

DELEGATED POWERS DECISION

STREETSCENE SERVICE CLIMATE, HOMES AND ECONOMY

CHARLES SQUARE REMODELLING

AGREE TO:

- Remodel Charles Square to provide better amenity space, improved accessibility and landscaping.
- Note the responses received to the engagement exercise during October/November 2021.
- Proceed with the implementation of the landscaping improvement works within the square.

1. REASONS

1.1. The proposal will:

- Help make Charles Square a more sustainable, inclusive, accessible, greener, attractive and most importantly safer open space. This will be achieved by:
 - Introducing a wide range of modern and sensory planting which will enhance biodiversity by prioritising native species, promoting habitat diversity, supporting pollinators, increasing food availability and by providing wildlife corridors.
 - Making the square more child friendly by introducing accessible planting areas with a combination of boulders and logs placed in between. While raised planters have their own advantages, such as easier maintenance and better control over soil conditions, flush planters provide a child-friendly environment that prioritises accessibility, safety, freedom of movement, learning opportunities, imaginative play, and social interaction.
 - Bringing the community together: A well-designed square can create a vibrant public space that encourages social interaction and community gatherings. By providing new seating areas, improved green spaces, informal play opportunities and high quality paving

material, the square becomes an inviting and comfortable space for people to relax, meet, and engage with one another. Currently the flats surrounding the square do not have quality outside space for community gatherings and any other forms of social interaction. Charles square is the nearest open space to achieve this. The remodelled space could instil a sense of pride and ownership among the community. By involving local residents in the design process and incorporating their feedback, the square becomes a reflection of their needs, values, and aspirations.

- Help residents feel safe and potentially more confident to use the square more frequently. This will be primarily achieved by upgrading the quality and aesthetics of the square as well as accessibility to all users. New granite paving will provide longevity and instantly upgrade the tired look of Charles Square. Diverse and sensory planting as well as new trees will create a greener and more attractive environment for residents and visitors encouraging them to spend more time and feel welcomed and safer when visiting.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. In a time when inactivity has become quite topical and people are urged to go out for physical activity, be it by walking or cycling, concerns over the impact of the outdoor environment on the health of children, the elderly and other protected groups have been raised.
- 2.2. The quality of air in London, high traffic volumes, fumes from passing cars, as well as inactivity, have also been talked about, particularly around schools and nurseries. This has made the need for quality open spaces even bigger.
- 2.3. Schemes such as Ultra Low Emission Zones (ULEZ), Strategic Cycle Routes, School Streets and Healthy Low Traffic Neighbourhoods and Town Centres were introduced to combat issues affecting the air quality and environment.
- 2.4. Refocusing on existing public spaces is equally important. Charles Square is located between housing estates and its existence is not so obvious from the main road network which includes Old Street to the south, Pitfield Street to the east and City Road to the west.
- 2.5. Charles Square is a historic garden square that was originally built in the

early 19th century, and it is named after King Charles II, who reigned from 1660 to 1685.

- 2.6. It was completed in 1770, at which time it was described as 'set with greens, plants, fruit and other trees'. None of the original features or surrounding buildings remain except for No 16, a Georgian townhouse.
- 2.7. During the 20th century, Charles Square underwent significant changes. In the 1930s, the square was extensively modernised, with the construction of new buildings and the conversion of the original houses into flats. During World War II, the square suffered damage from bombing raids, and many of the original buildings were destroyed.
- 2.8. Today, Charles Square is a mix of old and new buildings, with some of the original townhouses still standing alongside modern apartment blocks. The square is a popular residential area, and the communal garden in the centre of the square provides a peaceful amenity for local residents and visitors.
- 2.9. In recent years, Hackney Council has made efforts to improve the square and make it a more pleasant place for residents to live. These efforts have included the installation of new benches and the planting of new trees and shrubs. Charles Square still requires improvements to reflect the needs of modern living and it remains an important part of the history and heritage of Hackney and London as a whole.
- 2.10. Charles Square is located within a short walk from Old Street to the south and Shoreditch Park to the north. It's located in a quiet residential area, and is covered by large trees positioned mainly at its four corners.
- 2.11. In its current form, the square comprises two main areas: (i) the upper part of the square which is paved in the centre with grassed verges in the periphery, raised square brick planters and a number of benches. (ii) the sunken area which is accessed only via steps. There is one table tennis table available in this part of the square.

3. PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

- 3.1. Despite limited funding, our plans for Charles Square include making the square more accessible, inclusive, sustainable and attractive. Detailed proposals include:

- Demolishing the existing raised brick planters that disturb pedestrian desire lines and appear outdated and of poor quality
- Replacing existing hard paving areas (currently varied asphalt slabs) with new high quality contemporary granite paving
- Enlarging existing grass beds on the periphery of the square while allowing new hard paving beautifully bleeding/merging into the planted areas
- Installing new trees and a variety of low level planting within the newly designed (enlarged) grass beds. Planting to include a mix of evergreen shrubs and grasses including sensory plants as well as flowers to give colour and scent to the remodelled square
- Steps to be renewed with granite paving including the implementation of a ramped access to the west providing inclusive access to users
- Installing a new landmark tree in the middle of the paved area
- Replacing existing Victorian benches that look tired with new inclusive low maintenance benches. Benches will sporadically incorporate armrests and backrests providing comfort to elderly and disabled users.

Proposed changes for a permanent scheme

3.2. **Table 5** shows the proposals and impacts of the proposed permanent landscaping improvements within the square.

Proposal for permanent scheme	Reasons for suggestions
Demolishing existing raised brick planters that disturb pedestrian desire lines and appear outdated and of a poor quality.	The existing planters are scattered randomly within the upper part of the square disturbing ease of movement and creating an outdated layout. It is proposed to be completely removed in order to declutter the hard pavement area of

	the upper part of the square providing a more accessible and attractive environment.
Replacing existing hard paving areas (currently varied asphalt slabs) with new high quality contemporary granite paving.	The existing asphalt paving slabs in white and light grey colours are not level and looking tired. High quality granite paving is proposed that will create a fresh look and will be laid with the longer dimension of the linear slabs bleeding into the soft landscaping/planting areas as illustrated below.
Enlarging existing grass beds on the periphery of the square while allowing new hard paving beautifully bleeding/merging into the planted areas.	This proposal aims to increase soft landscaping areas but also create a new place identity to the square by implementing a unique paving pattern in the square where the linear granite slabs bleed into the planting areas in a staggered configuration.
Installing new trees (ideally multi-stemmed) and a variety of low level planting within the newly designed (enlarged) grass beds. Planting to include a mix of evergreen shrubs and grasses including sensory plants as well as flowers to give colour and scent to the remodelled square.	Planting trees in critical locations to densify planting and provide additional shade as a mitigation measure to ongoing climate change (extremely hot periods during summer months). Locations of trees to be selected carefully to ensure that they do not block natural surveillance from surrounding buildings. Currently the beds around the square are covered by turf and scattered trees. New landscaping is proposed to create attractive soft landscaping comprising a variety of flowers and grasses in various heights. The proposed planting species will be thoroughly discussed with our Parks team and arboriculture officers. A selection of boulders and logs will be also introduced within the planted areas to encourage informal play.
Steps to be renewed with granite paving including the implementation of a ramped access to the west providing inclusive access to users.	This improvement will significantly improve access for disabled users, especially people with mobility issues. The edge of the step will be bullnose (rounded) stone in a much lighter tone than the tread to aid visually impaired users. Public spaces should be fully accessible to everyone and most importantly vulnerable groups of people.
Replacing existing Victorian benches that look tired with new inclusive low maintenance benches. Benches will	To provide more comfortable, ergonomic and inclusive seats that will last longer and help create a more modern and inviting environment.

sporadically incorporate armrests and backrests providing comfort to elderly and disabled users.	
Installing a new landmark tree in the middle of the paved area	To enhance the character of the square and mark its new identity. The tree will also provide additional shade in the middle of the paved area.
Creating a new ramped entrance to the north-west of the square.	To provide a direct access from Brunswick Place to Charles Square (subject to trial holes and underground utilities as well as the presence of tree roots)

Table 5 - Proposed changes and reasons for suggestions

Potential measures/improvements considered and rejected

- 3.3. As part of the decision process regarding the scheme we have initially considered removing the railing around the square. Both the ‘Secured by Design’ team of MET police and residents at the drop-in session organised at the park advised to retain the railings as residents will feel safer and any ASB will be prevented during nighttime.
- 3.4. As part of the original consultation in November 2021 we were considering upgrading the sunken area of the square by installing another table tennis table and outdoor gym equipment (mainly callisthenics type of exercise equipment) as people have been observed using the space for working out. We have also considered resurfacing the sunken area with flexible paving. Unfortunately, due to budget constraints and the inflation of material and labour costs we will have to consult and implement these (subject to the consultation outcome) separately in the future when additional funding is secured.
- 3.5. All above proposals adhere with the Council’s draft Green Infrastructure Strategy. The Green Infrastructure Strategy is aimed at promoting and enhancing green spaces within the borough. It proposes a green link (Green Link 7) that seeks to connect Bishopsgate Goods Yard to Hoxton Square and Shoreditch Park. Although the route doesn’t go directly through Charles Square, the route passes very close, via Fellows Court, Geffrye Estate and Arden Estate.
- 3.6. The strategy aims to improve the quality and accessibility of green infrastructure in Hackney. It seeks to enhance biodiversity, mitigate climate

change impacts, improve air and water quality, promote physical and mental well-being, and create sustainable and attractive environments for residents and visitors.

- 3.7. Hackney's forthcoming Local Nature Recovery Plan (LNRP) identifies a number of areas of Hackney where wildlife habitat can be improved or enhanced. Charles Square is located in the "Regents Canal and Hackney South NRA Opportunities" area. One of the priorities for the area is to "Ensure all new developments maximise urban greening, especially in the most densely developed parts of the borough."
- 3.8. Hackney's Parks and Green Spaces Strategy has the following commitments that Charles Square will help to deliver:
 - Engage local communities, residents and tenants in improvements that affect their local parks and housing green spaces, with continued engagement from outset to delivery, with a special effort made to reach underrepresented groups
 - Increase biodiversity across Hackney in line with the emerging Local Nature Recovery Plan, creating more wild areas across all parks and green spaces
 - Eliminate all annual planting and replace it with more sustainable and drought tolerant planting schemes
- 3.9. These proposals also form part of the long term vision for streets in Shoreditch and Hoxton which reflect our aspirations for this thriving and dynamic area of London known as the Shoreditch Plan. Hackney Council wants to create streets that are safe, easy to walk or cycle on, reduce vehicle dominance and help to improve air quality. The particular location; Charles Square, has been also identified as an opportunity for a public realm project within the Draft Future Shoreditch Area Action Plan.
- 3.10. London's garden squares are a characteristic model of planned communal green space in higher density residential neighbourhoods.
- 3.11. The remodelling of Charles Square is also supported by the London Environment Strategy published in May 2018. For the first time, this strategy brings together approaches to every aspect of London's environment, kick starting action that will improve the city's environment right away, while taking the most ambitious view of what is possible in the future. It makes new connections between the environment and the rest of life in London. Recognising that the environment has a big influence on the quality of Londoners' lives, it has people and their experience of living, working and spending time in the city at its heart. **Figure 1** below presents

the aims of London's Environment Strategy by 2050 which adhere with the proposals.

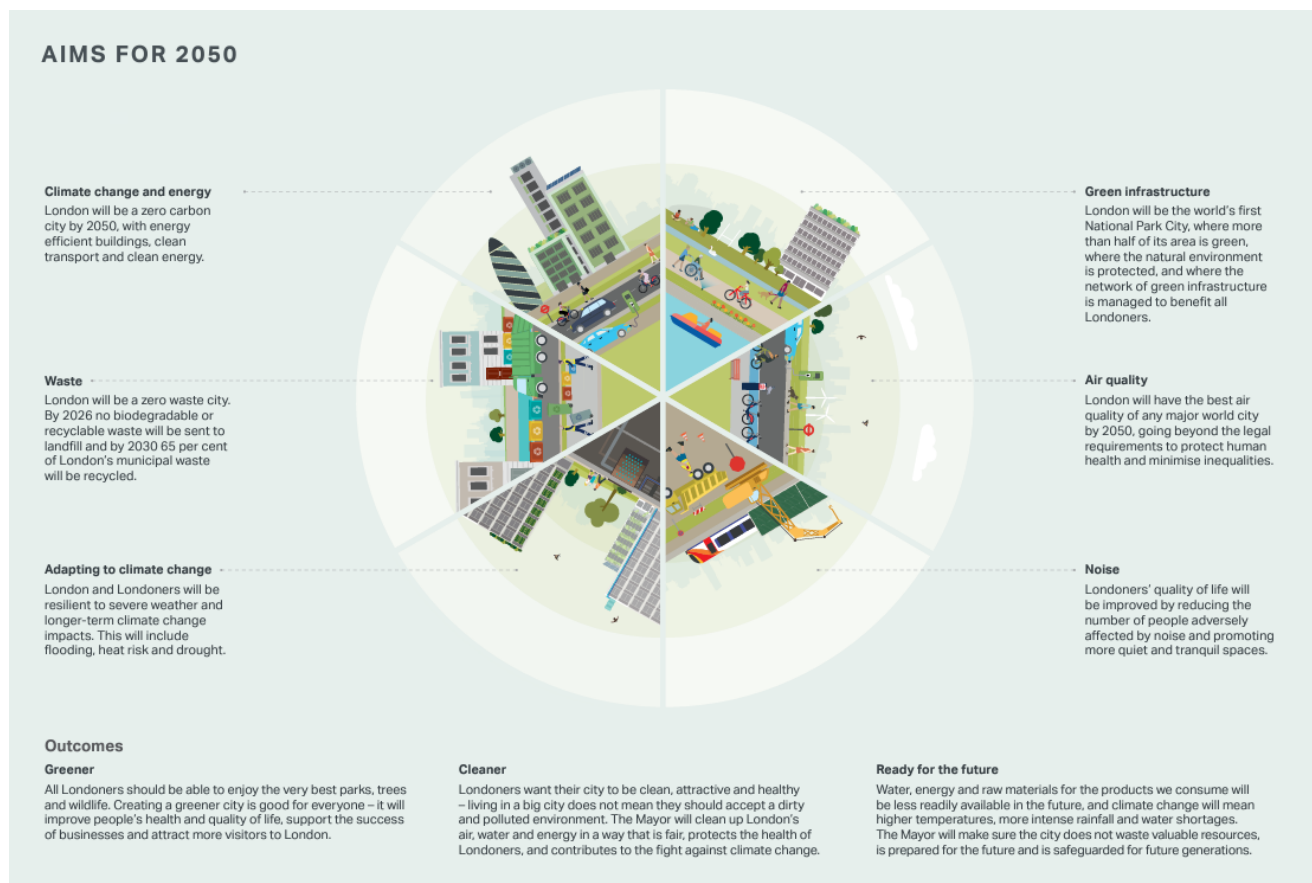


Figure 1: Aims for 2050, London Environment Strategy, May 2018

3.12. All the above proposals can be seen in preliminary drawing in **Appendix A**.

4. POLICY CONTEXT

Hackney Transport Strategy 2015-2025

- 4.1. Hackney Council's Transport Strategy sets out a coherent set of sustainable transport policies, proposals and actions that aim to further improve walking, cycling and public transport conditions and options for all residents, visitors and people who work in the borough.
- 4.2. The Strategy recognises that not only does transport have a critical role to play in Hackney's continuing physical regeneration but is also a key factor in achieving other key borough priorities such as promoting transport equality and access to jobs, training and essential services, reducing obesity levels through incidental exercise, supporting the local economy, improving air quality and reducing carbon emissions. In all cases, the

Strategy recognises that the borough must continue to challenge the potential impacts of greater levels of private car use through greater integration of transport and land use decisions and through providing sustainable alternatives to meet the aspirations of Hackney's people while improving social inclusion and combating climate change.

- 4.3. This vision supports the broad objectives of the borough for the environment, social inclusion, accessibility, connectivity, health, and supporting the local economy outlined in the Council's Corporate Plan to 2018 'A Place for Everyone' and other strategic policy documents including the Council's emerging Local Plan and Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
- 4.4. In addition to securing the necessary public transport improvements to support growth in the borough, Hackney Council wants to encourage its residents to walk and cycle more often and more safely. There are a number of very strong economic, social and environmental reasons why we should seek to do this. Hackney's population and employment are amongst the fastest growing in London meaning that future travel patterns and the demand for travel will need to be carefully managed.
- 4.5. Creating a travel and transport system that is safe, affordable and sustainable and that fully supports residents and local businesses is a key reason for producing the Transport Strategy.

Road Safety Plan

- 4.6. Hackney Council is committed to making our highways safer for all users and to reduce road traffic casualties from road traffic accidents. Hackney recognises the role that reducing casualties and improving the perception of the borough as a safe place to walk and cycle has on facilitating modal change and will continue to seek innovative ways to do this. Any investment from available sources in road safety will be priority based and data led. The borough also understands the need to tackle the relationship between areas of deprivation and high casualty rates and will seek to address this through the Road Safety Plan. Achieving further casualty reductions will require greater effort and a coordinated approach with Transport for London, our neighbouring boroughs and engagement with road users persuading them to behave more safely. This Road Safety Plan outlines some of the more successful initiatives undertaken by the Council to date.

Cycling Plan

- 4.7. The Scheme should help to encourage cycling, which would align

generally with Hackney's Transport Strategy. Hackney is synonymous with cycling in London, with many thousands of trips being made every day on the borough's streets, parks and towpaths. Hackney has the highest levels of cycling in the capital and has set an ambitious long-term target of 15% of all journeys to be made by bicycle by 2025. The proposed improvements will offer cyclist a destination place of interest and a chance to rest with shade and seating provided

- 4.8. It is considered that the Scheme would accord with a number of relevant policies set out in the Council's supporting plans to the Transport Strategy i.e. Walking Plan / Cycling Plan / Public Transport Plan / Liveable Neighbourhoods Plan / Road Safety Plan / Sustainable Transport Supplementary Planning Document, which form part of the Council's Transport Strategy.

Mayor's Manifesto Commitments

- 4.9. The Scheme also aligns with certain manifesto commitments made by the current Mayor of Hackney
- "We will make it easier and more attractive to walk and cycle to school."
 - "We want Hackney's streets to be the most walking and cycle-friendly in London, leading the push to build people-focussed neighbourhoods with places to rest, relax and have shelter and shade."

Mayor of London's Policies

- 4.10. The central aim of the Mayor of London's Transport Strategy (2018) is to create a future London that is not only home to more people, but is a better place for all of those people to live in. It recognises that the success of London's future transport system relies upon reducing Londoners' dependency on cars in favour of increased walking, cycling and public transport use, and that this will bring with it other benefits. The Mayor of London's aim for 2041 is for 80 percent of Londoners' trips to be on foot, by cycle or by using public transport. Further, the Mayor of London's Vision Zero (2018) sets out the goal that, by 2041, all deaths and serious injuries will be eliminated from London's transport network.

Climate Emergency Declaration

4.11. Hackney Council is committed to doing everything within its power to deliver net zero emissions across Council functions by 2040, which is ten years earlier than the target set by the government. When the Council made [our commitment](#), we resolved to:

- tell the truth about the climate emergency we face.
- pursue our declaration of a climate emergency with the utmost seriousness and urgency.
- do everything within our power to deliver against the targets set by the The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC's) October 2018 1.50C report, across our functions (including a 45% reduction in emissions against 2010 levels by 2030 and net zero emissions by 2040), and seek opportunities to make a greater contribution.
- call on the UK government to provide powers and resources to make the 2030 and 2040 targets possible.
- campaign to change national policy where failure to tackle the challenges has undermined decarbonisation and promoted unsustainable growth.
- support the campaign to create a just transition for workers and users.
- help create a million public sector jobs nationally to help minimise the effects of the climate crisis.
- involve, support and enable residents, businesses and community groups to speed up the shift to a zero carbon world.
- work closely with them to establish and implement successful policies, approaches and technologies that reduce emissions across our economy while also improving the health and wellbeing of our citizens.

- conduct an annual Citizens' Assembly with a representative group of local residents to allow for public scrutiny of the Council's progress and explore solutions to the challenges posed by climate change.
 - work with other local governments (in the UK and internationally) to discover the best methods to limit climate change and put them into practice.
- 4.12. The remodelling of the square will result in a reduction of hardscape areas as well as an increase in trees and planting. It therefore supports the objectives of the climate emergency declaration.

5. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Impacts on the road network

- 5.1. This is purely a landscape project within the boundaries of the square and therefore, no impacts are anticipated on the road network. The only impact on the public highway (Charles Square Street) will be the construction vehicles parked outside the square.

Air Quality Analysis

- 5.2. We're committed to ensuring that Hackney is a place for all to breathe clean air. We also want to make sure that everybody is aware of the impacts of air pollution, what the levels are within Hackney and what can be done to improve air quality.
- 5.3. We have a statutory duty to review and assess air quality within Hackney. This means considering the sources of pollution and the pollution levels, then comparing these to health-based air quality objectives (AQO).
- 5.4. The pollutants which are of greatest concern in Hackney are nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and particulate matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}).

Air Quality Monitoring

- 5.5. Hackney measures air pollutant concentrations across the borough using a network of both automatic and passive monitors. The data from these

monitors can be seen on Hackney's [Air Quality webpage](#). Data from the automatic monitors is updated regularly and can be viewed on the [Air Quality England](#) website.

5.6. The closest monitors to Charles Square are located on Old Street approximately 80 metres away. NO₂, PM10 and PM2.5 are all monitored at this location. Real time air quality monitoring can also be seen on the IQAir website. For the Old Street area which is where the nearest monitoring station is located, real time data can be accessed [here](#).

5.7. **Table 1** below presents the air pollutants as recorded mid May 2023 at the specific station on Old Street.

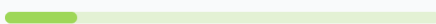
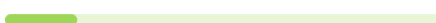


Pollutants		Concentration
PM2.5		9 µg/m ³
PM10		14 µg/m ³
O3		62 µg/m ³
NO2		13 µg/m ³

Table 1: Air pollutants as recorded at the nearest station on Old Street (south of Charles Square) mid May 2023

NO₂ concentrations

5.8. The NO₂ data from the automatic monitoring station located about 80m to the south of Charles Square is shown in **Table 2** below. This data is reported in Hackney's Annual Status Report which is available on the [Council website](#).

Objective	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
NO ₂ Annual Mean (µg/m ³)	60	57	57	50	47	37	33
NO ₂ Hourly Mean (No. of Hours Exceeding)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 2: NO₂ Ratified Results from Old Street Automatic Monitoring Station

Methodology

- 5.9. All the pollutants recorded at the nearest station (diffusion tube) to the square which is located on Old Street to the south of the square as shown below in **Figure 2**. NO₂ is below the 40 µg/m³ as recorded in 2021.

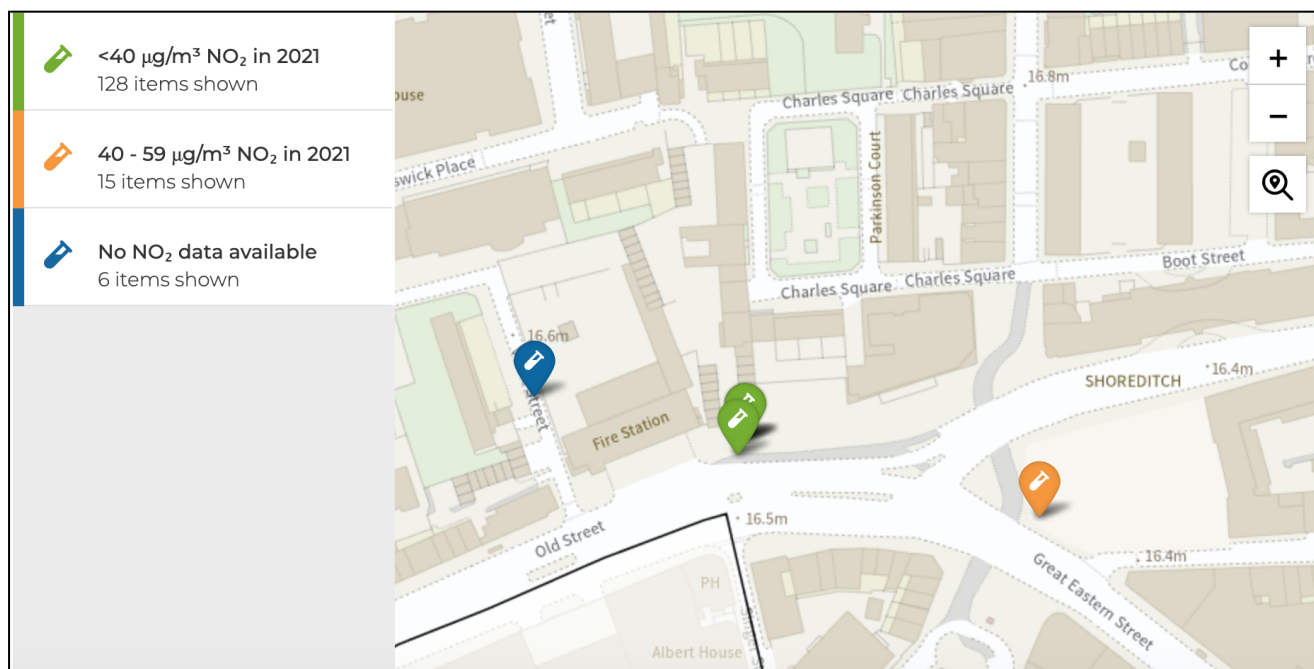


Figure 2: Air quality monitoring locations near Charles Square

Particulate Matter concentrations - PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}

- 5.10. The data from the particulate monitors located about 80m to the south of Charles Square is shown in **Table 3** below. This data is reported in Hackney's Annual Status Report which is available on the [Council website](#).

Objective	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
PM ₁₀ Annual Mean (µg/m ³)	26	20	19	24	22	19	20
PM ₁₀ 24-Hour Mean (No. of exceedences)	5	2	1	2	6	3	1
PM _{2.5} Annual Mean (µg/m ³)	12.1	12.1	11.7	10.2	9.1	7.9	7.8

Table 3: PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} Ratified Results from Old Street Automatic Monitoring Station

Air Quality Modelled Results

- 5.11. Hackney has also used air pollution dispersion modelling to predict air pollutant concentrations. This provides information on the levels across the borough in 2018 which can be used as a baseline for future comparisons. This predicted that, in 2018, the annual mean NO₂ Air Quality Objective was not being met at Charles Square. The PM₁₀ Air Quality Objective was being met but the concentrations are above the guidelines recommended by the World Health Organisation. Further details can be found [here](#).

Impacts on Collision Statistics

- 5.12. Road traffic collision data in the vicinity of Charles Square from January 2017 to October 2022 using [London Collision Map](#) platform. The latest data available goes up to 31 October 2022.
- 5.13. There are no severe or fatal collisions recorded in a close proximity of the square. The nearest collisions recorded are along Pitfield Street and all classified as 'slight'. The analytics of the severity of the collisions by year are presented below in **Figure 3**.
- 5.14. In total, 6 collisions were recorded between January 2019 and October 2022 resulting in 6 casualties in total. All collisions were between pedestrians and cyclists. It is worth noting that there are no collisions recorded in the 2021-2022 period. However, officers will continue to monitor the stats over the next few years around the square to identify if any interventions are needed in the vicinity.
- 5.15. Five out of six collisions recorded between 2017 and 2020 occurred along Pitfield Street to the east of the square. Pitfield Street is part of the Cycle Superhighway Route 1 (CS1) and it is a very busy route in terms of people cycling. An additional slight collision occurred north west of the square on Bache's St a couple of metres north of the junction with Brunswick Place.
- 5.16. None of the above findings on recorded collisions signified the need for interventions on the Charles Square public highway in the periphery of the actual square.

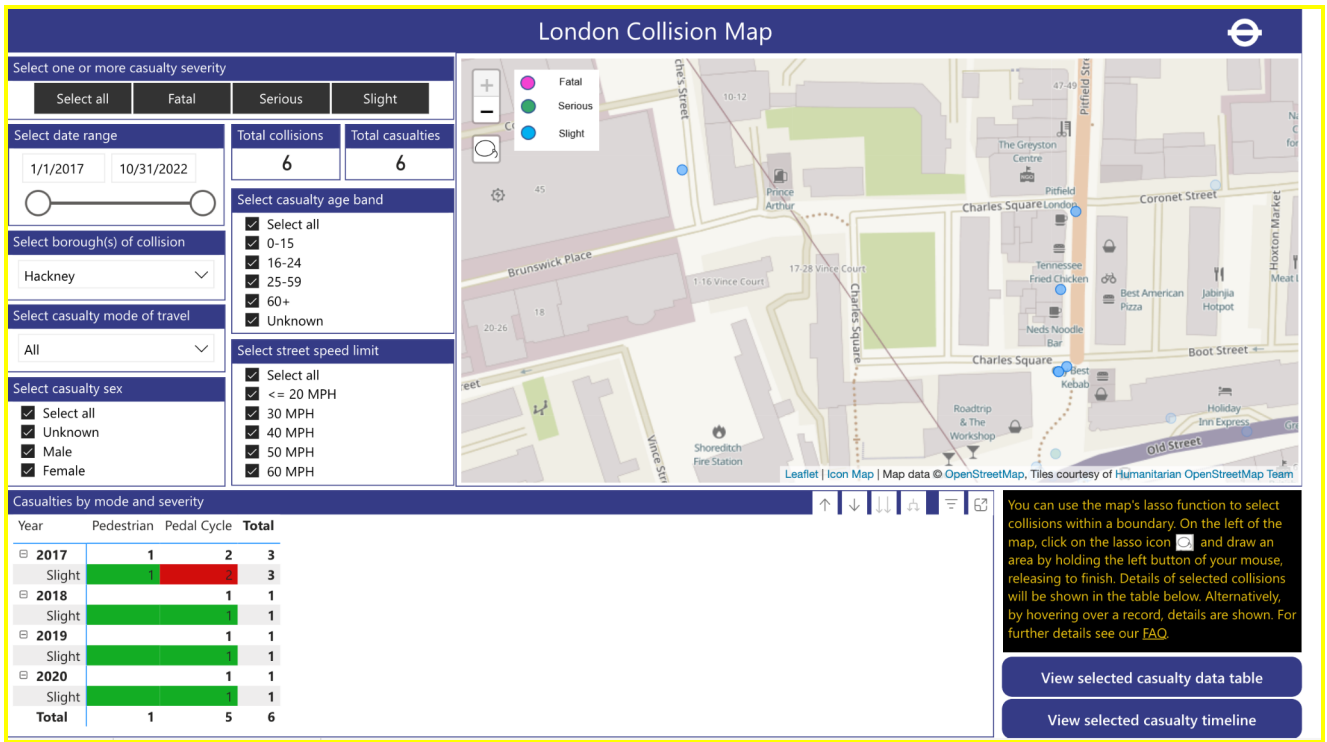


Figure 3: The collisions between January 2017 and October 2022 in the vicinity of Charles Square.

Impacts on Walking

- 5.17. Although it has not been possible to quantify the changes in pedestrian behaviour it is believed that by creating a new access to the north-west corner of the square and significantly upgrading the public realm within the square, more people will visit and spend more time. It will also become a more attractive destination for dog walkers, families, elderly, people who want to use the table tennis table, have their lunch or simply spend some time closer to nature in a car free environment.
- 5.18. Walking is one of the easiest ways to get more active, become healthier and achieve better mental health outcomes. Sometimes overlooked as a form of exercise, walking briskly can help one build stamina, burn excess calories and make one's heart healthier.
- 5.19. According to the Mental Health Foundation, UK and the NHS, physical activity has been shown to have a positive impact on our mood. Even a short burst of 10 minutes of brisk walking increases our mental alertness, energy and positive mood. Participation in regular physical activity can increase our self-esteem and can reduce stress and anxiety.

Impacts on Walking and cycling

- 5.20. Before the end of this decade, London's population will reach nine million. The city's economy continues to grow. Even with unprecedented investment in the Tube and rail network, parts of it will still be under pressure. Most journeys, by both public transport and car, are short and eminently cyclable. If these journeys can be made more easily by bike, significant amounts of that pressure could be eased.
- 5.21. Regular cyclists have, on average, the fitness of someone at least ten years younger. On average, they are half as likely to suffer from heart disease, a quarter less likely to have a stroke, and will live, on average, more than two years longer.
- 5.22. Cycling is:
- an effective way of keeping a healthy weight
 - an effective way of reducing anxiety and depression
 - cheaper than any form of motorised transport, an important consideration when living costs in London are high
 - It is the most reliable way to travel any reasonable distance beyond walking range
 - Like any exercise, it creates endorphins, natural highs that lift the mood.
- 5.23. The remodelling of Charles Square is expected to positively influence local cycle journeys. It will provide an attractive public space for cyclists to rest and break up their journey.

Implications for Crime and Disorder

- 5.24. Under section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, the Council is required to have due regard to the likely effect of its decisions, and the need for the Council to do all that it reasonably can, to prevent: crime and disorder in the borough (including anti-social behaviour (ASB) and other behaviour adversely affecting the local environment); the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances in the borough; and reoffending in the borough.
- 5.25. The Scheme has been discussed with the Council's Community Safety

and Enforcement Team who work closely with the police to monitor crime statistics and respond to local concerns. The design team is ready to respond to any infrastructure-related issues raised. Proposals have also been discussed during the engagement with the Secured by Design (SbD) team of the MET police which provided valuable feedback that informed decision making.

- 5.26. The main issues raised by the SBD team of Metropolitan police were mainly anti-social behaviour related to drug use and dealing, street drinking and urination. These forms of ASB take place mainly around the square and not directly within. It was also noted that where clubs operate in Shoreditch, sexual assaults take place as women are led from the clubs to 'blindspots' nearby. This was a general comment for the Shoreditch area to bear in mind and not specific to Charles Square. This comment was in relation to the intensity of the clubs in the vicinity.
- 5.27. It was expressed that installing CCTV and further improving lighting conditions in the area will discourage the above forms of ASB taking place in the vicinity of the square. Hackney Council has agreed to monitor crime and safety related issues around the square by continuing liaising with the SBD team. It was also agreed that proposed low level planting will be frequently maintained and will not exceed the one metre height as high and dense shrubs provide an opportunity for hiding weapons. New trees will be preferably multi stems and positioned in a way that allows natural surveillance towards the square from the surrounding residential buildings.
- 5.28. Summary data for crime and public disorder across the borough is shown in **Table 4** (from *economicpolicycentre.com*)

Crime, ASB and public order offences in Hackney (Before period defined as Aug 19-July 20, After Aug 20 -July21)			
	Before	After	Change
Anti-Social Behaviour	500	560	12%
All ¹ Crime	896	1016	13%
Public Order	85	117	38%

Table 4: Crime, ASB and public order offences in Hackney

- 5.29. More analysis of the details of offences and locations will continue,

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although it should be noted that reports of breaking lockdown restrictions were recorded as Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), but are not considered to be a result of the implementation of this scheme.

Impacts on Emergency Access

- 5.30. No impact on Emergency access at Charles Square as the proposed works will only affect the area inside the square and not the surrounding public highway.

Impacts on access for local residents

- 5.31. Direct access to properties around Charles Square will not be affected by the proposed remodelling of the square.

Impacts on parking arrangements

- 5.32. There are no parking amendments proposed as part of the proposed remodelling of the square. Parking suspensions adjacent to the square might be necessary for the duration of the works to accommodate construction vehicles.

Impacts on Human Rights

- 5.33. Under the Human Rights Act 1998, the Council is under a duty not to act in a way that is incompatible with any person's Convention rights. Accordingly, the order may not be made if it would give rise to a breach of a person's human rights.
- 5.34. The Council believes that implementing the proposed improvements within the square constitutes a justified interference because it aims to improve people's everyday life, particularly those that live, walk or cycle within 500m from Charles Square.

Impacts on children

- 5.35. Under section 11 of the Children and Families Act 2004, the Council also has a duty to make arrangements for ensuring that its functions are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- 5.36. Some children live or attend schools or nurseries, in close proximity to the square and will be positively affected by the landscaping improvements within the square which will create a more inviting child friendly environment. This will be achieved by introducing flush planters with

dense and diverse planting with boulders and logs scattered in between. These are considered more child-friendly than the existing raised planters due to the following reasons:

- **Accessibility:** Flush planters are level with the ground, making them easily accessible to children of all ages and abilities. Children can comfortably explore and engage with the plants without the need for climbing or reaching over raised edges. This accessibility fosters inclusivity, allowing children with mobility challenges or disabilities to participate in gardening activities.
- **Safety:** Raised planters, while beneficial in some contexts, can pose safety risks for young children. The raised edges may present tripping hazards or potential falls if children accidentally lean or climb on them. In contrast, flush planters eliminate these risks, providing a safer environment for children to enjoy and interact with the plants.
- **Freedom of Movement:** Flush planters offer more space for children to move around and play freely. They can run, sit, or lie down near the plants, allowing for a sensory experience and a closer connection with nature. Children can also observe insects, touch leaves, or even engage in small-scale gardening activities, such as planting seeds or watering, without any physical barriers.
- **Learning Opportunities:** With flush planters, children can have a closer look at the plants, observe their growth stages, and learn about different species up close. They can easily explore the textures, colours, and scents of the plants, enhancing their sensory experiences and stimulating their curiosity. This hands-on engagement can foster a deeper understanding and appreciation of nature, promoting environmental awareness and education.
- **Imaginative Play:** Flush planters provide a more open and inviting space for imaginative play. Children can incorporate the plants into their imaginative scenarios, creating stories, and pretending to be gardeners, explorers, or scientists. They can also interact with insects and other small creatures that visit the plants, fostering a sense of wonder and connection with the natural world.
- **Social Interaction:** Flush planters, especially when arranged in a communal garden or play area, can encourage social interaction among children. They can gather around the plants, share their discoveries, collaborate on gardening tasks, or simply enjoy the beauty of the planted area together. This promotes teamwork, communication, and the development of social skills.

5.37. Nearby educational facilities which are likely to be positively impacted are

listed below.

- St John the Baptist Primary C of E School - Located on Crondall Street, this primary school with a nursery is approximately a 7-minute walk from the square. It operates a 'school street' along a section of Crondall Street.
- St Monica's Roman Catholic Primary School - Located on Hoxton Street, is approximately a 5-minute walk from the square. It operates a 'school street' along a section of Hoxton Street.
- Hoxton Garden Primary School - Located on Ivy Street, is approximately 11-minute walk from the square. It also operates a 'school street' along a section of Ivy Street.
- Shoreditch Park Primary School - Located on Bridport Place, is approximately a 15-minute walk from the square. It operates a 'school street' along Bridport Place.
- Thomas Fairchild Community School, Forston Street, is approximately a 15-minute walk from the square and also operates a 'school street' along Napier Grove & Godwin Close.
- The Lyceum which is a co-educational independent school - Located on Worship Street and is approximately an 11-minute walk from the square.
- Hanover Primary School - Located on Noel Road, this primary school is approximately an 18-minute walk from the square.
- New North Academy - Located on Popham Road, this primary school is approximately a 20-minute walk from the square.
- Bright Horizons City Child Nursery and Preschool - Located on Bridgewater Square, Barbican is approximately a 16-minute walk from the square.
- COLPAI - City of London Primary Academy Islington - Located on Baltic St W, is approximately a 15-minute walk from the square.

5.38. Overall, the proposed improvements within the square which primarily include new pavement, flush planting with pavement providing an access to the plants with scattered logs and boulders in between, new ramp to the sunken area and inclusive benches will make this public space more suitable for informal play and create a more attractive and safe environment for young children to interact with nature.

Impacts on people with disabilities

- 5.39. As part of the proposed landscaping improvements in the square, a new ramped access with blister paving will be provided to the north-west corner of the square. The new ramp will have a gradient of 1:15 for public access, will be slip-resistant and have a not cold-to-touch finish. This will provide a direct pedestrian route for people coming from the west of the square - Brunswick Place which is a beautiful established pocket park filtered to all traffic. The new access will provide a direct connection of the two public spaces.
- 5.40. Another significant improvement that will improve access to all users and most importantly users with disabilities is the implementation of a ramped access to the sunken area. Currently the sunken area can only be accessed via steps which prevents visually impaired and users on wheelchairs to use that space.
- 5.41. Existing raised brick planters scattered randomly on the hard pavement of the square prevent ease of movement and create additional obstacles to visually impaired or blind people. By removing these raised old fashioned brick planters a contemporary open space is created where people can move around freely without having additional obstacles in the way.
- 5.42. A full assessment of the impacts is included in the Equality Impact Assessment.

Impacts on vehicle-related noise

- 5.43. No impact on vehicle-related noise as the proposed improvements are within the actual square. Vehicle volumes are not expected to be impacted by the remodelling of the square.

Potential equalities implications

- 5.44. Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 requires the Council to have due regard to the need to:
- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation or any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
 - advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it

and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

- 5.45. An Equalities Impact Assessment (EQIA) of the scheme is included in **Section 6**.

6. PUBLIC CONSULTATION

- 6.1. The online consultation and associated survey which was also advertised in a letter format within a specific catchment area, took place between 11 October 2021 to 7 November 2021.
- 6.2. The Council also conducted a drop in engagement event at Charles Square on the 3 November between 1200-1400 where people left their comments on a comment card and were directed to fill in a paper copy of the online survey. A total of 10 people attended, mainly local residents. Comments were collected in a written format on paper 'comment cards'. Council officers on site have also taken notes based on discussions. The majority of attendees at the drop-in session did not fill all the questions of the paper copy survey.

Scheme Public Feedback

- 6.3. All of the consultation discussed in this section was taken into consideration when considering the recommendations contained in this report.
- 6.4. The primary method of collecting data was via the online survey where the majority of more accurate responses were collected.
- 6.5. The online consultation which, included a brief description of the proposal and an online survey, was available to the public between October 2021 and November 2021. Letters encouraging people to fill in the survey for the proposed improvements were also distributed to the addresses within a specific catchment area with centrepiece the square. The distribution area covered a total of 2386 addresses. The letter distribution area and the online consultation survey are both presented in **Appendix B**.
- 6.6. Apart from the online survey, which was open for one month and the lunch time drop-in session at the actual square, leaflets and letters were also distributed within the catchment area with the installation of A3 signs with QR codes at all 4 entrances/exits of the square directing people to the online consultation. As part of the online survey, responders were also

asked if they wish to attend an online focus group session to discuss their concerns/feedback in more detail. Although around 12 people expressed interest, no one attended.

- 6.7. Consultation results included in this DPD report will be shared with all 28 individuals who stated that they wish to be notified of the outcome of this consultation (in person).
- 6.8. Analysis of all feedback and comments is included in this section, with Hackney's comments following toward the end of this section.

Stakeholder consultation

The Met Police

- 6.9. We have met with members of the Secured by Design (SbD) team of The Met Police who informed us about the existing anti-social behaviour/crime incidents in the area based on which they have provided some pointers to inform designs. The key sources of anti-social behaviour related with drug dealing and use, shoplifting at the nearby Sainsburys and urination at the 'blindspots' of the adjacent housing estates located in the periphery of the square. The SbD team did not have any major concerns with the scheme as presented verbally in discussions, however they asked that they participate when a more detailed design is developed post engagement. A meeting took place in early May 2023. Overall, it was requested that attention is given to lighting conditions, implementation of relatively low level planting to prevent hiding weapons (reference to knives) and keeping the square locked at nights. Lastly, it has been agreed that new trees should now block natural surveillance to the square from surrounding buildings.

London Ambulance Services (LAS)

- 6.10. No response from the LAS

London Fire Brigade

- 6.11. No response from the LFB

The Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB)

- 6.12. No response.

London Cycling Campaign in Hackney (LCCiH)

- 6.13. No response.

Community Safety, Enforcement and Business Regulation Service

- 6.14. Hackney Council has also taken on board the advice from its Community Safety, Enforcement and Business Regulation Service as part of the engagement with key stakeholders. The service feedback agreed with the advice given by the SbD team of Met Police. In summary, ensure that the square will continue to be locked at nights, secure clear visibility throughout and across the square which means keeping the planting low and not dense. During the day it is probably not a big issue, but the square is within the Night Time Economy (NTE) footprint area, and the team often deals with crime and ASB in the location because of the proximity to the main NTE routes. Therefore, any action as part of the proposal towards tackling ASB including making the square itself a more inviting and attractive place to visit will be welcome.

Parking Enforcement

- 6.15. The proposed scheme has no implication on parking services.

Online Consultation and Drop-in Session Engagement

- 6.16. A total of 47 responses were received online by the closure of the feedback period on 11 October to 7 November 2021 with an additional 10 responses collected during the drop-in event. These comments came from 57 unique respondents². As mentioned earlier in paragraph 5.5, leaflets and letters have been distributed in a total of 2386 addresses which equates to a response rate of 2.4%.
- 6.17. Residents were not asked directly if they were supportive or unsupportive of the overall proposal of remodelling the square. Instead, they were asked about their views for each individual proposed intervention to inform the designs. However, from the analysis below on **Table 6**, it is clear that the majority of the responders felt there is a need to update and improve the square to a more attractive, accessible and inclusive space that reflects the needs of modern society.
- 6.18. From the overall feedback it was also confirmed that there are signs of anti-social behaviour mainly around the square but not so much within the square taking place at late hours.

² Unique or blank user ID

- 6.19. A summary of the analysis of the results of the feedback is shown below on **Table 6**.

Question	Analysis	Officer's Comments
What is your connection to Charles Square? - Connection to Charles Square - I learn/study nearby/work nearby	39 - live nearby 8 - work nearby 0 - learn/study nearby 0 - commute through the space 7 - live nearby 3 - other 57 responses in total	N/A
Do you currently use the square? - Square usage	29 - yes 16 - no 2 - no response 7- yes 3 - not much 55 responses in total	N/A
How often do you visit the square?	17 - Not Answered 10 - Daily 11 - Several times a week 5 - less than once a month 2 - once a week 45 responses in total	N/A
Do you consider Charles Square a welcoming and safe place to visit/spend time in? - safety	15 - Yes 10 - No 5 - Not sure 17 - Not Answered The majority of the attendees at the drop-in considered it relatively safe during the day but	The square will continue to be locked at nights to ensure ASB does not take place within the square during late hours. The proposals will enhance public realm making the square a more inclusive and attractive place to visit and spend time in based on the feedback of this engagement.

	<p>expressed their concerns of ASB when it becomes darker.</p> <p>47 responses in total</p>	
<p>Do you consider Charles Square a welcoming and safe place to visit/spend time in? - If you answered 'no', please tell us why.</p>	<p>Other (sample responses examples):</p> <p>“It feels safe, but it could and should feel more welcoming to visit”</p> <p>“It's not really very attractive and the garden is down at heel. There is drug dealing going on in the square. I never walk through it when it is dark”.</p> <p>“The environment seems cheerless and hostile, and seems to attract marginal people”.</p> <p>“In the summer it is nice to sit in the sun on a bench but it's a rather barren setting”.</p> <p>47 responses in total</p>	<p>As above.</p>
<p>What do you currently like about Charles Square? -</p>	<p>10 - mature trees (some of which pointed out that more plants are needed)</p> <p>6 - It's quiet</p> <p>2 - benches to sit</p> <p>7 - ping pong table</p> <p>22 - a variety of other reasons (close to work/good for dogs/many said: it's a nice place and close to the estates etc)</p> <p>47 responses in total</p>	<p>The elements that people generally like at the square are the ones that have already been considered as the existing assets. These will only be enhanced (eg new improved benches), more trees/shade.</p>
<p>What do you currently dislike about Charles Square?</p>	<p>5 - Homelessness/ASB (drug issues, urinating, noise etc)</p> <p>5 - Concrete (some mentioned uneven hard surfacing)</p>	

	<p>4 - Benches 2 - not modern & not for kids Other - 41 :</p> <p><u>Examples of 'other' responses:</u></p> <p>“It isn't that pretty, or green enough. I seldom see families, or people just reading. It's kind of ugly. No trees, right? I just walk through it sometimes but then never stay”.</p> <p>“It's very inaccessible for elderly, prams, those with limited mobility. Limited interest in a variety of planting”</p> <p>“Could and should feel greener / more like an oasis”. “It is not well kept. It's not pleasant to sit in. Can get used by drunk people partying. Sometimes the bins are overflowing. not enough seating. It needs some landscaping to make it user friendly.</p> <p>“Park is scrubby and unattractive, pavement is very uneven, it's generally dingy and feels unsafe to walk through at night”.</p> <p>47 responses in total</p>	<p>The things that people 'dislike' of which the majority were also mentioned by the Secured by Design MET police team are the ones the proposal is trying to tackle with ASB being the most challenging and will have to be monitored post implementation.</p> <p>The square will feel greener, more pleasant/attractive, more child-friendly (more informal play rather than installation of playground equipment), improved and inclusive hard landscaping/paving.</p>
<p>How do you feel about our proposal to replace the old</p>	<p>23 - Absolutely love it' 5 - Neither like nor dislike'</p>	

<p>paving slabs with new high-quality paving across the square? - surfacing</p>	<p>19 - I like it Drop-in: They overall liked the idea of new surfacing and agreed it will have to give a fresh and contemporary look to the square 47 responses in total</p>	
<p>How do you feel about our proposal to create a new entrance at the corner of Brunswick Place? - new entrance</p>	<p>I like it - 18 Neither like nor dislike - 14 Really dislike it - 0 Absolutely love it - 11 Not Answered - 1 Not overly keen - 3</p>	
<p>How do you feel about our proposal to replace the old paving slabs with new high-quality paving across the square? - Please let us know if you have any further comments about this proposal.</p>	<p>Characteristic examples of responses:</p> <p>“It definitely needs an upgrade, it looks really old and doesn’t fit in with the upgraded old street area, it needs to be more modernised so the locals can actually enjoy spending time there”</p> <p>“Those pictures look very good, but I hope it doesn't look cold and grey. I prefer warm grays, otherwise, wooden”.</p> <p>“I like the idea of making more intimate seating spaces within the square but also having lots of planting. I like the idea of the inside of the square having soft curvy landscaping and not being so angular and square.</p> <p>“I think the challenge with the square is to create a</p>	

	<p>modern, welcoming and attractive space while at the same time not making it a magnet for drinking and drug use or other potentially antisocial behaviour”.</p> <p>“The current paving is the worst feature of the square - so these options would be a big improvement”.</p>	
<p>How do you feel about our proposal to create a new entrance at the corner of Brunswick Place? - Please let us know if you have any further comments about this proposal.</p>	<p>examples of responses:</p> <p>“Does it need railings? As drinkers get in anyway at night!”</p> <p>“Could do with another on the north side. The gate on the east side is difficult to use due to narrow pavement and parked cars”.</p> <p>“A through access would be very convenient”</p> <p>“Any new gate needs to be locked. The picture looks like it can’t be. Noise is the biggest environmental problem for residents of the square. Action needs to be taken to reduce the noise. Currently the square is locked at sunset and this needs to be continued otherwise the noise will be exacerbated with drunks shouting and misusing the area”.</p>	

<p>How do you feel about our proposal to install a ramp to make the square more accessible? - accessibility</p>	<p>Absolutely love it - 23 I like it - 15 Neither like nor dislike - 3 Really dislike it - 2 Not Answered - 4 47 responses in total</p>	
<p>How do you feel about our proposal to install a ramp to make the square more accessible? - Please let us know if you have any further comments about this proposal.</p>	<p>Characteristic examples of responses: “Entrances would also need to be improved and ramps on facing pavements would be needed”. “The whole square should have full step free access”. “Great idea for improving accessibility”. “This should not even be a question, all public spaces should be as accessible as possible without exception”. “No question - park spaces should be accessible to all”. “Good.... But people still need to get in the park first. Don’t forget improving access”. “Not an issue for me, but it seems a reasonable thing to do”. “Of course”.</p>	

<p>How do you feel about our proposal to install a long comfortable bench for people to rest and socialise, as well as individual seats scattered around the square? - seating</p>	<p>Absolutely love it - 14 I like it - 15 Neither like nor dislike - 7 Really dislike it - 6 Not Answered - 1 Not overly keen - 3 Seating yes! - 1 47 responses in total</p>	
<p>How do you feel about our proposal to install a long comfortable bench for people to rest and socialise, as well as individual seats scattered around the square? - Please let us know if you have any further comments about this proposal.</p>	<p>25 comments on this question 5 comments mention that they don't want a design that encourages lingering, loitering, noise or any anti-social behaviour. 3 comments mention the need for back support in terms of seating for people less able. 6 comments mention the design specifically, with a further 4 comments referring to the need for the design to be comfortable and another 4 to the configuration and amount of seating needed. 1 comment specifically expressed opposition to 'anti-homeless benches'. 2 comments say their support is design dependent 6 comments make reference to materials, specifically an opposition to concrete, with one comment specifically mentioning a preference for wooden bench tops.</p>	<p>Benches will be inclusive with backrests and armrests to provide comfort to elderly but also discourage rough sleeping (anti-homeless benches). They will have wooden tops which are softer and warmer to sit on compared to stone/metal materials.</p>

<p>How do you feel about our proposal to install outdoor gym equipment in the sunken area? - outdoor gym equipment</p>	<p>I like it - 13 Absolutely love it - 12 Really dislike it - 10 Not overly keen - 8 Neither like nor dislike - 2 Not Answered - 2 47 responses in total</p>	
<p>How do you feel about our proposal to install outdoor gym equipment in the sunken area? - Please let us know if you have any further comments about this proposal.</p>	<p>27 comments on this question 12 comments mention noise, with 1 further comment specifically mentioning drink and drugs and another mentioning that it might attract gangs and another mentioning crowds. 3 comments specifically oppose, with 5 specifically supporting. 1 comment feels it will detract from the areas' ambiance. 2 comments note maintenance, with one asking who will and the other mentioning the need to do it. 1 commenter feels the area should for kids 2 commenters feel that it won't be used 1 comment feels the equipment will need to be robust and vandal proof 1 comment feels the area should be used to create a swale</p>	<p>The square will remain locked at night. The proposed design will improve the aesthetics of the square by providing more greening, sitting options, inclusive access and of high quality pavement. These proposals aim to discourage Anti-social behaviour. The Council's Parks team will take on frequent maintenance ensuring planting is kept to a good condition.</p> <p>Benches will be long lasting and vandal proof.</p>
<p>How do you feel about our proposal to replace the raised beds with new</p>	<p>17 comments on this question Absolutely love it - 17 Neither like nor dislike - 10 (neutral)</p>	

<p>planting around the pathways? - Please let us know if you have any further comments about this proposal.</p>	<p>I like it - 13 Really dislike it - 6 Not overly keen - 0 Not Answered - 1</p>	
<p>Do you have any other comments on any of the proposals for Charles Square or about the rest of the square? - any other comments</p>	<p>32 comments on this question</p> <p>5 comments mention more greenery, planting and landscaping. With a further 2 comments specifically mentioning the need for additional trees to provide shade.</p> <p>Also, 2 comments make reference to the need to encourage biodiversity and wildlife</p> <p>7 comments mention anti-social behaviour, both that it currently exists due to the poor condition, image of the square but also the location and that they hope the changes will reduce it and/or that they don't want changes that exacerbate it.</p> <p>3 comments specifically mention noise, particularly late at night. 1 comment specifically mentioning the need for lighting, in this regard</p> <p>3 comments mention litter and request bins, as</p>	<p>All above comments agree with the proposals.</p> <p>The feedback aligns with proposals. New landscaping will improve biodiversity and wildlife locally.</p> <p>The proposed improvements aim to reduce ASB around the square by upgrading the aesthetics, access and functionality of the square to the better. Overall feedback aligns with the objectives of the proposed scheme.</p> <p>Existing lighting conditions will be inspected separately and should there be a need for improved lighting it will fall within our Highways Maintenance team responsibilities.</p> <p>To review along with the Parks and Environmental</p>

	<p>people currently hang their rubbish in trees</p> <p><i>4 comments oppose the creation of any sort of outdoor gym, with 4 comments (some the same) also requesting facilities for children.</i></p> <p>5 comments mention the need for a resident focused approach, with 1 requesting that it is not open at night</p> <p>3 comments refer to the general environment the scheme should create, with a further 3 requesting that it is not an identikit or replica development</p>	<p>Enforcement team as part of the implementation of the scheme.</p> <p>Outdoor gym/exercise equipment facilities do not form part of these proposals anymore due to funding constraints. A separate consultation/engagement will take place once funding becomes available in the future.</p> <p>Hackney Council has taken on board all feedback and advice from residents at the drop-in session and individual responses in this survey.</p> <p>The square will remain locked at night to ensure no ASB occurs within.</p> <p>The purpose of the remodel of the square is to create a fresh identity for the square while respecting the existing setting and surroundings.</p>
<p>Please let us know what you would like to sign up for. - sign up options - If the Council introduces volunteering in Charles Square, I would be interested</p>	<p>8 in total</p>	<p>All the individuals who express interest in volunteering/looking after the square (mainly planting) will be contacted via email should this scheme be signed off by the Head of Streetscene.</p>

Table 6 - Summary of analysis of feedback results from online and paper copy surveys and cards

Hackney Council Comments

- 6.20. The majority of the consultation responses/feedback support the proposals for remodelling the square. The design has been informed based on the responses presented in **Table 6**. As mentioned at the end of section 3, there were a few proposals (mainly related to the sunken area of the square) that were initially considered but have been discarded due to funding constraints.

7. Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)

Section 149 of the Equality Act

- 7.1. An equality impact assessment (EqIA) is a process designed to ensure that a policy, project or scheme does not unlawfully discriminate against any protected characteristic. This section describes how we ensured that the design for each scheme serves all users; a full analysis has been done in which knowledge about protected groups has been examined from a variety of sources.
- 7.2. Equality is a fundamental part of the aims of the scheme. The Mayor of Hackney's Priorities are:
- Fairer: Working and campaigning to keep Hackney a place for everyone with genuinely affordable homes, job opportunities, and excellent schools; where everyone can play a part, and where tackling inequality is at the heart of what we do
 - Safer: Making Hackney a place where everyone can feel healthy and safe, at home, at work, and on streets, parks, and estates
 - More sustainable: Making Hackney an economically, and environmentally sustainable place, with strong, cohesive, and diverse communities.
- 7.3. In order to achieve this, our Equality Objectives, as set out in our Single Equality Scheme 2018-22 are:
- Increase prosperity for all and tackle poverty and socio-economic disadvantage

- Tackle disadvantage and discrimination that is linked to a protected characteristic
- Build a cohesive and inclusive borough
- Embed preventative approaches across the Council
- Create an inclusive and diverse workforce

The Equality Act

7.4. Hackney Council and its delegated authority decision-makers must comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act (2010), which requires us to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation or any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it

7.5. As part of our decision-making process on the proposal for each scheme, due consideration has been given to the impact on all people within a protected group as defined by the act. The different groups covered by the Equality Act are referred to as protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex

- Sexual orientation

7.6. The Act goes on to say “Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:

- remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

7.7. Having due regard to the need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:

- tackle prejudice, and
- promote understanding”

7.8. This section has also given consideration to people experiencing or at risk of poverty, as although this is not a protected group, it is a strong component of Council priority.

7.9. Officers have ensured that all impacts on protected characteristics have been considered at every stage of the development of this proposal. This has involved :

Stage 1: Data and Evidence Gathering

7.10. The first stage of ensuring that protected groups are fully understood and appreciated is to find the best possible available data and evidence. This includes:

- Collecting together the best possible data and evidence on the general needs of each group
 - Using that information to understand the particular impact of public spaces improvements on each group
 - Reference to ward-specific data then tests the extent to which variation from average profiles requires a different approach.
- 7.11. This is done by reference to available research, preferably at ward level but if unavailable then at Borough or London level. This is clarified and confirmed by consultation feedback which is sought from representatives, again at ward, Borough or London level. Engagement should be seen as ongoing and all opportunities taken to consult and learn from people with protected characteristics.

Stage 2: Site Specific Considerations

- 7.12. An important part of the process is to ensure that the design proposals are suitable for all members of the community and in particular protected groups. This includes the following key actions:
- anticipating the consequences of the detailed proposal on these groups and the locations that are of most importance to them
 - making sure that, as far as possible, any negative consequences are eliminated or minimised.

Stage 3: Monitoring and Enhancement

- 7.13. The Equality Act is keen to see active promotion of integration, and that it should be seen as an ongoing process and not a single action. This means that the Council should:
- Maximise opportunities for promoting equality
 - Ensure that the EQIA will be kept under review and updated throughout the decision-making process.

Area-Specific Data

- 7.14. The next sections consider whether a variation at the detailed level is necessary for this particular scheme.

- 7.15. Data is not always available at a level which can establish the precise impacts on every household. For the purposes of this review reference has been made to census data and to available ward-level information.
- 7.16. Key Characteristics are as shown in the box below: With more details available at <https://hackney.gov.uk/hackney-ward-profiles>

Hoxton West Ward

- 7.17. The Hoxton West Ward is on the western edge of south Hackney. At the time of the 2021 census it was home to 13,736 people. The ward includes part of Shoreditch, an area that has become a focal point of London's night-time economy.
- 7.18. The profile shows that:
- The median age of Hackney is 32, this is lower than both London (35) and England (40)
 - Hackney has proportionally more children aged 4 years and under than London or England, around the same proportion of children aged 5 to 15, and fewer young people aged 16 to 19. It has a particularly large cohort of 25 to 34 year olds, and fewer people aged 50 to 85 and over.
 - Hoxton West Ward has a considerably higher proportion of 20 to 34 year olds compared to the borough average.
 - Hackney is one of the most ethnically diverse boroughs in the country - over 40% of its people are non-White.
 - Black groups make up the second largest community, accounting for 21.1% of Hackney's people, followed by the White Other group, which can include East and West Europeans, North and South Americans, White Africans and Antipodeans.
 - Hoxton West Ward has a higher proportion of Chinese residents and 'Other Asian' groups compared to the borough average, and slightly lower proportions of both Black and White residents.
 - 30.7% of Hackney's residents describe themselves as Christians - a significantly lower proportion than in London or England. The borough has relatively high proportions of people of the Jewish faith, Muslims and people with no religion or who declined to state one.
 - Hoxton West Ward has more Christians than the borough average but otherwise the religious makeup of the Ward is broadly in line with the overall Hackney picture.
 - Hackney has proportionately more lone parent, single person, cohabiting couples and other household type households than the averages for both London and England, and fewer single family households (both with and without children).

- Hoxton West Ward has a higher proportion of one person households under 66 years compared to the borough average and a lower proportion of single family households.
- Over 40% of Hackney's housing is socially rented, a much higher percentage than in London or nationally. Home ownership is correspondingly lower - just under a quarter of the borough's households are owner occupiers. Nearly a third of Hackney's households rent from a private landlord.
- Fewer properties in Hoxton West Ward are owned compared to the borough average, with a higher proportion of housing that is socially rented from the local authority.
- London's qualifications profile tends to differ slightly from the national picture. It has a better educated population, with 46.7% of people having at least a first degree (Level 4 or 5). It also has below average rates of residents with Level 1 or 2 qualifications and lower rates of residents with no qualifications too.
- These trends are more pronounced in Hackney with over 50% of residents having degree level qualifications. The proportion with no qualifications in Hackney is slightly higher than the London average, but lower than the England average. Hackney has relatively few adults with mid-level qualifications.
- Hoxton West Ward has a higher proportion of Level 4 or above qualifications than the Hackney average and a lower proportion of residents with no qualifications
- Hoxton West Ward has a higher proportion of residents in full time employment than the borough average as well as a higher proportion of students. It also has a lower proportion of retired residents.
- The health of residents in Hoxton West Ward broadly follows the overall borough pattern with the majority of residents having very good health.
- Disability rates in Hoxton WestWard are slightly lower than the overall borough average.
- Almost 50% of households in Hoxton West Ward are not deprived, a higher proportion compared to the borough average.

7.19. The above statistics of the ward profile can also be found online at this link https://docs.google.com/document/d/1a1QZG4ED2QxS-F-HCa51zWQPa_e0vlla0jS7PRTLNA8U/edit : .

Engagement with Disability Community

7.20. Local disability groups such as RNIB were contacted for comments on the proposals. However, there were no responses from the majority of disabled groups such as Age UK and Disability Backup. The proposed

improvements at the square aim to improve overall conditions for disabled groups. The below paragraphs explain how the remodelling of the square will benefit disabled users.

- 7.21. **Accessibility:** Enhancing accessibility is crucial to ensure that people with disabilities can access and navigate the square independently. This includes installing a ramp to the sunken area and curb cuts at the new north-west access in order to provide barrier-free access to all areas of the square.
- 7.22. Introducing a new level and smooth surface and removing the raised brick planters that are randomly placed on the hard paving will benefit people using mobility aids, such as wheelchairs or walkers creating a clutter-free area where everyone can move with ease.
- 7.23. Seating options with backrests and armrests provide comfort and support to individuals with limited mobility. New benches will be comfortable and inclusive for all users. Providing rest areas with seating and shade in the square will also benefit individuals with mobility challenges who may require breaks during their visit.
- 7.24. **Sensory Considerations:** Paying attention to sensory aspects can benefit individuals with sensory disabilities. For example, the new granite paving at the stepped area will incorporate visual contrasts where the bullnose edge of the step will be a much lighter tone from the remaining part of the steps.
- 7.25. **Inclusive Amenities:** Providing inclusive amenities like accessible water fountains, picnic areas with adjustable tables, and play equipment suitable for children with disabilities fosters equal opportunities for participation and social interaction. Although the installation of play equipment and fountain were considered, funding was not sufficient to incorporate these into the design. More cost effective solutions such as the introduction of sensory planting, logs and boulders within the soft landscaping areas will be implemented.
- 7.26. **Community Engagement:** Engaging with disabled individuals and disability advocacy groups during the planning and design process promotes collaboration and ensures that their specific needs and preferences are considered. This inclusive approach can result in a square that truly caters to a diverse range of abilities. Unfortunately the response rate for the engagement at this project was low and feedback from disabled groups was not clearly captured.

Pregnancy/maternity:

- 7.27. The positive benefits of a new open green space would benefit the most vulnerable road users, including mothers and children who disproportionately suffer the harmful effects of air pollution. Prams and pushchairs put children at the level of exhaust fumes when navigating the streets. Air pollution has been linked to low birth weight and underdeveloped lung capacity in children, as well as higher incidences of lung conditions such as asthma. Overall, the provision of an updated amenity space with more plants, trees and more comfortable seats could only positively impact pregnancy/maternity encouraging this group of users spending more in a secure public space to rest and enjoy the benefits of a quiet, greener, off road environment.
- 7.28. There were 4,384 live births to women in Hackney in 2018 corresponding to a birth rate of 58.8 births per 1000 women of childbearing age. This compares to the London birth rate of 60.1 and the birth rate of 59.0 for England and Wales.
- 7.29. Access to local GP Surgeries and health centres in the local area is not affected by the public realm improvements in the square.

Age:

- 7.30. Consideration has been given to the impact of these proposals in terms of age. The scheme is very relevant to all age groups, but in particular, attention has been paid to older people and young children.
- 7.31. Hackney's population is growing rapidly; at the present rate of growth the population will reach 317,000, a growth of 43,000, by 2033. Hackney is a young borough. Some 50% of Hackney's population is aged between 20 and 44 which is one of the highest such proportions in the country and compares to just 34% in this age group nationally and 43% in London.
- 7.32. Access to locations important to older people, including local GPs, health centres and pharmacies is not affected by these improvements.
- 7.33. As mentioned earlier, the proposed new ramped access and inclusive access to the sunken area of the square will make it easier to access all areas of the square for older people and disabled users.
- 7.34. Older people are more likely to suffer from slight mobility impairments due

to ageing, which do not fall under the disability PCG. This can include slower movement and reaction time, and some may use mobility aids for walking. Removing the raised planters will declutter the square and allow ease of movement.

- 7.35. Proposed seating has also taken into consideration the need of comfortable benches that include backrests and armrests for elderly.
- 7.36. The 0-15 age group also stands to benefit substantially from the remodelling of the square. Soft landscaping areas will be more accessible and will have a more attractive and interesting shape. Children will be able to touch and smell the plants (all of which will be selected carefully to ensure no poisoning) but also spend time in a more quiet and less polluted environment. A selection of boulders and logs will be introduced within the planted areas to encourage informal play.
- 7.37. People of young and old age are more vulnerable to poor air quality. Diversifying and enhancing green infrastructure is very important for all to improve air quality locally but also positively contribute to lowering people’s levels of stress, reducing rates of depression and anxiety, reducing cortisol levels and improving general well-being.

Religion and belief:

- 7.38. Consideration has been given to the impact of these proposals in terms of religion or belief. Special attention has been paid to places of faith and how these would remain accessible by all users as part of the proposals.
- 7.39. **Table 7** shows the distribution of religion and beliefs in the Hoxton West ward.

Religion	Hoxton West	Hackney	London
All usual residents	100% (13,752)	100% (259,145)	100%
No religion	36.9% (5,077)	36.3% (94,113)	27.1%
Christian	36.6% (5,032)	30.7% (79,499)	40.7%
Buddhist	1.2% (169)	0.9% (2,343)	0.9%
Hindu	1.2% (161)	0.8% (1,998)	5.1%
Jewish	1.5% (201)	6.7% (17,426)	1.7%
Muslim	12.2% (1,676)	13.3% (34,578)	15%

Sikh	0.8% (105)	0.7% (1,867)	1.6%
Other religion	2.1% (282)	1.9% (4,879)	1%
Not answered	7.6% (1,049)	8.7% (22,442)	7%

Table 7: Distribution of Religion and Beliefs

7.40. The proposed remodelling of the square will benefit all groups equally, regardless of religion. There is no disproportionate impact on the Muslim or Christian populations as residents or business owners, as the scheme does not prevent access to shops, places of faith or other cultural or religious institutions.

7.41. No place of worship is affected by these improvements.

Race and ethnicity:

7.42. Hackney is one of the most ethnically diverse boroughs in the country - over 40% of its people are non-White. Black groups make up the second largest community, accounting for 21.1% of Hackney's people, followed by the White Other group, which can include East and West Europeans, North and South Americans, White Africans and Antipodeans.

7.43. Hoxton West Ward has a higher proportion of Chinese residents and 'Other Asian' groups compared to the borough average, and slightly lower proportions of both Black and White residents.

7.44. **Table 8** shows the distribution of the ethnicity in Hoxton West.

Ethnicity	Hoxton West	Hackney	London	England
All usual residents	100% (13,749)	100% (259,147)	100%	100%
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh	12.1% (1,670)	10.4% (26,885)	20.7%	9.6%
Bangladeshi	2% (271)	2.5% (6,554)	3.7%	1.1%
Chinese	3.6% (500)	1.3% (3,459)	1.7%	0.8%
Indian	2.6% (356)	3.4% (8,832)	7.5%	3.3%
Pakistani	0.5% (65)	0.9% (2,461)	3.3%	2.8%
Other Asian	3.5% (478)	2.2% (5,579)	4.6%	1.7%
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African	19.4% (2,669)	21.1% (54,645)	13.5%	4.2%
African	12.1% (1,666)	11.4% (29,478)	7.9%	2.6%

Caribbean	4.5% (615)	6.9% (17,903)	3.9%	1.1%
Other Black	2.8% (388)	2.8% (7,264)	1.7%	0.5%
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups:	7.3% (1,003)	6.7% (17,487)	5.7%	3%
White and Asian	1.7% (233)	1.4% (3,691)	1.4%	0.8%
White and Black African	1.2% (164)	1.1% (2,735)	0.9%	0.4%
White and Black Caribbean	1.5% (208)	1.8% (4,749)	1.5%	0.9%
Other Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups	2.9% (398)	2.4% (6,312)	1.9%	0.8%
White:	51.6% (7,093)	53.1% (137,709)	53%	81%
English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British	26% (3,572)	33.9% (87,927)	36.8%	73.5%
Irish	2% (280)	2.2% (5,582)	1.8%	0.9%
Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0% (2)	0.1% (248)	0.1%	0.1%
Roma	0.4% (59)	0.3% (865)	0.4%	0.2%
Other White	23.1% (3,180)	16.6% (43,087)	14.7%	6.3%
Other ethnic group:	9.6% (1,314)	8.7% (22,421)	6.3%	2.2%
Arab	1.3% (184)	0.9% (2,342)	1.6%	0.6%
Any other ethnic group	8.2% (1,130)	7.7% (20,079)	4.7%	1.6%

Table 8: Distribution of ethnic groups in Hoxton West

- 7.45. The proposed landscaping works of the remodelling of Charles Square do not discriminate against race and ethnicity, as they apply equally to all groups.

Scheme Impacts on Ethnicity

- 7.46. The scheme is not anticipated to have any adverse effects on ethnicity.

Gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, and marriage and civil partnership:

- 7.47. The Scheme proposals apply equally to all groups, and thus they do not discriminate against any group, including gender and sexual orientation groups. That being said, it is important to identify any specific impacts on groups with these protected characteristics
- 7.48. Women and people with a LGBT sexual orientation can more frequently be the subject of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) and crimes of a sexual nature. Under section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, local authorities have to consider the impacts of its proposals on crime and

crime prevention.

- 7.49. Overall, enhancing the square to a more attractive, accessible and inclusive environment is expected to have a positive effect on women as they will feel safer in an upgraded environment and it will be less likely for a crime to take place within the square.

People experiencing or at risk of poverty:

- 7.50. For the purpose of this report, ‘poverty’ will be broadly defined as not having enough money to meet basic daily needs, or not benefitting from having what most of the UK population have.
- 7.51. Approximately 70% of households in Hackney do not own a car, compared to 44% across the whole of London. This has been showcased in TfL’s Travel in London: Understanding our diverse communities (2019). It is therefore important to provide local amenities including safe and attractive public spaces such as parks and squares within a small catchment area/neighbourhood.
- 7.52. At the latest count some 52.1% of trips were by walking or cycling.
- 7.53. It is important to support the 70% of Hackney Households that do not own a car to walk and cycle instead. If even a small proportion of people who used to travel by public transport switch to using private cars, the public health and road safety implications will be profound for those groups already disproportionately impacted upon by the secondary effects of motor vehicle use, including those on low incomes, people with Culturally and Ethnically Diverse communities, the elderly, and children.

EQIA Conclusions

Key: P - Positive Impact, N - Neutral Impact, A- Adverse Impact

Protected Characteristic						
Disability	Pregnancy & Maternity	Age	Religion & Belief	Race & Ethnicity	Gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, and marriage and civil partnership	Poverty
Overall P	Overall P	Overall P		Overall P		Overall P

Positive	<p>The remodelling of the square will have an overall positive impact on disabled groups of people as it will overall improve accessibility, provide inclusive seating and a level, obstacle-free hard paving area with planting only on the periphery of the square and rocks and benches between soft and hard landscaping acting as soft barriers between the two.</p> <p>The proposed landscaping works of the remodelling of Charles Square do not discriminate against religion, belief, race and ethnicity, as they apply equally to all groups. On the contrary, the public realm improvements at the square will improve conditions for pregnancy & maternity and age providing a contemporary place to rest, play and enjoy.</p>
Negative	<p>Ideally, further engagement with disabled groups of people would better inform decision making Funding constraints have acted as a barrier to improve (inclusive) amenities in the square e.g. play or exercise equipment, installation of a water fountain which would make the square an even more attractive destination for a wider audience.</p>
Comments	<p>The EQIA is a live document that requires continual updating and assessment.</p> <p>To monitor the scheme and collect feedback, the Council will continue to liaise with stakeholder representatives of protected groups to further improve the square in the future and facilitate the needs of local residents, employees and visitors</p>

Table 9: Equality Impacts Summary Table

Summary of Equalities Specific Recommendations

- 7.54. **Table 9 - Equalities Impact Summary Table** (above) shows a summary of the various protected characteristics, impact of the proposals and the comments made.
- 7.55. The Council will continue to liaise and consult with representatives of all protected groups in order to learn more about their day to day experiences.

Summary of Scheme and Benefits

- 7.56. To summarise, the proposed remodelling of Charles Square scheme, this report has shown that:

Walking and Cycling

- 7.57. Only positive impact towards walking and cycling as the new landscaping works at the square will create a new public space for people who walk and cycle to rest and enjoy that will hopefully become a destination for those who live and work nearby.
- 7.58. Pedestrians including other vulnerable users get to benefit more from an inclusive access to all parts of the square and also improved and accessible and inclusive benches for all. The square will also facilitate a place for cyclists to rest during their journeys. It could also serve as a focal point for cycling-related events, activities, and community engagement. Organising cycling workshops, group rides, or other cycling initiatives can help raise awareness, promote cycling culture, and foster a sense of community among cyclists.

Air Quality modelling

- 7.59. Air quality modelling found there is no impact on particulate matter annual mean concentrations (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}) from the implementation of the scheme.

Road Casualties

- 7.60. There are no severe or fatal collisions recorded in a close proximity to the square. None of the findings on recorded collisions signified the need for interventions on the Charles Square public highway in the periphery of the actual square. However, there will be a new entrance at the north-west corner of the square directly connecting Charles Square with Brunswick Place (existing filtered open space). It is anticipated that the majority of footfall traverses from Brunswick Place towards the square and it is anticipated that the new entrance will be beneficial for pedestrians. Therefore, no further interventions are required.

Emergency Services response times

- 7.61. Emergency Services response time will not be affected by the remodelling of the square as the works will only take place on the 'parks' land and not the public highway.

Equalities impacts

- 7.62. Extensive EQIA included in section 6.0 shows overall positive impacts.

Bus Performance

- 7.63. Bus journey times will not be impacted as this is a purely landscaping project within the boundaries of Charles Square and will not affect the public highway.

Consultation results

- 7.64. Of the 57 responses received, the majority were in support of the proposals to remodel the square based on the specific questions asked for the individual proposed improvement measure in the survey. Although the response sample is relatively small, Hackney Council has tried to engage with businesses and residents in various ways considering that this engagement exercise has taken place during the COVID-19 pandemic (October - November 2021). These included an online survey available for one month, a lunch time drop-in session at the actual square, leaflets and letters distributed within a catchment area and installation of A3 signs with QR codes at all 4 sides of the square directing people to the online consultation.
- 7.65. As part of the online survey, responders were asked if they wish to attend an online focus group session to discuss their concerns/feedback in more detail. Although around 12 people expressed interest, no one has attended. Consultation results included in this DPD report will be shared with all individuals who stated that they wish to be notified of the outcome of this consultation (in person).
- 7.66. The consultation has revealed some concerns but overall positive. All feedback has been analysed and the results of this analysis has been used to inform the recommendations in this report. After considering all comments, particularly the controversial ones, it is to be concluded that the scheme still represents an overall benefit for the wider community in the vicinity of Charles Square.
- 7.67. The scheme is consistent with the Council's Transport Strategy and its Climate Change Agenda. The remodelling of the square will increase tree canopy size, improve biodiversity by introducing a large number of new plants including pollinators and sensory plants. The scheme will also improve accessibility ensuring all residents, including people with disabilities will be able to use the square as part of the new and inclusive design.

8. Legal implications

- 8.1. The remodel/revamp of the square will not have any adverse impact on the environment, and Hackney Council's Streetscene and Parks teams will comply with any environmental regulations. Nesting birds will not be disturbed during nesting season (Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981). The square does not fall within a Conservation Area. The proposed works do not need a Planning Consent as Charles Square is not Common Land.

9. Financial implications

- 9.1. The estimated cost of implementing the proposed public realm improvements within the square is approximately £400,000. This is a combination of s106 funding (£215,000), Levelling up for a Parks Project funding (£85,000) and capital funding (£100,000).
- 9.2. The maintenance of the new landscaping works will be incorporated into the Parks team annual maintenance programme. All proposed trees (in consultation with parks and the arboricultural team) and low level planting have been agreed to be maintained by our Arboriculture and Parks team respectively who are currently responsible for Charles Square and not the Streetscene team.

10. Recommendations

10.1. It is recommended that the Head of Streetscene:

Recommends that the Council:

- 10.2.** Proceed with the implementation of the remodelling of Charles Square which includes new high quality pavement, new diverse and more dense planting, new ramped access to the sunken area and replacement of existing benches with new inclusive ones.

11.0 Approvals

I have noted the contents of this summary and the associated documents and approve the recommendations contained in section 10.

Signed



Tyler Linton - Acting Head of Streetscene



Ian Holland - Head of Libraries, Leisure and Green Spaces

Dated: 19 of June 2023

- cc Philip Glanville - Mayor of Hackney
- cc Cllr Mete Coban – Cabinet Member for Energy, Waste, Transport and Public Realm
- cc Aled Richards – Strategic Director, Sustainability and Public Realm

Climate, Homes and Economy

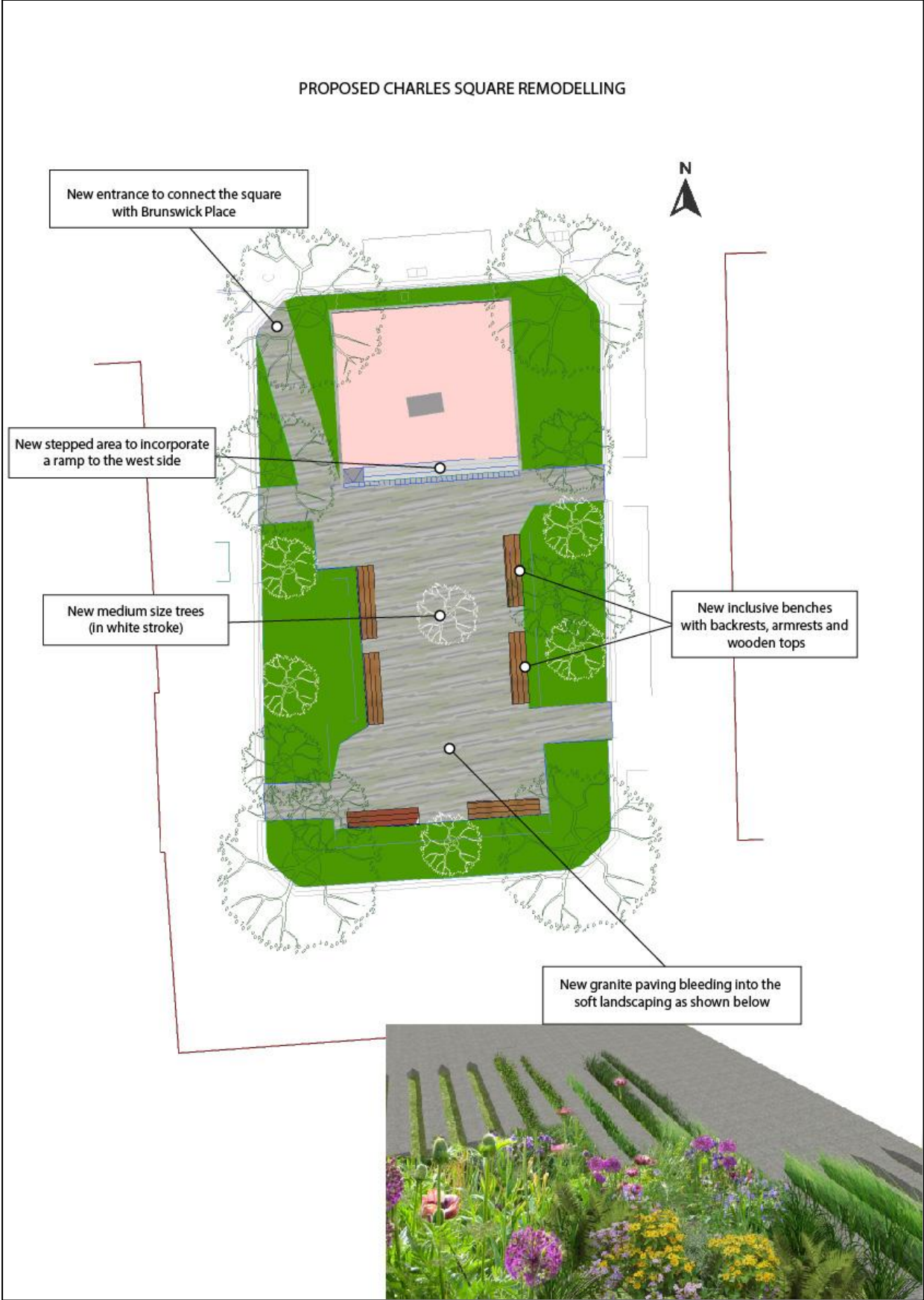
cc Maryann Allen - Group Engineer - Design & Engineering Group

APPENDICES

Appendix A - Preliminary Design of the proposed remodelling of Charles Square

Appendix B - Online consultation survey, letter and leaflet posted to residents and distribution area

Appendix A - Preliminary Design of the proposed remodelling of Charles Square



Appendix B - Online consultation survey, letter and leaflet posted to residents and distribution area

Charles Square

Overview

Hackney Council has secured funding to improve Charles Square in Shoreditch. Although the funding is limited, additional funding may become available for a second phase of improvements. In either case, we aim to accommodate as many ideas as possible.

Our plans for Charles Square include making the square more accessible, inclusive, sustainable and attractive.

If you live around Charles Square or use it we would love to hear how you currently feel about Charles Square, what you like and dislike, and what you think of our proposals. This will help to shape the final set of designs.

Due to the coronavirus pandemic we aren't able to run design and feedback sessions with children, families and schools in the way we usually do. If you have children in your home we'd love to hear what they think of the designs. Please include their views when completing the survey.

Have your say

Please complete the survey below to give your views. You will also have the option to register to participate in an online focus group via Zoom. On 3 November between 12pm and 2pm we will be in the square, so drop by if you have any questions or would like to discuss your views with us in more depth.

Your connection to Charles Square



1 What is your connection to Charles Square?

Please select all that apply

Please select all that apply

- I live nearby
- I work nearby
- I learn/study nearby
- I own a business nearby
- I commute through the square

Other:

2 Do you currently use the square?

(Required)

Please select only one item

- Yes
- No, but I might if the square is improved
- No, I would not even if the square is improved

Your use of Charles Square

3 How often do you visit the square?

Please select only one item

- Daily
- Several times a week
- Once a week
- Once a month
- Less than once a month

4 How long do you spend in Charles Square when you visit?

Please select only one item

- 5 mins - 15 mins
- 15 mins - 30 mins
- 30 mins - 1 hour
- Longer than 1 hour
- I just walk through

5 Do you consider Charles Square a welcoming and safe place to visit/spend time in?

Please select only one item

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

If you answered 'no', please tell us why.

Your feedback

6 What do you currently like about Charles Square?

8 How do you feel about our proposal to replace the old paving slabs with new high-quality paving across the square?

Please select only one item

- Absolutely love it
- I like it
- Neither like nor dislike
- Not overly keen
- Really dislike it

Please let us know if you have any further comments about this proposal.

New entrance

We are proposing to install new gates at the corner of Brunswick Place to the south-east corner of the square.



Please note that this image is indicative and not a final design.

9 How do you feel about our proposal to create a new entrance at the corner of Brunswick Place?

Please select only one item

- Absolutely love it
- I like it
- Neither like nor dislike
- Not overly keen
- Really dislike it

Please let us know if you have any further comments about this proposal.

Planting

We want to replace the raised beds with new planting around the pathways. The border between the planting and the pathways may be less formal than currently.

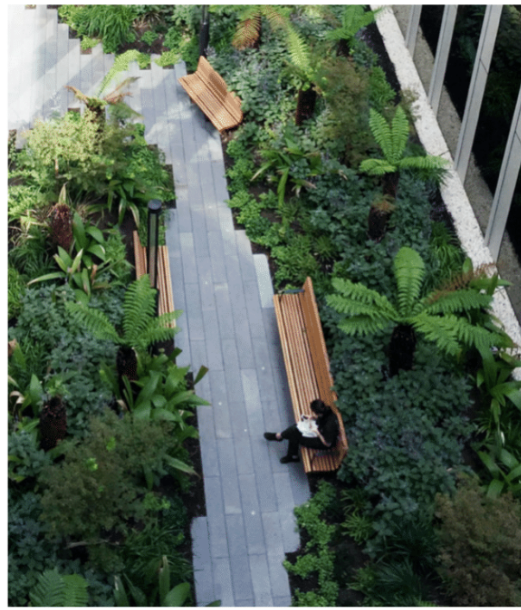
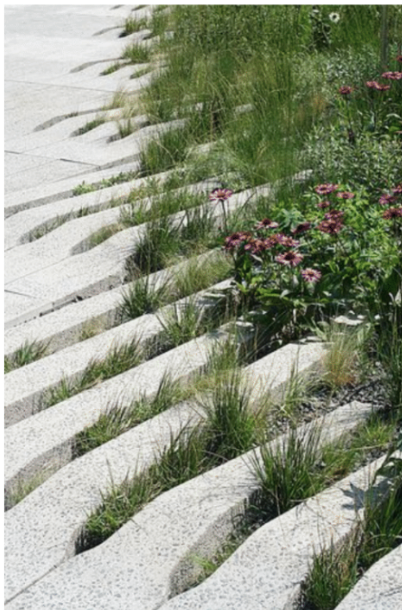


Please note that this image is indicative and not a final design.

7 What do you currently dislike about Charles Square?

Surfacing

We want to replace the old paving slabs with new high-quality paving across the square.



Please note that these images are indicative and not final designs.

8 How do you feel about our proposal to replace the old paving slabs with new high-quality paving across the square?

Please select only one item

- Absolutely love it
- I like it
- Neither like nor dislike
- Not overly keen
- Really dislike it

Please let us know if you have any further comments about this proposal.

New entrance

We are proposing to install new gates at the corner of Brunswick Place to the south-east corner of the square.



Please note that this image is indicative and not a final design.

9 How do you feel about our proposal to create a new entrance at the corner of Brunswick Place?

Please select only one item

- Absolutely love it
- I like it
- Neither like nor dislike
- Not overly keen
- Really dislike it

Please let us know if you have any further comments about this proposal.

Planting

We want to replace the raised beds with new planting around the pathways. The border between the planting and the pathways may be less formal than currently.



Please note that this image is indicative and not a final design.

12 How do you feel about our proposal to install a long comfortable bench for people to rest and socialise, as well as individual seats scattered around the square?

Please select only one item

- Absolutely love it
- I like it
- Neither like nor dislike
- Not overly keen
- Really dislike it

Please let us know if you have any further comments about this proposal.

Accessibility

We want to install a ramp to make the square more accessible, providing access to the sunken area.



Please note that this image is indicative and not a final design.

13 How do you feel about our proposal to install a ramp to make the square more accessible?

Please select only one item

- Absolutely love it
- I like it
- Neither like nor dislike
- Not overly keen
- Really dislike it

Please let us know if you have any further comments about this proposal.

Any other comments

14 Do you have any other comments on any of the proposals for Charles Square or about the rest of the square?

10 How do you feel about our proposal to replace the raised beds with new planting around the pathways?

Please select only one item

- Absolutely love it
- I like it
- Neither like nor dislike
- Not overly keen
- Really dislike it

Please let us know if you have any further comments about this proposal.

Outdoor gym equipment

We are proposing to install outdoor gym equipment in the sunken area.



Please note that this image is indicative and not a final design.

11 How do you feel about our proposal to install outdoor gym equipment in the sunken area?

Please select only one item

- Absolutely love it
- I like it
- Neither like nor dislike
- Not overly keen
- Really dislike it

Please let us know if you have any further comments about this proposal.

Seating

We are proposing to install a long comfortable bench for people to rest and socialise, as well as individual seats scattered around the square.



Please note that these images are indicative and not final designs.

Keeping in Touch and Getting Involved

There are various ways to be involved in the future of Charles Square. Sign up below!

Focus group

We are hosting a focus group via Zoom on **4 November from 5:30pm-6:30pm**. Let us know if you would like to participate.

Volunteer

We may look at introducing volunteering in Charles Square in the future. If we did this, please let us know if you would be interested.

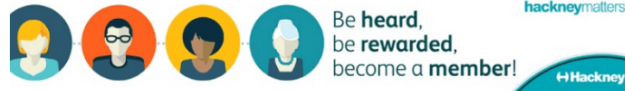
Consultation outcome

If you would like to be informed of the outcome of this consultation, please provide your email address in the box below.

Hackney Parks and Green Spaces Newsletter

Every month we send a newsletter about what's happening in Hackney's parks and green spaces. Sign up at <https://www.hackney.gov.uk/parksnewsletter> <<https://www.google.com/url?q=https://www.hackney.gov.uk/parksnewsletter&sa=D&source=editors&ust=1629202411018000&usg=AFQjCNF4d5M3OG34MbXBLf41GgSNjwKgwXw>> or tick the box below.

Hackney Matters



The Hackney Matters online panel is made up of Hackney residents who give feedback on issues that affect people living and working in the borough. Residents on the panel can earn rewards and win prizes for the feedback they give. Check it out here www.hackneymatters.org.uk <<http://www.hackneymatters.org.uk>> or sign up below!

15 Please let us know what you would like to sign up for.

Select all that apply

Please select all that apply

- I would like to attend the focus group via Zoom on 4 November from 5:30pm-6:30pm
- If the Council introduces volunteering in Charles Square, I would be interested
- I would like to be informed of the outcome of the consultation
- I would like to sign up to the Hackney Parks and Green Spaces newsletter
- I would like to join the Hackney Matters Online Panel
- I do not wish to sign up for any of these

16 Your name:

17 Your email address:

18 Your address:

19 Your postcode:

20 Are you representing an organisation or community group?

Please select only one item

- Yes
- No

If yes, please specify:

About you

This information will help us to understand our service users and residents, allowing us to establish if the response to the questionnaire is representative of the borough. All information is used under the strict controls of the 1998 Data Protection Act and the 2016 General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

This information is optional and will not be used in a way that identifies you.

21 Gender: Are you...

Please select only one item

- Male
- Female

If you prefer to use your own term please provide this here:

22 Gender: Is your gender identity different to the sex you were assumed to be at birth?

Please select only one item

- Yes it's different
- No it's the same

23 Age: what is your age group?

Please select only one item

- Under 16
- 16-17
- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65-74
- 75-84
- 85+

24 Disability: Under the Equality Act you are disabled if you have a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities. Do you consider yourself to be disabled?

Please select only one item

- Yes
- No

25 Caring responsibilities: A carer is someone who spends a significant proportion of their time providing unpaid support to a family member, partner or friend who is ill, frail, disabled or has mental health or substance misuse problems. Do you regularly provide unpaid support caring for someone?

Please select only one item

- Yes
- No

26 Ethnicity: Are you...

Please select only one item

- Asian or Asian British
- White or White British
- Black or Black British
- Mixed background
- Other ethnic group

Other (please state if you wish):

27 Religion or belief: Are you or do you have...

Please select only one item

- Atheist/no religious belief
- Christian
- Muslim
- Buddhist
- Hindu
- Secular beliefs
- Charedi
- Jewish
- Sikh

Other (please state if you wish):

28 Sexual orientation: Are you...

Please select only one item

- Bisexual
- Gay man
- Lesbian or Gay woman
- Heterosexual

Other (please state if you wish):

29 Housing Tenure: Which of the following best describes the ownership of your home?

Please select only one item

- Being bought on a mortgage
- Owned outright
- Rented (Local Authority/Council)
- Rented (Housing Association/Trust)
- Rented (private)
- Shared ownership (part rent/part buy)
- Don't know



Neighbourhoods and Housing Directorate
Hackney Council
Hackney Service Centre
London E8 1EA

020 8356 2897
streetscene.consultations@hackney.gov.uk

11 October 2021

Charles Square Consultation

Dear resident,

Hackney Council has secured funding to improve Charles Square in Shoreditch.

Our plans for Charles Square include making the square more accessible, inclusive, sustainable and attractive. We would love to hear what you think of our proposals.

To have your say, visit consultation.hackney.gov.uk/streetscene/charles-square by **Sunday, 7 November**. You will also have the option to register to participate in an online focus group via Zoom.

On Wednesday, 3 November between 12pm and 2pm we will be in the square, so drop by if you have any questions or would like to discuss your views with us in more depth.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'AS Cunningham'.

Andrew Cunningham
Head of Streetscene

We are improving Charles Square



To have your say, search 'Charles Square' at www.consultation.hackney.gov.uk

