

3 Exploring the Town Centre

Study Area

Here we zoom into the town centre, looking at more specific and detailed considerations affecting Whitefield.

This section presents analysis of the Bury New Road corridor, outlining the key challenges and constraints faced along the high street.

3.1 Key Destinations

There are several key destinations located within the town centre, acting as pull factors for Whitefield. These destinations are considered important to the town centre, and will be central to emerging plans for improvements.

Slattery

A popular family-run business, a patisserie and chocolatier shop and bakery existing since 1967. It is located north from the junction of Bury New Road and Pinfold Lane, close to the entrance to the wooded area of Green Hill. Slattery is a major draw to Whitefield, attracting visitors from far and wide.

Garrick Theatre

A purpose-built theatre located close to the Whitefield tram station. The theatre produces five plays each year, seats 87 people and includes foyer and bar facilities. The Whitefield Garrick Society was founded in 1943 and has its roots in the Whitefield Home Guard. The theatre is a very well-known and used facility among local residents.

Hamilton Road Park

A park located within All Saints Conservation Area. It is accessed via ramp from Bury New Road, and contains children's playground and a hard-paved events space.

Whitefield Park

First opened in 1890, it is a small, local urban local community park, adjacent to Whitefield tram stop. The entrance to the park is flat, then rises towards the middle and slopes away to the rear. Facilities include children's play area, multi-play ball zone and a youth shelter.

All Saints Church

A Grade I listed building built between 1821-1826, it is an Anglican parish church located on Church Lane acting as a community centre.

Former Library

The former Library and Adult Learning Centre on Pinfold Lane also served as a community meeting spot. It has been closed down due to lack of funding.

What you've said..

"Whitefield is an 'in-and-out' town rather than a destination."

Whitefield Resident

What you've said...

"There are not many places to meet - I have to leave Whitefield to do that."

Whitefield Resident



Key destinations



3.2 Understanding Bury New Road Public Realm, Pavements, Parking

Bury New Road presents a hostile and unpleasant environment for pedestrians and cyclists – with wide road carriageways dominating the streetscene.

Additional street analysis cross sections are provided in the appendix, providing further details on the problems faced along the Bury New Road corridor.

The environment at the Stanley Road intersection presents an example where the corridor is at its widest, with heavy traffic prevalent and noise / air pollution a major issue.

Clutter dominate the pavements; inactive frontages on the Morrison’s interface, and there is a lack of outdoor space for businesses to spill out into the street. There is a lack of green infrastructure, including trees, planting and greenery, and cycle lanes are narrow.

The section below captures many of the overarching issues faced by Whitefield Town Centre – as Bury New Road functions as an urban highway, not a high street.

What you’ve said..

“It’s not nice to walk along the main roads.”

Whitefield Resident

1

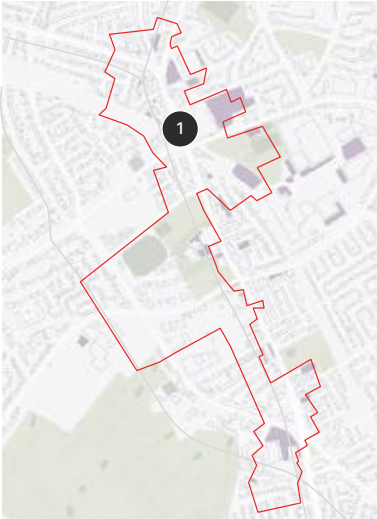


Bury New Road street analysis

What you've said...

"We want narrower road and wider pavements that are safe for everyone."

Whitefield Resident



Limited space for spillout from Porada restaurant



Poor cycling infrastructure



Width of carriageway creates unpleasant pedestrian environment

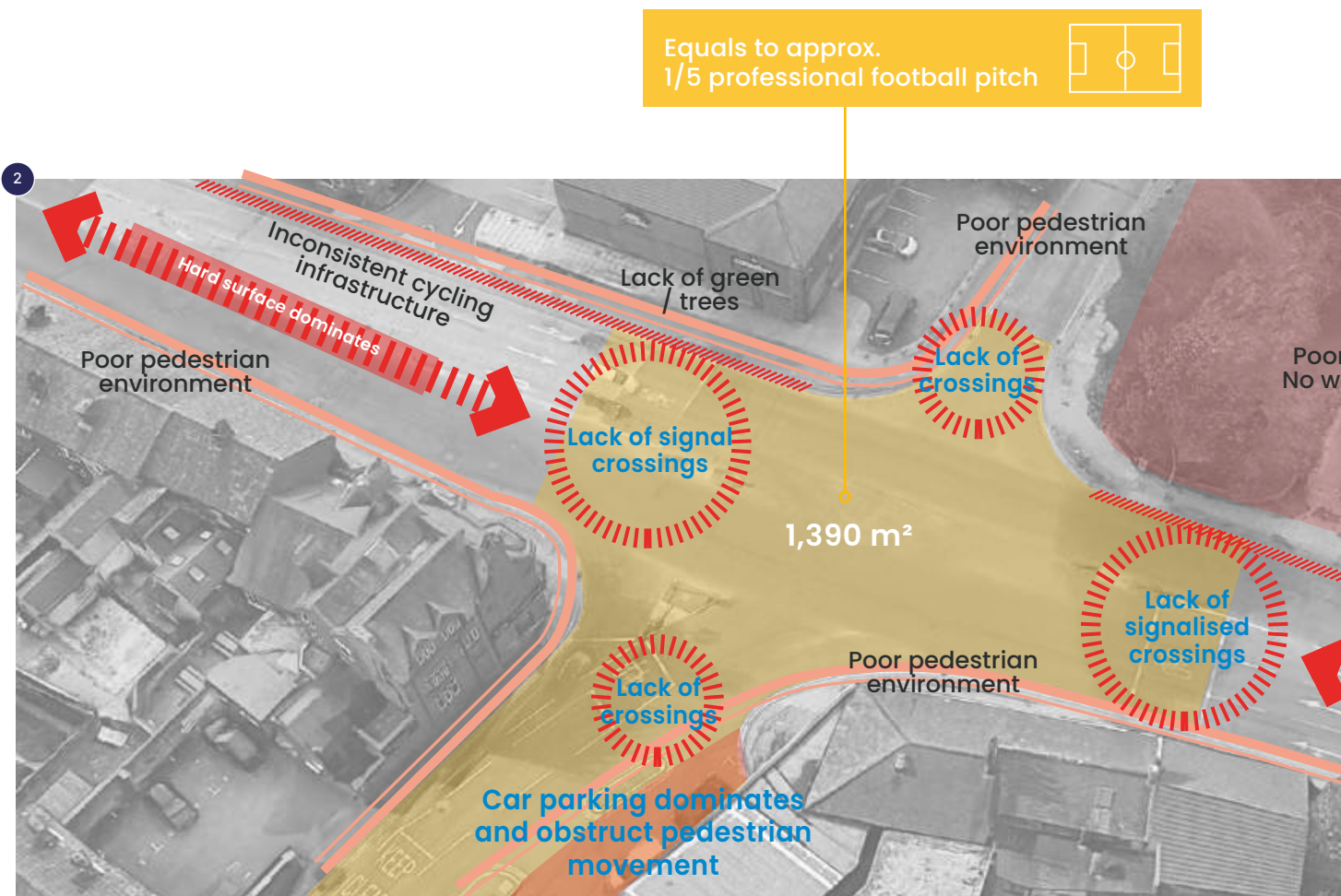


3.3 Understanding Bury New Road Junctions

Whitefield residents regularly expressed their frustration with the heavy traffic along the A56, which makes the town feel busy and overwhelming. The following junction case study captures some of the key prevailing issues faced at Whitefield's key junctions.

The pedestrian environment at key points along the A56 is of low-quality. The majority of crossings are not signalised, and fail to acknowledge pedestrian desire lines. This creates confusion, and as is a risk to pedestrian safety. Pavements are narrow leading into the junctions, further compromising the pedestrian experience and safety.

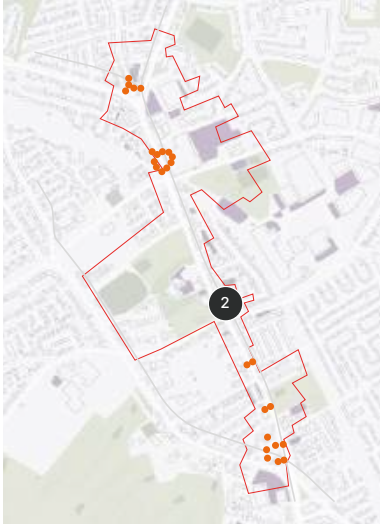
Additional analysis of each of the four key junctions and intersections along Bury New Road are provided in the Appendix.



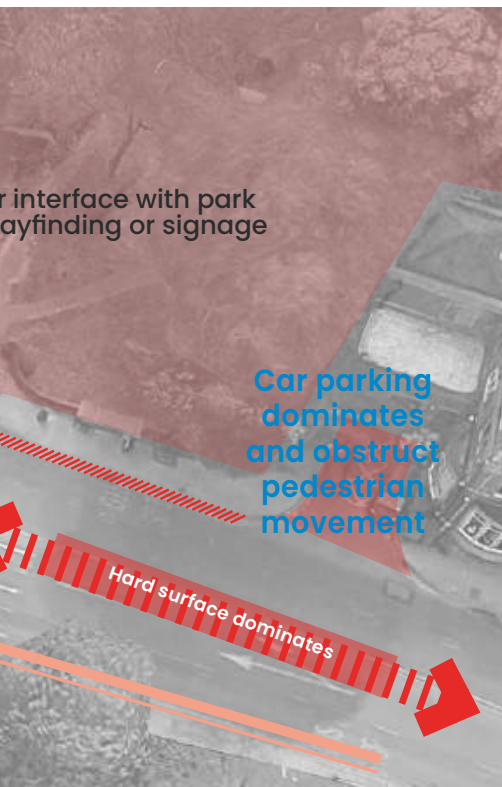
What you've said...

"The town is segregated due to the road and lack of public spaces"

Whitefield Resident



Carriageway dominates the environment



Low-quality public realm



Lack of signal used pedestrian crossings



3.4 Understanding Bury New Road Buildings and Character

Buildings in the study area present a range of architectural qualities, which changes the character of Bury New Road as you move through the town centre.

The majority of the many buildings in the area were built during the 19th and 20th century, with rows of red brick terraces, many now converted into retail units lining Bury New Road.

Larger Victorian semi-detached and detached homes address the street around the conservation area, set back from the street. Deep front gardens enhance the character of Bury New Road; and elevated buildings providing a strong sense of street enclosure.

There are several modern additions to the area, mainly in form of large-footprint retail and office buildings to the north and south. These buildings are surrounded by swathes of surface car parking, and fail to define the high street. This detracts from the sense of enclosure experienced elsewhere along Bury New Road - especially around the northern and southern gateway areas.

Key Findings

- Red brick, Victorian properties are characteristic of the area, and contribute positively to the character of Bury New Road around the conservation area;
- Other historic terraced buildings have been degraded over time, with the addition of low-quality render and fascia;
- Landmark buildings are scattered across the area, however ground floor frontages often fail to activate the street. Landmarks are poorly integrated and act as islands - a result of surrounding road infrastructure and boundary treatments; and
- The setting of landmark buildings are often poor, failing to celebrate the assets.



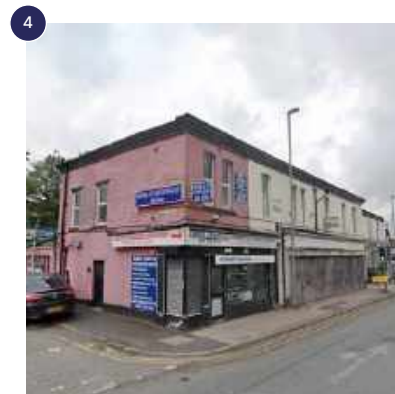
Landmark historic building with prominent facade features and strong vertical elements



Victorian terraced buildings, more recently converted into commercial properties, are characteristic of Whitefield



Victorian semi-detached houses with large, green thresholds define Bury New Road around the conservation area



Historic rows of terraced buildings where the historic character has been eroded by low-quality fascia and render

What you've said...

"The old Town Hall site has been a mess for 20 years."
Whitefield Resident



3.5 Understanding Bury New Road Frontages

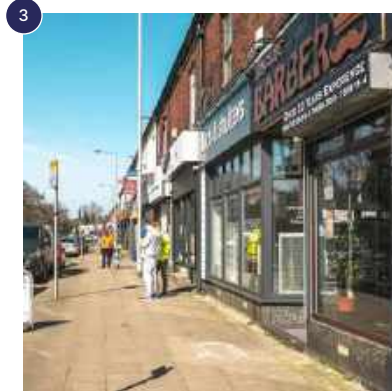
There are several types of building frontage treatment within the study area:

- Active frontages that interact with the street – with predominantly transparent ground-floor frontages;
- Active frontages that don't interact with the street. This type of frontage is predominantly detached and semi-detached villas offset from the road by a front garden;
- Residential frontages where the entrance is either directly onto the street, or via a small front garden;
- Inactive frontages – including blank walls, garage entrances, opaque shop fronts where branding or signage has been installed in a glass window;
- Areas addressing the corridor where no building frontage is present. This is particularly prevalent in gateway spaces way spaces to the north and south.

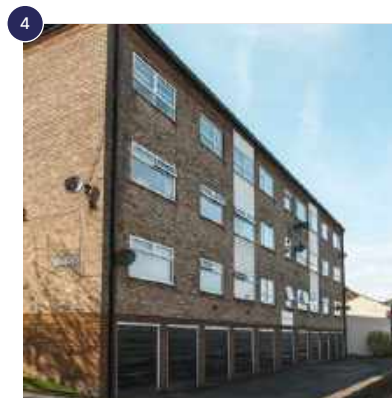
Key Findings and Messages



- There is limited to no spill out space along Bury New Road, preventing businesses from activating threshold and pavement spaces;
- The ground-floor frontages of many of the existing buildings along Bury New Road are opaque, failing to activate the street;
- Varying opening times of businesses result in long rows of closed shutters both through the day and in the evening;
- The location of large surface parking areas addressing Bury New Road creates fails to define the corridor, especially at key gateways to the north and south;
- The largest cluster of active frontages is located at the centre of the corridor; yet the street environment around them is poor. This is a major opportunity.



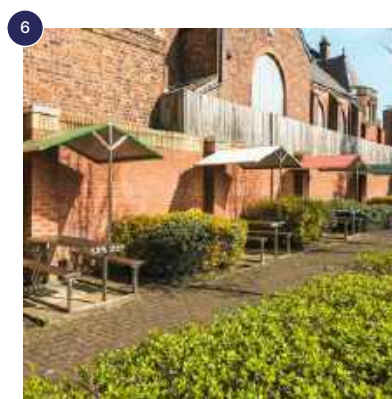
Ground floor frontage activated by shops and services



Inactive ground-floor frontage fails to activate the street



Ground floor frontage activated by residential entrances



Exterior spill out / seating areas partially activating the street

What you've said...

"Poor environment along Bury New Road negatively affects local businesses."
Whitefield Resident



3.6 Understanding Bury New Road Uses and Destinations

Whitefield is a predominantly residential neighbourhood, with the greatest mix of uses concentrated along Bury New Road, creating a central axis.

Dominant uses in the study area are retail and local services (e.g.. clothes shops, health and beauty, convenience, hardware, legal services etc.). There are some restaurants, coffee places and a range of takeaways in the area.

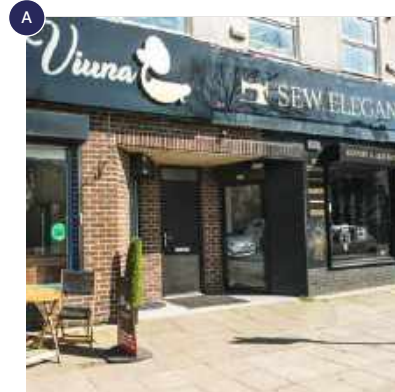
The majority of shops and services along the high street are small local and family businesses, but there is also presence of national retailers such as Morrisons, Subway, Aldi and McDonald's that include large areas of surface car parking. These are located in the northern and southern gateway areas of the town centre.

There is a large light-industrial / office park called Park 17 – of approx. 9 ha, to the east off Moss Lane in close proximity to the Metrolink Tram Stop and park and ride.

Key Findings



- Despite a wide range of uses, shopfronts often fail to breathe life into the high street. This is due to a number of factors, including the lack of pavement space for spillout, road traffic and associated issues and opaque ground floor frontages;
- The opening hours of shops along Bury New Road results in long rows of closed shutters throughout the day and evening; and
- Residents expressed that there is a lack of variety in cafes / pubs / bars and too few independent retailers. They also stated that car parking is having a negative impact on local businesses, as they deter from the quality of surrounding public realm and claim useable space.



Shops and services along Bury New road are mostly small businesses.



Big retailer shops with large parking areas.



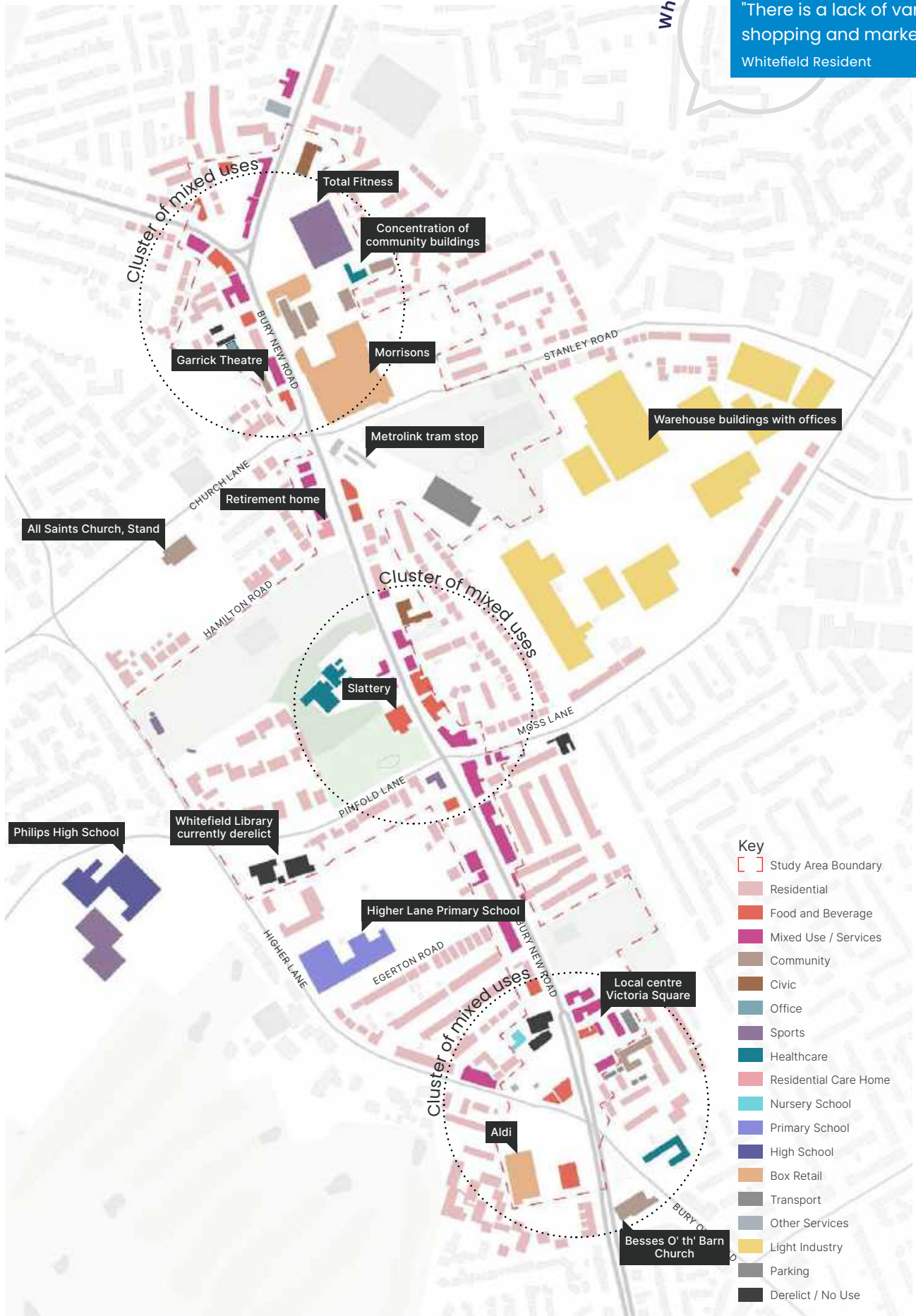
Various restaurants along Bury New Road.



Park 17 – large footprint buildings set within green space and surface car parking to the east of study area.

What you've said...

"There is a lack of varied shopping and markets."
Whitefield Resident



MARKETING &
COMMUNICATION

4 Exploring the Heart



Engagement

4.1 Exploring the heart of Whitefield

We have sought to understand how local people feel about Whitefield (the heart) to supplement our analysis of the physical elements of the place (the head).

Focusing on social flows and exchanges, rather than just the built environment, helps us understand the number of social and economic exchanges that are flowing through the study area.

We want to uncover the essence of Whitefield; the true nature or distinctive character that makes it what it is. You have to understand the essence of place to create interventions that resonate with it - its purpose and spirit.

Only through understanding how people feel about Whitefield as a place, can people develop meaningful connections and roles - becoming co-designers and stewards. It is only through a partnership with place that humans experience intimacy and responsibility to the world, creating meaningful roles for themselves. This grows new capabilities and capacity in people by including human development at every level.

4.2 Approach to Engagement

The adjacent timeline details the community engagement events and online consultation undertaken through the plan-making process.

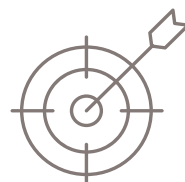
The findings have been collated and summarised to inform the vision, objectives, and proposed interventions presented in the latter half of the plan.



March

A consultation event with community stakeholders was held on 16th March.

Feedback was collated and grouped into themes, to help identify the local community's main priorities.



May - June

A wider public consultation event was held on 20th May, and online public consultation ran until 16th June 2023.

Feedback was again collated and grouped into themes and cross-referenced with the feedback we received from the first engagement event.



Early 2024

A formal public consultation is going to take place where the wider public will be able to review and provide feedback on this Vision document.



"There isn't a centre. It's just a road."
Whitefield Resident

4.3 Where is the centre of Whitefield?

Having asked the Whitefield community to locate the centre of the town, two key areas stood out:

1. Whitefield Tram Stop

The area around the Metrolink tram stop, Morrisons supermarket and Porada restaurant - mainly because of the location of the tram stop as a gateway and transport node. Also the historical analysis and comments from the residents suggest that the original centre of Whitefield was located within this area.

2. The area around the former Town Hall

An area further south, centred around the site of former Town Hall (now demolished), Slattery bakery and Uplands Medical Centre. This area was chosen mostly because of the former Town Hall location, as well as the renowned Slattery bakery. Historic analysis suggests that this area around Pinfold Lane was also significant in formation of the town of Whitefield.

We asked members of the Whitefield community to note where they felt the 'centre' of Whitefield sits, as identified on the adjacent plan.

The size of the circle indicates that a higher number of people identified the area as the 'heart'.



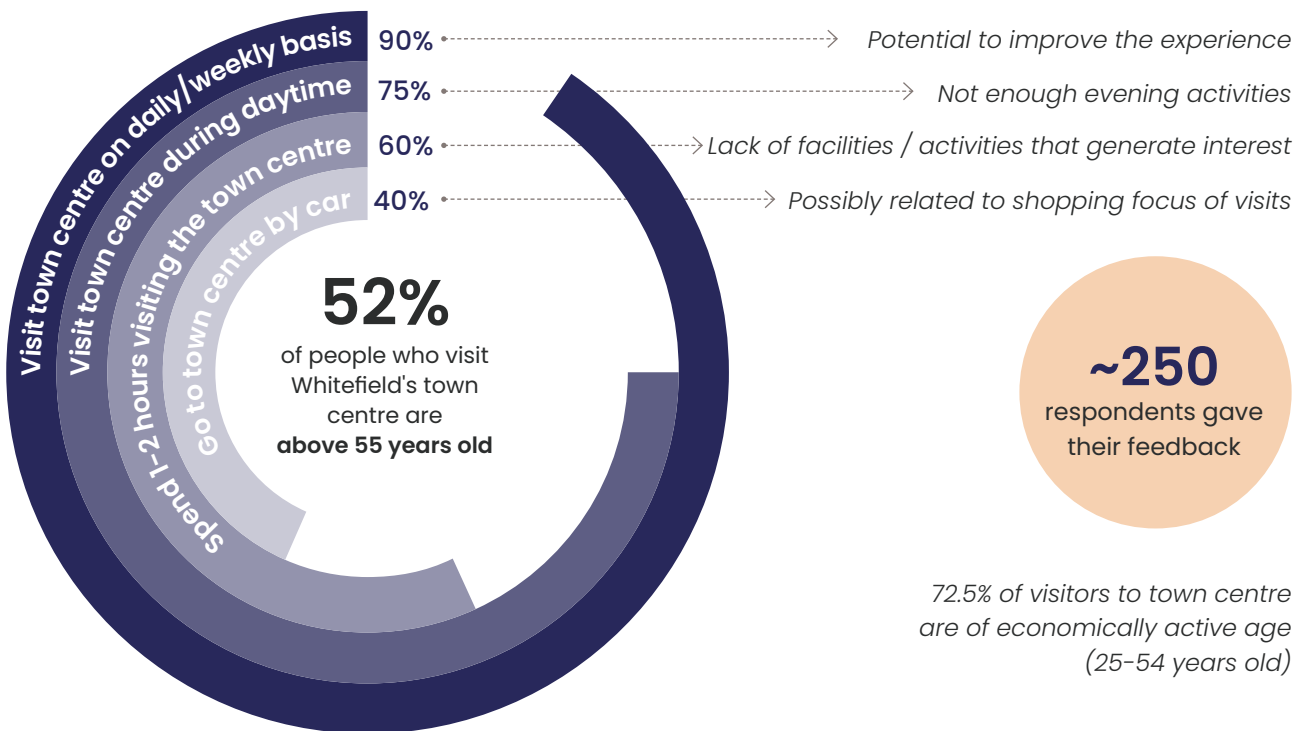
Hearts of Whitefield Plan



4.4 Community Engagement Summary

Further public engagement was undertaken between March and June 2023, providing a wealth of information and insight into the town. A summary of the key messages and findings is presented here.

For detailed summary of each community engagement event, please refer to Appendix 1.



Key Findings and Messages

These are the key themes that were identified based on the feedback from consultation events:

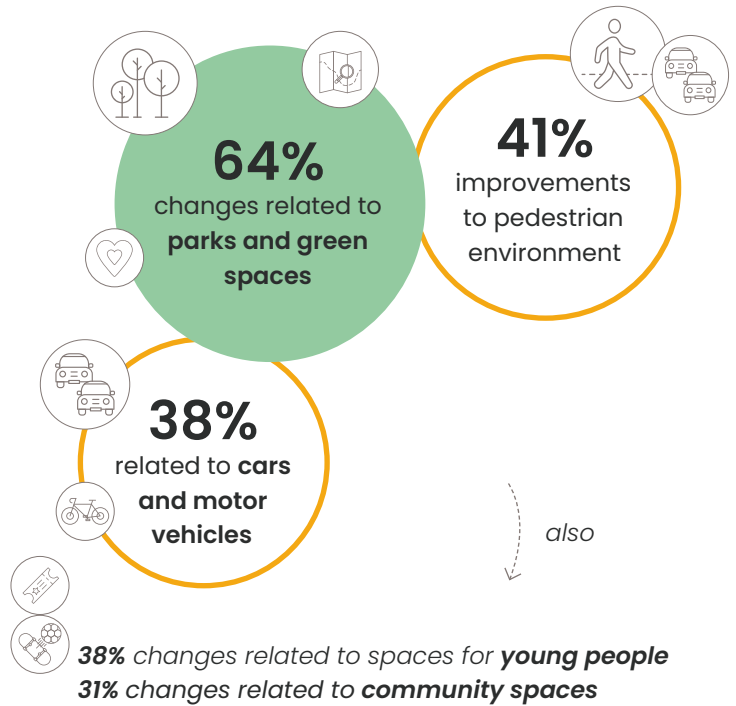


- Lack of a central heart**
- Poor experience of walking and public realm**
- It's not a destination / Lack of variety**
- Lack of cycling infrastructure**
- Strong community spirit**
- Heavy traffic and wide roads**
- Lack of community resources**
- Abundant parks and green spaces**
- Feels neglected which may lead to increase in antisocial behaviour**
- Need for facilities for young people**

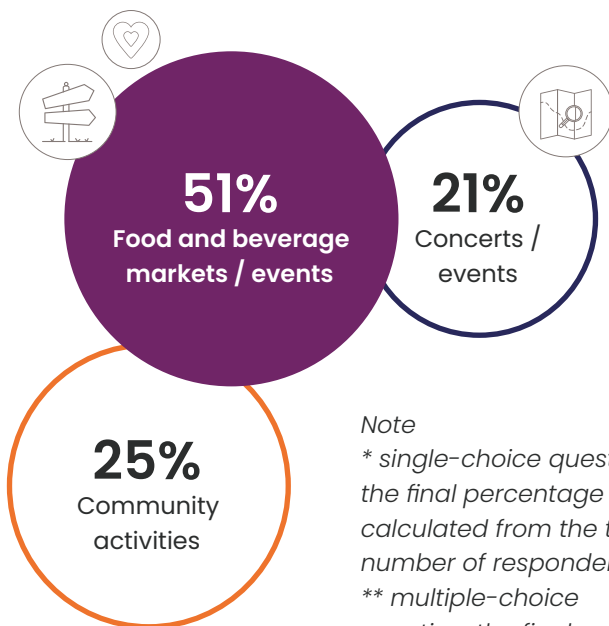
What is the main reasons for visit?*



What changes would the community like to see?*



What would they like to see more of?*



Note
 * single-choice question: the final percentage was calculated from the total number of respondents
 ** multiple-choice question: the final percentage was calculated from the total number of responses

Burning issues

Important notes from the community:

- There is no centre / heart to the town
- The local community needs a platform and physical spaces to get together
- Children's play areas and facilities need to be renovated / improved
- Road safety / lack of safe road crossings
- The environment around the Metrolink stop needs improvement to feel safer and reduce antisocial behaviour
- Demand to reduce traffic and speeding on Bury New Road
- The bus lanes seems redundant
- Strong demand to re-open the library