

the Roman Road



# COMMON VISION

a healthy, thriving, friendly neighbourhood

# Introduction

As local community groups based around Roman Road, we came together at the end of 2018 to think about a cohesive, sustainable vision for the neighbourhood. The Common Vision was born out of a desire to see the ambitious goal of making healthy and thriving streets turn into a reality.

The Common Vision is an overarching, cohesive green vision for Roman Road West and Roman Road East bringing healthier more liveable streets to the heart of the neighbourhood for all those that live, work, visit and travel through the area. The health and wellbeing of this neighbourhood has become a pressing issue for Tower Hamlets. There are also a number of transport challenges along the high street including congestion due to rat run to the A12, high pollution levels and narrow pavements making it unsafe for children to walk to local schools. The project will integrate with and amplify multiple local environmental and public realm initiatives, both civic and Council.

The Tower Hamlets Liveable Streets programme has since surfaced, with the initial public consultation in May 2019. TFL funding of £3.3million and Tower Hamlets funding of £1.7million means that Bow will now be seeing road and public realm improvements. The Common Vision is an opportunity for local people to express their shared ideas for the neighbourhood.

We hope that these eight key ideas give you an overall impression of our local vision. We plan to expand on the ideas and turn them into a Common Vision document, which will be submitted to both the Tower Hamlets Council and the Liveable Streets team. Our intention is that it informs the Liveable Streets initiative, an immediate programme to be implemented next year, and further Council and civic initiatives in the near future. We welcome your feedback and your suggestions.

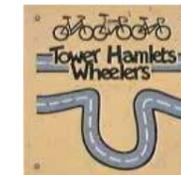
## Groups Involved:



Roman Road Trust



Roman Road Bow Neighbourhood Forum



Tower Hamlets Wheelers



Better Streets for Tower Hamlets



Friends of Meath Gardens



Cranbrook Community Food Garden



Plastic-free Roman Road



Edible Bow

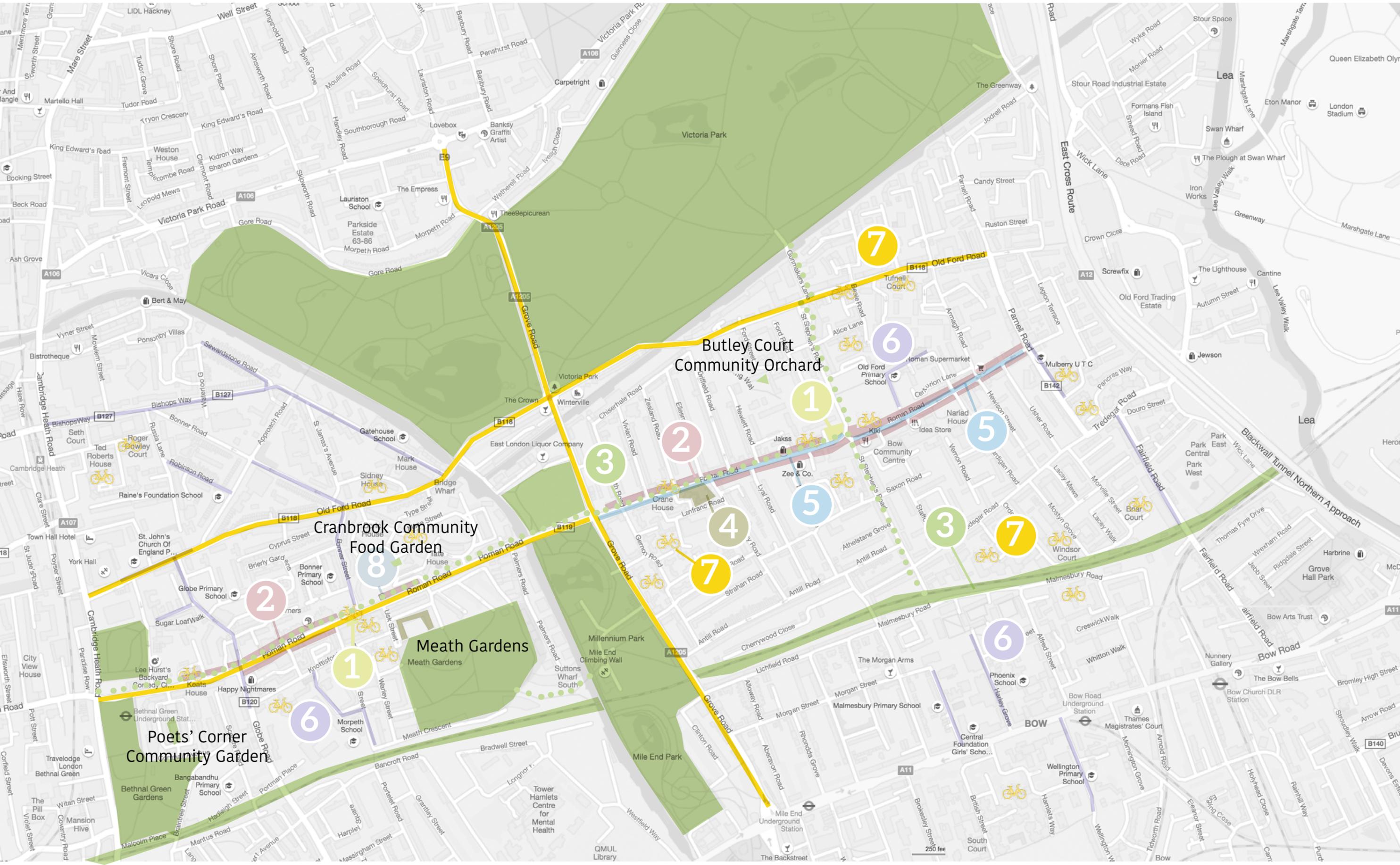


Globe Town Assembly



Poets Corner Community Garden

# Masterplan



## key idea 1:

# Create Town Squares

The Bow carpark and Globe Town Market Square should be town squares, open air meeting places for local people, designed with local people and community groups.

### Bow Town Square

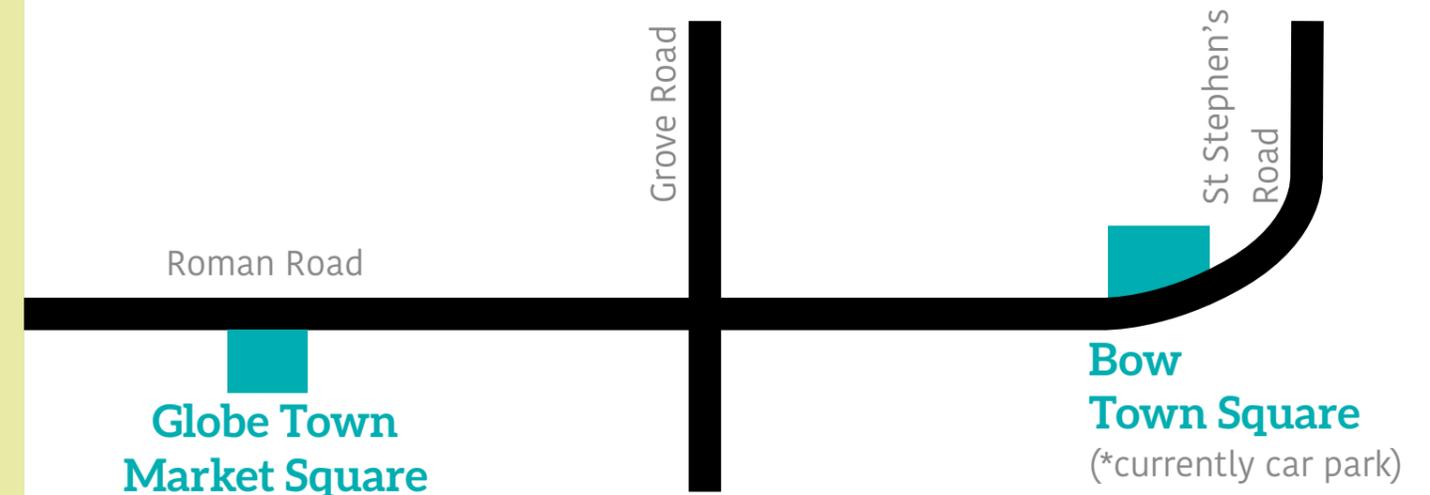
A town square is an open public space commonly found in the heart of a traditional town. Due to its open nature, organised and informal community gatherings for local people take place organically. The car park on St Stephen's Road is in a very strategic location next to the market and lends itself as a natural focal point for Roman Road east, easily making it a wonderful, inclusive civic town square. The junction of St Stephen's Road and Roman Road should be redesigned to prioritise pedestrian connectivity between the market and the square, with north-south traffic reduction. A well designed and accessible square with good seating and lighting will allow shoppers from the market to easily access the square, where they can have a rest, a chat or eat.

In addition to the open space, the square should be well designed with trees and planters surrounding it, which could be maintained by local community groups. There should also be a community hub, a community building that facilitates local gatherings and could also house a co-working space, events space and storage. The design of the space is to be co-designed with the community, facilitated by the Roman Road Trust.

**Roman Road Trust is keen on being involved in fund-raising to create a well-designed town square and community building.**

### Globe Town Market Square

In the same way, the design of Globe Town square should prioritise the square as a meeting place for local people. This would mean having good seating, lighting, signage, more greenery and possibly a play area. Roman



Our proposal for two town squares as focal points along Roman Road

Roman Road Trust carried out an eight month period of community engagement and outreach work in Globe Town in 2018 in partnership with the High Streets and Town Centres team at Tower Hamlets council. Roman Road Trust managed engagement and consultation activities with businesses, residents, and community groups under the Thriving High Streets Programme. Jan Kattein Architects have been appointed by the council in early 2019 to redesign the square under the town centre regeneration funding from Tower Hamlets Council.

**Roman Road Trust is calling for the council to involve local people in the design, for them to feel a sense of ownership over Globe Town Market Square.**

### SUMMARY

- **Install seating to encourage visitors to stay**
- **Improved bike storage facilities**
- **encourage pop-up markets/ community events/festivals that are organised by local groups**
- **Signage to guide visitors to surrounding green spaces**
- **Engagement with local school children and youth to submit ideas**



## key idea 2:

# Improve Quality of Public Spaces and Walkways

Public spaces & walkways should encourage people to linger.

To become a thriving high street, the Roman Road neighbourhood needs to improve its public realm and pedestrian walkways to attract people to linger and socialise. For example, the pavement could be improved along the shop frontages along Roman Road:

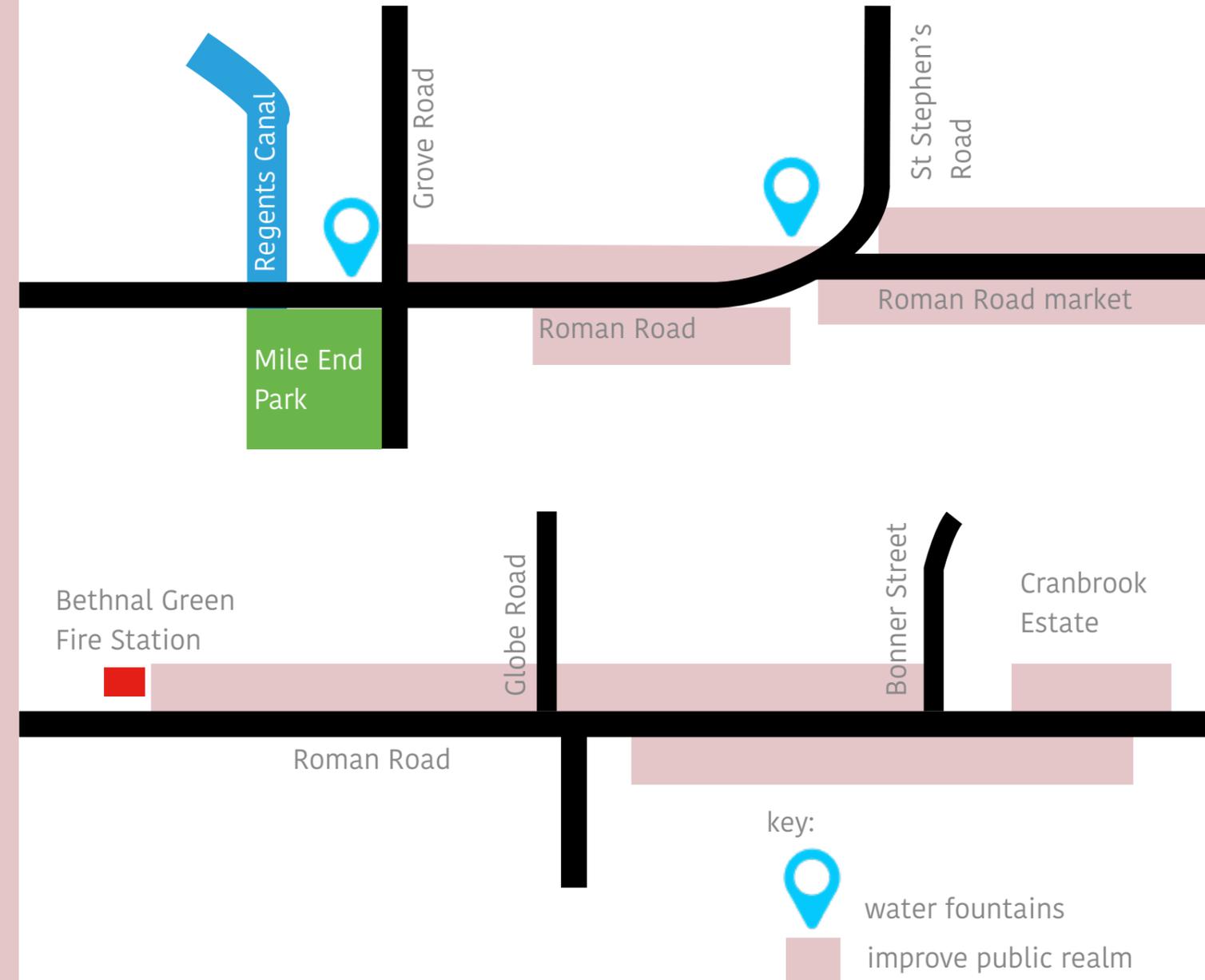
- section between Grove Road and St Stephen's Road
- section between Cranbrook Estate and the Bethnal Green Fire Station

**Roman Road Market could do with major improvement works with new paving, seating, bins, lighting and greenery.** Better public spaces will attract new shoppers to the market. Some ideas for public space enhancements include improving streetlights, adding seating and planting more trees along the roads. In addition, private and local authority housing estates should be better integrated into the public realm by improving access, materials and quality of design. Besides established parks, public spaces such as small parks off the street should be pleasant, safe and functional.

Public water fountains should be provided for refilling bottles at strategic intersections such as on the cross-roads of Roman Rd and St Stephen's Rd, at the entrances to Roman Road Market, corner of Mile End Park and on the canal path could be a radical way of reducing plastic waste.

## SUMMARY

- Improve pavement along shopfronts and the market
- Improve streetlights
- Add seating along Roman Road and the market
- Public water fountains for refilling bottles



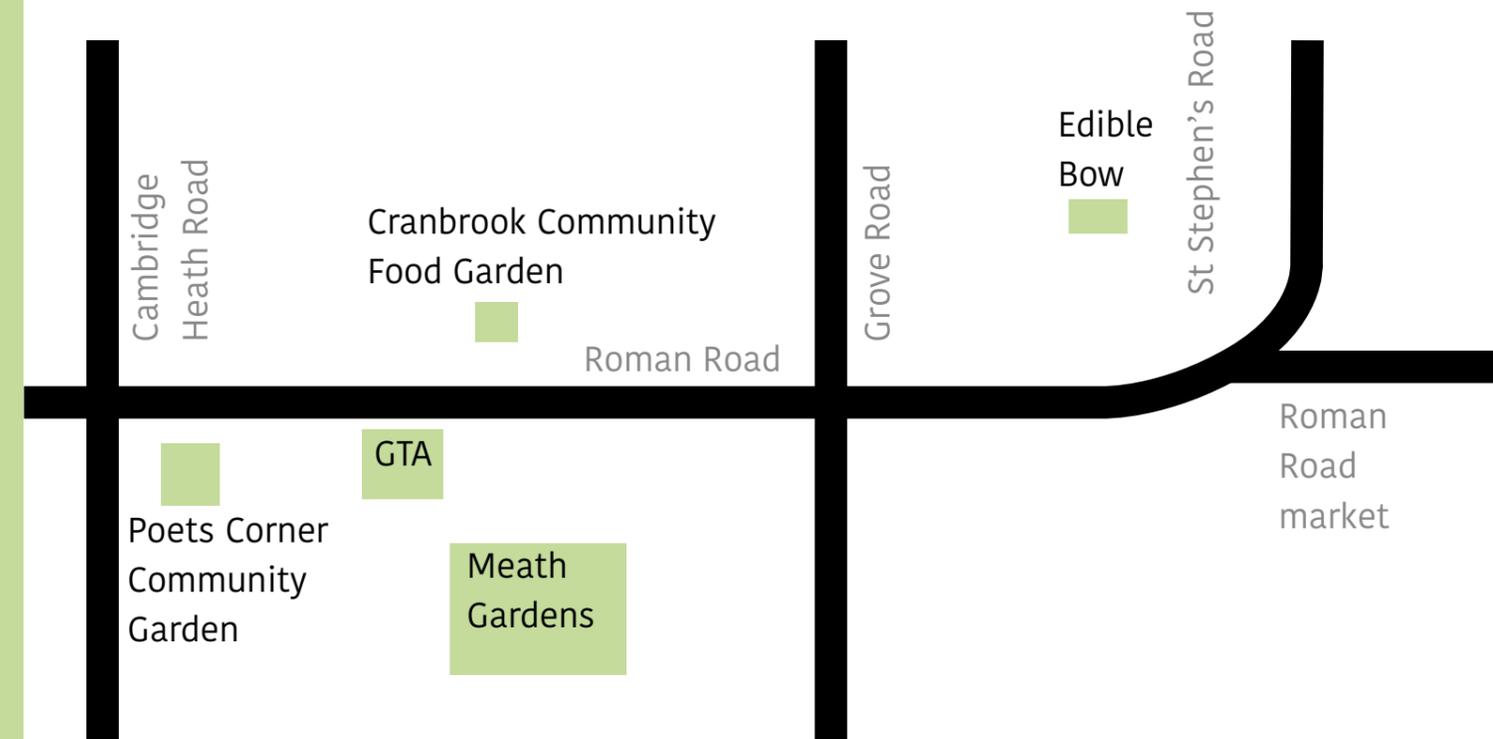
### key idea 3:

## Increase the Number of Green Spaces and Trees, and Improve Links between them

There should be more trees along the Roman Road with good **undergrowth**, especially edibles and ones which encourage and support pollinating insects and birdlife. **There should be more pocket parks and local orchards throughout the neighbourhood**, managed by local residents, particularly in space reclaimed from motor vehicles. These should be well lit and have good seating and cared for by residents. Healthy streets with green interventions provide traffic calming, reduce pollution and enhance connectivity to the open green spaces.

There is an opportunity for the railway line to become a green corridor by increasing the number of trees planted on this green strip. **The green spaces should be seen as a network; links between the orchards, existing parks, railway green corridor and canal towpath should be improved by increasing the number of trees and reducing traffic on the linking roads. There is opportunity to link into the Great Eastern Parks Route Project.**

Funding and support could be provided via housing associations to develop a working group of green spaces. This could start with conversations between the council, housing associations and local groups from across the borough to facilitate new green spaces (such as permission for planting or access to water.) Currently underused open spaces to be converted to include community-run food growing spaces. Small areas of grass which are not large enough to be used for recreation activities to also be converted for edible planting.



Gardens with active community groups

### SUMMARY

- Plant more trees along Roman Road with good undergrowth
- Create more pocket parks
- Have a network of green spaces that are interlinked
- New small, local green spaces around Bow
- Funding through housing associations



## key idea 4:

# Reclaim Green

## green roofs, bee corridor and pollinating insects and birdlife along Roman Road

Existing developed, brownfield, dead spaces should be reclaimed as green spaces to improve the air quality and sense of well-being, and encourage pollinating insects and birdlife along Roman Road.

For example, pocket parklets could be reclaimed from underused car parking spaces. Currently underused open spaces could be converted into community-run food growing spaces. For example, the plans to replace the car park on St Stephen's Road as "open space" could include a community food growing area. Other car parks such as on Lanfranc estate to be considered for similar use.

One surface area often overlooked that could be "greened" are flat roofs. Flat roofs on council-owned or managed buildings could be converted to house solar panels and green roofs designed to support pollinating insects. Green roofs could become a rooftop "bee corridor" aiding the passage of insects between the green spaces of Mile End Park and the Olympic Park. In Utrecht, the Netherlands, bus stops have green sedum roofs which encourage biodiversity.

Any street area reclaimed from traffic or paving could be replaced with a combination of pedestrian/ cycle zones and also green space with trees and undergrowth, not just trees in tarmac! Small areas of grass, which are not large enough to be used for recreational activities, should be converted to plots for edible planting, cared for by local residents. This is effectively a profusion of allotments all around the city!



Lanfranc Estate car parks could be transformed into community food growing areas

### SUMMARY

- Reclaim dead spaces with planting
- "Green" flat roofs
- Use small areas for edible planting



## key idea 5:

# Create pedestrian priority roads

## Roman Road should be radically reprioritised for people

**There should be plenty of public spaces in Bow and Globe Town which are designed solely or primarily for people on foot and on bike.** Roman Road is the high street of Bow and should be radically reprioritised for people. This could be done by changing the material on the roads and by adding traffic calming measures and street furniture.

The market could be redesigned without the road surfacing and repaved entirely for pedestrians. The junction of St Stephen's Road and Roman Road should be redesigned to prioritise pedestrian connectivity between the market and the square to support the market and local businesses.

If a section of Roman Road, west of St Stephen's Road where the shop frontages are, could be accessible only to buses, pedestrians and cyclists seven days a week, and Roman Road market closed to vehicles, the dynamics of the high street might change considerably. We recognise that this may also require consequential interventions to ensure convenient general motor vehicle access is maintained to neighbouring residential streets, including potentially moving some existing road closure points.



Roman Road radically reprioritised for people, cycling and buses.

### SUMMARY

- Reprioritise areas for pedestrians, for example Roman Road Market
- Reprioritise a section of Roman Road for buses, pedestrians and cyclists



## key idea 6:

# Low Emission Neighbourhood and Child-Friendly Streets

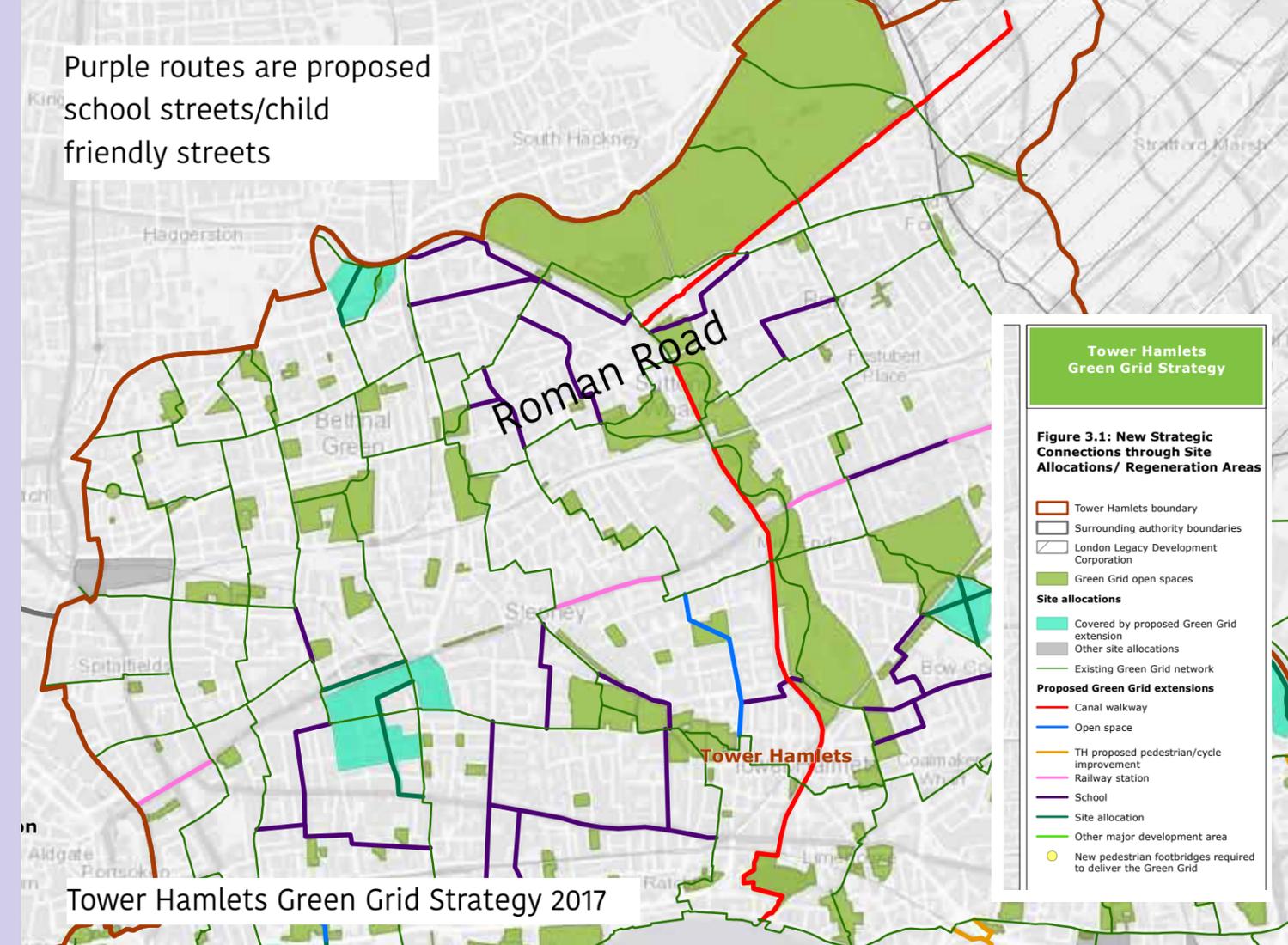
Every child in Bow and Globe Town should have somewhere in the public realm to play in zero - or very low- motor traffic conditions.

Every school and nursery in Bow and Globe Town should have a “school street” outside it, a complete closure to motor vehicles at school drop off and pick up times, to reduce pollution and create a space for parents and children to socialise. The Roman Road neighbourhood should be a low-traffic and low-emission neighbourhood, with rat runs significantly reduced. This would create much safer and quieter streets for people walking and cycling in the area as well as improving life for residents.

We call for a thorough traffic engineering study to alleviate roads and junctions that are prone to congestion such as on Parnell Road and the junction between Tredegar Road and the A12.

### SUMMARY

- Create a low-emission neighbourhood in Globe Town and Bow
- Create more School Streets
- Conduct a thorough traffic engineering study on congested roads



## key idea 7:

# Improve Cycling Infrastructure

## more cycle parking and cycleways

There should be a **protected cycleway along Roman Road to enable safe and comfortable cycling**. Other main thoroughfares should also have protected cycleways.

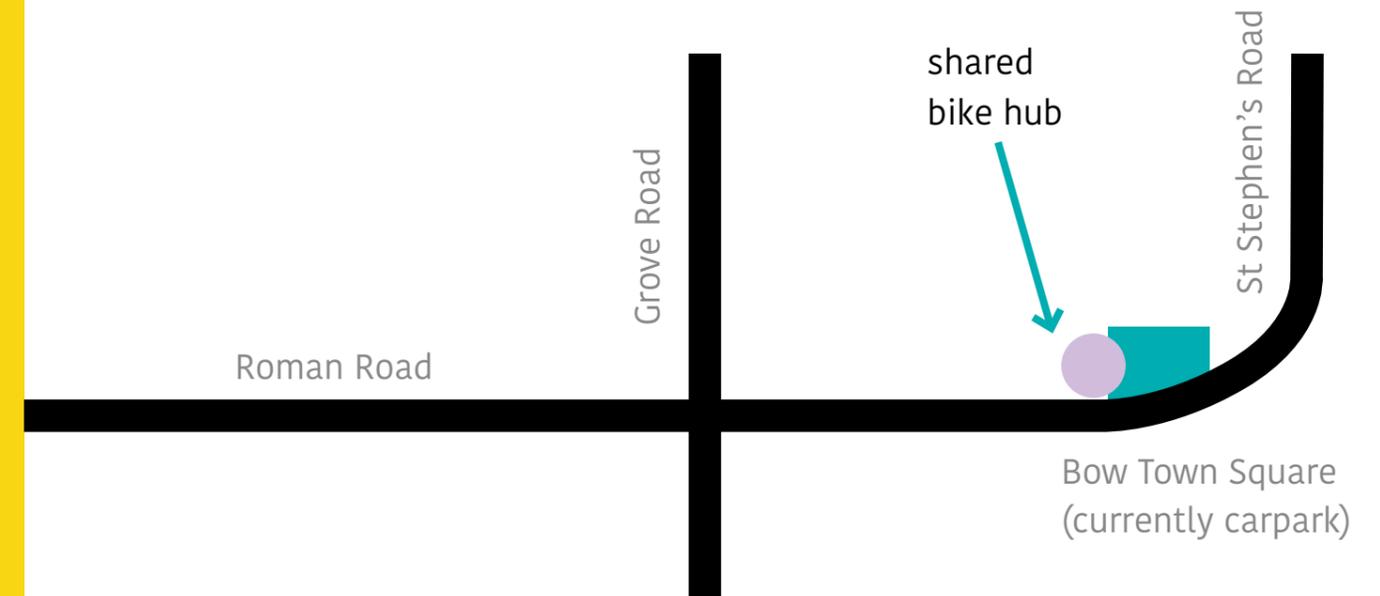
Both residents and visitors should have an abundance of cycle parking spaces available to them. This cycle parking should be both secure and be conveniently positioned, and should generally be sited to take road space or car parking spaces rather than pedestrian space

There should be a minimum of one bike hangar on each street (with several on the bigger streets). These should be sited on kerbside road space.

The number of secure residents' cycle parking areas on every estate should be increased. This could take the form of bike hangars replacing a car parking spaces on estates, or secure cycle shed.

The number of visitors' cycle parking outside every shop, café, restaurant, pub, workplace, school, place of worship, doctors' surgery, community centre, the Royal Mail delivery office, and any other amenity, as well as some purely residential streets should also be increased. This could be in a variety of formats (cycle hoops on lampposts and bollards, Sheffield stands, etc. or could be combined with planters or take interesting shapes). Some secure residents' cycle parking should be suitable for non-standard cycles such as cargo bikes and disability-adapted cycles.

**We advocate a "bike hub" as a base and parking for community owned/ shared bike schemes.** It could also be used as a zero-emission deliveries hub for businesses.



Map above show location of bike hub which could be incorporated into the design of the town square

### SUMMARY

- **Create a protected cycleway along Roman Road**
- **Provide one bike hangar on each street**
- **Increase the number of secure cycle parking and visitor parking, including parking for non-standard bikes**
- **Create a bike-hub**



Invest in interesting bike parking- this one integrates with a planter!

## key idea 8:

# Recycle & Reduce Waste with Community Re-use Hubs

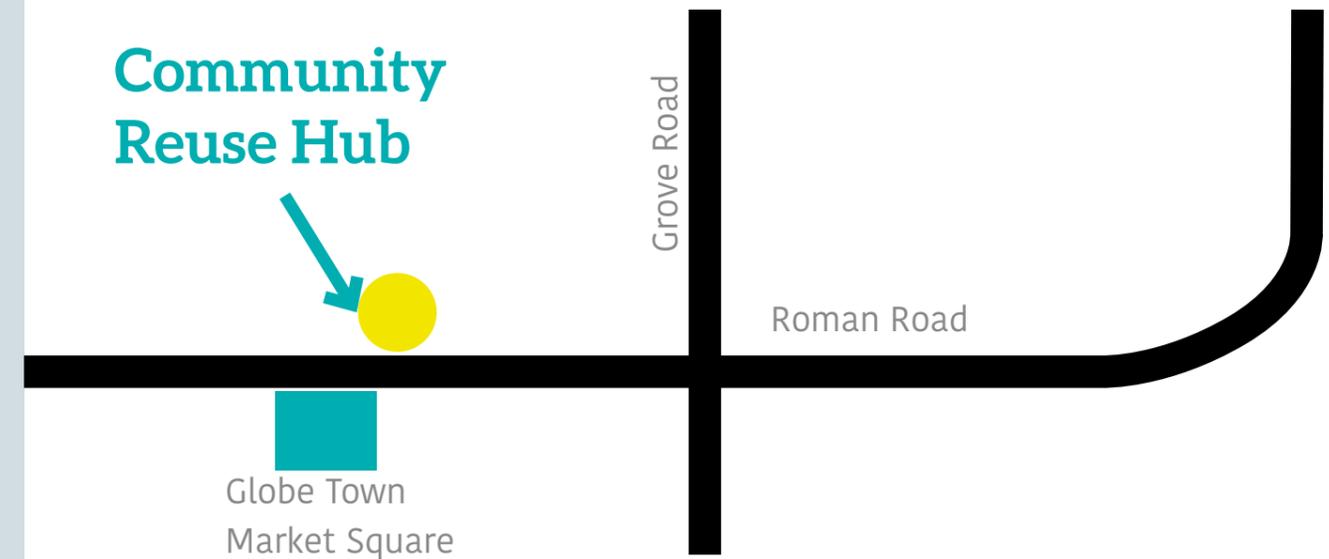
Each neighbourhood could have a community re-use hub.

These hubs will act as centres to collect and re-sell unused household items and furniture as well as hosting creative workshops to train people in carpentry, sewing and upcycling. Hubs could also feature Repair Cafes and initiatives, encouraging a zero-waste and local circular economy. The locations for these hubs could be identified in conjunction with the council - it could be a council-owned commercial unit that is currently empty

We need more zero-waste businesses and re-use schemes such as Roman Road Borrow-a-Bag, where fabric waste is upcycled to make reusable bags to borrow from local high street shops.

Bins with separate recycling receptacles, for example Big Belly Bins that enable more waste to be collected before becoming full, could replace standard bins.

Community composting bins could be introduced in green spaces to reduce organic waste going to landfill/ incineration and improve local soil quality.



## SUMMARY

- Create community re-use hubs
- Implement more zero-waste schemes
- Introduce community composting bins



Plastic waste as furniture

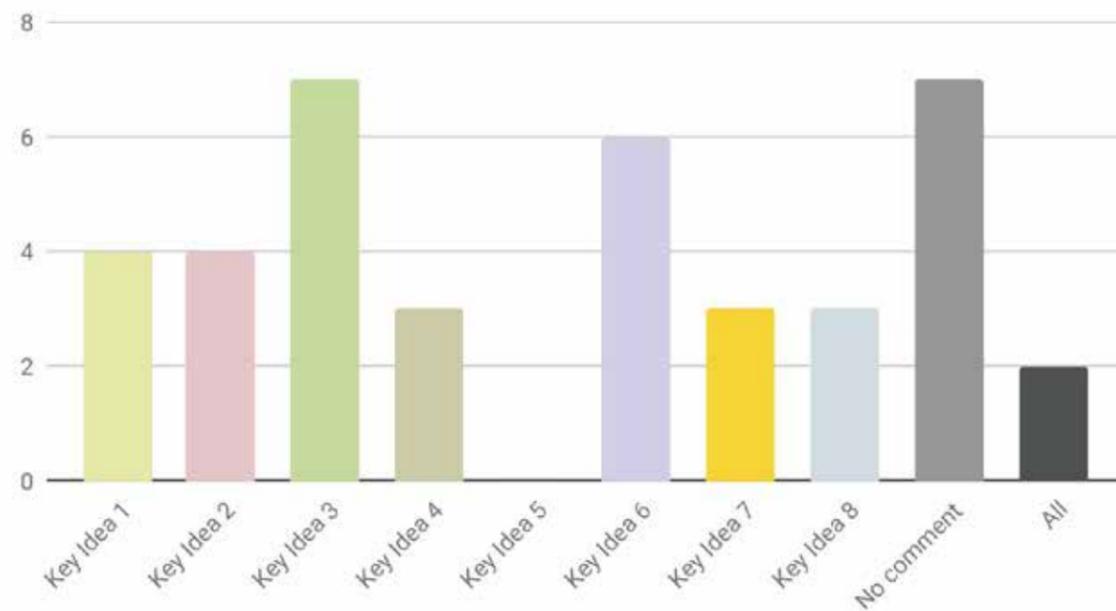
Linda Tai of Sunny Jar Eco Hub modelling a Roman Road Borrow-a-Bag

# Feedback

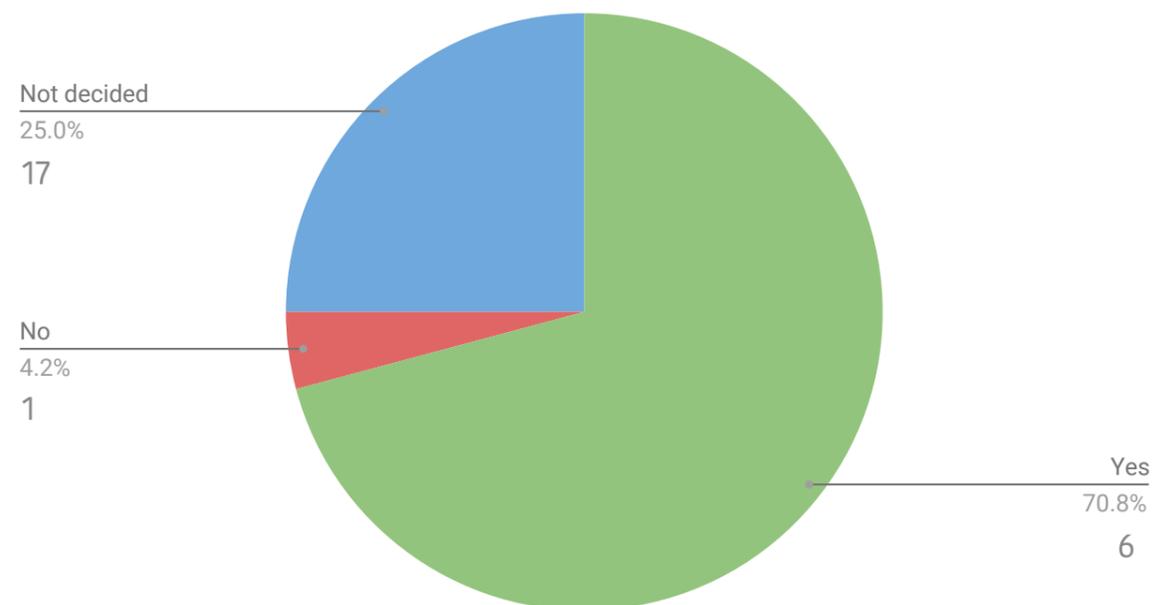
The feedback below are collated from:

- The exhibition held during the Roman Road Park Festival on 27th July 2019
- Online feedback form
- Comments on facebook post of the Common Vision

## Which is your favourite Key Idea?



## Do you agree with the Roman Road Common Vision?



- Reduced traffic, greener space
- less cars and more space for bicycles so young children can cycle on the road
- More parklets
- Inclusive street that encourages social interaction and sustainability
- School streets, less traffic, and more play
- Some great ideas! Need urgent action and many of these ideas fit into climate emergency
- Closing roads is not a good thing. More electric cars and more charging points for the cars.
- More commercially funded endeavours - can someone like JCDecaux or another advertiser provide/fund any of the suggested features? The big advertising companies typically have experts in public realm improvement projects - the costs are often met by them in return for advertising etc. Feels like a good option for taxpayer
- More green, more communal space
- Cycling infrastructure running down the whole of Roman Road - will enhance connectivity between these areas and hopefully encourage model shift to more sustainable modes of travel. Abundance of green spaces in the area - awareness of these needs to be raised as they are assets to the area.
- Food growing, reducing waste
- More affordable houses and less gentrification-is-good dogooders
- More interesting shops, reduced traffic, better road crossings, more greening
- Some of the ideas and aims are good but the implications of these on residents and local businesses is concerning. Please be careful when making suggestions: KEY IDEA 4: Name Lanfranc Est car park as possible growing area implies taking away parking spaces for existing tenants in affordable housing. A potential for causing division. KEY IDEA 4: using flat roofs is a good idea. KEY IDEA 7: more bikes, more cycles ignoring red lights and putting pedestrians at risk. we need bike riders to be licensed in some way. KEY IDEA 6: Yes reduce through traffic (at peak hours) by using technology so residents/buses are not affected. KEY IDEA 5: Please consult with local businesses before insisting Roman Road as a bus, pedestrian, and cycle friendly space only (and why are cycles allowed?)

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# Feedback

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They are often a hazard to pedestrians.) Why not make Roman Road West like Roman Road East? Which would mean it was open to traffic only at certain times. To reduce through traffic, use ANPR technology - but only at morning/evening rush hour.

- Some laudable aims, but consideration needs to be taken of the needs of all of the local community, especially when it comes to road closures. Consultation with community groups need to include those concerned with disability, the elderly, carers and care workers for example ie those less able to enjoy the benefits of walking and/or cycling. There needs to be a joined up approach with other projects such as the Hackney/ loD green route and the council's plan (now on hold) for road closures around the route to the A12 as part of the Bow Liveable Streets project.
- Nice, warm, fluffy, green ideas. Unfortunately for the most part they seem to lack substance or "SMART" objectives thinking. Hope there's not a whole load of tax payer money wasted on consulting ideas that are not fully formed.
- Reduced traffic for cars
- Community getting involved, recycle and reduce waste with community reuse hubs
- More community events and variety of local stores especially food/ restaurants. Clean up rubbish.
- Fresh food markets and food stalls
- More public engagement
- More pedestrian friendly and cycling friendly area
- I would like to see more people cycling and less people using cars, more shops and restaurants and events like the ones Roman Road London is organising. I would like to see less air pollution and more recycling.