

Compiled by the Planning Projects and
Environment Initiatives Teams
at Brighton & Hove City Council

INTERREG IVB Lively Cities Project
Ann Street / Providence Place Gardens
Consultation on long-term proposals

December 2013

Printing advice:

For optimum results, this document should be printed back to back. This is because information provided in the even pages has been designed to be complemented by



About this report

This report provides an overview of the community response to the consultation on proposals for long-term improvements to the Ann Street and Providence Place area, close to the London Road shopping centre in Brighton.

The consultation took place between 9 October and 24 November 2013.

This report contains a summary of 68 responses from people who filled in the feedback forms made available online and during the three-day public exhibition held in the area and two written responses from representatives of Brighton & Hove Friends of the Earth and Bricycles.

An implementation plan for the revised proposals based on consultation responses is provided in a separate report.

This work is part of the INTERREG IVB-assisted 'Lively Cities' (LICI) programme - a four-year project aimed at strengthening communities by reclaiming public space for public use.

The lead partner for the project is the Belgian-based AMCV. The partner authorities participating in the project (along with Brighton & Hove) are Aberdeen (Scotland), Lille (France), Eindhoven (the Netherlands) and Tournai, La Louvière and Liege (all in Belgium). Academic institutions observing the project as part of their research include (Åbo Akademi University in Finland, Univeristé du Luxembourg, Wageningen University in the Netherlands and North West University in South Africa).

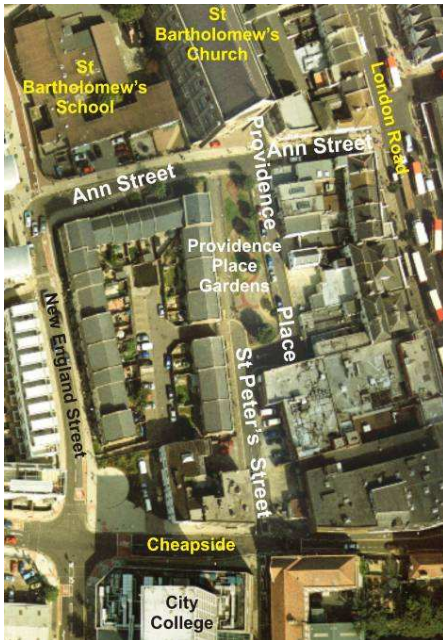
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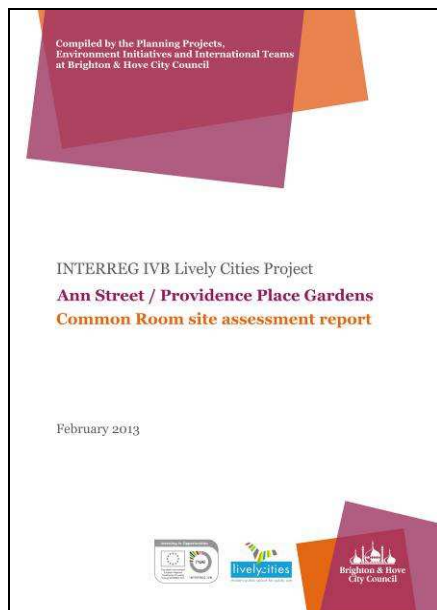


Aerial view of the project area during the Common Room pilot.

1. The project brief



Aerial view of Ann Street / Providence Place Gardens area off the east side of the London Road shopping area. The LIC Competition project area encompassed the spaces indicated in white letters.



Above: 2012 Common Room report (see also appendices).

Below: Officer workshop to support preparation of proposals for public consultation.

Between 1 and 14 October 2012, the winning Lively Cities competition entry - 'The Common Room' - was piloted in the Ann Street / Providence Place area of Brighton.

Full details of the two week pilot scheme and user response to the temporary changes are summarised in the Common Room site assessment report issued by the council in February 2013.

Between March and September council officers drew up proposals to take forward and refine the successful elements of the 'Common Room'.

It was considered important that the long-term proposals for the project area included the following elements:

- § A public realm design that can be implemented in phases (as funding streams become available).
- § A plan to help guide the social and economic 'place-making' aspects of The Common Room that addresses and supports the objectives of the council's London Road Central Masterplan and the various existing and emerging projects in the vicinity.
- § A transport plan that minimises on-street parking in the project area and re-provides and reallocates residents' on-street parking and blue badge spaces at appropriate locations elsewhere in the vicinity.

A series of meetings and a workshop were held to inform the proposals. This meant the proposals benefited from a wide range of expert advice from council officers, local councillors and the consultants (Plan Projects and Luis Trevino Architects) that conceived and designed the 'Common Room' pilot scheme.

The proposals submitted for public consultation are detailed in pages 9 and 10 of this report.



2. The consultation

The public consultation ran from 9 October until 24 November 2013.

It comprised a staffed, three-day public exhibition in Providence Place Gardens (10-12 October 2013), a dedicated workshop for the Providence Place Forum (16 October 2013) and an online exhibition available throughout the consultation period.

The exhibition comprised four display panels - two summarising the findings of the 2012 two-temporary trial and two detailing the plans (see pages 5-8).

A standard feedback form (see 5.1) was made available online and during the public exhibition to gauge people's responses.

Notes taken during the Providence Place Forum meeting and a letter submitted by Brighton & Hove Friends of the Earth were also considered as part of the findings outlined in this report. The Providence Place Forum was set up in 2011 to help guide the project and is formed by a group of stakeholders who represent a range of interest in the project site and the wider London Road community.

The responses gathered via each of these means of communication are reported in more detail in 5.2 – 5.6 of this report.

Images of the consultation panels, a summary of findings arising from the feedback received are provided below.



Public exhibition in Providence Place Gardens (10-12 October 2013).



Providence Place Forum workshop (16 October 2013).

Below and over: An online exhibition and feedback form were posted on the council's consultation portal for a six week period.

The screenshot shows the Brighton & Hove City Council Consultation Portal. The header includes the council logo and navigation links for Accessibility, Privacy, Brighton & Hove City Council Home, and Contact Us. A search bar and utility links (AAA, Login/Register, Who Said What?, Help, Print) are also present. The main content area is titled 'Lively Cities long-term scheme consultation' and contains several paragraphs of text explaining the consultation process, including a deadline of 24 November 2013. A 'View and Comment' button is prominently displayed. Below this is an 'Event Information' box with the following details:

Access:	No login required
Status:	open (From 09/10/13 09:00 to 24/11/13 23:59)
Privacy:	If you take part, your name will not be shown, your answers will not be shown, your town/city will not be shown
Description:	To register feedback on long-term proposals for a new design for the Ann Street / Providence Place area of Brighton.
Organisation:	Brighton & Hove City Council
Contact Name:	Planning Projects
Contact Email:	planningprojects@brighton-hove.gov.uk
Contact Telephone:	01273292352
Subject:	Parks and gardens, Planning (town and country), Public Realm
Organisation:	Brighton & Hove City Council
Ward:	St Peters and North Laine

Ann Street / Providence Place Gardens

Consultation on proposed changes



2012 Common Room trial

In October 2012 the Ann Street / Providence Place Gardens area was temporarily transformed for two weeks into the 'Common Room', a pedestrian-friendly area providing a variety of opportunities for people to relax, play and enjoy the area.

The changes included:

- removal of the park railings and introduction of terraced steps;
- fixed and movable seating;
- activities such as table tennis, after school-play and food trading;
- lighting of trees in the evening;
- stage and art wall (on Providence Place);
- free large capacity Wi-Fi; and
- ban on Heavy Good Vehicles.

At the bottom of Ann Street, a small 'square' was created with tables and chairs and providing flexible space for events.

With the help of community volunteers, the council monitored and gathered public response to the temporary changes. This work indicated that during the trial:

- there was a **noticeable increase in the use of the area as people** made use of the new facilities and activities;
- the changes **attracted a wider range of ages** than usual with a significant increase in young adults, teens, children and seniors using the area, and
- **people visited the area more often** than usual and **stayed for longer** periods of time.



Most successful changes

Removal of railings, introduction of steps between the park and Providence Place and seating in the park were the most popular physical changes introduced as part of the Common Room.

The removal of the railings and presence of the steps acted as an open invitation for people to enter and spend time in the park.

Along with the removal of parked cars, they also unexpectedly resulted in Providence Place being treated as a shared space - similar to Brighton's New Road, where pedestrians and vehicles all share the same road area.



Exhibition panel 1.

Ann Street / Providence Place Gardens

Table tennis, after-school play and other activities

Table tennis and after-school play were the most popular activities introduced as part of the Common Room. People of all ages played table tennis (some even in the rain) and after-school play turned the park into a space that children and parents could enjoy.

Some impromptu activities took place during the Common Room trial. Nobody who was there will forget the evening the Brazilian dance troupe came to practice. Such unplanned events revealed the potential of the park as a flexible space where a diverse range of activities could take place!



Ann Street 'pocket' square

Tables and chairs invited people to take a break and spend time in the area while allowing space for events to take place and still allowing access for delivery vehicles.



Tree lighting and HGV ban

Lighting-up the trees helped to make the park look beautiful and feel safer after dark. The HGV ban proved largely effective and resulted in a much safer and quieter environment.



Mixed fortunes

Food trading had mixed fortunes and appeared to be dependent on a variety of factors including weather, range of products on sale and price.



Least successful changes

Stage
This was arguably the least successful of the changes and was at no time used for its intended purpose of providing for impromptu performances.



Ann Street / Providence Place Gardens

Long-term proposals

Shared space in Ann Street, Providence Place and top of St Peter's Street

Play area

Features parking similar to New England Quarter and The Level.

Carriageway raised to walking curb level.

Possible play area status for Providence Place for use at both times.

Street furniture and landscaping

Lighting, seating, bins, bollards, cycle stands, surface materials and green wall

Play area

Play area with a raised curb level.

Play area

Possible play area status for Providence Place for use at both times.

Street furniture

Street furniture as per the Level. Street furniture. Replacement of metal path through park with compacted gravel. Green wall to extend park to the end of Providence Place.

Shared space

Placemat-style steps suitable for outdoor seating with furniture for flexible use of space.

Wayfinding screen.

Terraced steps

Steps made with bluish-grey concrete without visible joints to create a monolithic effect.

Sub-in-planters to enclose people with disabilities and to prevent skateboard riding.

Tactile paving at the top of the steps to alert the visually impaired.

Design guidance

Design guidance to be produced for areas rear of London Road shops.

Recommendations to guide new development, encouraging active housing along Providence Place.

Communal waste

One general and two recycling waste bins to be provided at the end of Providence Place.

Exhibition panel 3.

Ann Street / Providence Place Gardens



What happens next?

Help us improve the proposed plans by filling in the feedback form and posting it in the box available in this exhibition.

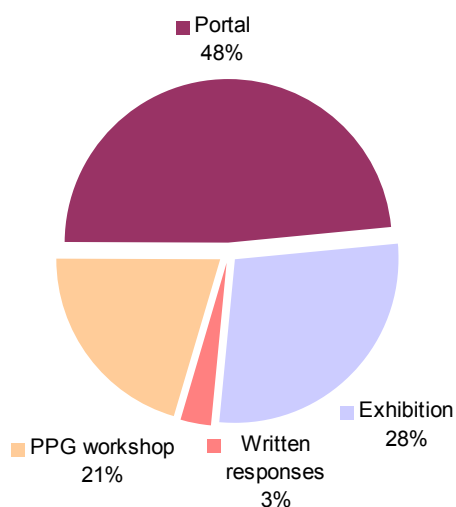
You can also view the plans and fill in the feedback form online at www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/livelycities by 24 November 2013.

Feedback from the consultation will help to inform the permanent scheme which will be agreed by the council next year following a formal consultation on replacement parking facilities.

A large part of the necessary funding has already been secured for the scheme. A phasing plan will ensure that construction work on the key elements of the project commences next Spring, for completion later in 2014.

Exhibition panel 4

3. Summary of findings



Response by type

Responses were received from 68 individuals and/or organisations.

The vast majority of respondents (52) used the standard feedback form to express their views on the proposals. This included:

- § 33 who used the online version posted in the council's Consultation Portal;
- § 18 who used the printed forms provided during the three-day exhibition in Providence Place Gardens; and
- § 1 who send the form by post.

Two written responses were received from representatives from Friends of the Earth and Bricycles.

Views expressed by the 14 members of the public, representatives of organisations and local ward councillors who attended the Providence Place Forum were also recorded and considered as part of the consultation.

Transcripts of all responses received are detailed in the longer version of this document.

3.1 General overview

Overall the most popular areas of support (or suggestions for improving the proposed design) included:

- illuminating the trees and the church after dark with LED sustainable energy lighting, whilst minimising light pollution;
- using high quality, long lasting, maintenance-friendly, sustainable materials - particularly for the terraced steps;
- clearly demarking the shared-space zone and ensuring parking restrictions are enforced;
- increasing the proposed level of greening across the project area (with particular support expressed for the proposed green wall and requests for hanging baskets, trees, planting, wild flowers and raised beds);
- providing for the free movement of cyclists and people with disabilities across the site;
- providing an increased number of well-spaced Sheffield cycle stands across the site, in particular close to London Road;
- realigning the proposed street furniture in Ann Street 'pocket square' to release more space for pedestrians and cyclists
- encouraging new uses along with the proposed new frontages to the existing rear elevations of buildings around the edge of the project area, to provide cafes, bars, art gallery and new entrances to London Road shops; and
- ensuring that the proposed waste bins are attractive, colourful, compact and to consider making them the subject of a design competition

3.2 Standard feedback form responses

The majority of these respondents:

- § live near the project site (56%) and/or in Brighton (85%);
- § had visited the area during the 2012 pilot (78%); and
- § do not use existing car parking facilities in the area (65%).

The feedback forms asked how the plans could be improved, but nearly half of all respondents (48%) chose not to make suggestions in this respect..

Of those who made suggestions, the graph on the right indicates the aspects of the scheme that attracted most comments.

Only one respondent objected to the proposed plans, on the basis that “the council is ‘short of money [and] it [would be] imprudent to spend any money on a scheme like this ... [and commit to its] maintenance’.

Respondents’ suggestions are summarised below.

Terraced steps:

- § Should be comfortable and built with quality, long lasting, easy to maintain materials
- § Should incorporate lighting to improve visibility and dimensioned to accommodate traffic flow
- § Planters should be replaced with rails or should be made more attractive through lighting or sculpture

Shared space:

- § Entrances to zone should be clearly marked, kerb and road should be levelled and and similar materials to New Road should be used
- § Free movement of cyclists and disabled people should be provided
- § More trees and seating should be provided, in particular along Ann Street
- § Children must be educated to use shared space.

Street furniture:

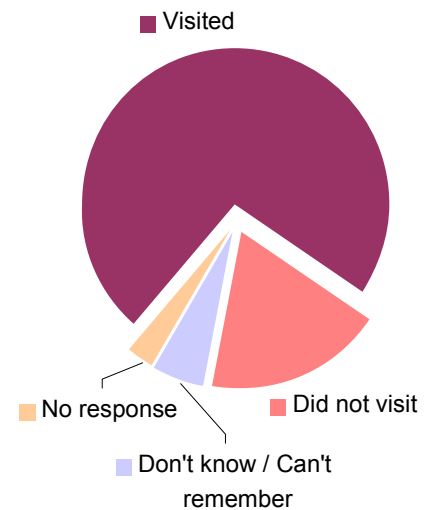
- § Provide more cycle stands, in particular near London Road
- § Illuminate trees and church, using sustainable LEDs, whilst avoiding light pollution
- § Provide more greening of the area (green wall, baskets)

Design guidance for developing plots at rear of London Road properties

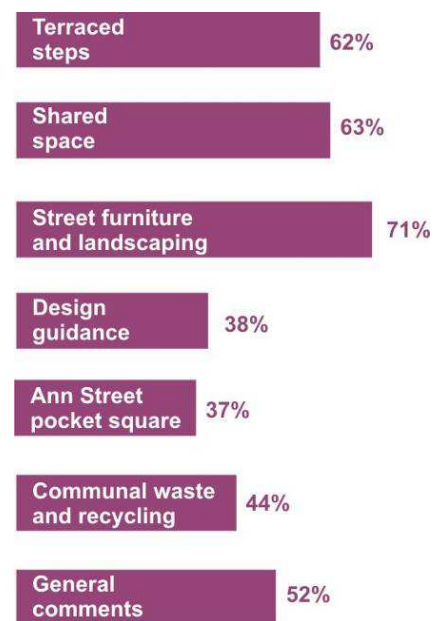
- § Encourage cafes, bars, art gallery and entrances to London Road shops
- § Improve existing facades

Ann Street pocket square

- § Provide more greenery (trees, raised flower beds, grass)
- § Realign proposed layout of street furniture in Ann Street pocket square to release more space for pedestrians and ensure cycle parking provides Sheffield stands.



Respondents who visited site during 2012 pilot



Share of respondents who made suggestions per consultation topic.

Communal waste

- § Ensure bins are visually attractive (colourful, small/compact, bury them underground/screen them, hold a design competition)
- § Relocate bins elsewhere in London Road area

General comments

- § Ensure high quality sustainable materials that require minimal maintenance
- § Ensure cycle routes are safe and clearly marked

Relocation of disabled and parking bays

The proposed changes will require the relocation of four disabled parking bays currently provided at the bottom of Ann Street and seven resident parking bays located in Providence Place (along the eastern edge of the park). Respondents were asked to suggest nearby areas where these could be relocated.

The majority of respondents (65%) said they did not use the parking facilities in the area and 80% that they did not hold either a Blue Badge or resident parking permit needed to use the parking facilities in the area.

Among those who said they use parking facilities only half currently hold a Blue Badge (1 respondent) or resident parking permit for the zone Y (9 respondents).

In order to accurately reflect the views of users of current parking facilities, in this report only the views of the permit holders who responded to the consultation will be considered. This would suggest that the preferred options are as follows:

- § the disabled parking bays to be relocated to London Road and Oxford Street; and
- § the resident parking bays to be largely relocated to the streets south of Cheapside and some to the streets near London Road car park.

3.3 Written responses

Feedback received from Brighton & Hove Friends of the Earth and Bricycles indicated broad support for the proposals, in particular HGV restrictions, the green wall and shared space approach. Suggestions made to improve the proposals included :

Brighton & Hove Friends of the Earth

- § Increase number of cycle stands across site and, if possible, replace and increase number of stands outside Sainsbury's (design faults make these difficult to use)
- § Realign proposed arrangement of cycle stands, benches and other street furniture in the Ann Street pocket square to increase space for pedestrians and provide bollards at the western end of cycle stands at the top of the 'square' to protect parked bikees from delivery vehicles using the nearby loading space
- § Introduce trees in Ann Street to make it more attractive.

Brighton & Hove Bricycles

- § Ensure a clear, coherent, and convenient demarked two-way route on the carriageway which takes account of cyclist desire lines and avoids traffic conflicts;
- § Ensure Providence Place shared space is not obstructed by displays from shops and mobile street furniture, if motor vehicle traffic is excluded at any time;
- § Provide plenty of suitably spaced cycle parking, in particular near cyclist destinations such as London Road
- § Ensure plateau style steps and movable furniture in Ann Street pocket square do not lead to a loss of space for cyclists and others and create potential pedestrian/cyclist conflicts

- § Introduce handrails on terraced steps to aid people with mobility impairment, visual impairment and many older people, as planters are too low to assist older people and inadequate for the purpose of enabling people to hold on to them.

3.4 Providence Place Forum workshop

There was general support for the proposals, in particular the potential to strengthen the physical links between the park and the church through treatment of the public realm.

The following issues were raised by various attendees:

- § Allow for occasional HGV access for deliveries and events in St. Bartholomew's Church
- § Prioritise resident off-street parking when relocating bays, using parking audit carried out by residents from the North Laine (NLRA) when considering options for relocating bays
- § Clearly mark shared space to signal user priority and avoid possible accidents from speeding cars and work closely with school to make sure children are educated about how shared space works
- § Audit implementation of shared space to make the necessary adjustments if/when needed
- § Design should minimise risk of people coming down the steps and walking into oncoming traffic
- § Reintroduce tables used during pilot in the Ann Street pocket park and get local businesses to manage them
- § Extend sponsored graffiti initiative in Elder Place to LICl project area and talk to children about graffiti as an art form as distinctive from tagging