



Stapleton Road – high street engagement and plans

Area overview

Stapleton Road is both a busy thoroughfare and a local shopping street serving a very diverse community.

The road is divided into three relatively distinct sections by the busy A4320 Easton Way and the railway line linking Temple Meads to the North. Each of these sections has differing issues and needs.

The street is well served with several bus routes and has access to Stapleton Road train station providing local train services.

Most of the shops are primarily food-related independent businesses. The shops are interspersed with housing and community venues including the Easton Leisure Centre and the Wild Goose drop-in centre. There are two post offices, one in the southern section and the other right at the northern end.

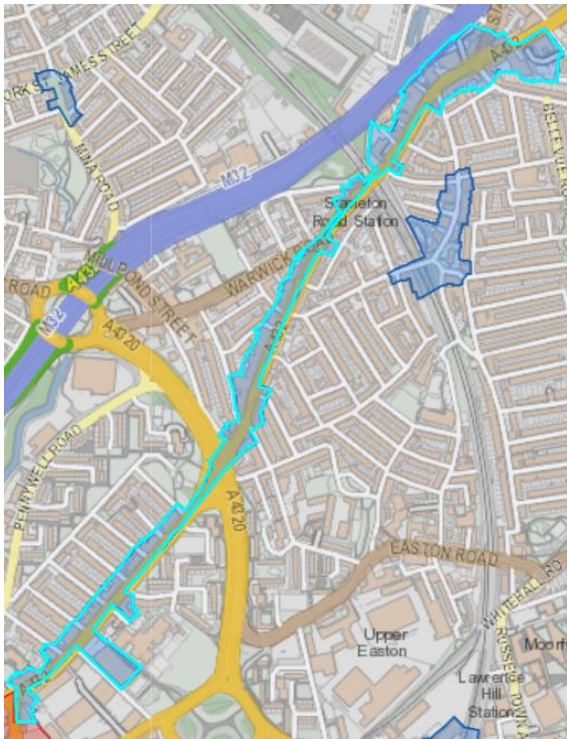
Within a few minutes' walk, there are two schools, two health centres and several faith venues.

The area south of Easton Way has a lot of greenery, but this is notably absent from the more northern sections. There needs to be more improvement to the street scene and overall appearance of the area and an attempt to combat the negative stigma of the area.

There is an appetite from various local people to host and create cultural events to benefit the area and make it a destination high street.

There is an increasing concern with anti-social behaviour, particularly on-street drinking in the area.

Although there is a feeling of neglect, there is a real pride in the diversity of the area and a sense of culture, creativity and strong community spirit, together with a feeling that the area has huge untapped potential.



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Engagement

We engaged with businesses and members of the public in two phases: first in late 2021 to identify issues and priorities and then again in January and February 2022 to gather more in-depth ideas and suggestions relating to these. This was done through a combination of face-to-face engagement, on-line workshops and on-line surveys with a paper alternative, as well as attending the Easton and Lawrence Hill Neighbourhood Forum.

The majority of businesses (52%) are reasonably confident about the future despite a decline in footfall over the last 12 months. There is, however, general dissatisfaction with the street's appearance and the amount of traffic, and a desire for a more varied retail offer.

The biggest concerns among both businesses and residents were parking provision and enforcement, (complaints about constant on-pavement parking, disregard of double yellow lines and road obstructions).

Local people visit the street frequently, to shop, to access transport and community facilities, but visits tend to be short, most less than 30 minutes. Two thirds of people come on foot, with 15% coming by car, the second most popular option.

Both businesses and members of the public expressed a desire for more diverse shops and services on the high street. Suggestions varied from fishmongers to cafes and included a small supermarket, coffee shop, and a drop-in service for those seeking mental health or homelessness support.

Nearly half of all businesses and a majority of residents commented that parking provision and parking enforcement need to be improved and a wide range of issues were mentioned, including constant on-pavement parking, disregard of double yellow lines and road obstructions, and the lack of short-stay parking for shoppers. In addition to parking issues, people also noted that the high street attracts anti-social behaviour, in particular street drinkers.

In terms of improving the streetscape, litter and fly tipping were a major concern, both by shoppers, residents and by businesses. In some places concerns were raised about how this encouraged vermin and was worsened by animal activity.

While the southern part of the high street has a lot of greenery, whereas the outer sections have very little. There is a general feeling that more is needed there particularly trees and permanent or sustainable planting. The area around the railway bridge is seen as a potential focal point for this section of the street and was a popular suggestion as a venue for a regular market. There is also interest in developing the area under the M32 at the end of Stapleton Road, next to the area used as a skate park, to make this more attractive and accessible.

The area has a very diverse population including a high number of very creative people, which could provide a base for community events to bring people together. It is unlikely that any one event will meet the wishes of the entire population, but a range of different activities could encourage people to come out and mix. An annual street-party-type event with a temporary road closure that is not tied to any one community could also provide a source of cohesion, although this may need to be separate for the two parts of the road divided by Easton Way.

There was some interest in a public art installation, but there was a much stronger feeling that a general clean-up and dealing with existing issues would make the biggest impact on the streetscape.

High street plans

Issues and Opportunities	Proposed Action
Need to support businesses and organisations	Business Development Officers to provide information, signposting and support
	Provide information to businesses on how to improve the appearance of their windows/frontages
	Promote the area and its offer using a variety of channels, including www.wheresittobristol.com and @shoplocalbris social channels including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram
Attracting new and desirable shops and services to the vacant property units	Monitor property vacancies to identify opportunities and promote the vacant property grant scheme to potential occupiers
Outer sections of the high street largely devoid of greenery	Identify appropriate greenery and specific locations for placement and initial designs produced
	Work with local residents and organisations to develop a group for maintenance of greenery/plants
	Install new greenery/plants
Litter an issue both from businesses and the public	Install additional litter bins in identified trouble spots
	Work with businesses to improve recycling/waste disposal
	Focused public education campaign around litter/recycling
Desire for more community events/projects to bring people together and increase footfall to local traders	Develop a programme of community events in collaboration with local organisations to create a range of activities to ensure that there are events for all groups
	Explore possibility of road closures for seasonal events – avoiding religious festivals
	Work with the local community to agree public art interventions and locations

Pockets of anti-social behaviour can be off-putting for some residents	Work with relevant Council services and other stakeholders to address anti-social behaviour and crime
Interest in regular market, particularly for food/local producers	Explore options for delivery of a market
Parking and traffic issues a major concern for most businesses and residents	Work with local retailers and shoppers and promote sustainable travel options
	Public education campaign to encourage people to respect existing parking restrictions and to discourage 'anti-social' activity such as double parking
Strong interest in the area in cycling and sustainable transport alternatives	Identify opportunities for better cycle provision
Call for cycle lane on Stapleton Road but lack of space for this	Clearer marking of and signposting to existing cycle routes