned by some Assembly members:
- Better sports provision
- Public art & culture
- Better cycle lanes & improved road safety
- Improving the library
Assembly Recommendations:

Community provision
Session 3 - 29 September 2020

This session was focused on community provision. The session began with introductions, and a brief recap on the discussion on estate regeneration from Session 2. The Assembly then heard from John Diver, Planner at Camden Council who briefly shared additional census data to explain the existing population of the area, and to explain the anticipated population changes to come.

The Assembly briefly discussed community provision, what provision currently exists in their neighbourhood, and how they make use of it in their daily lives. The Assembly reviewed feedback from the 2015-2016 engagement process and the priorities that came out of those discussions. The Assembly then heard from David Toothill, Director of London School of Mosaic on how underused spaces can become community assets. Assembly members also had a brief presentation from DC Jim Cope of the Metropolitan Police on designing out crime (this presentation was shared separately with residents to watch before the session). Lastly, Assembly members heard from John Diver about potential locations for community provision in the area.

In small groups, Assembly members discussed two questions:

1. What they thought about the requirements, if anything was missing from those requirements and if they had any concerns about how the requirements are implemented

2. What a future community hub provide should provide for residents.

Slides from Session 3 can be found here.
Session 3 - Community provision

The assembly broadly agreed with the previous priorities around community provision. However, they gave the following considerations:

- **Prioritise younger and older groups, as well as supporting mixing between groups.**
  Provision for younger people within these priorities is very important, as well as ensuring there are activities for older people. Also consider how provision can support intergenerational support.

- **Build on existing provision and focus on linking provision together.**
  Ensure that community facilities work well together and compliment each other, rather than compete. This is particularly important for any new community provision and existing community centre.

- **Don’t just invest in new things, also invest in ongoing maintenance.**
  It is crucial to plan for how these indoor and outdoor spaces are maintained and run.

- **Safety needs to build into this provision.**
  It is important to consider how this investment will impact community safety and this should be planned from the start. There were particular fears around green walking routes.

- **Ensure spaces are inclusive and welcoming.**
  This community provision needs to be inclusive and accessible for all groups in the community - specifically those with disabilities. The spaces need to feel welcoming and comfortable to spend time in.

**Community provision investment priorities from previous engagement process:**

- Provide new **health centre** (relocated from Wendling Estate)
- Relocate the **youth centre** to a new, purpose built facility
- Creation of a **community hub**, including hall for multi-faith use
- New **public squares** and improved **public open spaces**
- Tie into a scheme for the **transformation of Queens Crescent** and green walking routes
- Enhance the **library** and **community centre** offer
- Invest in open spaces and enhance sports and play facilities
- Improve community safety
Session 3 - Community hub provision

What is a community hub?

During this session we used the term ‘community hub’ to describe a potential new or enhanced publicly accessible space that brings community groups and services together to offer a range of activities, facilities and services. We used this term to distinguish this from the existing community centres in the area (which would need to be enhanced and complimented), but also to acknowledge that the co-location of services or facilities may allow for improvements in the offer and cost-effectiveness.

Members were asked to consider the list of top priorities for community provision highlighted in previous engagements, and whether this list matches their expectations. During the session, some potential options for physical locations of any such community hub were discussed. However, the Community Vision will seek to clearly set out what is seen as the highest priority to be delivered with the available space and budget before any detailed design work occurs. Once the Community Vision is adopted any plans to develop new community facilities in the area would still require specific and targeted consultation.

Most Assembly members agreed that the following should be included in a community hub:

- A community kitchen and/or cafe that encourages residents to gather together. Older residents were highlighted as a group that would particularly benefit from this provision as a place to gather, eat, and socialise.
- Multi-use spaces that can be used for a variety of activities and by any residents, at hours that are convenient for residents. Spaces that are welcoming for young people to use was highlighted by several Assembly members.
- Free wifi, both to attract young people and potentially with a broader range so it can be used by market vendors.
- Advice available to residents. Housing and homelessness advice were highlighted by several Assembly members.
- Adult learning opportunities which exists elsewhere in the area, but would benefit from being accessible in a single space, and recreational classes.
- Assembly members raised concerns around the continued maintenance to ensure the hub is appealing to residents, and the governance of the hub.

Other suggestions that were mentioned by some Assembly members:

- If this was going to be an addition to the existing community centre or a separate space
- Whether private sector organisations would be involved in the hub
- Services available should be free whenever possible, and affordable if a cost is necessary
Assembly Recommendations:

Queen’s Crescent
Session 4 - 6 October 2020

This session was focused on Queen’s Crescent. The session began with introductions and a brief recap of session 3 before defining the term neighbourhood centres. John Diver, Planner at Camden Council briefly explained the policy background of neighbourhood centres, and the current local provision in Gospel Oak & Haverstock.

John then explained what the role of a Community Vision is specifically regarding neighbourhood centres to focus the Assembly’s discussion. The Assembly then discussed the character of Queen’s Crescent, what they liked and didn’t like about it, and what elements should be preserved in the future. The Assembly then discussed Queen’s Crescents purpose and function for the community, what they would miss if it disappeared and therefore should be protected. Lastly, the Assembly discussed how the Council should measure the success of the Queen’s Crescent neighbourhood centre when making decisions about its future development.

After a short break, the Assembly heard from East, an architecture firm who is designing public realm improvements for Queen’s Crescent and from John Diver about a COVID-19 street trial being run in the area. Following a brief question and answer session, Assembly members broke into small groups to answer two more questions: if the scheme proposed by East will enhance the character, function and success of Queen’s Crescent, and what the main aim of the COVID-19 street trial should be to preserve the character, function and success of Queen’s Crescent.

Slides from Session 4 can be found here.
Session 4 - Characteristics of Queen’s Crescent

Most Assembly members agreed that the following characteristics of Queen’s Crescent should be preserved:

- Diversity and multicultural nature of Queen’s Crescent
- That Queen’s Crescent is a place for residents to work, stay and grow up. The neighbourhood remaining affordable is a crucial part of that belonging.
- The community feel that exists -- that people know one another and are friendly

Most Assembly members agreed that the following characteristics of Queen’s Crescent should be improved or developed further:

- The diversity and vibrancy of the market
- Safety, particularly at night
- The run-down appearance of the area
- Heavy vehicle traffic and a lack of pedestrian access

Other comments from some Assembly members:

- Queen's Crescent does not have the same community feel that it had previously, and that should be revived
- There are very few accessible activities for children
- There are more transactional services such as fast food restaurants, takeaway shops, and betting shops
- The availability of parking, particularly for disabled users
Session 4 - Purpose and Function of Queen’s Crescent

Most Assembly members agreed that the following **purposes / functions** of Queen’s Crescent should be preserved:

- Library that acts as a hub for the community
- Local essentials and shopping
- The mosque should be supported and possibly improved
- Some residents noted the cafes and bars, and others thought that the area could do with more

Most Assembly members agreed that the following **purposes / functions** of Queen’s Crescent should be improved or developed further:

- Community spaces where people can sit, spend time, and socialise
- More community support and services, in particular mutual aid groups and community spaces
- Additional support to create local jobs and bolster the economy
- More activities for young people and children, not only shops

**Other comments** from some Assembly members:

- There is little to attract people to the area
- Residents should be encouraged to spend their money in the area
- Public facilities such as toilets and cash points should be better maintained
- The need for a covered market
Most Assembly members agreed that the following changes to Queen’s Crescent would indicate success in the area:

- Fewer empty shops along with a wider variety of businesses both in storefronts and at the market
- More pedestrian focus and access, potentially with less vehicle access
- A more attractive street that is well-cared for and also feels safer to residents
- Greater footfall and an increased number of people visiting Queen’s Crescent
- More people using community facilities and feeling connected to other residents
- People being able to remain living in the area
- Economic indicators such as more money being spent in the area, and more opportunities for small businesses

Other comments from some Assembly members:
- How schools are performing in the area, especially their OFSTED ratings
Session 4 - Public realm improvements to Queen’s Crescent by East

Most Assembly members agreed on the following remarks regarding the public realm proposal:

- Many Assembly members liked the proposal by East however they urged that the improvements should meet the needs of residents and be functional. Improvements should provide value and not only look appealing.
- Assembly members appreciated that the designs matched the local character, and that the designs reinvigorated the space.
- The greenery additions (especially the trees) are welcome, but Assembly members cautioned about the long-term upkeep needed to maintain greenery additions.

Some Assembly members agreed on the following remarks regarding the public realm proposal:

- There is a delicate balance to be struck between upgrading the area and gentrifying the area. Affordability for community members was raised by several Assembly members as a priority.
- Additional seating is welcome and should be made permanent, however COVID-19 adjustments should be recognised with additions such as seating.
- Cycling infrastructure such as bike racks are welcome, and should extend to cycling-related services.
- There was mixed feedback on the proposed mosaic designs as some Assembly members liked them, while others thought they were out of place or would be difficult to care for.

More detailed recommendations from the Assembly, including areas of potential concern, have been shared directly with East.
Session 4 - COVID-19 street trial feedback

Most Assembly members suggested the following to measure when considering the success of the pilot:

- Footfall in the area
- Air pollution and congestion in the area. Assembly members cautioned against the impact of road closures in the area
- Number of COVID-19 cases in the area
- Number of pedestrians and cyclists in the area and how safely they can access the area

More detailed recommendations from the Assembly have been shared directly with the Transportation Team.
Assembly Recommendations:

Wider Engagement & Tradeoffs
Session 5 - 1 December 2020

This session was focused on the wider engagement process and trade-offs within the Assembly’s recommendations. The session began with introductions and a recap of what had occurred since the Assembly met back in October before understanding the various components that make up a Community Vision. The Assembly was given examples of what strategic objectives, local priorities, specific aims, and designs standards could be and where they could have the most impact in their advice.

The Assembly then broke into small groups to discuss their thoughts on the draft summary. After facilitators shared the Assembly’s feedback on the aspects of the summary that need to be adjusted, in particular more detail in the recommendations from Sessions 3 and 4, the Assembly then heard from Jasper Sutherland at make:good. Jasper took the Assembly through what groups had been engaged thus far and discussed what the initial findings from the wider engagement were thus far. Jasper and John then answered questions before the Assembly took a short break.

The Assembly then broke into small groups to discuss their next question, which focused on the specific aims and design standards they thought should be included in the Community Vision. In particular, the Assembly discussed the inherent tension between their desire to improve the look and safety of the area, and attracting more people to the area, while also ensuring that it remains affordable to those who live and work there now. After a short update from some facilitators, the group briefly heard about Camden Council’s next steps for writing the draft Community Vision, and broke for the year.

Slides from Session 5 can be found here.
Many Assembly members recognised that Gospel Oak and Haverstock is diverse in age, culture, and identity. This diversity is one of the most appealing aspects of the neighbourhood, and this diversity should be supported and maintained. Several Assembly members cautioned that a diverse community cannot be engineered or forced, however, there are several factors that can encourage diversity that should be incorporated into the Community Vision. The local economy, housing and rental prices, and the cost of living were all mentioned as factors that can contribute to a diverse community.

Many Assembly member agreed that community cohesion and connectedness is lacking, and should be a priority established in the Community Vision. Community connectedness and cohesion can be encouraged in different ways. Some ideas from the Assembly were:

- The creation and facilitation of spaces/facilities that could be rented by or used free of charge by community groups and organisations. Priority should be given to community organisations that provide benefits to the neighbourhood through jobs and opportunities, and as a result, improve community safety.

- A specific space to act as a focal point for community connectedness where individuals and groups could interact. This could be a library or a community space that can be easily accessed both by individuals and by groups.

Several Assembly members cautioned against excluding certain groups in the hopes of making spaces and services more inclusive. Several Assembly members stressed the importance of providing opportunities for young people in the area through facilities and spaces for young people, and the opportunity of jobs.
Many Assembly members stated that affordable housing is crucial in keeping the neighbourhood diverse, and as such should be highlighted in the Community Vision.

In particular, several Assembly members noted these important aspects of affordable housing that the Council should incorporate into the Community Vision:

- Generally, there should be more affordable housing available in Gospel Oak and Haverstock and that where possible, renters' rights should be protected
- Some affordable housing units should be reserved for key workers and public sector workers to have access to
- Housing should be designed to work for large and growing families to ensure that they can remain in the neighbourhood over time rather than being forced to move if their families grow
- More broadly, new developments in the area should provide benefits for residents, and residents should be engaged in the entire development process
Session 5 - Aims and Design Standards for the Community Vision

When prompted, Assembly members generally agreed that the Council should focus improvements and regeneration efforts on benefitting area residents, rather than attracting visitors to the area. Some of those benefits may attract visitors to the area, however, Assembly members generally agreed that the priority should be on residents.

These benefits could take various forms, but Assembly members specifically mentioned:

- Local providers such as architects and design companies should be given opportunities to create local spaces for residents
- Residents should be more involved in the development process, and the benefits from new developments should be more clearly outlined for residents
Session 5 - Aims and Design Standards for the Community Vision

Several Assembly members stressed that public services and facilities in the neighbourhood should be well-maintained and enhanced rather than only building new facilities. There are characteristics of the local area that should be protected. There were several aspects that were highlighted by Assembly members as important:

- Facilities and equipment aimed at children and young people
- Facilities that are affordable or free for the community to use, such as football pitches
- Specific spaces such as Queens Crescent and facilities intended for the Queen's Crescent market (such as a building and public toilets)
- When new facilities are built, they should be of good quality and designed in a way that they will be used for many years into the future

Related to improvements of existing facilities, many Assembly members highlighted community safety as a priority that should be a major part of the Community Vision. Assembly members called for the Council to make use of designing out crime principles, especially when updating or creating new walkways, green spaces, and to make use of lighting with the intent of decreasing antisocial behaviour in the area.
Assembly Recommendations:
Draft Development Principles
Session 6 - 2 March 2021

This session was focused on discussing a part of the draft Community Vision that has been written by Camden’s Planning team — the development principles. The session began with introductions and a recap of what had happened since the Assembly met back in December before reviewing the development principles.

A principle is an ambition that forms the basis of the Community Vision and will be used to inform future decision making in the Gospel Oak & Haverstock neighbourhood. A strategic principle sets out a high level ambition that the Council wants to achieve for the neighbourhood. Most specifically, a development principle sets out how decision makers should consider and apply this when proposing or assessing development in the neighbourhood. The Assembly focused on draft development principles as they are some of the most fully formed elements of the Community Vision at this point, and will influence a significant portion of the rest of the Vision as it is crafted by Camden Council.

The Assembly reviewed six development principles over the course of the meeting. Assembly members broke into seven small groups with facilitators and note-takers to review the following development principles:

- Fostering a strong and inclusive community
- Making the best use of land
- Creating a healthy and safe neighbourhood
- Delivering the homes we need
- Supporting an inclusive economy
- Creating a sustainable and resilient neighbourhood
In the first discussion, each of the Assembly breakout groups was assigned a principle to discuss, with “Delivering the homes we need” being discussed by two groups. In their second discussion, Assembly members decided what principle they wanted to focus on as a group, and discussed the principle in detail. In both discussions, Assembly members answered the same questions:

What do you like about the principle?
What is missing from the principle?
Do you have any other thoughts about the principle?

Below are the notes from these small group discussions, which have been grouped by each development principle. The principles have been put in the order of popularity as a discussion topic.

Slides from Session 6 can be found here.
Session 6, Principle 1 - Delivering the homes we need

What elements the assembly liked best

● The Assembly broadly supported the principle and felt that many of their recommendations were noted in this principle. Several Assembly members thought it was the most important development principle, and potentially could be prioritised over others since homes and housing sit at the centre of residents’ lives.

● In particular, Assembly members were pleased to see carbon reduction highlighted as a priority.

● Assembly members were also pleased to see residential units being saved for key workers and other groups.

● Many members agreed that the strategic target of 50% new homes being affordable was positive, but some groups encouraged the Council to strive for even more than 50% affordability.

● Several members appreciated the detail around space for green and social infrastructure, and the usage of empty space being put to good use.

● Members were pleased to see that improving existing homes is a priority, but questioned if this was an intention or a reality.
What language needed adjusting

The Assembly noted that the definition of affordable housing was not included and should be incorporated into this principle. Several assembly members also recognised that Camden’s definition of affordable housing may not be clear or bold enough to meet the Assembly’s expectations, and should be reviewed before being included. Some Assembly members suggested that the running costs of a property should be taken into account when calculating affordability.

○ More information about how “affordable housing” is defined by Camden Council in Appendix 1.

Assembly members noted that planning language such as ring-fencing should be replaced with more accessible language. Another member noted that a complementary mix of housing should be more clearly explained, and questioned if this was about housing tenure, type of units, or something else. Another member also mentioned that the size of properties is not included in this principle and should be added and clarified.
Session 6, Principle 1 - Delivering the homes we need

What larger changes the Assembly wanted to see

● The Assembly appreciated the idea of a car-free area but also recognised that some residents (or Assembly members) may not be in favour of car-free areas. In particular, Assembly members noted that a balance should be struck between the needs of individual residents, access to Queen’s Crescent market, and the changing needs of residents during the pandemic. **Elements of a car-free neighbourhood should be considered carefully**, especially low-emission vehicles, electric vehicles, and the necessary infrastructure such as bicycle storage and dedicated parking spaces.

● As mentioned previously, some Assembly members thought that this principle is the most important and **could be prioritised** above others.

● Some Assembly members wanted the principle to include **checks and balances** that would ensure developments in the area respect the Community Vision and its principles.

● Some Assembly members stressed the importance of clear and transparent communication from the Council about housing developments, especially those that are affected by change. If elements change throughout the planning process or timelines are extended, communication with residents is crucial to maintaining trust between residents and the Council.
Session 6, Principle 2 - Creating a healthy and safe neighbourhood

What elements the Assembly liked best

- The Assembly broadly supported the principle and thought it was of high importance.
- In particular, a number of members thought establishing a network of safe walking routes really stood out as an important part of this principle. There was also support for developing safe cycling routes.
- There was also significant support for designing out opportunities for anti-social behaviour (part 3.4).

What language needed adjusting

- Assembly members thought the language of ‘feels like safe and supervised spaces’ (3.4e) didn’t feel strong enough. Places should be safe and properly supervised if needed.
- There was agreement that the wording of this principle was quite technical and academic and could be made simpler.
- There was acknowledgement that this was primarily a planning document, so the focus on designing out crime and anti-social behaviour was an important focus. However members wanted this to be stated explicitly and show how this will link with other council and community initiatives to improve safety.
Session 6, Principle 2 - Creating a healthy and safe neighbourhood

What language needed adjusting (continued)

- A number of members wanted specifics around anti-social behaviour and **what exactly would be improved.**
- A number of members felt that the principle did not explicitly talk about **how disabled residents would be supported** and that this needed to be brought out more.
- One member wanted more clarity on what ‘**residents taking ownership of the design and maintenance of underused spaces**’ looked like in practice.

What larger changes the Assembly wanted to see

- Some Assembly members agreed that it didn’t make sense to **pair health with safety** as they didn’t feel very related. It was felt safety could be better linked with principles on the economy and social inclusion, as secure work and a supportive community could reduce crime and anti-social behaviour. Whereas health could be better linked with a greener and sustainable environment. There was some disagreement across the group as some Assembly members saw these as a natural pairing.
- Assembly members felt that the principle still required further consultation with, and focus on young people.
- A number of members thought there was **overemphasis on Queen’s Crescent.** Some members felt like it wasn't an attractive location in terms of shopping or safety and that a focus here could take focus away from other areas.
Session 6, Principle 3 - Fostering a strong and inclusive community

What elements the assembly liked best

- Assembly members agreed that the aspirations set out by this principle were in-line with their previous discussions and worth supporting. More broadly, Assembly members noted that all residents have a basic desire to feel a part of a community and this principle would seek to meet this desire.

- Members appreciated that adaptability of space due to their shifted perspective from COVID-19 was incorporated into this principle.

- Some Assembly members noted that although the description length of this principle was appropriate, it may be prudent to shorten it and simplify the language, especially for residents who do not speak English as their first language.

What language needed adjusting

- Many Assembly members noted that safety should be highlighted in this principle, in addition to being noted elsewhere. Assembly members stated that the application of designing out crime principles is key to addressing safety needs in the area, and should be included.

- Assembly members also noted that there was no specific mention of youth provision, which they perceived to be a crucial element in creating a strong and inclusive community.

- Assembly members suggested that the language could be less passive and more active, especially as it would indicate a more powerful commitment to change by the Council.
Session 6, Principle 3 - Fostering a strong and inclusive community

What language needed adjusting (continued)

- One Assembly member questioned if the sub-points in the principles are hierarchical, and wanted to know if they are in a particular order.
- Another Assembly member requested tangible examples within the principles to express what is intended by each principle.
- An assembly member asked to draw out ease of access in the community.

What larger changes the Assembly wanted to see

- Assembly members noted that while the principles reflected many of their recommendations, they wanted to ensure that the *principles were mandated rather than suggested*. One group of Assembly members presented the specific example of ensuring developers have to evidence how they improved an area beyond the basic requirements to be considered successful.
- One group of Assembly members wanted this principle to include a *commitment to bringing residents into the development process* at key milestones to ensure accountability. Online meetings, letters, and tenant resident associations are an element of this engagement, however Assembly members wanted additional rigour around engagement.
- Assembly members recognised that the neighbourhood’s population will change over time and stressed the importance of future-proofing developments in the area to meet the changing needs of residents.
Session 6, Principle 4 - Creating a sustainable and resilient neighbourhood

What elements the assembly liked best

- Generally, the Assembly members that discussed this principle were satisfied with it, and agreed it would **improve the quality of life in the neighbourhood**.
- The Assembly recognised that reducing CO2 emissions from new builds and existing homes should be prioritised (part 6.5).

What language needed adjusting

- The Assembly noted that sustainable drainage systems (SUDS) should be explained within this principle.
- Assembly members suggested that existing green areas in the neighbourhood could be trimmed less as a quick win to increase biodiversity in the area.
- Assembly members noted that **the language could be more ambitious**, especially as the next decade is crucial for climate and biodiversity protection. Specific examples of strengthened language included carbon positivity rather than carbon neutrality, along with regenerative neighbourhoods.
- Assembly members wanted to expand on increased opportunities for growing, specifically mentioning the opportunity for local food production. This could include community growing areas and community kitchen spaces for shared use within the neighbourhood.

What larger changes the Assembly wanted to see

- Assembly members raised that cycle paths adjacent to bus stops can be very dangerous and should be considered carefully when planning new cycling infrastructure (part 6.4).
Session 6, Principle 5 - Making the best use of land

**What elements the assembly liked best**

- The Assembly supported the **protection of open spaces**. However some consideration should be given to how this can prevent antisocial behaviour.

- The Assembly supported the focus on **connecting up green spaces**. These changes should ensure they are accessible for wheelchair users or buggies.

- Assembly members liked the creative use of meanwhile spaces but believed there could be more emphasis on multi-use spaces.

**What language needed adjusting**

- Assembly members wanted to ensure **longevity** was built into any changes and that improvements should stand the test of time.

- Assembly members wanted more consideration around **how play spaces could cater for different generations and different activities**. The design of spaces needs to be accessible and take into account those that are less mobile.

- An assembly member wanted to ensure a focus on space not being misused or wasted.
Session 6, Principle 6 - Supporting an inclusive economy

**What elements the assembly liked best**

- Assembly members supported the creation of a **physical jobs hub**, but wanted to ensure this was a place that offered real job opportunities.

**What language needed adjusting**

- Assembly members wanted more detail on what kind of employment would be created beyond shops and community centres.

**What larger changes the Assembly wanted to see**

- Assembly members felt that **young people should be prioritised** with this principle and that there should be more specific engagement with young people around this.
- Some assembly members wanted workspaces to support businesses that employ locally.
- Some assembly members felt that some workspaces could be prioritised for art, music and creative uses.
Session 6, Appendix 1 - What is affordable housing?

The term **affordable housing** is used to describe housing for sale or rent that is specifically provided for people whose needs are not met by the general housing market. The government’s definition is broad and includes a number of “affordable products” such as:

- Social Rent – this is the level of rent charged in council housing
- London living rent – the rent is based on average local incomes
- Affordable rent – this can be up to 80% of market rate
- Shared ownership – also known as “part buy, part rent”. This is aimed at first time buyers who cannot afford to buy a property on the open market. Under the scheme you can buy at least a 25% share in a home, and pay a rent on the remaining share. The overall value of the home is the full open market value

In recognition that some affordable housing is still relatively expensive, especially when it is linked to open market values in areas with high property values such as Camden, the term “**genuinely affordable**” is often used. However, this term does not have a legal definition, and means different things to different people.

For Camden Council, affordable housing in Camden is defined as our council homes and Camden Living homes. Examples of council rents are on the home connections website and Camden Living rents are here – Camden Living rents are set to an intermediate level that’s below private market rent levels. They’re for people who don’t qualify for council housing and struggle to afford to private rent levels in Camden.
Assembly Recommendations:

Community Provision
The final session of the Neighbourhood Assembly took place in mid-May. An important update occurred after the Assembly’s sixth session -- the announcement of a residents’ ballot on Wendling Estate & St. Stephen’s Close taking place in Summer 2021. With this residents’ ballot having a substantial impact on the number of future homes being built in the area, the timelines for the Community Vision have changed. The first draft of the Community Vision will now be published in Autumn 2021. As a result of these timeline changes, the Assembly has not formally endorsed the Community Vision at this stage.

Instead, the seventh session was focused on reviewing a draft element of the Community Vision -- the key community provision areas. Community provision can be defined as facilities that enhance residents’ quality of life and encourage community connection. Community provision might also be called social infrastructure or community facilities. Community provision forms a vital part of neighbourhoods and should meet the local community’s needs.

The Assembly discussed community provision in their third session as a broader concept and following that guidance, the Council had drafted six community provision areas they brought to the Assembly. Assembly members participated in two discussions -- one focused on a topic that was assigned and another focused on a topic of their choice. Assembly members broke into seven small groups with facilitators and note-takers to review the following community provision areas:

- Make the area feel safer
- Improve youth facilities and opportunities
- New and enhanced community facilities
- Repurpose Carlton School as an integrated education and community hub
- Improve health outcomes
- Improve sports, recreation and play facilities

Slides from Session 7 can be found here.
Session 7, Area 1 - Make the area feel safer

What elements the Assembly liked best

- The Assembly was pleased to see many of the suggestions around physical improvements to the neighbourhood, especially improved lighting and addressing fly-tipping (two issues that have been previously mentioned by the Assembly as key priorities).

- The Assembly noted that many of these ideas were very aspirational and wanted to understand more about how they would actually be implemented and measured.

- The Assembly appreciated the idea of freeing up vacant space and making the process of residents using those spaces less bureaucratic.

- Several Assembly members noted that CCTV and patrols were important safety measures for them.

- The Assembly noted that introducing several safety measures simultaneously would naturally result in people feeling safer in the area.

- One Assembly member noted that the many of the suggestions focus on residents being invested in the place that they live, which felt positive.
Session 7, Area 1 - Make the area feel safer

What language needed adjusting

- The Assembly noted that the community provision boards contained **paternalistic language**, and **did not address the deeply rooted core causes of crime** in the area. Root causes and prevention should be more clearly highlighted in the Community Vision. Some felt that whilst physical measures will help make the area feel safer, alone they will not prevent deeply social and complex issues that result in crime.

- Several Assembly members highlighted the importance of **creating opportunities for young people** to increase safety in the area. In particular, the Dome was highlighted as a resource for young people to access youth workers and other service, along with other public spaces and specific opportunities around jobs and skills training with local businesses.

- Some Assembly members recognised that TRA halls and community spaces were not mentioned as community resources in the community provision boards, and that the Council should **consider empowering residents to deliver services** (potentially through TRAs).

- Some Assembly members said that **the area above Mansfield Road doesn’t receive much funding** or provision, and that there is more concentration on the Queen’s Crescent area.

- There was division in the Assembly on the idea of **using private provision** when providing services for the neighbourhood.
Session 7, Area 1 - Make the area feel safer

What larger changes the Assembly wanted to see

- The Assembly noted that timelines are crucial for managing people’s expectations and should be clearer. In particular, some Assembly members thought that timelines for redevelopment were too long. Others noted that safety improvements will take time to show impact, and that should be acknowledged to manage expectations.

- The Assembly pointed out that communications need to be improved from the Council. In particular, the Assembly noted:
  - A clearer understanding of what happens when a resident raises a safety concern could result in people feeling safer.
  - More honesty and transparency would help residents understand delays in service provision (such as fly-tipping collection).
  - Increased communication between the Council, security staff and residents would be helpful.

- The Assembly recognised that different groups in the community will have different perceptions of safety, and that more research may be needed to better understand these groups.

- The Assembly noted that residents should be given the opportunity to take charge and play a role in improving safety in the area. TRAs and other local groups would benefit from support in accessing funding for localised opportunities, as applications can be complicated.
Session 7, Area 2 - Improve youth facilities and opportunities

What elements the Assembly liked best

- The Assembly noted this area is comprehensive but not all young people are the same, and their more specific needs should be considered. There should be more specificity around what young people these services are for to ensure they actually meet their needs.
- The Assembly liked the multicultural area but said it required further work.

What language needed adjusting

- The Assembly wanted to ensure that young people are involved in the design and delivery of facilities, not only to ensure the facilities meet their needs but also to see themselves reflected in the service providers.
- The Assembly also highlighted that this area was missing the link between youth facilities and safety, and that safeguarding and safety checks need to be considered in the design.
- Assembly members also pointed out that well-trained youth workers and resources need to be present in addition to facilities, and that volunteers cannot be relied upon alone.
- One Assembly member mentioned that facilities for pubescent-age children should be prioritised as they are not as mobile as older young people and are still looked after by their parents.
Session 7, Area 2 - Improve youth facilities and opportunities

What larger changes the Assembly wanted to see

- The Assembly noted that **proximity of services for young people and other services** is important. The location of the Dome was questioned in particular and if it was accessible to young people in the neighbourhood.

- Assembly members thought that more should be done to understand the **long-term impacts of a missed year as a result of COVID** on young people, and consider that in service provision.

- Some Assembly members pointed out that some of the facilities **sounded similar to the Connexions Hub** on Ashdown Crescent that no longer exists.

- Some Assembly members wondered about **involving professional clubs** in funding and providing services specifically for young people in the area.

- One Assembly member was curious about **existing facilities being more directive about engaging young people in service provision**. Kentish Town City Farm was mentioned as one example that could be appealing.

- One Assembly member noted that **extended opening hours for multi-use gaming areas** should be considered so that young people can more easily access facilities in a safe way.
Session 7, Area 3 - New and enhanced community facilities

What elements the Assembly liked best

● The Assembly appreciated the idea of one-stop-shops that fit the needs of residents’ lives and have multiple uses for the community.

● The Assembly liked the idea of intergenerational support around health and wellbeing that would come from a living centre.

● The Assembly also appreciated the idea of mentoring and mental health services, especially as a way to bring the community together.

● Two examples the Assembly highlighted were the Somers Town Living Centre as there was nothing like it in the area, and the new TRA Hall at Maitland Park for its multipurpose use by different groups.

What language needed adjusting

● The Assembly wanted to see more detail around ongoing communication about facilities for the community, and that those communications be digestible and transparent.

What larger changes the Assembly wanted to see

● Some Assembly members thought that funding should be made available for local-led improvements in an effort to give power back to residents.
Session 7, Area 4 - Repurpose Carlton School as an integrated education and community hub

What elements the Assembly liked best

- The Assembly liked the idea of **co-locating services** and that the space could become a resource for the entire community, not only school-aged children.

- The Assembly pointed out that **intergenerational relationship-building** that might occur in a community hub. More broadly, a space for residents seeking advice on housing, wellbeing, and mentoring was especially appealing.

- The Assembly recognised that Carlton School has good transport links, is in a good location and has ample space but questioned that this might duplicate existing services in the area. They questioned if the space could be used for something else community-oriented.

- The Assembly was concerned that **a school space may not be appealing to young people**. Additionally, the space and activities intended for young people should be designed with young people to ensure it actually meets their needs. One Assembly member liked the idea of **building resilience to gang culture** in young people but questioned if this might be better suited to a youth centre.
Session 7, Area 4 - Repurpose Carlton School as an integrated education and community hub

What language needs adjusting

- The Assembly wanted more clarity on the timescales for these changes and the scale of ambition for the community hub. The Assembly wanted to see improvements taking place sooner rather than later, and that small changes would be welcome to indicate movement.

- The Assembly wanted more detail around the sustainability of a hub. Assembly members questioned who will run the hub, how it will be funded, and if multiple organisations would be responsible for its success. They also wanted to better understand how it would be used and if it would receive referrals from health and education providers.

- The Assembly was concerned about duplication of services in the area, the cost affiliated with updating this space, and the potential for competition amongst providers. The Dome was mentioned as a provider of nursery space in the area, and Kiln Place was highlighted as a space that would benefit from an upgrade.

- Some Assembly members wanted more detail around funding and support for local-led improvements and upgrading existing facilities. One Assembly member noted that the Council needs to avoid favouritism and should provide support to a range of groups.

- One Assembly member noted that across the community provision areas, there is a lack of emphasis on mental health. The community hub could be home to counselling services and an access point to other services intended for young people and low income families. There is a stigma around mental health discussions in certain ethnic groups that could be especially important in the neighbourhood.
Session 7, Area 4 - Repurpose Carlton School as an integrated education and community hub

What larger changes the Assembly wanted to see

- Some Assembly members supported the idea and others did not. The Assembly wanted **better communications around the merger**, especially for residents who are connected to the schools.

- The Assembly also wanted to better understand **the decision-making process around this choice** and have a clearer indication of how a hub will be incorporated into the area. The Assembly strongly felt that **more evidence, transparency, and engagement with residents** was needed in decisions such as this.

- The Assembly wondered about this space being **redesigned for younger children**, specifically as a holistic early-years facility or as a space for children over 4 to receive after-school services. Some members pointed out this facility could be part of Camden’s 1000 Day initiative as an integrated facilities with services for babies, toddlers, and children. This focus could potentially address some concerns the Assembly raised around DBS separation and other safety issues.

- The Assembly **questioned some services being placed at Carlton School**, namely coworking spaces that might be better suited to Queen’s Crescent for residents’ needs.

- One Assembly member was concerned about **permanent police presence** onsite and was concerned it may deter young people and residents with uncertain migrant status from using services.

*Note: The Assembly was not being asked whether or not they supported the proposed merger, instead offering comments in relation to the potential for new community uses to the upper floor only.*
Session 7, Area 5 - Improve health outcomes

What elements the Assembly liked best

- The Assembly agreed that a **co-located, holistic health centre that focuses on underlying health conditions** would be a welcome addition to the area. They also specified that this health centre would need to consider all aspects of health and wellbeing, not only physical health,

- The Assembly also appreciated the **highlighting of loneliness and isolation** as a major health issue experienced by residents.

- Some Assembly members liked the **new walking and cycling routes**.

What language needed adjusting

- Assembly members agreed that the language and delivery in this community provision area is the wooliest and **needs to be clearer**. In particular, the Assembly wanted to see more commitment and clear accountability from the Council to ensure it could be acted upon.

- The Assembly highlighted that **mental health is a key factor in healthy living** and was not highlighted in this community provision area.

- The Assembly wanted **more context and data around the proposed health changes** included in this community provision area. They wanted to see more evidence to show why certain services are being prioritised and potentially relocated.

- The Assembly was concerned that **renovations to existing properties** was not mentioned.
What larger changes the Assembly wanted to see

- The Assembly wanted to highlight the **interplay between some solutions that will result in better health outcomes**. In particular, the Assembly highlighted safety, access to green space, food, and housing as aspects of residents’ lives that would most certainly have an impact on their health and wellbeing.

- Assembly members were interested in seeing **more detail around evidence bases** that contributed to decision-making. They also wanted to ensure that the Council has committed to both listening to what the Assembly has recommended, along with the wider community.

- The Assembly wanted to ensure that social connections were considered as important as design decisions in the Community Vision.

- Some Assembly members wanted to explore how care home residents could be integrated into the wider community to reduce loneliness and isolation.
Session 7, Area 6 - Improve sports, recreation and play facilities

What elements the Assembly liked best

- The Assembly appreciated that facilities were described as **free to use and accessible to all**.

- The Assembly broadly liked the ideas included in this area but wanted to ensure that specific infrastructure decisions around leisure had **agreement from residents to ensure their use**. Outdoor gyms were highlighted as an example of seeming like a welcome addition but questioned their broader appeal.

- The Assembly discussed **the Dome as an asset** in the neighbourhood. Members agreed that improving youth provision was a top priority for the area. Some members had heard of the Dome space while others had not. Some members felt that the space was too expensive to hire and not accessible and were keen to learn more about its re-use as a more affordable and accessible space.

- Some Assembly members liked the Southwark example that was highlighted as it was a large, flexible space that could be used by variety of groups in different ways. They did question if there would be enough space in the area to create something similar.

- Some Assembly members highlighted that any green space, however small, could be used by families in the area.
Session 7, Area 6 - Improve sports, recreation and play facilities

**What language needed adjusting**

- The Assembly pointed out several existing facilities that could benefit the wider community if availability was extended to meet residents’ needs. The outdoor space at Fleet Road School could be used outside of school hours. The Royal Free Hospital recreational centre for staff can also be used by residents, however the Assembly wondered if this could be opened up further to be used by more people.

- The Assembly questioned if specific groups would benefit from facilities designed especially for them. In particular, female-only facilities may be welcome, along with facilities for very small children and teenagers.

- Some Assembly members noted that there should be evidence to support the usage of specific spaces such as the multi-wheel park.

**What larger changes the Assembly wanted to see**

- The Assembly noted that facilities should be open at times that work for residents, especially evenings and weekends.

- The Assembly wanted to see better coordination, connection and awareness of existing facilities into the community.

- The Assembly recognised that some facilities need to make money to be sustainable but wanted to see the Council explore different funding models (such as non-residents being charged for use).
Next steps
What comes next for the Assembly?

The Assembly’s initial recommendations were used to inform the wider engagement approach Camden Council undertook between October 2020 and January 2021, with an online survey and relaunched project website. Further engagement activities targeting specific groups, for instance young people, will take place throughout the spring and summer 2021 to ensure that everyone gets a chance to have their say. Camden Council will continue to use the feedback from the Assembly and the wider engagement process to write the Gospel Oak and Haverstock Community Vision.

Once the draft Vision is published and formal consultation begins in the Autumn, the Assembly will be invited to provide their perspective and input once again. This will be used to refine the draft in advance of its final adoption in Winter. During this time, members of the assembly will also be invited to get involved in multiple local projects and continue to shape changes coming forward in the neighbourhood.