



Commonplace case study

Catford pre-planning engagement

Project name

Catford town centre

Location

Catford

Customer

London Borough of Lewisham

Started

March 2017

Ended

Ongoing

Commonplace project lead

David Janner-Klausner

Background

Commonplace was selected by the London Borough of Lewisham to deliver insight into what residents and visitors to Catford think about the area at present, and how they'd like to see it change and improve.

Catford is located in South London and is a fairly traditional town centre with a mix of high street retail, a 1960's covered shopping centre under a brutalist-style housing estate and some significant public buildings including council offices and a theatre. The South Circular Road carries significant traffic and both serves and severs the area, which is also served by two railway stations - Catford and Catford Bridge.

Commonplace has enabled us to reach thousands of residents and helped us better understand what they like about our town centre and what they'd like to see improved. It is also a popular and useful communication platform for sending out news and animating conversations. It has assisted us in promoting a sense of local identity and in building trust through Commonplace's openness.

Deborah Efemini, Lewisham



Pre-planning goals

Lewisham commissioned Commonplace over a year before it was planning to appoint master planners to consider the regeneration of Catford. There were multiple reasons for the long lead. The council wanted plenty of time to gather information; but it also saw using Commonplace as part of its communication strategy, preparing local residents and communities for change and in the course of 18 months, building a greater sense of local identity, focus and engagement. During this period, the council soft-launched a local brand, "Team Catford", using it within Commonplace and gradually developing a presence through logo, colour scheme, a separate Team Catford website and an ongoing series of local events.

Communications

Lewisham Council uses the Commonplaces 'News' platform routinely, building up a base of over 700 subscribers. The "Team Catford" social media accounts were used to disseminate comments collected using Commonplace and encourage referrals to the site - there have been over 2,400 referrals to Commonplace from Facebook.

The News platform is used to advertise local events, markets, cultural activities - as well as face-to-face engagement activities such as "Young and Vocal", targeting young people. It has also been used to create a feedback loop with items summarising key issues emerging from Commonplace comments.

After running Commonplace as a digital-only engagement for six months, the council appointed a local communications firm to run local events, prepare videos and target groups that were less engaged online. The combination of the web presence through Commonplace and local events has been hugely effective in achieving the entwined goals of building local engagement and gaining insights into current issues and future aspirations.

Catford Cornucopia provides locally-sourced merchandise and offers a space for conversations about the future of Catford Town Centre.

The infographic features a central map of Catford Town Centre with various local businesses and landmarks marked. A pink banner in the top left corner reads "9 LOCAL SUPPLIERS". The map includes labels for "Bottle Bar & Shop", "Duan's Deli", "Jerk Off BBQ", "Chitter Chatter Arts", "Rugby Ground", "Hazel Nicholls", "Big Gay AI", "BROWN HILL ROAD", "Lake Agaimon", "Eye", and "Mont 58". To the right of the map, a green box contains a testimonial from Hazel, Catford Cornucopia Manager, stating: "I'm really grateful for the support I've received from Team Catford and Catford Cornucopia. It's important to me that people support local makers and businesses, the money made here spent right here in Catford." Below this, a yellow box highlights: "For every £1 spent with a small or medium-sized business 63p stays in the local economy, compared with just 40p with a larger business." Further down, it says "Open for over 400 hours since August" and "Over 1,250 people follow Catford Cornucopia across our social media channels." A "Best Seller" badge identifies "Catford hoodies". At the bottom, a green box features a testimonial from a Catford resident: "Walking in there and seeing all the things from local artists, all the Catford pride. It makes me feel proud as someone who was born and bred in Catford." The bottom right corner displays the "CATFORD CORNUCOPIA" logo with the hashtag #CatfordandProud and #CatfordConversation.

After six hugely successful months and over 400 hours of trading, Catford Cornucopia will be opening its doors for the last time on Sunday 27th January making way for an exciting refurbishment of the building that will bring a new food outlet with homes above. If you haven't already visited, these are the last few weeks.

Image: Catford news sent out via Commonplace

Reporting

Throughout the engagement period Commonplace has delivered data reports to the council, which have been discussed by council members. The reports formed part of the brief that the council published in early 2018 for potential bidders to deliver the regeneration master plan.

Catford Stations



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Most agreed comment with **46 agreements**:
The space around Catford Bridge Station and between the two stations needs some serious looking at. The pavements are very narrow, always dirty and covered in litter, and cars parked in this area make the space seem even smaller.

80 comments (up from 77 since January) mention the Stations or refer to the area around it. In total these comments have **693 agreements**. The comment sentiment is mostly negative.

Stations - feeling

Mostly positive	3.3%
Neutral	15.0%
Negative	42.5%

Catford Stations

Improvements

Summarising the tags for "What would you like to see here?" shows that the station area needs:

- Better pavements/ footpaths
- Greenery/planting
- More seating
- Better lighting
- Less congestion

Compared to the last report - 'less congestion' has replaced 'Signage/wayfinding'. Otherwise top 4 are the same.

Stations - What would you like to see?



Suggestion	Count
congestion*	13
*better pavements/footpaths	22
*greenery/planting	10
*More Cycle route	21
*Less Noise	4
*places to sit/stand	4
*signage/wayfind...	11
*food/beverage	12
*More cycle paths	2
*better lighting	6
*Community use	14
*More seating	5
*studio/workshop	17
*More car parking	1
*furniture/access	2

Moundsfield Park

“

Most agreed comment with **20 agreements**:
We really need this cafe, toilets too. Vital to the park and community life.



45 comments mention Moundsfield Park. Suggestions include:

- Cafe and toilet facilities.
- Better upkeep and removal of litter.
- Tennis tables.
- Improve appearance and safety of entrances.
- Better cycling route that goes East to West and connects some of the parks.

Learn more about the Catford Commonplace

<https://catfordtowncentre.commonplace.is>