Consultation Report

Centre for Urban Sustainability

Stakeholder Consultation Findings, Design Considerations and Strategic Recommendations for the Centre for Urban Sustainability in North Kensington

Vault Consulting

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PREFACE

The coming decade will be shaped by efforts to address the effects of the climate crisis on communities throughout the United Kingdom. Many urban communities are already experiencing the unequal impacts of environmental risk alongside longstanding social and economic inequalities, placing increasing pressure on local institutions, infrastructure, and systems of public participation.

At the same time, growing fiscal constraints at the local authority level risk widening the gap between the ambitions outlined in the UK's Net Zero Strategy and the capacity of communities to meaningfully participate in the transition toward more sustainable ways of living. This raises important questions regarding how local communities will access the knowledge, skills, spaces, and organisational support necessary to respond to emerging environmental, economic, and social challenges.

In response to these conditions, the Westway Trust commissioned this report to explore the viability, relevance, and potential community impact of a proposed Centre for Urban Sustainability (CUS) in North Kensington. The proposal builds upon an earlier community-led iteration of the project first raised through consultation processes in 2021.

This report presents findings from a series of stakeholder consultations conducted across community organisations, educational institutions, local partners, and public and private sector stakeholders. It provides an analysis of the opportunities, concerns, and expectations associated with the proposed Centre, while examining the broader role that community-based spaces can play in fostering urban sustainability, participation, innovation, and social resilience.

Findings from the consultation process suggest that the Centre is understood not simply as a building, but as part of a wider ecosystem of relationships, activities, and shared responsibilities. In this context, the proposed Centre for Urban Sustainability emerges as a potential form of social infrastructure capable of supporting long-term environmental engagement, community learning, and social justice through collaborative action within North Kensington.

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SUMMARY

Sustainability is a complex and evolving subject that intersects with many aspects of daily life in North Kensington. The Westway Trust commissioned this report as the third consultation to assess the proposed Centre for Urban Sustainability (CUS) in response to identified gaps in access to sustainability education and opportunities, particularly for young people.

Consultations were carried out with educational institutions, local member organisations, councillors, and members of the wider public through a structured presentation based on the Theory of Change logic model. This framework was used to communicate the proposed role, outcomes, and long-term ambitions of the CUS to community stakeholders, funders, policymakers, and delivery partners.

The proposed CUS is intended to support a more equitable and community-responsive sustainability transition by strengthening pathways to green skills training, applied research, and local innovation. Central to the consultation process was the recognition that sustainability within North Kensington is closely connected to broader questions of social equity, trust, participation, and long-term community resilience.

The following are the key concepts, tensions. The descriptive analysis of the methodology for these consultations includes a literature review to support the findings. In closing, the next steps are laid out for the Westway Trust to pursue.

KEY CONCEPTS

- Sustainability should be experienced through multiple social, cultural, environmental, and organisational entry points within the North Kensington community. As such, the architectural approach to the building should remain adaptive to the diverse ways community members and organisations engage with sustainability as a practice.

- Within North Kensington, sustainability is closely connected to questions of social and climate justice in the aftermath of the Grenfell Tower fire. Community concerns regarding institutional trust, governance, and resource allocation therefore form an important context for the project and the role of the Westway Trust.
- The proposed CUS extends beyond the function of a physical building. Its intended role includes supporting green skills development, applied research, and community-based innovation through an enabling ecosystem approach. This requires attention not only to architectural outcomes, but also to the design process itself as a means of fostering participation, trust, and long-term community ownership.

METHODOLOGY

1 **Stakeholder Consultation**
Staged and iterative consultation process was undertaken with educational institutions, local member organisations, councillors, and members of the wider public. Engagement methods included presentations, workshops, co-design sessions, targeted stakeholder meetings, and an open online consultation period.

2 **Qualitative Data Collection**
Data was collected through recorded consultation sessions, facilitator notes, written feedback, workshop responses, and presentation discussions. Selected sessions were transcribed using AI-assisted transcription tools, with outputs reviewed for accuracy.

3 **Literature Review**
A targeted literature review was conducted to provide contextual grounding across themes including environmental justice, climate change preparedness, socio-economic inequality, sustainability, green skills development, and community resilience.

4 **Thematic Analysis**
A structured thematic analysis was applied to consultation findings. Initial themes informed by the literature review were refined through iterative analysis of stakeholder contributions to identify core priorities, concerns, and opportunities.

5 **Ethics and Limitations**
The methodology prioritised accessibility, inclusivity, informed consent, and secure data handling. While participation levels varied across stakeholder groups, the use of multiple engagement methods and triangulation with relevant literature strengthened the reliability of the findings.

EMERGING THEMES

The consultation process identified a number of recurring themes relating to the proposed Centre for Urban Sustainability (CUS). These included:

• Trust, governance, and institutional legitimacy.

• Sustainability, environmental justice, and localised risk

• Skills development, access, and community capacity building.

• Community participation, cultural expression, and inclusive space-making.

• Development, partnership, and the role of the Centre within a wider ecosystem of organisations and initiatives.

Taken together, these themes highlight that stakeholders viewed the proposed Centre not simply as a standalone building, but as part of a broader social, environmental, and institutional process. Across consultations, participants consistently emphasised the importance of trust, collaboration, accessibility, and long-term community relevance in shaping the Centre's potential role within North Kensington.

Emerging Tensions within the CUS Vision

The consultation process identified a small number of recurring tensions that reflect the expanding scope and ambition of the CUS concept. These tensions often sit between conceptual aspirations, governance considerations, and practical spatial realities.

Key tensions emerging through the consultations include:

- **Demonstration Project vs Community Facility**
  Questions emerged around whether the CUS should primarily function as an exemplary sustainability demonstration project, or as an accessible and adaptable everyday community resource.
- **Sustainability as Expertise vs Sustainability as Participation**
  Different understandings of sustainability were present throughout the consultations, ranging from technical and accredited approaches to more lived, community-based practices such as repair, growing, reuse, and making.
- **Building vs Network**
  The CUS was frequently described not only as a building, but as part of a wider network of spaces, relationships, and community infrastructures extending beyond the site itself.
- **Community Autonomy vs Institutional Frameworks**
  The project must operate within wider planning, funding, and sustainability systems while also maintaining local legitimacy, accessibility, and community ownership.

- **Programme Ambition vs Spatial Capacity**
  Multiple discussions highlighted tensions between the scale of proposed activities and the physical limitations of the site and building footprint, particularly regarding teaching spaces, maker spaces, the atrium, and wider programme delivery.

These tensions are explored further in the following section through participant comments, consultation observations, and thematic analysis.

Rather than presenting fixed conclusions, these themes and tensions provide a framework through which the next phase of the CUS's development can continue to be explored collaboratively with stakeholders and community participants. This diversity of perspectives is welcomed, as it reinforces the need for a Centre that provides a space for dialogue, the exchange of ideas, and collaborative exploration of sustainable urban development.

INTRODUCTION

The community of North Kensington, like many across the U.K., finds itself at the intersection of a burgeoning crisis as it navigates this coming period of the sustainability transition. With rising climate risks, increased pressures on local infrastructure, and limited access to green skills training, the transition that is required is at risk. Both national and international agencies have emphasised that for the transition towards a more resilient, healthy, and economically vibrant future to be a sustainable one, there will be a need for widespread public participation. Such participation, with active contributions from community members and local member organisations can help ensure that the transition towards sustainability can also be one that prioritises social justice. This is intersectional environmentalism.

The present day topic of sustainability is not viewed equally by non-homogenous societies (Hiraide, 2026). In casual observation through conversation as a qualitative exercise, it can be noted that sustainability is valorised differently across varied ethno-cultural groups. It should be noted that there are also economic socio-cultural factors that play a role in how groups of persons interact with the topic of sustainability.

With its origins dating back to efforts to improve living and working traditions, intersectional environmentalism brings to the fore discussions of environmental justice, climate and social justice to the very people who will be most affected by the coming decade. There must be an urgency with regards to climate action to create a strong

movement, engagement, and powerful force for change.

When social justice and environmental advocacy unite, their combined strength can drive significant momentum toward protecting our communities and fostering equity. The key is to recognise that environmental concerns should not be addressed in isolation.

The aim of the proposed Centre for Urban Sustainability (CUS) is to provide a locally-led, community-anchored initiative designed to unite concerns of this coming future through sustainability education; applied research, and skills training, to increase participation, broader representation as North Kensington faces the impending climate challenge of this and subsequent decades.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Environmental Justice equals Social Justice, Climate Justice and Reparations

The essence of environmental justice is that all communities have equal protection under the environmental, health, housing, transportation, and civil rights laws (Thompson, 2021). Due to some of the longstanding inequalities within the borough, the lived experience of the North Kensington community means that historic residents have already experienced the trauma of an environment that does not afford them such equal protections.

This is not only for the community of North Kensington, but throughout the UK. It is well documented by healthcare providers that health outcomes are usually worse amongst minority groups, with racial inequality being linked with strong evidence.

The tragic death of young child attributed to air pollution is a recent example of how the lack of access to proper healthcare can negatively influence life expectancy (Devkumar et al., 2022). So, too, post-Grenfell, where the community continues to ask for justice.

Beyond environmental justice, the discourse revolves around fairness and equity for all people.
As we continue, it is important to consider how these historical efforts and definitions have shaped the community of North Kensington, and will determine current and future actions taken to address the need for wider public participation in environmental advocacy.

To make this intervention effective, environmental education is crucial. It should be mandatory to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to participate in climate actions and solutions. This will increase the level of inclusivity, lead to a broader

representation in policy discourse and a more robust fight against climate challenges.

- The **combination** of social justice efforts with environmental awareness to **harness** power, representation to create momentum to protect our communities and **create** equity.
- Social justice, climate justice and environmental advocacy have more power when they gathered together for the common goal. To ignore the intersection is to do so at one's own risk.

Intergenerational Trauma and Reparations

There is a need to reflect on present attitudes towards the climate crisis in light of past intergenerational trauma that have not been adequately addressed. Even though research can demonstrate that material wealth and access has occurred in the last half century, through a specific thesis that innovation has occurred in urban "nodes" of innovation and institutional development have driven long-term improvements in human welfare, global inequality persists (Follett, 2023).

Within this framing, underlying inequality are seen as secondary to absolute gains as ***most*** people are materially off over time. Inter-generational poverty in Denmark is largely transmitted through family background, whereas in the UK and Germany it persists through additional mediating factors such as adult education and employment pathways. Exposure to poverty in childhood significantly increases the likelihood of experiencing poverty in adulthood (Parolin et al., 2023). Limited resources can also generate psychological distress within households, often resulting in harsher parenting practices that may hinder child development, as outlined in the Family Stress Model (Cross, 2020). In addition, material deprivation can contribute to bio-social developmental constraints (McEwen and McEwen, 2017).

Consistent with these frameworks, a substantial body of research demonstrates that public income transfers are associated with improved outcomes for children, including better health and well-being, higher test scores, and increased rates of high school completion and college attendance (Bastian and Michelmore, 2018). Conversely, policy-driven reductions in income have been shown to increase instability in the living conditions of children in low-income households (Parolin et al., 2023).

Environmental inequality and exclusion from Progress

Progress metrics tend to foreground access to goods but have consistently given short shrift to the environmental degradation,

infrastructure inadequacy, unequal resilience to climate stress, all the while assigning blame to some of the most vulnerable communities such as North Kensington, where these burdens are not evenly distributed.

They intersect with income disparity, racial inequality, housing concerns, and historical planning decisions made at the expense of the community of North Kensington.

This backdrop has created a situation where the cumulative exposure to these factors has been "inherited" across generations, yet is rarely accounted for in datasets highlighting economic growth. The reflections on these concerns by centers of power and decision-making should lead to the following:

- Is the climate crisis a distant abstract?
- Is the current impact on the community adequately acknowledged?
- Is there true engagement in the fight for climate justice?

These reflections can guide leadership, be it community, local, or regional, in recognising the urgent need for intersectional approaches in tackling climate issues.

Research has shown that environmentalist from communities of colour experience resistance from white dominated spaces on the introduction of intersectional topics when seeking to highlight the post-colonial history and its role in present-day inequalities. As you will see in this report, such experiences further highlight the importance of the establishment of such a safe space to explore the barriers and potential for Global Majority concerns as they relate to climate change (Hiraide, 2026).

Reparations

As we delve into the topic of reparations in the context of the climate crisis, let's explore the thought-provoking ideas presented by American philosopher Olúfẹmi O. Táíwò. In his book, "Reconsidering Reparations," Táíwò challenges us to rethink reparations not merely as compensation but as a transformative construction project. Imagine reparations as a means to build safer neighborhoods and better schools. This reframing encourages us to consider how reparations can lay the groundwork for long-term systemic change.

Climate activist Mikaela Loach further supports this idea by emphasising that reparations should extend beyond financial compensation. She argues for concrete actions, advocating for significant investments in vital areas such as infrastructure, education, healthcare, housing, and energy.

These investments are crucial to repairing the harm caused by past

injustices and ensuring a more equitable and sustainable future. As we move forward, we'll explore how cities play a pivotal role in addressing climate challenges while promoting equity and resilience. **Praxis, understood as the enactment of theory into lived practice, is therefore essential to any meaningful approach to intersectional sustainability.**

Therefore, sustainability will not be intersectional or radical by simply discussing what it means to the community of North Kensington, and would amount to greenwashing. There must be an accounting of the social inequalities, so as to avoid reinforcing unequal power structures (Newman, 2011). The approach to intersectional environmentalism should engage social actors in a way that does not ostracise, and can help all parties to relate and understand the far-reaching nature of the topic of sustainability as it relates to climate and environmental justice. This can lead to a rich, fuller, broader type of participation into efforts of climate risk mitigation (Henn & Foard, 2014).

Positioning the CUS

The CUS can represent the stage between the creation of community-based innovation and the founding of the first organisational structure embedded in the community (Li &Khessina, 2024), within communities of shared experiences. Such spaces are defined as provisional, small-scale, easily accessible spaces that allow people and market pioneers to interact with innovation (Li & Khessina, 2024).
These spaces are noted as in important trigger to prompt study, knowledge and expertise transfer through the ideation process from problem identification through to application and market testing (Li & Khessina, 2024).

One important element to note at this point are the concrete actions taken to activate and animate the material, social, and cultural redistributions of knowledge to combat structural inequalities. There are real world implication for intersectional environmentalism in undertaking social and climate justice work (Collins, 2015). ***Strategies must be constructed with a firm understanding of the political sphere, and the language and strategies that must be employed to raise the level of engagement for communities*** (Hiraide, 2026). There has been concern for the environmentalist movement in Britain being subject to criticism for its lack of diversity, with Hiraide (2026), noting that "***environmentalism is too white, too middle class, too academic.***"

Green Skills Training and Examples from the EU

In order to train their work force for the expected sustainability transition, the EU has sought to align labour markets with opportunities by promoting sustainability-related education, training, and re/upskilling programmes, for workers, as well as job seekers (SWD 2025). Various parties such as the Circular Economy Stakeholders Platform, the Bioeconomy Stakeholder Network will collaborate to bring together industry, investors, civil society to engage interested parties through established networks of outreach such as the Bioeconomy Youth Ambassadors. This sort of collaboration and network building is based on the valorisation of knowledge exchange and interaction consolidating to action (SWD 2025) to closing the gap between policy ambition and community readiness to realise opportunities stemming from the sustainability transition.

This level of engagement is very important in overcoming the dismissive attitudes when discussing social justice concerns in the context of sustainability, and influence the ability of the community of North Kensington, as well as organisations' ability to adequately organise around the topic (Hiraide, 2026). Add to this in intergenerational trauma, and it can be observed that persons that are repeatedly subjected to resistance and hostility in addressing marginalisation due to power structures and racial inequality (Hiraide, 2026). Black, and especially, black female environmentalist and activists can experience burnout, as has been raised by Hiraide, as well as the author of The Intersectional Environmentalist, Leah Thomas. This strategic absence of intersectionality is then reflected in the public discussions in public discourse, in an effort to avoid alienation from non-aligned audiences (Hiraide, 2026, Thomas, 2022).

The Role of Provisional Spaces in Enabling Local Innovation and Participation

Emerging research on organisational development highlights the importance of what are termed "*provisional spaces*" — small-scale, accessible environments where new ideas, practices, and forms of collaboration can be tested before more formal, permanent structures are established (Li & Khessina, 2024).

Rather than new large-scale institutions simply appearing fully formed, evidence suggests they are often preceded by periods of experimentation within informal or temporary settings (Li & Khessina, 2024). These spaces allow individuals and organisations to explore new approaches in practice, from within communities, exchang knowledge,

and collectively develop models that can later be formalised.

As experimentation matures and successful practices begin to demonstrate value, there is often a need for a more permanent structure through which knowledge, relationships, and capabilities can be sustained and expanded. In this sense, provisional spaces are not an alternative to formal institutions but a precursor to them. The proposed Centre for Urban Sustainability (CUS) can therefore be understood as the natural evolution of ongoing collaborative experimentation, thus providing a physical and organisational focal point through which learning, innovation, and community partnerships can be consolidated and supported over the long term.

Crucially, provisional spaces play a key role in making innovation visible and tangible. They provide opportunities for participants to engage directly with new ideas — not just conceptually, but through lived experience — enabling people to understand, adapt, and ultimately contribute to emerging forms of activity (Figure 1 & 2). In this way, they act as early-stage platforms through which new organisational

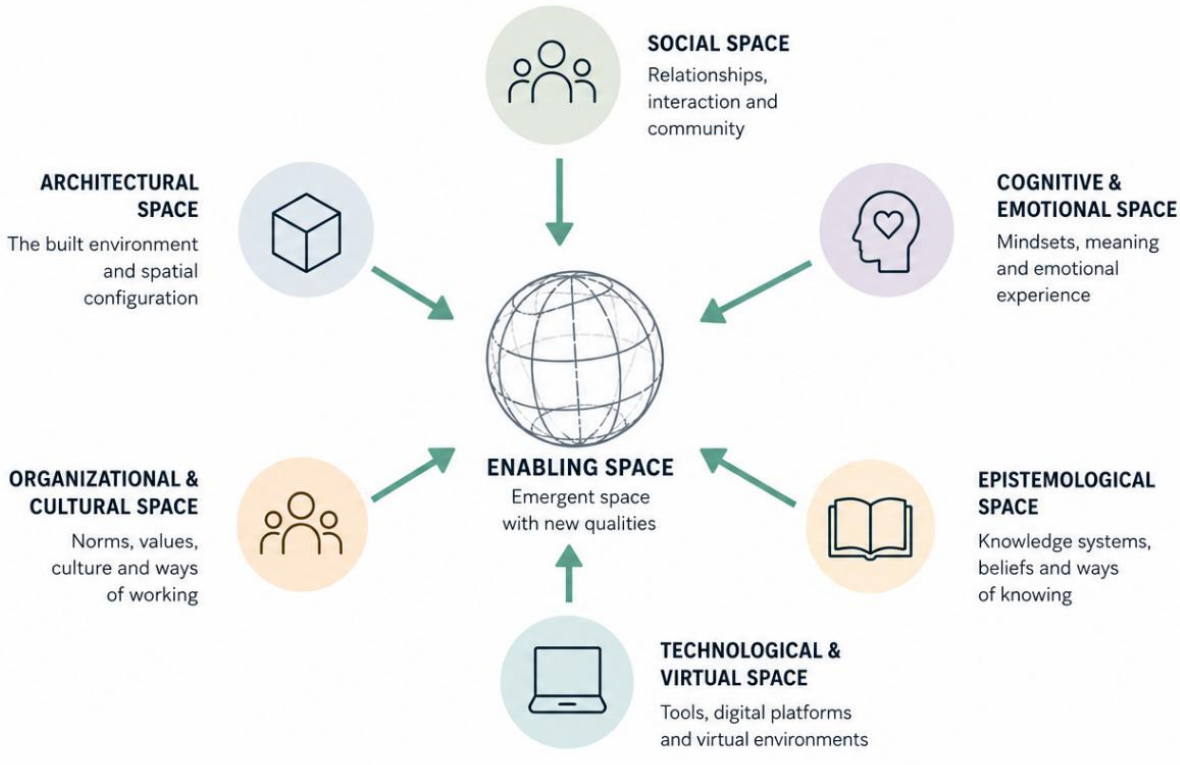


FIGURE 1: Integrating the dimensions of the Enabling Space creates an emergent space with new qualities which cannot be found in the contributing aspects.

models are both tested and socially embedded.

Figure 2 - The Enabling/Provisional Space Design Process



However, access to such spaces is not evenly distributed. Research indicates that communities with greater availability of provisional spaces are more likely to generate new forms of organisation and local enterprise (Li & Khessina, 2024), while broader organisational theory suggests that the emergence of new forms is reinforced through and density (Hannan & Carroll, increasing organisational presence 1992).

Conversely, communities that lack access to these enabling conditions may be excluded from shaping and benefiting from emerging economic and social opportunities. This could very much hold true in the case of the overarching topic that is sustainability, and thus, sustainable business model innovation design, and proper application of circularity in sustainable entrepreneurship.

This has direct relevance in areas that have experienced longstanding inequality. In such contexts, the

absence of accessible, low-barrier environments for experimentation can reinforce existing disparities, limiting who is able to participate in new forms of economic activity, including those associated with the transition to sustainability.

The consultations undertaken as part of this study strongly reinforce this insight. Across multiple stakeholder groups, there is a clear emphasis on the importance of creating opportunities for early engagement, hands-on learning, and local participation prior to, and alongside the development of a permanent facility. Taken together, both the literature and consultation findings point to a consistent conclusion:

The success of the proposed Centre for Urban Sustainability will depend not only on the delivery of a physical building, but on the extent to which it enables a broader ecosystem of provisional, accessible, and locally embedded spaces and programmes through which participation, learning, and innovation can begin to take root.

METHODOLOGY

This project adopted a mixed qualitative, participatory approach, combining stakeholder engagement, iterative design consultation, and thematic analysis informed by a targeted literature review. The methodology was designed to ensure that the development of the Centre for Urban Sustainability is grounded in both community need and strategic relevance, while also being supported by evidence-based insight. By integrating consultation findings with established research across key thematic areas, the approach provides a robust and defensible foundation for decision-making.

A staged and iterative stakeholder engagement process formed the core of the methodology. Early pre-feasibility consultations were undertaken to explore initial concepts, assess community needs, and test assumptions on the topic sustainability. These sessions played a critical role in shaping the proposed scale and footprint of the building, identifying appropriate uses, and generating initial design ideas.

This was followed by a series of targeted one-to-one and small group sessions with key stakeholders, allowing for more detailed and specialist feedback. These discussions directly informed specific elements of the design, including the greenhouse, kitchen space, and nursery provision.

Following the initial pre-application stage, further consultation sessions were held with stakeholders who had expressed an ongoing interest in the project. These sessions focused on reviewing and refining proposed design adjustments, particularly in relation to the outbuildings and their

placement within the site. This iterative engagement resulted in a number of tangible design changes. A subsequent three-month online open consultation period invited broader community input on all aspects of the project, ensuring that a wide range of perspectives could be captured and considered.

Engagement methods were intentionally varied to ensure accessibility and inclusivity across different stakeholder groups. These included information sessions, structured presentations, facilitated workshops, co-design sessions, and bespoke decision-making opportunities tailored to the needs and capacities of participants. This flexible approach enabled both breadth and depth of engagement, recognising that different stakeholders engage in different ways.

Data collection was primarily qualitative in nature. Audio recordings were made during selected consultation sessions, with appropriate consent, to ensure accurate capture of discussions. These recordings were stored securely and used solely for transcription and analysis purposes. AI-assisted transcription tools were employed for three of the consultation sessions to support efficient processing of audio data; all outputs were reviewed for accuracy prior to analysis. Additional data sources included facilitator notes, written feedback, and responses gathered during presentations and workshops.

To provide contextual grounding, a targeted literature review was conducted alongside the consultation process. This review focused on key areas including environmental justice, climate change and preparedness, poverty and socio-economic inequality, sustainability and the green economy, and the role of provisionary spaces in enabling innovation and community resilience. Insights from this review informed both the framing of the consultation and the development of initial analytical categories.

A structured thematic analysis was applied to the data. Preliminary (first-order) themes were developed based on insights from the literature and early consultation findings, reflecting anticipated areas such as health and wellbeing, environmental development, employment opportunities, and inclusion. Following transcription and detailed review of consultation data, a second stage of analysis was undertaken to identify additional themes emerging directly from stakeholder contributions. These second-order themes refined and expanded the initial framework, allowing for a more nuanced understanding of stakeholder priorities and the relationships between key issues. This iterative analytical process resulted in a set of core themes that underpin the findings of the report and directly

respond to the research questions guiding the consultation.

While the methodology prioritised inclusivity and depth, there are some limitations to note. Participation levels varied across stakeholder groups. Like many community consultations, it is recognised that not all voices within the community may be equally represented. Furthermore, the qualitative nature of the research emphasises depth of insight rather than statistical generalisability. However, the use of multiple engagement methods, iterative consultation, and triangulation with relevant literature strengthens the overall reliability and relevance of the findings.

Ethical considerations were embedded throughout the process. This included obtaining informed consent for participation and recording, ensuring the secure handling and storage of data, and using AI tools responsibly for transcription purposes. Care was also taken to ensure that participant contributions were represented accurately and respectfully.

Overall, this methodology ensures that the project is both community-informed and analytically robust, providing a credible and transparent foundation for strategic development and decision-making.

EMERGING THEMES

Consistent Support

Across all stakeholder consultations, there was clear and consistent support for the proposed Centre for Urban Sustainability (CUS**). Table 1** presents the consultation priorities around the main themes raised.

Participants from across sectors—including education, health, community organisations, and faith-based leadership—expressed strong alignment with the project's core aims, particularly its emphasis on sustainability education, climate justice, and community engagement.

As one participant reflected:

"Personally, I think it's brilliant… I'm totally behind everything you've said around climate justice and the need for sustainable things to be in the urban setting."

This support was reinforced by a wider sense that North Kensington would benefit from more positive and future-oriented community initiatives, with another participant describing the Centre as:

"…a positive thing… which needs more and more positive things."

While the vision of the CUS was widely supported, stakeholders consistently shifted discussion toward a second, more critical question: not whether the Centre should exist, but

whether it could successfully deliver on its ambitions in practice.

Programmatic Ambition

A recurring theme concerned the relationship between programmatic ambition and physical capacity. Participants with experience in education and community delivery questioned whether the proposed scale of the building could adequately support the range of activities envisioned, particularly in relation to training, learning, and skills development. As one participant noted:

"It's actually quite a small build… less than a thousand meters,"

raising concerns about

"How much capacity [there is] to provide the offering that you want to provide."

Related concerns were also raised regarding the relationship between architectural openness and functional usability. While the transparency, permeability, and openness of the proposed design were widely valued, some participants reflected on the practical challenges such environments can create for educational and community programming. Drawing on experiences from other community and learning spaces, one participant observed:

"It's a classic architect's dream… but it's actually not practical for us to run [education]."

Longer Term Vision and Mission

Stakeholders also highlighted the importance of maintaining clarity around the Centre's long-term mission and identity. While there was strong support for creating an inclusive and flexible community space, some participants cautioned that increasing demand and expanded programming could risk diluting the Centre's core sustainability focus. As one participant warned, the building could:

"Suddenly become another building… used for very good things… but losing the core mission."

Demonstration Sustainability

Questions were additionally raised regarding how sustainability would be defined and demonstrated in practice, particularly in relation to the decision to pursue a new-build approach rather than the reuse of existing structures. Across consultations, participants emphasised the importance of ensuring alignment between the Centre's sustainability ambitions and its development model.

Issues of access and equity also emerged consistently throughout the consultations. While stakeholders strongly supported principles of affordability and openness, several

participants questioned how the Centre could remain accountable to local residents while also functioning as a destination space connected to wider London networks. As one participant noted:

"It's right by a tube station… it could very easily get a load of people [from outside the community] coming in."

Who Benefits?

This raised broader questions regarding who ultimately benefits from the investment, and whether local residents—particularly those from underrepresented backgrounds—would be able to access the jobs, training, and opportunities generated through the project.

Finally, stakeholders repeatedly emphasised the importance of partnerships and networked delivery. Multiple consultations highlighted the potential for the CUS to function not simply as a standalone building, but as part of a wider ecosystem of education, skills development, environmental action, and community infrastructure. As one participant noted:

"There's great potential… for us to run stuff out of the Centre."

Taken together, these discussions point toward a broader challenge of balancing openness with intentionality. The consultation findings reveal a high degree of alignment around the purpose and potential of the CUS, alongside a clear articulation of the conditions required for its success. These include ensuring sufficient operational capacity, aligning design with use, maintaining mission integrity, demonstrating sustainability coherence, safeguarding equitable access, and embedding the Centre within a wider network of partners and community organisation.

Table 1: Consultation Priorities around Main Themes

Consultation Priorities	Local Authority	Environmental Network	Textile Sector Org.	Forestry Initiative	Community Growing Org.	Health Institution	Advertising & Infrastructure Co.	Interim Use / Venture Group	Community Garden	Local Councillors	Community Development Org.	Enterprise & Workspace Hub	Adult Education Provider	Transport & Mobility Org.	Heritage & Records Network
Sustainability Demonstration	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓✓ strong	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Environmental Justice	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Green Jobs & Skills	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Circular Economy	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Community Use	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓ strong	✓	✓✓ strong	✓	✓	✓				✓
Institutional Partnerships	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓✓ strong	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Governance / Trust	✓			✓	✓	✓			✓	✓					✓
Economic Development / Entrepreneurship						✓	✓ strong	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓ strong	✓		

MAIN THEMES

1. Trust, Governance and Institutional Legitimacy

Trust emerged as a foundational condition shaping stakeholder responses to the proposed CUS. Rather than being assumed, legitimacy was understood as something that must be actively cultivated through transparent governance, sustained engagement, and meaningful alignment with existing community structures and institutions.

From the start of the consultations as well as throughout the process, participants sought clarity on the relationship of the CUS to the Westway Trust, and other institutions such as the RBKC. This extends into the decision-making processes related to the many different stages of the creation and operating processes.

As one participant asked:

"What relationship is the centre going to have with RBKC … what's going to happen to the centre?"

There will be a need for transparency and clarity, given the experiences of the community with both the Westway Trust and RBKC, and the shortcomings (however historical) of those elements in past interactions and projects. At the same time, institutional and corporate stakeholders demonstrated strong interest in contributing to the development and operation of the CUS.

This included opportunities for:

- Skills training and mentorship.
- Entrepreneurship and innovation programmes.
- Local procurement and supply chain development.

One stakeholder noted:

"We're always looking for ways that we can extend our hand outside of a commercial agreement and help."

These discussions also revealed broader questions regarding how the Centre would position itself within the existing ecosystem of organisations, initiatives, and community assets. Stakeholders emphasized the need for alignment rather than duplication, avoiding potential overlap with existing or emerging projects. These concerns extended beyond this physical infrastructure to include programme, funding arrangements, and stakeholder engagement. This was most noted among the institutions and local member organisations that operate at the intersection of education, community, and sustainability.

The Trust will need to consider the risks of, as one participant noted:

"talking to the same funders, the same stakeholders, and the same communities."

The consultations revealed an important insight into the nature of engagement itself. Stakeholders also recognised that the complexity of sustainability-related challenges requires participation that is broad, collaborative, and embedded within existing community networks. While formal invitations were generally welcomed, stakeholders highlighted limitations in their reach and effectiveness. This is a common theme in many consultations of all kinds. To engage the full diversity of the community, stakeholders emphasised the need for more embedded approaches.

These can include:

- Engaging directly at community events.
- Creating informal and accessible participation opportunities.
- Reaching residents who are not already connected to established community organisations.

Taken together, these perspectives suggest that institutional legitimacy may be best gained by formal governance structures, and by how the Centre positions itself relationally within the wider community ecosystem. Trust, in this context, is reinforced when the CUS is perceived as collaborative, complementary, and responsive to existing community networks rather than centralising or extractive. These perspectives suggest that engagement should not be understood as a discrete consultation exercise, but as an ongoing and embedded practice through which communities build investment in and support for the project over time.

Overall, the consultations revealed that perceptions of the CUS at this stage were linked to broader questions regarding the institutional legitimacy of the Westway Trust and its relationship with the wider North Kensington community. There is a perception of the reach of the Westway Trust that attributes more power than actual versus that of the council.

2. Sustainability, Environmental Justice and Localised Risk

Consultations revealed that sustainability was not understood as a fixed or universally agreed concept, but as an active and contested area of practice shaped by questions of credibility, equity, and lived environmental experience. Stakeholders consistently emphasised that the legitimacy of the proposed Centre for Urban Sustainability (CUS) would depend not only on its stated ambitions, but on the extent to which those ambitions are reflected in its design, construction, and operation.

Sustainability, in this context, was understood not simply as an outcome, but as a criterion against which the project itself would be evaluated.

Participants questioned how sustainability would be defined and embodied within the Centre. In particular, concerns were raised regarding the environmental implications of new construction, with some stakeholders asking why approaches centred on reuse, retrofit, or adaptive use had not been more strongly prioritised. As one participant cautioned:

"…the project could define sustainability in an unsustainable way."

Related to this, stakeholders identified what can be understood as a broader "net zero credibility" tension within the proposal:

"You're building something to solve a problem… while contributing to it."

These perspectives reflected an expectation that the Centre should demonstrate coherence between its environmental objectives and its practical decisions. This includes articulating a clear and transparent sustainability strategy that addresses trade-offs, justifies key development choices, and aligns environmental ambitions with wider social considerations. In this sense, the CUS was understood not only as a proposed environmental intervention, but also as a project that must account for and justify its own environmental impact.

At the same time, there was strong interest in the Centre functioning as a visible and accessible site of environmental learning and demonstration. Participants expressed support for approaches that make sustainability tangible through the building itself, including the use of bio-based materials, integrated environmental systems, and opportunities for public interaction with sustainable technologies and practices. These elements were viewed as important not only for educational purposes, but for strengthening the credibility of the Centre by embedding sustainability into the lived experience of the space.

Environmental concerns were also consistently framed through local and everyday experience rather than abstract global narratives. In North Kensington, environmental risk was understood in relation to immediate conditions, including air quality, traffic exposure, limited green space, pollution, waste management, and the long-term environmental and social impacts associated with the Grenfell Tower fire. Participants frequently connected these concerns to broader questions of inequality, noting that environmental burdens are often disproportionately experienced by communities already facing social and economic disadvantage.

These discussions positioned environmental justice as a central consideration for the proposed Centre. Stakeholders emphasised that environmental action must be locally relevant, accessible, and responsive to the lived realities of the surrounding community. This extended beyond climate mitigation alone to include questions of health, inclusion, equity, and the uneven distribution of environmental risk.

Taken together, these perspectives suggest that sustainability was understood not as a singular technical objective, but as a socially situated and continuously negotiated practice. This highlighted the need for ongoing discussions about the meaning of sustainability in an urban setting. It revealed that there is no other place at this point where these sorts of discussions can be unpacked and examined within and between local communities. The consultations revealed that the credibility of the CUS will depend on its environmental aspirations, and on its ability to demonstrate accountability, transparency, and responsiveness to the environmental conditions and justice concerns experienced within North Kensington itself.

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3. Skills Development, Access and Community Capacity

Stakeholders consistently welcomed and identified the proposed Centre for Urban Sustainability (CUS) as a significant opportunity to strengthen local skills, knowledge, and long-term community capacity within the context of an accelerating sustainability transition. Across consultations, participants emphasised that environmental and economic changes associated with decarbonisation, green infrastructure, and emerging sustainability policy frameworks are likely to reshape employment, education, housing, energy systems, and everyday life within North Kensington. In this context, the Centre was frequently understood not only as a site of training, but as a potential platform through which local residents could better understand, engage with, and participate in these wider societal transitions.

There was particularly strong support for the Centre's role in supporting pathways into emerging sectors of the green economy, including opportunities related to education, training, enterprise, and employment. However, stakeholders consistently framed these opportunities within broader questions of accessibility, equity, and participation. Rather than focusing solely on workforce development, participants often emphasised the importance of ensuring that local communities are equipped to meaningfully engage with the environmental, economic, and policy changes that will increasingly shape their lives and neighbourhoods.

Consultations with educational providers, institutional stakeholders, and community organisations highlighted the importance of creating accessible progression pathways that connect informal learning, community-based activity, technical training, and formal educational or employment opportunities. As one stakeholder noted:

"There is nothing that brings knowledge together like a physical structure."

Participants frequently described the Centre as having the potential to function as a shared site of learning, exchange, and public education where sustainability-related knowledge becomes more visible, understandable, and practically relevant to local residents. This included not only technical or vocational skills, but also broader forms of environmental literacy, community awareness, and civic understanding. In this sense, stakeholders often connected skills development to questions of agency, empowerment, and the capacity of communities to participate more actively in shaping local priorities and responding to future change.

At the same time, challenges associated with cost, awareness, prior educational attainment, confidence, language, and physical accessibility were identified. Although the proposal was widely welcomed, concerns were also raised regarding the extent to which a single site could adequately respond to the scale and diversity of local need. Nevertheless, many participants acknowledged the importance of beginning with a practical, achievable initiative, recognising that any future Centre would need to evolve over time. As one participant observed:

"You want to do all this… but the building is small."

These concerns led to discussion and support for a point of focus for flexible and distributed approaches to learning and participation, including partnerships with existing organisations, community-based programming, and activities delivered across multiple sites and formats. Stakeholders consistently emphasised that accessibility would depend not only on the availability of programmes, but on whether the space would be permeable and open to participation pathways are designed in ways that are visible, inclusive, and responsive to the realities of everyday life within North Kensington.

Participants highlighted the importance of creating accessible entry points into sustainability-related learning and engagement. Facilities included in the CUS such as community kitchens, workshop spaces, and making environments were widely viewed as valuable because they connect education, enterprise, and practical experience in ways that are socially familiar and

culturally accessible. Activities such as food-based workshops, repair, making, and small-scale enterprise such as those carried out by the Trust in collaboration with others so far, were understood as opportunities to introduce wider sustainability concepts through tangible and participatory forms of learning.

Taken together, these perspectives suggest that the CUS was widely understood as having the potential to function as more than a training or educational facility alone. Stakeholders frequently envisioned the Centre as part of a broader process of building community capacity, strengthening environmental literacy, and enabling more inclusive participation in the sustainability transition taking place across London and the wider UK. In this context, access to knowledge, skills, and participation was understood not only as an economic issue, but as an important condition for community agency, representation, and long-term resilience.

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4. Community Space, Cultural Expression and Participation

Stakeholders consistently emphasised the importance of the proposed Centre for Urban Sustainability (CUS) functioning not only as an environmental or educational facility, but as a flexible, inclusive, and community-oriented space capable of supporting a wide range of social, cultural, and participatory activities. Across consultations, participants highlighted that long-term relevance and accessibility of the Centre would depend on its ability to include the lived experiences, cultural identities, and everyday practices of the surrounding community.

A recurring theme within discussions was the importance of designing spaces that enable participation at different scales and levels of formality. Stakeholders expressed particular interest in smaller, adaptable units that could support short-term community residencies, workshops, exhibitions, and cultural programming. These spaces were viewed as especially valuable because of their likely accessibility and flexibility, enabling local groups and residents to participate without many of the barriers often associated with larger institutional or the costs of wholly commercial venues.

Participants also emphasised the importance of ensuring that the Centre complements, rather than competes with, the wider ecosystem of community organisations, initiatives, and local assets already operating within North Kensington.

These discussions noted the importance of positioning the CUS as this consultation did, as part of a collaborative and interdependent community network rather than as a standalone or centralising institution.

In response, stakeholders consistently highlighted the value of:

- Recognising and building upon existing work.
- Acting as a connector.
- Developing complementary relationships across organisations and community groups.

This relational approach to participation was also reflected in discussions surrounding cultural activity and community use. Stakeholders frequently described food, making, creative production, and informal gathering as important entry points into wider conversations around sustainability and local development. Facilities such as community kitchens, workshop spaces, and flexible outdoor environments were therefore seen not simply as supporting amenities, but as critical infrastructure for participation, cultural exchange, and community connection.

Participants further highlighted the importance of designing intergenerational environments that respond to gaps in existing community provision. This included outdoor seating, informal gathering spaces, child-friendly areas, and environments capable of supporting both structured activities and everyday social interaction. Such spaces were viewed as particularly important for older residents, families, and individuals who may feel excluded from more formal institutional settings or other sustainability-related initiatives.

More broadly, the consultations revealed that cultural expression was frequently understood as an important dimension of sustainability itself. Participants consistently connected sustainability not only to environmental performance or technical innovation, but also to the preservation of community identity, local knowledge, social connection, and everyday practices of care, making, and sharing. In this context, the Centre was often envisioned as a space capable of supporting forms of participation that are socially and culturally grounded.

Taken together, these perspectives suggest that the success of the CUS will depend on the activities it hosts, the kinds of relationships it fosters, interactions, and forms of participation it enables. Community space, in this context, was understood as physical infrastructure, but also as a social and cultural condition through which belonging, collaboration, and community capacity are continuously produced and sustained.

5. Development, Delivery and the Distributed Model

Stakeholder responses consistently demonstrated that the proposed Centre for Urban Sustainability (CUS) was understood as a future building project, but also as part of a wider and ongoing process of social, environmental, and institutional change within North Kensington, which was also important for the Trust. Discussions surrounding

development therefore extended to broader concerns regarding delivery, visibility, accessibility, community impact, and the long-term role of the Centre within the surrounding area.

Participants discussed a range of practical considerations relating to:

- The design and implementation of the project.
- The building's visual identity.
- The accessibility, environmental performance.
- The spatial configuration.
- The potential disruption during construction activity.

Concerns relating to noise, waste management, and the impact of development on the surrounding community. This reflected wider sensitivities regarding change and development within North Kensington.

Stakeholders also emphasised the importance of ensuring that the Centre maintains a clear and coherent identity, cautioning against overextending the functions or expectations placed upon a single site. This included recognition that the Centre alone cannot address all dimensions of sustainability, community need, or local inequality.

Consultations revealed a strong preference for understanding the project as part of a broader continuum of activity rather than as a singular development milestone. Stakeholders consistently emphasised the importance of early activation, visible engagement, and sustained community presence throughout the development and planning process. This seemed to reinforce the idea that the Centre should naturally emerge from pressure due to ongoing activity that would demonstrate relevance and value before the completion of the physical building itself. As one participant noted:

"We have to show that this thing lives before it's built."

Participants therefore highlighted the importance of initiating activity in advance of construction completion such as:

- Regular community-based initiatives.
- Pilot programmes and temporary projects.
- Partnerships with existing organisations.
- Distributed use of existing community spaces.

These discussions reinforced a broader understanding of delivery as an ongoing and relational process rather than only a finite construction outcome. The success of the CUS was frequently linked to the quality of the completed building, and to the extent to which momentum, trust, partnerships, and public participation can be cultivated over time.

Taken together, these perspectives point toward a distributed and

hybrid model of delivery in which the physical Centre operates as a key component component or principal node within a wider network of organisations, spaces, and activities across North Kensington. This model was viewed as particularly important in responding to concerns regarding scale, flexibility, accessibility, duplication, and long-term community relevance. Stakeholders often envisioned the CUS as a flexible and evolving platform capable of supporting multiple forms of engagement across different locations, partnerships, and phases of development.

More broadly, the consultations revealed that development was consistently evaluated in relational terms: not only by what is built, but by how development is carried out, who participates in shaping it, and whether it contributes positively to the long-term social and environmental conditions of the surrounding community. In this context, delivery was understood as an ongoing process of building legitimacy, visibility, and collective ownership over time.

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN and SPATIAL INTEGRATION

The consultation process has significantly informed the evolving architectural vision for the Centre for Urban Sustainability. Across consultations, participants engaged with the broader mission of the Centre, and also with the practical, symbolic, and spatial qualities of the proposed building.

Importantly, feedback (See Appendix A - **Table 1** for summary) demonstrated that the architectural process has not been static. Rather, the consultations functioned as a co-creative mechanism through which community concerns, aspirations, and practical considerations have influenced design thinking. This has strengthened the credibility of the proposal as a community-responsive project. Several design features received strong and consistent endorsement throughout consultations. This may be an indication that future consultations could be valuable to inform the operational model.

In parallel with the consultation process, specialist technical assessments have been commissioned to inform the architectural development of the proposed Centre for Urban Sustainability. These include a Daylight and Sunlight Assessment and a Building Positioning Study, undertaken to ensure that the building responds appropriately to its surrounding context and complies with applicable planning guidance. Preliminary findings indicate that a 1.3° adjustment to the building orientation significantly reduces potential impacts on neighbouring properties while preserving the architectural integrity of the proposed design. Similarly,the

external wall to the West elevation has been withdrawn by 1.1m. The North elevation facing the Forest Garden has also been moved inwards to improve its physical relationship with this space minimizing the extent to which it might encroach.

Separately, any development adjacent to the existing A40 needs to maintain a minimum 3.5m distance away from any of its infrastructure. To respect this requirement the South elevation of the main building has been moved inwards by 0.5m and two of the walls of buildings. 1 and 2 under the Westway and near to its columns have similarly been moved.

Whilst these changes are important for the preservation of the wider environment and neighbouring properties, they have a limited impact on the look and function of the building as designed. A comparison of the previous and amended building are included in Appendix B.

Strongly Supported Design Features

Light, openness, and visibility

Participants repeatedly responded positively to the sense of light, openness, and spatial generosity within the proposed design. The use of the portico, glazing, natural light, and open circulation spaces was consistently viewed as welcoming and community-oriented. The atrium and staircase were particularly acknowledged as valuable social spaces capable of encouraging interaction, informal learning, and collective gathering. The staircase was repeatedly interpreted not merely as circulation infrastructure, but as a social connector within the building.

Integration with the Forest School and surrounding landscape

The purpose-built entrance for the Forest Schools and the physical integration of the building with the adjacent forest garden were strongly endorsed. Multiple discussions returned to the importance of maintaining continuity and connectivity between indoor and outdoor learning environments. A recurring message involved the critical relationship between the building and surrounding green spaces as essential to the ethos of sustainability education.

The architects also noted that the chosen siting of the building creates a far stronger relationship with the forest garden than any alternative nearby structures would allow. This relationship was viewed as central to:

- The educational philosophy of the Centre.
- Biodiversity opportunities.
- Intergenerational programming.
- The creation of a distinctive emphasis on environmental identity.
- Coherent programming.

- A new center synonymous with pride for the area.

The consultations also strengthened ideas relating to a broader "generational garden" or "intergenerational garden" connected to the Maxilla Social Club Yard and adjacent community spaces. Participants highlighted opportunities for:

- Outdoor seating.
- Food-growing activities.
- Biodiversity enhancement.
- Intergenerational interaction.
- Informal, safe-gathering spaces.
- Cultural programming connected to sustainability.

The kitchen as a cultural and sustainability space

The inclusion of the kitchen received exceptionally positive feedback across multiple consultations. Participants consistently identified food as a powerful entry point into sustainability discussions concerning:

- Food provenance.
- Land use.
- Food waste.
- Cultural heritage.
- Nutrition.
- Community enterprise.

Several organisations highlighted opportunities for:

- Fusion food expos
- Community cooking
- Cultural residencies
- Intergenerational knowledge-sharing
- Micro-enterprise opportunities

There were also practical design suggestions raised regarding:

- Potentially relocating the kitchen to the ground floor or enabling another kitchen at the ground floor to support the use of the flexible spaces.
- Enhancing the secondary maker space with kitchenette facilities rather than only serving counters
- Integrating dedicated toilet facilities into one of the smaller spaces under the Westway.

These recommendations reflect the growing understanding that food, culture, and sustainability are deeply interconnected within community life.

Maker spaces, flexible and provisional spaces

The consultations strongly reinforced the importance of flexible maker spaces and provisional spaces. Participants recognised these adaptable community spaces as highly valuable for exploring intersectionality between environmental and;

- Artists;
- Cultural associations;
- Small community organisations;
- Entrepreneurs;
- Exhibition.

Several consultees specifically highlighted that smaller spaces beneath the Westway could support "community residencies" where groups temporarily inhabit and activate spaces through cultural and sustainability programming.

This was viewed as especially important for smaller organisations that may lack permanent physical infrastructure. The consultations therefore strengthened the concept of the Centre as a flexible enabling ecosystem.

There was a suggestion that removing the Nursery space to retain more space for environmental activities should be considered.

The East–West thoroughfare and permeability

The East–West bike and walking route integrated through the site received positive feedback throughout consultations. Participants viewed the permeability of the site as an important urban design gesture that;

- Increases accessibility;
- Avoids creating an inward-facing structure;
- Strengthens connectivity across the estate; and
- Improves integration with surrounding public spaces.

The splitting of the structure between the main building and smaller maker spaces beneath the Westway was generally well received.

Sustainability through construction and materiality

The consultations also expanded discussions concerning what sustainability should mean in practice, that is materiality. Participants repeatedly emphasised that the building process itself should function as a demonstrable sustainability case study. Discussions highlighted opportunities for:

- Educational site visits during construction.
- Transparent communication regarding material sourcing.
- Public explanation of carbon calculations.
- Showcasing bio-based insulation materials.
- Visible sustainability education embedded within the architecture itself.
- Ongoing environmental monitoring.

The discussion among architects emphasised that the project creates opportunities to demonstrate:

- Life-cycle carbon considerations.
- Operational sustainability.
- Net-zero ambitions.
- Alternative approaches to urban construction.

This aligns with broader stakeholder ambitions for the Centre to "live" sustainability rather than simply reference it.

Safeguarding, accessibility, and operational concerns

Alongside strong support for many aspects of the design, consultations also generated important discussion and observation relating to safeguarding, and operations and implementation.

Safeguarding

Concerns were raised regarding:

- Overlooking into Forest School spaces or the potential Nursery space.
- Unauthorised photography.
- Child safeguarding.
- Visibility through glazed facades.

In response, architects and planners identified the need to explore:

- Glazing treatments.
- Sightline mitigation strategies.
- Controlled access measures.
- Additional safeguarding protocols.

This feedback reinforced the importance of ensuring that openness and transparency are balanced with privacy and child protection, particularly if the Nursery remains.

Accessibility

Stakeholders also highlighted accessibility challenges linked to:

- The current uneven ground.
- Current changes in site level.
- Disrupted pathways during construction.

Independent consultants acknowledged that while the main building addresses accessibility requirements, wider site accessibility requires further review and coordination with planners.

Construction impacts and asbestos removal

Construction fatigue emerged consistently throughout consultations.

Residents expressed understandable concern regarding:

- Prolonged construction activity.
- Waste management.
- Disruption to green spaces.
- Access during asbestos removal should be restricted.

Importantly, many participants also recognised the removal of the asbestos-containing structure as a significant public health improvement.

The presence of asbestos within the existing Maxilla Children's Nursery structure was consistently understood not simply as a planning or operational issue, but as a long-term health and environmental concern requiring careful

intervention. Stakeholders acknowledged that the continued existence of the deteriorating structure presents unacceptable risks over time if left unresolved. In this respect, the proposed redevelopment creates an important opportunity to undertake the removal and disposal of hazardous material through a formally governed and highly regulated process.

The Westway Trust's role in providing fiduciary oversight, governance, and coordination throughout this process was viewed as especially important. The safe removal, containment, transport, and disposal of asbestos requires rigorous compliance, specialist contractors, environmental monitoring, and transparent accountability mechanisms. The consultations therefore highlighted that the redevelopment is not solely about constructing a new sustainability-focused facility, but also about responsibly addressing an existing public health liability within the community.

The replacement of hazardous infrastructure with a carefully monitored and environmentally conscious development was widely regarded as a meaningful long-term investment in community wellbeing and environmental stewardship.

Architectural Identity and Symbolism

The consultations repeatedly returned to questions of identity, symbolism, and public meaning. Several participants strongly supported the proposed sustainability tower and wider visual identity of the building, viewing it as:

- A beacon for North Kensington.
- A visible commitment to sustainability.
- An opportunity to positively reshape wider perceptions of the area.
- A beacon for pride in the area.

Participants highlighted that North Kensington is too often publicly associated only with trauma, deprivation, or Carnival. The Centre was therefore viewed as an opportunity to establish an additional positive civic identity that would be highly visible to all, rooted in;

- sustainability;
- Innovation;
- environmental justice;
- culture;
- community resilience

Consultations also cautioned against overburdening the building with too many expectations. Participants stressed that the Centre should maintain a clear identity and operational focus rather than attempting to solve every spatial or social need within the area.

This tension between ambition and functionality became an important part of the architectural discussions. As noted by the architects themselves, critique was not viewed as obstruction, but as a spur for improvement. The consultations therefore contributed not only to community buy-in, but also to the refinement of the architectural and operational thinking underpinning the project.

CONCLUSION

Sustainability, Trust, and the Meaning of the Centre

The consultation process surrounding the proposed Centre for Urban Sustainability (CUS) has revealed something far more significant than support or opposition to a single building project. What emerged repeatedly across consultations was a wider conversation about trust, the potential to build trust, participation, visibility, belonging, governance, and the future direction of North Kensington itself.

The sustainability transition is often spoken about as a technological or environmental challenge. However, the consultations demonstrate that in communities such as North Kensington, sustainability is equally social, cultural, economic, and relational. CUS will play a part in who participates in shaping the future, who benefits from investment, whose knowledge is legitimised, and whether organisations of some size are capable of acting with humility, consistency, and accountability.

Throughout the consultation process, stakeholders repeatedly expressed enthusiasm for the values underpinning the Centre. Climate justice, intergenerational learning, environmental stewardship, youth opportunity, public health, biodiversity, food systems, green enterprise, and community empowerment were all strongly endorsed across consultations. Participants consistently recognised that the challenges posed by climate change, inequality, poor air quality, food insecurity, and economic exclusion are already affecting urban communities and will continue to intensify over the coming decades.

At the same time, the consultations also surfaced important tensions.

There remains understandable caution within parts of the community regarding **development and delivery**. Residents spoke candidly about construction fatigue, consultation fatigue, uncertainty around governance structures, and wider anxieties connected to long-standing distrust of institutions. These concerns **should not be dismissed as resistance to sustainability itself**. Rather, they reflect a community asking serious questions about implementation, accountability, delivery capacity, and inclusion.

It was acknowledged that as the Trust continues its journey of transfor-

mation, these questions are legitimate. That CUS is a central construct for the Trust to gauge its own progress.

Importantly, even many of the most critical voices acknowledged that the vision and language of the CUS aligns strongly with the kind of work they themselves would wish to support. The tension therefore does not concern the principles of sustainability, **but whether the project can embody those principles in practice**.

This distinction is critical.

The consultations indicate that trust in the CUS will not emerge from architectural renderings, strategic language, or policy alignment alone. Trust will instead be earned through visible practice. This may comprise:

- Through transparency during construction.
- Meaningful inclusion, avoiding extractive behaviors.
- Openness and responsiveness to criticism and explaining decisions.
- Evidence of long-term stewardship.
- Participation in decision-making
- Early activity before completion of the building itself.
- Ensuring that opportunities created by the Centre materially benefit the surrounding community.

As several participants observed, the project must avoid becoming merely "the appearance of accountability without substance."

This is perhaps one of the most important findings of the consultation process. The Centre cannot simply speak the language of sustainability. It must live it.

The Trust needed to be mindful that this applies equally to the physical building, the organisational culture, the governance structures, the procurement processes, the educational programming, the construction phase, and the long-term operational model. There is evidence that the Trust is willing to embrace this challenge as demonstrated by practical examples in its transformation journey to date.

In this respect, the consultations revealed a growing understanding that the CUS should not be viewed as a standalone destination or singular intervention. Rather, its greatest strength may lie in its ability to function as a distributed and enabling ecosystem.

Participants repeatedly pointed toward the importance of:

- Activating existing community organisations.
- Creating satellite projects before completion of the building.
- Supporting local schools and supplementary education.
- Connecting with healthcare institutions.

- Enabling green entrepreneurship;
- Supporting smaller organisations lacking physical space
- Integrating arts, culture, food, and sustainability
- Embedding activity across multiple community sites.

The emerging model is therefore not only one of a principle node, but coordination, connectivity, and brokerage. The multiple demands reflects the need for community space, but the Centre should be careful not to try to be all things to all people.

The proposed Centre increasingly appears as a hub within a wider network of institutions, community groups, schools, artists, healthcare organisations, environmental actors, and local residents. This distributed model reflects broader understandings within sustainability transitions literature, where long-term urban change is rarely achieved by isolated interventions, but rather through collaborative ecosystems capable of generating shared learning, innovation, and adaptive capacity. The consultations also reinforced the importance of enabling spaces.

A recurring question whether a new physical building is necessary at all, particularly given existing institutional capacity elsewhere in London. Yet responses from community organisations repeatedly highlighted that many smaller groups — particularly ethnic community organisations, grassroots initiatives, and informal networks — often lack affordable, flexible, and culturally responsive spaces through which collaboration and innovation can occur. Lack of usable space is the single most request to the Trust.

The value of the Centre therefore lies not solely in its material form, but in its ability to create conditions for exchange, experimentation, learning, enterprise, and belonging. Additionally, there is the matter of cultural heritage and pride to consider.

There is growing recognition that sustainability transitions cannot occur exclusively within abstract policy spaces or academic environments. They must also occur in lived environments where people gather, build relationships, exchange knowledge, test ideas, share culture, and collectively negotiate what sustainable urban life actually means. This is particularly important within North Kensington.

The consultations repeatedly highlighted the paradox that exists within the borough: significant wealth and institutional presence in the South alongside entrenched inequality, environmental health disparities, social fragmentation, and uneven access to opportunity. Participants spoke about the visible North–South divide, concerns around pollution and health outcomes, unequal participation in emerging green economies, and the need for local residents to benefit directly

from sustainability-related investment.

The CUS therefore carries both symbolic and practical significance.

Its location adjacent to the Grenfell memorial area reinforces the inseparability of environmental justice and social justice within North Kensington. The Centre has the potential to become part of a wider process of repair, stewardship, and long-term investment in the social fabric of the area.

However, the consultations also make clear that the long-term legitimacy of the project will depend upon whether the Centre:

- Creates accessible pathways into education and employment.
- Strengthens existing organisations rather than displacing them.
- Supports vulnerable and marginalised groups.
- Remains affordable and community-oriented.
- Facilitates local entrepreneurship.
- Demonstrates measurable public value over time.

Listening also to the caution that the Centre should not try to be all things to all people, the indicators for programmatic success will need to be carefully selected and communicated, involving communities in both.

The Centre should not be understood as a "ribbon-cutting moment" or singular endpoint. Rather, the process itself — consultation, relationship-building, ongoing programming, construction transparency, pilot projects, satellite initiatives, educational outreach, and ecosystem development — already forms part of the sustainability transition. In this sense, the Centre is better understood as a continuum.

The lead-up to construction, the construction process itself, and the eventual operation of the building all become part of a shared learning process concerning sustainability, participation, governance, and urban resilience. This understanding also reshapes how success should be measured. Any moments where the Trust can demonstrate the characteristics as identifiers of success should be identified and embraced.

The consultations strongly suggest that the power of the CUS will come from its success as a building but also as it demonstrates itself as an active example of social infrastructure.

Its indicators of success may therefore be:

- The range of relationships it enables;
- The degree to which local people feel ownership over it;
- The opportunities it creates for participation;
- Its ability to connect fragmented sectors;
- Whether it can function as an enabling space for innovation, trust-building, collective action and demonstrated practice.

As noted by one participant:

"We have to show that this thing lives before it's built."

The consultation findings indicate that there remains substantial support and goodwill toward the project, alongside understandable caution. Importantly, the consultations also reveal that many residents and organisations are willing to engage constructively if they can see evidence of transparency, accountability, continuity, and shared ownership.

The challenges moving forward are ones of planning approval or funding acquisition as well as whether the project can continue to cultivate trust through sustained action. The Westway Trust's role within this process is especially significant.

The Trust is increasingly being asked to and should embrace the opportunity to demonstrate that it can deliver a building, and act as a credible steward of a collaborative sustainability ecosystem. The consultations indicate that stakeholders view Pillar 4, governance and fiduciary oversight, as central to the success of the wider project. The Trust should be aware that it is being tested not only operationally, but culturally.

The consultations indicate that there is a growing expectation that through the process, the Trust must continue demonstrating;

- institutional self-awareness
- listening and openness to iterative improvement;
- willingness to share its journey f decision-making; and
- capacity to maintain long-term accountability.

The findings of this report suggest that the consultations have helped clarify where those tensions exist, why they exist, and how they may be constructively navigated. In many respects, this represents progress. Ultimately, the value of the Centre may lie not only in its physical form, but in the praxis surrounding it: the ongoing enactment of sustainability through collaboration, accountability, education, and community stewardship.

Next Steps

Immediate Priorities

Several immediate actions were put forward as important to maintaining continuity and accountability within the consultation process.

These include:

1. Continued follow-up with participating forestry and educational institutions regarding anticipated updates and ongoing engagement opportunities.

2. Additional outreach may also be required to facilitate consultation with representatives from The Mews and/or the Men's Shed organisation, following earlier unsuccessful contact attempts.

3. Participants also emphasised the importance of maintaining public visibility and accessibility throughout the project's development. In this regard, an open public meeting presenting the findings of this report may provide an opportunity for continued dialogue, clarification, and broader community engagement.

4. Further opportunities for early-stage activation were also identified. One suggestion raised during discussions was the potential activation or expansion of the Trust's existing Green Task Force initiatives, including small-scale environmental and community improvement activities. Such initiatives may offer opportunities to build local participation, visibility, and practical sustainability engagement while broader project development continues.

5. The Westway Trust must have a defined consultation process to expand community co-creation opportunities for diverse stakeholders.

6. In order to uphold the values and commitments associated with Pillar 4, potential value in further examining how governance processes, accountability mechanisms, and decision-making structures may be evaluated, strengthened, or demonstrated

7. This may include consideration of how transparency, community participation, and ongoing public communication can be embedded into both the development process and the Centre's longer-term operational model.

Longer-Term Opportunities

1. Beyond immediate project delivery, consultation findings also pointed toward broader opportunities for phased implementation, for example distributed programming, and ecosystem-based collaboration.

2. Consider the value in approaches that extend beyond a single physical site, including expanding temporary activations, partnerships with local organisations, educational engagement, and network-based sustainability initiatives operating across the wider community.

3. Consider further potential for the Centre to evolve as a physical destination, but also as a platform for ongoing participation, learning, experimentation, and relationship-building.

APPENDIX A: Consultation Summaries

Table 1: Architectural Design and Spatial Integration Summary

Main Area	Key Consultation Themes	Main Points Raised
Light, openness, and visibility	Welcoming and community-oriented design	• Positive responses to natural light, glazing, open circulation, and spatial openness • Atrium and staircase viewed as important social spaces • Staircase understood as a social connector rather than purely circulation infrastructure
Integration with Forest School and landscape	Indoor–outdoor learning and environmental identity	• Strong support for integration with forest garden • Importance of continuity between indoor and outdoor learning • Educational philosophy linked to biodiversity and intergenerational learning • Support for "generational garden" connected to Joe's Yard
Generational / intergenerational garden	Community use of green space	• Outdoor seating • Food-growing activities • Biodiversity enhancement • Informal gathering • Cultural programming • Intergenerational interaction
Kitchen and food spaces	Food as an entry point into sustainability	• Food provenance • Land use • Food waste • Nutrition • Cultural heritage • Community enterprise
Kitchen-related design suggestions	Operational and spatial refinement	• Possible relocation of kitchen to ground floor • Kitchenette facilities within maker spaces • Additional toilet facilities for community spaces
Maker spaces and provisional spaces	Flexible community infrastructure	• Temporary residencies • Workshops • Artist and cultural association use • Entrepreneurship • Local exhibitions • Support for smaller organisations lacking permanent infrastructure
East–West thoroughfare and permeability	Connectivity and accessibility	• Improved pedestrian and cycle permeability • Better integration with surrounding estate • Avoidance of inward-facing architecture • Positive reception to split-building arrangement
Sustainability through construction and materiality	Demonstrating sustainability in practice	• Educational construction visits • Transparent material sourcing • Public carbon calculations • Bio-based materials • Environmental monitoring • Life-cycle carbon considerations
Safeguarding concerns	Balancing openness with protection	• Overlooking into Forest School spaces • Unauthorised photography concerns • Need for glazing treatments and access controls
Accessibility concerns	Site-wide accessibility challenges	• Uneven ground conditions • Changes in site levels • Disrupted pathways • Need for wider accessibility coordination
Construction impacts and asbestos removal	Public health and disruption concerns	• Construction fatigue • Noise and waste management concerns • Access disruption • Importance of asbestos removal • Need for regulated oversight and environmental monitoring
Architectural identity and symbolism	Civic identity and representation	• Sustainability tower viewed as symbolic beacon • Opportunity to reshape perceptions of North Kensington • Links to sustainability, innovation, environmental justice, and resilience
Tensions and operational realism	Balancing ambition and functionality	• Concerns about overburdening the Centre with expectations • Importance of maintaining operational clarity • Critique viewed as constructive refinement rather than obstruction

APPENDIX B: Comparison of the previous and amended building positioning

Original Building orientation



Amended building orientation



APPENDIX C: References

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