

Engaged: On-the-Ground  
Engagement and Co-Design Report  
September 2022



Royal College of Art  
**THE HELEN HAMLYN  
CENTRE FOR DESIGN**

**PiM.studio**  
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# Introduction:

People are the heart of the high street, but they need public toilets to spend more time participating in their community and the local economy. For older people, disabled people and those with young families, toilet access can decide which high street to visit, or whether to visit at all. Yet despite public support, public toilets in England and Wales have reduced by 35% since 2000\*.



\*Hansard, 2021, H.L. Vol 811:426

# Introduction:

## Partners and Stakeholders

The **Engaged** project is run by the **Public Toilets Research Unit (PTRU)** based at **The Helen Hamlyn Centre for Design (HHCD)** at the **Royal College of Art (RCA)**, in partnership with **PiM studio Architects**.

Engaged is one of 20 innovation projects in the **Mayor of London's Designing London's Recovery** programme, in response to the 'High Streets of All' Mission.

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Project Partners:



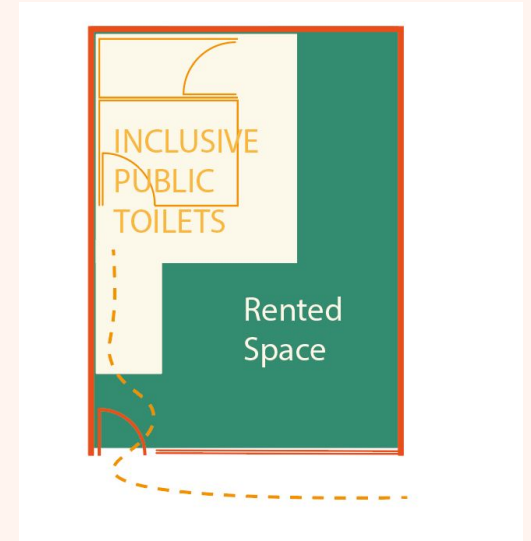
**PiM.studio**  
Architects

# Introduction:

## Engaged Brief

**Engaged** investigates how to reuse empty premises as public toilets, sharing space with start-ups, small businesses, incubator space or community initiatives, to provide this overlooked element of public health infrastructure that supports high street regeneration.

With expertise in inclusive design, urban design and architecture, **PTRU** and **PiM.studio Architects** will develop toilet facilities that meet the needs of those who are often excluded, for and with the local community, through co-design methods.



# Introduction:

## Overview of Research

**Engaged** has already working closely with local and national experts and stakeholders to understand the current barriers and issues surrounding public toilet facilities. This information has been captured through workshops, site visits and interviews.

From this we have developed an Engaged **Pre-Feasibility Study**, and a **National Need** Report that pulls together Government papers, mapping data and expert insight into both public toilets in general, and the barriers and opportunities for Engaged.

The third part of Engaged, **On-the-Ground**, works with a London Community to find what an inclusive public toilet would look like in their neighbourhood. This report shares the findings from this engagement and co-design activity, in the Hackney Central area.



## Activities so far

1 Regeneration Workshop (London) 13 Workshop participants 10 Expert interviews (UK-wide) 2 Site Visits (Hackney)

# On the Ground:

## Aims of the Study

With support from London Borough of Hackney, we have sought to understand the current condition and accessibility of local public toilets. We invited members of the public to share both their experiences, and how public toilets could better meet their needs. We have also spoken with businesses that provide toilets, to understand the challenges, and how these could be navigated.

The On the Ground activities aim to:

- Identify gaps in local toilet provision
- Identify local opportunities and challenges for toilets and the Engaged model
- Pilot and improve engagement and co-design activities for future Engaged studies
- Inform a proposal for an inclusive toilet design in the Hackney Central area

As well as being of local value, insights from this study will inform how we develop and pilot Engaged for other communities, as a sustainable proposition that can bring value to the high street.



# On the Ground:

## Overview of Research Activities

12 July 2022

Hackney Central Community Walk

26 Participants

14 August 2022

On Street Activities, Broadway Market

84 Participants

22 August 2022

Community Co-design Workshop (Online)

5 Participants

1-5 September 2022

Interviews with toilet providers

2 Participants





# Community Walk

12 July 2022, Hackney Central

Engaged joined a walking tour (6-8pm) for the Hackney Central Community Panel led by the council regeneration officers

The panel is made up of people from community and civic groups, businesses and residents, from or located in Hackney. The walk and panel are run by Hackney Council to work with the community in the development of Hackney Central. The walk was designed to show the panel several site allocations and talk about future developments.

The aims for our participation were:

1. To get a better understanding of existing current public toilets, where new toilets are needed and why.
2. To understand business and community views on public toilets.
3. To get to know the community panel, and see if any members would like to participate in our research.



# Community Walk

## Participants and Overview

Participants were provided with a booklet with questions and a map which was filled in during and at the end of the walk. It also had space for comments and information about Engaged.

Participants: 26

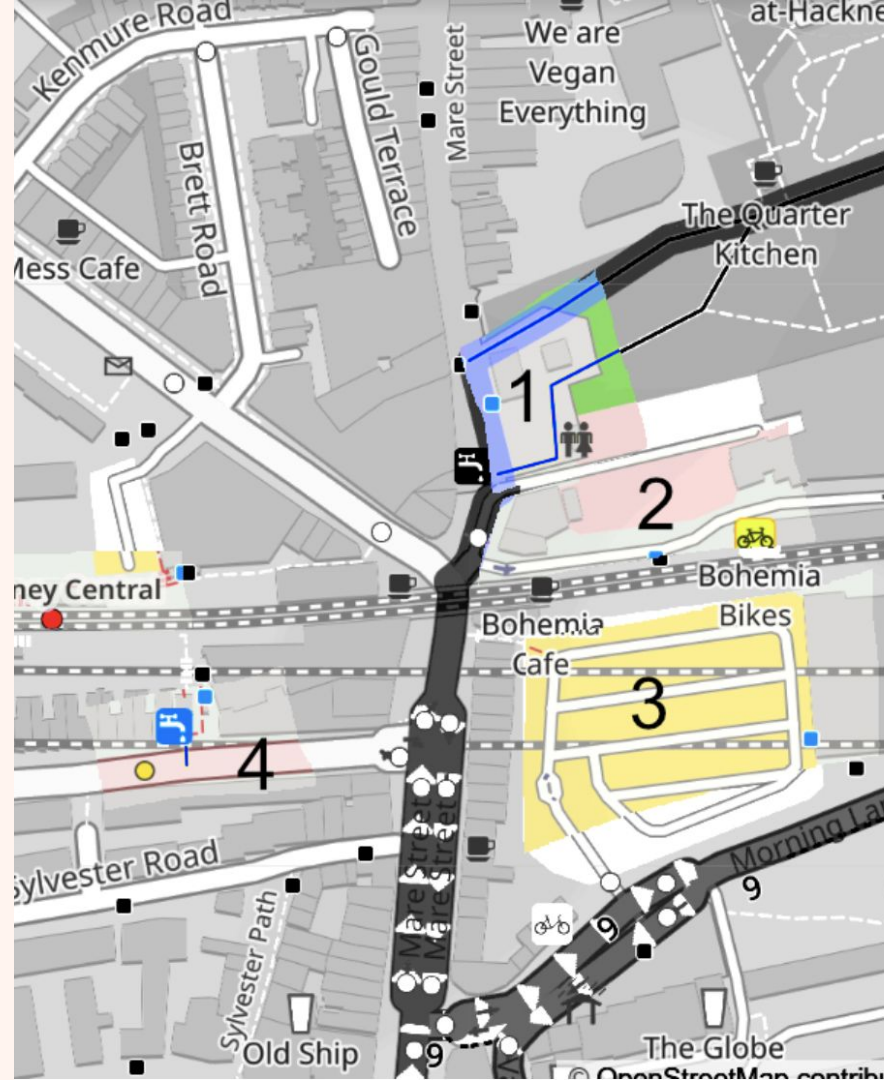
Booklets returned with written responses: 9

Booklets returned with some response: 15

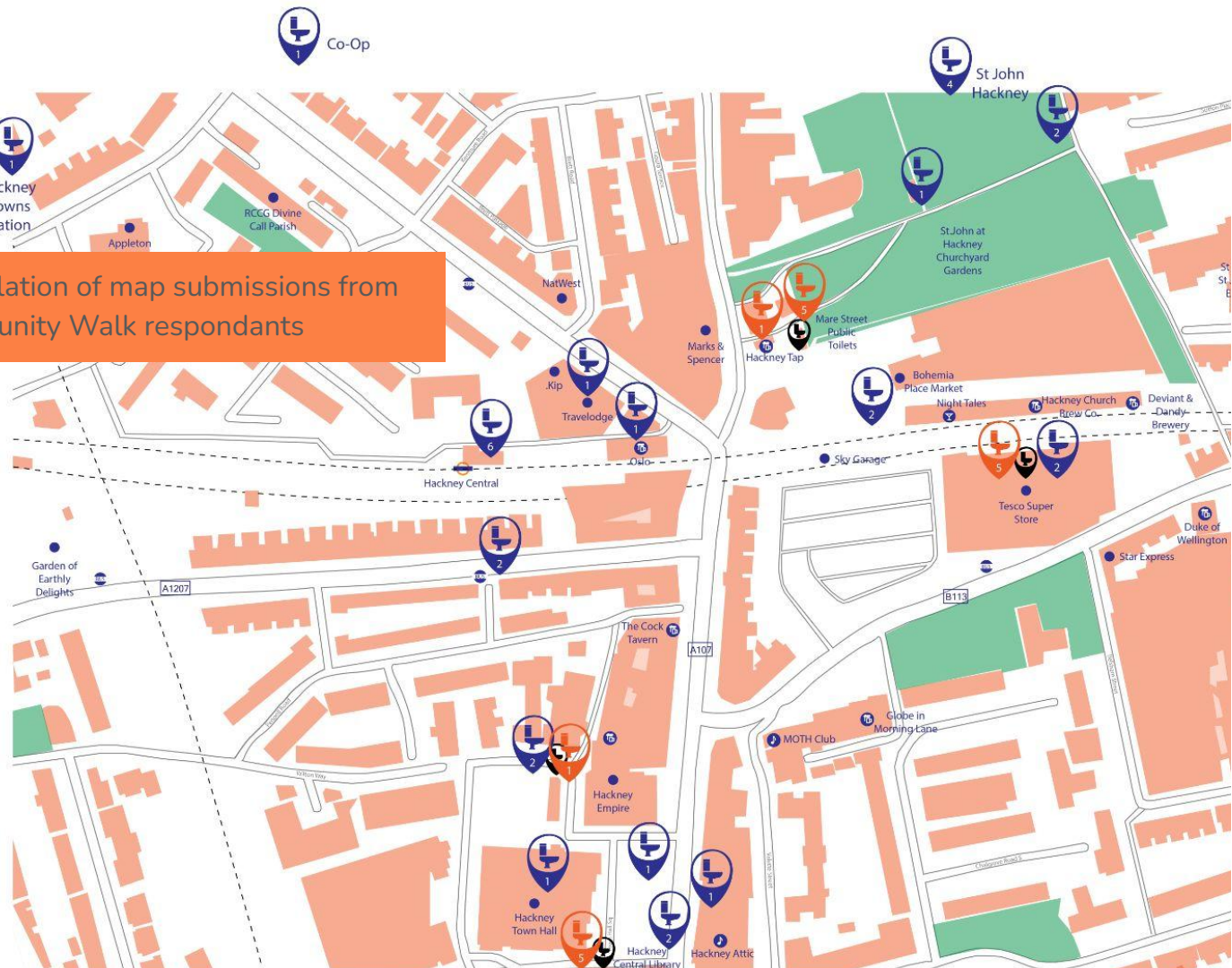
Booklets returned with no response: 2

### Key stops:

1. Narrow Way & Veronica Ryan's Windrush Sculptures
2. Bohemia Place (currently used as a market)
3. Tesco Car Park
4. Hackney Central Station (new entrance on Graham Road)
  - Garden of Earthly Delights (west of Hackney Central Station)



Compilation of map submissions from Community Walk respondents



ENGAGED

- Public Toilets
- Toilets Used (number indicates the number of votes)
- Toilet location Requested (number indicates the number of votes)

**General Information**

Date: 12/07/2022  
Event: Hackney Walking Tour

*"Have you used public toilets in this area of Hackney?"*  
(Votes)

YES	NO
10	4

**Notes:**

Hackney Central station gained the most votes for a toilet to be provided.

Tesco, Hackney Library and Mare Street Public Toilets were the most used toilet locations.

2 people indicated that the Hackney Council Car park toilet location is closed, and requested for them to be opened.

# Community Walk

## Themes from comments

Themes emerged from the participants' comments. One was the use of **non-public toilets**. There are several private businesses in Hackney Central that let people use their toilets. This was positive for people, particularly as some were at busy travel points. This would be known by locals but not visitors to the area.

This links to another theme, **wayfinding**. Hackney Central does have good sign-posting to some of its toilets, but in the map analysis, people had said that a set of toilets on the map were closed, when they aren't. Someone suggested an app for the toilets. The toilets are covered by The Great British Public Toilet Map.

There were some comments about **locations** for public toilets. This came up in standalone comments as well as

some of the comments connected to the non-public toilets. A few of these mentioned the need for toilets at transport hubs or interchanges.

Someone commented about **having to pay** as a negative. There was one comment about **access**, having toilets open 24 hours, and concerns about **anti-social behaviour** in toilets.

Someone mentioned the importance of **grassroots businesses and communities** and there was a comment around **children and young people**, who need to be thought about in future design decisions.

# Community Walk

## Observations

The Community Walk raised several interesting points with regards to the current public toilets. The toilets in the Hackney Town Hall car park were identified as "closed" by several members of the group. In general, we found that there was high demand for public toilets in areas that already had these. This could imply an issue of **wayfinding/sign posting**.

The new **Hackney Central Station** entrance has a coffee shop as well as a free water fountain. However, there are no toilet facilities on the site or nearby. Therefore, this was raised as a priority site of interest with regards to requesting public toilets with 6 votes on site and 2 opposite by the bus stop.

**St Johns Park** was also a point of interest with 7 votes in different locations for requested public toilets.

The most used toilet facilities were **Tesco Superstore**, **Hackney Central Library** and **Mare Street Public Toilets** each gaining 5 votes.

4 out of 14 participants had not used any toilets within the mapped area.

The **Garden of Earthly Delights** is located on Crossrail and is being safeguarded by the current users. The site is open for the public, however, they have had furniture and tools stolen. They have an eco toilet that is for urine only and is handmade by the build team.

# Broadway Market

12 July 2022, On-street engagement activities

Engaged ran a stall at Broadway Market at the south of the Hackney Central area between 10am and 5:30pm, to speak with the community about public toilets, and the Engaged Model.

## Aims

- To get a broad understanding of the local issues around public toilets in Hackney Central
- To hear about the needs of local people in relation to toilets
- To find out what local people would value in a public toilet

We ran three activities throughout the day: **a map, a multiple choice question;** and **a written question.** For the last two activities, the questions changed every two hours (the last question we ran for only one hour). We asked 4 sets of questions in total.

**84 people participated throughout the day. Of these, 50 people lived in Hackney and 34 people lived outside Hackney.**



# Broadway Market:

Multiple choice questions

The public responded to a multiple choice question by voting using lego in milk bottles. Q1 and Q2 were posed for 2 hours each.



**Q1. Which public toilets are you happy and able to use?** (number of votes)

- Male/female toilets: 22
- All Gender/Unisex toilets (own sink): 27
- All Gender/Unisex toilets (shared sink): 16
- Disabled/Accessible toilets: 21

36 respondents, of which 27 people lived in Hackney and 9 people lived outside Hackney.

People could vote for more than one option for this question

**Q2. In the past year has the lack of suitable public toilets stopped you going somewhere or meant leaving early?** (number of votes)

- Never: 1 vote
- One or two times: 8 votes
- Three of four times: 10 votes
- More than five times: 7 votes

26 people responded to the question. 16 people lived in Hackney and 10 people lived outside Hackney.

People could only choose one option for this question

# Broadway Market:

Multiple choice questions

The public responded to a multiple choice question by voting using lego in milk bottles. Q3 was posed for 2 hours and Q4 for 1 hour.



## Q3. What else would you like in a public toilet?

(number of votes)

- Moisturiser: 1
- Showerhead/bidet: 4
- Family toilet: 2
- Composting: 6
- Changing places toilets: 12

17 people responded to the question. 3 people lived in Hackney and 14 people lived outside Hackney.

People could vote for more than one option for this question

## Q4. Which toilets would you use when out and about?

(number of votes)

- Pub: 3
- Public Toilet: 2
- Fast food restaurant: 2
- Cafe: 3
- Public building / Station / Shop: All 0

5 people responded to the question. 4 people lived in Hackney and 1 person lived outside Hackney.

People could make more than one choice for this question.



# Broadway Market:

Written response questions

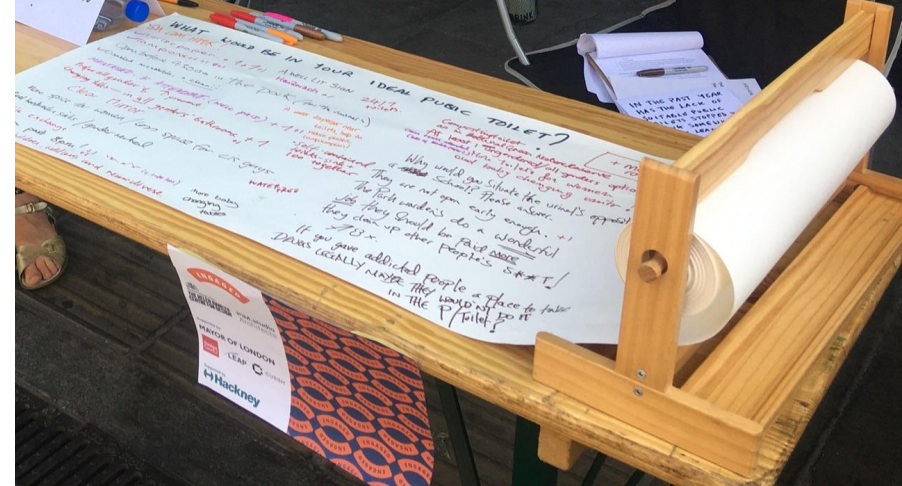
The public responded to a written question by writing on a shared sheet of paper. 4 questions were posed. Responses to Q1-3 were collected for 2 hours each, and responses to Q4 were collected for 1 hour.

Q1 What would be in your ideal public toilet?

Q2. What has stopped you using a public toilet?

Q3. What's missing from your high street?

Q4. What businesses wouldn't you feel comfortable going into, to use the toilet?



prefer all gender if 1 present.

hanging tables — in all genders' bathrooms. +1

Clear Mirror

more space for women / less space for cis

Real handwash + sinks / gender neutral

Needle exchange

Keep open past 8pm! +1 +1 (if super loos)

Accessible for children, toddlers and neurodiverse.

# Broadway Market:

Written response questions - Analysis

## Q1. What would be in your ideal public toilet?

Themes were created from each answer and these formed categories of:

- 1) **Objects**: things people want in a public toilet which included coat hooks and mirrors.
- 2) **Environment**: This covers comments about how the toilets look, how long they are open for, whether they are unisex, where they are, how to find them.
- 3) **Inclusivity** which includes accessibility and who will be using them,
- 4) **Environmental** which includes composting toilets and water use.

It was interesting talking with the person who said they didn't feel comfortable using Broadway Market's urinals which are positioned opposite a school. There were a couple of people who asked for more toilets for women.

## Q2. What has stopped you using a public toilet

The state of the toilet was very important, including the smell and cleanliness. Lack of access to toilets was also noted as a problem, with them not being close enough or not enough of them. There was a comment about not using them if people are congregating around them.

## Q3. What's missing from your high street?

Responses to what was missing didn't focus on the shops but more on facilities such as places to sit, water fountains ( quite a few mentions), places that homeless people could shower, more places to compost, and leisure facilities. One person wanted a tube station in Hackney, which seems to relate to access to the area in general.

**Q4. What businesses wouldn't you feel comfortable going into, to use the toilet? - no responses.**

# Broadway Market:

Publicly compiled map of toilet locations



Spots of Public Urination



Current Public Toilets



Where would you like public toilets?



# Co-Design Workshop:

24th August 2022, Online.

The co-design workshop used Zoom and Miro, and ran from 12-2pm.

We designed it to consist of 6 activities.

Activity 1

**Recent experiences of public toilets**

Activity 2

**Types of toilet - preferences**

Activity 3

**Sensory preferences**

Activity 4

**Design your ideal toilet**

Activity 5

**Benefits of additional space**

Activity 6

**Use of additional space**

# Co-Design Workshop:

## Participant representation

This online workshop had five participants.

The attendees for this workshop were all Hackney-based. They represented different community groups to ensure a wide perspective on the local needs.

Groups represented (selected by participants):

Attendee 1: ***LGBTQ+ & Ability/Disability (age)***

Attendee 2: ***Families & Ability/Disability (age)***

Attendee 3: ***General Public & Ability/Disability (age)***

Attendee 4: ***Homeless/Vulnerable & Street drinkers / people who spend all day outside***

Attendee 5: ***General Public & Other, medical condition***

Their choice of groups to represent were based on their personal experience, whether that be in their own life or through their work or volunteering.

Four groups were not selected: Faith, Women, Night-workers and Youth. However, two additional groups were added by the participants: Street drinkers/ people who spend all day outside and Medical Condition.

# Co-Design Workshop:

## Activity One: Recent experiences

We asked the participants to share their most recent experience of public toilets.

Negative experiences or features were more memorable.

The key area raised as an issue was in relation to **access** - specifically -if the toilets were open to the public at all. Some found a lack of clarity on **opening times**. In some cases toilets were **locked** or participants had needed **further assistance** to gain access.

Issues around the **cleanliness** of the space and how it is maintained were raised. Some respondents said a space “didn’t feel clean”. This highlights the **sensory experience** and translation. Considering the senses in designing the space could develop the essence of “feeling clean” as well as *being* clean, through **easy-to-maintain** facilities.

The image shows a digital form for a workshop activity. At the top, a large orange banner with the word 'ENGAGED' in white, curved letters is centered. Below this, a 'PLEASE READ' section contains a consent form. The main activity area is a grey rounded rectangle with two input boxes: 'Initials:' (with a note 'This is used for data processing and will not be published') and 'What are your pronouns:' (with options 'She/They/He/Other' and a 'Please define if other' field). Below this is an orange section titled 'Based on your experience, how could public toilets be better design for the needs of' followed by two dropdown menus: 'LGBTQ+' and 'Ability/disability type?'. A note says 'Select an option/options from the selection below'. Below the dropdowns are several blue buttons: 'Families', 'Faith', 'Homeless/Vulnerable', 'Women', 'Night-workers', 'General Public', 'Youth', and 'Other, Specify'. A small text block explains the purpose of the session. The bottom part of the form is a large orange rounded rectangle containing 'Activity 1. (8 Minutes)' with a prompt to write answers in boxes. The first question is '1. What was your most recent experience of a public toilet? What was good and what bad?'. Below the question is a large white text area with a sample response. The response describes a public toilet in Victoria Park, Hackney, near tennis courts, noting accessibility issues and a red emergency cord. A note at the bottom of the response says 'Worth noting that I moved to Folkestone a few months ago and the public toilet provisions here are fantastic - there are loos all over the place, signposted, clean and with extra capacity during tourist season - it makes such a difference from London!'. Below the response area is 'Activity 2. (8 Minutes)' with a prompt to use stickers to vote for top three. At the very bottom, a section titled 'PART 1: If you could choose, which type of toilet would you prefer to use?' is partially visible.

**ENGAGED**

PLEASE READ:

We ask that you provide some information about yourself that will provide context to your answers within this workshop session. We will refer back to your consent forms with regards to the use of this information and if you have requested to be anonymous. The information requested in section one will remain anonymous and not be associated to your name, even if consent has been provided.

Initials:

This is used for data processing and will not be published

What are your pronouns:

She/They/He/Other

Please define if other

They/Them

**Based on your experience, how could public toilets be better design for the needs of**

of  LGBTQ+  Ability/disability type?

Select an option/options from the selection below

Families Faith Homeless/Vulnerable

Women Night-workers General Public Youth Other, Specify

During this session we ask that you fill in this activity sheet individually, but encourage discussion within your groups. This is a space for you to share your thoughts as an individual.

Please ask the facilitator for any help if you are unsure of anything or need assistance.

**Activity 1. (8 Minutes)** Write your answers in the boxes provided

1. What was your most recent experience of a public toilet? What was good and what bad?

I used the public toilets in Victoria Park in Hackney near the tennis courts. This was on my way to work (cycling from Stratford International to the Town Hall) at around 11.15am on a weekday. They have a number (2 I think?) of any-gender toilets which are also accessible - unfortunately, they are often locked with no explanation. I had this on a previous occasion. Fortunately, on this one, it was unlocked which meant I was able to use it and take my bike in with me to keep it safe. It was clean and there was toilet paper, however the red emergency cord was tied up rather than hanging to the floor. I notice this in most accessible facilities, I think the general public doesn't realise they're meant to dangle to the floor. More education on this, or explanatory signs would be useful.

Worth noting that I moved to Folkestone a few months ago and the public toilet provisions here are fantastic - there are loos all over the place, signposted, clean and with extra capacity during tourist season - it makes such a difference from London!

**Activity 2. (8 Minutes)** Use the stickers to vote for your top three.

**PART 1: If you could choose, which type of toilet would you prefer to use?**

# Co-Design Workshop:

## Activity Two: Types of Toilet

This activity aimed to capturing preferences of existing types of public toilet, by each participant rating them 1st, second and 3rd, and any they would actively avoid. .

Accessible toilets and Gender-neutral enclosed facilities gained the most votes.

Shared common facilities (eg hand-washing) in gender-neutral toilets were regarded as a formation to avoid, invoking a discussion in the session about the safety of the space. One member shared their hesitations about sending their child to these toilet facilities.

Additional urinals had positive and negative votes, as whilst there was a benefit to a separate space being available, this division of space was considered non-inclusive and as a result not the solution to creating more inclusive toilets.



Responses cannot be considered statistically significant due to the small number of participants, but may represent the attendees and the groups they work with. Significant user groups not represented include faith/culture, women, night-workers and youth.

# Co-Design Workshop:

## Activity Three: Sensory experience

Attendees were asked to each finish sentences relating to there sensory experiences within public toilets

### When entering a toilet, I would like...

These general preferences could be considered the most basic requirements relating to the maintenance and functionality of the facility. It needs to be **big enough for free movement**, including within the cubicle, right down to the distance from the toilet seat to the sanitary waste bin.

### The public toilet would smell like..

The smell within the space can impact the experience. The desired smell was described as **neutral/nothing** or **clean/fresh**. It can also have an overwhelming impact on neurodivergent people so creating a space with limited smells will provide inclusivity. This would need high levels of ventilation in the general space as well as individual cubicles.

### I would like to hear sounds of...

The sounds within the toilet should reflect privacy. There is a need for the space to not let sound out or in. If this is not possible, sounds could be muffled by those of nature to create audio privacy.

### I would like to feel...

The feeling in the cubicle was described as safe, private, clean and relaxed. An attendee described it as *“relaxed, as if I was at home, safely contained”*. Connecting the elements of privacy and escapism to a relatable space is an interesting concept to consider in the design.

	Key Themes (Activity 3)
General	Space for movement, cleanliness, lockable, necessary facilities provided, enough cubicles to prevent waiting, free
Smell	Fresh, neutral, nothing, clean
Sound	No sounds entering the space or exiting, sounds of nature, music
Emotional	Safe, private, clean, relaxed



# Co-Design Workshop:

## Activity Four: Design your ideal toilet

Activity four asked participants to design the layout for a cubicle in their ideal public toilet using icons created by the team.

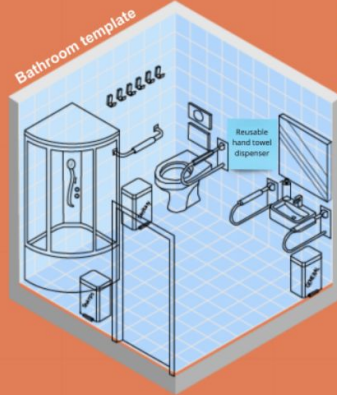
An example of the findings is shown in the image to the right. The participant has both dragged and dropped icons into the space, as well as suggesting other facilities using the post-its..

The findings from the full group are presented on the next page.

### Attendee 4 : Homeless/Vulnerable & Street drinkers / people who spend all day outside

**Activity 4.**  
Task: Design your ideal cubicle

Use the bathroom template to the left to design your ideal public toilet. Drag and drop the facilities provided to build the design or you can upload pictures or use the drawing function, any features that are missing from the list provided please note in the area provided. Whatever best communicates your idea.



Additional features I would like included that aren't listed are...

Add your text here	Add your text here	Add your text here
Add your text here	Add your text here	Add your text here
Add your text here	Add your text here	Add your text here

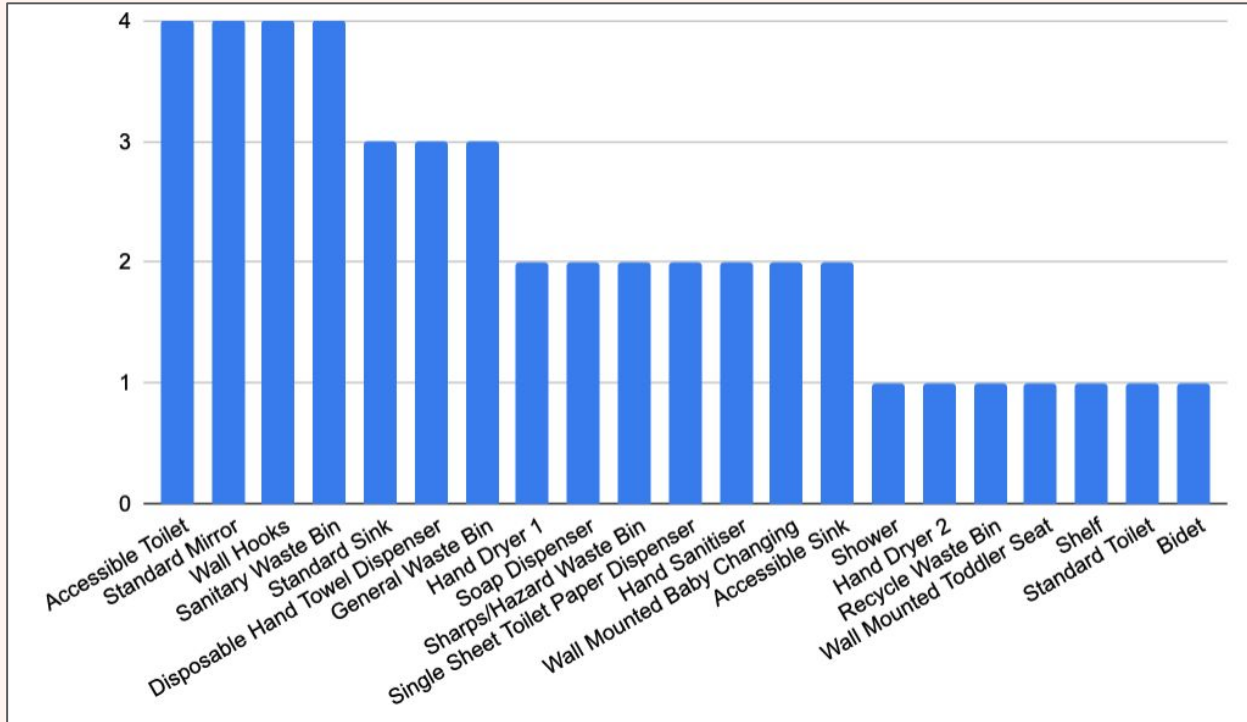
Attendee	Facilities Requested	Additional Features
4	Accessible Toilet	Reusable hand towel dispenser
	Accessible Sink	
	Soap Dispenser	
	General Waste Bin	
	Sanitary Waste Bin	
	Standard Mirror	
	Wall Hooks	
	Shower	

# Co-Design Workshop:

## Activity Four: Design your ideal toilet

This chart shows how many participants chose each icon.

The table shows and categorises additional facilities suggested by participants.



Additional Features	Theme
Safety/Help alert system	Communication
Emergency cord - clear signs about it touching the floor	Communication
Hooks on Door	Design Feature
Minimal Touch Facilities	Design Feature
Paper Towels - Blow dryers are unsanitary	Design Feature
Make sure the toilet has a lid	Design Feature
Easy to clean facilities	Design Feature
Working lock on the door	Design Feature
Lower sink for children and wheelchair access	Design Feature
Childs toilet to be hands free	Design Feature
Plants	Design Feature
Daylight	Design Feature
Artwork	Design Feature
Separate urinal only area	Spatial Feature
All new toilets should be as eco friendly and sustainable as possible	Sustainability
Reusable hand towel dispenser	Sustainability

# Co-Design Workshop:

## Activity Five: Benefits of additional space

Within this activity we asked several questions to discover what additional space could be used for and the potential benefits. The key themes raised for the public toilet were:

- **Self Contained**
- **Lockable**
- **Clean**
- **Accessible Entrance**
- **Extended Opening Hours**
- **Inviting for users**
- **Free for Use**
- **Easy to Locate**
- **Sustainably functioning facilities and use of materials**
- **Regularly maintained**
- **In areas of high volume (transport, parks, green spaces)**
- **Safe Access**

These themes run across the five attendees in different activities

Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3
<b>self contained, lockable cubicles</b> which contain sink, menstrual waste disposal and can be used by any gender with accessible options made available. Where space is available, a separate smaller are with urinals only	<b>free to use</b>	<b>regularly maintained</b> for cleaning to make sure the toilets work and that they're not being misused or vandalised
Cleanliness: <b>as little physical contact as possible</b>	accessibility: not locked, it's there when you need it and <b>open for use</b>	<b>making sure they exist: Playgrounds need toilets!</b>
<b>Fully accessible entrance, and lockable</b>	<b>Clean, fresh and maintained</b>	everything needed <b>functional and usable</b>
<b>long opening hours, well maintained (and staffed in some cases)</b>	<b>Easy to locate and many of them</b>	<b>sustainable</b>
Accessibility ; for disabled/wheelchair users, carers, adults with children and elderly(no heavy doors) and <b>attractive access to invite people to use them</b>	<b>Sustainability;</b> energy(solar panels ) resources ( all basin water into toilet cisterns etc) and materials; what it is built out of and products used	<b>Siting: where people need them, near transport links, high street shops, open spaces, green spaces,with safe access</b>

# Co-Design Workshop:

## Activity Six: Use of additional space

Participants were asked to make suggestions as to what facilities might use the additional space provided with the toilets that they have designed for their user groups.

This naturally led the participants to suggest what services could best manage a public toilet. These covered charities that support their user groups as well as maintenance services.

There is suggested resistance to the idea of a charity taking on this service for the space. However, if the council is invested in providing services for these user groups, it may be an opportunity for them to have direct or closer access.

There is less focus on commercial services, although there was a suggestion that it could be a positive opportunity for businesses to gain new customers.

Complimentary Business/Service for public toilet scheme
The council
Tourism focused support organisations
Cleaning companies
Safety and drug support organisations
Outreach programmes
Women's support groups
Cafe - an example being Broadway market
Green Spaces: green space groups to manage it
Public Spaces
Sex Worker Charity
Various local charities could assist
Citizens advice
Pharmacist

# Co-Design Workshop:

## Summary of Findings

This workshop provided a wide range of insight within user groups, however, the size of the group does not provide enough context to ensure clarity on their needs. This provided the opportunity to talk about the diverse needs of Hackney, with specific reference to the groups. This should be considered in the scaling of the research or project.

The recurring themes include **access**, in relation to opening hours, access at different times of day, and unscheduled closures or additional access restrictions. Within the facility, locking and safety were raised including the needs of children and families, with the example of a child unlocking a cubicle on their adult, whilst still being accessible to them.

In terms of **signage**, this should indicate the facilities rather than the gender of the user. Various examples were shared in the session, shown here. Engaged signage would indicate the facilities, number of facilities and opening hours / access information.

The design activities highlighted the need to **address the basics** - cleanliness, locking, access. Then we can bring in **additional design features** listed in activities 4 and 5. The services in activity 6 present opportunities for Engaged, as **potential organisations** to speak with to understand the limitations and needs for supporting public toilets.



# Provider Interviews

1-5 September 2022

As one aspect of the Engaged model will be the staff of a business taking care of the toilets, we interviewed two businesses to look at how staff currently do just that.

Of the two interviews, one was with a pub landlord, and the other with someone who tended the bar and was wait staff in a pub. Both interviewees said that the toilets were mainly used by customers, but that they would let anyone who asked use them, except for some groups of young people who had caused problems.

Whilst this is a very small sample, they have generated good insight and illustrate the benefit of doing further interviews of this nature in the future.



# Provider Interviews

## Insights on Maintaining Toilets

### Design

Thinking about the design of the toilet, both the layout and the structures can help with maintaining them and keeping them safe. If the business's stock is kept near the toilets, then it is easy to check on them when restocking, even when busy.

If the entrance or cubicle doors can be seen by the staff it makes it easier for them to see if there is a problem, or if someone needs help.

The hand-drying facilities are important. The area behind the hand dryers' needs to be cleaned regularly. Having the area behind the hand dryer varnished makes that easier.

The toilet facilities can be designed to discourage drug use for example having enclosed cisterns, removing the toilet seat, having hand dryers high up, or scratching or putting Vaseline on surfaces.

In the interviews there was only one mention of a problem when someone was in the toilet, and they didn't have a way to open the door from the outside. Having toilets that the staff can open from the outside could help with this.

One interviewee wanted to have the option of gendered and gender-neutral toilets, and there was a comment about having more cubicles for women than men.

# Provider Interviews

## Insights on Maintaining Toilets

### Schedule for checking and cleaning

Schedules can be put in place to make sure the toilets stay clean. They should be cleaned every morning before opening. This could be by the staff or a cleaning company.

There should be regular checks of the toilets throughout the day, though staff using the toilets themselves also helps with this, and customers do seem to let the staff know if there is something wrong.

The scheduling for checking and cleaning should be fair and flexible, so it doesn't fall to one person, but circumstances are taken into consideration.

### Training

It could be useful to have some form of training for the staff so that they know what to do in certain situations. The staff will try and manage difficult situations, for example if people are upset with the toilets.

In one interview the Ask Angela poster was mentioned, a poster put in pub toilets that tell people that if they feel unsafe, they can go to the bar and ask for Angela. The staff have been trained to know that this means the person is not feeling safe, and what they should do for them. There could be some sort of equivalent in Engaged toilets, so that staff know what options there are to help any customers who are having problems.



# Provider Interviews

## Insights on Maintaining Toilets

### Challenges

Cleaning was mentioned as one challenge to having toilets in a business. Another was drug use in toilets and also the difficulty in managing multiple roles, such as bartender, waiter, and toilet cleaner.

The multiple roles can be difficult, particularly when the staff are busy, and the toilet is out of sight. When it becomes busy, checking and cleaning the toilets doesn't get done.

### Cleaning

The morning clean is the main one of the day, with each toilet being mopped with bleach, the sinks and the area under the dryer cleaned.

Throughout the day it is best to keep on top of the cleaning, with the sinks, high contact areas such as handles, and the area behind the hand dryer being wiped down regularly.

### Amenities

Several amenities that would be good in toilets were mentioned, including good hand dryers, coat hangers or hooks in the cubicles, mirrors, good lighting, and nice soaps.

There was a recommendation for individual soap dispensers on the sink, as the inside of the metal dispensers screwed into the wall tend to fall out. They used a refillable soap dispenser on the sink which they said didn't get taken too often. This would be a good point to check with other businesses.

There was a recommendation for a rubber toilet cleaner rather than the traditional toilet brush, which are harder to clean.

# Next Steps

Planned outputs and future opportunities for Engaged:

- Toilet design for London Borough of Hackney and wider dissemination as an example of the Engaged model.
- A project findings overview (revised version of this document), shared in a format useful to LBH (eg pdf report or slide deck).
- Engaged at Designing London's Recovery (DLR) Exhibition, V&A Museum, hosted by Mayor of London as part of London Design Festival, 22nd September 2022
- Engaged final report (Nov 2022), marking end of DLR programme, for Greater London Authority, project participants, stakeholders
- Two academic papers based on National Need report, capturing expert interviews, literature review and location data.
- Seek additional support, partners and funding, eg perspectives on how best to prototype, scale and unlock opportunities for public toilets in high streets, based on findings from Engaged research.



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