

“Essence of Northcote Road” Ten Point Action Plan

- (a) Better promotion. Northcote Road needs to be seen as a distinct attraction within Clapham Junction town centre. It should be marketed as one of London’s special places by emphasising what is special in the shops and the market. It should appeal to families and young people who are seeking a different offer from the superstore and a ‘live’ experience as opposed to the internet. Special events should be organised linked to festival/holiday periods or slack business periods;
- (b) Livelier street market. There is wide agreement that the street market is a core element of the street’s essential character. However, it is not large enough (nor operating frequently enough) to realise its maximum potential. By ‘growing’ the market, the Council can encourage future independent traders (rather than trying to find ways to protect shop units for small independents). The market can provide a place for small traders (especially food) to start up, to continue trading (if shop rents become too high e.g. fishmonger) or to use as an intermediary step in relocating (e.g. Verde) but still keeping a presence in the location. Actions could include:-
 - (i) increasing the size of existing street market;
 - (ii) linking to the indoor antique market;
 - (iii) exploring the accommodation of more specialised vans; and
 - (iv) introducing other types of specialist markets, including on Sundays;
- (c) Different opening hours. Shops and stalls open at the same times as they have for decades, while patterns of work and leisure have changed. Missed opportunities are early evening with people returning from work, and Sunday which is almost as busy as Saturday. Action to be taken to inform traders of the footfall figures to encourage wider opening hours;
- (d) Business succession planning. Independent business often close as proprietors are unable to find someone to take on the business before they retire or the business fails. The business survey suggested that businesses would also be interested in receiving specialist help e.g. on tax and pensions. The Council could approach the Government, London Development Agency and Business Link to provide advice to business proprietors planning their retirement and ensure that businesses are aware of the advice and support already offered by Business Link and others;
- (e) Streetscape improvements. The physical condition and appearance of the street are not major causes for concern. There are a number of short-term measures that would improve linkages, develop a greater sense of place and boost trade. Action could be taken to:-
 - (i) declutter, including removal of guard rails, and creation of build outs at bus stops;
 - (ii) undertake general maintenance e.g. repairing potholes around the market stalls;

- (iii) create a hierarchy of gateways and focal points at key street corners with use of public art, lighting and seating; and
 - (iv) provide banners on lampposts and updateable signage boards indicating the location and nature of shops and services;
- (f) Streetscape and environment action plan. Improvements to the environment for all street users (including children and families, who constitute a large proportion) could include:-
- (i) widen pavements and build out bus stops;
 - (ii) introduce shared and differentiated surfaces;
 - (iii) transform key junctions into 'meeting places' by the use of public art, lighting and seating;
 - (iv) make pavements and the library area child friendly and more easily navigated for people with disabilities; and
 - (v) tap into the Legible London programme as a pilot to develop further signage;
- (g) Battersea Rise junction demonstration project. The junction with Battersea Rise is the key gateway to Northcote Road, and has attracted particular concern. The consultant suggests that the Council works with Transport for London (TfL) to improve this junction to make it easier to cross the South Circular road by removing guard rails, changing signal phasing, realigning pedestrian crossings along desire lines and narrowing crossing width;
- (h) Sensitive parking management. Of major concern to both businesses and (less so) customers, is improved parking management. This could make a profound difference to the image of Northcote Road and make the most effective use of the parking available. There is adequate parking at most times, but the regime is complex. Actions suggested include:-
- (i) simplifying current parking regimes;
 - (ii) identifying more shopper parking places, including dual use of spaces in side streets;
 - (iii) introduce a pilot delivery clock scheme (or similar) for loading and unloading delivery vehicles; and
 - (iv) introducing a more customer-friendly parking enforcement and management regime, where wardens could advise where to park to optimise use of available parking spaces;
- (i) Active market management. In order to realise the market's full potential a more proactive approach to market management is required, possibly advised by a private operator; and
- (j) Funding. Many of the more expensive actions listed above are expensive and there is no current budget provision. Funding from TfL and others will therefore be needed. This could be as part of the future review of the A3 as part of TfL's Network Management Plans. The Council should develop the case for funding for the street (possibly as a best practice model, transferable to other London town centres).