

SHAPING  
THORNTON  
HEATH:  
HIGH  
STREET  
PLAN

Shaping Thornton Heath  
High Street Plan

FIRST EDITION  
May 2021

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# SHAPING THORNTON HEATH: HIGH STREET PLAN

## NOTE

The project is led by CarverHaggard in collaboration with The Means, Fran Balaam, Europa and Turf Projects. Text in the document is generally authored by the project team. In addition, throughout the document, we have included quotes from the engagement process.

“It’s proper London, so filled with diversity and noise, but it’s also got some of the problematic things that richer areas don’t suffer from.”

Where text is formatted in this way, it is taken from the anonymised results of the engagement process, including the survey responses, focus groups, and workshops.

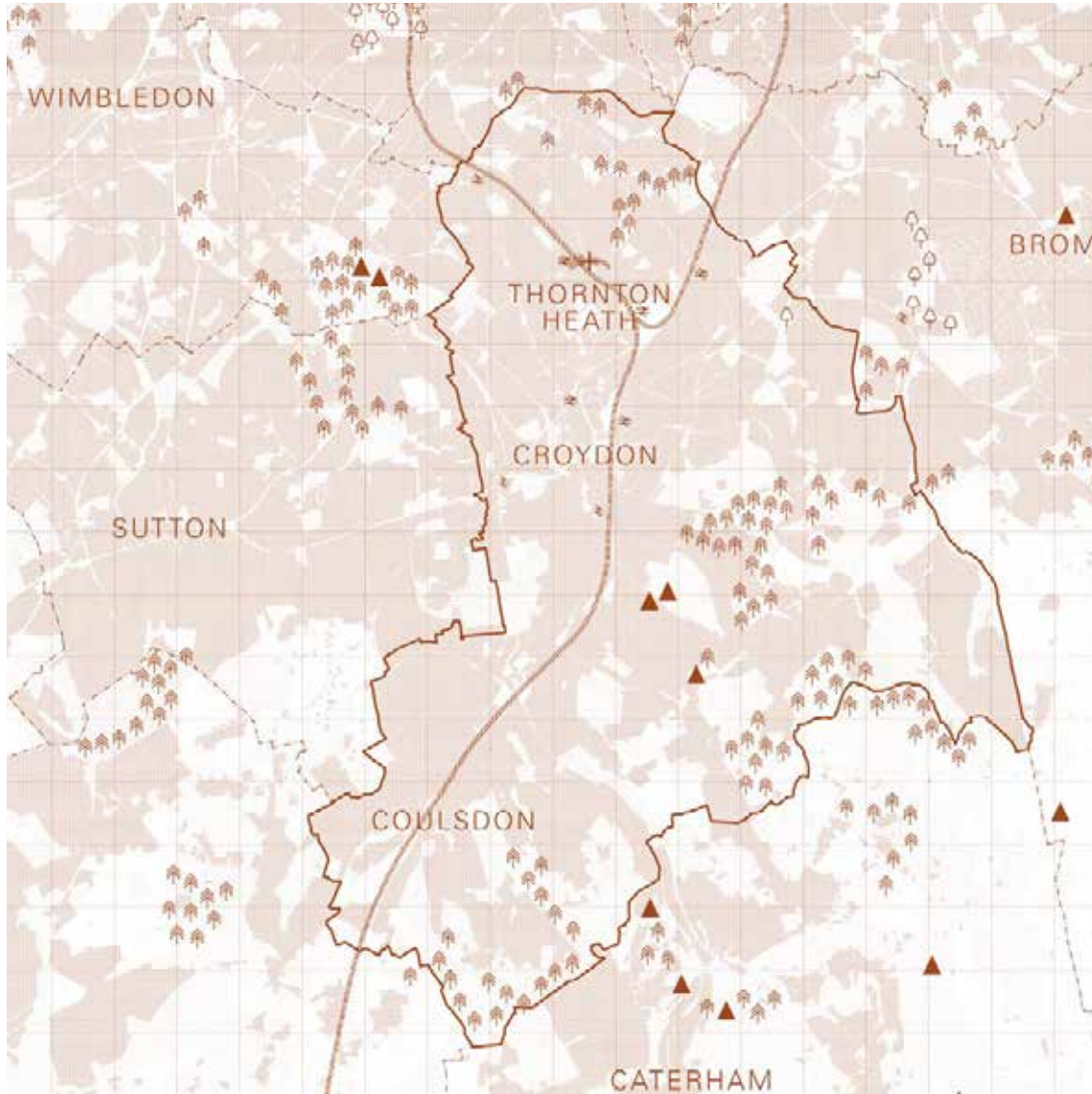
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# PART 1

## INTRODUCTION

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Location in Croydon

## CONTEXT

Croydon Council has invited the community of Thornton Heath to create a plan that can be used to shape the future of Thornton Heath High Street and Brigstock Road. This plan will not be funded by the council; it will be used to influence developers working in the area and to support the local community to seek funding opportunities for projects.

We have been working with members of the community since the spring of 2020 to identify key principles and priorities, and to map out a shared vision that will harness future change to benefit Thornton Heath.

Thornton Heath is changing, with potential housing development in the near future, alongside increased transport pressures and challenges for its high street, exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic. The community is proud of the area, and aware of the challenges that need to be tackled.

“There is a great community spirit in the area, with active local groups, and people wanting to make the area nice, pleasant and liveable. It could be a really attractive area for existing and potential residents, if only more was done to address the really stark issues that bring parts of it down.”

“It’s proper London, so filled with diversity and noise, but it’s also got some of the problematic things that richer areas don’t suffer from.”

“I’m proud of the diversity of people, the friendliness of neighbours and strangers, our beautiful green spaces and parks, the lack of gentrification, the independent shops and most of all the spirit!”

This High Street Plan is an important opportunity to involve the local community in change, so that Thornton Heath can provide current and future residents and businesses with the community facilities, transport and public spaces that they need.

## PART 2

# BASELINE INFORMATION



Local context

## THE CROYDON LOCAL PLAN

The consideration of planning applications takes place through the Croydon Local Plan. The Croydon Local Plan is available online and should be referred to for planning policy guidance (see page 2 for the URL).

As well as the strategy for development across the borough for the next 20 years, the Croydon Local Plan has additional specific development management policies for each of the 16 Places of Croydon, including Thornton Heath.

The Croydon Local Plan sets the following for this area:

- The vision for the area
- How many homes should be built and where
- The need for Employment, Skills and Community Facilities
- The key Character, Heritage and Design themes
- How Environment and Climate Change will be addressed
- Green Grid and Open Space assets and their future role
- Transport issues and how they will be addressed
- The allocated development sites for the area.

### Local Plan Review

The current Croydon Local Plan was adopted in 2018, and an immediate review was undertaken, to take into account the need to tackle the climate crisis and build more new homes. The reviewed Croydon Local Plan, due to be adopted in 2022, will plan for development and growth up to 2039.

### Influence of this document on the Local Plan

The following information from the Shaping Thornton Heath project will be shared with Croydon's Spatial Planning team to influence the Local Plan Review for Thornton Heath:

- Research, community engagement, and analysis
- The project documents
- Community feedback on the draft documents.

## SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATISTICS

Thornton Heath is very diverse, with high levels of socioeconomic deprivation and health inequality.

### Ethnicity categories

|                                       |     |
|---------------------------------------|-----|
| Black/African/Caribbean/Black British | 40% |
| White                                 | 30% |
| Asian/Asian British                   | 20% |
| Mixed/multiple ethnic groups          | 8%  |
| Other ethnic group/prefer not to say  | 2%  |

### Age

|       |     |
|-------|-----|
| 0–24  | 35% |
| 25–44 | 27% |
| 45–65 | 28% |
| 65+   | 10% |

### Religion

|                |     |
|----------------|-----|
| Christian      | 63% |
| No religion    | 14% |
| Muslim         | 14% |
| Hindu          | 7%  |
| Other religion | 1%  |
| Sikh           | 1%  |
| Buddhist       | 1%  |
| Jewish         | 0%  |

### Index of Multiple Deprivation

The study area covers five Low Super Output Areas which are among the 20–30% most deprived in the UK.

Across the two wards, around 17% of children live in low income families, and barriers to housing and services are high.

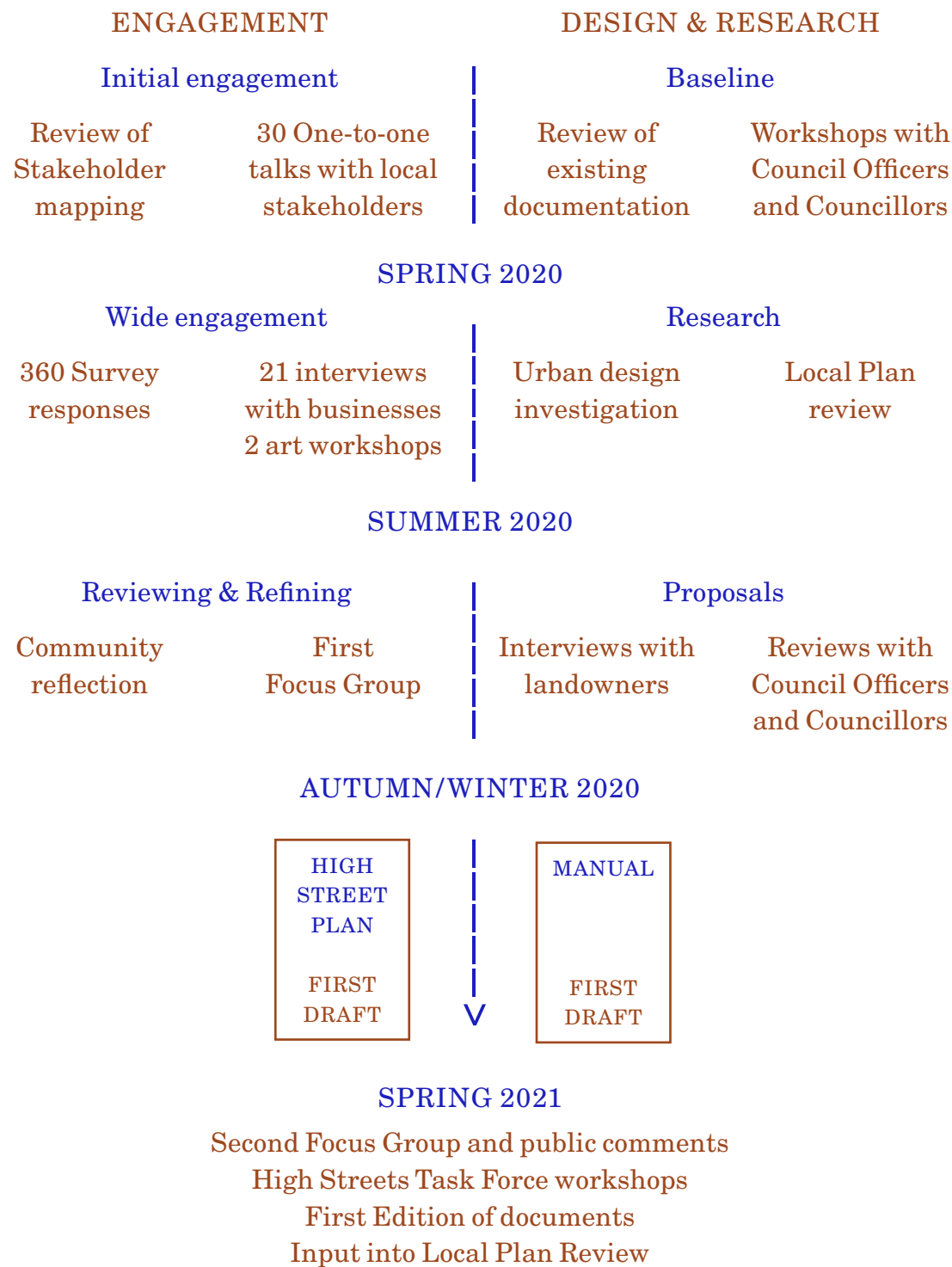
“I really like the ‘realness’ of the area – it hasn’t been gentrified and had its personality removed like many other areas of London have. It’s a great mix of people – ages, races, etc.”

“It has a proud history of different ethnicities and cultures co-existing. This needs to be built upon and maintained for the future.”

Data is taken from Croydon Observatory, based on 2018 Ward boundaries for Thornton Heath and Bensham Manor wards, and LSOAs 005D, 006E, 010A, 010B, 010E, using ONS census 2011 and other information.



# PART 3 ENGAGEMENT & ANALYSIS



## PROCESS

The Shaping Thornton Heath project, as detailed on the following pages, has resulted in two different documents, which are intended to be owned jointly between the community and the Council.

### High Street Plan – this document

This is a longer and more technical document, which is intended to inform the Croydon Local Plan and set out guiding principles for future development.

### A Manual for Shaping Thornton Heath

The Manual includes practical projects that could be taken forward to help deliver aspects of the High Street Plan, either by the community themselves, or in partnership with developers and/or the council.

### Impact of Covid-19

The project has taken place during the Covid-19 pandemic. Despite the efforts of the project team, engagement was made more difficult by the pandemic, as many of the usual means of meeting face-to-face were not available during the project. A large proportion of meetings were carried out online using video conferencing tools, making it significantly harder to reach a sample that accurately represents the area’s demographic.

### Review of draft documents

The draft documents were published online for comment between 5th March and 28th March 2021. A local focus group was also invited to review the document, to ensure a representative set of final comments.

## ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

### Strategy

This plan has been built in conjunction with the community. The initial community mapping process recognised that there are many community groups already active in Thornton Heath. Therefore, this High Street Plan builds on existing conversations and activity, whilst also drawing others into the conversation.

There were three main phases:

#### 1 Initial engagement and baseline research

This stage was a discovery stage. Existing community groups were mapped and 30 local stakeholders were interviewed to learn more about the area and existing community activity. Information and views were also gathered from existing reports, research, and meetings with Council officers and Councillors.

#### 2 Wider public engagement and research

This stage sought to give the wider community the opportunity to engage with the process. Knowledge gathered through the initial engagement helped to shape the strategy and the content of the survey.

- An online survey was produced and promoted to residents and businesses, receiving 360 responses.
- A launch meeting was held with community groups, who were able to ask questions about the process, suggest improvements and share information with their members.
- We visited businesses to let them know about the survey, and conducted 21 interviews in person.
- An on-street drawing exercise and a virtual spoken word workshop targeted at young people, both hosted by local artists, provided alternative opportunities to get involved.

#### 3 Reviewing and refining

By this stage a large amount of feedback had been received. This was digested and analysed followed by:

- A community reflection session, in which the survey results were presented to and discussed by a group of residents and community group representatives
- Landowner meetings, during which initial findings were presented to landowners
- A councillor workshop, during which findings were discussed with local ward councillors
- A focus group, during which a group of local residents and community groups, seeking to be broadly representative of the local area, commented on draft elements of the plan

The results of this process have informed the development of the High Street Plan.

#### Demographics

During the initial mapping stage, baseline information about the demographics of the two key wards for the area (Thornton Heath and Bensham Manor) was collected from the publicly available information on the Croydon Observatory website. Where available these statistics were used as a baseline against which to measure the extent to which engagement was penetrating different parts of the community. Equality and diversity monitoring questions covering the 6 protected characteristics of age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability and religion were included at the end of the online survey. These were optional, and 146 of the 360 participants submitted information.

Following this process, the draft documents were published online and a second focus group was held for final comments. This focus group emphasised the need to address deep-rooted issues of economic opportunities, physical safety and security, alongside regeneration projects.

A more detailed summary of the engagement process and findings is available as an Appendix.



## ENGAGEMENT FINDINGS

### 1 What are you proud of in Thornton Heath?

|              |     |       |
|--------------|-----|-------|
| Diversity    | 29% | ----- |
| Community    | 24% | ----- |
| Amenities    | 13% | ----- |
| Connectivity | 9%  | ----- |
| Nothing      | 15% | ----- |

Responses to this question reflected stakeholder conversations and highlighted the extent to which the area’s diversity is seen by many as a positive and a strength.

“The community – its talents and diversity, the way in which people connect and support each other.”

“There is a great community spirit in the area, with active local groups, and people wanting to make the area nice, pleasant and liveable.”

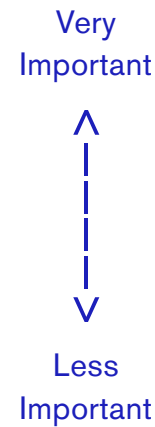
This is a common theme, with people emphasising that interventions need to ensure Thornton Heath provides for all and remains accessible and affordable. The strength of community action is also reflected, with a large number of people proud of the community’s friendliness, welcoming nature, or the teamwork required to produce the Thornton Heath Carnival or to deliver community planting.

Another common response was “Nothing”, with respondents feeling as though there wasn’t anything to be proud of. These responses mentioned themes such as cleanliness, maintenance and safety, which arise again in other parts of the survey.

“This is a very difficult question to answer as there is so little to be proud of!”

Other common responses related to the area’s connectivity, green spaces, in particular Grangewood Park, and the creativity of many of the area’s residents, past and present.

### 2 How important are each of these themes for Thornton Heath?



- Creating safer streets and spaces for all ages
- More greenery
- Ensuring a successful and diverse high street
- Improving environmental sustainability and local air quality
- Supporting local job opportunities, training, and entrepreneurs
- Helping the community live healthier lives
- Bringing a “destination venue” to Thornton Heath
- Supporting art, culture, music and events in Thornton Heath
- Developments that provide affordable homes
- Prioritising space for pedestrians and cyclists over vehicles

10 themes were offered to participants, who were asked to rate each one between 1 (Very unimportant) and 5 (Very important), with 3 being “no opinion”.

The themes were distilled from feedback received during the stakeholder pre-engagement stage, and the main purpose of this question was to test these with the wider community.

Because of this, it is perhaps unsurprising that all themes scored highly, and even the lowest ranking theme achieved over 50% “Very Important” or “Important”. However, there is a gap between the higher and lower-ranking themes, and those that ranked most highly are reflected repeatedly throughout other feedback.

#### Calculation of percentages for open questions

- With the exception of Question 2, the other questions (1, 3, 4, 5, 6) were “open”, without suggested responses.
- For open questions the most popular 5 themes are listed in this section.
- Percentages refer to the proportion of the respondents who mentioned each theme.

## ENGAGEMENT FINDINGS

### 3 What changes to outdoor spaces would you like to see in Thornton Heath?

|                            |     |       |
|----------------------------|-----|-------|
| Safer Spaces               | 41% | ----- |
| Maintenance/Cleanliness    | 31% | ----- |
| Improved play areas        | 23% | ----- |
| Greener Spaces             | 21% | ----- |
| Improved Sports facilities | 12% | ----- |

Comments in relation to safety were the most common. These included fears about crime and violence, concern about the presence of street drinkers, physical aspects such as lighting after dark and calls for increased police presence or CCTV.

“There is a problem with anti-social behaviour.”

“More visible patrols by police and parks staff to deter vandalism and anti-social behaviour.”

“The area attracts too many anti-social loiterers.”

“Safety - lighting and CCTV.”

“Could something be done for our local drinkers? They might then feel like valued members of our community.”

For example, while 12% of respondents were keen to see more seating to enable more relaxation and socialising in public spaces, 5% wanted less seating because of the association with Anti Social Behaviour (ASB).

“More benches to sit on, in the high street and in the Parks.”

“Less seating as these areas are dominated by drinkers.”

“Don't throw the baby out with the bathwater by removing the seats.”

There were different views about whether it is most important to create physically welcoming public meeting spaces, or to make them unwelcoming to discourage certain behaviours.

This issue was a main focus of conversation during the “Community Reflection Session”. The main points from this session were:

- There was support for more public meeting spaces, but concern about maintenance and behaviour.
- The issues of behaviour and safety go beyond urban design, and work is needed to address more deep-rooted issues.
- There was openness to testing approaches such as activation of spaces to dilute Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) but scepticism that this would work without other forms of intervention.
- It was noted that whatever approach is taken, it is important that public spaces remain public and do not feel as though people have to have money in order to spend time in them.

The importance of issues of safety and security was again emphasised in comments on the draft High Street Plan and at the second focus group. It is clear that this issue is a very high priority for the community, given the responses to it throughout the engagement.

We have taken this into account when proposing interventions along the high street, such as approaches to lighting, seating areas, or alleyways.

However, tackling crime and anti-social behaviour is a complex area and is largely beyond the scope of this study. Please see page 114 for further information about the Council's approach to crime and anti-social behaviour.

## ENGAGEMENT FINDINGS

### 4 What types of indoor spaces would you like to see in Thornton Heath?

|                             |     |       |
|-----------------------------|-----|-------|
| Community Space             | 28% | ----- |
| Culture/Entertainment       | 25% | ----- |
| Space for talent/creativity | 23% | ----- |
| Space for enterprise        | 19% | ----- |
| Changes to high street mix  | 16% | ----- |

A wide variety of community spaces were called for; including places for young people, a community centre, spaces for hobby and community groups and children’s activities.

“Indoor spaces made available for charities to book and use for events, activities, all sorts of workshops.”

Whilst some provision already exists in Thornton Heath, for example through the use of church halls, a number of comments implied a desire to have a more central location that not only provided functional space but also acted as a place where people can spend time and spontaneously meet others.

“A community centre.. for different generations and cultural needs.”

Music venues were often mentioned alongside rehearsal spaces with the idea that local performers be given a platform, whilst galleries and a museum were often talked about in the context of exhibiting local artists or local history.

“Places for youth that want to explore their talent.”

Stakeholders have suggested a significant creative community that could be further nurtured through the provision of certain types of space; 53 people indicated interest in artists’ studios and 38 in practical workshop space.

“Affordable studio space for young creatives would be great.”

### 5 What types of events would you like to see in Thornton Heath?

|                            |     |       |
|----------------------------|-----|-------|
| Markets                    | 57% | ----- |
| Arts or Performance events | 33% | ----- |
| Pop-ups                    | 18% | ----- |
| Large events               | 9%  | --    |
| Inclusive events           | 9%  | --    |

An appetite for markets in Thornton Heath was the single most common response in any question of the whole survey. Produce or farmers’ markets were most often suggested, but craft markets, street food markets, flower markets, and vintage or antiques markets were also mentioned.

“A regular farmers’ market would be wonderful.”

“Food markets – potentially shutting the high street from time to time. More iterations of the current annual festival throughout the year.”

“Street food market with stalls from different countries and different businesses.”

This question also attracted a number of comments about making sure that events were inclusive and reflected the diversity of the area. Markets are one potential way of providing flexibly for a variety of cultural needs and affluence levels, and respondents referred to the Clocktower Market in South Norwood, West Norwood Feast, and Haynes Lane Market in Crystal Palace as local examples.

Support was voiced for existing regular and one-off community events, such as the Carnival and Thornton Heath Festival, and the Light Festival in 2018. There was a general appetite for more to do in Thornton Heath, in particular Arts or Performance events, with exhibitions and live music being suggested most often.

## ENGAGEMENT FINDINGS

### 6 What would you like travel to look like in the future in Thornton Heath?

|                              |     |       |
|------------------------------|-----|-------|
| Better for pedestrians       | 35% | ----- |
| Less traffic                 | 26% | ----- |
| Changes to parking           | 21% | ----- |
| Better provision for cycling | 18% | ----- |
| Better traffic flow          | 9%  | ----- |

A better experience for walking was the most common response, complimented by wanting to see less traffic. The most common suggestion for improving the walking experience was easier road crossings, followed by improved safety and traffic calming.

“Easier road crossings. I don’t think there are enough zebra crossings”

“Far fewer cars. The streets are choked with the cars of people visiting the hospital, and traffic cutting through to other places”

Parking was mentioned regularly; this includes a desire for more parking, but also comments on the most appropriate location and type. A number of people observed that illegal parking on the High Street was causing buses to get stuck and cause traffic jams. One solution suggested was to move parking from the High Street to off-street locations, such as advertising the Gillet & Garnet car park better.

“A car park near the high street to discourage the double parking and careless driving currently blighting the high street”

It should be noted here that businesses stressed the need for loading and delivery space. Better cycling facilities also received a large number of responses, focusing on cycle parking and safe cycle routes.

“Less traffic on the high Street and more places to park and lock up bikes.”

“It’s pretty scary cycling down the high street at rush hour!”

## 7 Priorities for Thornton Heath

In the second section of the survey, respondents were asked to identify their priorities for Thornton Heath. Respondents were presented with maps dividing the area into three smaller areas, West, Central, and East. They were asked two questions:

What is the area like now?

What is it most important to change about this part of the street?

The detailed qualitative responses to these questions, combined with further feedback in the focus groups, have been summarised in the following section and informed the development of the High Street Plan.

A more detailed summary of the engagement process and findings is available as an Appendix.

“Love the architecture of The Prince George and St Alban’s Church. Love the pastel colours and most of the murals. Hate the pavement clutter and traffic.”

“Limit chicken shops, nail bars, etc. Absolutely no betting shops on the High Street. Bring some style to the area.”

“The Library, Trumble Gardens with tennis courts and play area are good – a breath of fresh air in Thornton Heath.”

“The flower beds that have been planted on residential streets and around the clock tower are a welcome addition.”

“Traffic at peak times and during football matches can be very heavy and small side roads can clog up.”

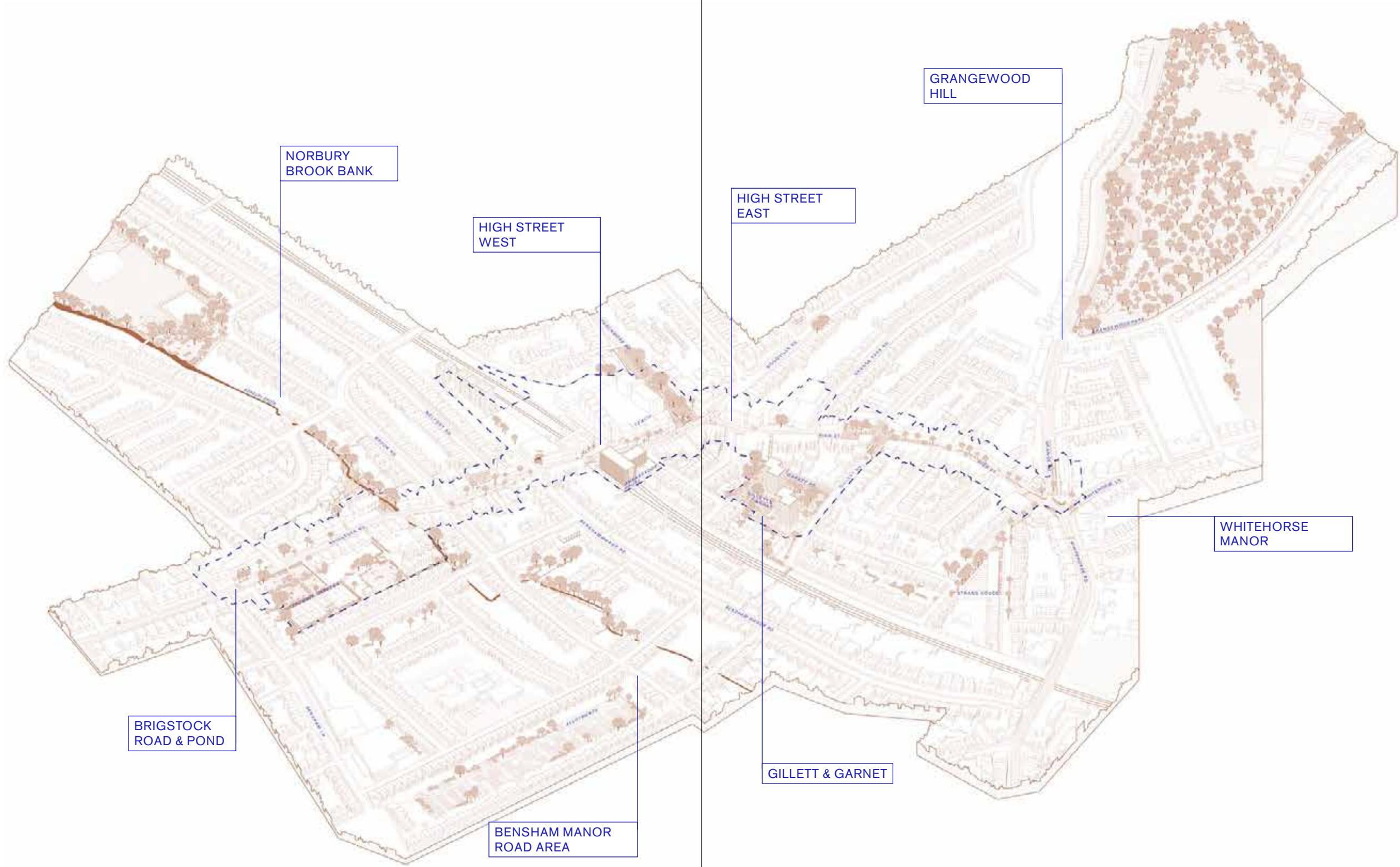
“Make the parks feel safer with more security to discourage parties and drinking.”

“Ambassador House has not been occupied for a number of years. An empty old dated office block is not a good look for an introduction to Thornton Heath.”

“The colourful painted buildings are nice, they show history and suggest the area is cared about.”

# CHARACTER AREAS

Urban design notes and engagement findings





### BRIGSTOCK ROAD & POND

The Western approach to Thornton Heath, connecting London Road to High Street, West.

This is mainly residential in character, with some of the larger houses now being used as business space or small guest houses/hotels. The street is a mix of Victorian detached villas and semis, with some Edwardian and 1930s terraces and later 20th century infill blocks. There are the remains of some grand houses, but almost all are in poor condition with front gardens dominated by parked cars. Trumble Gardens, opposite the library, is one of the few green spaces near the high street. The area immediately on the street is currently low quality with little mature planting to enliven this part of the road, or trees to mitigate air quality issues. The culverted Norbury Brook crosses through this area of Thornton Heath, although many local residents aren't aware of it.

“Near the library looks pretty good with its wider pavement and seating area, but Trumble Gardens is really uninviting.”

### NORBURY BROOK BANK

South of railway, including Thornton Heath Recreation Ground.

Residential area with two storey terraced houses, largely 19th Century. Houses back onto Winterbourne Park, with the culverted Norbury Brook winding between residential gardens and the park. St Andrews Catholic Church on Brook Road is one of the only non-residential buildings in the area, with the small-scale building fitting into the low-rise streets. The Norbury Brook is seen as an opportunity for the area, that could be opened up and naturalised in the long term.

“There is I think a river that has been hidden under the road – Wouldn't it be nice to expose this somehow or build something around it?”





## HIGH STREET WEST

The station and surrounding landmarks are considered by many people as a gateway to Thornton Heath.

The large blocks of Ambassador House and the Laxton and Kettering dominate this stretch of the high street. At ground level these buildings are disconnected from the street or have inactive frontage, in contrast to the adjacent 2–3 storey terraces with more traditional retail frontage. Existing shops are of varying quality with a limited offer – people would like more variety and a market. The Ambassador House forecourt is in a prominent location opposite the station and with improved accessibility there is potential for it to host markets and events. The station and good rail connections are seen as one of Thornton Heath’s main assets, but people are still heavily reliant on cars – traffic and poor air quality has a significant impact on the high street.

“I love what they have done with the colour on the steps of Ambassador House, but the building itself is ugly and unused.”

## HIGH STREET EAST

From Thornton Heath clock tower to St Albans church.

This stretch of the high street is the main retail area and largely consists of 19th century 3 storey terraces with ground floor retail. Above ground floor elevations are simple with good materials and details typical of their period. Some of these, particularly towards the western end, are in poor condition and with careful maintenance could make a really positive contribution to the streetscape. The painted pastel terraces towards St Albans Church help to make a more joyful atmosphere. The building line is consistent along this stretch of the high street with the leisure centre and job centre being the only breaks in this pattern – larger blocks set back from the pavement with planted forecourts.

“I’m proud of the quantity and quality of the independent shops that include many Afro-Caribbean and African owned.”

“Love the pastel colours and most of the murals. Hate the pavement clutter and traffic.”





### GRANGEWOOD HILL

North of railway, up the hill from Thornton Heath centre to Grangewood Park.

Two storey terraces of 1920s–30s houses surround Grangewood Park – a large wooded parkland with ornamental gardens, playing courts and cycle lanes. There are some grand Victorian/Edwardian villas on Ross Road near the corner of Whitehorse Meadow. The attractive park gates and Grangewood Park Lodge are at the junction of Ross Road and Grange Road, up the hill from the high street. Grangewood Park was part of the Whitehore Estate before being bought for the public by the Corporation of Croydon in 1900. The foundations of the house originally at the centre of the park are now laid out as a formal garden.

“Distant views of the Grangewood tree tops add to the local landscape.”

### WHITEHORSE MANOR

Whitehorse Lane and Whitehorse Road, starting at roundabout and Thornton Heath sign. Continues to Whitehorse Manor Junior and Infant School and towards Selhurst Park stadium.

This is made up of two storey terraces, largely residential, with some short parades of shops. There are no street trees and front gardens are dominated by parked cars. The buildings are generally in poor condition. Sainsbury’s sits between the street and the football stadium.

The need for more street trees throughout the whole Thornton Heath area came across strongly in engagement with local residents.

“The school has pleasant trees that add value to the streetscene.”

“The upper part of Whitehorse Road looks depressing at the moment.”







### GILLETT & GARNET BLOCKS

A mix of 20th century infill with remains of some modest 19th century two storey terraces surround the blocks. The Gillett and Garnet towers sit at the heart of the area within landscaped gardens, almost similar to a traditional garden square.

There is low-rise mid 20th century housing to the East of the blocks, with a route through to Thornton Heath Nursery School and Strand House. A small group of bungalows, with a shared central garden strip, sit just to the North of the train line near the footbridge crossing.

“The Garnet Road alley from the High Street is very convenient but needs improvement – it is often flytipped and has been used as a toilet.”

### BENSHAM MANOR ROAD AREA

A low rise mix of late 19th century and early 20th century housing with later additions in the form of dormers and extensions, as well as late 20th century clusters with shared off-street parking.

The pattern is interspersed with small clusters of shops and off-licenses, while the larger blocks are often visible. There are few street trees, and streets are dominated by parked cars.

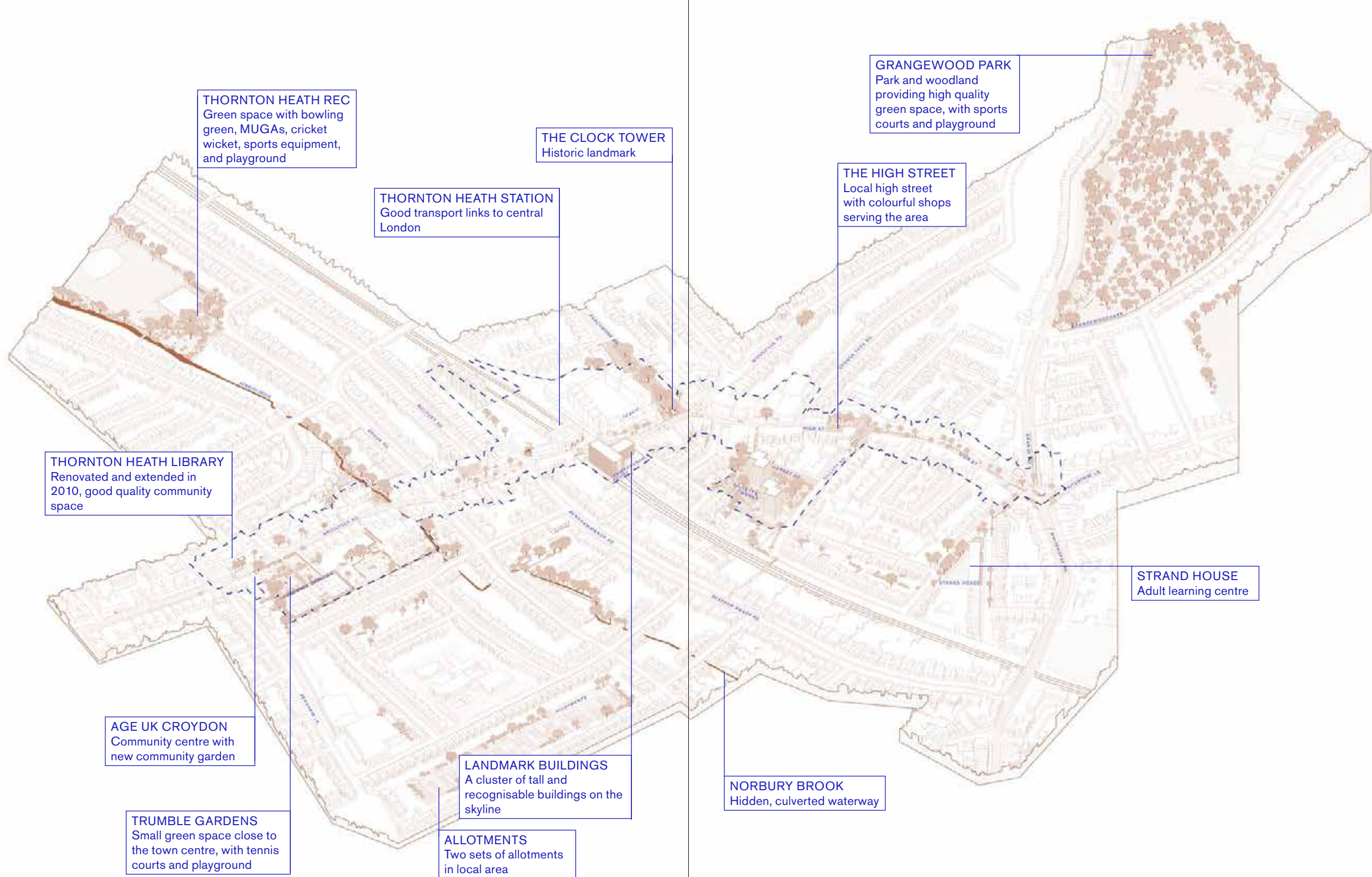
The street pattern is broken by the railway line, with few crossing points.

“We love the Victorian houses and many of the residents on our road. There is a lot of character in the residential streets... we are proud of our home and our road.”



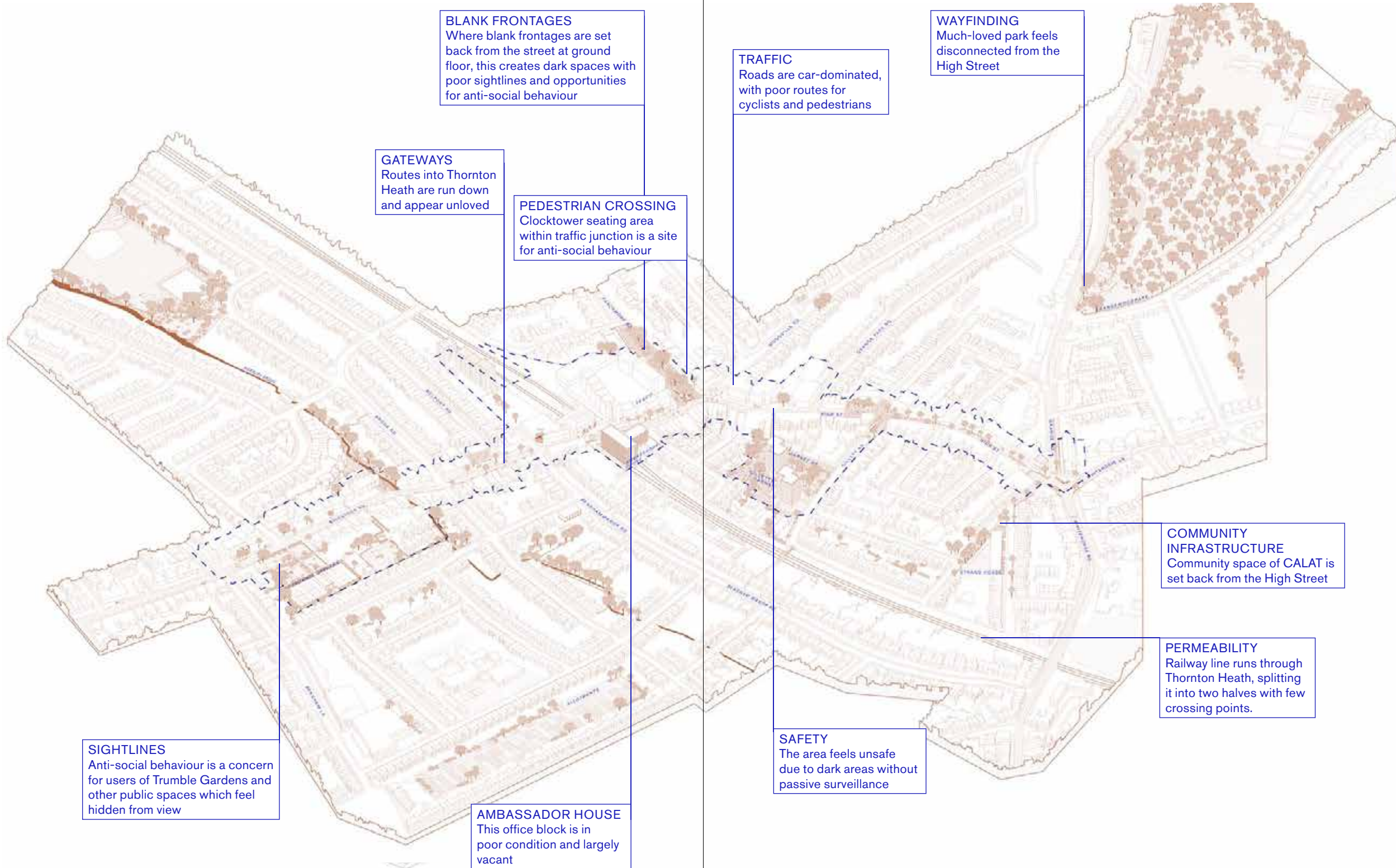
## ASSETS & OPPORTUNITIES

Key assets as identified through the engagement process



## CHALLENGES

Key challenges as identified through engagement



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## PART 4 VISION

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## VISION STATEMENT

This is a speculative plan, which aims to identify community priorities for future regeneration in the local area. We hope that this plan, and the ideas that it captures, will be used to:

- Inform proposals for the sites identified, influencing developers seeking to invest in the area to do so in a way that supports the local community.
- Assist local stakeholders seeking funding for projects.

The Plan includes the following strands, to establish a framework and parameters for future development:

### Principles (5–25 years)

Overall urban design themes based on the engagement process, to inform future developments and plans.

### Key Sites (3–10 years)

Analysis of key sites identified by the Council, and guidance on their role in promoting the principles of the plan.

### Framework of Public Realm improvements (3–10 years)

A series of interlinked opportunities to improve public realm along the High Street, to deliver the principles of the Plan.

### Potential project and Activity Ideas (3–10 years)

These ideas are based on community suggestions which support the overall vision and could either be applied to multiple locations, or which are “looking for a home”. They are collated in the Manual to:

- Share ideas and best practice with landowners.
- Assist local stakeholders in developing project ideas and seeking funding for projects.

The projects in the plan are not intended to be funded by Croydon Council. However, where transport has a key role to play, these ideas should be progressed in coordination with Croydon’s Strategic Transport team, perhaps with external funding from TfL or DfT.

## THE PLAN

This plan sets out design guidance and principles to shape Thornton Heath in the future, based on this engagement and analysis.

### Principles (Plan pp. 42–73)

Overall urban design guidance based on the engagement process, to inform future developments and plans.

- |                            |                           |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 Strong local character   | 5 Sustainable development |
| 2 Future-proof high street | 6 Green infrastructure    |
| 3 Good homes               | 7 Sustainable movement    |
| 4 Space for the community  | 8 Blue infrastructure     |

### Key Sites (Plan pp. 74–97)

Analysis of key sites identified by the Council, and guidance on their role in promoting the principles of the plan.

- |                       |                       |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| K-01 Iceland car park | K-04 Gillett & Garnet |
| K-02 Ambassador House | K-05 Strand House     |
| K-03 Tesco site       |                       |

### Framework Projects (Plan pp. 98–107)

A series of interlinked public realm improvement opportunities along the High Street.

- |                                |                            |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| F-01 Trumble Gardens           | F-11 Job Centre forecourt  |
| F-02 Trumble Gardens Gate      | F-12 High Street core      |
| F-03 Norbury Brook Corner      | F-13 CALAT Connections     |
| F-04 Brigstock House & Temple  | F-14 Thornton Heath Rec    |
| F-05 Iceland forecourt         | F-15 Grangewood Park Lodge |
| F-06 Station forecourt         | F-16 Pedestrian Bridge     |
| F-07 Tesco frontage            | F-17 Brook Path            |
| F-08 Clock Tower Crossing      | F-18 Brook Opening         |
| F-09 Alleyway                  | F-19 Brook Deculverting    |
| F-10 Gillett & Garnet car park | F-20 Brook Mews            |

## THE MANUAL

The Manual is a separate document, with projects to assist developers, residents, and community groups in delivering aspects of the Plan.

### Framework Projects (Manual pp. 36–57)

More detail on Framework Projects is included in the Manual.

### Project and Activity Ideas (Manual pp. 58–79)

Ideas based on community suggestions, which support the overall vision and are “looking for a home” as part of future developments.

- |                              |                             |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| P-01 Street trees            | P-06 Community hub          |
| P-02 De-paving and suds      | P-07 Event space            |
| P-03 Rainwater as a resource | P-08 Market                 |
| P-04 Lighting enhancements   | P-09 Space booking platform |
| P-05 Local wayfinding        | P-10 Outdoor events         |

### Transport Initiatives (Manual pp. 80–85)

To be progressed with Croydon’s Strategic Transport team.

- |                            |                       |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| T-01 Crossings and routes  | T-04 Vehicle traffic  |
| T-02 Bicycles and scooters | T-05 Cars and loading |
| T-03 Supporting buses      |                       |

### Reference Projects (Manual pp. 86–91)

Previous local initiatives and projects, for reference.

- |                            |                         |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| R-01 Ambassador House deck | R-04 Festivals & Events |
| R-02 Public Realm 2018     | R-05 Reimagine TH       |
| R-03 THCAT initiatives     |                         |

### Material palette (Manual pp. 92–95)

Design references for materials and approach.

- |               |            |
|---------------|------------|
| M-01 Paving   | M-03 Sound |
| M-02 Planting | M-04 Light |

## PRINCIPLE 1 STRONG LOCAL CHARACTER

Enhancing the character of Thornton Heath by celebrating landmarks. New development should be sensitive to existing buildings and urban grain.

There is a varied mix of different types and characters of buildings in Thornton Heath, and new development should be congruent with this.

This patchwork of styles gives Thornton Heath its identity. Existing buildings and spaces should be valued and enhanced where possible, rather than redeveloped.

Where new development is needed, this should be neighbourly, responding carefully to adjacent buildings, spaces, and patterns of development.

“I think the beautiful buildings of St Alban Church and The Prince George pub could be cleaned and lit up.”

“The colourful painted buildings are nice, they show history and suggest the area is cared about.”

“I like the view down the road here – it looks like bit like a village with the railway telegraph there looking very charming.”

“There is a lot of character in the residential streets... we are proud of our home and our road.”

“There so many beautiful houses from the Victorian era down this road.”

## EXAMPLES OF PRINCIPLE 1

A new public space creating new routes and connections through the site, with a narrative informed by local son John Ruskin.

Ruskin Square, Croydon  
designed by muf and J&L Gibbons,  
with Objectif and ARUP. Image: muf



New public space created by activating a previously blank wall with space to host events and markets, responding to the existing library building. Lighting used to celebrate local heritage.

Barkingside Town Square,  
Redbridge, designed by DK-CM.  
Image: DK-CM



New interventions in dialogue with existing buildings.

West Croydon Interchange  
designed by East architecture,  
landscape, urban design.  
Image: East



**PRINCIPLE 1 STRONG LOCAL CHARACTER**

**NORBURY BROOK BANK**  
Celebrate and open up access to the historic waterway

**CLOCK TOWER**  
Celebrate historic land marks with improvements to the public realm, crossing, and lighting

**GRANGEWOOD HILL**  
Connect green spaces to the High Street with street trees and wayfinding

**HIGH STREET WEST**  
Enhance and maintain the character of landmark gateway buildings and forecourts

**HIGH STREET EAST**  
Enhance the character of the High Street through improvements to the public realm and shopfronts

F-19

F-14

F-08

K-01

K-03

F-07

F-20

F-04

F-05

F-06

F-03

K-02

F-02

F-17

F-18

F-01

**BRIGSTOCK ROAD & POND**  
Enhance the route to Thornton Heath with public realm improvements and refreshing landmarks

**BENSHAM MANOR ROAD AREA**  
Enhance low-rise streets by greening front gardens, planting street trees and designing for pedestrians

**GILLETT & GARNET**  
Make the most of open space and tall landmarks through character lighting, planting and paving

**WHITEHORSE MANOR**  
Enhance historic buildings, and key public routes to the high street and green spaces

F-15

F-09

F-11

F-12

F-10

K-05

F-13

This is a speculative plan based on community engagement and urban design analysis. The proposals are indicative and are not currently funded.

- KEY**
- Existing landmarks
  - ⊕ Opportunity for character lighting
  - ◇ Opportunity to enhance character
  - ◀ Key views / sightlines
  - Framework projects

## PRINCIPLE 2 FUTURE-PROOF HIGH STREET

Repairing and extending active frontage. Making space to nurture local business and culture, and supporting new uses including a market and entertainment.

The high street has some large stretches of inactive frontage, without windows or doors onto the street. Opening these up – through adjustments to the existing buildings, or as part of new developments along the high street – should be a priority for Thornton Heath.

For high streets to survive they need to be visibly active and vibrant to encourage footfall. A diverse mix of uses, including community activities, with a range of sizes and types of units to support them, will also help to make a future-proof high street.

Retail use should be retained at ground floor in areas designated as retail frontages, and other town centre uses would be preferred outside these areas.

Thornton Heath has pioneered social prescribing through a network of local community and healthcare organisations, which may have a key role in the high street of the future.

“A more diverse high street so that money stays in the area.”

“I like the mix of shops in the High Street and would like to continue that diversity with more independent stores.”

“A market would be nice and possibly pop-up shops, as long as they cater for everyone, as we are a very diverse area.”

“Art exhibitions would be a good use of space in empty shops, with displays of work from students from Croydon College or talented local people.”

“If Thornton Heath had more to offer on its high street then perhaps people wouldn’t need to travel so much by car.”

## EXAMPLES OF PRINCIPLE 2

New community space for an enterprise charity created by activating three previously vacant commercial units.

55 East, designed by CarverHaggard. Image: Max Creasy



Eye-catching extension to existing library to host a flexible range of new uses, with a strong visual connection to the high street.

East Street Exchange in Southwark, designed by We Made That. Image: We Made That

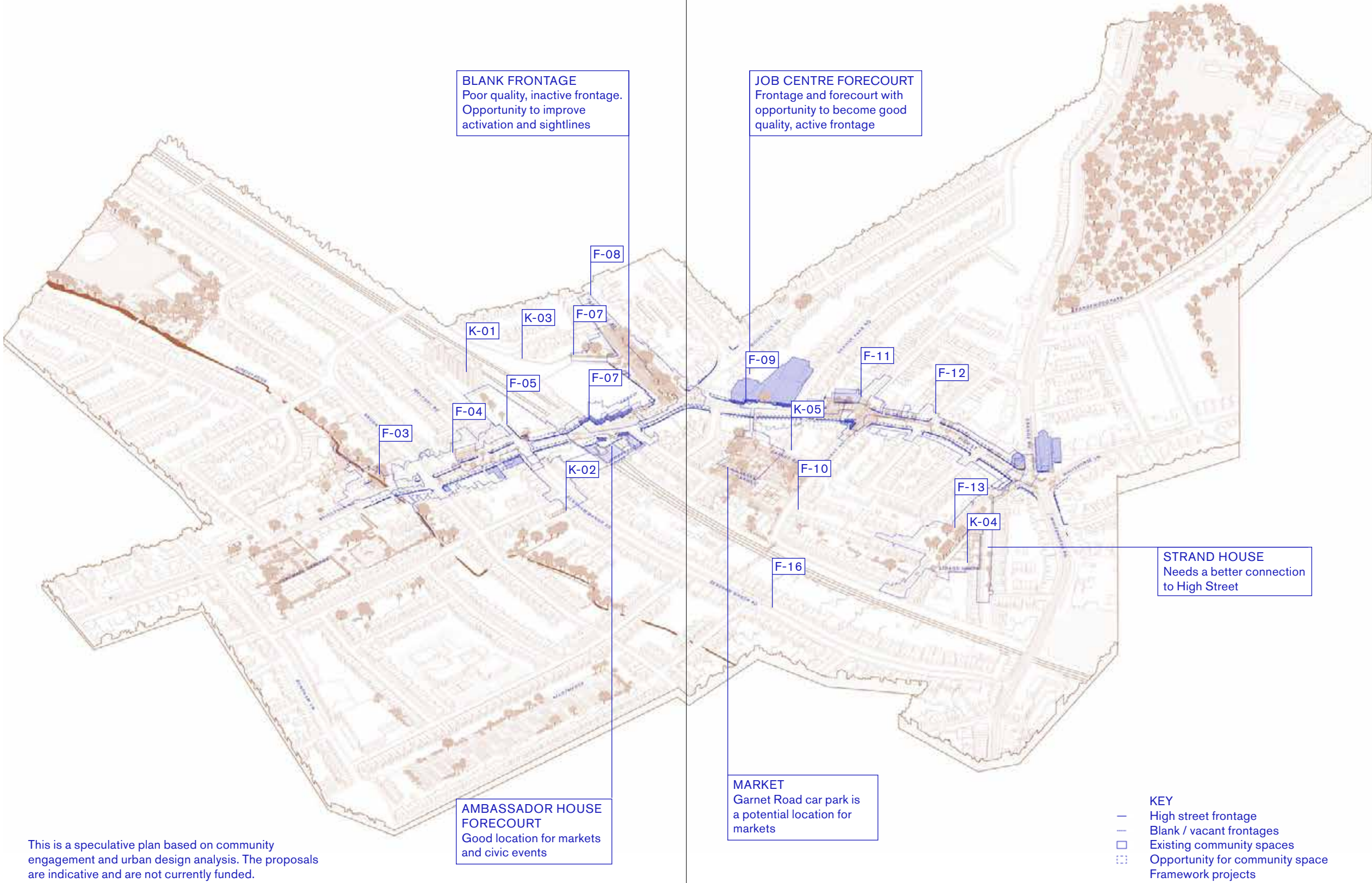


New market square created by activating a railway viaduct and former goods yard, alongside a residential development.

Deptford Market Yard in Lewisham, designed by Ash Sakula Architects and Farrer Huxley. Image: Ash Sakula







This is a speculative plan based on community engagement and urban design analysis. The proposals are indicative and are not currently funded.

## PRINCIPLE 3 GOOD HOMES

Making good homes with high quality and legible communal space, and making Thornton Heath a healthy and happy place to live.

Thornton Heath needs new homes, and locating them on or next to the high street will help to build a thriving community and support the local economy.

New homes should feel connected to the existing community and neighbourhoods. They should have a positive relationship with streets and communal spaces.

Amenity spaces such as shared gardens and courtyards should be genuinely usable – providing privacy and shelter, and with good views and light.

“Keep family housing in the area.”

“I love the fact that there are a variety of different styles of homes; houses, flats, privately owned, privately rented and local authority.”

“Affordable run down houses are being turned into HMOs, encouraging denser populations, more waste and less opportunities for those already here.”

“Housing is important – social housing rents and self build community schemes.”

“I live in a small flat and want to enjoy outdoor space.”

## EXAMPLES OF PRINCIPLE 3

Developer-led refurbishment of a Listed 1960s housing estate.

Park Hill, designed by Hawkins Brown and Studio Egret West. Image: Hawkins Brown



Infill mews housing, sensitive to neighbouring houses and gardens.

Moray Mews in Finsbury Park, designed by Peter Barber Architects. Images: Morley Von Sternberg

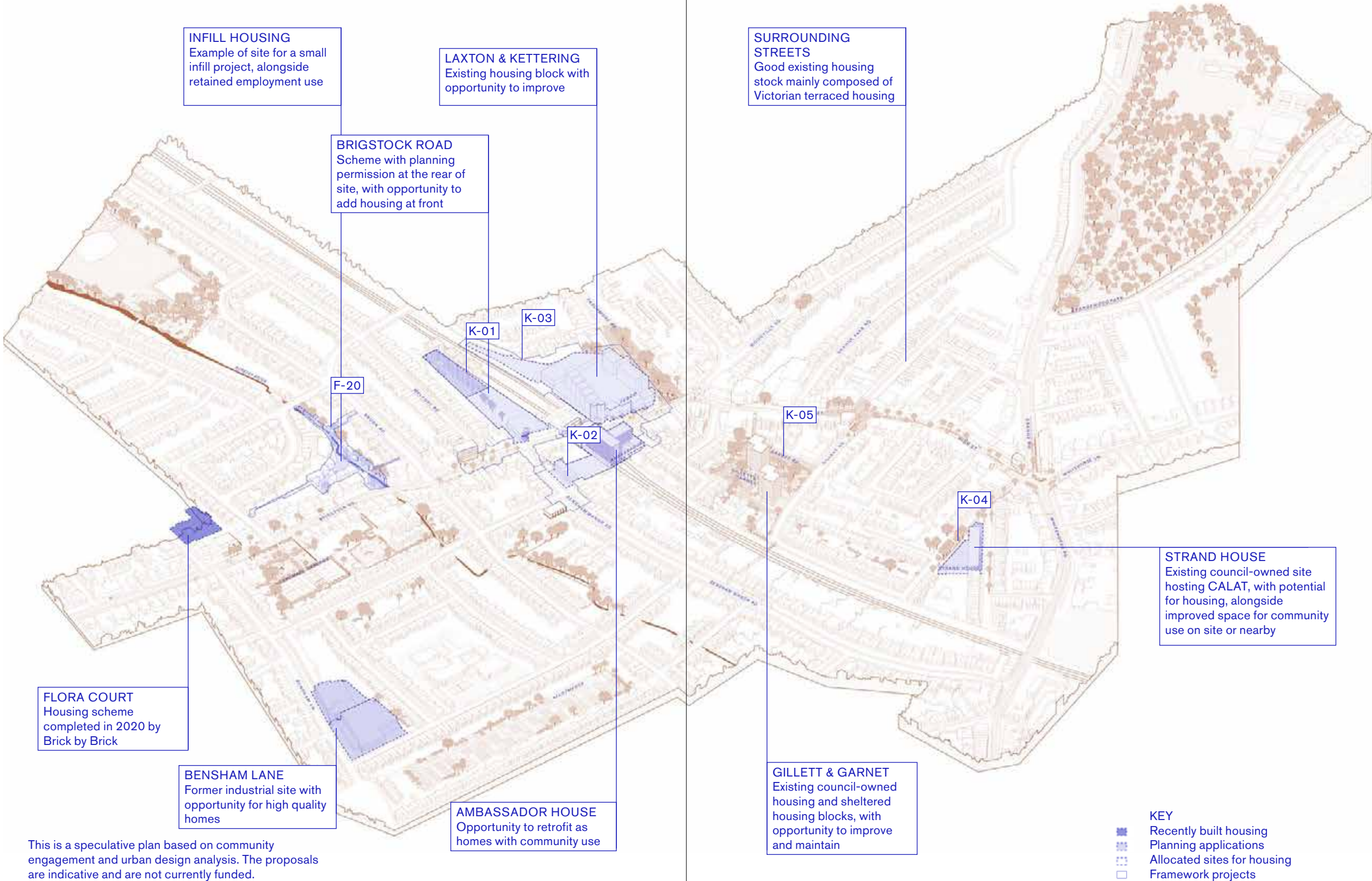


The scale and massing of this 38-home street reflects the urban grain of the surrounding area to create a domestic and intimate character.

Dujardin Mews in Enfield, designed by Karakusevic Carson Architects with Maccreanor Lavington Architects. Image: Tim Crocker



**PRINCIPLE 3 GOOD HOMES**



This is a speculative plan based on community engagement and urban design analysis. The proposals are indicative and are not currently funded.

## PRINCIPLE 4 SPACE FOR THE COMMUNITY

Creating outdoor and indoor public spaces that are safe and welcoming for a diverse range of people.

Outdoors, design issues that contribute to anti-social behaviour in the public realm should be addressed. Indoors, community initiatives that provide services on the high street should be supported.

Public space should be accessible and usable by all ages and groups. Recent improvements to Ambassador House forecourt suggest a new civic space for Thornton Heath, and future projects can develop these ideas further. People should feel safe in the public realm and spaces should be designed to mitigate anti-social behaviour by improving sightlines, lighting, and passive surveillance, and encouraging positive activities in public spaces.

Space for community initiatives should be prioritised – from flexible workspace for local start-ups, to spaces for community groups and events. The success of social prescribing and the existing network of local community and healthcare organisations suggests that a neutral and shared community space would benefit the local area. New developments should provide a new community space on site, or contribute to a local high street community project.

“Safe outdoor areas for children to play and adults to enjoy. I believe a community that knows each other (not necessarily by name) is much safer.”

“Trumble Gardens could be a real asset to TH (especially with the need for more outdoor activities, meetings, etc) but currently has such un-realised potential and is sadly neglected.”

“A community space would be a great boon – and if this could be central that would boost trust in the safety of the centre a bit more?”

“Community space that can be used for performances. Maybe have a licensed bar when performances are running.”

## EXAMPLES OF PRINCIPLE 4

A new sustainable community building linked to a community garden.

Phoenix Community Centre, designed by Office Sian. Image: Office Sian



The garden of Scratchley Hall, at Age UK Croydon on Brigstock Road is a community asset located between the Library and Trumble Gardens. Formerly overgrown and inaccessible, it was recently landscaped as part of ITV’s Love Your Garden.

Image: Age UK



A new playable street intended to provide a space where a child can learn to ride a bike, invent new games with friends, or draw on asphalt with chalk.

Murrain Road, King’s Crescent, designed by muf with Karacusevic Carson and Henley Halebrown. Image: Lewis Ronald



**PRINCIPLE 4 SPACE FOR THE COMMUNITY**

**THORNTON HEATH REC**  
A new park cafe/WC would help to activate the space

**TESCO SITE**  
Blank frontage and poor sightlines enable ASB

**GRANGEWOOD PARK LODGE**  
Grangewood Park Lodge has been put forward for disposal by the council, presenting an opportunity for positive development proposals

**CLOCKTOWER**  
Crossing and seating experiences ASB

**LEISURE CENTRE**  
Good community centre but needs to improve relationship with street

**THORNTON HEATH LIBRARY**  
Support existing community spaces that are providing key services

**STRAND HOUSE**  
Improvements to Strand House to create a better link to the High Street

**TRUMBLE GARDENS**  
Park Café and WC to activate the space and provide passive surveillance

**AMBASSADOR HOUSE PARADE**  
Public realm improvements including lighting, surfaces and awnings to encourage use of forecourt

**GILLETT & GARNET**  
Improvements to public realm around housing blocks to create safe and welcoming entrance spaces

- KEY**
- Existing community spaces
  - ! Issues around safety and ASB
  - ◆ Opportunity to enhance public realm
  - ⊕ Opportunity to improve lighting
  - Framework projects

This is a speculative plan based on community engagement and urban design analysis. The proposals are indicative and are not currently funded.

## PRINCIPLE 5 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Re-using and regenerating existing buildings where possible, and making any new development environmentally sustainable.

To tackle the climate emergency, we should build only what we need. This is an opportunity to develop innovative ways to repurpose Thornton Heath buildings and set a precedent for sustainable reuse, by upgrading and retrofitting existing buildings and transitioning away from reliance on fossil fuels.

New buildings should be constructed to the highest possible environmental standards, using traditional and innovative methods to make them as sustainable as possible.

All construction should minimise embodied carbon and utilise passive design principles, aiming for zero use of fossil fuels for heating and cooling.

Biodiversity should be protected, and enhanced wherever possible, through the provision of green and blue infrastructure such as planting and SUDs.

“Maximise the use of solar energy with solar lights to brighten up Thornton Heath roads, parks and open spaces.”

“Combat pollution and promote a sense of wellbeing.”

“Let’s find a cultural and environmental USP for Thornton Heath.”

“We need to reduce both our consumption and our waste – we have been living a life of excess for a few decades now and there just is not the resources on the planet, as well as the fact that it is causing untold destruction to our environment and so much life.”

## EXAMPLES OF PRINCIPLE 5

Award-winning new-build social housing; 105 low-energy homes, designed to Passivhaus standards.

Goldsmith Street, designed by Mikhail Riches with Cathy Hawley.  
Image: Tim Crocker



Refurbishment of three 1960s social housing towers containing 530 social homes; the existing buildings were extended by wrapping them in new wintergardens.

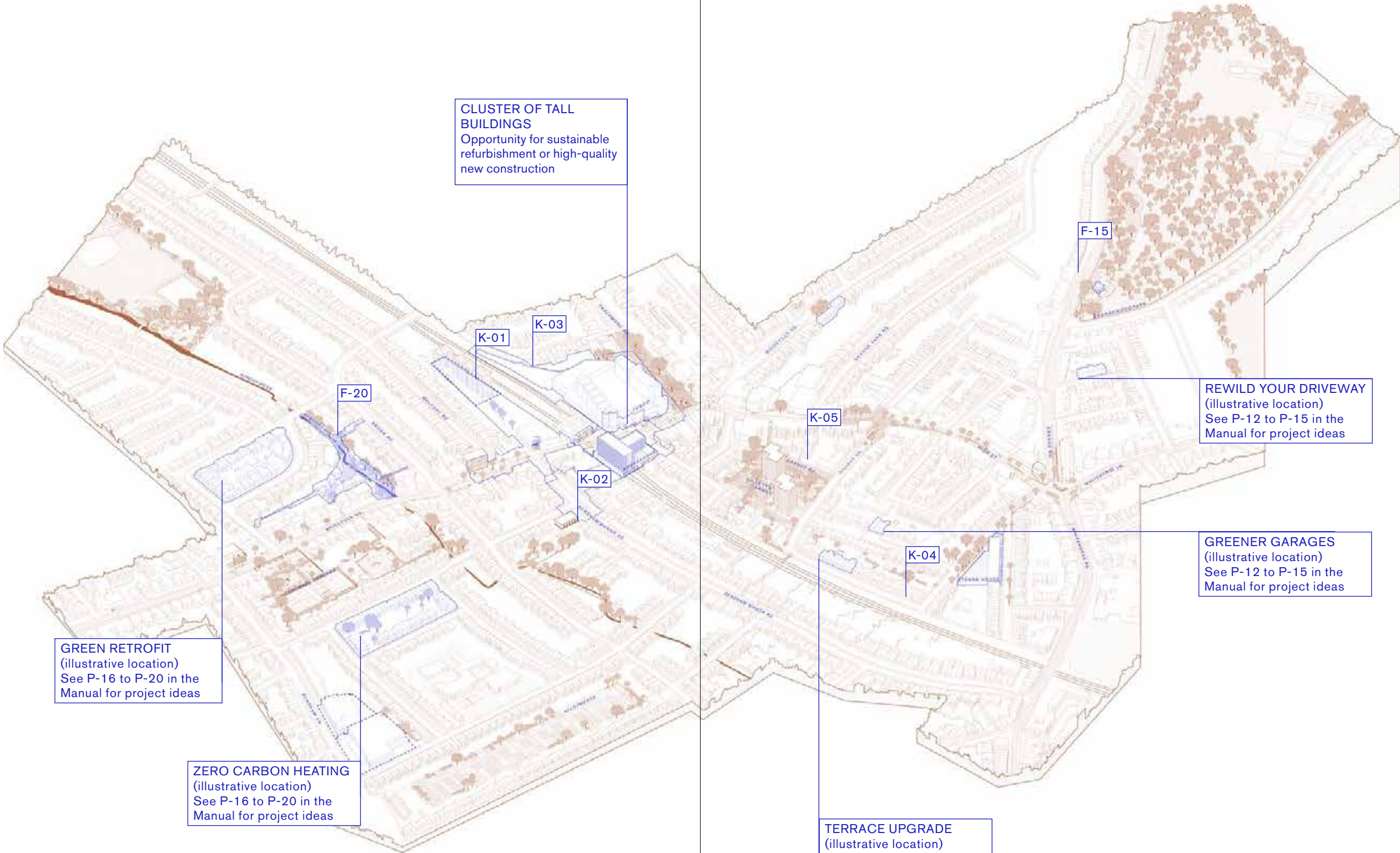
Grand Parc in Bordeaux, designed by Lacaton & Vassal.  
Image: Lacaton & Vassal



This combined heat & power plant for 3000 homes celebrates its role in enabling a greener energy solution, and integrates community uses.

Energy Hub in Elephant & Castle, designed by Morris + Company.  
Image: Morris + Company





**CLUSTER OF TALL BUILDINGS**  
 Opportunity for sustainable refurbishment or high-quality new construction

**GREEN RETROFIT**  
 (illustrative location)  
 See P-16 to P-20 in the Manual for project ideas

**ZERO CARBON HEATING**  
 (illustrative location)  
 See P-16 to P-20 in the Manual for project ideas

**TERRACE UPGRADE**  
 (illustrative location)  
 See P-16 to P-20 in the Manual for project ideas

**REWILD YOUR DRIVEWAY**  
 (illustrative location)  
 See P-12 to P-15 in the Manual for project ideas

**GREENER GARAGES**  
 (illustrative location)  
 See P-12 to P-15 in the Manual for project ideas

**KEY**  
 [Dashed box] Future developments  
 [Solid box] Framework projects and examples

This is a speculative plan based on community engagement and urban design analysis. The proposals are indicative and are not currently funded.

## PRINCIPLE 6 GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Providing additional greening along the high street to improve air quality. Enhancing existing green spaces on and near the high street.

Thornton Heath needs more green spaces and improved green infrastructure.

Improving what is there already, by enhancing the planting of green areas, and adding new planting and trees on the high street, will have a significant impact on the quality of the public realm and wellbeing of the community.

Sensitive development that encourages increased access to green spaces, such as Cafés or WCs in parks, should be supported where appropriate.

New planting should be promoted, with a preference for native species that can survive with minimal maintenance, ameliorate air quality, and provide improve biodiverse habitats.

All opportunities to improve biodiversity should be pursued, including using green or brown roofs on new and refurbished buildings.

“Street trees really improve people’s health and mental well-being, as well as pride...”

“I’d like to see more green spaces for general use.”

“Add more greenery – it would be nice to have tree-lined streets.”

“There is an opportunity to provide more green infrastructure, trees and urban hedgerows in Thornton Heath.”

“Spaces dedicated to wildlife where children can learn about the importance of nature and adults can find a moment of calm.”

## EXAMPLES OF PRINCIPLE 6

Depaving, tree planting, and garden managed by local businesses.

Ashwin Street in Dalston, designed by muf and J&L Gibbons

Image: Sarah Blee



Refurbishment of an existing park structure as a neighbourhood park café, encouraging enjoyment of an existing green space.

Pavilion Café in Victoria Park, designed by Asif Khan

Images: Freunde von freunde



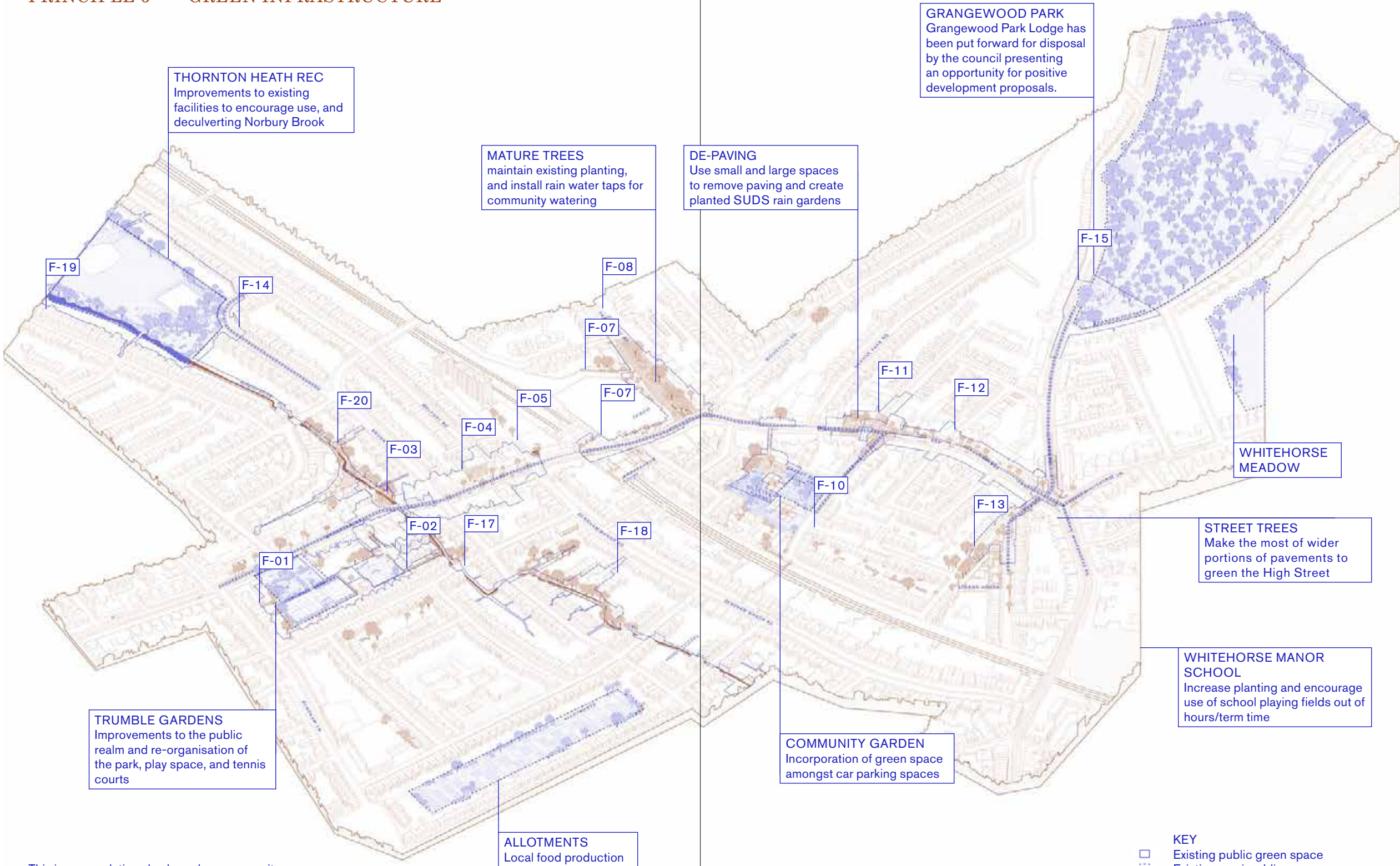
Redevelopment of an existing local park including upgrade of sports courts, new furniture and an enhanced route to encourage passers-by to enter.

Aske Gardens in Hoxton, designed by We Made That.

Image: We Made That







This is a speculative plan based on community engagement and urban design analysis. The proposals are indicative and are not currently funded.

## PRINCIPLE 7 SUSTAINABLE MOVEMENT

Improving routes and the public realm to make it a good place for pedestrians, wheelchair users, and cyclists. Encouraging inclusive active travel over car use.

Thornton Heath is currently largely reliant on car use, and congestion and air quality need to be improved.

Making a more attractive environment for active travel – including improved wayfinding, public realm and upgrading existing routes and connections – would help to encourage more people to walk and cycle to the high street.

New infrastructure should support electric vehicles and the sharing of cars, bicycles, and scooters.

Other alternatives to vehicles powered by fossil fuels should be promoted wherever possible, including electric cargo bikes, and the potential for safe electric scooters.

“Easier access for mobility scooters, wheelchair users and pram users. No narrow pavements.”

“If it was safer to cycle down the high street, I’d probably do it.”

“Safe bike parking near the station would be really good to have.”

“Definitely less traffic, the high street is always gridlocked with traffic throughout the day.”

“Bicycle parking, electric car charging points, rental bicycle.”

“It would be great to have an affordable and practical car hire service that can help reduce the number of cars on the road.”

## EXAMPLES OF PRINCIPLE 7

An oversized pedestrian crossing changes the priorities between people and vehicles.

Eltham High Street in Greenwich, designed by East. Image: East



Reduced vehicle traffic combined with planting enables businesses to open up onto the street.

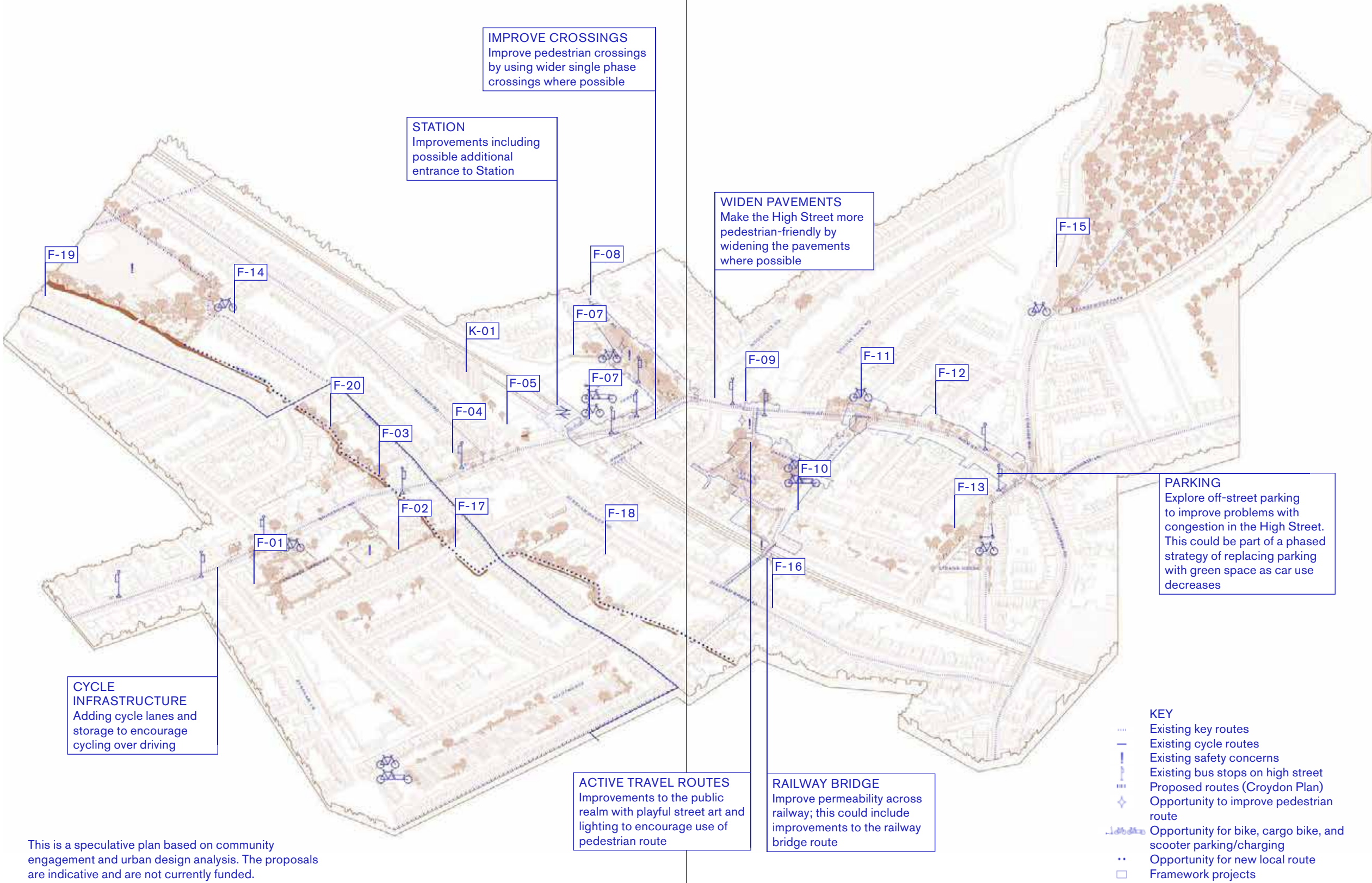
Orford Road in Waltham Forest, designed by What If. Image: What If



Sustrans offers a “library” of electric cargo bikes for small businesses, community organisations and charities in Edinburgh.

Edinburgh Cargo Bike Library, project by Sustrans. Image: Babboe e-cargo bike





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## PRINCIPLE 8 BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE

Protecting and improving blue infrastructure, to manage water for climate change mitigation and wellbeing.

Addressing flooding and drainage issues is vital in all urban centres. The importance of urban water management is increasing as climate change causes a greater number of “cloudburst” heavy rains.

Incorporating sustainable urban drainage into all new public realm and development projects, at small and large scale.

Unused areas of hard landscaping should be de-paved, and permeable paving should be used whenever possible.

Rainwater from roofs should be collected and used to water plants and trees.

De-culverting the Norbury Brook should be a priority, where feasible, to deliver flood alleviation benefits and support biodiversity and local identity.

“Norbury Brook is a missed opportunity as a natural waterway running through the area; it would be great to find out way to open up sections of it and to make them an attractive feature rather than a transit for floating rubbish.”

“The Brook could be made more of – we have water above ground – what an asset!”

“Didn’t know there was a brook behind a wall – if it is possible to open up and make a nature space that would be great.”

## EXAMPLES OF PRINCIPLE 8

Restoration of the River Wandle by de-culverting and daylighting the River, which previously ran in an underground culvert.

Wandle Park, Croydon  
Image: Anthony Spratt



Downpipes for this office building were completely disconnected from the mains drainage system. Instead, they feed into a water butt and planted steel containers, creating a micro rain garden that provides valuable green infrastructure.

Swan Yard, designed by J & L Gibbons. Image: J & L Gibbons



On a household scale local people created a series of community-owned demonstration gardens and green roofs in public spaces to make their area more resilient to flooding and climate change.

Lost Effra Project by London Wildlife Trust, in partnership with Lambeth Council and Thames Water. Image: Helen Spring, London Wildlife Trust.



**PRINCIPLE 8 BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE**

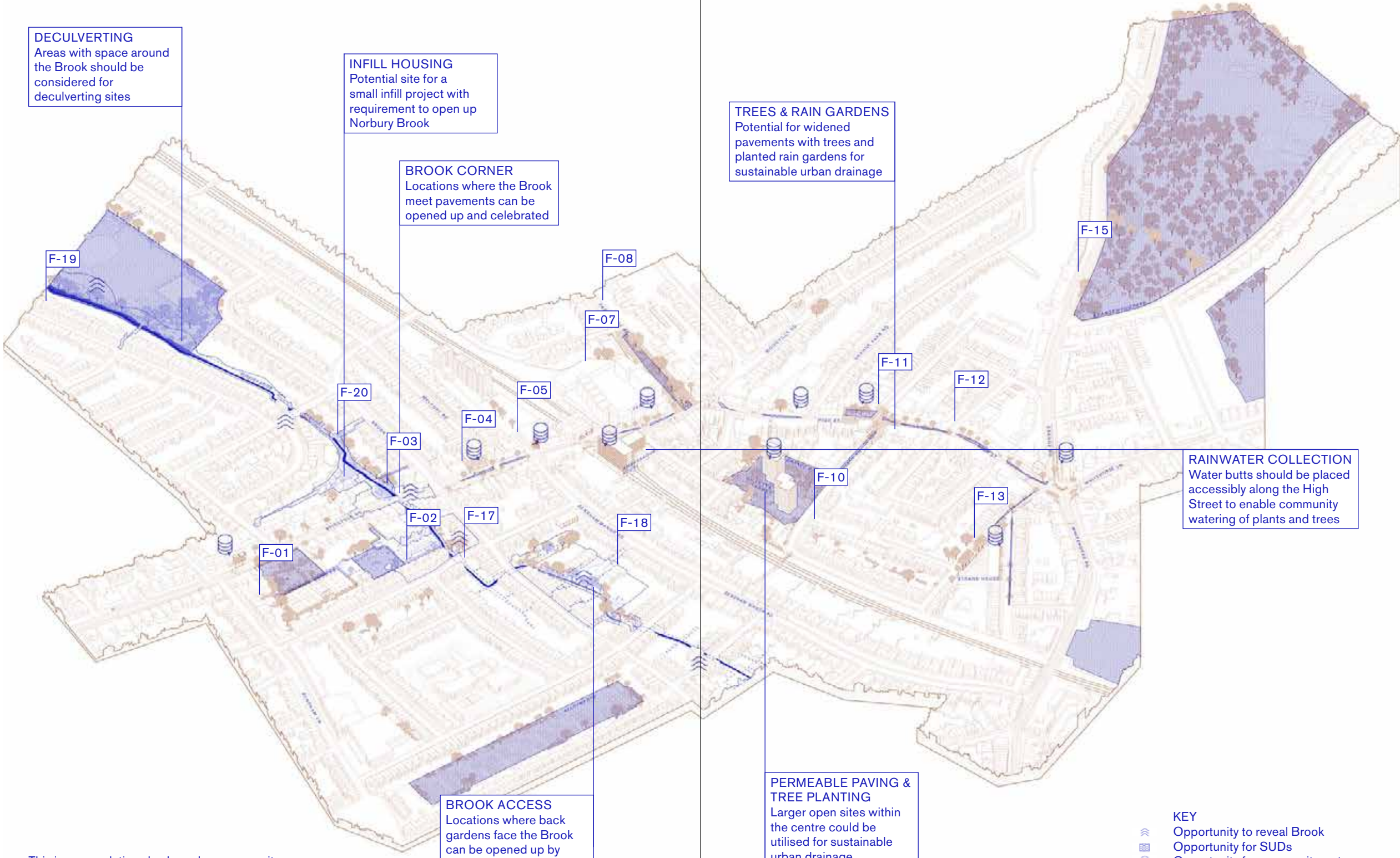
**DECULVERTING**  
Areas with space around the Brook should be considered for deculverting sites

**INFILL HOUSING**  
Potential site for a small infill project with requirement to open up Norbury Brook

**BROOK CORNER**  
Locations where the Brook meet pavements can be opened up and celebrated

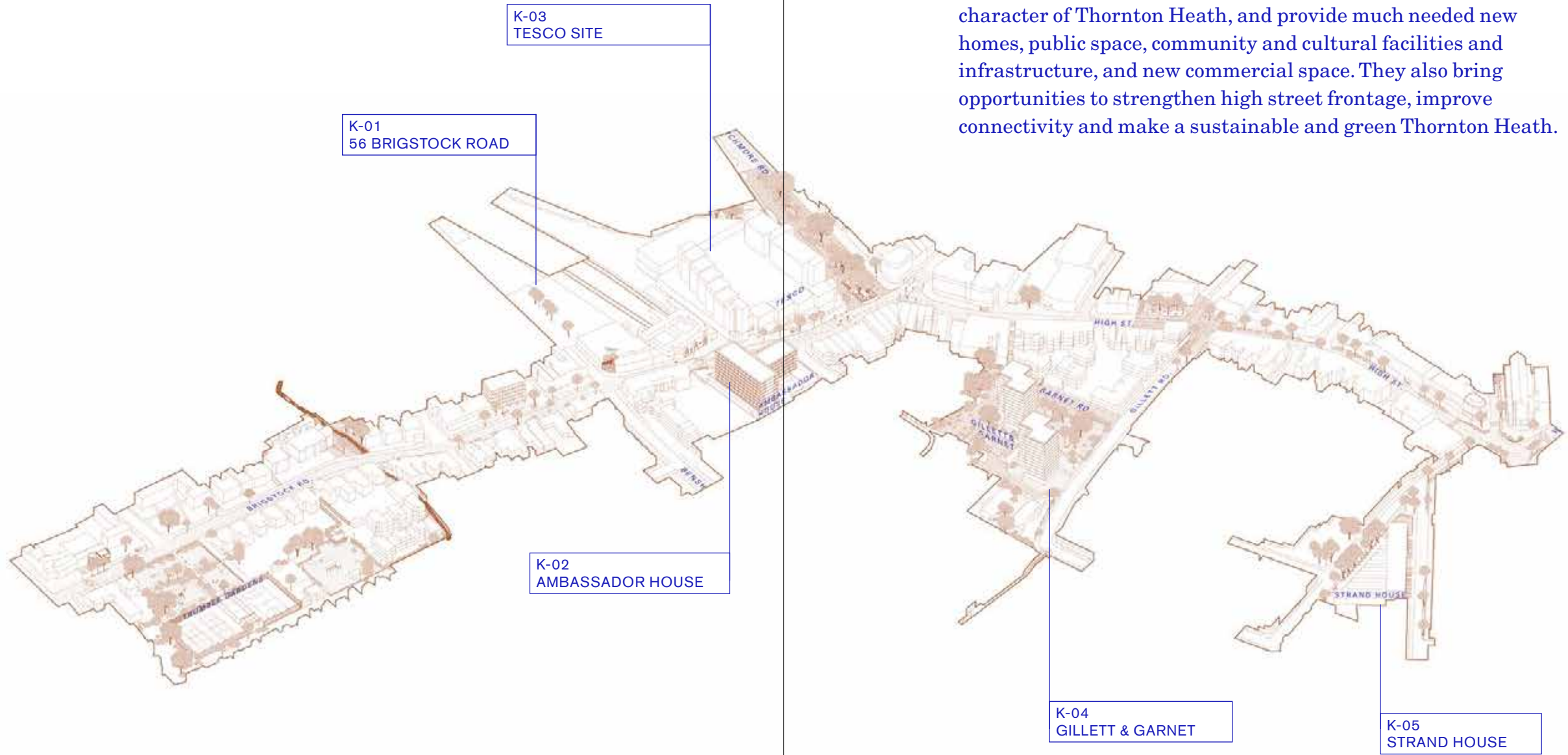
**TREES & RAIN GARDENS**  
Potential for widened pavements with trees and planted rain gardens for sustainable urban drainage

**RAINWATER COLLECTION**  
Water butts should be placed accessibly along the High Street to enable community watering of plants and trees



This is a speculative plan based on community engagement and urban design analysis. The proposals are indicative and are not currently funded.

# PART 5 KEY SITES



Five key strategic sites in Thornton Heath have been identified as suitable for mixed use residential development and are all on or connected to the high street.

All of these sites may be considered for allocation in the current Local Plan Review, subject to other considerations.

Redevelopment of these sites would have a major impact on the character of Thornton Heath, and provide much needed new homes, public space, community and cultural facilities and infrastructure, and new commercial space. They also bring opportunities to strengthen high street frontage, improve connectivity and make a sustainable and green Thornton Heath.

This is a speculative plan based on community engagement and urban design analysis. The proposals are indicative and are not currently funded.

KEY SITES



K-01 56 BRIGSTOCK ROAD



K-03 TESCO SITE



K-04 GILLETT & GARNET



K-02 AMBASSADOR HOUSE



K-05 STRAND HOUSE

## K-01 56 BRIGSTOCK ROAD

The Brigstock Road sites include the Iceland supermarket and car park and a builders' yard to the rear of the site.

Planning permission on the rear section of the site has been granted – if implemented this would provide 58 homes with two commercial units for flexible shared workspace (Use Class B1b/ B1c).

The proposals should include a masterplan for all three areas of the site (builders' yard, car park, Iceland). A comprehensive plan is needed to maximise the benefits of these sites for Thornton Heath.

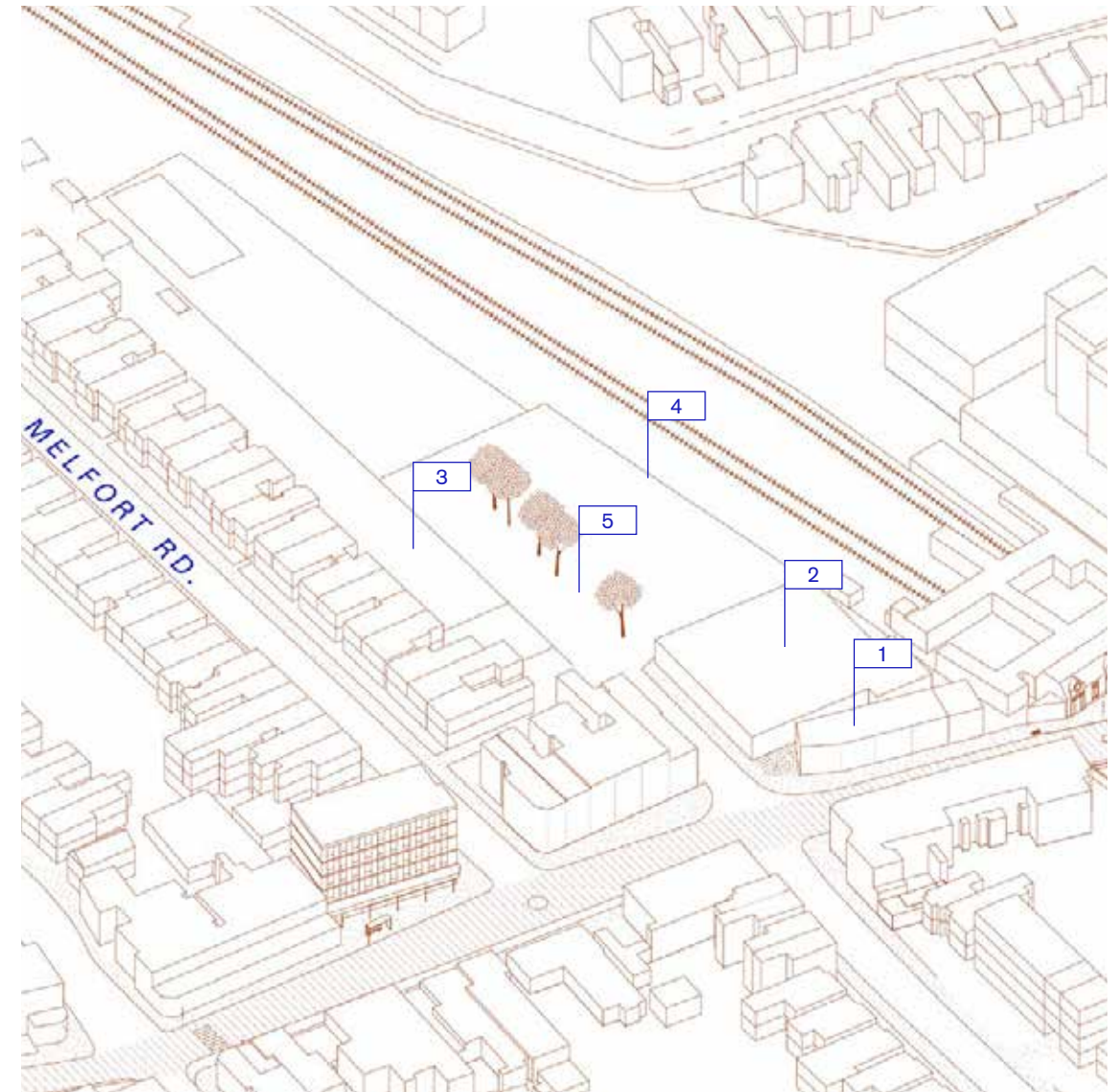
There is an opportunity to think more carefully about how this whole site works with the high street both in urban terms, but also as a place to support new uses. The current location of the Iceland supermarket impacts on potential to connect with the high street. Iceland do not currently plan to redevelop their site, and development on any area of the site should be part of a phased plan which will allow it to work holistically once all areas come forward.

There is an opportunity for these sites to relate to existing patterns of development and form a new mews or street connected to the high street, that could also support new types of ground floor high street uses.

“Iceland and the car park are a mess. Why can't we green it with trees on the corner and in the car park?”

“Feels a bit grim round here. Iceland and the forecourt are always messy.”

“Iceland is huge and the car park always seems empty, there must be a better use for that space.”



### Opportunities & Constraints

- 1 Site is disconnected from high street and existing parade of shops is outside the site boundary.
- 2 Need to maintain Iceland on the site and keep operational throughout development.
- 3 Private back gardens and low-rise terraced houses.
- 4 Network rail access required.
- 5 Opportunity for new street/mews off the high street.



## K-01 56 BRIGSTOCK ROAD – PRINCIPLES

### 1 Strong local character

Make a comprehensive masterplan for the sites extending the existing urban fabric to make a coherent street or mews that relates to the existing character of development. Be generous to the neighbours; the houses on Melfort Road backing on to the site need to be considered. Impact on adjacent gardens and dwellings, particularly light and outlook, should be sensitively handled.

### 2 A future-proof high street

Connect the site to the High Street. The existing high street frontage is currently disconnected from the sites beyond. Relocating Iceland (either temporarily or permanently) to the carpark site would unlock this high street edge. High street frontage should be strengthened through a comprehensive redevelopment of the high street parade and Iceland site to make a new high street development. The former light industrial use of the site makes this a good place to explore a new mix, introducing ground floor uses that help support the future development of the high street.

### 3 Good homes

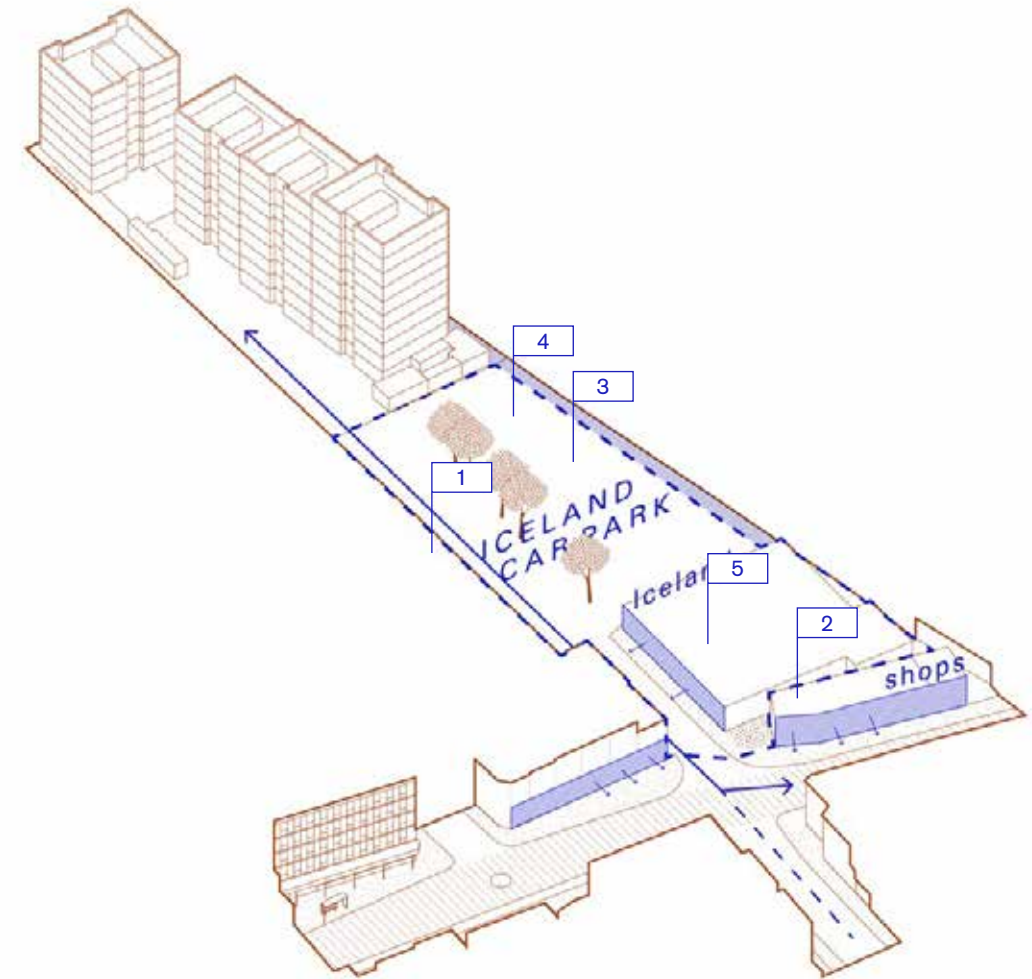
This should be a good place to live. New homes must be designed to work harmoniously with a mix of uses. It should be designed as a community with high quality communal space, and innovative typologies used to address site constraints.

### 4 Green and blue infrastructure

Greening and sustainable urban drainage should be integral to the redevelopment of this site. There is an opportunity to make a new street for Thornton Heath that demonstrates innovative ways of incorporating green and blue infrastructure in the public realm.

### 5 Sustainable development

Reuse and upgrading of the additional buildings should be prioritised. The sustainability benefits would be significant. Any new development on the site should use innovative methods to make it as sustainable as possible.



## K-02 AMBASSADOR HOUSE

Ambassador House is a 1960s office block in poor condition and largely vacant. It is immediately opposite Thornton Heath station, a key gateway to the area. Careful refurbishment and redevelopment of the site has potential to bring new homes and commercial/community space to Thornton Heath, and also to improve perception of the place and enhance this section of the high street and public realm.

Ambassador House is an allocated site in the current local plan, and there have been a number of studies and applications looking at residential conversion and redevelopment of the site. Complex ownership issues, and the preclusion by Network Rail (the freeholder) of any for-sale homes on the majority of the site, makes this a challenging site.

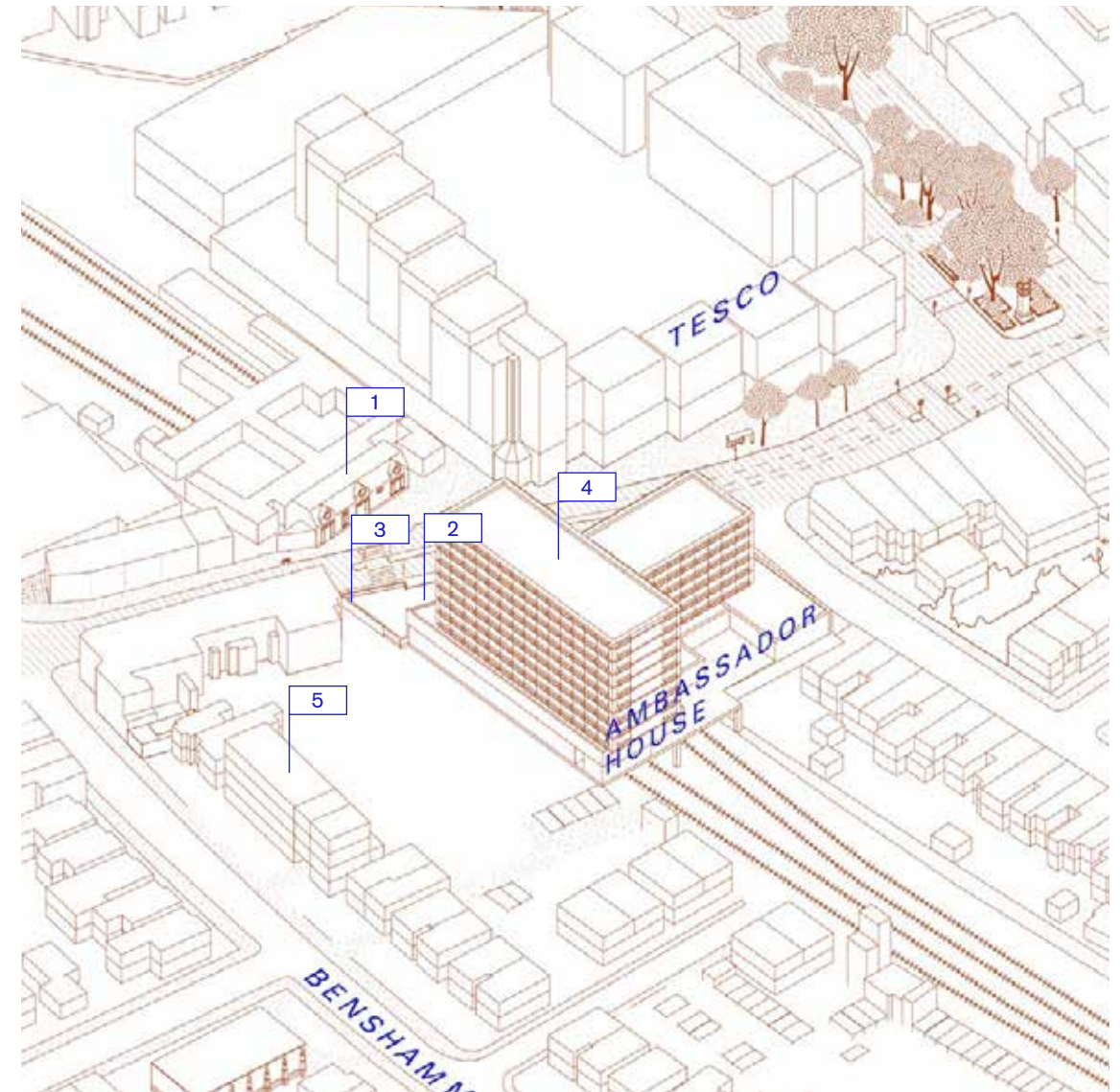
The existing buildings have character; with careful enhancement they could contribute to Thornton Heath's identity. There is value in retaining them both from a sustainability perspective and as a landmark for the area, but refurbishment may not be feasible.

Holistic redevelopment/refurbishment of the site is likely to be a medium-long term project due to the complexity of negotiations required between leaseholders and freeholder. A detailed development brief building on the capacity and the business case for the site should be developed in consultation with the key stakeholders.

In the short term the forecourt offers scope for an immediate impact on the high street, building on recent improvements to Thornton Heath's civic space, and maximising greening opportunities on the high street.

"I love what they have done with the colour on the steps of Ambassador House, but the building itself is ugly and seemingly unused."

"Ambassador House and the forecourt are an embarrassment. They are the first things someone sees when leaving the station and they are a mess."



### Opportunities & Constraints

- 1 Poor arrival. View from station should be improved.
- 2 Weak and disconnected high street frontage. Opportunity to improve access to ground floor retail units.
- 3 Forecourt is currently underused and feels disconnected from public realm.
- 4 Existing buildings are in poor condition but with careful refurbishment could be a marker for Thornton Heath.
- 5 Bensham Manor Road frontage is run down. Opportunity to redevelop Chancellor Court and significantly improve the streetscape.

## K-02 AMBASSADOR HOUSE – PRINCIPLES

### 1 Strong local character

Retain the existing building as a landmark for Thornton Heath. It has a distinctive character and with enhancement through sensitive design, could be a robust part of Thornton Heath's identity. Improve the skyline; the cluttered and unsightly roofline could be addressed by crowning the existing structure, if an appropriate proposal is put forward.

### 2 A future-proof high street

Support new types of high street uses and business by providing different types and sizes of commercial space in the existing buildings and on the site.

### 3 Good homes

Maximise the Chancellor Court site and carpark. Focus residential development on this less constrained area of the site. This would provide new homes and improve the existing poor Bensham Manor Road frontage. Conversion of the building should provide high quality homes, meeting or exceeding local and national standards for space and sustainability.

### 4 Community space

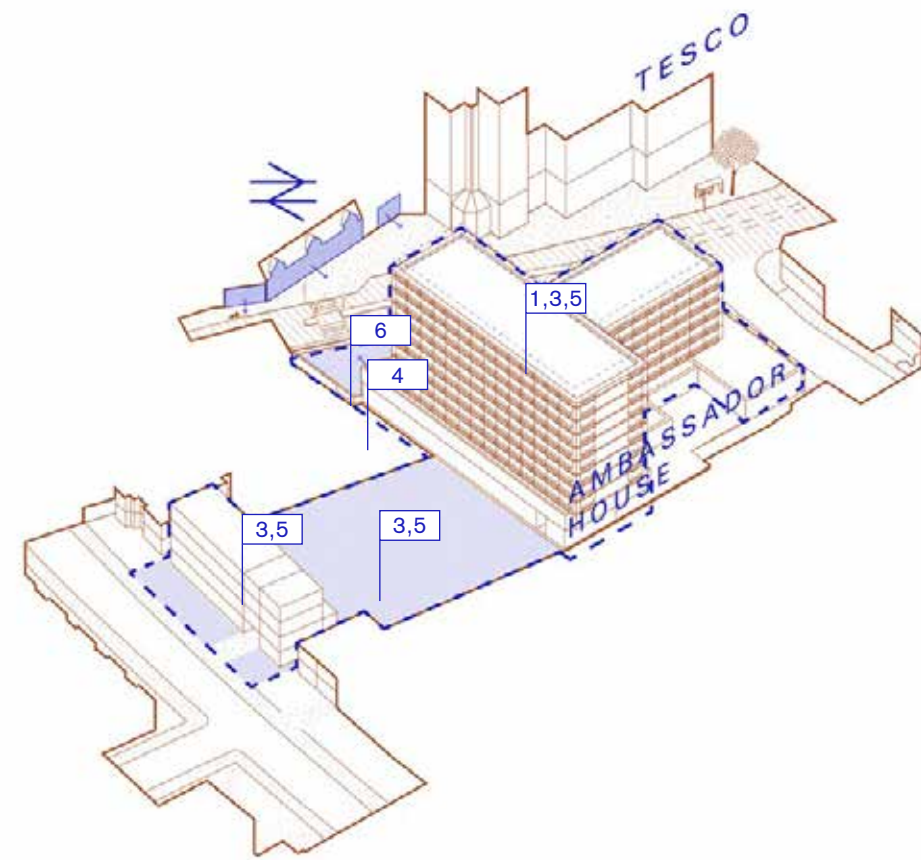
Unify the public realm. A single public realm scheme for the station and forecourt – including the highway – would help to connect the forecourt with the high street and station and make a good community space. Access and levels need to be reconfigured to open up the space to the High Street and make it accessible.

### 5 Sustainable development

Reuse and upgrade the existing buildings where possible. Any new development on the site should use innovative methods to make it as sustainable as possible.

### 6 Green infrastructure

Provide much needed greening on the high street by introducing planting and trees – especially species that improve air quality. The view from the station is important – make this green.



### K-03 TESCO SITE

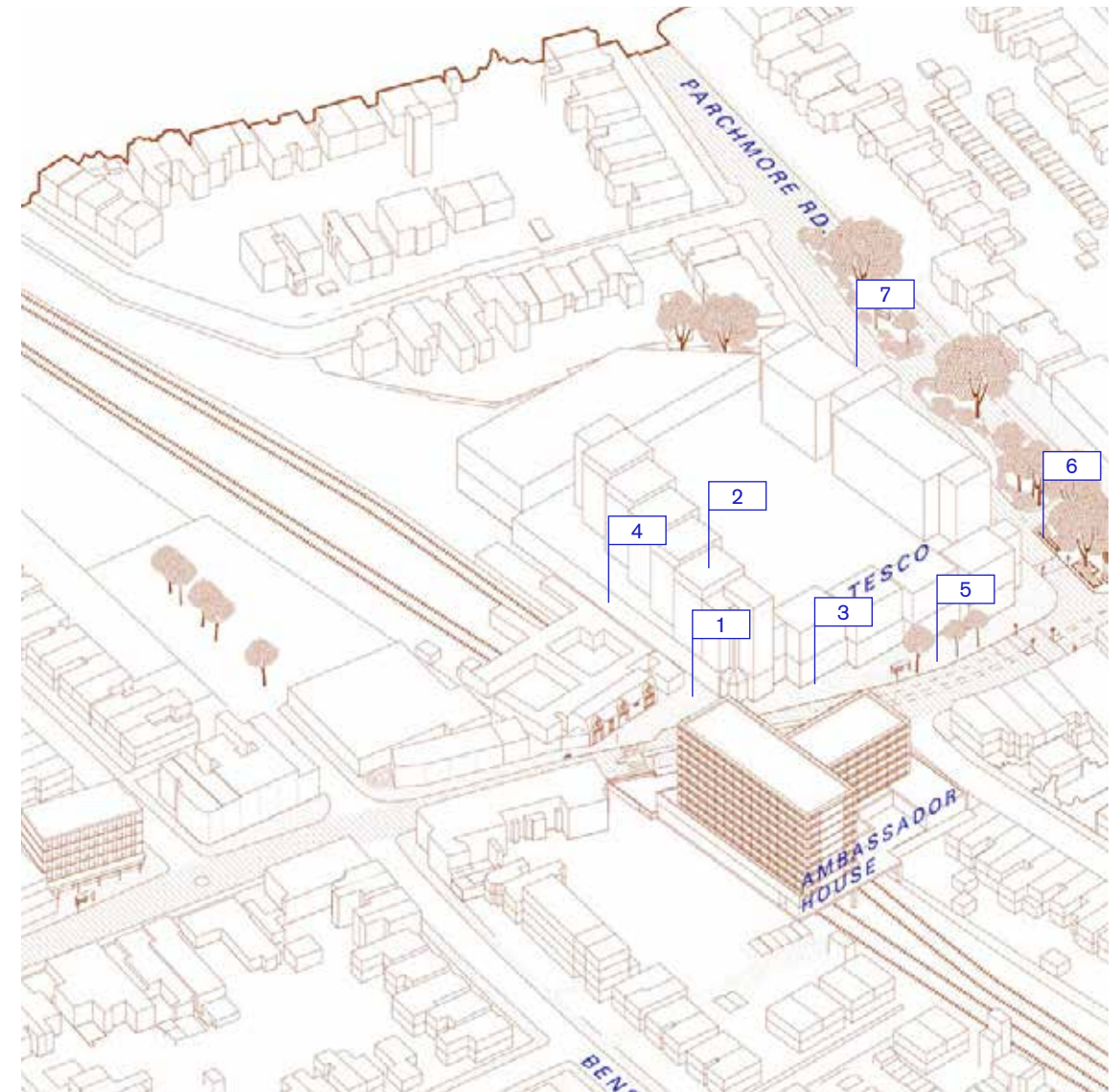
The Laxton and Kettering Courts estate dominates this part of the high street. Built in the late 1970s it has 123 homes with a Tesco supermarket on the high street at ground floor level. Both the estate and Tesco car park have anti-social behaviour issues. On the estate, this largely results from a confusing layout with poor sightlines and limited entry and exit points with poor visibility. High street frontage, particularly the interface with the station, is also poor.

This is a complex site and the largest of the key sites, in a prominent position. It has potential to be one of the most transformative sites for the High Street and Thornton Heath, both spatially and socially. Sensitive redevelopment would have a very positive impact on Thornton Heath both in placemaking terms and through provision of high-quality new homes and retail space.

The site has been proposed for allocation in the new local plan as a mixed-use site with 45–245 homes. A considerably denser scheme may also be possible. Viability is likely to be an issue for any future redevelopment of the site, and careful planning will be required to ensure that density does not negatively impact on the quality of homes or communal space.

The scale and complexity of this site, as well as viability issues, are likely to make this a longer-term option. It is understood that there are no current proposals for the redevelopment of the site. Tesco Stores own the freehold for this site, and Croydon Council lease the residential blocks. Should Tesco wish to redevelop this site in the future, this would require close consultation with Croydon Council and residents.

Short-term improvements e.g. public art/murals would help to enhance blank frontage in the short term and improve the relationship with the station. This area of the high street benefits from generous public realm in front of the existing Tesco, and there is potential to incorporate greening and sustainable urban drainage here.



#### Opportunities & Constraints

- 1 Poor relationship with station
- 2 Massing very dominant
- 3 Weak/inactive frontage
- 4 Opportunity for new route
- 5 Generous pavement – opportunity for improved public realm with new planting and SUDs
- 6 Enhance existing green space
- 7 Improve public realm and recycling area

## K-03 TESCO SITE – PRINCIPLES

### 1 Strong local character

Design buildings for Thornton Heath. Height, massing and character should be well judged. This is a large site and needs to fit carefully into the patchwork of different styles already seen on and adjacent to the high street.

### 2 A future-proof high street

Repair frontage to make a vibrant and visible high street – frontage should be active along the entire length of Brigstock Road and Parchmore Road. Meanwhile projects to address blank frontage would be a quick way to reinvigorate this area of the high street.

### 3 Good homes

Make a good place to live on the high street, with good homes with good communal space and outdoor amenity space. This should be a town centre community where density is balanced with the need for high quality communal space and landscape.

### 4 Sustainable development

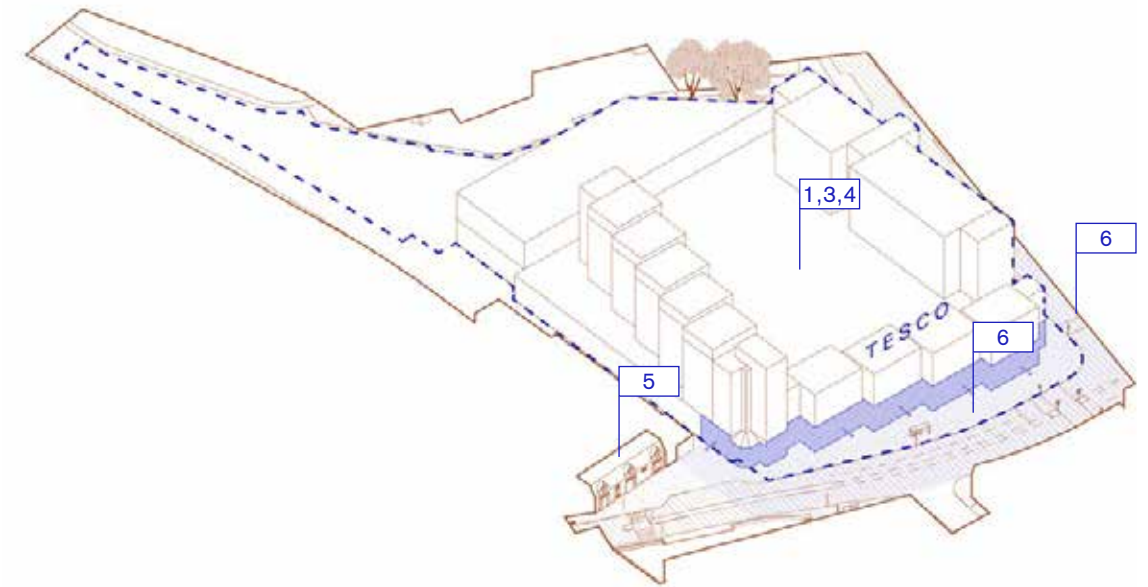
Development should work to reuse and upgrade the existing buildings where possible. Any new construction on the site should use innovative methods to make it as sustainable as possible.

### 5 Sustainable movement

It should be a good neighbour to the station, with new routes from through site to the station opened up.

### 6 Green and blue infrastructure

Enhance the public realm, including the clock tower space. Greening and sustainable urban drainage should be introduced – the clock tower space should be enhanced to maximise the benefits of this green space on the high street. The generous Brigstock Road pavement should be used as an opportunity to make a densely planted edge to the high street.



“The area around Tesco/Laxton House [is] quite bleak and could really benefit from more greenery, with a mix of tree planting and green walls.”

”[Make a] cleaner, greener ‘town square’ and not the concrete we have at present around Kettering and Laxton Court.”

## K-04 GILLETT AND GARNET

Gillett and Garnet are two 1960s council owned blocks with a mix of 1 bed social rented and sheltered flats. The estate and homes are in variable condition and future refurbishment/ redevelopment of the site may be needed to bring the homes up to current space and energy standards.

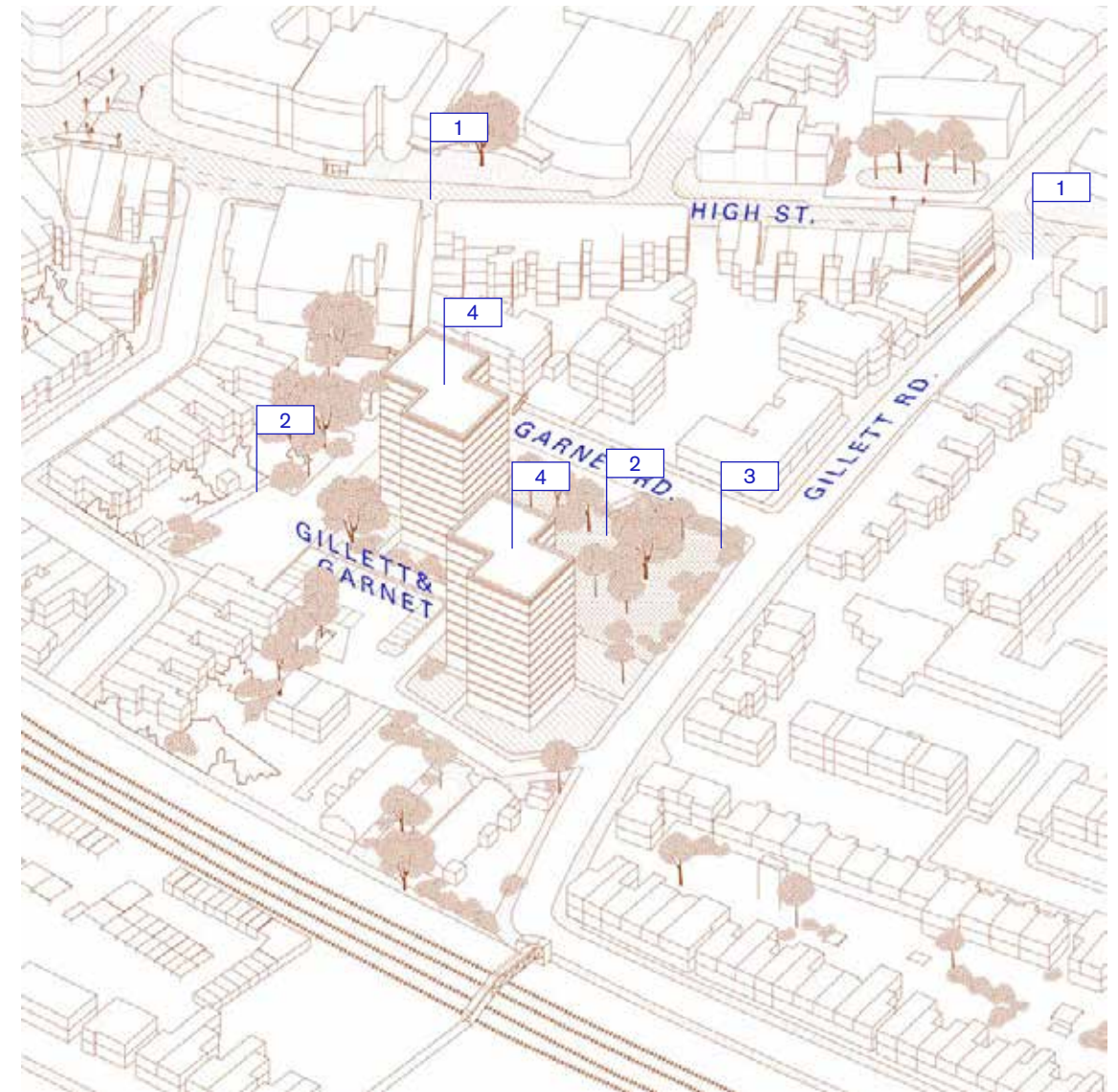
The towers have architectural merit as good ordinary mid-century design, and retention and refurbishment should be considered if feasible as part of any future redevelopment.

A comprehensive plan to improve the estate is likely to be a long-term option, but small short-term improvements should be carried out to reconnect the site and open up the landscape.

This would enhance the setting of the estate and improve edges and connections to the high street. The blocks are set in landscaped space with some mature trees and planting. In an area which lacks green space, this is an asset and should be celebrated.

Public realm improvements to high street routes and connections are also needed. Meanwhile projects could build on and enrich the existing community garden, helping to establish a space that could benefit the wider community, and could subsequently be incorporated into the redeveloped site.

“The Garnet Road alley from the High Street is very convenient but needs improvement – it is often flytipped and has been used as a toilet.”



### Opportunities & Constraints

- 1 Poor public realm and connections to the high street.
- 2 Mature trees and planting – this could be an asset for the area.
- 3 Improve/open up edge so that the landscape can be enjoyed.
- 4 Existing buildings are simple and robust, with good materials and details. Feasibility of refurbishment should be explored.

## K-04 GILLETT AND GARNET – PRINCIPLES

### 1 Sustainable development

Long term – reuse where possible. The existing towers have value – with good bricks and concrete details that it may be possible to restore. Subject to viability, careful refurbishment could be an option and would help form an approach to sustainable estate regeneration.

### 2 Community space

Make the landscape work harder. The longer term ambition is for an enhanced community garden. Start it now and improve the use and quality of the landscape.

### 3 Good homes

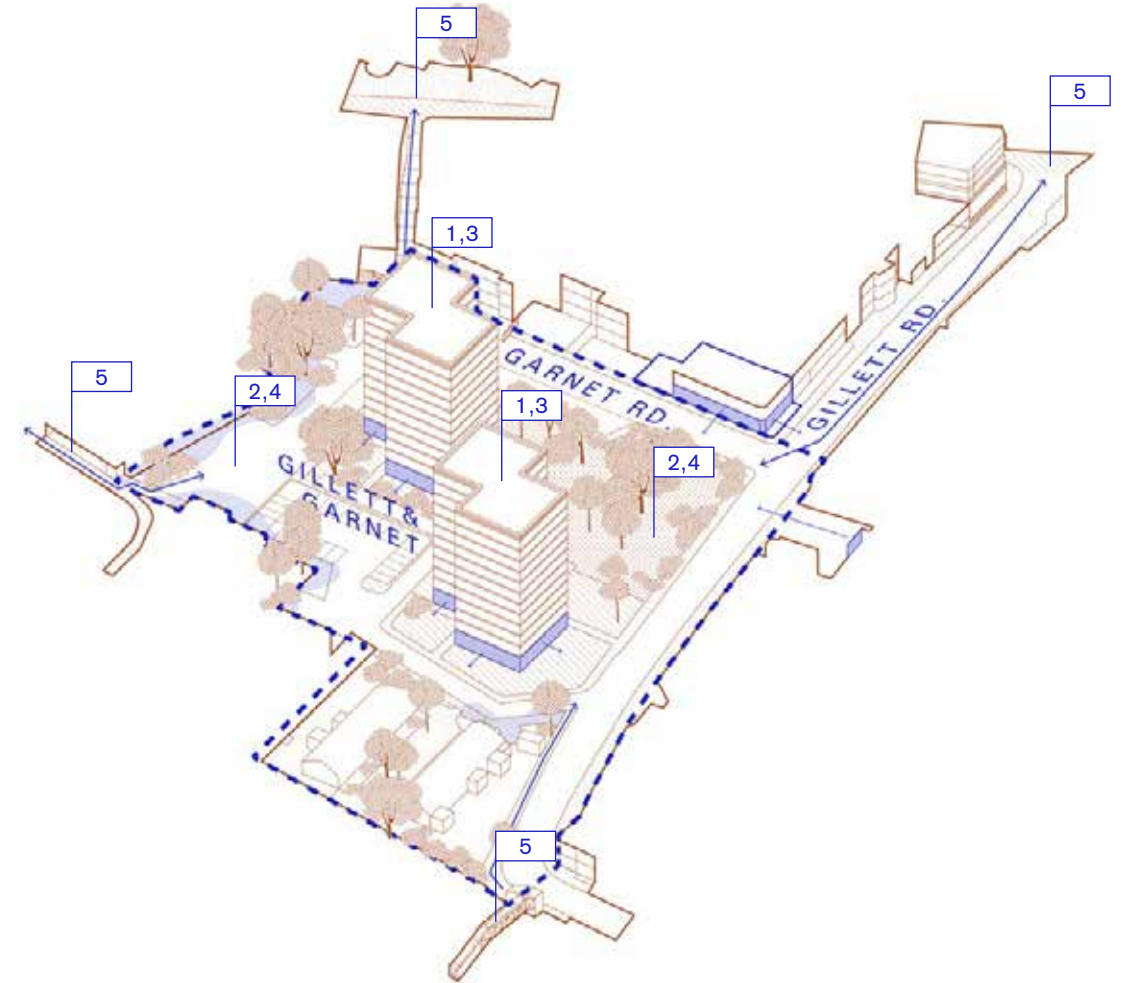
Refurbish or re-provide existing homes to meet current space and energy standards – exceeding baselines where feasible. Homes should be designed in consultation with resident stakeholder groups and be practical, flexible and joyful. All homes should have well designed private amenity space, and the sheltered blocks should include new communal living spaces for use by all residents.

### 4 Green infrastructure

Planting and trees are mature and attractive, bringing much needed green to the area. The site could be a garden square for Gillet and Garnet roads, rather than an enclosed island. Re- thinking the fencing and edges would improve its function as visual amenity and, management permitting, open the landscape up to the community more generously.

### 5 Sustainable movement

Reconnect the site to the High Street. The public realm at the Cotford Road and Garnet Road alley is very poor. These are key connections to the high street and should be improved.

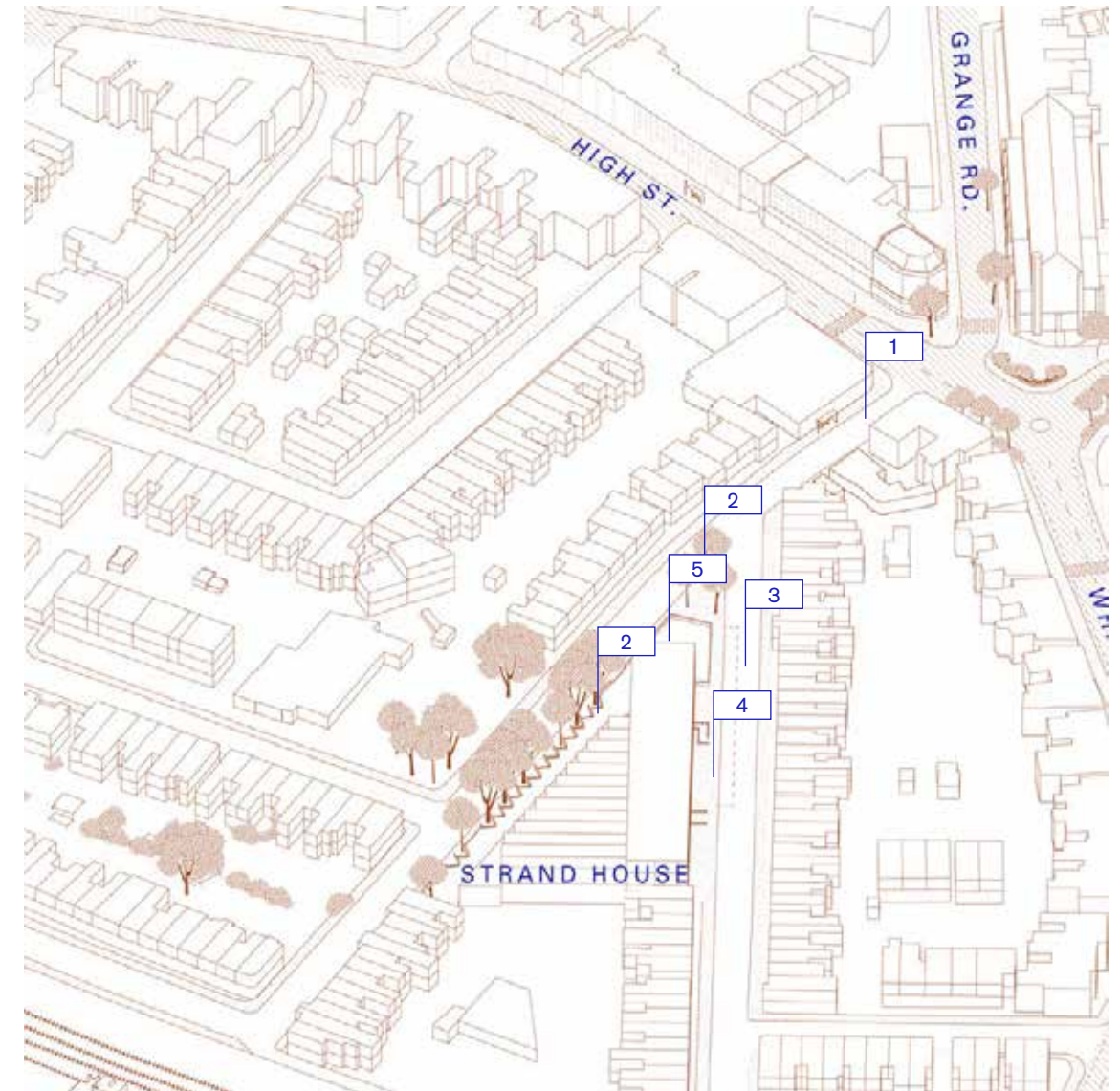


## K-05 STRAND HOUSE

Strand House is Council owned and houses Croydon Adult Learning and Training (CALAT), an important community asset which has recently been refurbished.

The site has been considered for allocation in the new local plan for mixed-use residential development with 12–67 homes.

The existing building and any future redevelopment of the site would need to include repositioning or relocation – potentially to a more visible high street site – of CALAT.



### Opportunities & constraints

- 1 Poor visibility from high street
- 2 Existing planting could be enhanced and extended
- 3 Poor quality public realm
- 4 Blank frontage with inactive ground floor
- 5 Poor frontage with dominant car parking



## K-05 STRAND HOUSE – PRINCIPLES

### 1 A future-proof high street

Connect the site to the High Street visually by enhancing the building's envelope and arrival. Proposals to redevelop or refurbish the existing building should create a visible and attractive arrival point from the high street at the junction of Nursery and Zion Roads.

### 2 Community space

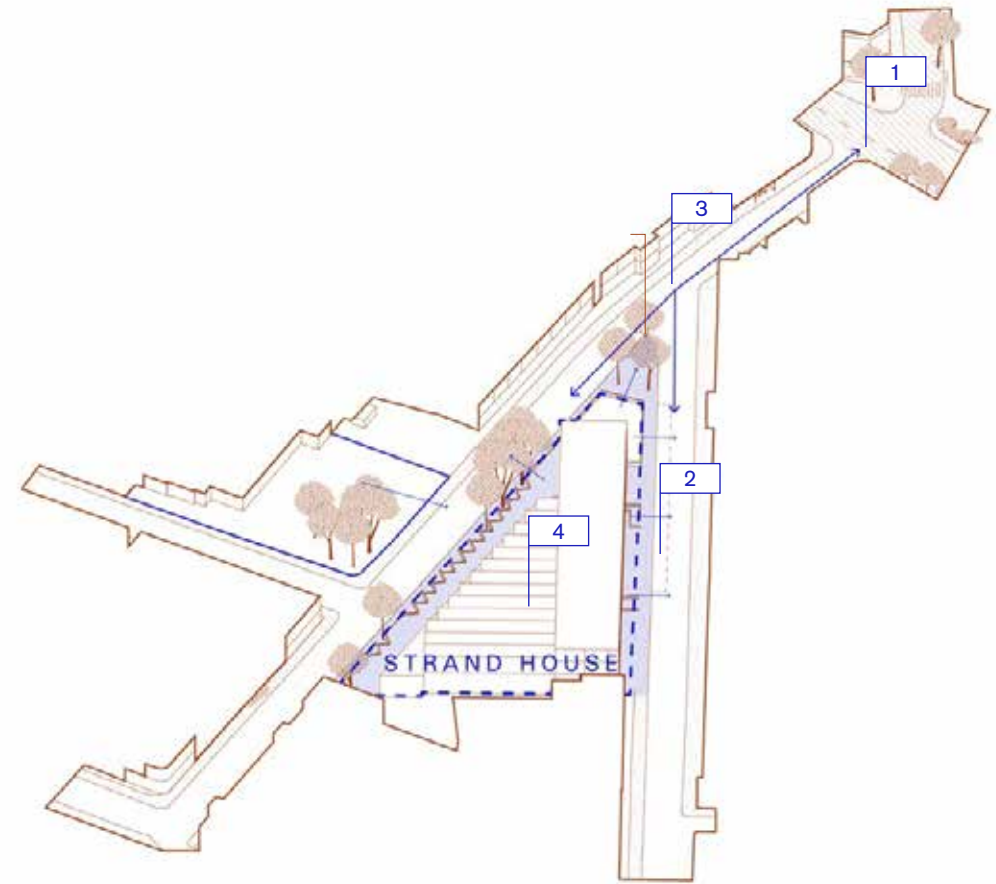
Re-development or refurbishment of the site would be an opportunity to propose a building that has an improved relationship with the street. Opening up the ground floor to make it more visible would help to make a more resilient and successful community space.

### 3 Sustainable movement

Enhance the public realm. Improve the public realm leading to and surrounding Strand House, including new wayfinding on Nursery Road and Zion Road. Accessibility is important.

### 4 Good Homes

Explore the possibility of delivering homes on the site, while safeguarding the important community use, either on the site or within the high street area.



# PART 6 PUBLIC REALM FRAMEWORK



F-01



F-02



F-03



F-04



F-05



F-06



F-07



F-08



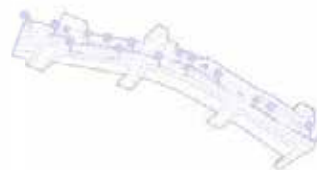
F-09



F-10



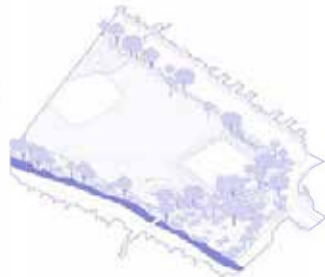
F-11



F-12



F-13



F-14



F-15



F-16



F-17



F-18



F-19



F-20

## FRAMEWORK PROJECTS

A series of interlinked projects along the High Street.

- F-01 Trumble Gardens
- F-02 Trumble Gardens Gate
- F-03 Norbury Brook Corner
- F-04 Brigstock House & Temple

- F-05 Iceland forecourt
- F-06 Station forecourt
- F-07 Tesco frontage
- F-08 Clock Tower Crossing

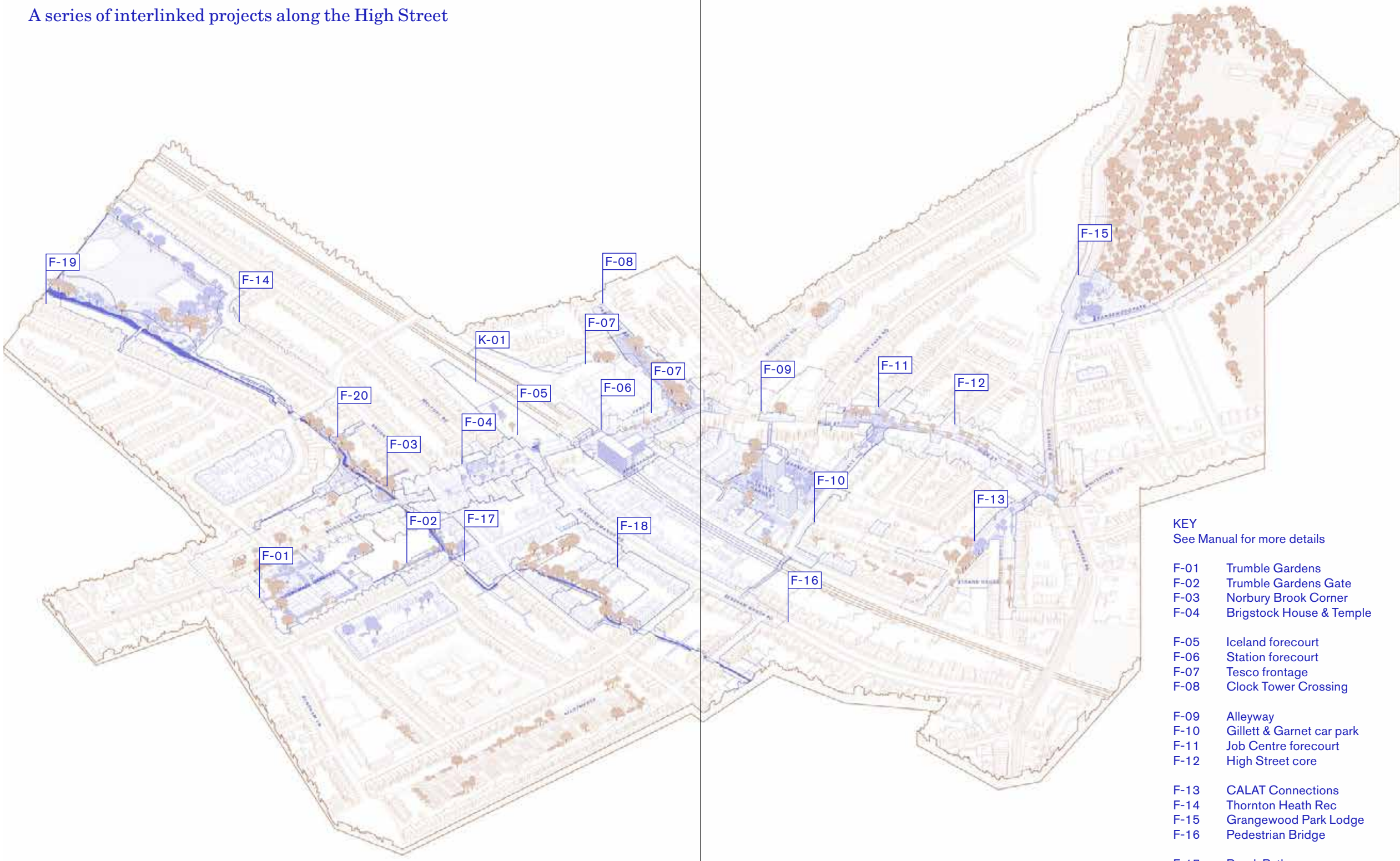
- F-09 Alleyway
- F-10 Gillett & Garnet car park
- F-11 Job Centre forecourt
- F-12 High Street core

- F-13 CALAT Connections
- F-14 Thornton Heath Rec
- F-15 Grangewood Park Lodge
- F-16 Pedestrian Bridge

- F-17 Brook Path
- F-18 Brook Opening
- F-19 Brook Deculverting
- F-20 Brook Mews

# FRAMEWORK PROJECTS

A series of interlinked projects along the High Street

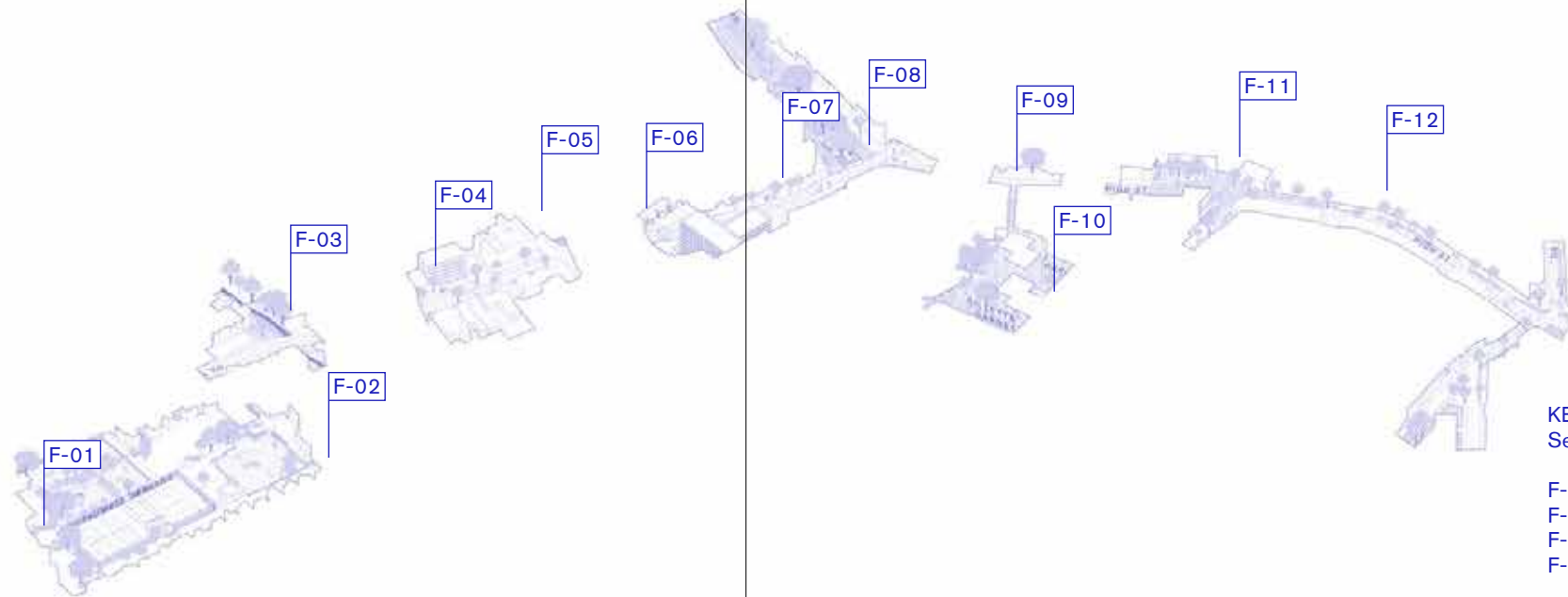


- KEY**  
See Manual for more details
- F-01 Trumble Gardens
  - F-02 Trumble Gardens Gate
  - F-03 Norbury Brook Corner
  - F-04 Brigstock House & Temple
  
  - F-05 Iceland forecourt
  - F-06 Station forecourt
  - F-07 Tesco frontage
  - F-08 Clock Tower Crossing
  
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  - F-17 Brook Path
  - F-18 Brook Opening
  - F-19 Brook Deculverting
  - F-20 Brook Mews

This is a speculative plan based on community engagement. The proposals are not currently funded.

## FRAMEWORK PROJECTS

Phased implementation: 1–5 years



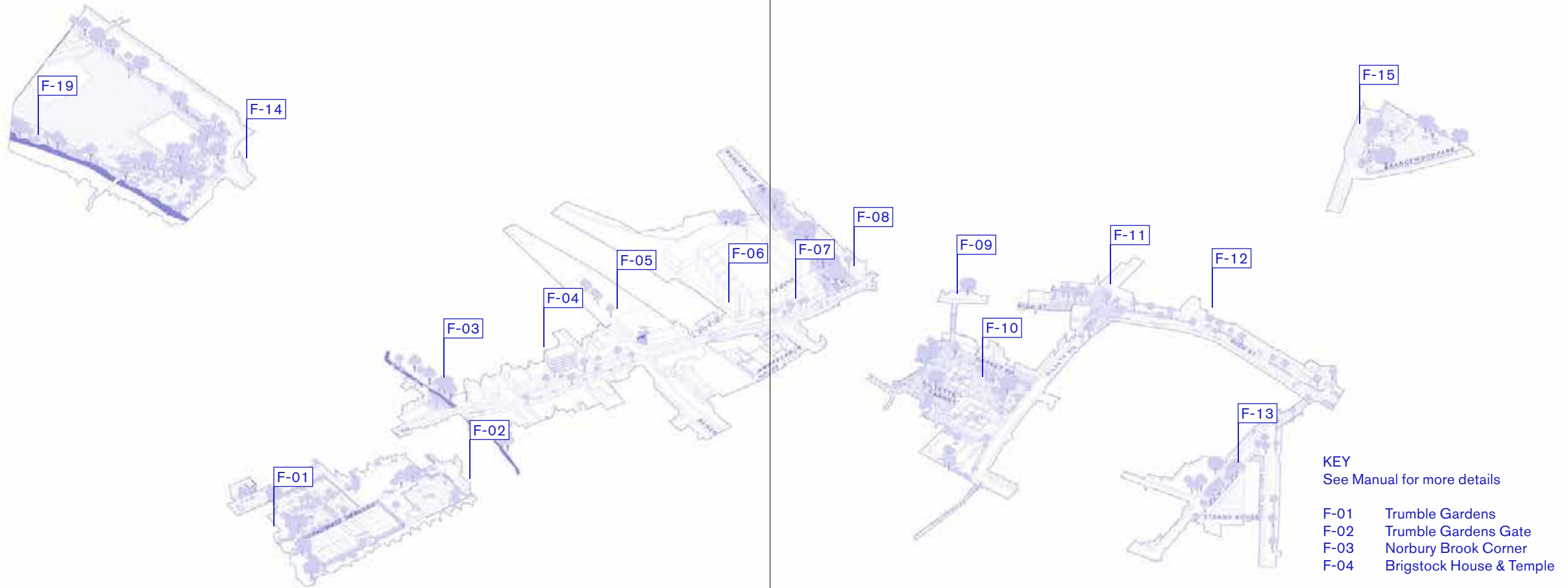
KEY  
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This is a speculative plan based on community engagement. The proposals are not currently funded.

## FRAMEWORK PROJECTS

Phased implementation: 5–10 years



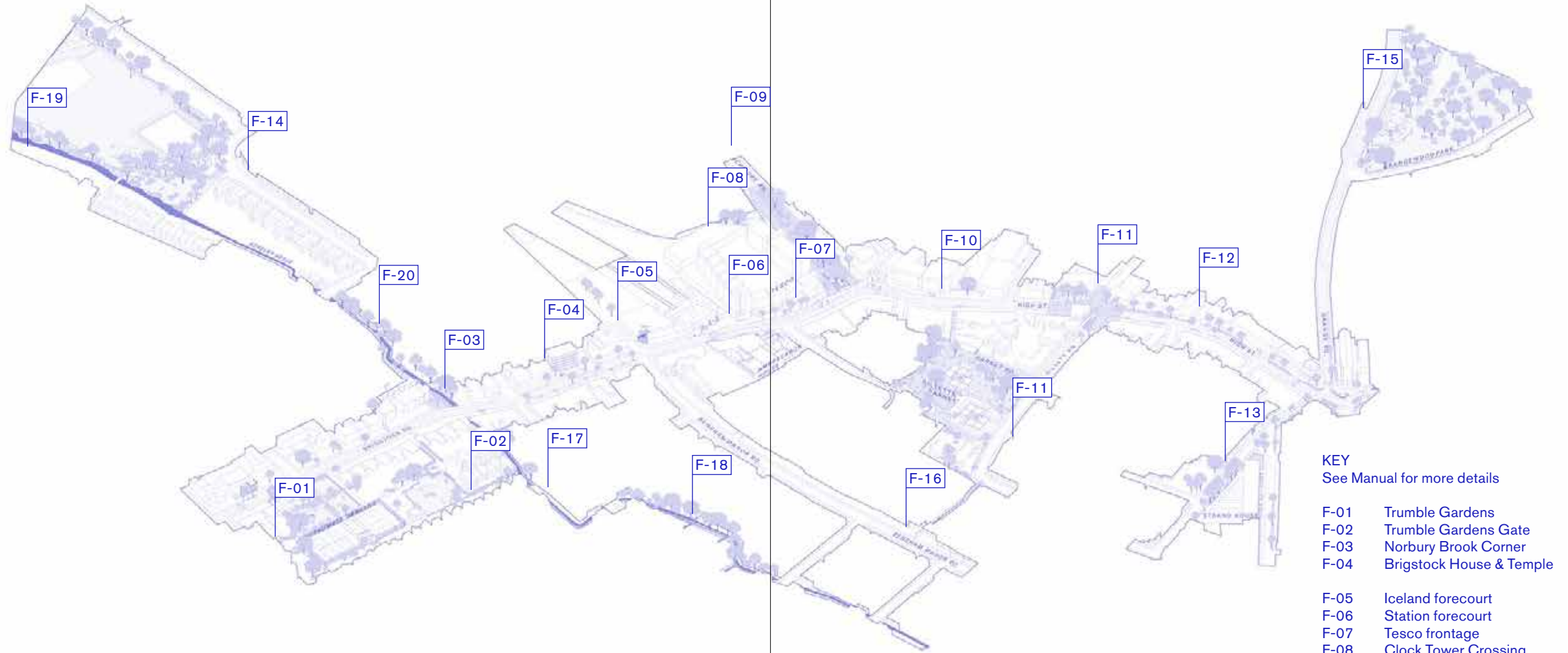
KEY  
See Manual for more details

- F-01 Trumble Gardens
- F-02 Trumble Gardens Gate
- F-03 Norbury Brook Corner
- F-04 Brigstock House & Temple
  
- F-05 Iceland forecourt
- F-06 Station forecourt
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- F-15 Grangewood Park Lodge
- F-16 Pedestrian Bridge
  
- F-17 Brook Path
- F-18 Brook Opening
- F-19 Brook Deculverting
- F-20 Brook Mews

This is a speculative plan based on community engagement. The proposals are not currently funded.

## FRAMEWORK PROJECTS

Phased implementation: 10–20 years



**KEY**  
See Manual for more details

- F-01 Trumble Gardens
- F-02 Trumble Gardens Gate
- F-03 Norbury Brook Corner
- F-04 Brigstock House & Temple
  
- F-05 Iceland forecourt
- F-06 Station forecourt
- F-07 Tesco frontage
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- F-19 Brook Deculverting
- F-20 Brook Mews

This is a speculative plan based on community engagement. The proposals are not currently funded.

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## PART 7

### NEXT STEPS

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#### NEXT STEPS

##### High Street Plan

This document is intended to inform the Croydon Local Plan and set out guiding principles for future development.

##### A Manual for Shaping Thornton Heath

The Manual is a second document, which includes practical projects that could be taken forward to help deliver aspects of this plan, either by the community themselves, or in partnership with developers and/or the council.

##### Focus Group

The project has taken place during the Covid-19 pandemic, which has created additional challenges for engagement. A locally representative focus group was invited to review the document in parallel with the public comment process, to ensure a degree of diversity in the review of feedback.

##### Local Plan Review

The documents and supporting information will be shared with Croydon's Spatial Planning team to influence the Local Plan Review for Thornton Heath. The Regulation 19 Local Plan Review is intended to be published in 2021.

##### High Streets Task Force

A series of workshops have been carried out with the High Streets Task Force in order to refine and develop the ideas in the High Street Plan and Manual with the focus group.

Design Council held two 1.5 hour-long sessions in Thornton Heath on the 18th and 24th of March 2021. Colin Haylock and Holly Lewis were the two High Streets Task Force Experts providing advice with facilitation run by Design Council colleagues. A summary of these sessions is included overleaf.

## HIGH STREETS TASK FORCE WORKSHOPS

Notes from Workshop held on 18th of March 2021

### Summary and Insights

Stakeholders first introduced themselves and their interest in Thornton Heath. A short briefing was then given by the Croydon Regeneration team. This provided a general introduction to the area, and also discussed the council's High Street Plan – which identifies 20 key opportunity sites – and the extensive series of consultations that this had involved.

Workshop attendees were then divided into two breakout groups. Group discussions were facilitated by Design Council officers and received input from the High Streets Task Force Experts. Groups discussed what the overall challenges and opportunities for the area were. This discussion included reflections on:

- Creating safer streets and spaces for all ages
- Helping the community live healthier lives
- Bringing in more greenery into the town centre and improving the air quality
- Celebrating and supporting arts and culture
- Building civic pride through positive, forward-looking built environment interventions

Workshop attendees were then invited to reflect on which of the 20 projects proposed in the High Street Plan they thought represented the best opportunities to nurture and accelerate the transformation of the town centre. These included:

- Improving lighting in the alleyway by the Gillet & Garnet car park
- Rethinking the use of the patch of grass in the Iceland forecourt
- Addressing anti-social behaviour by the crossing in front of the Clock Tower
- Improving Trumble Gardens
- Relocating Croydon Adult Learning and Training (CALAT)

## HIGH STREETS TASK FORCE WORKSHOPS

Notes from Workshop held on 24th of March 2021

### Summary and Insights

The second workshop focused on two of the opportunity sites identified during the first session: the Alleyway by the Gillet & Garnet car park (F-09), and the Iceland forecourt (F-05).

Workshop attendees were asked to reflect on the challenges and opportunities associated with the two sites, what interventions were likely to help transform them, and who should be involved in delivering the interventions.

### Alleyway: insights and stakeholders

Key insights for the alleyway included:

- The alleyway currently is poorly lit and feels unloved and unsafe.
- There is an opportunity to improve the space by introducing better street lighting. The Council has previously worked with Skanska on street lighting, and they might be interested in providing support for catalytic projects such as this one.
- It is also an opportunity to introduce artworks by local artists into the alleyway. The Croydon Arts & Craft Trail is already working together with local artists and makers and there is an opportunity to involve them in the transformation of the alleyway.

The following organisations and people were identified as critical to taking plans for the alleyway forward:

- Nearby businesses – such as the leisure centre, the local estate agent and solicitor
- The Music Relief Foundation (Magdalene Adenaike)
- CALAT
- The Job Centre
- Residents from Gillett & Garnet and Laxton & Kettering Court
- Faith groups (St Pauls, Parchmore Methodist Church, the local Islamic Centre).



## HIGH STREETS TASK FORCE WORKSHOPS

Notes from Workshop held on 24th of March 2021 (continued)

### Iceland forecourt: insights and stakeholders

Key insights for the Iceland forecourt included:

- The forecourt is currently unused and looks unappealing.
- There is an opportunity to enliven the forecourt by introducing public greening space, places for children to play and local art interventions.
- Such interventions would help generate civic pride and increase dwell time.
- Taps and water butts for collecting rainwater would need to be installed to service a green space.

The following organisations and people were identified as critical to taking plans for the alleyway forward:

- Iceland (Matthew Rowlands)
- Thornton Heath Gardening Club
- CALAT
- Local businesses such as The Cutting Company (hairdresser), Taj Mahal Restaurant, Railway Telegraph Pub.

## HIGH STREETS TASK FORCE WORKSHOPS

Notes from Workshop held on 24th of March 2021 (continued)

### Taking the vision forward

The components are in place to deliver projects that can be catalytic for Thornton Heath. There is an awareness of the town centre's main challenges and opportunities, rich and implementable ideas for possible solutions, and an overview of the key stakeholders to involve in the projects. It is important that the council, local communities and local businesses continue to work together on the development and implementation of proactive, forward-looking interventions for the high street.

Funding remains an issue, and the council is likely to reduce its regeneration resource in the area. However, a new Greater London Authority grant – the 'High Streets for All' challenge, currently live – represents a viable opportunity to apply for funding. The Challenge invites proposals that set out how high streets could change to meet the needs of a post-Covid world. A sum of £20,000 has been earmarked for each local authority.

With so many stakeholders engaged and interested in improving the town centre, it also is an opportunity to set up a community trust to take on projects that the council are unable to lead on. To ensure such a trust is successful, it will be critical to clearly assign roles and responsibilities across the very engaged cohort of community organisations and individuals.

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## PART 8 APPENDIX

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### COMMUNITY SAFETY STRATEGY

#### Summary of Approach

The importance of issues of safety and security has been emphasised at each stage of community engagement. This has been taken into account when proposing interventions along the high street, such as approaches to lighting, seating areas, or alleyways.

However, tackling crime and anti-social behaviour is a complex area and is largely beyond the scope of this study. Further information about the Council's approach to crime and anti-social behaviour is included below:

Croydon Council takes a multi-agency approach to tackling crime and reducing anti-social behaviour (ASB) in Croydon as well as local areas such as Thornton Heath. This is outlined in the Community Safety Strategy 2017–2021.

The Safer Croydon Partnership (SCP) is operative throughout Croydon and we work with partners closely in Thornton Heath to cut crime, help fight disorder and reduce reoffending. The partnership includes the council, police, fire services, probation and health agencies, as well as businesses, community and voluntary sector organisations.

The Safer Croydon Partnership Board meet on a regular basis and is responsible for all community safety matters across the borough. This group provides strategic leadership and makes decisions regarding resources, performance management and future developments.

The Joint Action Group (JAG) is the medium-term operational arm of the SCP and is a multi-agency intelligence led local partnership focussed on ASB and related crime & disorder, dealing with the threat, risk and harm to local communities and local people, identifying and tackling crime and ASB through collaborative problem solving.

Thornton Heath High Street is one of 19 time banded waste collection locations in the borough. Furthermore, Don't Mess with Croydon has run a Take Pride campaign to raise awareness of a range of environmental issues and to get people to take more responsibility for green spaces in the area through engagement, education and enforcement.

The enforcement of environmental offences is addressed through Fixed Penalty Notices, prosecutions and the seizure of vehicles. Neighbourhood Safety Officers (NSOs) patrol Thornton Heath High Street every day. There is also a biannual Duty of Care visit to every business along the High Street to make sure waste is being disposed of legally.

#### To report a crime or ASB in an emergency

If you would like to report a crime or ASB in an emergency  
– Please call 999.

#### To report a crime or ASB in a non-emergency

If you would like to report a crime or ASB in a non-emergency  
– Please call 101  
– Or contact the local policing team using the Metropolitan Police's online portal: <https://www.met.police.uk/a/your-area/local-policing-team-contact/contact-your-local-policing-team/>

