

KENTISH TOWN PLANNING FRAMEWORK

Neighbourhood Forum workshop summary note
21st March 2018

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Attendees

Kentish Town Neighbourhood Forum

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Chris Hudson

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Dartmouth Park Neighbourhood Forum

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Ben Castell

Nick Bradfield

Dr Jessica Jacobs

Kay Hughes

Eileen Wilmott

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Camden Council

Katrina Christoforou

Jacob Willson

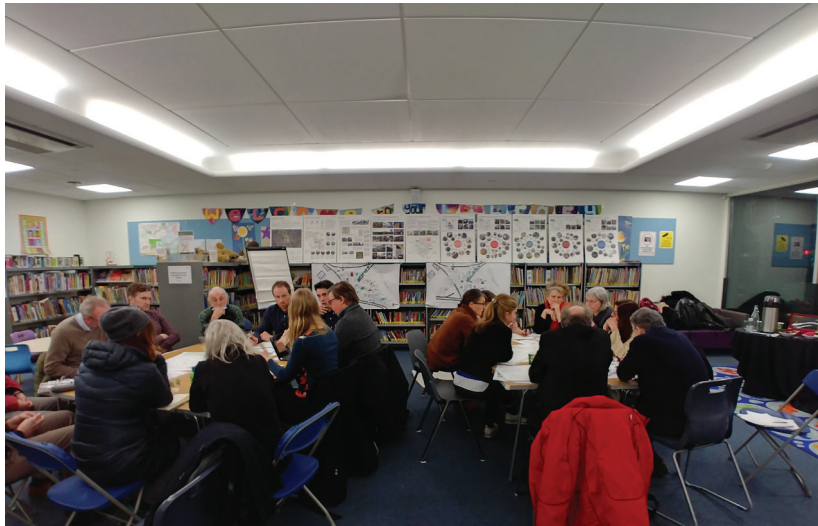
Victoria Hinton

Ian Gracie

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Observers

Sian Berry



SUMMARY

Introduction

The Regeneration and Place team at Camden Council hosted a workshop attended by members of Dartmouth Park and Kentish Town Neighbourhood Forums to discuss the Kentish Town Planning Framework. The workshop was held on the evening of Wednesday 21 March 2018 at Kentish Town Library.

The workshop was part of the first round of public engagement for the planning framework. The first round is called 'issues and ideas' and is the early stage of developing a draft framework. The purpose of this stage of engagement is to:

- gather community views on the potential development priorities in the area
- share the Council's draft site analysis and gather local views on the strengths and weaknesses of the area
- discuss the overarching themes with the community and understand the priorities for growth

The Kentish Town Planning Framework area includes significant areas that are within the designated Kentish Town and Dartmouth Park Neighbourhood Areas. Both forums have given significant thought to the framework area and undertaken initial design work on parts of the framework area.

Workshop objectives

The purpose of the workshop was to bring all parties together for an initial meeting and enable more in-depth discussion with members of both forums on the topics raised in the public engagement material. The format of the workshop was table discussions in two groups with a mix of participants from each neighbourhood forum and the Council. This provided the opportunity to have in-depth conversations between forum members on strategic principles concerning the planning framework area.

The workshop involved the following three exercises:

1. Strengths and weaknesses
2. Area vision
3. Framework themes

The objective of these exercises was to enable focused group discussions on themes important to consider at the early stages of developing a planning framework. Discussions focused on current perceptions of the area and issues as well as ideas for the future of the area and the potential benefits to the wider area.

Summary notes

The workshop exercises generated interesting ideas, discussion and debate between both neighbourhood forums and the Council. The discussions and ideas generated from the exercises will inform the next stage of producing a draft planning framework for Kentish Town. The outcomes of the exercises are presented on the following pages, the following is a summary of some of the principle points raised:

Framework area

There was some discussion about the extents of the proposed framework area:

- Some of the table thought extending the framework area to include more of the high street would be beneficial, although KTNF are opposed to the whole length of Kentish Town Road being included in the Framework Plan as this would overcomplicate the scope of discussion needed to focus on the Regis Road and Murphy sites.
- There was discussion about including Spring Place in the area given the desire to get a route through the site.
- It was suggested that Sanderson and Carol Close could be included in the area as the sensitive boundaries of the estate would be subject to change and there could be improvements to the public spaces on the estates.

Exercise 1: Strengths and weaknesses

The strengths and weaknesses exercise pulled out extensive research that both neighbourhood forums have already undertaken on the qualities of the area as it exists today. Key strengths that were discussed include the proximity to Hampstead Heath, the strength and mix of the community, the industrial heritage on the site, the character of adjacent residential neighbourhoods and the excellent public transport connections. The primary weaknesses that were discussed include congestion and pollution on Kentish Town Road, a lack of open spaces and a lack of access through and around the site.

Exercise 2: Area vision

This exercise generated interesting conversations on both tables about the type, character and feel of the area in the future. Much of the conversation focused on the character of the area, and whether this should draw on the surrounding context or be a distinct place of its own. Other key issues discussed include the types of buildings that could define the area, the role of green infrastructure and open space and the importance of physical connections throughout the area.

Exercise 3: Framework themes

The final exercise focused on the five themes that were presented in the public engagement material. This generated a variety of ideas and suggestions that will be used to inform the draft planning framework. Key points raised under each theme include:

Jobs and industry: Target creative and tech industries, retain uses that provide an important local function and the importance of industrial uses that can co-locate with residential uses.

Homes and neighbourhood: Affordable housing a priority, typologies should reference the surrounding character and the Council should consider a design guide.

Public open spaces: A linear park connecting Kentish Town to Hampstead Heath is supported, there should be a large green open space and a square opposite Kentish Town station is supported.

Routes and connections: Improving pedestrian and cycle infrastructure in the area is critical as well as general permeability throughout the area, especially to Gospel Oak via Arctic Street. Support for step free access at Kentish Town and Gospel Oak stations.

Community and culture: Consider the impact of an increased population on social infrastructure and the potential for new art facilities.

Exercise 1: Strengths and weaknesses

Purpose

The purpose of the exercise was to have a joint conversation about the groups perceptions of the strengths and weaknesses of the area as it exists today. It enabled Council Officers to understand what local people value about the area as well as what can be improved. The neighbourhood forums have done extensive research looking at the area's strengths and weaknesses, the exercise provided the opportunity to discuss this work with a focus on the framework area.

Discussion and comments

The group identified a wide range of strengths and weaknesses of the proposed framework area. These are summarised below:

STRENGTHS:

The area has a number of valued heritage assets, particularly looking to the Murphy's site and the railway infrastructure and historic warehousing.

There is relatively low car ownership in the area when compared to the London average.

The surrounding area is mixed with a broad range of housing tenures.

Local liveliness and vitality.

The northern edge on the Murphy's site is defined by a planted boundary which add to the green feel of Hampstead Heath

History of Kentish Town

Concentration of jobs and industry

Views from Kentish Town station towards Parliament Hill.

Good opportunities to bridge the railway for pedestrians and cycles.

There is a significant amount of employment space in the area, which contributes to a sense of local liveliness.

Low car ownership and within walking distance of the town centre.

Proximity to Hampstead Heath

Choice of restaurants and pubs in Kentish Town

Business community

Very well connected to public transport

WEAKNESSES:

Lack of diversity of uses across the area.

The area has seen a loss of small business units in recent years due to PD rights.

Congestion and pollution are real problems in the area.

Local shops on Highgate Road are struggling.

Large vehicles from Regis Road causing congestion.

The nature of the businesses on Regis Road cause increased traffic.

Overall, despite Hampstead Heath being nearby, there is a lack of green space in the area.

Vehicle movements currently too high.

There aren't enough access points into the framework area.

The area is fragmented by the railway.

Lack of diversity in employment.

Poor access to all surrounding transport links.

Accessibility to the south in particular is poor.

Vehicle and pedestrian permeability.

Employment land is thinly spread.

Air pollution is high - especially to the south of the area.

Exercise 2: Area vision

Purpose

The purpose was to have group discussions about the vision for the future of the area. Rather than looking at detailed projects of the framework area, this exercise required attendees of the workshop to consider the bigger picture of what is possible. There was group discussions on the question: 'what type of place should the neighbourhood be?' This enabled very open discussions that will be used to inform the vision in the draft planning framework.

Discussion

We have grouped the discussions on both tables into four focus areas: connections, character, open space and uses.

Integrate the area into the wider street network

Include a 'green way' following the viewing corridor

Connect the area to Kentish Town and West Kentish Town

CONNECTIONS

Connect Hampstead Heath with Kentish Town

'Highline' - connecting spaces but also being a green space

Upgrade Gospel Oak station

Due to size of the area, new development could have multiple characters that respond to adjacency

Must have its own identity in relation to its unique industrial character

Balance between creating individual characters but also integrating into the wider area

Fine grain development, high density but medium rise that is informed by the surrounding character

Preserve existing historic buildings

CHARACTER

Employment could define the area's character

High density, medium rise appropriate for the area, don't want Kings Cross or Camden Goods Yard character with large blocks

Good quality, modern design

Preserve mixed character of the wider area

Identify historic buildings of value on the Murphy site

Needs a variety of architectural styles

Employment could define the area's character

Public square
outside Kentish
Town station

Include a large park
as well as a number
of small parks

Integrate surface
run off from
Hampstead Heath
through the site

Draw on the
character of
Hampstead Heath

OPEN SPACE

Car free space and
play streets - 'green
character' to the area

Aspire to see a green
space the size of
Talacre Gardens

Greener character
to the north, by the
Heath

Support mixed
communities

Character should be
reasonably active

Not retail-focused,
compliment existing
high street, don't
undermine it

Development must
make the best use
of land

USES

Build on cultural
uses

Cater for emerging
businesses

Introduce high
quality housing

Potential for the site to
be a creative hub with a
rich mix of uses

Support employment,
particularly tech and
creative industries

Exercise 3: Framework themes

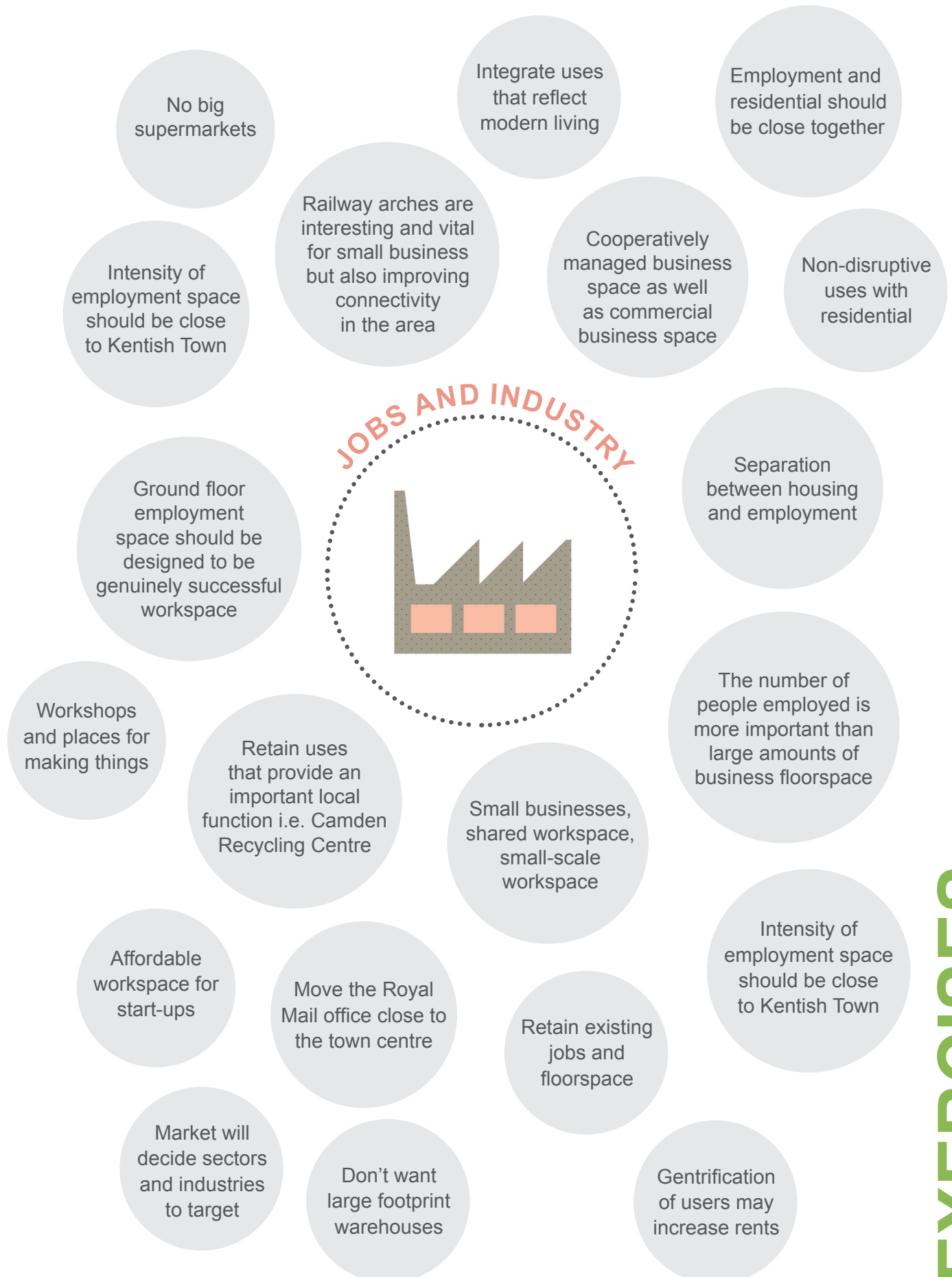
Purpose

The exercise consisted of 10 minute discussions on each of the five framework themes, as presented in the public engagement material. This enabled more detailed thematic discussions on the principle issues that the draft planning framework will focus on.

Discussion

There was a wealth of ideas discussed in both groups, with much agreement on the issues facing the area and how the planning framework could address them. The main points and ideas raised in the discussions are presented across the following pages.

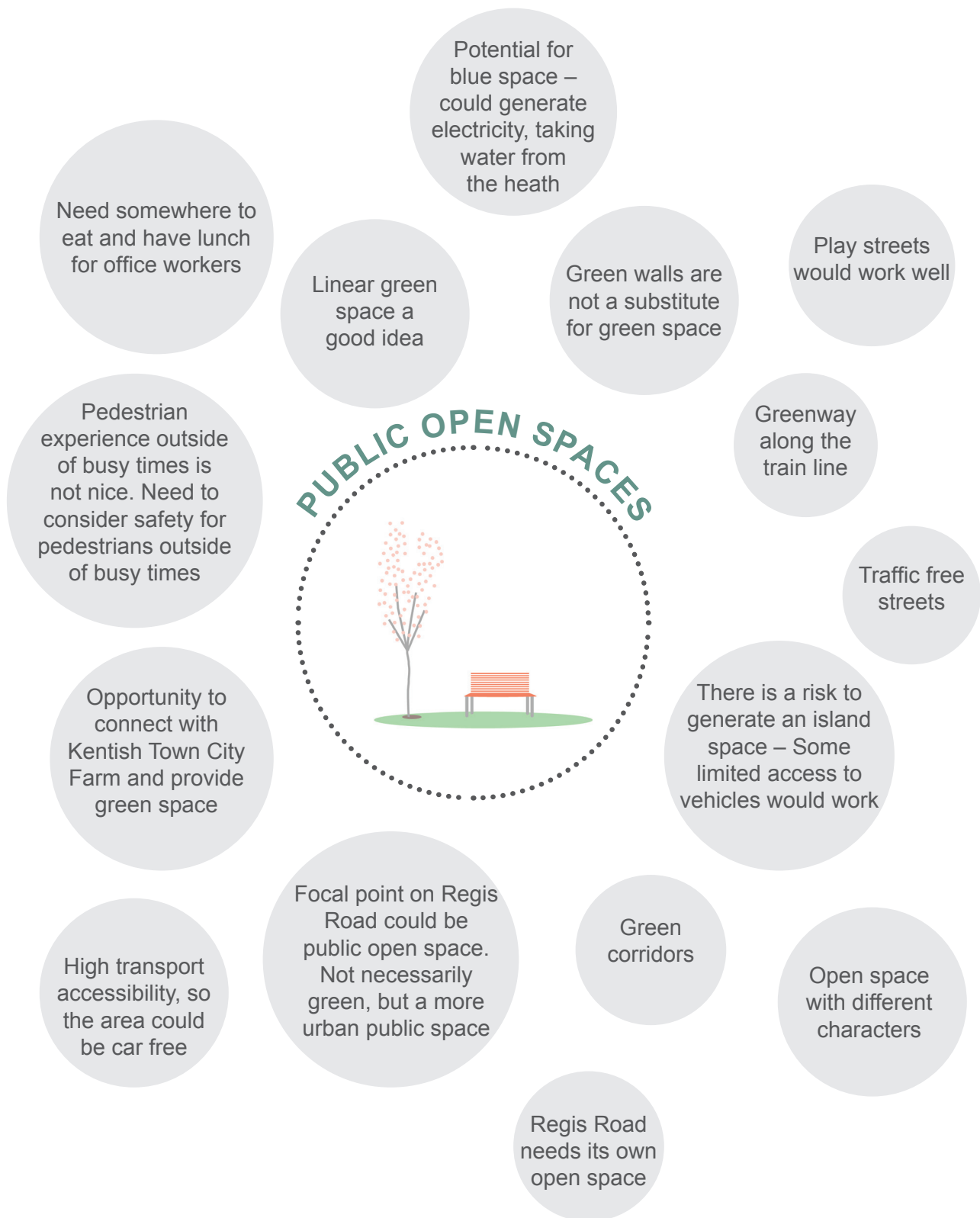
What types of jobs, business and workspace should the planning framework support?



What types of homes should the framework support to create a balanced neighbourhood at Kentish Town?



What types of open spaces should the planning framework support?



How can the planning framework support improved routes and connections into and around the area?



What types of community and cultural uses should the planning framework support?

