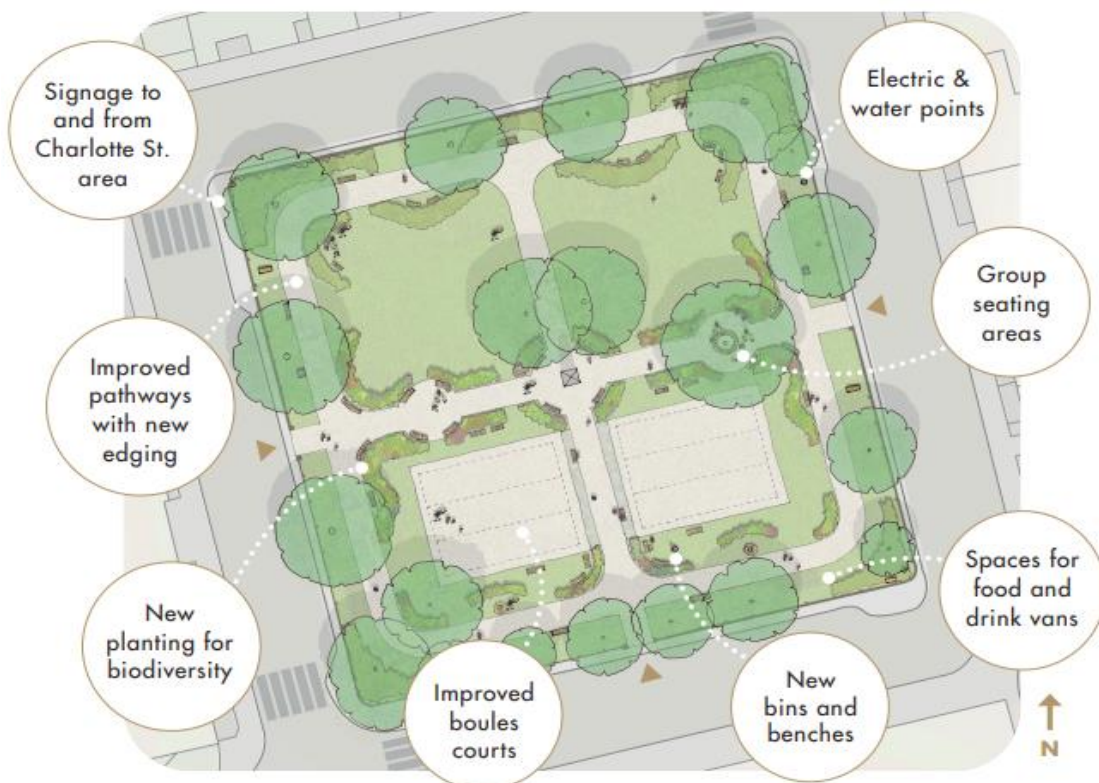


Queen Square Feasibility Study Engagement Report

Document no: Queen Square Engagement Report
Revision: 1

Bath & North East Somerset Council

Queen Square Public Realm - Feasibility Study
20 February 2025



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1. The Scheme and Engagement

Bath and North East Somerset (B&NES) Council is proposing improvements to Queen Square public realm, using funding associated with the implementation of the Clean Air Zone in Bath city centre. The improvements include reconfiguring pathways, additional seating, planting and new water and power points, alongside improving wayfinding between Queen Square and Charlotte Street Car Park. To share the proposals more widely, and gather views on the emerging design, engagement activities were undertaken both with groups and with the general public.

2. Stakeholder Engagement

During development of the preferred proposal, engagement workshops were held with a number of key stakeholder groups and individuals. These open discussions enabled key thoughts, suggestions and expectations to be captured prior to a draft proposal for engagement with wider teams. Those invited to workshops included:

- B&NES Officers from Parks and Green Spaces, Events and Markets, Regeneration, Planning and Heritage, Parking, Highways Maintenance and Strategic Transport
- Bath Business Improvement District
- Bath Preservation Trust
- Bath Boules
- The Abbey Area Residents' Association
- Bath Royal Literary and Scientific Institution (BRLSI)

In addition to these workshops, meetings were also held with Historic England and the Francis Hotel, to understand their views on the emerging proposal. Comments made by these Groups have been reflected in the following sections.

3. Public Engagement

Following development of the proposal, shaped by stakeholder input, the enhancement scheme was shared with the public. A webpage was launched, on the B&NES website, with an overview of the scheme and proposals. The webpage included an online survey to capture views on the proposed improvements. To raise awareness of the webpage, and proposals overall, the engagement was publicised between November 26th and December 6th 2024 digitally via the council's [Newsroom](#) website, on various social media accounts including X, Facebook, Instagram and Next Door and emailed to local and regional media contacts. In addition, a QR code with a link to the questionnaire was displayed at Queen Square for the two week period.

Two public engagement events were held at Queen Square in Bath between 12pm and 2pm on Friday 29th November and Wednesday 4th December 2024, staffed by a team comprising members from B&NES, Jacobs and Stride Treglown. A gazebo was erected to provide visibility of the event and for shelter, and consultation boards were available for viewing providing background on Queen Square's history and what the proposed public realm improvements are (see Appendix A).

The scheme was discussed with those visiting the events, with encouragement to complete the online survey to help shape the scheme. In addition, paper copies of the questionnaire were also made available at the events to record views. The questions in the questionnaire can be found in Appendix B.

4. Feedback Generated

The online and paper survey generated 89 individual responses. Comments made during the engagement events were also recorded separately to support the analysis and allow for incorporation to potential scheme

amendments. These responses are not included within the quantitative analysis so as to avoid duplication if the individuals were also to submit a survey response.

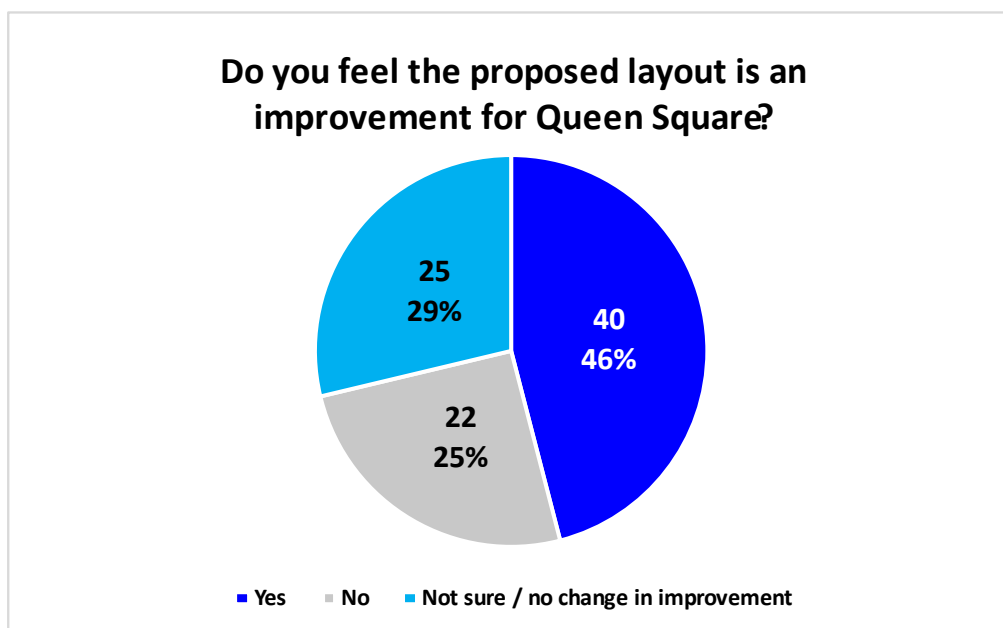
The engagement analysis has involved both quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data was gathered through multiple choice or single answer questions producing numerical results. Qualitative data was gathered through open ended questions which asked about impressions, opinions and views in their own words. To analyse these open-ended questions, a method for coding key words and themes was utilised. This approach allowed for the clear identification of the most important issues surrounding the scheme and also produced a clear breakdown of the most discussed categories throughout the engagement. It is useful to note that for some suggestions made there were also conflicting responses received.

4.1 Respondents' Characteristics

Question 1 was a closed question which aimed to provide general information relating to respondents' individual characteristics and whether they were a local resident, someone who works in Bath, or a visitor to the city. The vast majority (96%) of respondents to the questionnaire live locally in Bath, with 1% working in Bath and the remainder stating "Other", as they were responding on behalf of groups.

4.2 Views on the Proposal

Two questions were asked in order to understand whether the respondents were in support of the scheme. Question 2 was a closed question which aimed to ascertain whether the respondents feel that the proposed layout is an improvement to Queen Square. Almost half of respondents agreed the proposal was a positive change (40 people or 46%), 25 (29%) responded that they are unsure or that there is no change in improvement and 22 (25%) responded that it is not an improvement. There were 2 individuals who did not provide a response.



Question 3 was an open question asking respondents to elaborate on their answers to question 2. These responses allowed exploration of the reasons behind the response to Question 2. In some instances, predominately those stating there to be no improvement, the comment provided was not directly related to the proposed public realm enhancements at Queen Square. A coding exercise was undertaken to understand the view of the Scheme based on the comments, which provided the following overview.

Is the proposed layout an improvement?	Count
In support	41
Neutral	27
Not in support	14
Comment not applicable	5
No response	2

Of those “not in support”, the predominant comments were related to the desire to keep Queen Square as it currently is, or to restore to a more historic layout. The following table details the key themes and comments received.

Response Theme	Summary of Comments Raised	Outcome
Planting	<p>6% felt the proposed planting will look more visually appealing to visit, noting that planting at the corners of the boules courts would help to stop people from cutting diagonally across the pistes and spreading gravel. It was also thought to promote biodiversity and would sufficiently respect the historic formal and regular nature of Queen Square. Many were pleased to see the trees remain within Queen Square.</p> <p>5% commented that there was not enough emphasis on planting within the proposed layout, with a need for further planting around the outer edges to mitigate traffic pollution. In addition, one respondent made the comment that the trees block light to the plants and also block the view of the historical buildings on Queen Square. Maintenance concerns were raised of new planting areas.</p>	<p>The planting mix and locations will be reviewed as part of the detailed proposal, taking on board the specific comments received.</p> <p>Comments related to maintenance and tree canopies have been passed to the appropriate B&NES Officer.</p>
Seating	<p>7% welcomed the provision of additional seating in Queen Square and felt current provision was not satisfactory for the use by groups.</p> <p>Whilst the existence of seating was viewed positively, there were many design considerations raised with 3% against the proposals. Curved benches were considered to look messy and expected to be difficult to clean, with a couple of respondents favouring the traditional style. The placement of benches was also questioned, with a preference not to face the road and ensuring that benches are situated at key focal points (i.e. the Obelisk).</p>	<p>The detailed design will review bench type to ensure a mix that suits different levels of accessibility. Designs will be in accordance with the Bath Pattern Book.</p> <p>Placement of benches will be updated to reflect suggestions raised.</p>
Lighting	<p>1% suggested improved low lighting in the evening was beneficial for those walking through Queen Square at nighttime.</p> <p>Conversely, 1% raised there was too much light pollution and that additional lighting would worsen this.</p>	<p>Low level lighting, sympathetic to the setting, is being considered as part of the detailed design. The 'Make Space for Girls 2023 Report', will be considered in terms of how lighting can be used to make the space safer.</p>
Pathways	<p>5% mentioned that improvements to the path were positive, with acknowledgement that they need tidying up and would make Queen Square look smarter. Efforts to delineate/emphasise the path to the monument were welcomed.</p> <p>2% considered that the footpaths require further improvements to make them more resilient to harsher weather and questioned whether wider paths would be better for larger groups.</p>	<p>Paths will have improved edging with clear delineation to provide a better aesthetic. Non-gravel bound paths have been considered but discounted as this would not be sympathetic to the heritage of Queen Square. Wider paths, whilst benefiting some, would reduce green space in Queen Square which would not be viewed positively by a higher proportion.</p>

Boules Courts	<p>3% provided clear support for improvements and retainment of the boules courts, with more clearly defined boules pistes, re-gravelling and enlargement of the courts all welcomed and expected to enhance gameplay. This was supported in discussion at an engagement event, where 30 boules players provided comments, expressing their support and identifying design features to consider.</p> <p>Comments were raised relating to the reduction of grass strips at the edges of the courts which may result in boules rolling onto the path with suggested solutions including leaving the buffer and having low level wooden edging (with gaps for access). 2% of respondents thought the boules pistes were better relocated (either to the north quadrants or away from Queen Square altogether).</p>	<p>Relocating the boules courts has been considered, however the existing location on Queen Square is best for playable area. The design will be updated to include a buffer between the court and path and other design features will also be included at the detailed stage, e.g. levelling, edging.</p> <p>Boules is an important pastime in Queen Square and so removal is not considered appropriate.</p>
Signage	<p>There was support for increased signage, particularly for the introduction of historic information boards to encourage visitors to Queen Square. Suggestions included information on its name, the obelisk, what John Wood's role is and more. Signage to the nearest public toilets was also raised and desired by respondents, especially local boules players who would like to use the facilities during periods of events.</p>	<p>Wayfinding between Charlotte Street car park and Queen Square will be refreshed and will consider additional signs, such as to facilities. It is intended to provide a map/information board within Queen Square.</p>
Air quality	<p>It was noted that improvements to vegetation will help with noise and air pollution from stationary traffic in Queen Square.</p> <p>2% felt the layout does not consider any improvements to the air quality within Queen Square, fumes and noise which might arise from the space's use for events would make Queen Square an unpleasant environment to sit and relax in.</p>	<p>The introduction of additional electrical points will remove/reduce the need for generators to be brought onto site for the ad-hoc events that occur, therefore supporting improvement in air quality.</p>
Food and Drink Opportunities	<p>2% welcomed the promotion of spaces for temporary vans during events and considered the inclusion of a more permanent food kiosk could be beneficial.</p> <p>4% were against addition of food and drink outlets, considering there to be enough surrounding Queen Square, most notably in Kingsmead Square. It was felt Queen Square would become too busy and not a quiet place to relax, with additional concerns such as the smell of food, littering and dirt (as seen in Kingsmead Square and the Royal Crescent).</p>	<p>Whilst some support for more frequent food and drink opportunities, this scheme does not intend to promote or encourage use over that which currently occurs in Queen Square. The improvements (reinforced grass) will protect the area for ad-hoc appearance by vans.</p>
Water and Electrical Supply	<p>3% mentioned water points being a positive addition to Queen Square, either for event use or individual to fill a bottle.</p> <p>2% were against water supply points, considering they would be visually unappealing, especially for those who live in Queen Square. There was also concern raised they would support antisocial behaviour.</p>	<p>Water points are being investigated and the introduction carefully considered.</p>
Use for events	<p>8% voiced concern over the use of Queen Square for events considering it as one of the few green spaces to relax. There were strong views against commercialising Queen Square, removing the 'oasis' that it is or any intention to turn it into a food court.</p>	<p>Elements of the scheme that support the holding of events are intended to facilitate and lessen the event's impact.</p>

4.2.1 Neutral Responses

The majority of the neutral responses suggested that no further improvements/changes are necessary. Some comments were in support of the proposed changes but would prefer Queen Square to be kept for local people rather than visitors and the money to be spent elsewhere in Bath. Other comments asked for further details to be provided including types and extents of surfacing, style of street furniture and proposed planting.

4.2.2 Responses outside the scope of Queen Square Public Realm Scheme

There were 5 responses which have been coded into the 'N/A' category because they do not directly relate to the proposed changes to the layout of Queen Square i.e. within the confines of the park and inside the railings. These generally related to concerns regarding traffic and accessibility around Queen Square or a misinterpretation of the scheme objectives. This feedback has been passed onto the relevant team at B&NES for consideration.

4.3 Future improvements

Question 4 was an open question which asked respondents to state whether there are any future improvements that they would like to see in and around Queen Square. Within all of the responses, there were 100 different items which were raised as improvements, and many of these have been considered as part of the scheme development. Outside of this scheme, the following improvements were raised:

- **Traffic improvements:** Over half of all responses mentioned the need for traffic improvements around Queen Square in order to make a real difference to the ambience of the area. These included pedestrianisation; safe crossings; removing the traffic lights; stopping traffic using the north side; reducing vehicular access; introducing dedicated cycle lanes; and wider pavements around Queen Square.
- **Maintenance:** A number of respondents were keen for better maintenance and upkeep within Queen Square, particularly with new areas of planting. Enhanced maintenance of bins and routine checking/emptying is also required. Maintenance budget will be considered as part of the proposals for the scheme.
- **Security:** Three respondents raised their concerns around the security of the park, including the existence of unwanted tents/camping and associated drunk and disorderly behaviour. Responses also suggested consideration of the 'Make Space for Girls 2023 Report', a report outlining the dangers for girls in parks and ways that these spaces can become safer.
- **Toilet facilities:** Additional toilet facilities in close proximity to Queen Square was considered important by some. There is considered to be a lack of public conveniences within the City itself.
- **Cycle Parking Provision:** Additional cycle parking was requested in the local vicinity and across the City in general, with specific locations mentioned including access points to Queen Square and on Queen's Parade.

5. Summary and Conclusions

Engagement has taken place throughout the development of proposals for enhancements at Queen Square. Workshop sessions with key stakeholders were important to shape initial proposals which have then been shared with the public, both online and in-person, to understand wider views and suggestions. Almost half of the respondents consider the proposals to make an improvement, with a further 29% considering there to be limited improvement. Of those considering there to be no improvement, this was predominately a desire to keep Queen Square as it is. Half of all comments received related to the traffic surrounding Queen Square and the importance of this in enhancing the area.

This feedback will be considered by B&NES in the next stage of the design phase for public realm at Queen Square, to help ensure that the future of Queen Square is encompassing views and desires of those who use it most regularly.

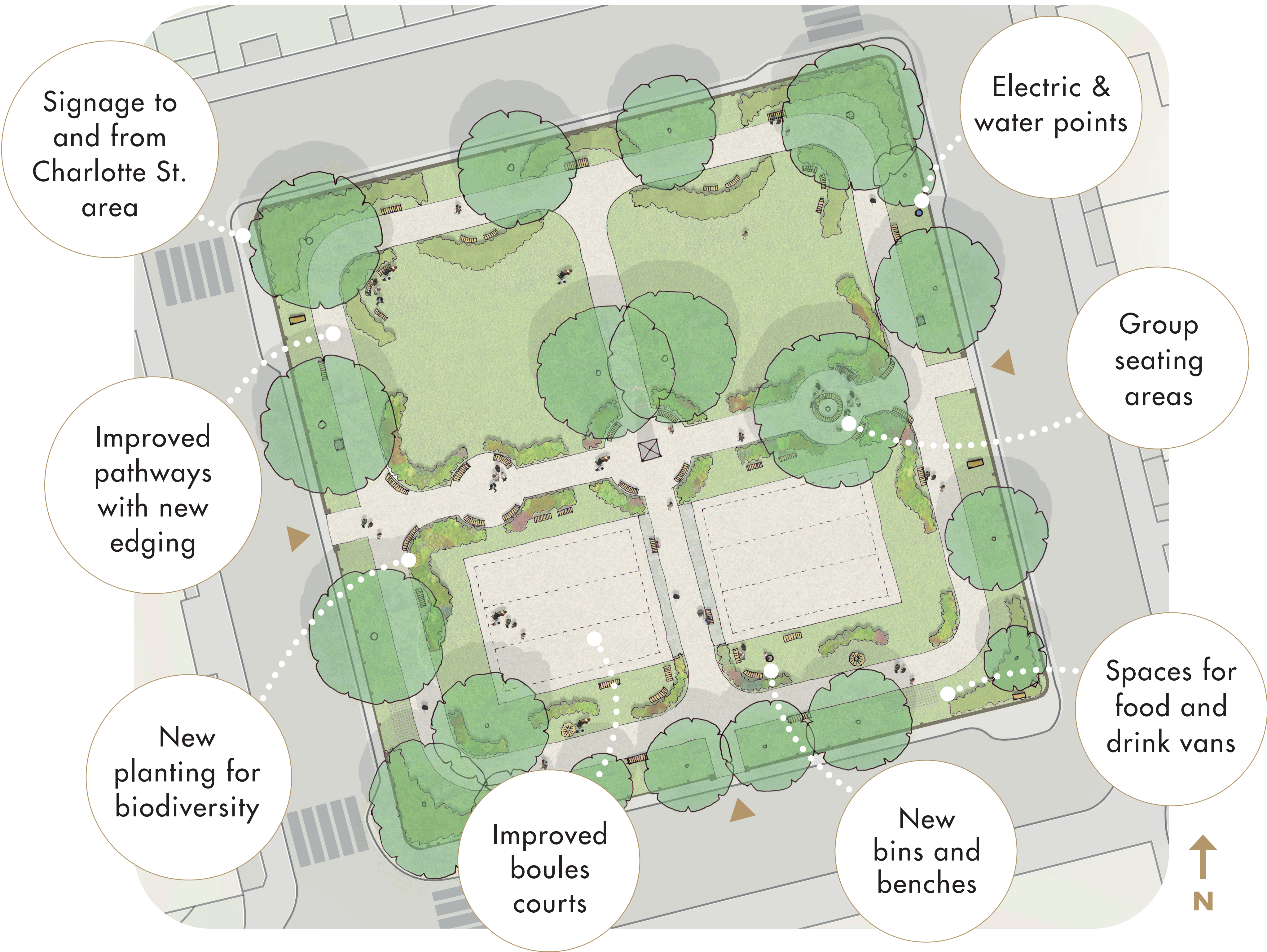
Appendix A. Engagement Boards

QUEEN SQUARE

A testament to community spirit and the cultural enrichment taking place within the city.

'Welcome to Bath' website

This design enhances this historic setting for the community by increasing planting and biodiversity as well as providing more seating and usable spaces for activities and events.



What it could look and feel like...

**What do you think?
Tell us here...**



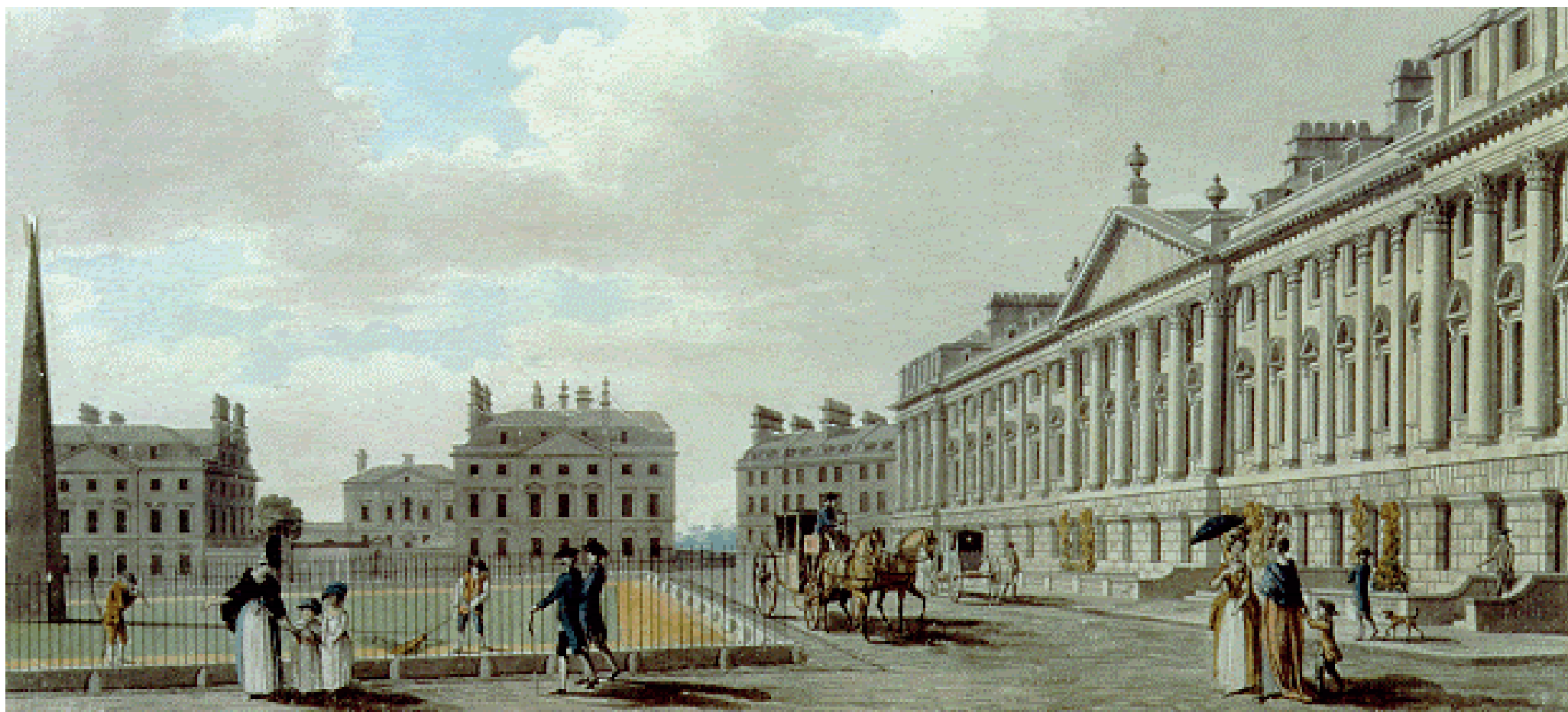
QUEEN SQUARE

The intention of a square in a city is for people to assemble together.

John Wood the Elder - Architect

Queen Square is a prominent Georgian square with architectural significance in the heart of Bath, making it a vital part of the city’s cultural heritage and urban fabric.

Following the introduction of the Clean Air Zone (CAZ) in Bath, additional funding was made available to support schemes within the city that support the aims of the Clean Air Plan. One area that funding was secured for included enhancement to the public realm in and around Queen Square.

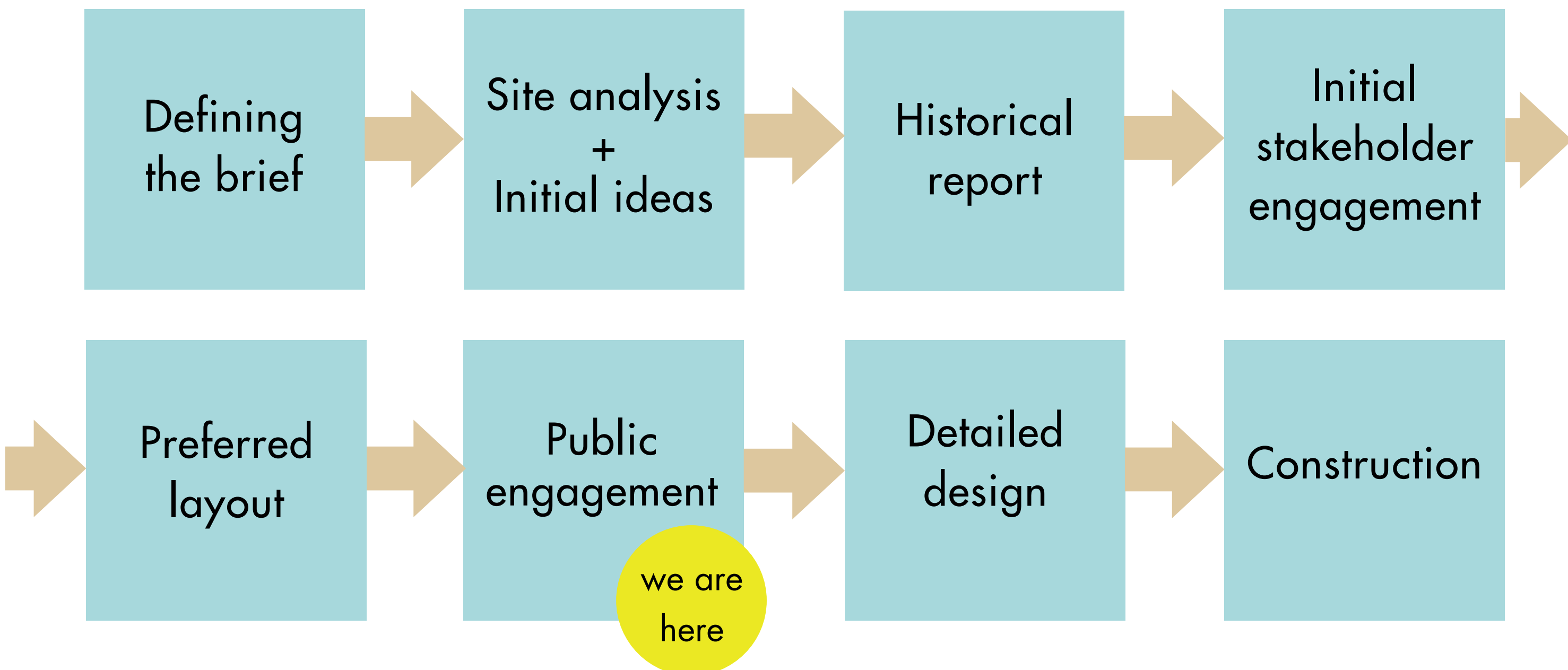
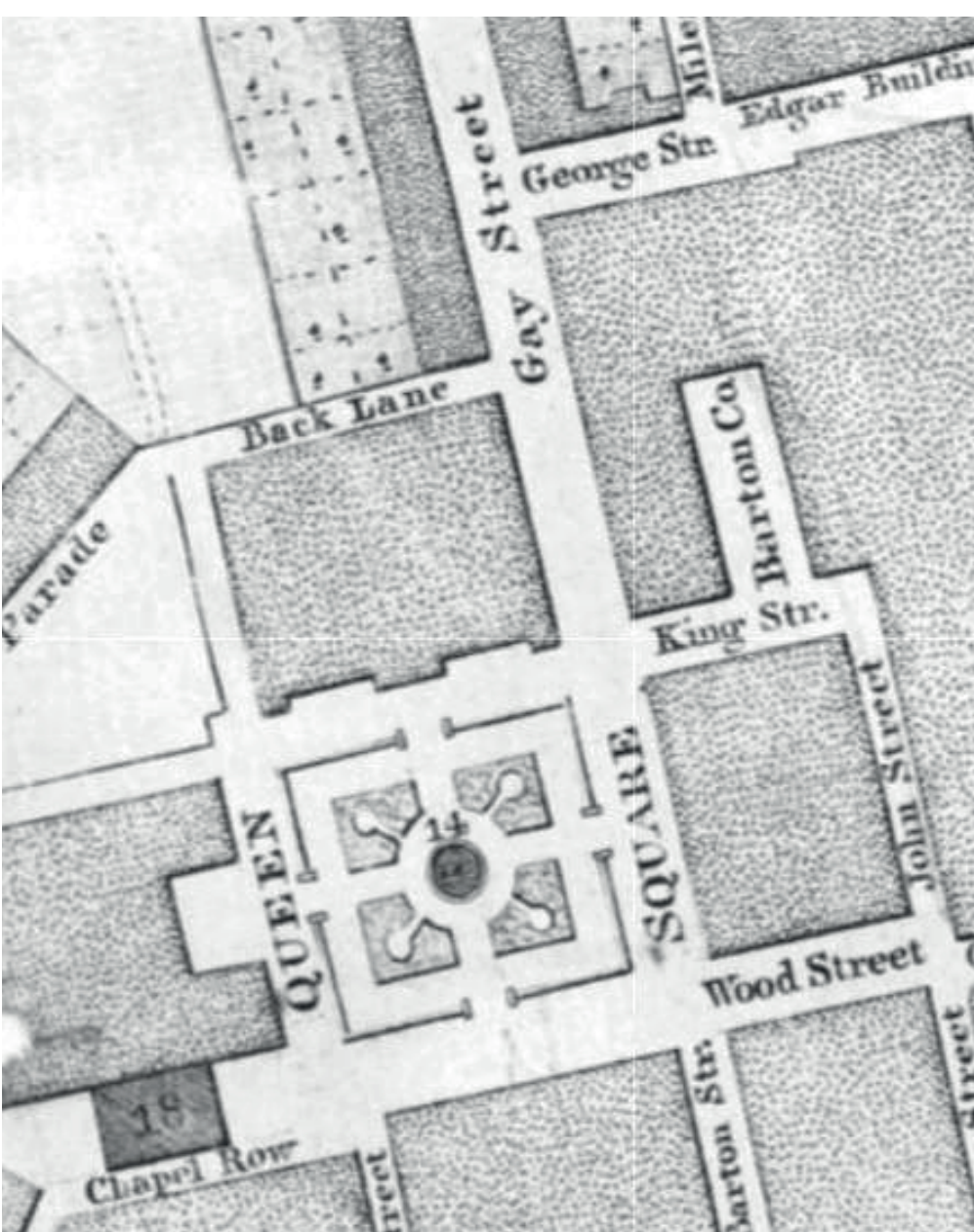


The design proposals have been developed and informed through extensive site analysis and stakeholder engagement. The groups included talking with local residents and businesses, users of the square and council officers to consider heritage, transport, parks, events and utilities.

The **objectives** of the Queen Square Public Realm project are:

- To create an improved place at the historic site of Queen Square, supporting recreation, events and cleaner air.
- To improve access to Queen Square, particularly from the Charlotte Street area.
- To recreate a pleasant, peaceful surrounding in which to meet and relax.

The project aims to respect the historical significance of Queen Square while making it more useful for today’s needs.



Appendix B. Questionnaire Questions

Queen Square Feasibility Study

Survey Questions

1. Are you a local resident, someone who works in Bath, or a visitor to the city?

- ☐ Local Resident
☐ Working in Bath
☐ Visitor
☐ Other (please specify)

More than one choice can be ticked

2. Do you feel the proposed layout is an improvement for Queen Square?

- ☐ Yes
☐ Not sure / no change
☐ No

Only one choice can be made

3. Could you explain briefly your response to Question 2?

4. Are there any future improvements that you would like to see in and around Queen Square?