

Introduction

Who are we?



BeFirst is an urban regeneration company owned by the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham. Established in 2017, it was created to accelerate growth and renewal across the borough. Its mission is to deliver thousands of new homes, create jobs, and build thriving, sustainable communities. Be First goes beyond property development by focusing on placemaking, combining high-quality design, affordability, and social value to ensure regeneration benefits local people.

Levitt Bernstein People.Design

We are specialists in housing and like to work together with communities to improve their homes and neighbourhoods. Our team includes: architects, landscape architects and urban designers.



Community engagement at the London Festival of Architecture 2022

Archio

We design housing through co-creation with communities, ensuring homes meet real needs. Since 2013, we've championed collaborative design to build stronger, more resilient neighbourhoods.



Citizens House - a development of 11 affordable homes in Lewisham

J.A_P

We are a London-based multidisciplinary practice, focusing on architecture, urban strategy, and art, creating socially driven projects that combine storytelling, collaboration, and spatial design.



Papers Festival at the Barbican 2016



We are sustainability specialists reducing energy consumption and carbon emissions in the built environment to tackle the climate emergency.



Waterslade is a London-based consultancy specialising in daylight and sunlight analysis, helping architects and developers optimise natural light for sustainable, compliant, and visually appealing designs.



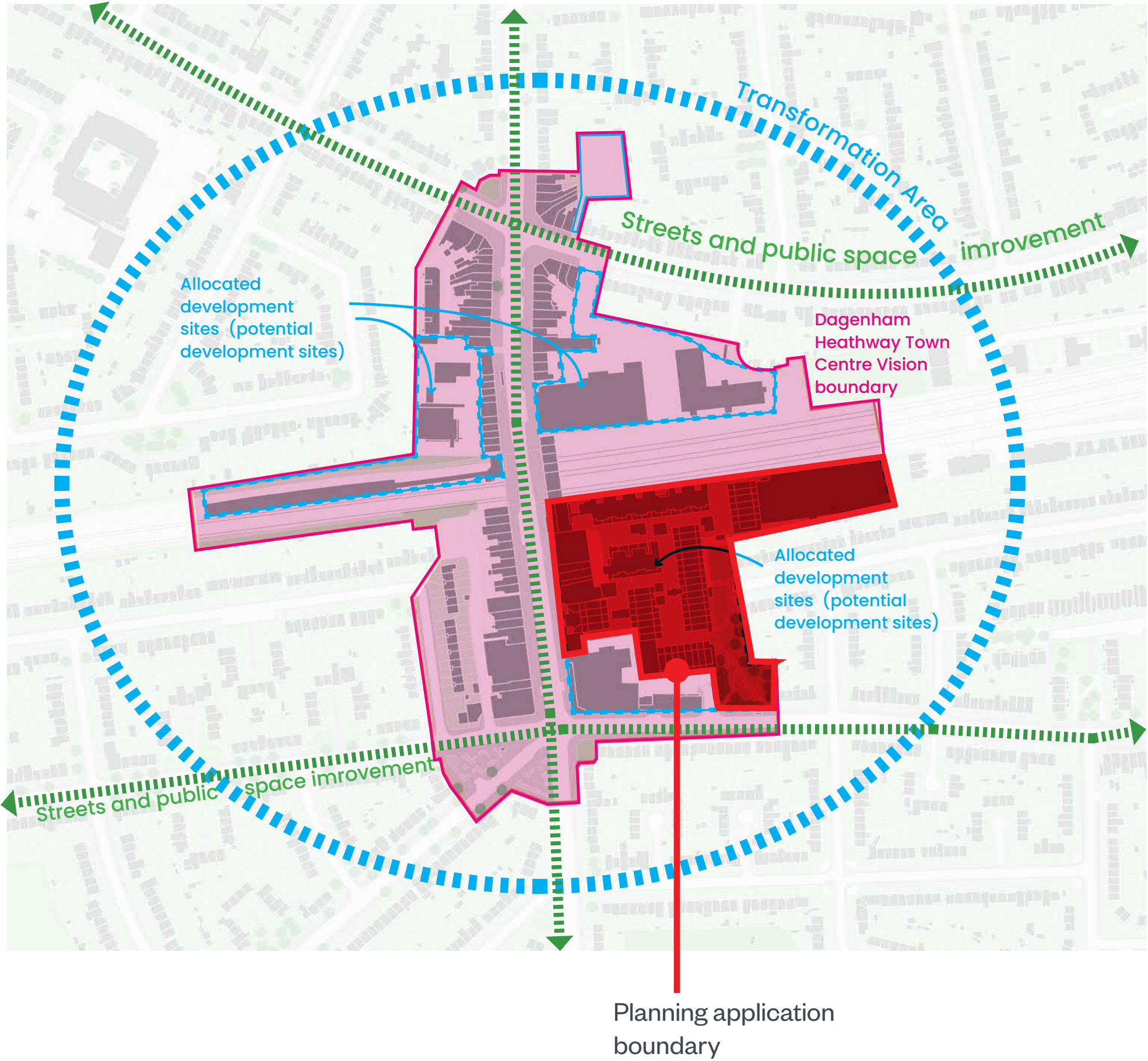
Mott MacDonald is a leading multidisciplinary consultancy providing expertise in structures, transport, ecology, and more - delivering integrated solutions that support sustainable and innovative design.

Why are we here?

We are here today to share proposals for Dagenham Heathway redevelopment and to hear your thoughts. The London Borough of Barking and Dagenham allocated Dagenham Heathway in the Local Plan adopted in 2024 as a key site for transformation and mixed-use, housing-led development.

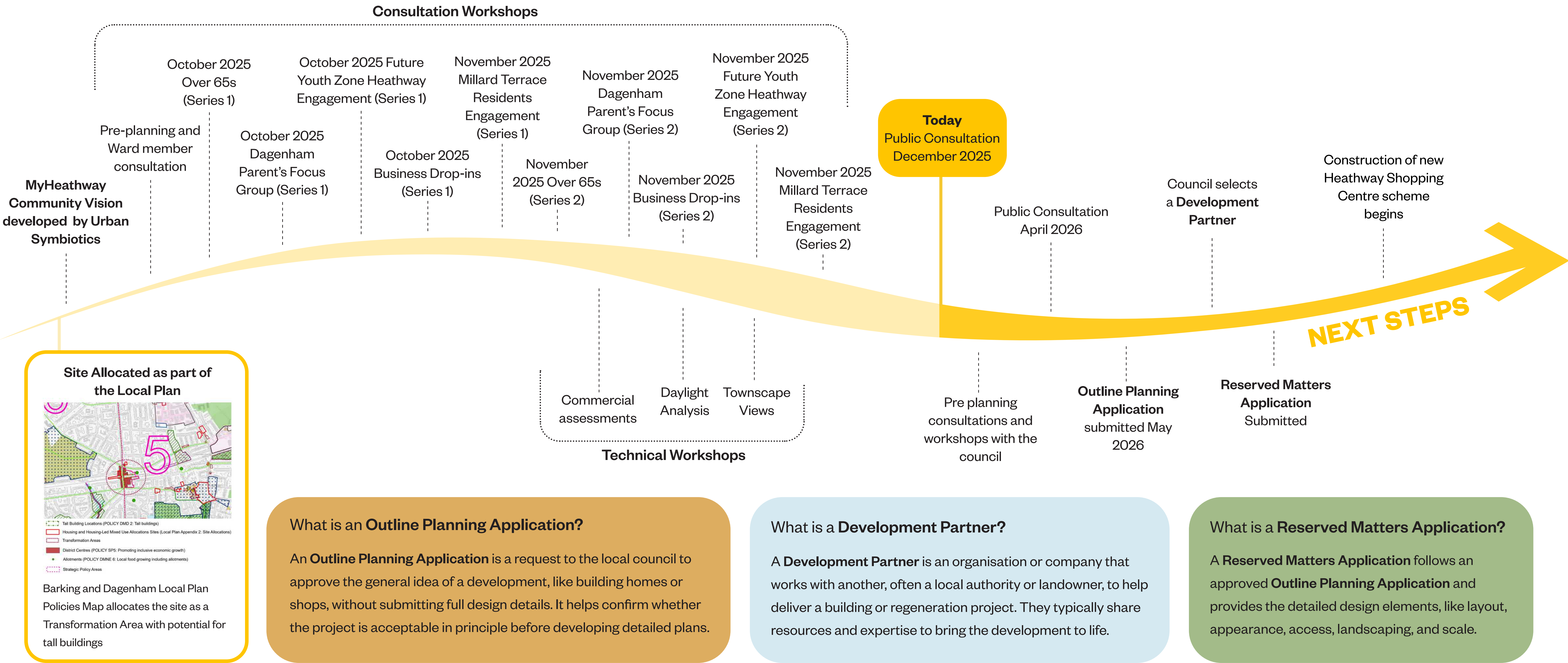
The Site is entirely council owned land comprising Millard Terrace, The Heathway Mall and the multi-storey car park. It requires comprehensive redevelopment and provides a once in a generation opportunity to Transform the Dagenham Heathway District Centre.

Over the past year design options for an Outline Planning application have been developed. It is intended that the broad parameters of development are agreed with the Local Planning Authority, leading the way for a Development Partner to come forward with a detailed design for the area in the next few years.



The story so far

Engaging with residents has been at the core of redeveloping Dagenham Heathway. This engagement has been run through Urban Symbiotics and Source Partnership, including face-to-face workshops, drop-ins, online surveys, and more. This feedback has provided a baseline understanding of existing residents' and users' real-life experiences, priorities and aspirations for the future of Dagenham Heathway.

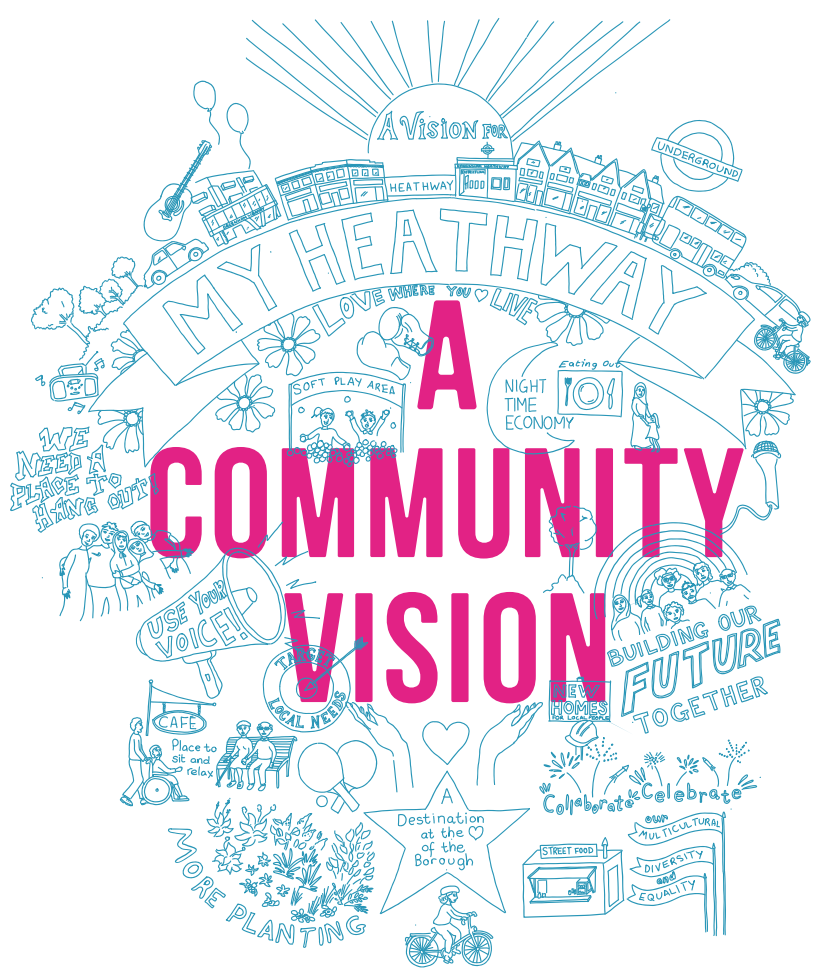


Research and Feedback

Working with the Community

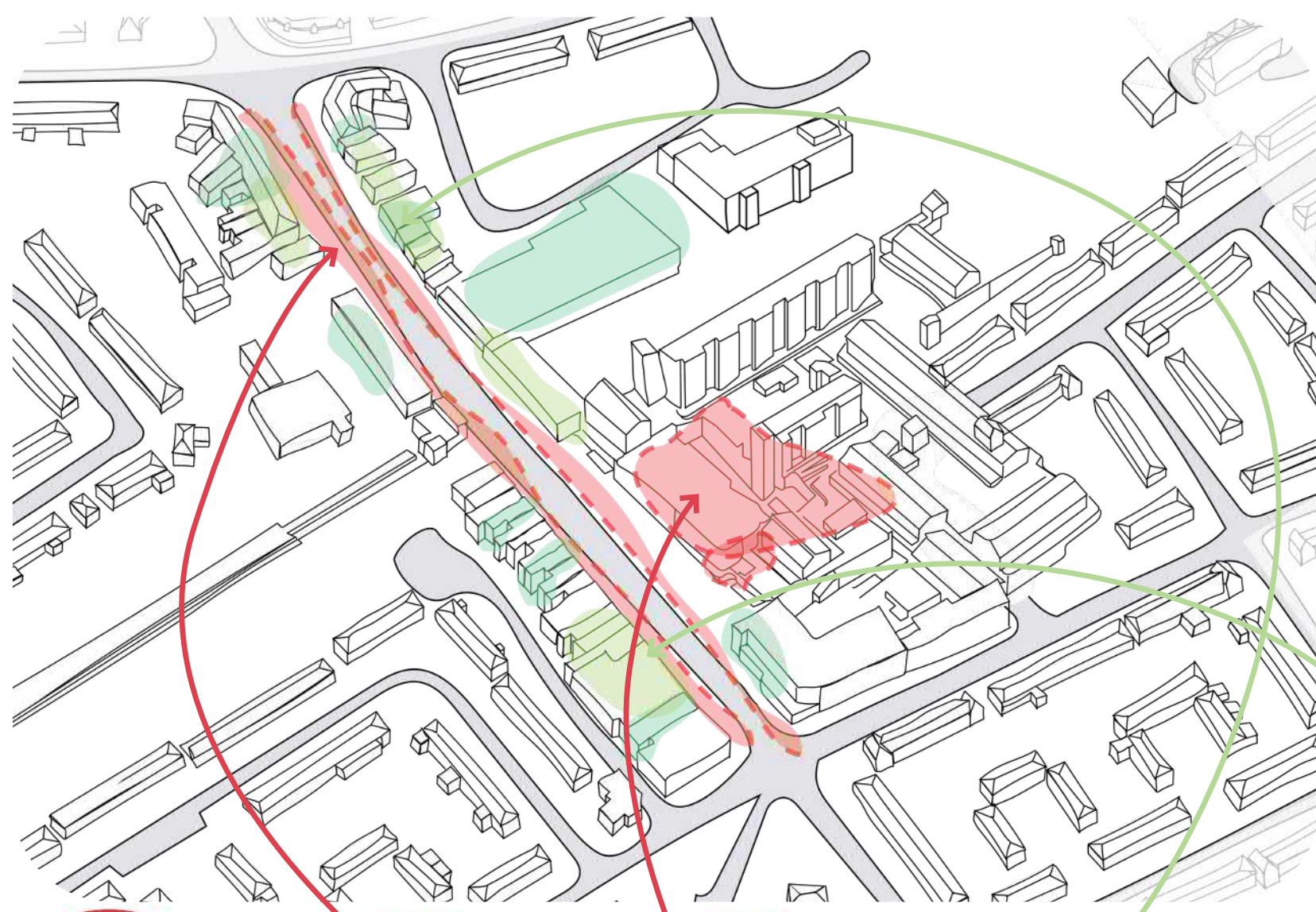
Urban Symbiotics have been working with the local community to find out what are the local challenges of the Heathway and understand the issues directly from residents and users.

The research undertaken and feedback received has been a key driver in developing a shared vision for the future of the Heathway. The community aspirations are set out below.

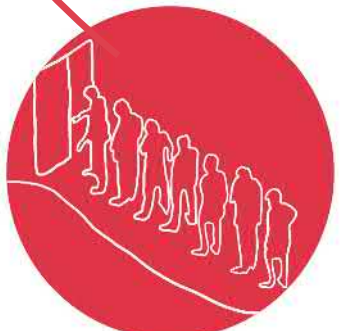


- A Safer Heathway
- A Cleaner 'Looking Good' Heathway
- A Diverse Heathway re: retail
- A Convenient Heathway
- A Green Heathway
- An Active Heathway
- A Cultural Heathway
- A Welcoming Heathway
- An Accessible Heathway Team
- Spaces for Community
- Spaces for Youth Space
- Street Improvements

Present Challenges



Lack of Leisure offering
No leisure offering in comparison to 4% of floorspace provided in other district centres and 7% in major centres.



Cumulative Footfall
By 6pm on a weekday, Heathrow has already attracted 84% of the day's footfall, with just 16% remaining in the evening.



No night time economy
The average District Centre attracts 25% of its footfall after 6pm on a weekday and 28% on a Saturday. The Heathway has only 16% of footfall after 6pm.



Commercial offer
There is a good mix of independent and multiple operators in retail sector. 72% of the floorspace on the Heathway is shops (in comparison to 57% in other district centres)



Lack of F&B offer
A total of 9% of the Heathway's use class floorspace is food and beverage, with over half of these (5%) being hot food takeaways.



Health
Health outcomes ranked 4th lowest out of 242 London centres



Employment
With high levels of economic inactivity, employment outcomes are ranked 9th lowest and income ranked 17th out of 242 London centres.



Crime
Crime ranked 7th highest out of 242 London centres



Education/Skills
Education/Skills outcomes are ranked 10th lowest out of 242 London centres.



Housing and Services
Barriers to housing and services ranked 14th lowest out of 242 London centres

Listening to your feedback

Various events have taken place with different community groups to make sure we're understanding the issues from different perspectives and can use the feedback to help drive the proposals.

Parents Focus Group



- Lack of Vibrancy & Identity in the Heathway
- Loss of Family & Community Activities
- Need for Play & Active Spaces
- Retail Aspirations
- Public Realm Improvements

Future Youth Zone



- Safety and Security of Heathway and local area
- Poor Public Realm and Atmosphere
- Outdated Retail Shops
- Need for Safer Transport

Over 65s group



- Safety and Security of the Heathway
- Poor Public Realm and Amenities
- Poor Community and Social Connection
- Nostalgia for lost Local Identity
- Poor Lighting and Atmosphere

Business Drop-Ins



- Economic Decline & Retail Challenges
- Safety & Security of the Heathway Mall
- Poor Visitor Experience
- Desire for Better Retail Offer
- Need for Leisure & Social Activity to boost vibrancy

Vision Priorities for the Heathway

Enhance its status as the heart of a mixed, vibrant, sustainable and healthy Becontree and Dagenham community.

Be a focus for culture, heritage and social infrastructure that services the local community.

Provide goods and services supporting the local community, and be a connected second gateway to London.

Be a focus for investment and local economy growth in Barking and Dagenham.

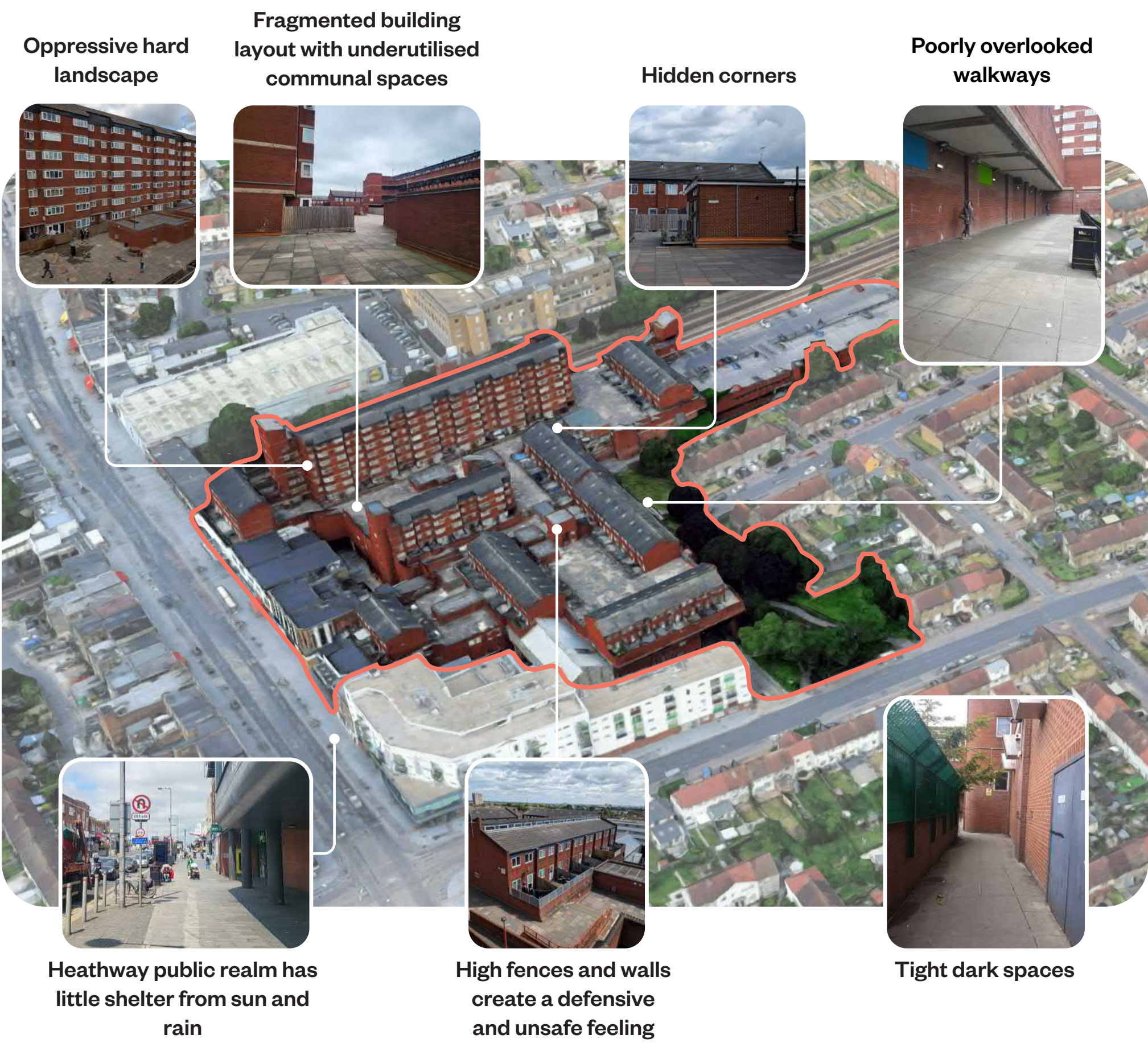
The site today

Millard Terrace

The 1970s layout of Millard Terrace leaves many hidden corners and poorly overlooked areas, which today has led to high levels of anti-social behaviour and crime through the estate. The original homes which were built to 1970s standards also now fall below the current expectations of a modern home.

What do you like or dislike about Millard Terrace today?

We want your feedback!
Stick your post-it notes here!

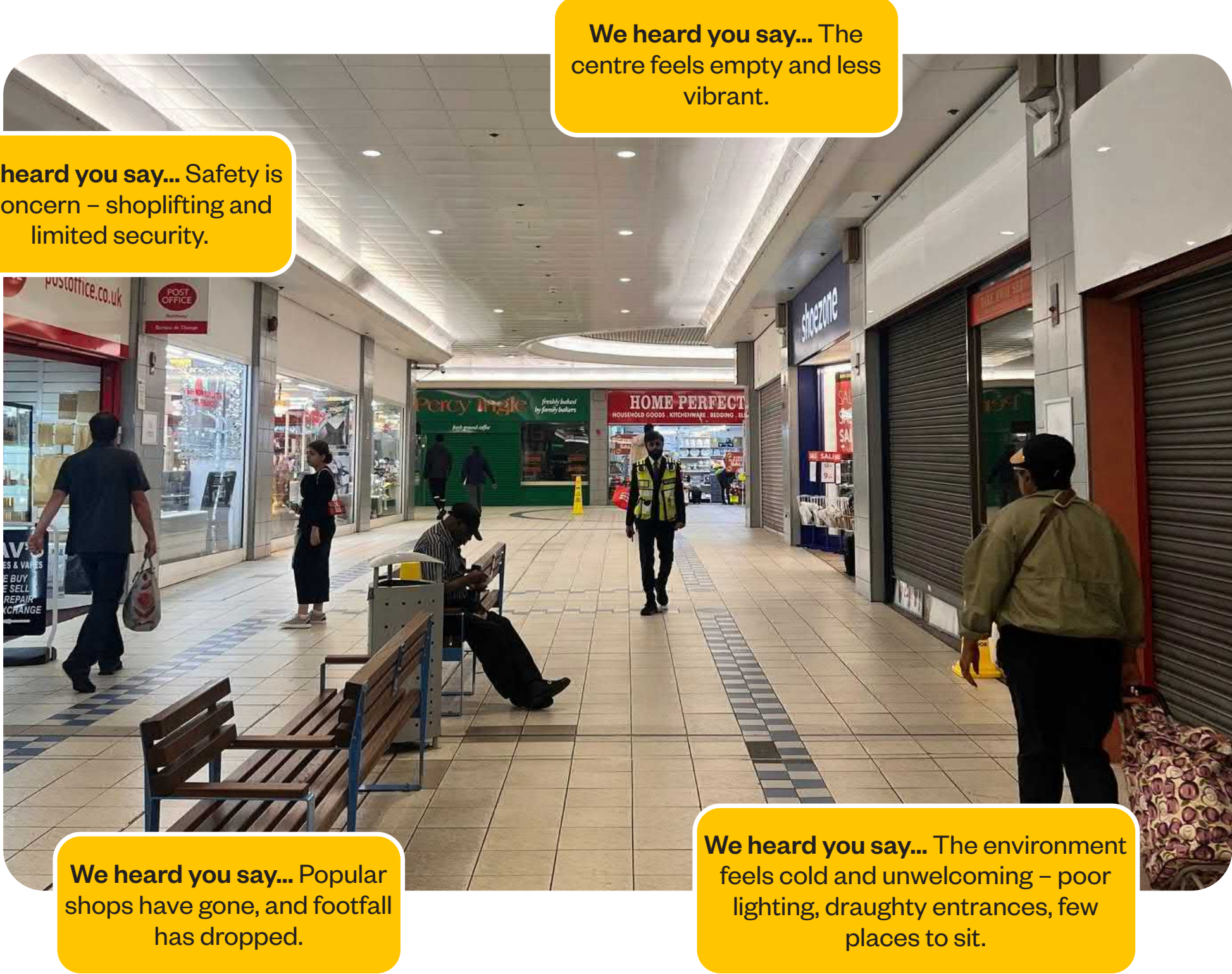


The Mall

Despite the popularity of the shopping centre in 1980s, the mall today is facing economic decline with reduced footfall. Many of the shops within the mall are now vacant for various contributing factors, including: blank facades, condition of circulation space and flooring, undesirable lighting and atmosphere, poor public toilets, sound and atmosphere.

Constraints of an Indoor Shopping Mall:

- There aren't any places open at night like restaurants, cafés, dessert shops, or bars.
- Fewer people are passing through the area, most only come here to shop and don't walk through.
- It is unclear what is inside the mall from the Heathway main road.
- There's no room for outdoor activities like alternative events and performances.
- There isn't much flexibility for short-term uses like pop-up shops or temporary stalls.



What do you like or dislike about the shopping mall today?
What do you think about the current shops?

We want your feedback!
Stick your post-it notes here!

The Vision

A new Heart to the Heathway

Key features of the proposed development of Heathway prioritise vibrancy of the District Centre, consolidating the commercial offer to promote modern and diverse shopping and food and beverage opportunities. External streets and an inviting public realm would replace the existing enclosed Mall and community focused areas for gathering would be provided such as flexible and adaptable squares for local use.

A Place That is Cared For



Nature of the public realm: well-lit with an abundance of footfall and spill-out spaces.

The Heathway Square



The Green Link



The Living Square



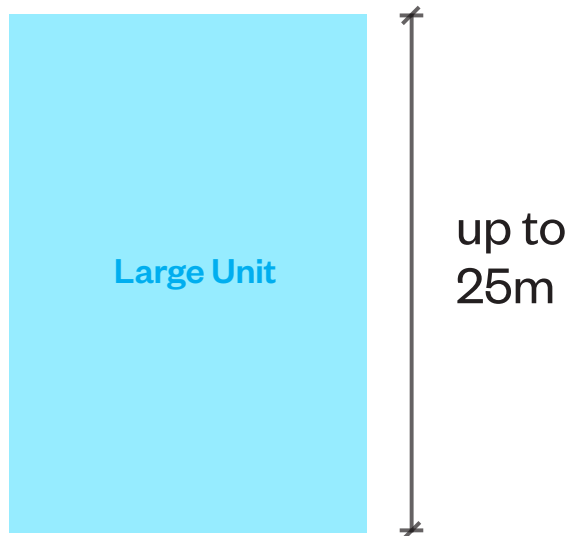
New Homes

A range of new homes would be integrated into the design, bringing more people to the neighbourhood and increasing footfall and activity throughout the day and into the evening.

New Shops

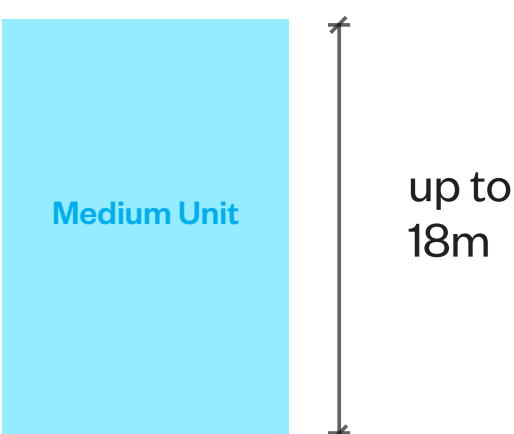
A variety of unit types and sizes are being explored and could be included in the future development of the Heathway. We want to ensure there is a good mix of uses that will attract customers.

Large Commercial Unit



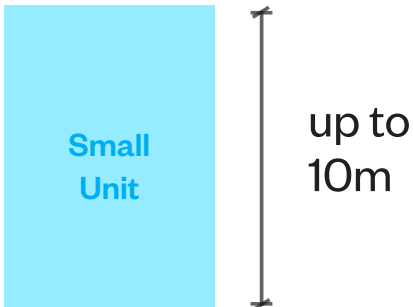
Large Unit examples include: Tesco Express, Sainsbury's Local, Co-op Food

Medium Commercial Units



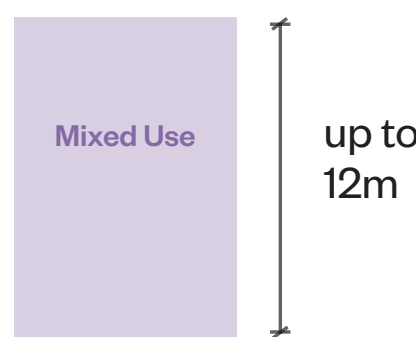
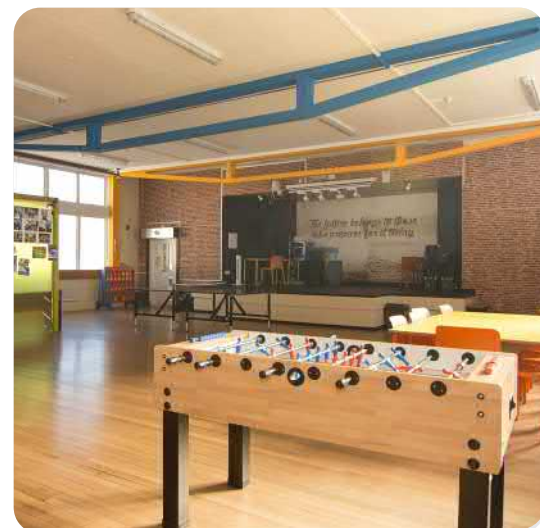
Medium unit examples include: Food and Beverage or Beauty and Care (Boots)

Small Commercial Units



Small unit examples include: Shoe store, Clothes store

Mixed Use / Community



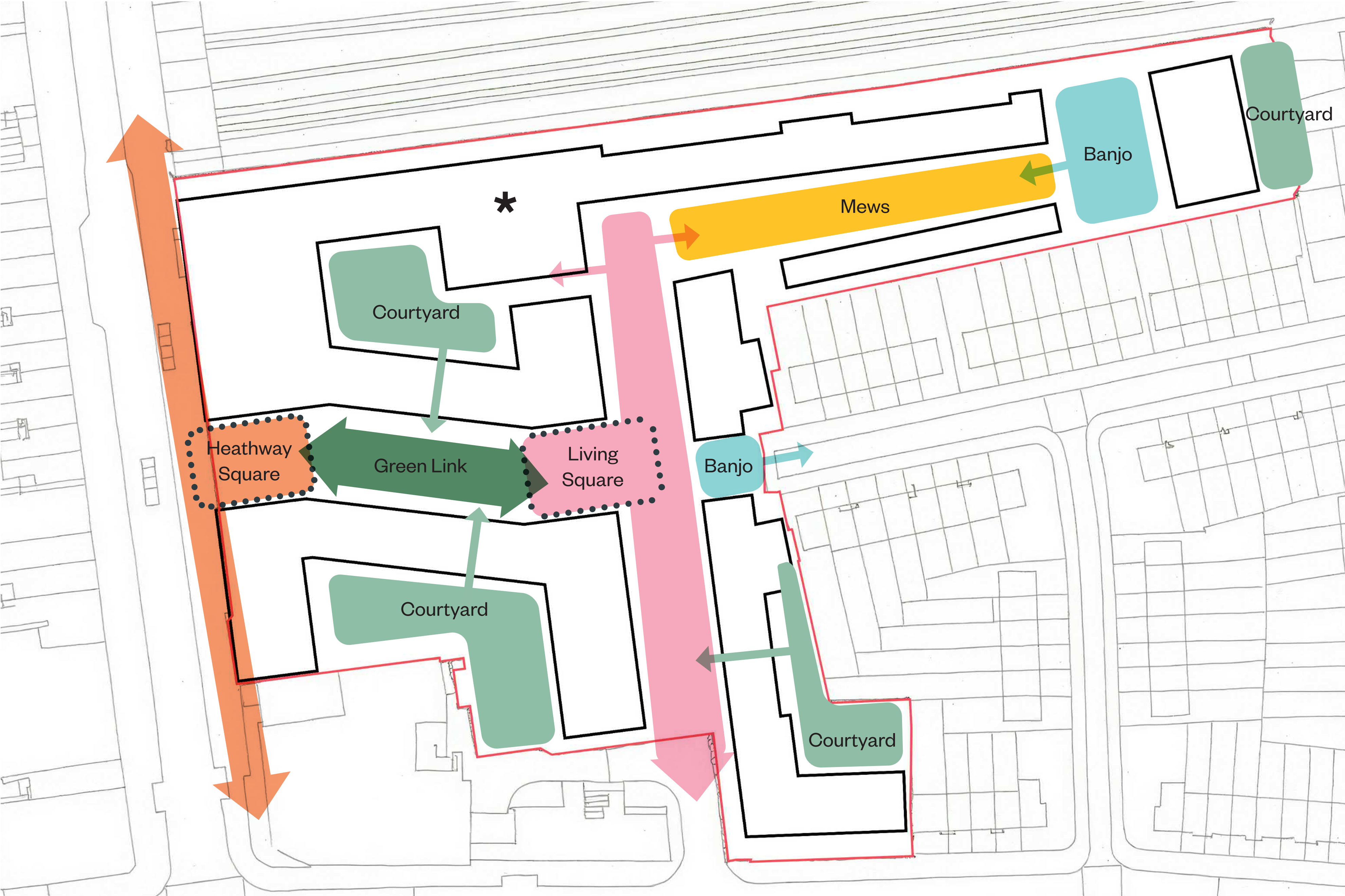
Examples include:

- independent shops
- bakers / butchers
- dessert places
- community uses

What do you think about the range of shop sizes and the mix of uses shown?

Would you like a community facility?
What do you think that should be?

Character Areas



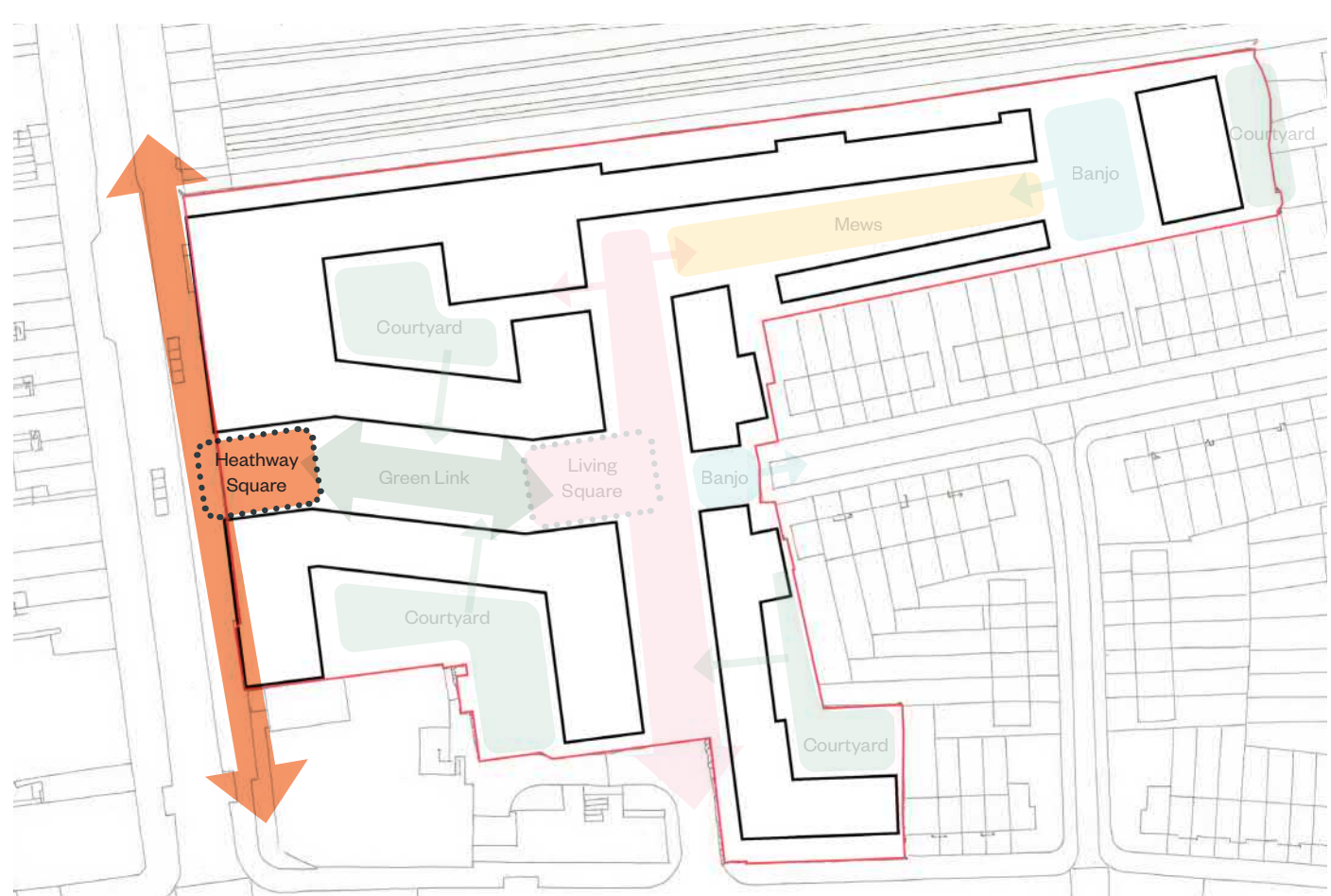
- Heathway High Street**
Heathway High Street is being reimagined as a vibrant, inclusive space that honours Dagenham's character while introducing fresh energy through revitalised shopfronts and community-focused design.
- Living Street**
The Living Street prioritises pedestrians with a discreet service route and varied surface treatments that calm traffic and create a safe, welcoming environment.
- Green Link**
A new green east-west spine will link Blackborne Road with The Heathway, creating a lively, pedestrian-friendly corridor with green spaces, play areas, and seating that foster community and street life.
- Courtyards**
Shared courtyards provide green, sociable spaces for play, rest, and everyday connection, with soft landscaping and informal gathering spots that support a calm, active atmosphere.
- Mews**
A pedestrian-priority street with balanced parking, play, and greening creates a safe, lively environment, well-overlooked by surrounding homes.
- Banjo**
These public spaces, inspired by Becontree Estate, offer well-overlooked areas for play, gathering, and greening at the ends of residential streets.
- *** Potential location for a taller building.

What do you like or dislike about the range of outdoor spaces proposed?

We want your feedback!
Stick your post-it notes here!

Character Areas - Commercial / Mixed Use

The Heathway Square



'Town square' for pop-up events

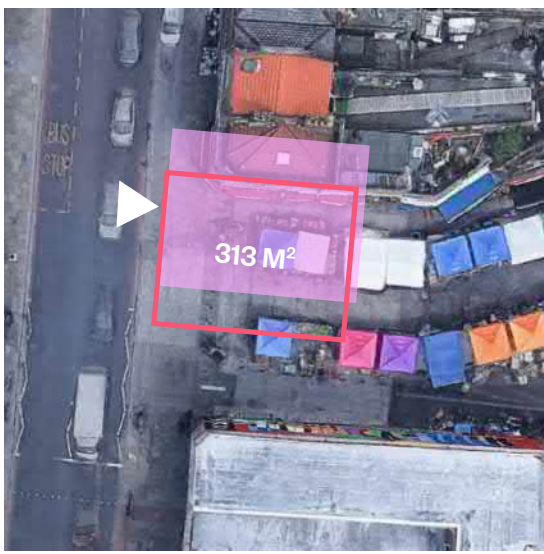


Tree planting framing entrance spaces to shops and cafes, providing shade & greenery



Seating and sculptural play features encourage gathering and activity for all ages

Similar sized public squares in East London



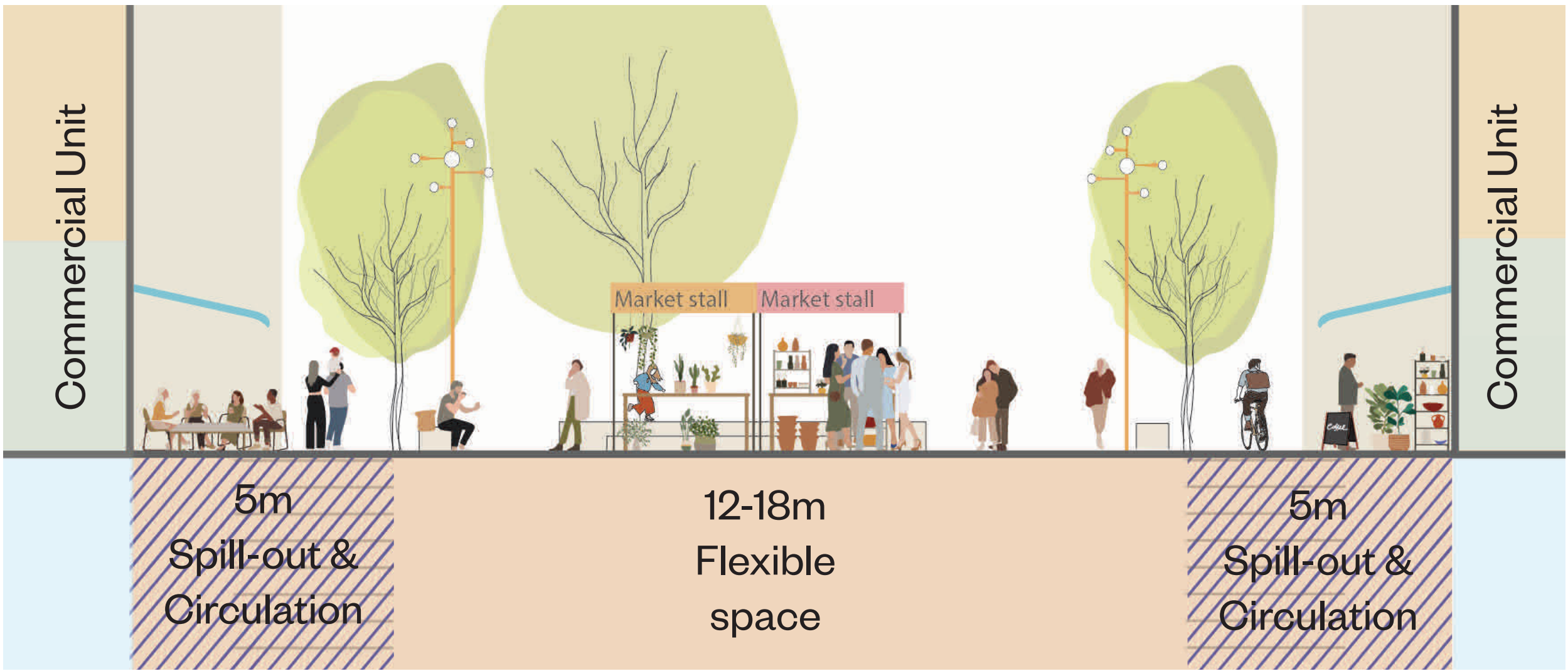
Ridley Road, Dalston



Queen's Square, Upton Park

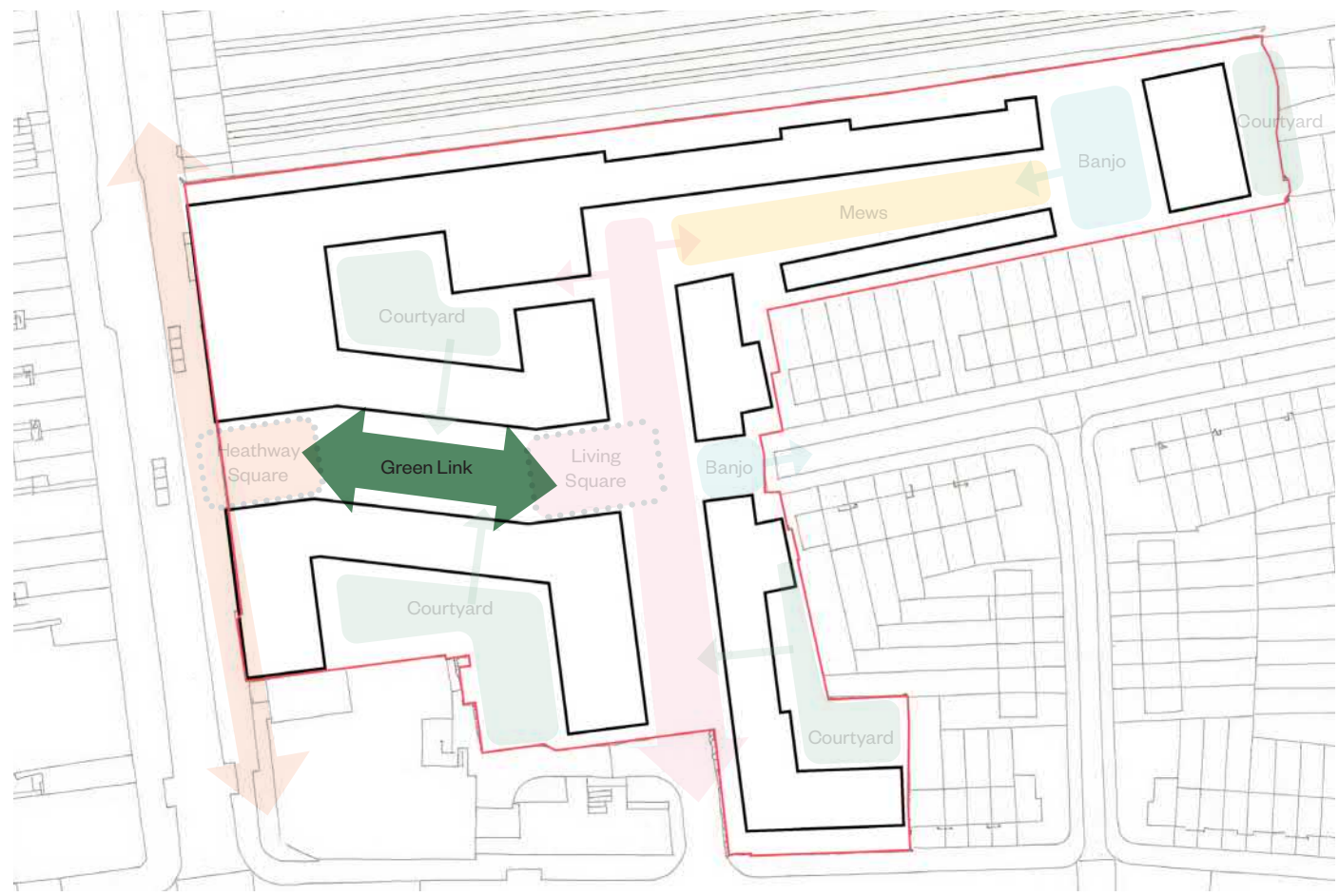


Gillett Square, Dalston



22m-28m

The Green Link



A green 'route' with spaces for rest and gathering



Sculptural play elements creating a space for children to enjoy



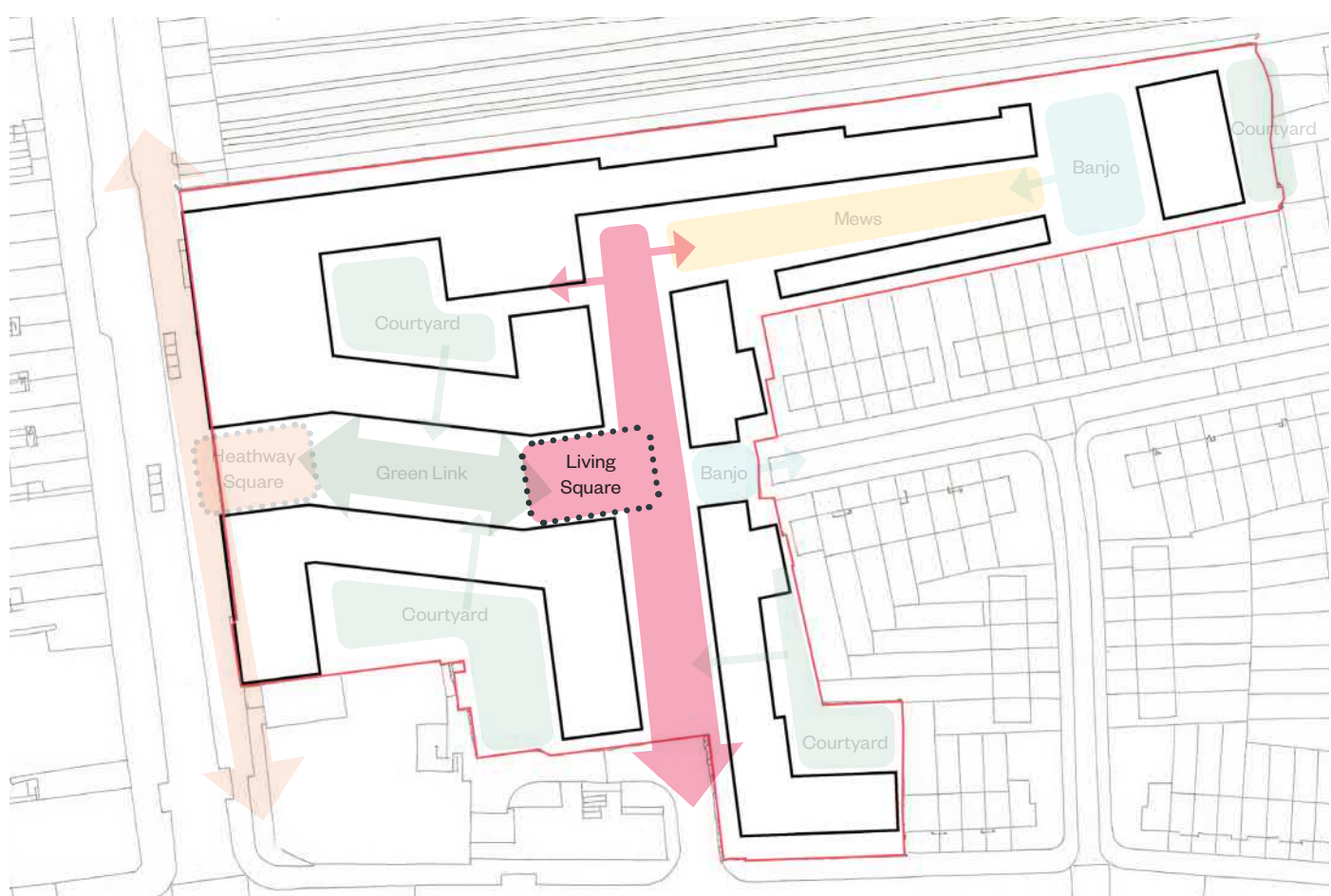
Spill out space for food and beverage stores

What do you **like** or **dislike** about the proposed commercial / mixed use open spaces?

We want your feedback!
Stick your post-it notes here!

Character Areas - Residential

The Living Square



Space for active travel and on-street activity

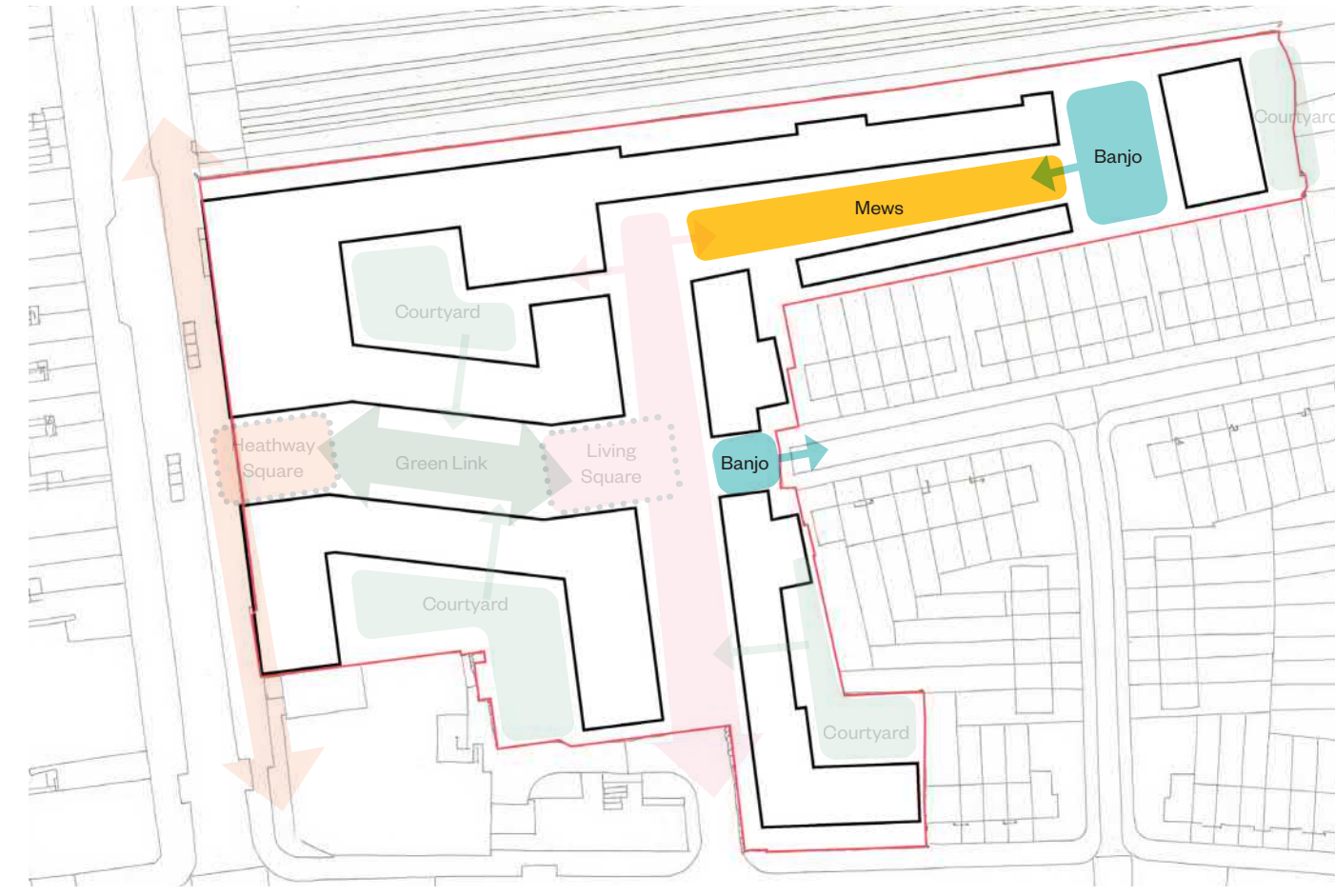


Play and gathering space on resident's doorstep



Dedicated residents focused playspace

Banjo's and Mews



A social space for people to gather on their doorstep

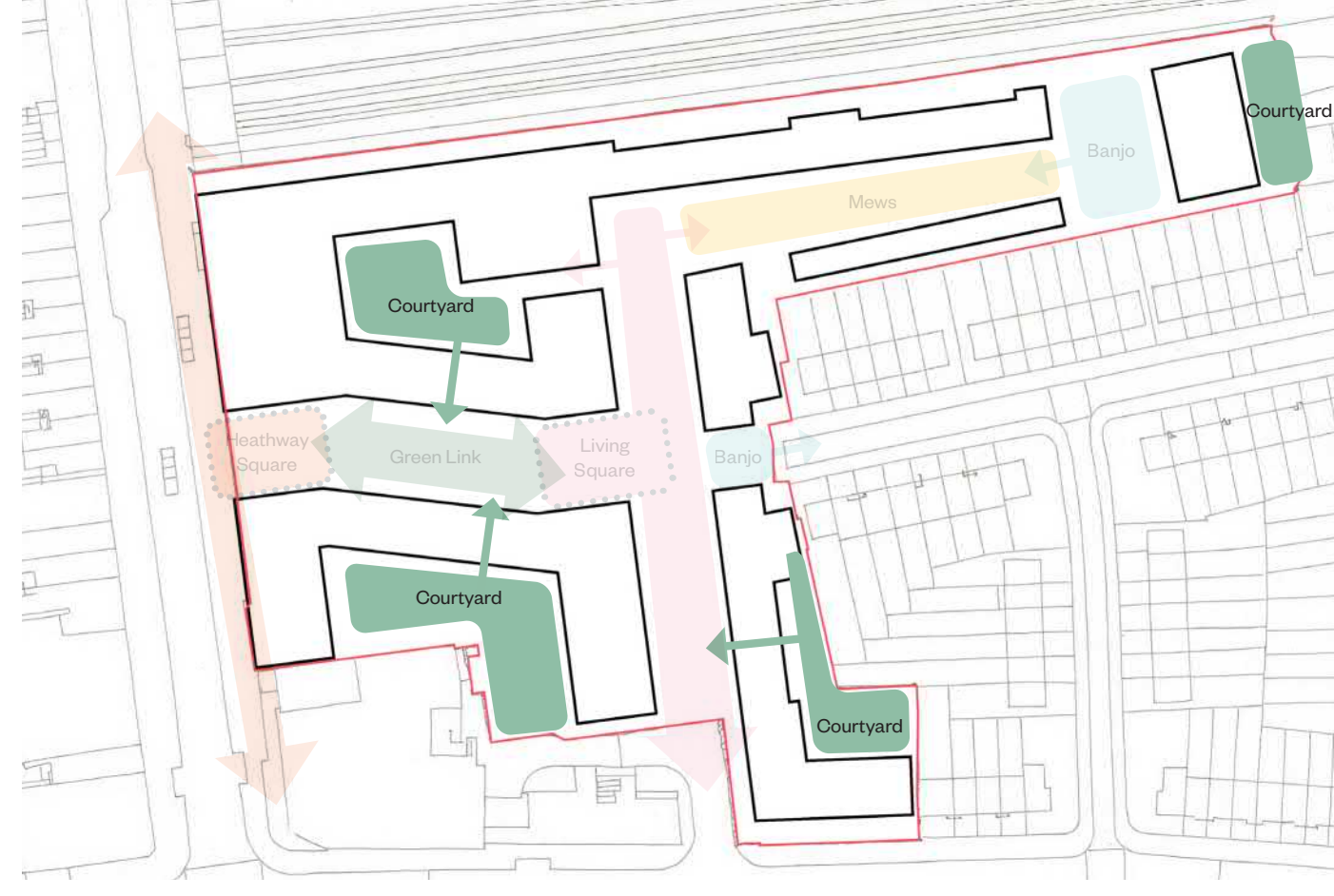


Incidental play forming part of a mews street



Play, greenery and seating allow life to spill out onto the street

Courtyards



Greenery used to create a buffer between dwellings and the communal space



Naturalistic planting appeals to the local climate and ecology

What do you **like** or **dislike** about the proposed residential open spaces?

We want your feedback!
Stick your post-it notes here!