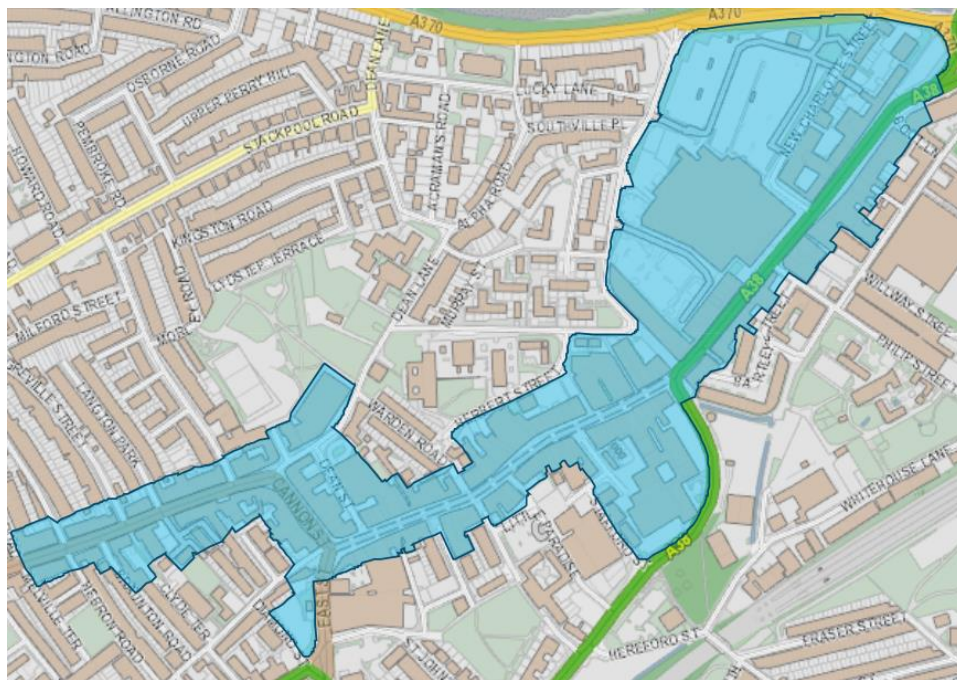


## East Street, Bedminster Appendix

### Area overview

East Street is a historic high street located a few miles to the south of Bristol city centre. With a wide selection of retail outlets alongside hospitality, creative units and a library, East Street is a popular hub for the local community. New establishments have opened over the last few years keeping it in touch with a changing demographic. Predominately a retail street and mainly pedestrianised, it is still on several bus routes and has a local railway station nearby. Within a few minutes' walk there are many industrial units, offices and a popular city farm.

East Street is one of the few high streets that still has a stand-alone Post Office and as well as branches of major national chains. Overall, however, there is a feeling that East Street is tired and there are a noticeable number of vacant units. There is a large amount of development planned for the surrounding area over the next few years and this will offer both challenges and opportunities for the high street.



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During 2020/21 extensive consultation was undertaken to develop a vision for East Street to improve public spaces and development in the adjacent Bedminster Green area (around St Catherine's Place and Dalby Avenue/Malago Road) is being guided by a regeneration framework. The Council is committed to working with local people through the Bedminster Business Improvement District and other community organisations.

## Engagement Feedback

We engaged with businesses and residents in September to November 2021 to identify the major issues in the area and again in early 2022 to gather more detailed information and ideas about the priorities identified. This was done through a combination of on-line focus groups, an on-line survey with a paper alternative and on-street engagement.

Half of the businesses surveyed recorded a decrease in footfall over the past 12 months although just over half anticipate a rise in footfall over the coming year. They also highlighted their general dissatisfaction with East Street, with litter/recycling and anti-social behaviour being the biggest issues mentioned. Two thirds of businesses and over 60% of residents would like to see a wider range of shops and services added to the high street.

Most people come to East Street to shop at least once a week and around 70% do so on foot. The time spent there was usually around an hour, perhaps reflecting the number and range of shops and services available. Reasons given for not going there included it being run down and neglected, feeling unsafe and the level of anti-social behaviour, with street drinkers being a particular concern. Dissatisfaction with the street's appearance was high at 82%, as with the range of shops and services.

The most popular options for improvements were:

- Culture/events, both residents and businesses would like to see markets followed by community events (fetes, parades, etc.). Suggestions included trying to link up with the successful market at the Tobacco Factory and generally improving links with North Street. Pop ups for activities such as Bingo for older people and a pop-up cinema in St Catherines Place were both popular suggestions
- More greenery, the most popular option for greenery was trees and there was a general trend towards low-maintenance planting.
- Litter and cleanliness. More than one person commented on the general dirtiness of the street and suggested that the first priority should be a thorough cleaning. Litter is an issue, but mostly in terms of general litter, including cigarette butts, and some fly-tipping in side streets.

Other responses included complaints about anti-social behaviour such as street drinkers and graffiti with suggestions to install CCTV and increase the police presence, pedestrianisation of the area, better variety of shops and investment in the vacant units. A variety of additional shops and services were suggested which included, but not limited to, a community meeting space, bank, pharmacy and more independent shops.

People are proud of East Street's identity as a major longstanding high street and would like to see it brought back to its former glory. There is a sense of community and unity and a desire for cohesion between old and new. People want to ensure events, installations and services are tailored for the area, especially with consideration given to the new housing developments that are due to be built and also taking account of the needs of all age groups. The area could benefit from money being spent on the infrastructure to support events and activities i.e., electrical points for outdoor events.

## **On-Street Creative Engagement (Play Disrupt)**

The on-street event took place on Sunday 5th February, to tie in with the monthly market at Tobacco Factory Theatre. East Street however felt quiet, with many shops not open. Most people in the street near to our set up were making use of the new Hippie Cafe. Our engagement took place shortly after a one-way system had been brought in by Bristol City Council to allow for three years of building work for the new Bedminster Green development. At the time of this project there were multiple news reports in the Bristol Post about the issues this was and is causing for footfall on the high street. We delivered a targeted workshop with the 'Making Time' group at acta centre off North Street. This was majority of retirees who were from or had lived in the area for a long time. There was much discussion about safety on East Street at night, improving pavements/walkways, speeding of cars along the street, and interest in activities for older people as well as concern for improved youth provision.

East Street is the second biggest shopping area in Bristol, and historically a main shopping centre for South Bristol. With more people moving to the area to take up residence in new build homes, there is a huge opportunity here, with a strong community of traders and Bedminster BID. However, the challenge is for the high street to attract footfall in the years during building work.

There was strong interest in a market for East Street, as historically this took place here. There was a call for this not to be gentrifying or to try to compete with North Street's offer, but for it to support existing business in the area. Stalls should complement what is already in the area and provide more choice for customers. There could be an offer for children and creative activities for people to get involved with at the same time, providing more than only a shopping experience.

Additional provision for teenagers is needed in the area, with a link to Dean Lane skatepark suggested, and possibly building a stage there for events.

There have been recent additions of pocket parks to East Street, but one resident pointed out that if you look straight down East Street you don't see them, leaving the street itself looking tired. Greenery, hanging baskets and planting along the street itself could help to break this up and brighten things.

Pop ups for activities such as Bingo for older people and a pop-up cinema in St Catherines Place were both popular suggestions. Cafes which are closed in the evening could potentially be used as venues for evening activities and provide another source of income for business. A pop-up community centre as a test bed for a variety of creative and community activity was also suggested, enabling more activities to be tested.