

Engaged: Re-using empty commercial premises as public toilets, as a model within high street regeneration.

Dr Rosanna Traina, Gail Ramster and Professor Jo-Anne Bichard.

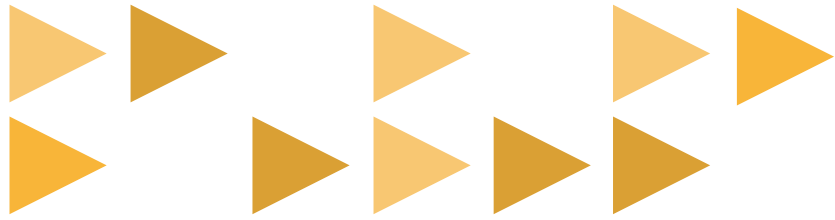


PiM.studio
Architects

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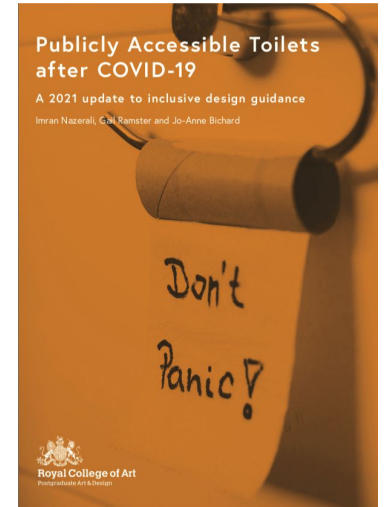
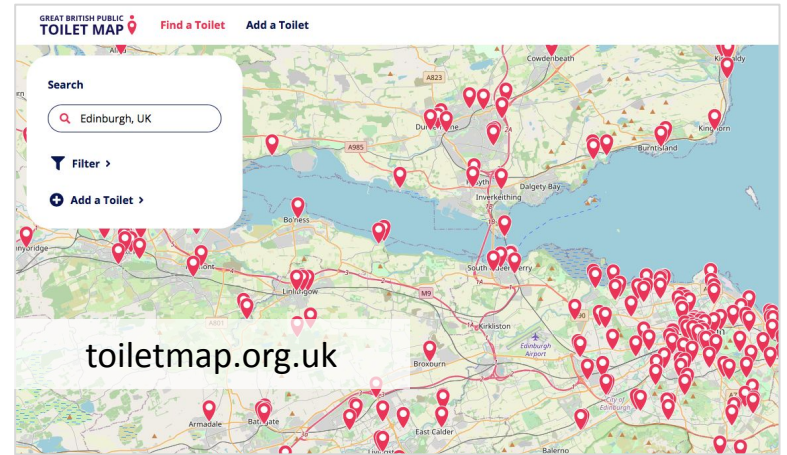
MAYOR OF LONDON



PUBLIC TOILETS RESEARCH UNIT



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



TINKLE

Toilets Innovation and New Knowledge Exchange

<https://tinkle.rca.ac.uk>



**Toilet
Consortium**



RESOURCES

Find published information on toilet design. Our resource bank includes guidance, standards, regulation, toolkits, websites and research.



NETWORK

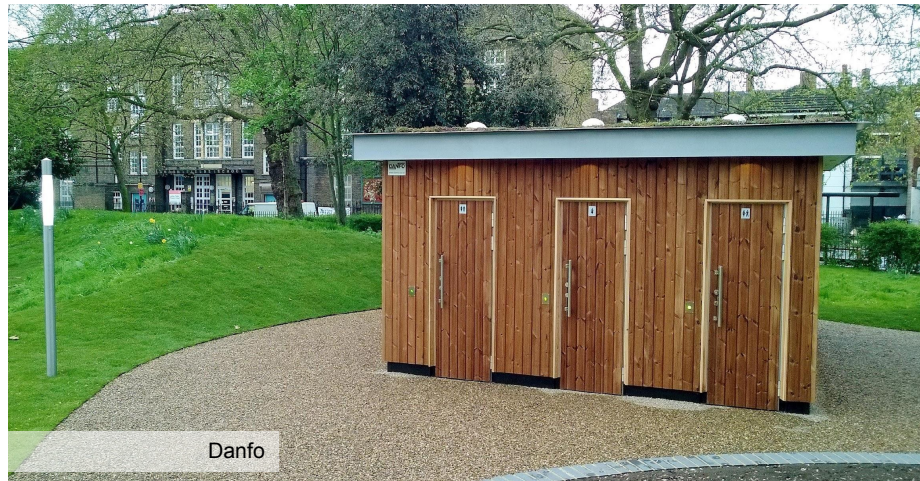
Connect with our network for expert or peer-to-peer advice. Our network includes experts across many aspects of toilets, available for contact.



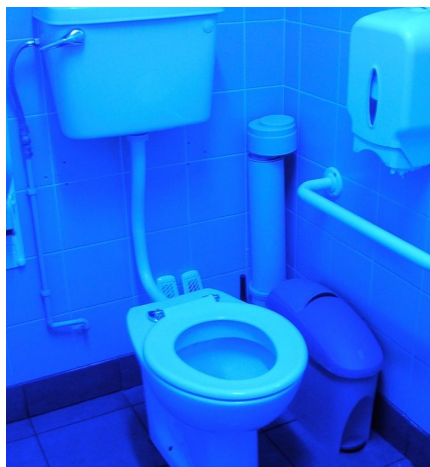
LATRINALIA

Our forum, open to all, where you can ask and answer questions, participate in open debate, share new resources, support campaigns and enable research.

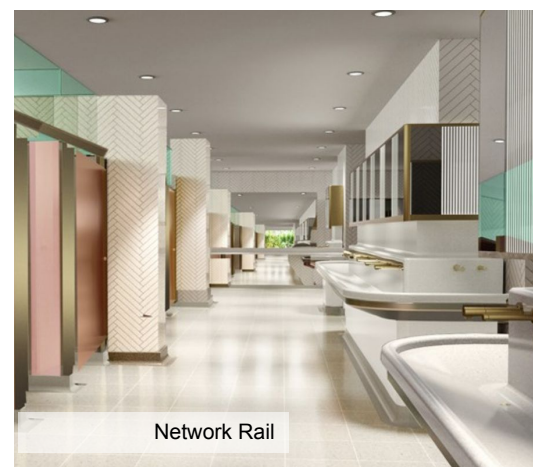




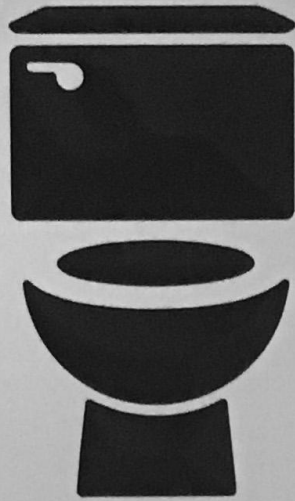
Danfo



Wellcome Collection



Network Rail



FOR EVERYONE



Research: living active lives

Lack of toilets is “affecting equality, mobility, physical fitness and other aspects of health”

Royal Society for Public Health (2019)



32% (1684) of public toilets closed between 2000 – 2018

Ref: Hansard, 2020



Image: Google Streetview,

UK POPULATION

14 million people living with bladder problems

6.5 million adults living with bowel problems



UK POPULATION

1 in 4 UK adults (12.5 Million)
have high-blood pressure

Diuretics (‘water tablets’)
increase need to urinate



“[Water tablets] make you go a bit often.

So when I come out for the day I don't take mine. “

*Research participant, age 76
on diuretic medication*

Public

Traditional Toilet Block

Individual Cubicle Toilets

Automatic Public Convenience



Parks & Cemeteries



Libraries



Town Hall

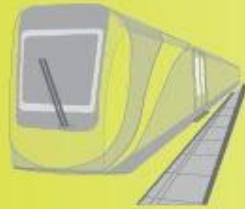
Other Public Buildings

Accessible to public

Inaccessible to public

Private

Shopping Centres



Train & Bus stations

Ferry terminals



Community Toilet Scheme

Department Stores

Large Stores

Fast food

Pubs

Museums and Galleries

Cafes



Restaurants

Hotels

Betting shops

Offices

Accessible to public

Inaccessible to public

Search

City of Edinburgh

Filter

Reset Filter

Free

Baby Changing

Accessible

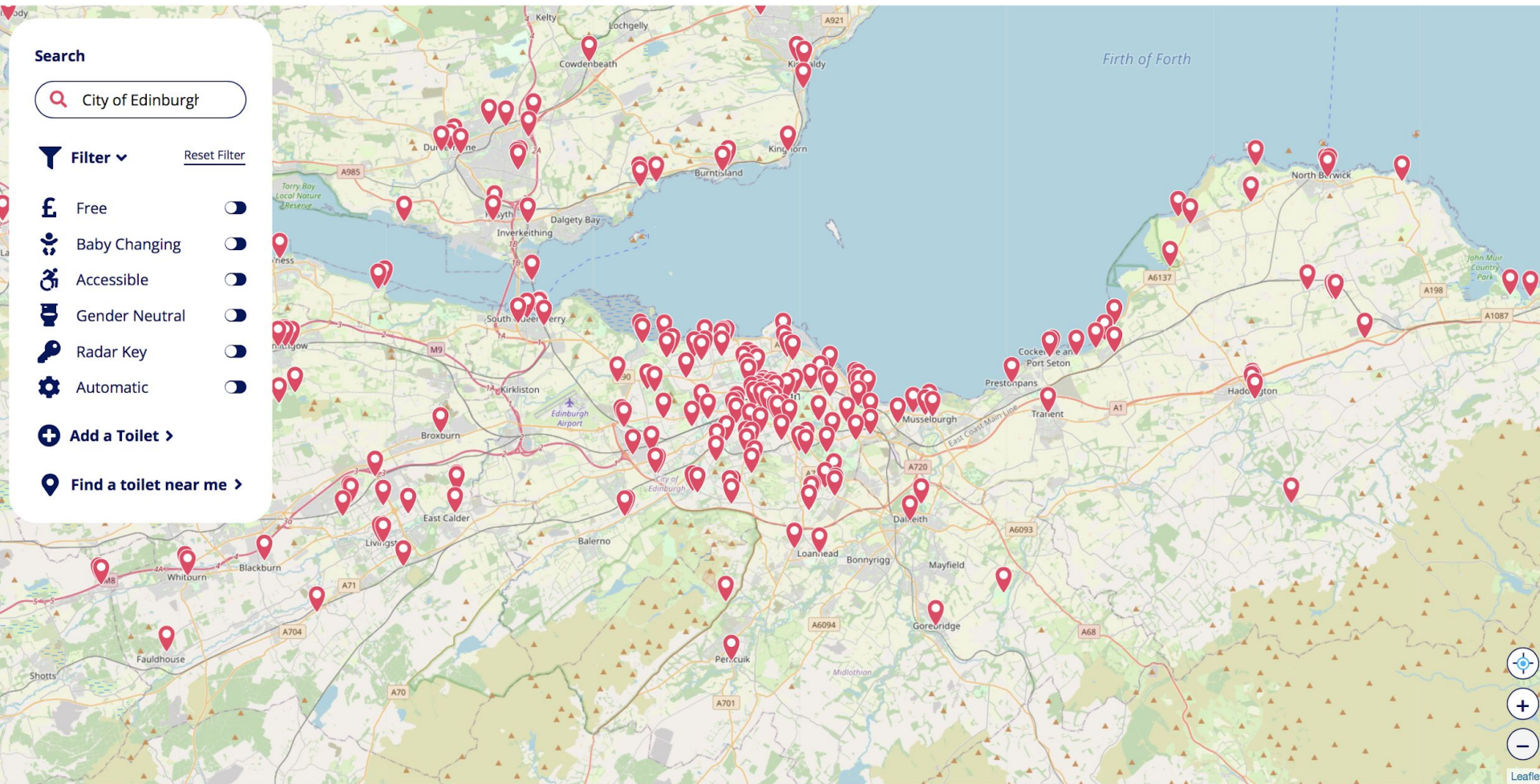
Gender Neutral

Radar Key

Automatic

[Add a Toilet](#)

[Find a toilet near me](#)



Cultural Institute



Community Toilet Scheme



Public Toilet



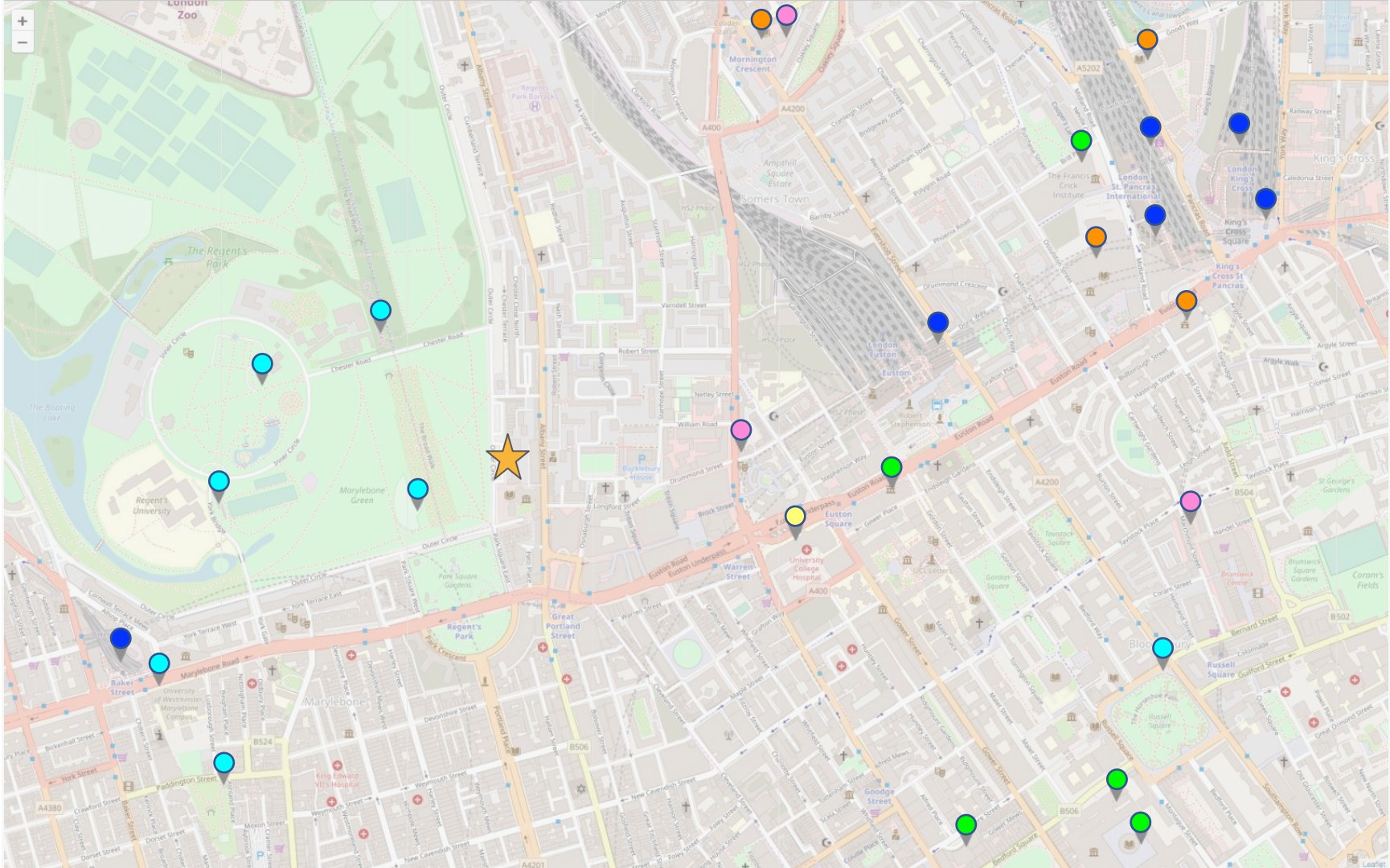
Hospital



Public Building



Train / Tube Station



Search for something on this website...



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Public toilets reopen for key workers

23 April 2020

Following feedback, Orkney Islands Council has reopened some of its public toilets for key workers to use while making essential journeys as part of their work.

Orkney Islands Council

Coronavirus

● This article is more than 1 year old

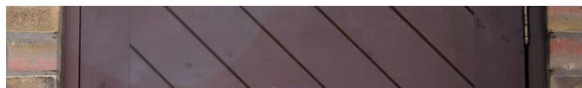
Closure of public toilets causing anxiety, distress and frustration across UK

Guardian investigation and survey also finds situation is causing significant health risk

- [Coronavirus - latest updates](#)
- [See all our coronavirus coverage](#)

Libby Brooks Scotland correspondent

Wed 10 Jun 2020 16:04 BST



The Guardian

Coronavirus: Toilet fears hamper high street return for some

By Ian Murphy
BBC News

BBC News

Engaged

A toilet on every High Street



INCLUSIVE



Changing Places facility (Wellcome Collection)



Children's sink



Wudhu facility



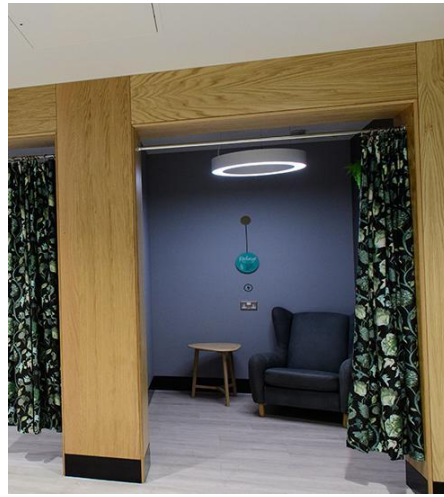
Cubicle with sink

COMMUNITY SPACE

INCLUSIVE
PUBLIC TOILETS

POP-UP
SPACE





PUBLIC HEALTH



Partners & Funding

Engaged 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 for All* mission.



Engaged is also being generously supported and guided by the **Greater London Authority** and the **Design Council**.



MAYOR OF LONDON



CUSSH



The Engaged Workshop: Content

The workshop comprised surveys, a presentation and 6 hands-on activities:

Opening survey: participant's perception of public toilet need.

An ice-breaker activity: officers' desires and ideals around public toilet design.

Series of activities to capture:

- their borough's strengths and opportunities for Engaged;
- barriers to implementing Engaged
- how a version of Engaged might fit within their unique borough needs and characteristics.

Closing survey: the value of the workshop.



Workshop Findings: Opportunities for Engaged

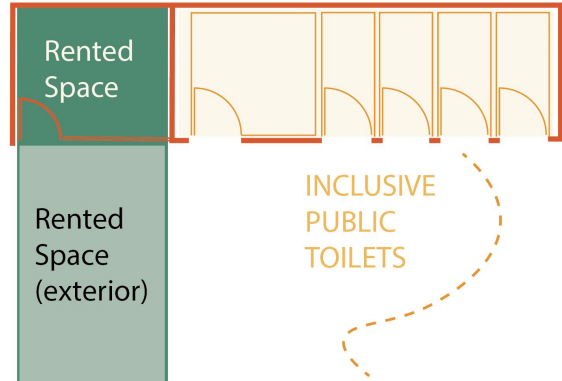
- **Officers reported confidence in council support and involvement in pursuing Engaged locally** - with anticipation of bureaucratic barriers, and needing to establish a range of council department relationships in planning implementation.
- **Potential support for Engaged via BID teams, local businesses, and by building on local regeneration successes.**
- **Many officers did report vacant units in their boroughs to support Engaged** – however the high rent rates is also a challenge.



Workshop Findings: Configurations

Alternatives in addition to 'empty shops'

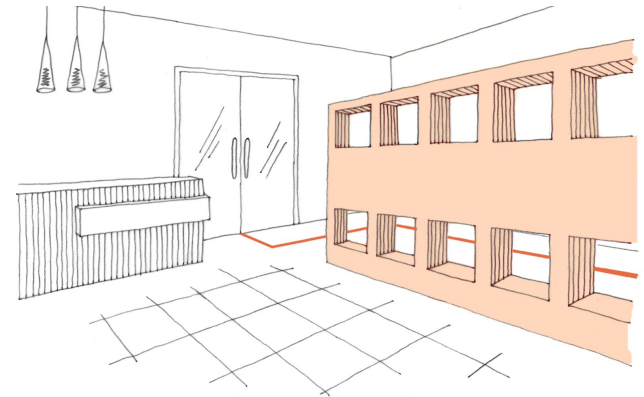
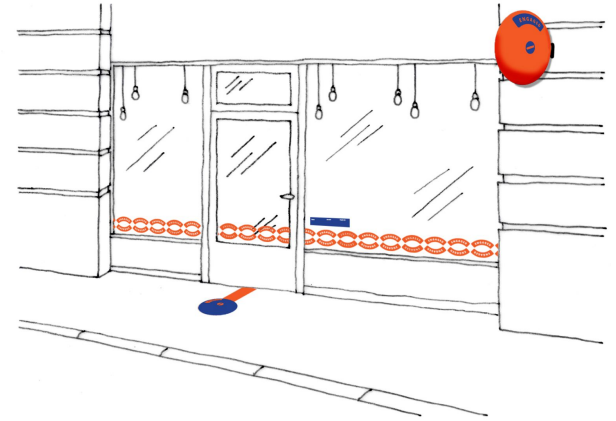
- **Extension** of existing public toilet block
-
- **Deconstructed version** (partner business is physically located away from toilet)
- **Mobile unit**



Workshop Findings: Configuration

Setting up Engaged as part of 'new developments' in the borough (as opposed to existing vacant units).

- wider possibilities for shared-space activity and longer opening times.
- ability to design, develop or build inclusive toilets from scratch.
- toilets to be planned in, in order to secure funding.
- integrate model of ownership and responsibilities.

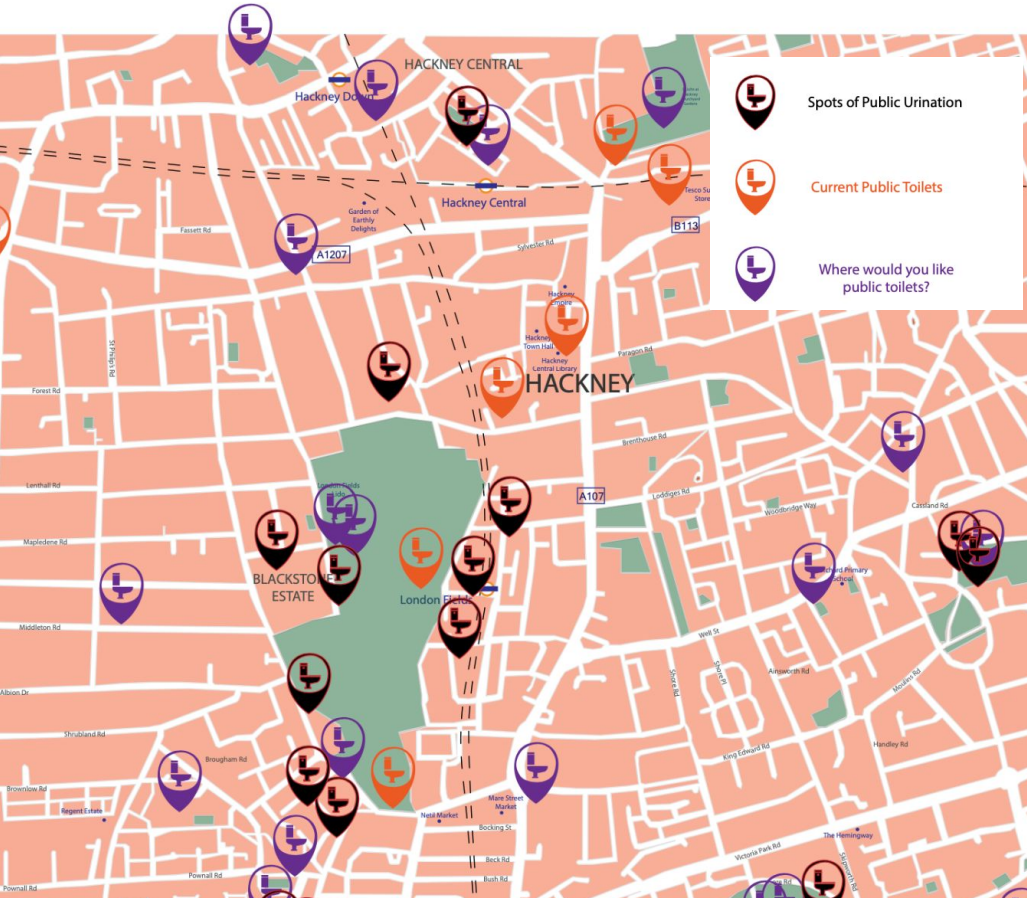


Workshop Findings: Shared space activities

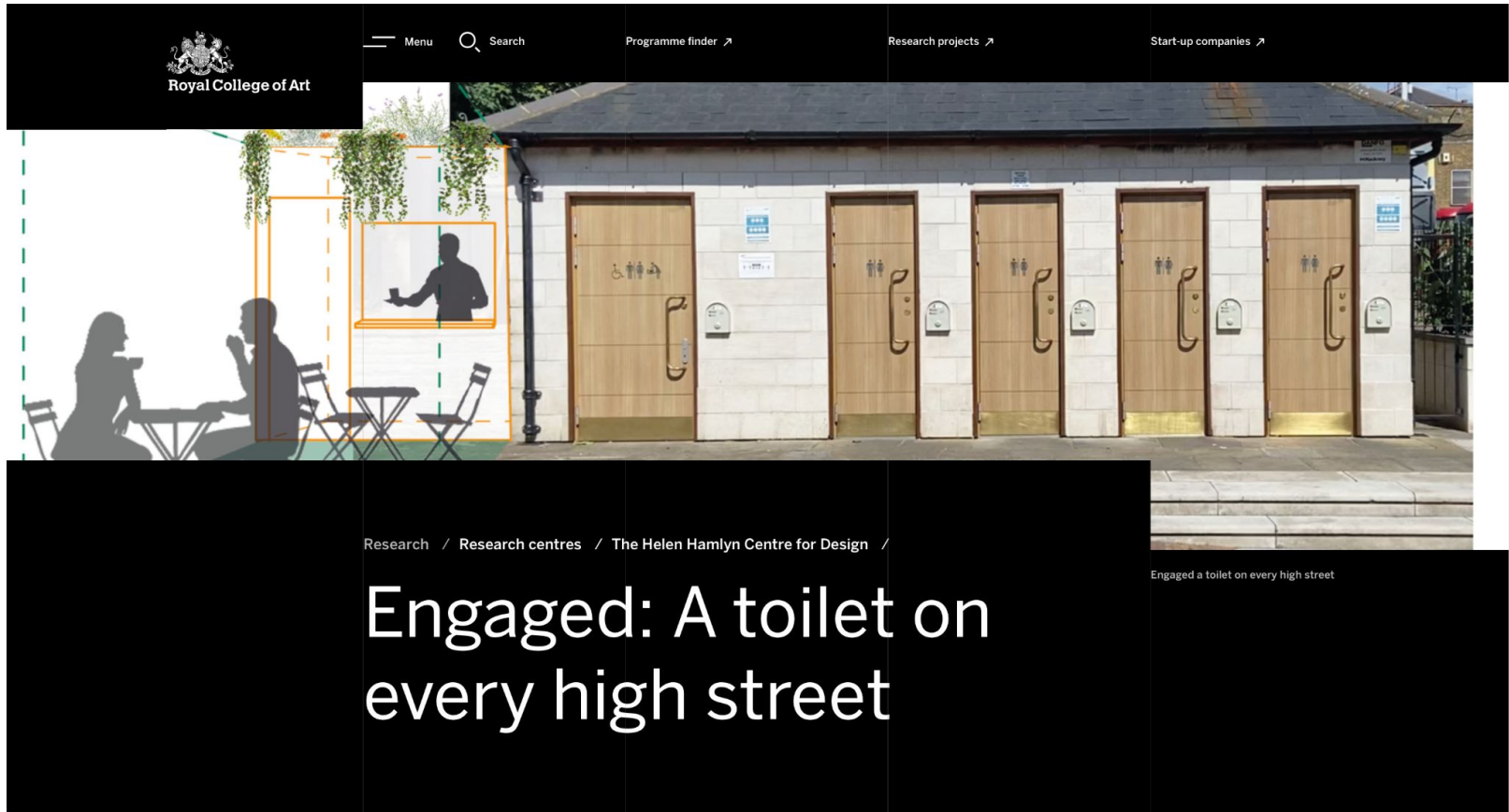
- BID or business-related activities – particularly food-based businesses
- Community-based activities
- Activities that present as a ‘destination’ in themselves



Next steps: 'On The Ground'







Research / Research centres / The Helen Hamlyn Centre for Design /

Engaged: A toilet on every high street

Engaged a toilet on every high street

Workshop Findings: £1m Loo Spend

Lots of comments fell under the umbrella of basic toilet and public health provisions:

- **on basic provision:** toilets being clean, well maintained, with dry floors.
- **on achieving accessibility for all:** free services; disability access; gender inclusivity; cultural inclusivity; breastfeeding spaces; support for drug users.
- **on making users feel safe:** day or night through natural visibility, attendants, maintenance updates.
- **on providing health and well-being support:** drinking water; safe rest space; washing facilities; space to accommodate bike/pram/scooter.
- **on basic consumables:** toilet paper; free sanitary wear.

Opening survey responses tallied with this: officers wanted to see better standards of cleanliness and accessibility features; gender-neutral provisions; and more safe areas to rest.

Workshop Findings: Barriers to Engaged

Insights for three barrier areas that received a significant number of comments include:

Access to appropriate spaces and locations:

- lack of vacant units generally.
- poor footfall, visibility or inaccessible location, where vacant units exist.
- finding businesses that would support access via extended opening hours.

Bureaucracy:

- having to work within council priorities, plans, agendas and budgets and managing conflicts arising from these; and managing the impact of gaps relating to ownership or provision responsibilities.
- managing relationships landlords and land owners.
- managing relationships with developers.
- uncertainties re: sustaining long-term toilet solutions – perceptions around pursuing new ideas over existing provisions.

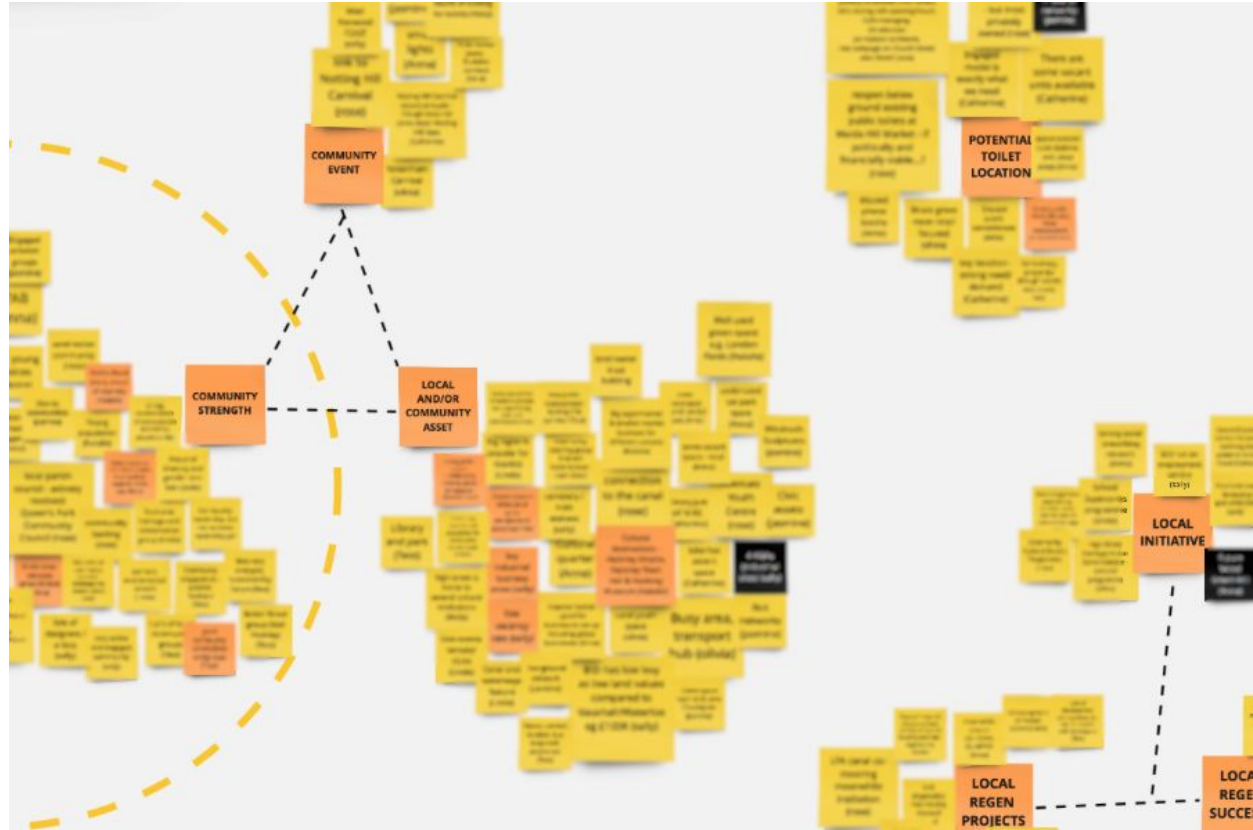
Safety & Security:

- managing the balance between 24hr, free access to all – where this might invite misuse.
- managing the public's real and perceived safety in toilets.
- tackling the direct impact of anti-social behaviour as an ongoing barrier to sustainability.

Workshop Findings: Opportunities for Engaged

Officers individually explored the strengths & characteristics of their borough by mapping and ideating around their high street case studies.

These activities subsequently enabled small groups to collaboratively explore potential opportunities for Engaged – and feasible versions of the concept, tailored to suit each borough's needs and physicalities.



Workshop Findings: Opportunities for Engaged

Officers' keen understanding of their borough's community strengths and assets (people-based, networks, physical assets, infrastructure) – and their desire to activate their borough and high street potential – establishes council partnerships as a key enabler for Engaged.

Any version of Engaged will need to align with key community activities and also understand the relationship between local regeneration plans and the community engagement that these plans seek to serve.

Working collaboratively with regeneration officers and their knowledge of their area's physical and characteristic strengths will help Engaged to:

- Mutually co-support local community activity
- Meet Engaged's co-design goals
- Improve chances of implementing Engaged

Workshop Learning

Via the closing survey, officer **comments around inclusivity appeared slightly more attuned to considerations around meeting accessibility needs within toilet provision**, including being family-friendly and meeting medical and disability needs. This may have been on account of our presentation on Engaged's concept and vision.

Comments on the workshop included:

"I loved learning about the different designs that can be cleverly incorporated responding to many concerns"

"[I've learnt that] it's possible to be more inspirational!"