

Improving Headington Centre



About the project

BACKGROUND

Headington Action and Headington Neighbourhood Forum are taking action to help improve Headington Centre.

In 2021 Headington Action worked with local people in Headington to prepare a vision for the future of Headington Centre.

The vision is that Headington Centre will:

- Be welcoming, inclusive, and easily accessible for all, encouraging active and sustainable travel;
- Have lively and vibrant gathering spaces;
- Provide an extended hours economy and a mix of services for our diverse demography;
- Reflect the presence of local institutions.

THE PROJECT

The Headington Centre Improvement Project is the first step to realising the vision.

Headington Action has employed urban design practice AR Urbanism, with the support of Wedderburn Transport Planning, to identify ideas and prepare a plan to implement the vision. The plan will be a document describing a range of different potential projects across the study area. Projects will range in size from small to large scale.

TELL US WHAT YOU LIKE

Show us which ideas you support.

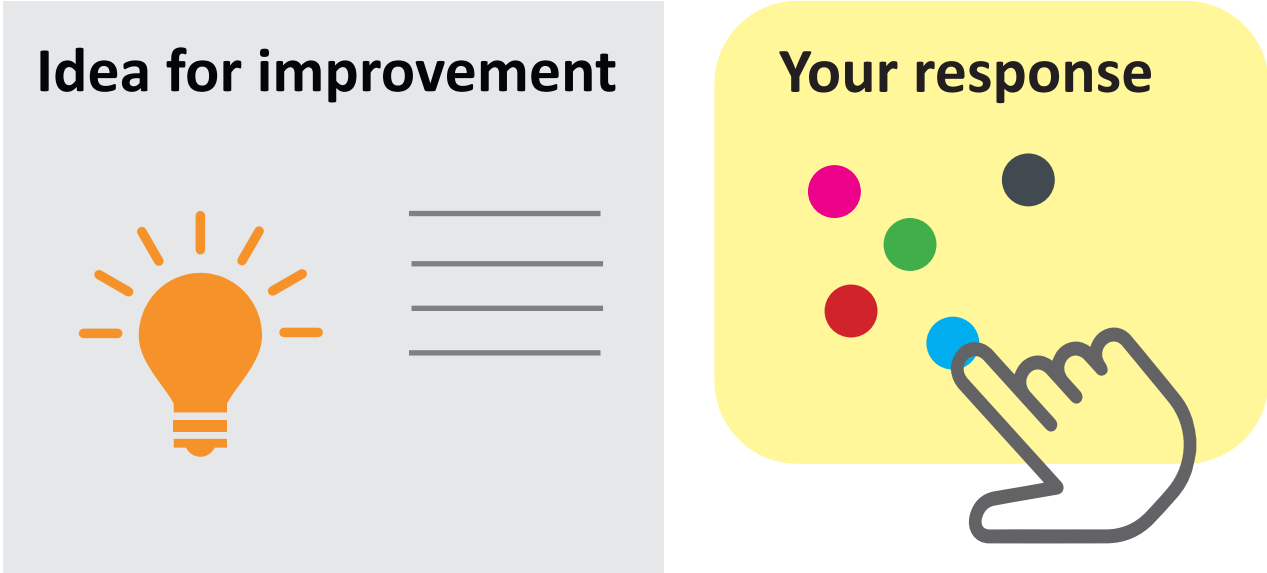
Take a strip of sticky dots from the table.

Review the draft ideas for improvement projects on the following posters.

You can stick a dot next to projects or ideas that you like.

Use any colour sticky dot.

Stick the dots in the yellow squares, like the example shown below.



THE STUDY AREA



CONTEXT



Team and Timeline

Meet the study team



Richard Crappsley
AR Urbanism



Agata Podgajna
AR Urbanism



Lauryn Holland
AR Urbanism



Anna Saveleva
AR Urbanism



Amanda Reynolds
AR Urbanism



Riccardo Bobisse
AR Urbanism



Martin Wedderburn
Wedderburn Transport Planning



Sara Nalaskowska
Wedderburn Transport Planning

Project timeline

The project was launched in May at the Headington Festival. Since then the AR Urbanism team has:

- Analysed the area to understand issues and opportunities for change;
- Listened and learned about concerns and aspirations of stakeholders and the local community; and
- Identified draft ideas for potential future improvements.

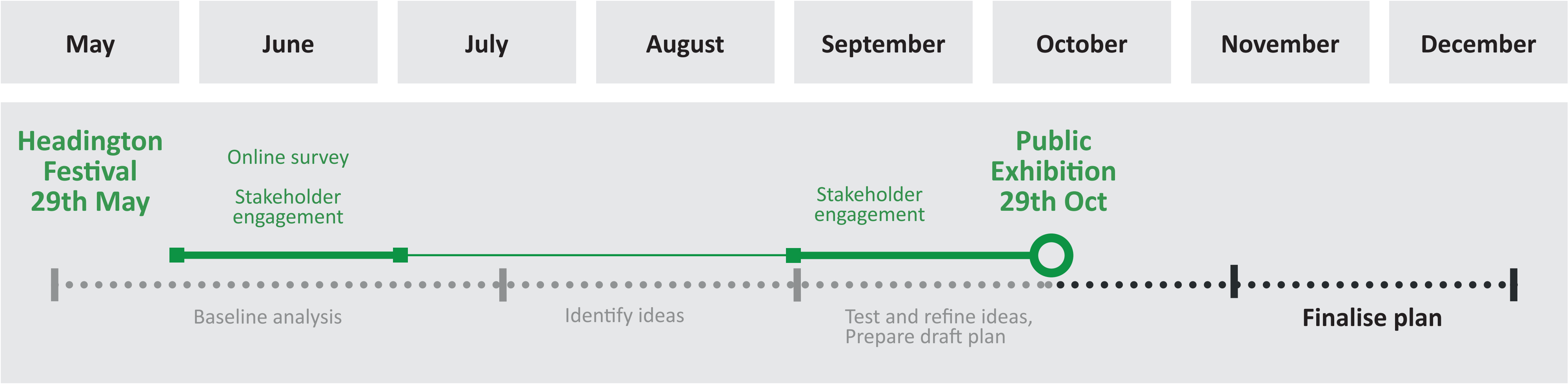
These ideas are the subject of today's exhibition.

What happens next

After this exhibition we will review feedback on the ideas. The ideas will be refined and presented in the Headington Centre Improvement Plan document. This will be issued by January 2023.

Headington Action and Headington Neighbourhood Forum will use the Plan to promote future improvements, and work with stakeholders to deliver them. Delivery timeframes could vary from 1 - 2 years, to 5 years or more, depending on the improvement.

The Plan is just a starting point. Improvement ideas will require design development and consultation. Implementation of ideas is dependent on securing funding. There will be more opportunities to shape these initial ideas. Sign up to Headington Action's email list or follow them on social media to hear more.



Community Survey

What we heard

Online surveys of local people and businesses were undertaken between May 28th and July 4th 2022. Over 330 responses were received.

POSITIVE & NEGATIVE ASPECTS →

The survey results have told us what people like and dislike about the Centre.

The graphic to the right highlights the key aspects which were identified as the most positive and the most negative. These are ranked in order of scale, according to number of times they were mentioned.



Most positive

Saturday Market

Cafés / restaurants

Services

Ease of walking around

Public spaces

Bus and coach access

Retail offer

Pubs

Personal security



Most negative

Activities for children & young people

Evening economy

Leisure facilities

Car access

Cultural activities/events

Services

Cleanliness

Car parking

Retail offer

Physical appearance

TYPES OF IMPROVEMENTS TO CONSIDER ↓

The results have also helped us understand what type of improvements people would like us to consider. There were a wide range of ideas. The illustration below captures ones that were mentioned frequently.

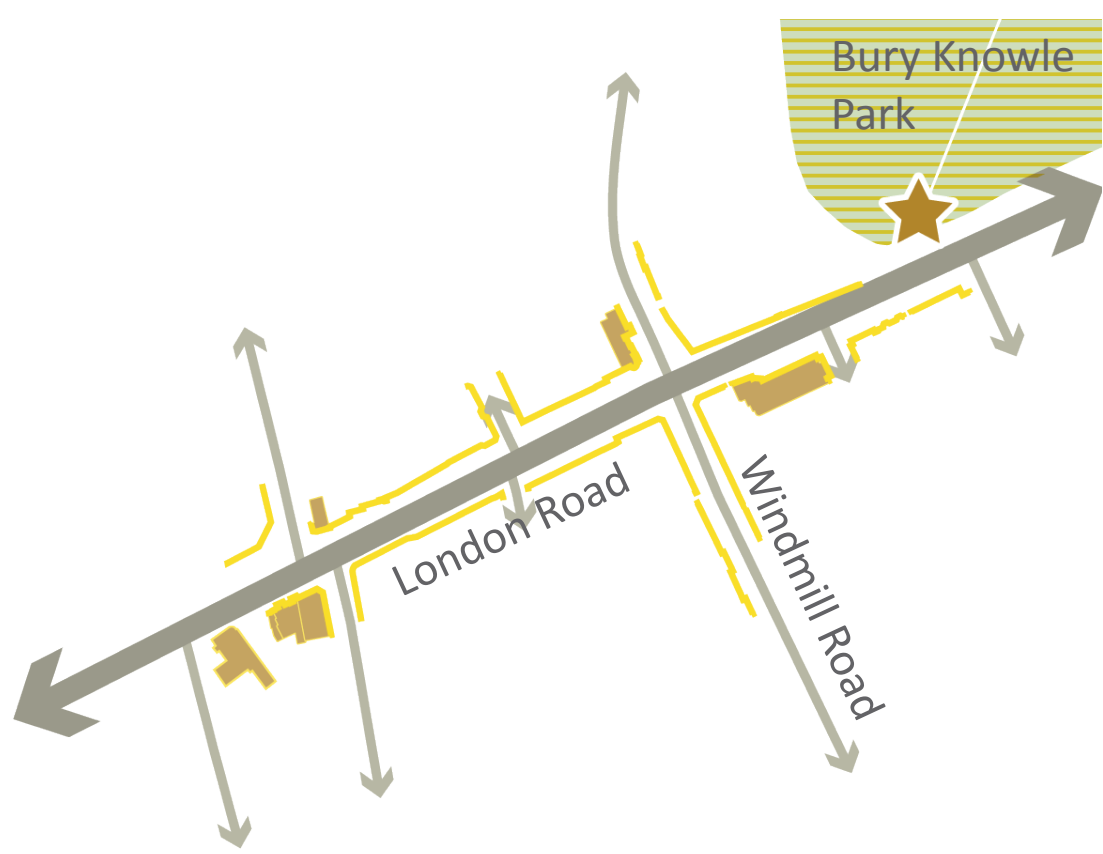


Vision and Design Themes

Design themes

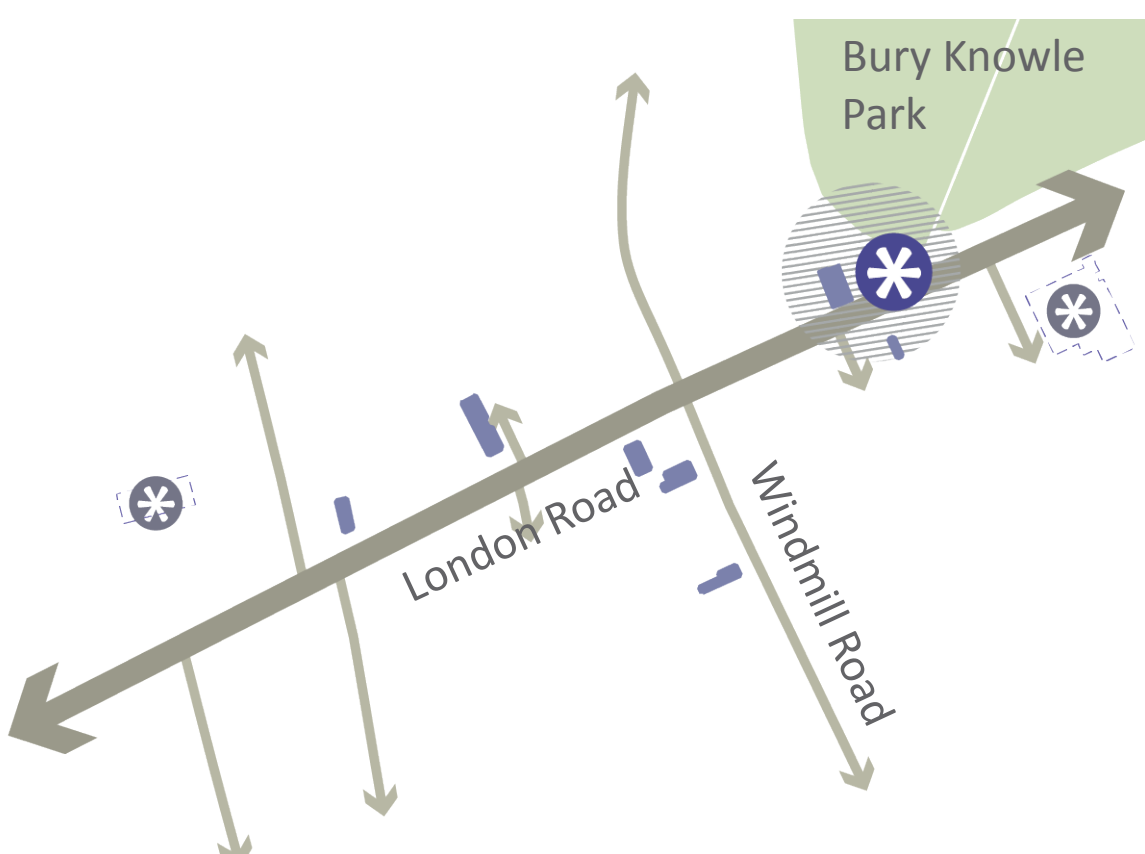


We have identified six themes - illustrated conceptually below - to address in the Improvement Plan. The ideas for improvements presented on the following posters, all support one or more of these themes.



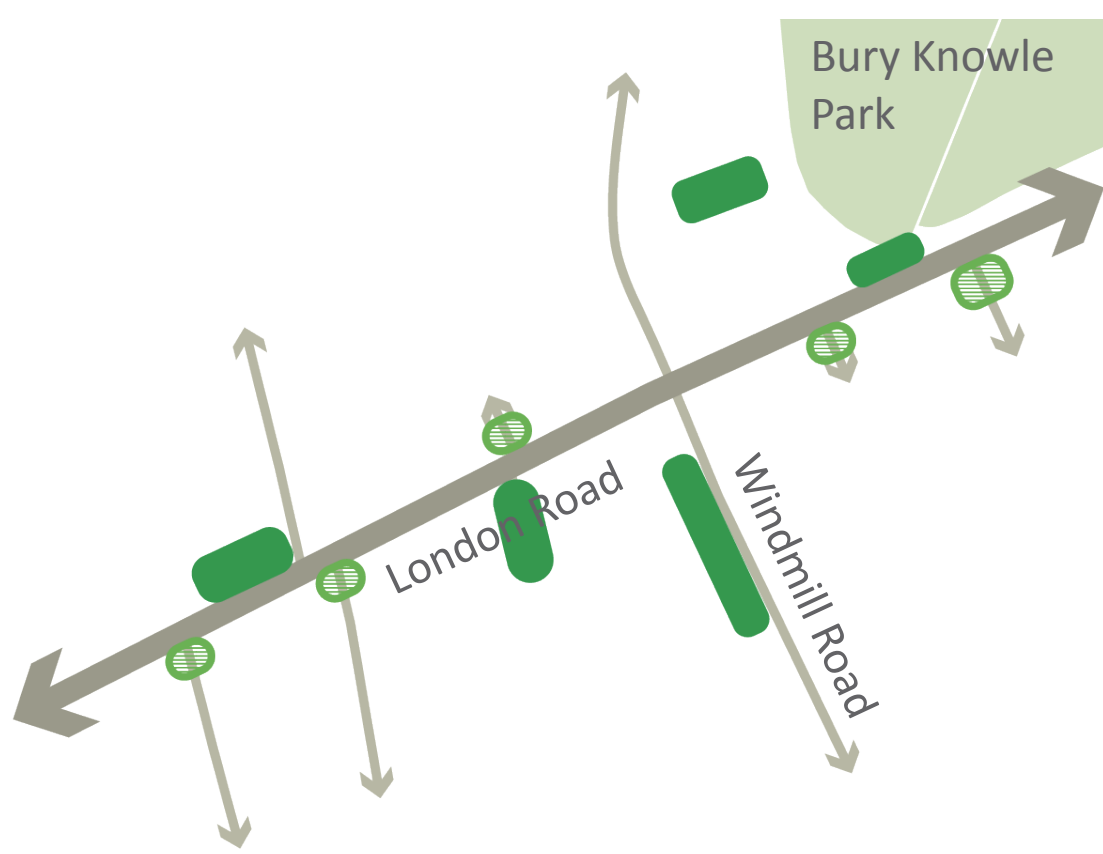
Strengthening local identity:

- Highlighting local features and heritage
- Adding character via placemaking and public realm improvements



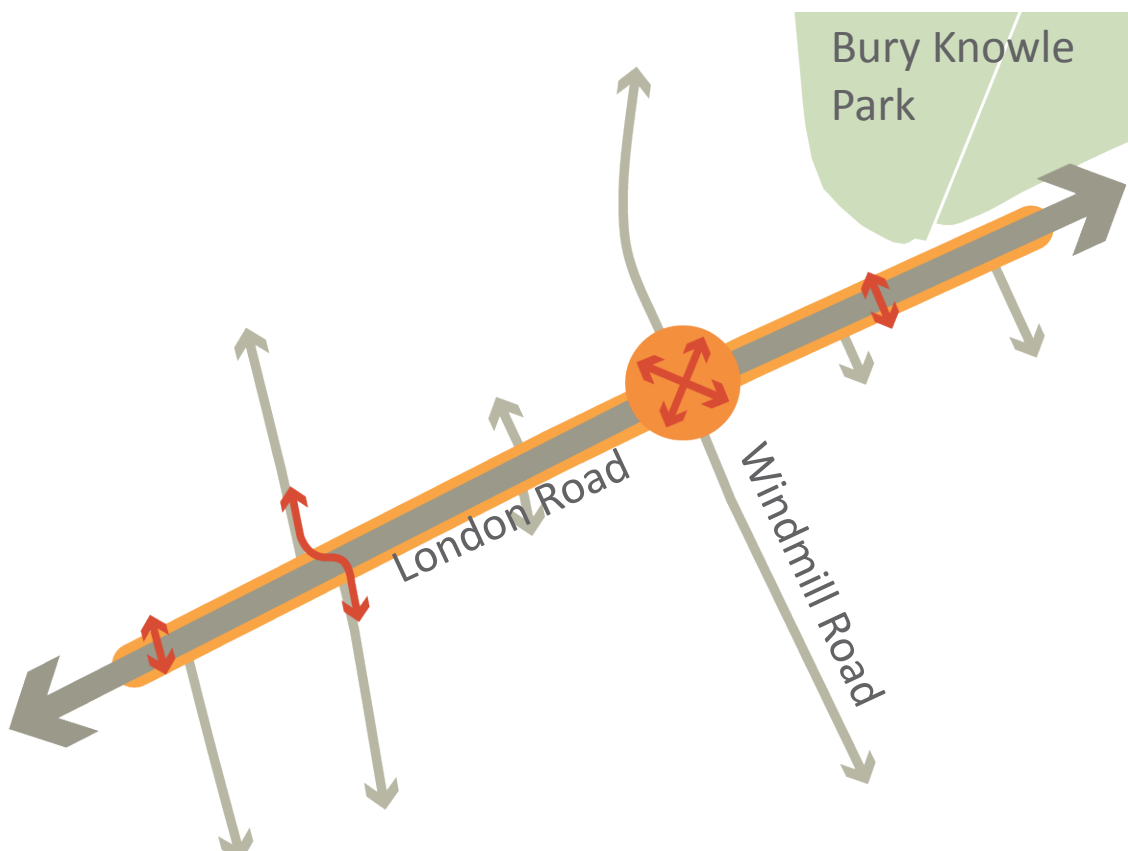
Supporting community vitality:

- A community facility in the Centre
- Measures that can support business success



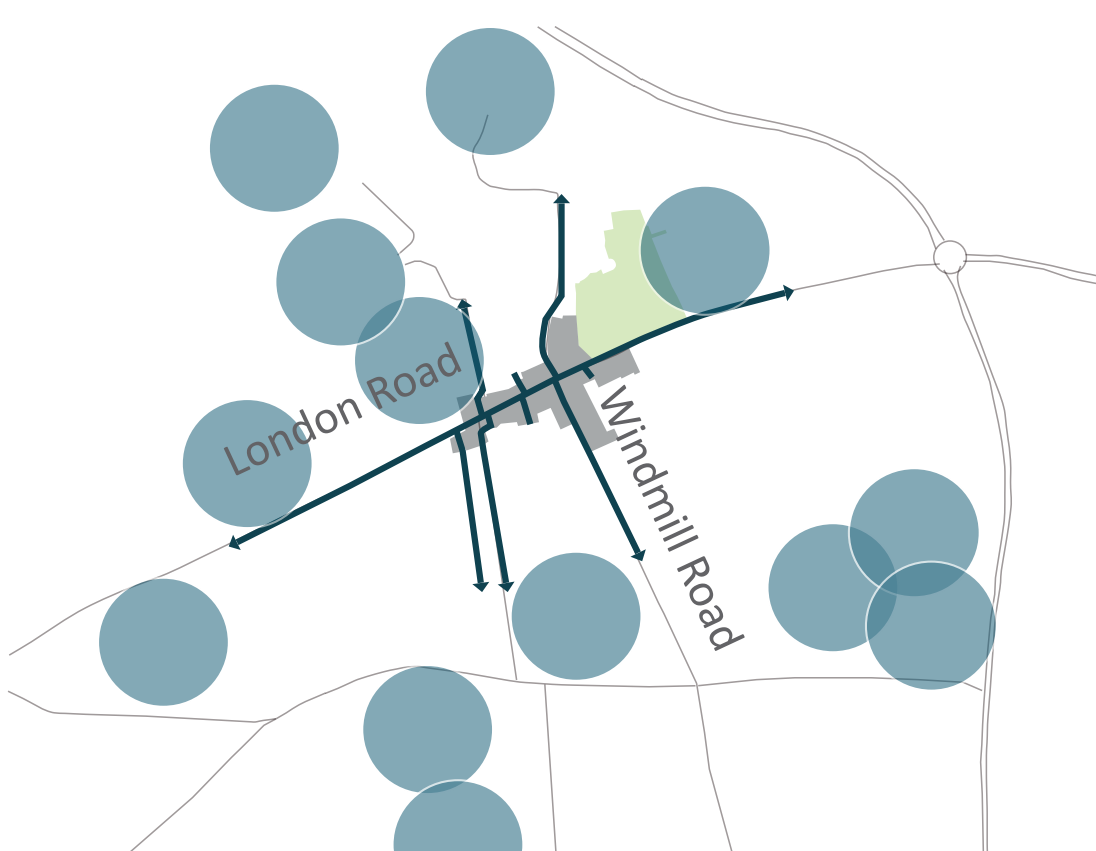
Creating lively public spaces:

- New pocket plazas making most of limited space
- Improving amenity and adding greenery



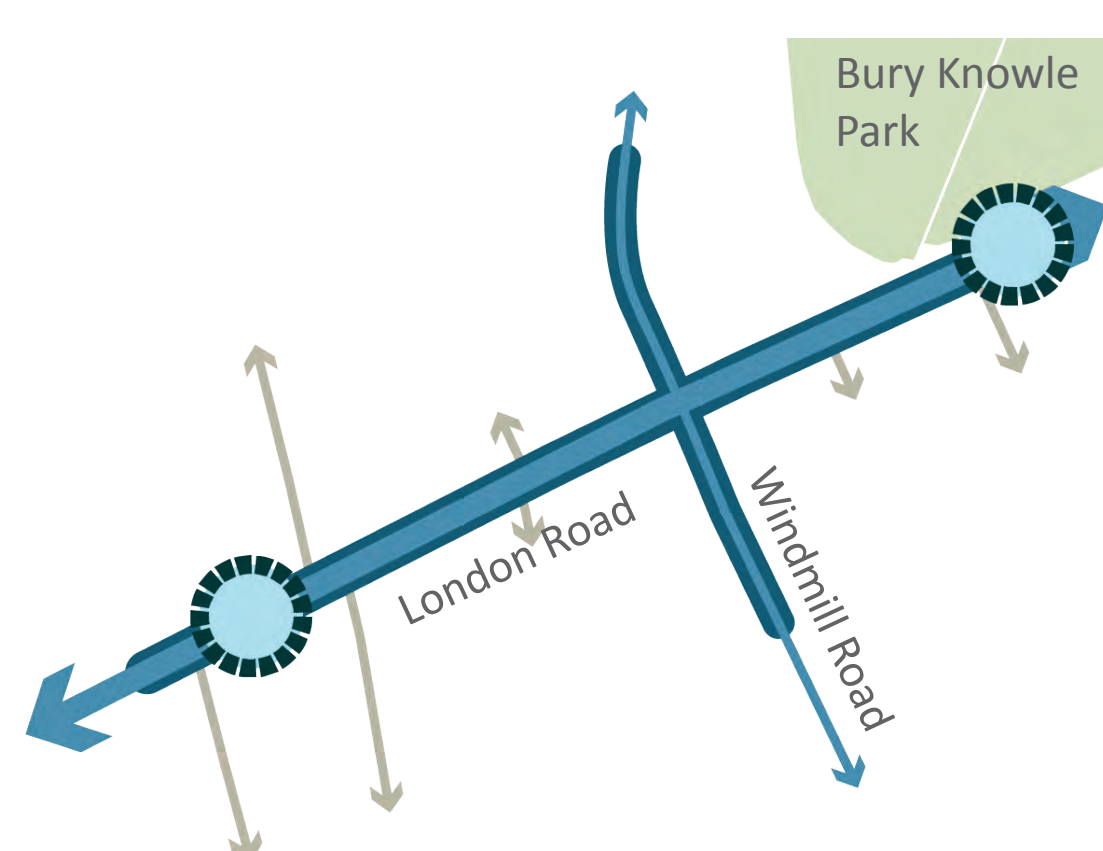
Connecting people with places:

- Ease of walking along/across London Road
- Accommodating all ages and abilities
- Access by active and sustainable means



Connecting and reflecting the institutions:

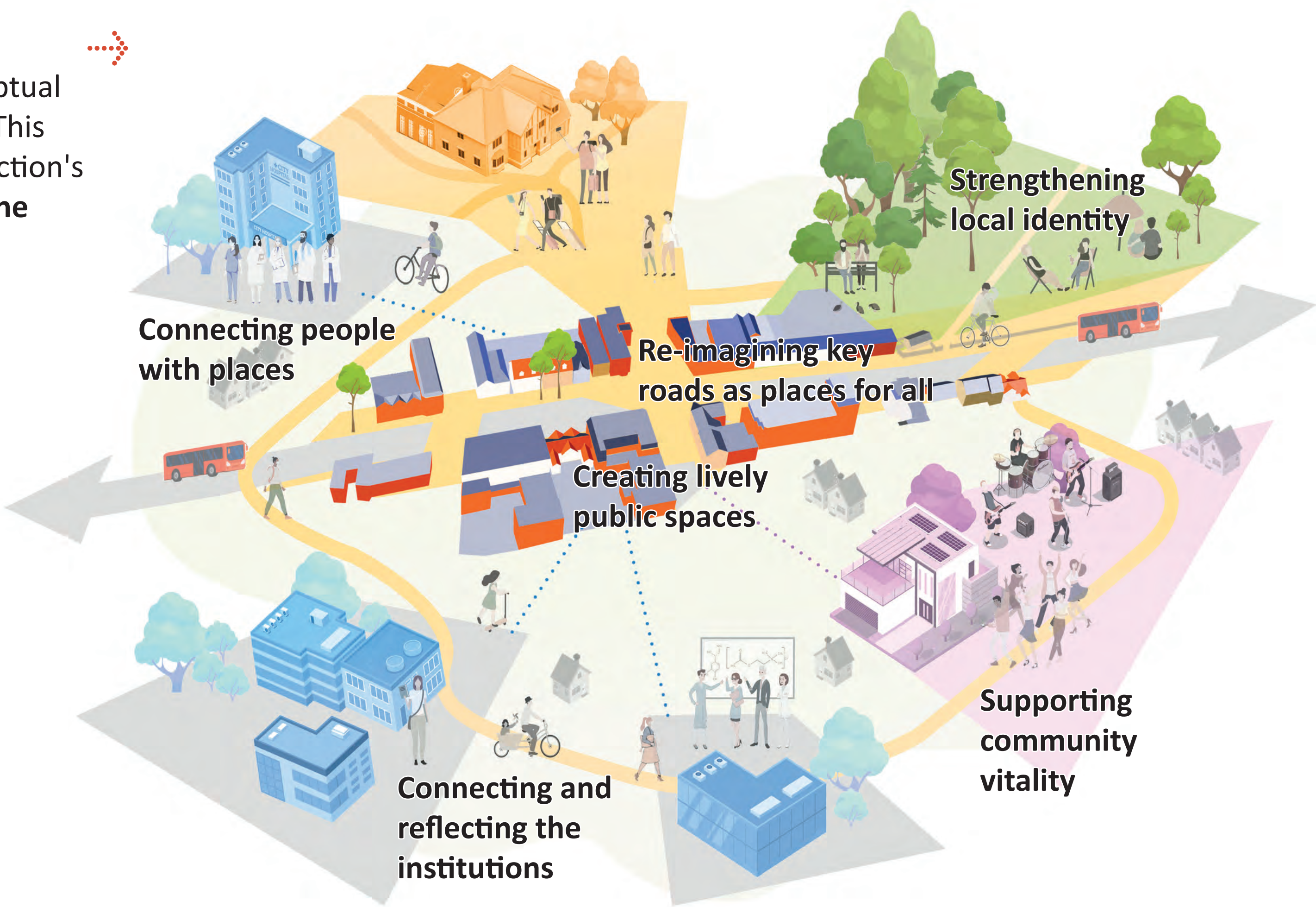
- Access between the Centre and the various campuses and institutions
- Strengthening their presence within the Centre



Re-imagining key roads as places for all:

- Streets for people and activity as well as corridors for movement
- Promote sense of arrival into Headington

The design themes are combined into a conceptual vision for Headington. This supports Headington Action's aspiration **to develop the Centre as the heart of Headington**



Ideas for Improvements

1. Headington Centre gateway areas



ARTIST'S IMPRESSION OF POTENTIAL EASTERN GATEWAY

EXISTING SITUATION

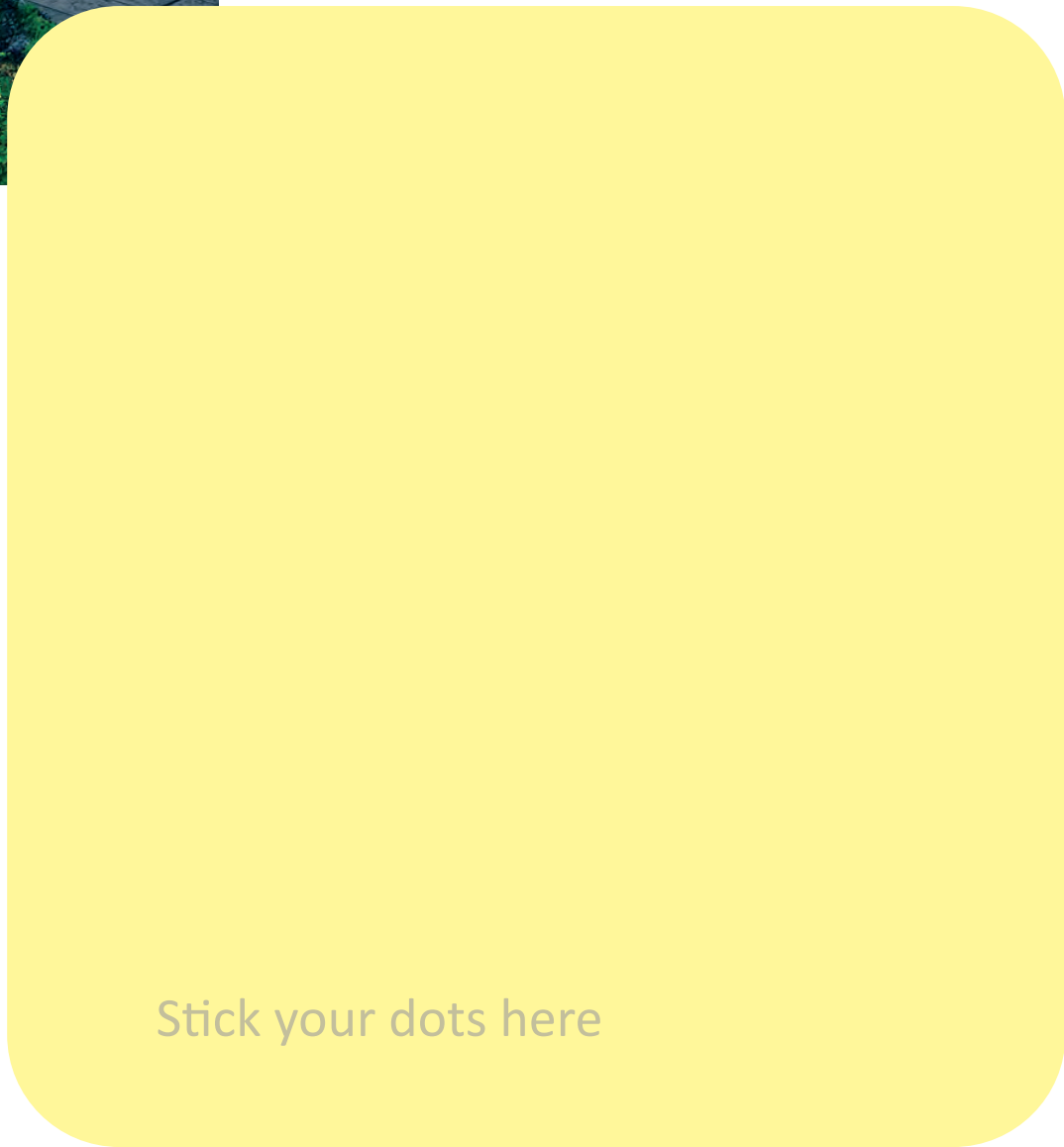
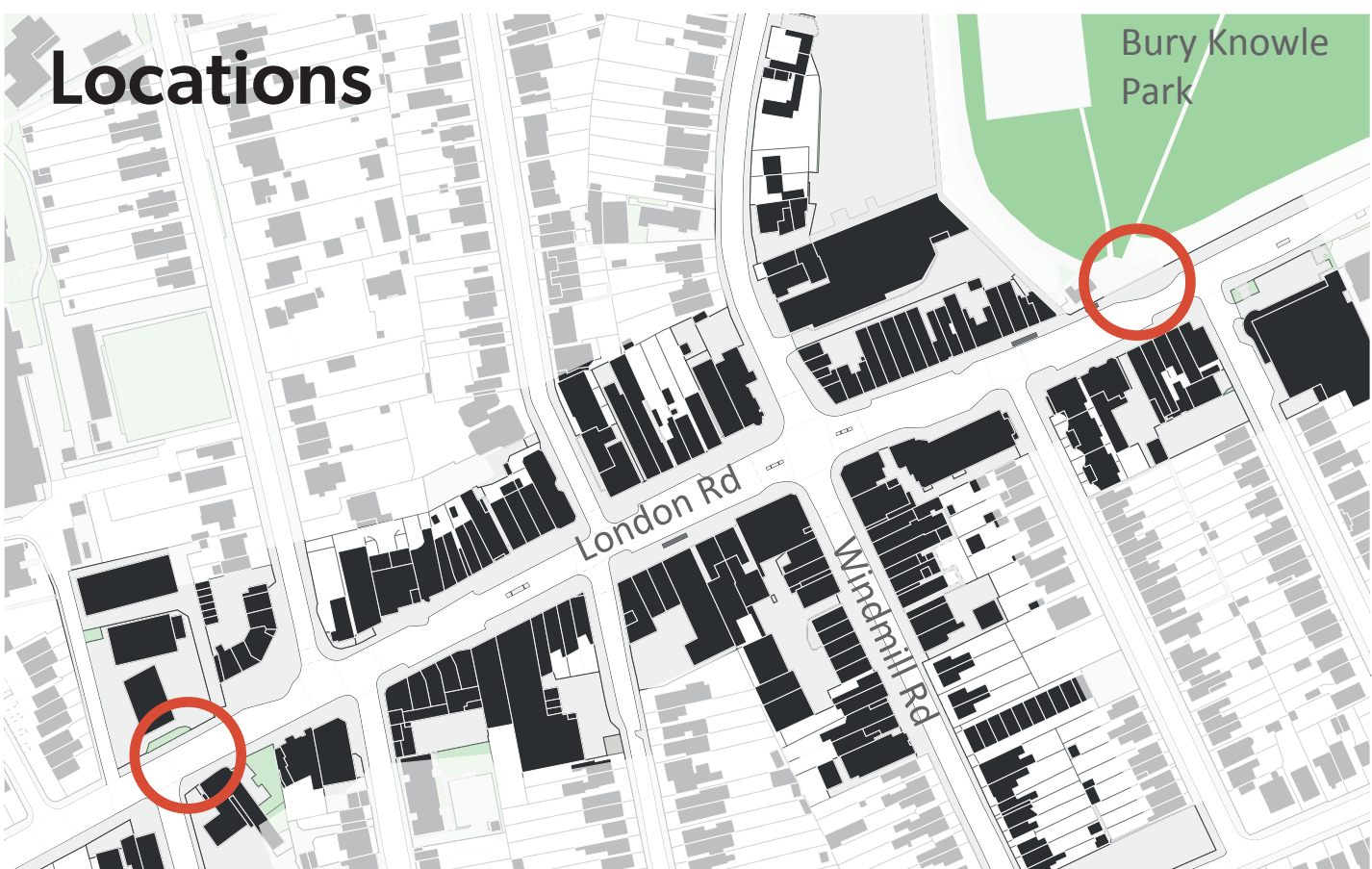


Redesign these two locations on London Road to provide a strong sense of arrival into Headington Centre from both the east and the west.

Provide design features that slow traffic, e.g. median strips, narrowed carriageway, and different surfacing. Relocate and improve pedestrian crossing and widen pavements by relocating bus stops.

Enhance identity using landscape, feature lighting, art elements. At the eastern gateway a new entrance plaza for Bury Knowle Park could also be created.

The gateways could help catalyse further change along the rest of London Road, as explained in idea number 11, the Long Term Vision for London Road.

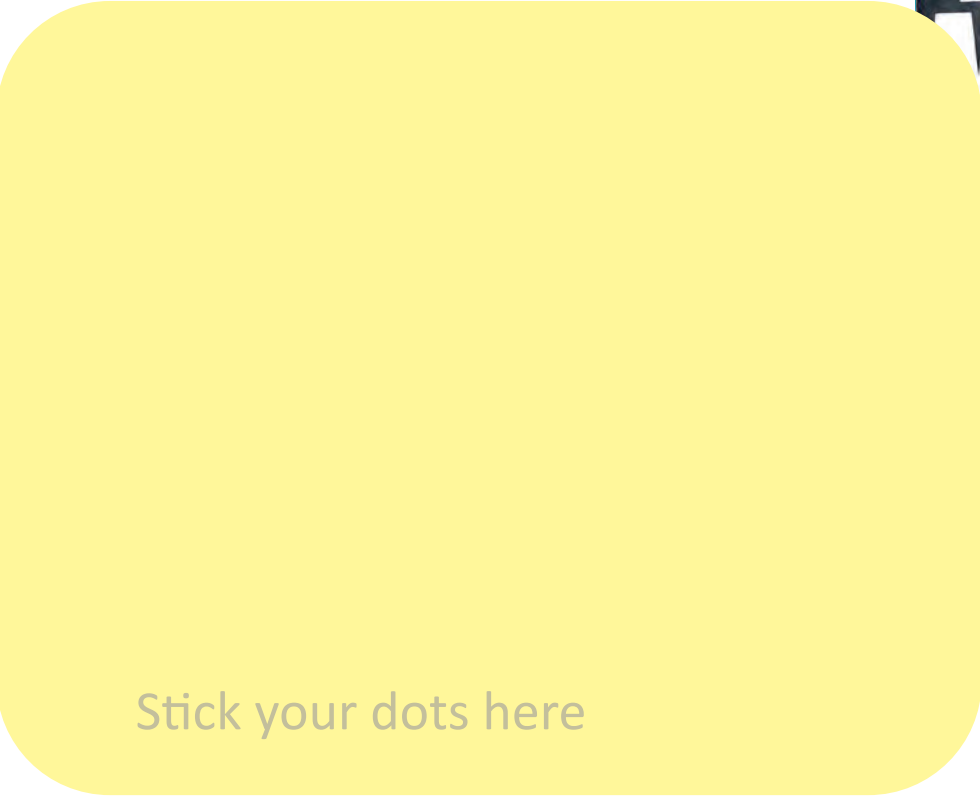
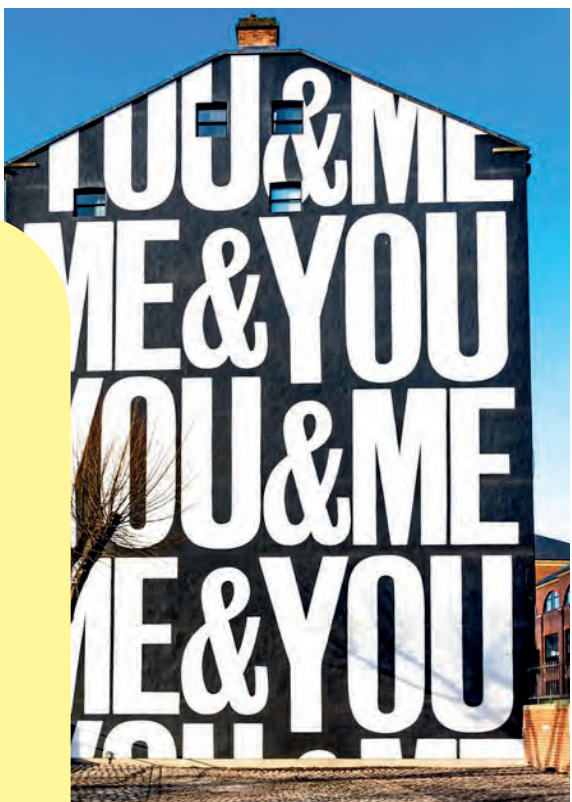


2. Placemaking elements

Celebrate local heritage, e.g. with interpretation panels and trail.

Public art interventions, e.g. shop shutters and blank walls.

Creative lighting, e.g. highlighting features or integrated within landscape.



3. Walking improvements

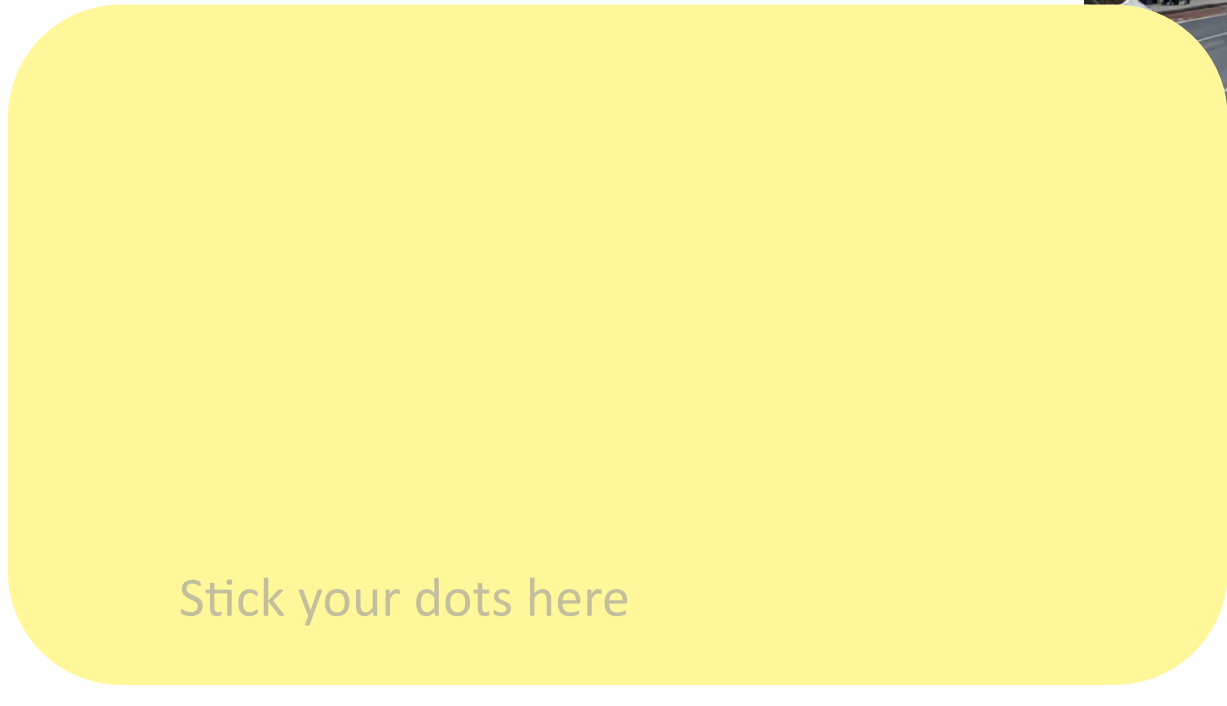
Provide wayfinding signage.

Remove / relocate street furniture and signage where possible.

Redesign level changes to reduce obstruction.

Provide continuous footway crossings across side street entries.

Relocate cycle and scooter parking to side streets.



Ideas for Improvements

4. Osler Road corner pocket plaza



ARTIST'S IMPRESSION

Enhance area as an informal public space with additional planting, seating, and feature lighting. Integrate informal play elements. Retain some pavement space free for use for small events and business spill-out. Relocate cycle and scooter parking. Prevent car parking on the footway.

Stick your dots here

5. Kennett Road pocket plaza



ARTIST'S IMPRESSION

Narrow road and extend pavement to create a public space with seating, planting, feature lighting. Integrate informal play elements. Retain local access for vehicles. Host events / installations and use for Saturday Market.

Stick your dots here

6. Windmill Road public realm



Provide high quality public realm on the west (wider) side of Windmill Road, working with property owners to resurface pavements entirely.

Provide permanent planting along street edge (i.e. trees and plants in-ground), plus seating, and feature lighting.

Space for business spill-out / sitting-out.

Complement with art on shop shutters and shop front improvements.



Stick your dots here

Ideas for Improvements

7. A community hub

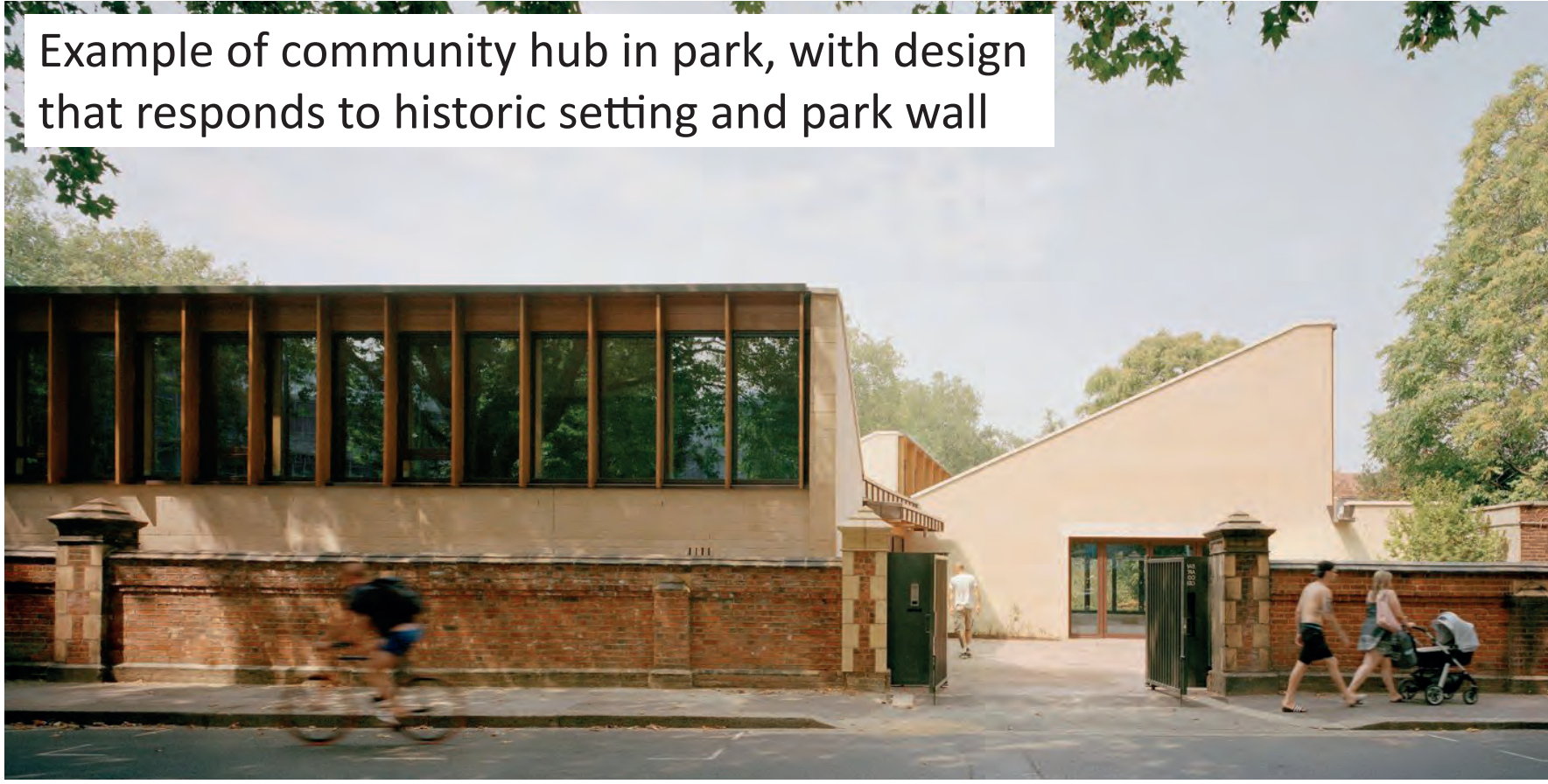
Provide a dedicated building in Headington Centre for use by all the community. This could be a new building at the Bury Knowle Park entrance, replacing the existing toilet block (with WC reprovision), sensitively designed for park context (including Old Headington Conservation Area and listed wall).

The building could provide for new activities for children and young people, along with additional activities within the grounds of Bury Knowle Park.

A new entrance plaza and gateway enhancements would help announce the hub and the Park. This would be complemented with gateway improvements as shown in idea 1.

Alternatively, an existing building such as a vacant shop or office building could be repurposed and retrofitted as a community facility.

Example of community hub in park, with design that responds to historic setting and park wall



Stick your dots here

8. Making more of the institutions

Create a space for showcasing research work done by the institutions and engaging with the community, e.g. via lectures and exhibitions. This could be within a vacant unit in the centre.

Improve walking between the Centre and institutions with wayfinding, and upgrades to pavements and public realm at key locations.

Programme 'pop-ups' by Headington businesses in institutions. E.g. Saturday Market stallholders or other local businesses which might offer something institutions' staff/ students/ visitors likely to be interested in.



Stick your dots here

9. Saturday Market

Facilitate improvement of market stall layout and expansion. Declutter pavement space on London Road (see also idea 3. Walking improvements) and redesign north end of Kennett Road to accommodate market stalls (see also idea 5. Kennett Road Pocket Plaza).

Provide a dedicated and weather-protected storage area for market stalls, bins, and other equipment.



Stick your dots here

10. Shop front improvements

Work with businesses to improve shop fronts and building façades, helping to create a visually appealing and coherent townscape. E.g. this could cover graphic design of signs, facade architectural elements, and window displays. The scheme could be run as a match-funding grant scheme for landlords and business owners.



Stick your dots here

Ideas for Improvements

11. A long-term vision for London Road

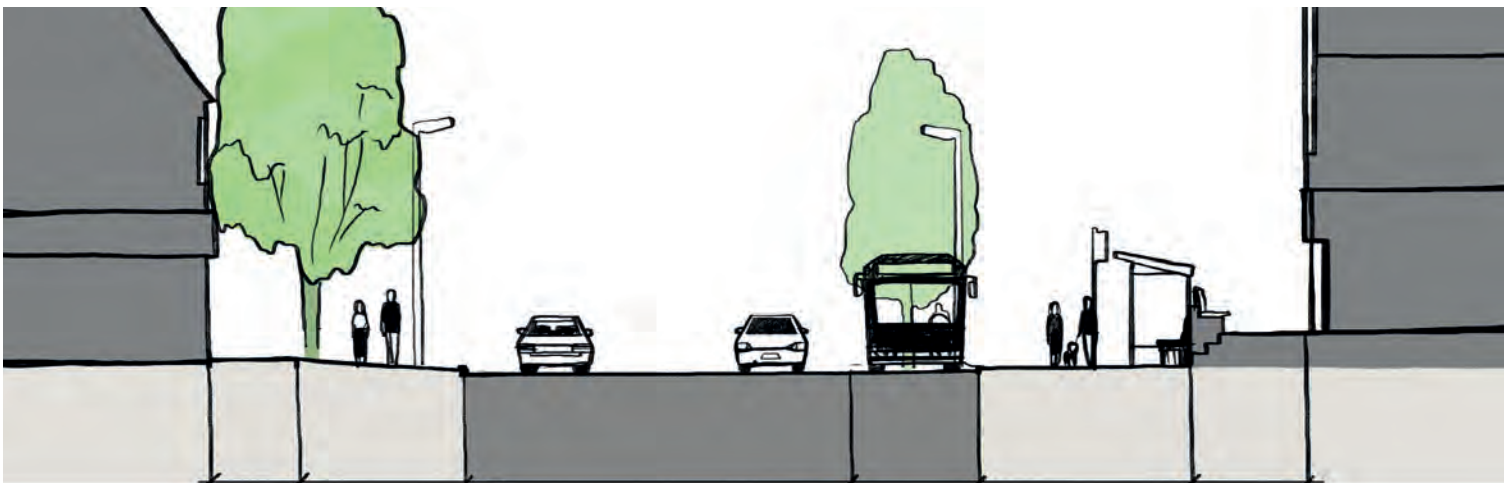
A major project to re-imagine and redesign London Road to make it a distinctive and attractive place for people to come to and spend time in, and strongly support active and sustainable travel.

This would be a complex and long-term project with extensive design development required with the County, City, local community and key stakeholders.

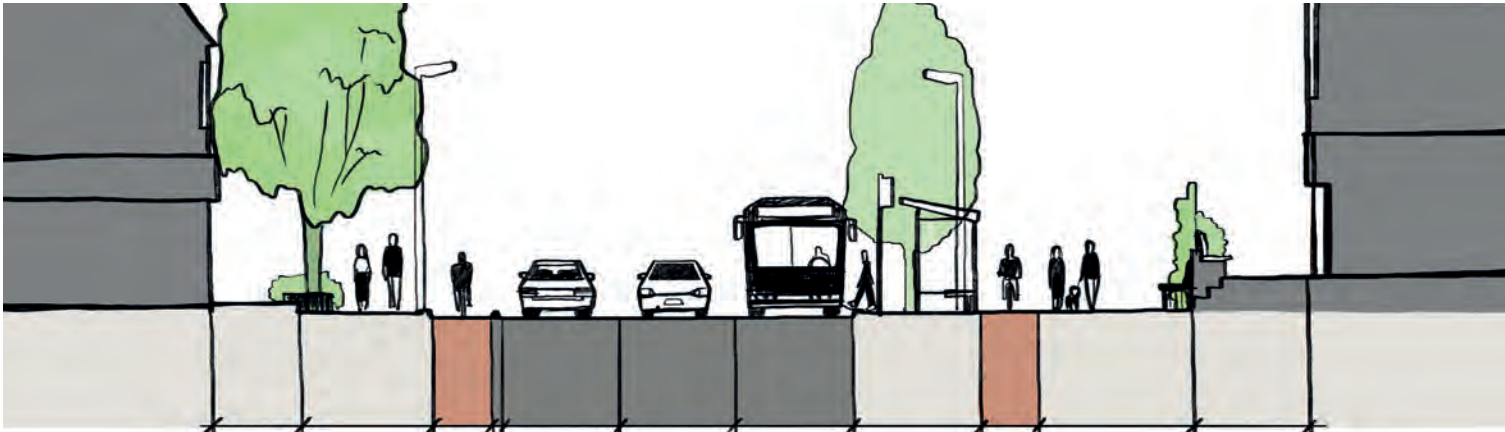
The proposed starting point for the vision is:

- Ensure wide and unobstructed footways throughout Headington centre
- Improve pedestrian crossings and reduce vehicle speeds
- Create safe cycling infrastructure through the high street with either segregated tracks or mixed with vehicles in a 15mph speed zone (subject to approval)
- Relocate bus stops to increase the effective footway width where crowding is a problem
- Retain on-street loading facilities for units with no rear servicing access
- Remove on-street parking from London Road and re-provide some short stay parking on side streets prioritising disabled users

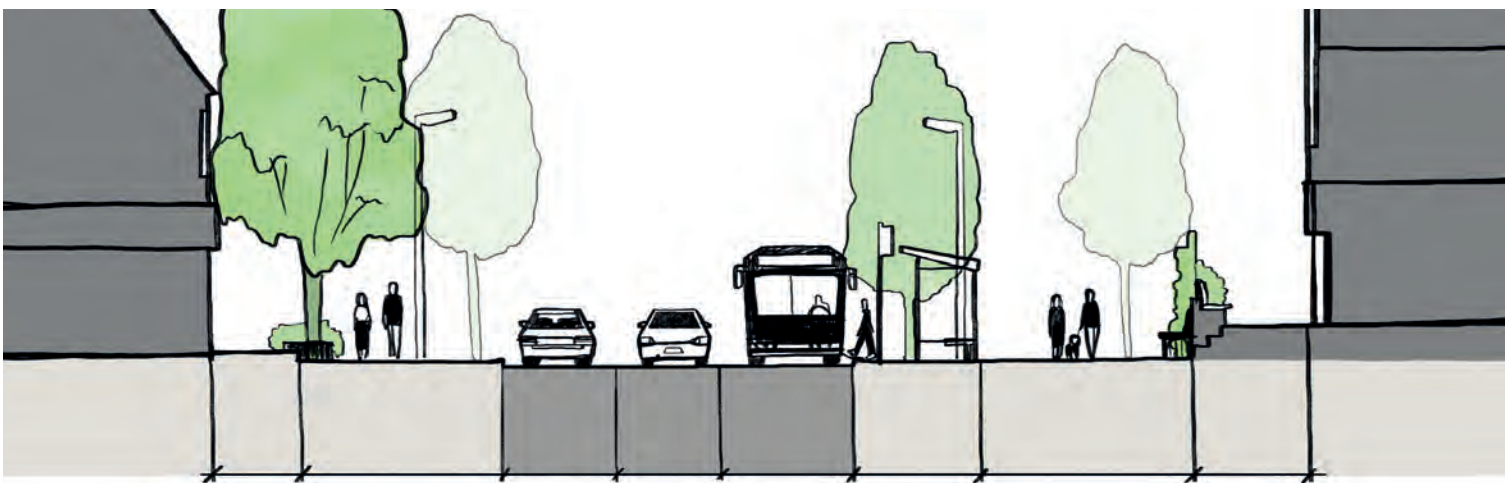
This vision aligns with the policies of the draft Central Oxfordshire Travel Plan (COTP) and represents an aspiration for delivery over a longer timeframe when funding becomes available. The vision seeks to align with emerging proposals that are the subject of consultation, and the detailed locations of some proposals such as improved orbital bus routes and transport hubs may change.



Existing: this shows a typical situation on London Road



Potential with cycle lanes: how space could be reallocated to provide a segregated cycle lane on each side of the road



Potential with mixed traffic: how space could be reallocated to maximise footways and narrow the carriageway space



Gateway treatments (see also idea 1) and narrow carriageway would keep traffic slow



Parking could be relocated to side streets



Diagonal pedestrian crossings could be provided at the main junction



Loading bays could be integrated with the footway design



Protected cycle lanes could be considered for each side of London Road



Cycle lanes and bus stop areas would need to be designed to work together

INDICATIVE CROSS-SECTIONS EXPLORING POTENTIAL WAYS OF ARRANGING STREET SPACE

Tell us more...

Answer our short questionnaire and provide any further comments:
<https://bit.ly/3s536Xb>



Stick your dots here