



# Hearts & Minds

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Measuring the Impact of Northcote's  
Urban Regeneration on Community Wellbeing

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## **Research Report**

**August 2021**

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Hearts & Minds NZ Incorporated

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**Recommended Citation**

Jalili-Moghaddam, S. (2021). The Impact of Northcote's Urban Regeneration on Community Wellbeing report. Hearts & Minds NZ Incorporated, Auckland, New Zealand.

**Keywords**

Northcote, residents, community, wellbeing, urban redevelopment, housing change

**He aha te mea nui o te ao**  
What is the most important thing in the world?  
**He tangata, he tangata, he tangata**  
It is the people, it is the people, it is the people

# Acknowledgments

Hearts & Minds would like to thank:

- All Northcote respondents, including the residents and community stakeholders, who took the time to complete the survey and took part in interviews to share their insights and experience with us. This study would not be possible without their invaluable input
- Our community collaborative partners, the Kaipatiki Community Facilities Trust (KCFT), the FONO, and Te Puna Hauora whose combined effort and insights supported the Hearts & Minds team during the various phases of this community- led research study
- Lotteries Community Research for their support

We acknowledge the Academic Advisory Group, Professor Elaine Rush and Dr Sari Andajani who guided us through design and conducting this study.

This study was supported by a grant received from the New Zealand Lottery Grants Board (Te Puna Tahua).

# 1.0 Executive summary

Northcote is a vibrant and diverse community that is currently experiencing significant change as a result of the major urban regeneration taking place through the Northcote Development programme. It is also home to the highest intensification of social housing on the North Shore, with the majority of the 'old' social housing dating back to the 1960s.

After many years of neglect, Northcote was designated as a Special Housing Area in 2014 and the Northcote Development started in 2016. Kāinga Ora is responsible for delivering the Northcote Development programme, while working closely with Panuku, an Auckland Council controlled agency focussed on revitalising the Northcote town centre.

The aim of the Northcote Development is to increase access to housing (including social housing, affordable housing and private houses for sale), improve the quality and liveability of housing and to upgrade the infrastructure and amenities within Northcote Central's established multi-cultural community of Māori, Pasifika, Asian, New Zealand European/Pakeha and others.

Consequently, the population of Northcote Central is expected to more than double by the end of the Northcote Development in the mid 2020s. Change is well underway, and more change is expected.

Whilst the aim of urban regeneration programmes, such as the Northcote Development, is to improve the physical and socio-economic position of areas (Mehdipanah et. al, 2013) there can be negative implications on wellbeing through social disruption and displacement (Egan et. al, 2015). Discussions with the Northcote Central community and stakeholders at a grassroots level indicated that this may be the case and a very strong need for their voices to be heard during the Northcote Development process was identified.

With the support and input of their community collaborative partners, Hearts & Minds commissioned this strengths-based study to:

- Identify the impact of the Northcote Development programme on the wellbeing of Northcote residents, families/whanau and the Northcote community
- Articulate the voices of the Northcote Central community
- Support the wellbeing needs of the Northcote Central community during this time of change

The research undertaken for this study included group discussions (focus groups) and a written survey with Northcote residents, as well as semi-structured interviews with Northcote Central community stakeholders, including Plunket, Police, Northart Gallery, and the Northcote Public Library.

While this research project experienced unavoidable limitations due to the impacts of four Covid lockdowns in a community that was already experiencing unprecedented levels of change, which affected the scope and depth of the work that took place, the information gained from participants is of value. It should be noted, however, that the sample of 27 participants does not wholly reflect the full demographic mix of Northcote and should not be generalised to other communities.

Hence, this research is simply one short snapshot in time, about how participating residents and community stakeholders currently feel and think about the Northcote Development programme, and why. This is their voice.

## Key Insights

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### The People: the Northcote Participants

Of the 27 participants in this survey:

- Just over 81%, or 22 residents, live in Kāinga Ora (14) and private rental homes (8). They are mostly of Maori and Pasifika heritage, and a few NZ European/Pakeha.
- The 59% of people who have lived in Northcote Central the longest (over 10 years) are tenants, with 69% Kāinga Ora tenants and 31% private tenants. The majority of Kāinga Ora participants have been there for between 25-45+ years.
- Home ownership is limited to five participants, including Chinese, NZ European/Pakeha, and one Other (unstated), who have lived in Northcote for 10 years or less.
- A majority of residents were in full or part time work, five were job seekers, and three were retired; there was one caregiver and one volunteer, and two who preferred not to say.
- No residents new to Kāinga Ora housing in Northcote were among the participants.

The above suggests residents in rental accommodation, given their long tenure, are likely to have helped provide substantial stability within the Northcote population over time, with potential positive flow on effects for themselves and the community.

### The Northcote Development Programme and its Effects to Date

The Northcote Development programme, to date, has led to substantial changes in how Kāinga Ora tenants are housed. Some Kāinga Ora participants have regrets about the demolition of much of the previous social housing stock, and their shift into newly developed more intensive housing, because:

- Their previous homes had more space indoors and out which supported them to meet their diverse needs, including cultural needs; they enabled family to stay as needed, and for outdoor spaces to be used for games, living, hangi, social gatherings and gardening.
- Some participants deeply feel the loss of previous larger Māori and Pacific families not allocated new housing, who had to move away. These were often long-term friends and neighbours who they may be concerned for and miss.
- Some Kāinga Ora (and other) participants felt some new social housing tenants are less friendly or mind their own business. For long term (and possibly new) Kāinga Ora residents the Covid lockdowns in 2020 and 2021, grappling with the change, and perhaps health issues, means making new connections may have been hard.
- There are some signs of potentially emerging concerns: around safety, inconsiderate neighbours, and amenity concerns for residents, neighbours and in public spaces.

It may be that Kāinga Ora was unable to take into account some of the factors Barton considers relevant to housing policy, including accommodation of large families who wanted to remain.

The departure of some families and the reduced friendliness of some newcomers has also been noticed by others in the community. Some mention the importance of safety; some participants, are stressed and anxious. Concerns also came through when participants chose the top four 'big' problems over the previous 12 months: 'Dangerous driving', 'Noise pollution', 'Alcohol or drug problems' and 'People you feel unsafe around because of their behaviour'.

Two participants suggested that there is a need for more effective management of social housing. Community programmes may also support greater social integration of new and old residents.

There appears to be concern around whether increased social housing will tip the Northcote community's balance, and the need to ensure that there are appropriate facilities and infrastructure in place to support good outcomes. Some wanted the previous diversity reinstated in Northcote through more affordable housing for Pasifika and Māori and balancing of the future culture. The participants' mixed views about whether the housing changes have improved Northcote may reflect how much, either directly or indirectly, the changes have affected and are affecting specific participants, their ethnic community, and their feelings around change, safety, and identity.

### **We Like Living in Northcote, the People, our Identity**

Northcote Central is commonly characterised by its diversity and character. For many residents Northcote is also defined by the people, the familiar faces and the families that live there or have lived there, in some cases, for decades. 85% of participants like living in Northcote and 81% feel part of the community; this includes the nearly one third of residents who voiced their concerns regarding the departure of friends, families and familiar faces from Northcote, and the introduction of new less friendly people. Relationships tended to impact on whether an individual felt part of the Northcote community.

Northcote was mostly valued for its convenience to shared facilities, the friendly diverse community, good access to public transport during peak hours, its proximity to work and good neighbours. Virtually all used various means to keep in touch with neighbours. Most felt safe out and about during the day, and at home alone at night; a third have safety concerns when out alone at night.

Concerns also came through when participants chose the top four 'big' problems over the previous 12 months: 'Dangerous driving', 'Noise pollution', 'Alcohol or drug problems' and 'People you feel unsafe around because of their behaviour'. These suggest some sense of community disquiet.

Some residents have concerns that Northcote is losing its identity. For some this may partially be attributed to the departure of long-standing Maori and Pasifika friends and whanau from the area, new residents with different ethnicity/culture, and the changing landscape, including built structure, of Northcote.

While there appears to be concern around whether the increased population may tip Northcote community's balance, there is insufficient data to come to any conclusion, given the size of the participant sample and the lack of baseline research. What it points to is a need to ensure that there are appropriate facilities and infrastructure in place to support good outcomes, as well as possibly appropriate further research.

A number of community stakeholders felt that the departure of many long-standing families from Northcote Central was having an impact on the wellbeing of the residents, which could further be compounded by the upcoming changes to the Northcote town centre landscape.

### **Northcote's Shared Facilities and Services**

A range of questions focus on many existing shared facilities (16, 17, 21, and 30), in addition to other comments. All participants who rated the importance of shared facilities rated the local shops as important/very important to Northcote (24). Next came local parks, trees and greenery, and community gardens. Most residents wanted the existing shared facilities to be retained, while around half support a community hall (discussed below).

Several participants were generally positive about the range of community services currently provided. Participants would like to see a more diverse range of services and events, catering to a wider age and different ethnic/cultural groups.

Some participants pointed to ease of access/use issues with parks, playgrounds and sports clubs, and to a lesser extent public transport. The importance of community connection places, while lower at 59%, may reflect occasional rather than frequent or regular use, while the rating for the children's playground may in part reflect the age and life stage of participants.

Some participants appear to have a broader approach to what 'local' is, with one noting their main shop was generally outside Northcote. This may reflect the location of workplaces, income, and mobility.

### **Outdoor Spaces: Local Parks, Trees, Community Gardens**

Space and the need for more and different kinds of spaces was a key point repeatedly highlighted. Half of the participants wanted more outdoor and green community space. The Te Ara Awataha greenway is expected to connect "the community via a network of parks, shared cycling and walking paths and wildlife" (Northcote Development, 2020), and has included community input. It is hoped this may meet many of the needs raised.

Outdoor space could have a strong positive impact on the fulfilment of what participants chose as the three things that would improve their health and wellbeing: more physical activity; eat more fresh and whole food; more relationships with family, friends and neighbours.

It is not known whether Kāinga Ora or Panuku are making provision for spaces for hangī, whanau or other community gatherings and communal gardens – aspects of their previous homes that Kāinga Ora, particularly Maori and Pasifika participants, most regret not having. Some participants would also like a range of other events/facilities in parks: a playground, more green space for physical activity, physical exercises areas, more seating and the planting of fruit trees.

### **The Northcote Town Centre: A Community Hall**

The Northcote Town Centre Benchmark Masterplan (Auckland Council, 2019) includes provisions for a new town square which will be a dedicated place for events, activities and celebrations; greater investment in public spaces; a community hub; more community shared facilities (i.e. community recreational facilities and recreation) as well as the Te Ara Awataha greenway.

A community hall in Northcote Central is the mostly strongly supported new facility, with support from the majority of community stakeholders and around half of the participants. They point to the need for more easily accessible community spaces for workshops, cultural events, classes and groups. Flexible, appropriate community spaces, including meeting rooms, as part of a community hall complex. It sounds like the Auckland Council's Masterplan's multi-purpose hub centre.

Given such a facility was not foreshadowed in questions, it has strong support, including from Pasifika. In addition, the town square, and planting within the Town Centre, fits with some of the comments on outdoor spaces.

There are also concerns about some of the spaces occupied by community stakeholders within the Town Centre. While the location is accessible and supports effective community outreach there are limitations, in terms of easy access for all, or privacy for meetings, given others nearby.

### **The Town Centre: Community Stakeholders and Retailers**

Some of community stakeholders are uncertain as to what the final outcomes for the Northcote Town Centre will be, how they will be achieved, and within what timeframe. Community stakeholders are also unsure whether they will be able to operate within the Centre once any demolitions start to occur, whether there will be opportunities to locate close to the Town Centre,

and whether they will have space in new buildings once these are constructed. They would like greater clarity around these issues, particularly given that their services are under pressure and the need for them is increasing.

Retailers and others may be in a similar position in terms of their premises. Some participants are looking forward to an updated town/shopping centre; two are concerned for local retailers to be supported through the changes, in line with Barton (2003) who points to the need to consider the availability of accommodation for successful businesses who want to remain in the area.

### **Engagement - Let's Talk More**

It is clear there is uncertainty among both community stakeholders and residents about what the outcomes of the Northcote Development programme will look like, who will live there, and what the impacts will be.

Over half of the participants (mostly Kāinga Ora residents) were dissatisfied with the level of engagement they have had with the Northcote Development programme. None were satisfied and only a small percentage didn't know or were neutral. Given that Kāinga Ora residents have been and are more likely to be impacted by the redevelopment this should not be a surprise. In some ways Kāinga Ora residents' views about the engagement to date may reflect the sense of "overwhelm", anxiety and concern about what is happening and what may happen. These include comments on mental health, including anxiety and stress.

Of those in private rentals or home ownership, 15% of participants were satisfied with the engagement whilst the rest were dissatisfied or neutral.

The community stakeholders considered that many residents have found the changes difficult, with two loose groups: those who are aware, anxious and concerned about gentrification, and those shocked by the changes and thoughts of a concrete jungle. From the data, some of these may include those fearful for the future of their community in Northcote Central. At the same time, they are also considering what they would like to see happening, and how to meet their needs in the future, as shown by some participants' support for community gardens and for the building of a community hall.

The data would also support the existence of a third group more open to change, including more housing and an increasing population. For some participants it includes openness to changes to the Northcote Town Centre with a greater variety of shops, and with improved infrastructure and amenities. This includes some across all tenure types, including those who may regret some changes, and/or also have some concerns about the coming changes.

Participants acknowledged a wide range of potential stressors. These range from loss of family/whanau, friends, and previous homes, coping with new different homes that connect people less, and with possibly less friendly neighbours. It also includes other stressors, from financial, work and job seeking, to having a family member move in or moving in with a family member, to health, including cancer and mental health issues such as anxiety and depression. While stress can be a positive aspect of life, and can motivate reassessment and change, too much may reduce wellbeing, and the ability to thrive, at least in the short term.



## Looking Forward

The community stakeholders acknowledge that the Northcote Development programme will see significant increases in both housing and the population over the next three to five years, with changes to the Northcote Town Centre also anticipated. They acknowledged that they, like many in the community, are uncertain what the outcomes will be on the ground particularly for the Town Centre. In their interviews they came up with a number of suggestions for further consideration.

First, they would like more consultation, communication, and co-ordination with one another to help better meet the needs of existing and new members of the Northcote community.

Secondly, they wish to engage with the community more in ongoing way to better hear residents' hopes and concerns and to support them in meeting their needs.

They considered that a greater level of engagement with the community could benefit all, including community organisations, and Kāinga Ora and Panuku. Some acknowledged their own uncertainty about some of the changes expected, and the importance of up-to-date, clear, factual information, particularly as aspects could change. This could also support stakeholders in their future discussions and engagement with the community.

Some community stakeholders would also like to see provision of more targeted support for those new to Northcote, both for specific communities, and across the community to support people's integration into the community. In addition, they would like more multilingual staff within key community services to ensure that all residents' needs can be addressed and supported.

It is clear that the Northcote Development is having mixed effects on the wellbeing of the participating residents and stakeholders. Some feel positive and see the potential for good outcomes but want to ensure that the anticipated needed amenities and infrastructure are delivered at the same time as the increasing population arrives. Some others, are more concerned about the changes that have already occurred, and less certain about what the future will bring, and how it will affect them and the community. Within this group some are more directly affected, feel more vulnerable, and possibly need more support.

The participating community stakeholders suggest:

- Working with groups of residents so as to get a better sense of residents hopes and concerns, possibly through regular community group discussions
- More consultation and communication among the different organisations providing support to the community

They considered that a greater level of engagement with the community would benefit all, including community organisations and Kāinga Ora and Panuku. Involvement of key organisations on a range of levels could help with ensuring community stakeholders are kept up to date. Concise, clear, factual information would support stakeholders in effective engagement with the community, listening to concerns, building bridges with residents, fostering connection and integrating 'new faces' into the community. It could also help identify temporary and strategic opportunities that use existing resources and support the community during this period of change.

Given the concerns raised, consideration needs to be given to ensuring the new Kāinga Ora housing development reflects its residents' diverse needs and is supportive of the Northcote community both now and into the future.

Suggestions include:

- Kāinga Ora and Panuku consider providing communal spaces for hangi, family/whanau and communal gatherings
- More effective management of social housing by Kāinga Ora so that all residents are integrated well within the housing provided and with the wider community, and amenity issues are being effectively managed (e.g., noise, rubbish, and safety).

The participating community stakeholders and many residents would like:

- An easily accessible community hall where people can meet and/or participate in community activities to support the Northcote community

Other suggestions participating community stakeholders and residents would like to see include:

- more multilingual people within key community services to ensure that all residents' needs can be addressed and supported
- provision of more targeted support for those new to Northcote, both for specific communities, and across the community to support people's integration into the community

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# 1.0 Introduction

Hearts & Minds is a community organisation based in the heart of Northcote Central. Pivotal to their work is an integrated focus on wellbeing, inclusion, and diversity. This is reflected in the community wellbeing services they deliver, their participation in multiple networks and their relationships with community stakeholders. Their community development approach enables Hearts & Minds to hear the voices of the Northcote community through direct engagement with individuals, whanau, and organisations that work at a grassroots level.

The Northcote Development programme is expected to increase the Northcote Central population from approximately 3,000 to around 7,700 residents (Auckland Council, 2019). Many existing families/whanau current living in Northcote will remain and will be joined by an estimated 900 new families making Northcote Central their home in the next five years. Given the development currently underway, the Northcote Central community is already experiencing significant change, with further change expected to occur over time.

Discussions with the Northcote Central community and stakeholders highlighted a strong need for their voices to be heard during the Northcote Development programme and to ensure that any learnings be integrated into the ongoing development of the community going forward.

With the support and help of their Kaumatua and community collaborative partners: Te Puna Hauora, The Fono and Kaipatiki Communities Facilities Trust (KCFT), Hearts & Minds undertook this strength-based study to:

- Identify the impact of the Northcote Development programme on the wellbeing of Northcote Central residents, families/whanau and the Northcote community
- Articulate the voices of the Northcote Central community
- Support the wellbeing needs of the Northcote Central community during this time of change

The collaborative partners are involved given their significant roles in the local community. Both the Fono and Te Puna Hauora have health clinics in the broader Northcote Central area and provide diverse culturally appropriate services. The KCFT provides community development programmes, events and projects across Kaipatiki, including the Northcote area.

Key factors that shaped the research were:

- Existing literature regarding the impact of housing regeneration/development programmes on individuals' and communities' wellbeing
- Northcote Central as part of the Northcote area
- The Northcote Development Programme which focuses on Northcote Central.

## 1.1 Literature Review

There is no single definition of wellbeing, but there is a general agreement that wellbeing includes *“the presence of positive emotions and moods (e.g., contentment, happiness), the absence of negative emotions (e.g., depression, anxiety), satisfaction with life, fulfilment and positive functioning”* (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2018).

Hearts & Minds defines wellbeing as “when people have the psychological, social, spiritual and physical resources, within themselves and their community, to meet life’s challenges and thrive” (Hearts & Minds, 2020, p. 3).

There is an array of literature that focuses on the impact of housing regeneration/development programmes on individuals’ and communities’ wellbeing. Petticrew et al, (2009) note that housing regeneration activities may play a key role in improving the health of the public and reducing health inequalities.

In a systematic review, Carmona (2019) explores the association between the quality of the built environment and its value, in health, social, economic and environmental terms. Carmona’s research highlights that a well designed and built community can deliver a wide range of health benefits.

These include:

- Better physical health i.e., lower prevalence of diseases, such as obesity, asthma, etc
- Better mental health i.e., reduced depression, anxiety
- Better general fitness i.e., increased walking and exercise
- Greater daily comfort i.e., decreased traffic noise and poor sanitation
- Enhanced quality of life i.e., increases sense of emotional wellbeing and satisfaction and greater happiness

However, urban regeneration can also have negative implications on wellbeing through social disruption and experienced displacement (Egan, Lawson, Kearns, Conway, & Neary, 2015). Shaw and Hagemans (2015) explore the notions of social mix, place and displacement among residents of secure community housing in Melbourne, Australia. They conclude that “transformations in shops and meeting places, and in the nature of local social structure and government interventions, cause a sense of loss of place even without physical displacement” (K. S. Shaw & Hagemans, 2015, p. 323).

Barton (2003) also notes that local housing policy needs to consider other factors such as:

- Availability of accommodation for single residents (young/old) and large families who want to remain in the area
- Availability of accommodation for successful businesses who want to remain in the area
- Availability of properties with large gardens or very close to allotments for keen gardeners

Resident participation in shaping the built environment directly supports their mental health through encouraging a sense of empowerment and ownership (Kent et al, 2011).

## 1.2 Northcote and Northcote Central: A Brief History

Māori were the first settlers of Aotearoa/ New Zealand, including the broader Tamaki Makaurau/ Auckland area, and within this, Northcote located on the northern shore of the Waitemata Harbour, to the north and west of the Harbour Bridge. Iwi settled this area with its rich soils and fish resources many hundreds of years ago (Community Facilities Trust, 2010).

The second and ongoing wave, of mostly European settlers, occurred after the 1841 Crown purchase of the large Mahurangi block, and later purchases. Over time, Northcote became a mix of rural and urban areas. Suburban development and a rise in rural-urban migration for Maori saw their proportion of the population increase between 1926 and 1986 (Hoffman, 2019). Increased public transport from the mid-1930s, and the 1959 opening of the Harbour Bridge, also reinforced urban development.

In June 1959, the Northcote Shopping Centre, located between Lake Road and College Road opened. Over time more than 80 retail businesses, medical centres, community service centres and other public facilities were developed (Community Facilities Trust, 2010).

The 1950s also saw the introduction of social housing into Northcote, for example, between Onewa Road and Belle Vue Avenue (Matthews & Matthews Architects Ltd & Truttman, 2001). In the 1960s further social housing was constructed between Lake Road and College Road (Matthews & Matthews Architects Ltd & Truttman, 2001). Both the Northcote Town Centre and current state/social housing area are at the heart of Northcote Central.

Over time, other migrants, including those from the Pacific and Asia arrived in Northcote. For example, in 1971 there were very few Pasifika people in Northcote but from the early 2000s there has been as strong Pasifika presence and identity in Northcote Central. The Auckland Plan 2050 indicates that by the 2018 Census, 28% of Auckland residents identified as Asian, with the largest subgroup being Chinese people (The Auckland Plan 2050, Auckland Council). With a strong Chinese presence in the Northcote business sector, alongside Korean, Thai and Vietnamese businesses, Northcote has become a well-known and celebrated Asian cultural area on the North Shore.

### 1.3 Northcote Central Now

The focus in this report is on Northcote Central, called “Ocean View”. This is based on the 2021 statistical boundaries where the broader Northcote area comprises Ocean View, Northcote South, Tuff Crater, and Monarch Park (Statistics New Zealand, 2018). Northcote Central is across 0.69 sq.km land, and has a population of approximately 3000 (Auckland Council, 2019).

The Northcote Central centre is today seen as a bustling vibrant hub with “about 90 retail occupiers, 60% of whom are grocery/convenience retail, 20% food and beverage, and the rest service outlets” with an aging infrastructure (Panuku Development Auckland, 2020).

Northcote Central is situated within the most deprived quintile of the New Zealand Index of Deprivation (Atkinson, Salmond, & Crampton, 2014) and is home to the highest intensification of State/Social Housing on the North Shore. While the North Shore region may have a reputation for homogenous wealth, the Northcote Central population has consistently remained in an economically and socially disadvantaged position as shown by the deprivation index, an area-based measure of socioeconomic deprivation. The median income in Northcote is \$21,600NZD, with just over half the residents in full time or part time employment (Stats NZ, 2018).

Despite its economic challenges, Northcote boasts a rich cultural history, with a strong Māori presence (both historical and contemporary), alongside prominent Pasifika and Asian populations, as well as Pakeha and other ethnic groupings (Stats NZ, 2018). It is an ethnically and linguistically diverse community: almost 15% of the residents’ spoken languages were categorised under ‘Other Languages’ in the New Zealand 2018 Census. With over 16 languages spoken, Northern Chinese (8%) and Tongan (7%) were the most spoken languages after English (Stats NZ, 2018).

After many years of neglect, Northcote was designated as a Special Housing Area in 2014 and is currently the focus of a major urban development project called the Northcote Development programme, which started in 2016.

## 1.4 Northcote Development Programme

Auckland is the least affordable city after Sydney in 92 major global housing markets according to the 2021 Demographia Housing survey. Northcote Development (2020) states that “Aucklanders are concerned about a shortage of housing – particularly affordable housing – and the government is responding with a large-scale initiative called The Auckland Housing Programme. The Northcote Development is part of this programme.”

Kāinga Ora is delivering the Northcote Development programme under the direction of the Ministry of Housing Urban Development. The programme is forecast to be completed in 2024 and is in the Northcote Central area (Kāinga Ora, 2019). It is important to note that the ethnic makeup of Northcote differs from the Northcote Development area. In the development area, Pasifika are the largest group (41%), followed by New Zealand European (27%), Asian (21%) and Māori (17%). (Northcote Development, 2020). The development area population total is greater than 100% as people can identify with multiple ethnicities.

The aim of the programme is to:

- Improve liveability
- Increase the number of houses available to buy or rent, including Kāinga Ora state homes
- Improve the quality of housing in Northcote
- Upgrade the infrastructure and amenities (e.g. parks, streets, stormwater and wastewater systems)
- Create a safe, durable and healthy environment for people, plants and wildlife

The Northcote Development will be divided equally into three parts: social housing, affordable housing, and houses for sale. As part of the redevelopment project, 1500 new homes and three new pocket parks will be created (Northcote Development, 2020). The estimated current number of state houses in Northcote is 479; 89 are newly built and 317 houses have been demolished to date (Kāinga Ora, 2020).

**Figure 2. Northcote Development (2020)**





There is also a focus on revitalisation of the Northcote Town Centre managed by Panuku, a council controlled organisation (CCO). This began in 2020 and is based on the Northcote Town Centre Benchmark Masterplan (Auckland Council 2019). It includes a range of development principles and criteria, including establishing a visible and easy access multi-purpose community hub, retaining the Town Centre as a destination for a wide range of ethnic food places, establishing a more active place for retail shops and businesses, developing high quality residential apartments and a balanced car parking option, and creating a 'greenway' of connected spaces.

Kāinga Ora and Panuku, are working on Te Ara Awataha together; this new greenway has been developed with community input and follows the path of the original Awataha Stream. Historically, Awataha was a key meeting place for several iwi (Community Facilities Trust, 2010).

## 2.0 Study methodology

The aim of this study was to identify the impact of Northcote's Development programme on the wellbeing of the Northcote Central community.

The guiding methodological approach underpinning this study was appreciative inquiry, a strength-based approach. A strength-based approach is where the focus is on the strengths and positive attributes of an individual or group, rather than the pitfalls and weaknesses. (Hammond, 2010).

*"Appreciative Inquiry assumes that every organisation and community have many untapped and rich accounts of the positive— what people talk about as past, present, and future capacities, or the positive core. Appreciative Inquiry links the knowledge and energy of this core directly to an organisation or a community's change agenda, and changes never thought possible are suddenly and democratically mobilized"* (Cooperrider, 2005, p. 16).

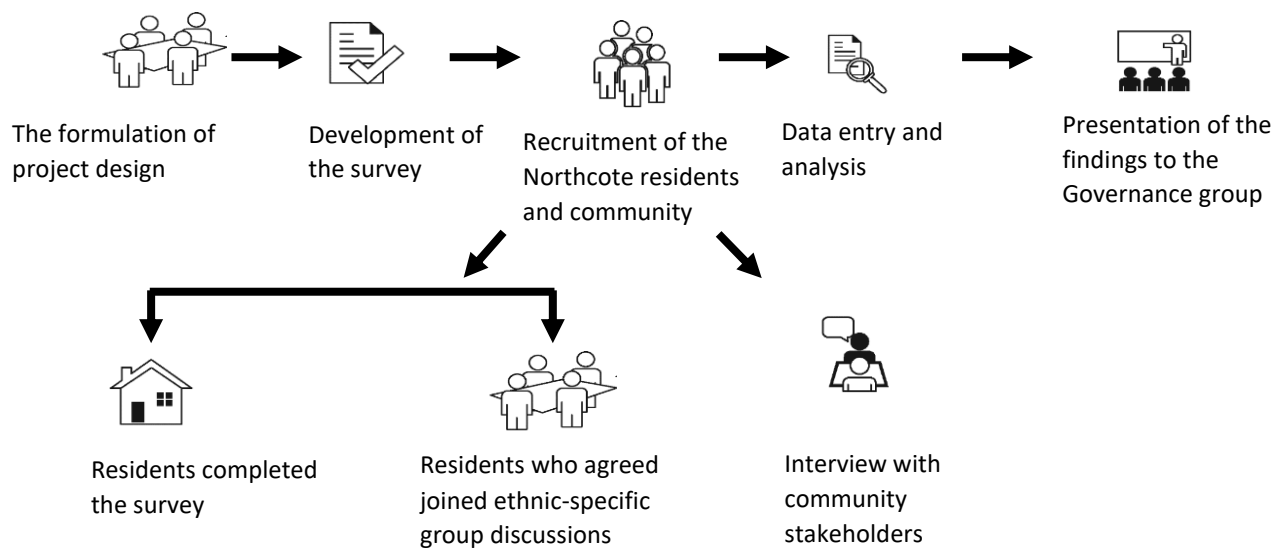
This strength-based approach was employed to:

- Identify and expand community knowledge
- Provide an opportunity for stakeholders to be heard
- Provide an opportunity for stakeholders to share their hopes and aspirations
- Create an environment in which stakeholders felt comfortable and able to choose how they contributed

For the purpose of this study, two primary stakeholder groups were identified and engaged:

- Northcote central residents
- Northcote community stakeholders

## 2.1 Design and method



**Figure 1. Summary of project design and method.**

### 2.1.1 Northcote Central Residents

Northcote Central residents were invited to participate in the study via a mail drop and local community events facilitated by Kaipatiki Community Facilities Trust.

The mail drop was to more than 40 residential properties along a specific road (Please see Appendix A). The collaborative partners advised that this location be targeted due to its mix of local and social, new and old built properties, as well as being north bound of the Northcote Development programme (Figure ). The mail drop summarised the rationale and process of the study and included an introduction to the research team.

Between mid-March 2021 and mid-April 2021, written surveys were completed by 27 Northcote central residents and two in-depth group discussions (focus groups) with Tongan (n=5) and Samoan (n=3) were undertaken. They received a copy of the information sheet (Appendix B) and consent was obtained before they undertook the written survey (Appendix C) and joined the group discussion (Appendix D). Participants were encouraged to ask questions at any stage of the study.

### 2.1.1.1 Survey

A survey was selected as the main way of gathering data from Northcote residents (Appendix E) for the following reasons:

- To efficiently gain a wide range of user opinions
- Anonymity – a wide array of literature indicates that anonymity appears to promote more honesty, a greater disclosure of information and higher levels of participation

The survey used straightforward language to allow residents of varying levels of literacy to participate.

Written surveys were completed by 27 Northcote Central residents. One individual (over the age of 18 years) per household was randomly selected to complete the survey after their consent was obtained.

This survey was reviewed by the Research Governance and the Academic Advisory groups before it was pre-tested to determine areas within the survey that required improvement (Ornstein, 2013).

Between mid-March 2021 and mid-April 2021, written surveys were completed by 27 Northcote central residents and two in-depth group discussions (focus groups) with Tongan (n=5) and Samoan (n=3) were undertaken.

### 2.1.1.2 Group Discussions

Semi-structured interviews and vignette methods were used within the group discussions (focus groups). It was very important that Northcote Central residents had the opportunity to voice their thoughts, views, hopes and aspirations outside of the survey construct. The group discussions primarily focused on what they enjoyed about Northcote and how living could be improved for residents, using the survey questions as a base point.

Two separate group discussions (two hours-long each) were conducted with Samoan and Tongan participants. To ensure that non-English speaking Northcote central residents could participate comfortably in the group discussions, sessions were arranged by participants' ethnicities. The researcher and a translator were present at each session; ensuring that the session was culturally appropriate, whilst also translating whenever there was a request from participants, otherwise most of the discussions were in English.

## 2.1.2 Northcote Central Community Stakeholders

The community collaborative partners identified community stakeholders to be contacted for the purpose of this study. Each stakeholder was contacted and invited to participate in an individual interview.

### 2.1.2.1 Interviews

All stakeholder interviews were semi-structured and conducted either face-to-face or over the phone. Semi-structured interviews were chosen as they are more flexible than formal interviews (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Five defined questions sought to ascertain the stakeholders' experiences,

perceptions, opinions, feelings and emotions about Northcote Central, its community and the urban regeneration project. This included discussion around potential solutions, aimed at improving the wellbeing and resilience of the Northcote central community during the urban regeneration project.

Interviewees received a copy of the study information sheet (Appendix F) and the consent form (Appendix C) in advance.

## 2.2 Data management

All group discussions and individual interviews were audio-recorded with the permission of the participants. Participants were advised that they could stop the audio-recorder when they didn't want certain parts of their interviews to be recorded. Audio recordings were transcribed by the researcher.

To ensure participants' personal information was kept confidential, each participant received a study code. Only the research team at Hearts & Mind have access to the participants' identifiable information. The information will be securely held in password protected files of Hearts & Minds.

## 3.0 Results

In this section, responses from the survey and the group discussions have been presented to provide insight into Northcote central, its residents and the impact of the Northcote Development programme on community wellbeing.

### 3.1 Participating Residents Profiles

Questions 1 – 7 focus on participating residents' profiles including age, gender, ethnicity, NZ born or migrant, employment status, and dwelling type. Table 1 below sets out this information.

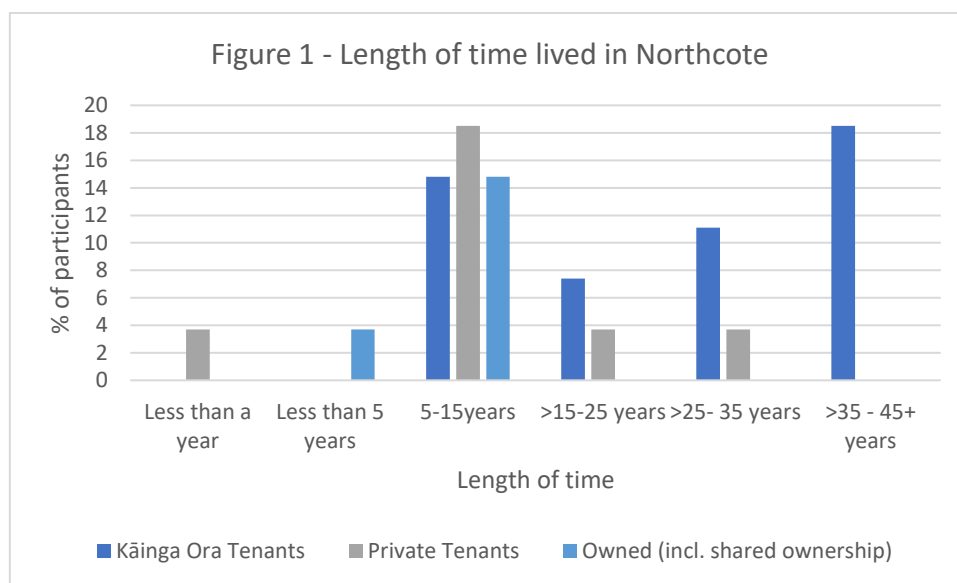
Characteristic	Number (range)
<b>Age (years)</b>	
18-24 years old	0
25-34 years old	2
35-44 years old	7
45-54 years old	6
55-64 years old	6
65+ years old	6
<b>Gender</b>	
Female	21
Male	6
<b>Ethnic group</b>	
Māori	5
New Zealand European	4
Samoan	3
Cook Islands Māori	1

Tongan	6
Māori- New Zealand European- Niuean	1
Māori- New Zealand European	1
Māori- Samoan	2
Chinese	2
Other	2
<b>New Zealand born</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Migrant (&gt;10years)</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Average number of adults in household (≥16 years)</b>	<b>3 (1-7)</b>
<b>Average number of children (&lt;16 years)</b>	<b>2 (0-7)</b>
<b>Employment status</b>	
Full time	11
Part time	4
Job seeker	5
Full time caregiver	1
Volunteer	1
Other	5 (3 retired)
Prefer not to say	2
<b>Dwelling type</b>	
Owner	5
Private tenant	8
Kāinga Ora tenant	14

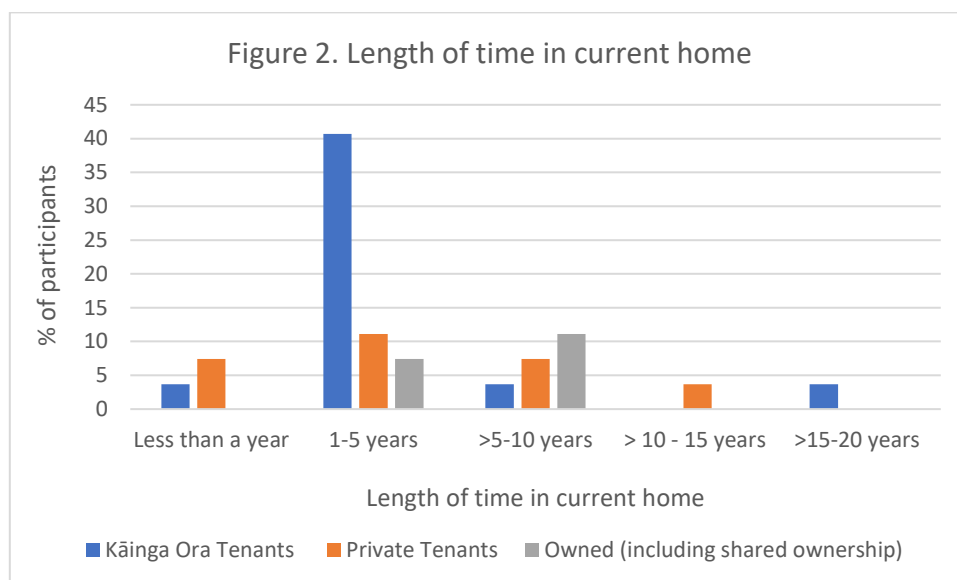
**Table. 1 Participant Profile**

The diversity of the 27 participants is reflected across housing types. Homeowners include New Zealand European, Chinese and Other heritage. Participants in private rentals include Pasifika, Māori and Māori/other. Lastly, Kāinga Ora residents include Pasifika, Māori, or Māori/other, New Zealand European and Other.

The graph below illustrates how long participating residents have lived in Northcote (Q12) and whether they were tenants or private owners - this includes shared ownership (Q11).



A third of all participants had lived in Northcote for 5- 15 years and nearly a third of Kāinga Ora residents had lived in Northcote for more than 25 years. All homeowners had lived in Northcote for 15 years or less. Virtually all residents have lived in Northcote for a minimum of five years.



More than half of the participants have been living in their current home for 1-5 years. 11% had been in their home for less than a year and were all tenants.

## 3.2 Northcote Residents: Their Voice

This section states the participants responses across the following 4 parts:

- Health & Wellbeing
- Northcote
- Northcote Development programme
- Challenges and opportunities for Northcote residents

### 3.2.1 Health & Wellbeing

#### 3.2.1.1 General health

The health of the participating residents varied. In question 8, nearly two thirds (59%) state their health was good (41%) or greater (very good 4%, excellent 14%). In contrast, 37% state their health was fair (30%) or poor (7%); 4% of participants indicated they did not know their health status.

Participants were asked to identify three things from a list of nine (question 10), that would improve their health and wellbeing. The top three factors selected were:

1. More physical activity (74%)
2. Eat more fresh and whole food (52%)
3. More relationships with family/whanau, friends and neighbours (37%).

While a third selected 'less financial pressures' it was not in the top three.

In question 32, the final survey question, participants were asked "Do you think this survey is a useful way of gathering information to help with improving your health and well-being?"

19 participants (just over 70%) agreed, five (18.5%) disagreed, and two (7.5%) indicated no. This question wasn't answered by one person (3.7%).

### 3.2.1.2 Changes over the last year

In question 9, participants were asked whether anything had changed over the last year, with regards to:

- **Health and wellbeing**

Over half of the participants (63%) reported a deterioration in their health over the last twelve months, 11% did not answer this question. For the 85% of respondents who clarified why, this was primarily due to being sick or changes in their level of stress. Stress was primarily attributed to the participants' work/living physical environment.

- **Relationships (family, friend, neighbours, community centres)**

58% of participants noted that their relationships had altered, 26% did not answer this question and only 30% of those who answered explained why. The changes identified largely centred around relationships with neighbours (mostly new), and friends and family/whanau that were impacted by the Northcote Development programme.

*"Families and community broken up due to relocations" (Participant IN019)*

*"A lot more support and stress created by project" (Participant IN018)*

- **Living arrangements**

59% of participants had experienced change in their living circumstances, 7% did not answer this question and 68% of the participants who responded yes explained why. These encompassed: new homes, rent hikes for some Kāinga Ora tenants, house sharing, the need to ask their older children to leave the house due to limited space and overcrowding. It was also noted that there was limited rent-to-buy options.

- **Employment status**

22% experienced a change in employment and 26% of participants did not answer this question. Reasons provided were decreased work hours, change in employment status and new roles.

- **Financial status**

A third of participants noted that their financial status had changed and 11% of participants did not answer this question. Two thirds of those who answered reported either financial struggles or an increase in living costs (e.g. Food, power etc). One homeowner's financial status had improved with the low mortgage interest rates.

## 3.2.2 Northcote

### 3.2.2.1 Living in Northcote

Question 13 asked participants whether they like living in Northcote. 85% did, a very positive response.

A small minority (11%) noted that they both liked it and disliked it; one individual stated that they did not know.

Question 15 asked how the participants felt about their neighbourhood.

The majority were positive with 66% indicating they felt good about it; within that nearly 30% rated it highly, using terms such as very good, very friendly, love our neighbourhood, excellent. Some participants noted that improvement was needed, and one resident felt that the newcomers weren't so friendly:

*"I love it, things need improving around infrastructure and amenities, which I think is slowly happening" (IN021)*

*"People make a neighbourhood, Northcote is a great place to live in. New residents not so friendly." (Participant IN015)*

Some are not finding their neighbourhood so easy, with several attributing this to their relationships with their neighbours:

*"Sometimes is good and sometimes is bad." (Participant FG005)*

*"There is only one neighbour who is from Social housing and she is not friendly... and keeps distance. Every weekend the[y] are very noisy and different people come..." (Participant IN002)*

Nearly a third of participants voiced a recurring theme of displacement, largely concerning the moving out of "old friends" and the arrival of new, at times less friendly faces:

*"A change in the demographic means that there are less of my people (Tangata Whenua) are living here. They have been encouraged in many ways to shift out of the area." (Participant IN018)*

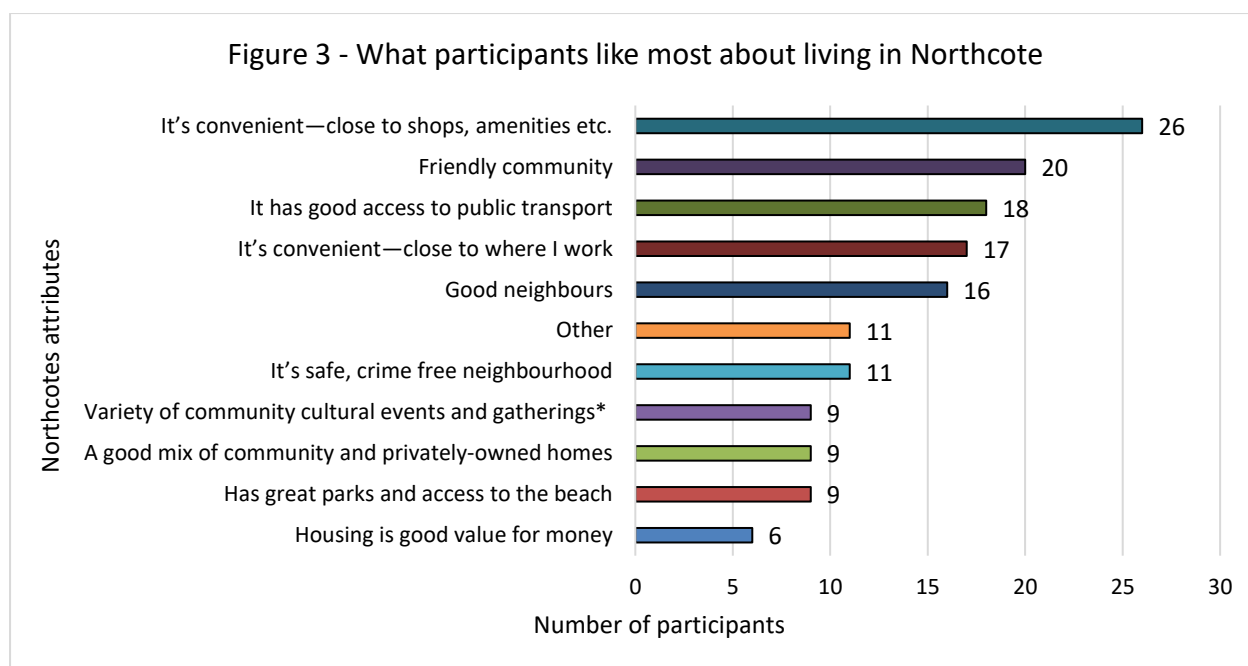
*"It is not the same. We were a small tightened community and everyone knew who you were and family connections. It is changed now, lots of different faces, local Primary overhaul. Heart and soul of the community has been lost. (Participant IN019)*

Other participants simply stated their concerns regarding the neighbourhood, for example:

*"When I first moved in it was a real community then was safe, now it is just path[et]ic...Kiwi build was a big mistake. All those home are not suitable for large families..." IN016*

Question 16 asked participants to indicate which listed factors they liked about living in Northcote. This is set out below.





The three top ranked things that participants most liked about living in Northcote were its convenience, the friendly community and the good access to public transportation (Question 16). Also liked was Northcote's proximity to work and good neighbours.

Several participants are also very appreciative of the community services already provided.

*"I think our community facilities do an excellent job at creating fun engaging activities. So more of the same." (Participant IN014)*

*"KCFT is awesome, their events bring a sense of community. More communal events, concerts in the park, family days or get togethers" (participant IN023)*

### 3.2.2.2 Northcote's Shared Facilities

All participants without exception, said the supermarkets and local shops were easy to access/use (question 21). However, nearly a quarter felt access and use of sports clubs and sports grounds was not easy. This is visible in figure 4 below.

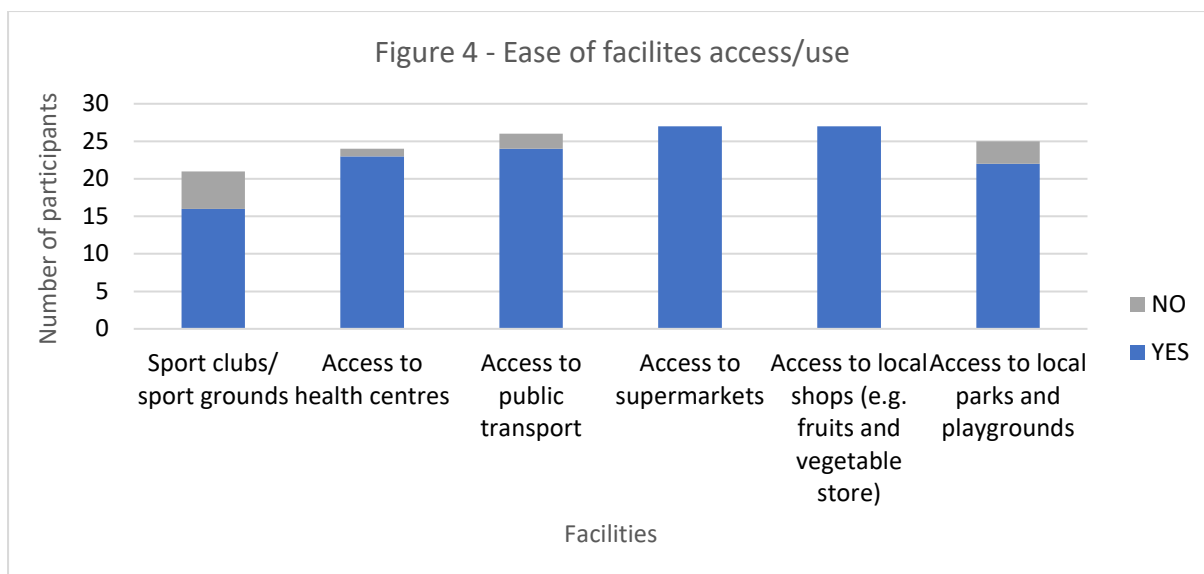
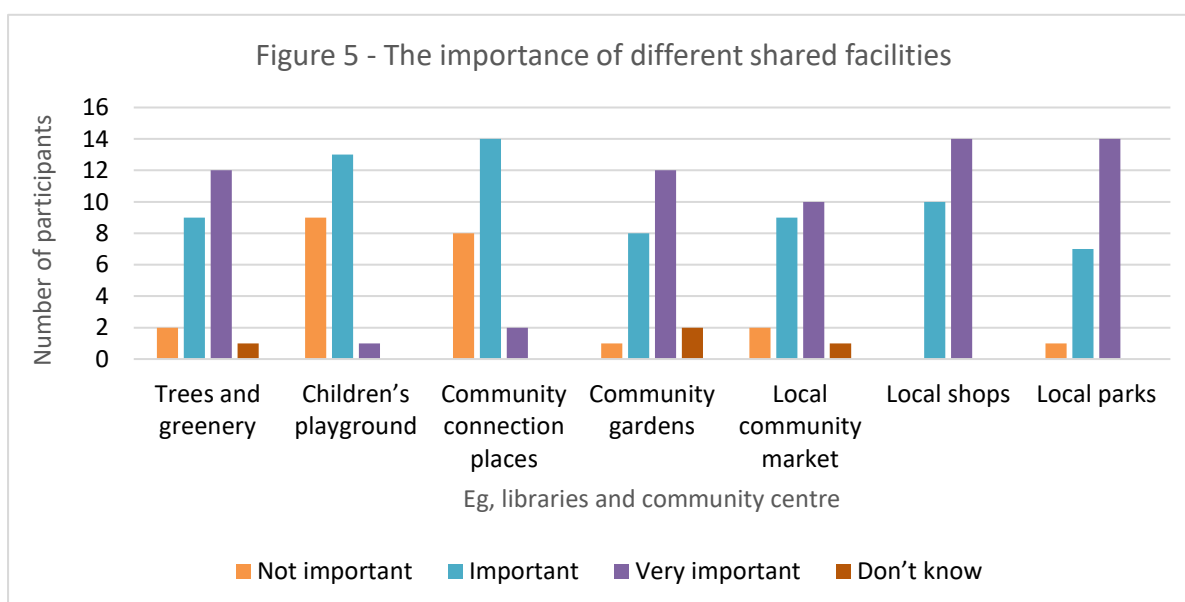


Figure 5 below demonstrates the importance of the different shared facilities to Northcote residents. All participants who answered this (question 30), without exception, consider local shops to be very important or important. The most important facilities after the shops are local parks; trees and greenery; and community gardens, followed by community connection places.



**Figure 2. Rating the importance of different shared facilities in Northcote**

Many would like the existing shared facilities retained and revitalised, in addition to a request for more facilities, including a community hall.

More than 75% had highlighted the importance of the Northcote Shopping Centre. Some are concerned that the Centre is tired, and needs a “revamp”, “with better variety of shops”, “more shops” to “nourish and support the local retailers and eateries”:

*“Build out the ethnic eateries, set up a space for night markets, upgrade the amenities and shops (please keep some of the stalwarts), upgrade the food hall, improve the supermarket. Make it a destination... I think this is in the plan, but I*

*can see it's years and years away... I feel like we could make it all a bit more local and unique to here... Please be proactive in liaising to ensure amenity capacity matches demand and does not lag." (Participant IN012)*

Half of the participants highlighted a strong need for more green community space and a community hall:

*"Ensuring public space stays public as new housing has no room for physical activity. People need space. It will be better to see more people enjoying the green spaces" (Participant IN015).*

*"We really need of those community halls. For example, especially for our youth. For like to put some indoor games there. For like me and some mothers to come there and try to help with our kids. Like every afternoon I love to talk with the neighbourhood. And sometimes our husbands- there is a kava thingy for our husbands." (Participant S)*

A need for community gardens and facilities that address cultural practices was also identified:

*"We need a place where we can put hangi. (Purpose built with water supply fenced plus fire brick built.) You have cut off our ability to pass on valuable skills. Change your attitude plus work with Māori." (Participant IN018).*

*"...other areas like South and West they do have a big area where they go do gardening. You know grow yam or kumara So if we can have a big area for the Tongan community so we can go and farming there." (Participant S)*

### 3.2.2.3 Northcote community

In response to question 18, 81% of participants feel part of the Northcote community. This was largely attributed to relationships they had established within the community.

*"When I have problem with my family, the community reach out and help." (Participant FG003)*

*"We moved to this area around fifteen years ago. Because it is comfortable and here in Northcote, I love the area and lovely people around us." (Participant IN011)*

In contrast, two of the four residents (two homeowners, two Kāinga Ora residents) who did not feel part of the community point to the lack of relationships within the community (the other two residents gave no explanation):

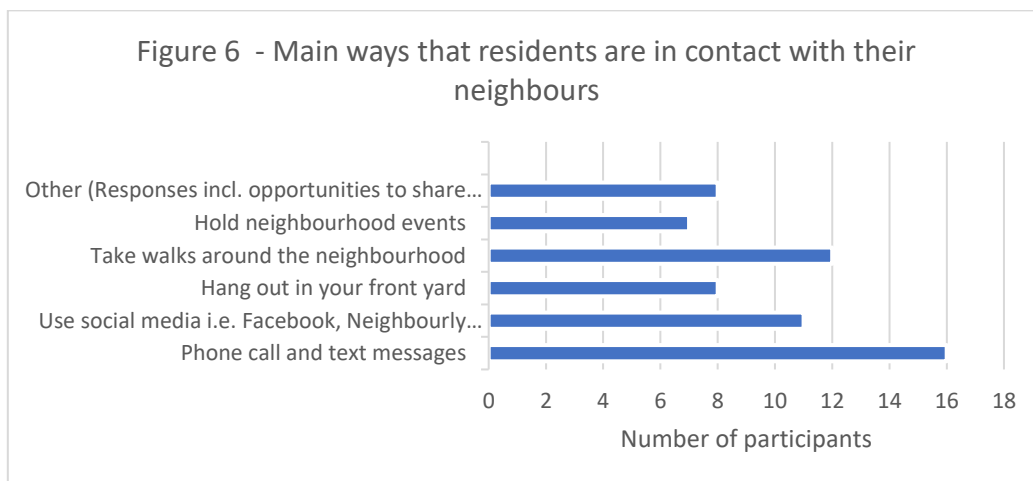
*"No one interacts with anyone else anymore, it is different from the past." (Participant IN06)*

*"To be honest I don't know because I don't involve in any community services." (Participant FG008)*

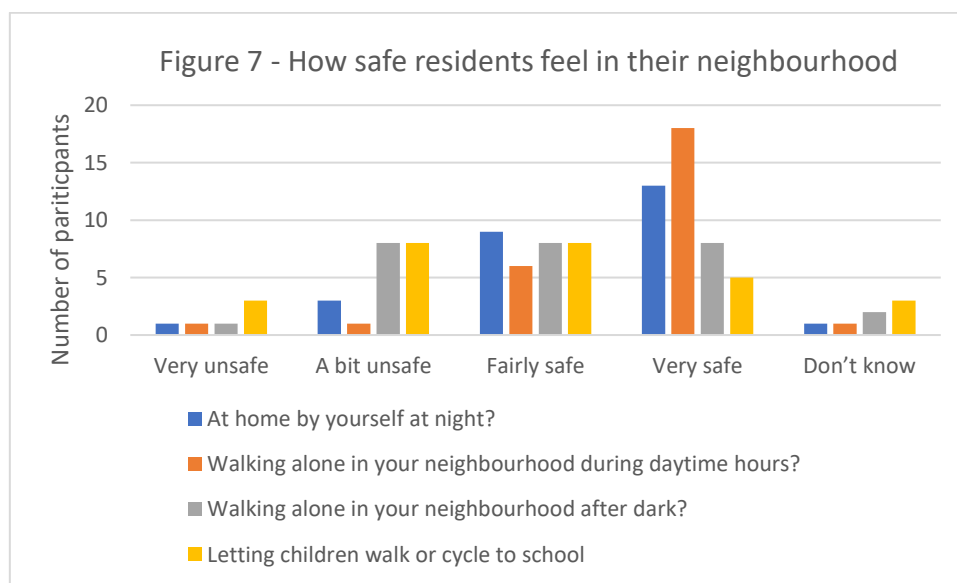
Interestingly, some participants' views changed when asked in question 28 how much they agreed or disagreed with the statement 'Northcote has a good sense of belonging and community'. 57% of participants agreed (of this 25% strongly agreed) whilst 43% of participants disagreed (only one participant strongly disagreed).

Questions regarding safety and the level of contact with neighbours also help provide a sense of the Northcote community.

Question 19 indicates that an overwhelming majority of 96 % of participants were in contact with their neighbours through one or more different ways.



The chart below summarises how safe the participants felt in Northcote across different scenarios (question 20). While 81% of participants generally felt fairly safe/safe home alone at night and walking alone during the day, a third feel a bit unsafe/very unsafe when walking alone at night. Views are mixed about letting children walk or cycle to school. Safety also comes through as a concern in comments under some other questions.



### 3.2.3 Northcote Development Programme

#### 3.2.3.1 Northcote before the Northcote Development programme

##### What they liked

The recurring themes in response to question 24, 'What did you like about Northcote before the housing project started' were:

- Familiar faces and old friends (26%)

*"People know each other personally, by sight, by name or through other knowledge. Room for families-whanau friendly. People watched out for each other." (Participant IN015)*

- Space (18%); Kāinga Ora tenants noted there was more space for gardening and living

*"Yes, more area to live and grow a garden." (Participant FG004)*

- Greater diversity, specifically more Māori and Pasifika (7%)
- Safety (7%)
- Everything (7%)

7% of participants did not answer this question. Other answers (20%) related to a variety of different reasons such as: greater privacy, the presence of a small council that was run by locals who understood the community's needs, quieter and less traffic.

##### What they didn't like

When residents were asked in question 25 "what did you NOT like about Northcote before the housing project started" their responses mainly centred around:

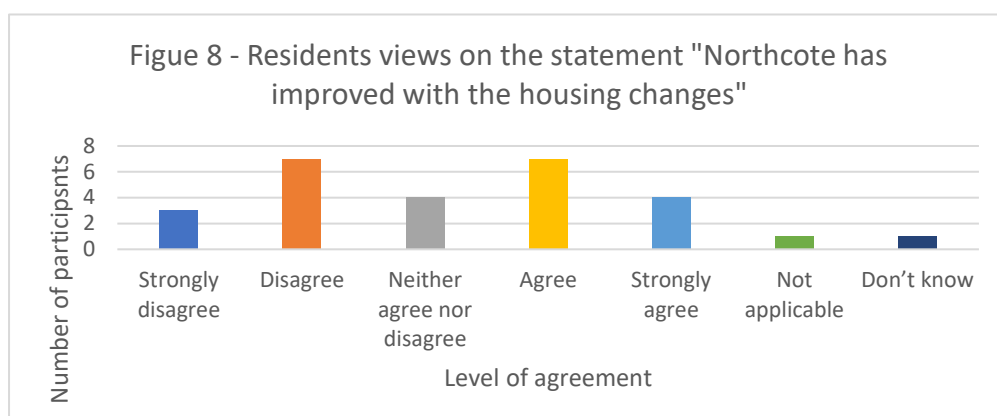
- the state of the houses (22%)
- the area (15%)
- safety (15%)

Houses were characterised as being old and cold and the area was described as "run down" and "uncared for". All participants who identified housing as an issue were tenants (one private tenant and the rest were Kāinga Ora tenants). 14% of participants did not answer this question. Other answers given related to a broad range of topics such as rubbish dumping, unsightly hoarding, poor transport system.

#### 3.2.3.2 Northcote now: during the Northcote Development programme

In regards to the Northcote Development programme; 40% agreed (including strongly agree) and 37% of participants disagreed (including strongly disagree) with the question 20 statement that "Northcote has improved with the housing changes."

The graph below illustrates the results:

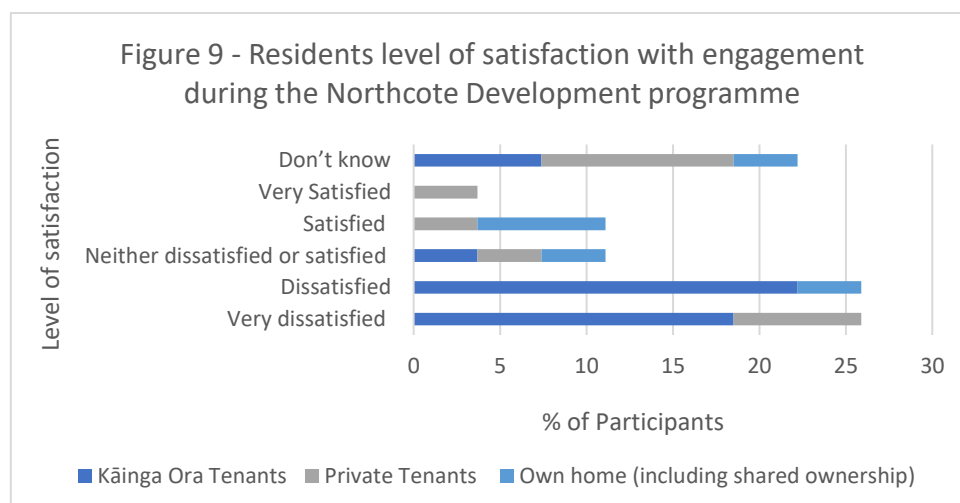


*"Northcote has a vibe of its own. Population diversity scares me and thought of six story apartments is horrendous. I can say that the infrastructure will be awesome and that people who buy will LOVE it and want to be a community and not just a dweller." (Participant IN008)*

*"This suburb has such great potential to be revitalised with new vibrant people and to build a fresh community focus. Let's make it a test case for excellence." (Participant IN012)*

### 3.2.3.1 Resident Engagement in the Northcote Development Project

Figure 11 below depicts the results for question 29: "Overall, do you feel that your voice was heard during the housing project?":



Just over half of the participants (52%) were dissatisfied/very dissatisfied with the engagement they have had to date with the Northcote Development programme. Kāinga Ora residents were strongly represented in this grouping with none of them being satisfied, and only a small percentage who either 'don't know' or are neutral. Smaller percentages of private tenants and owners were dissatisfied. Comments include:

*"They didn't listen to what we had to say about housing project." (Participant IN006)*

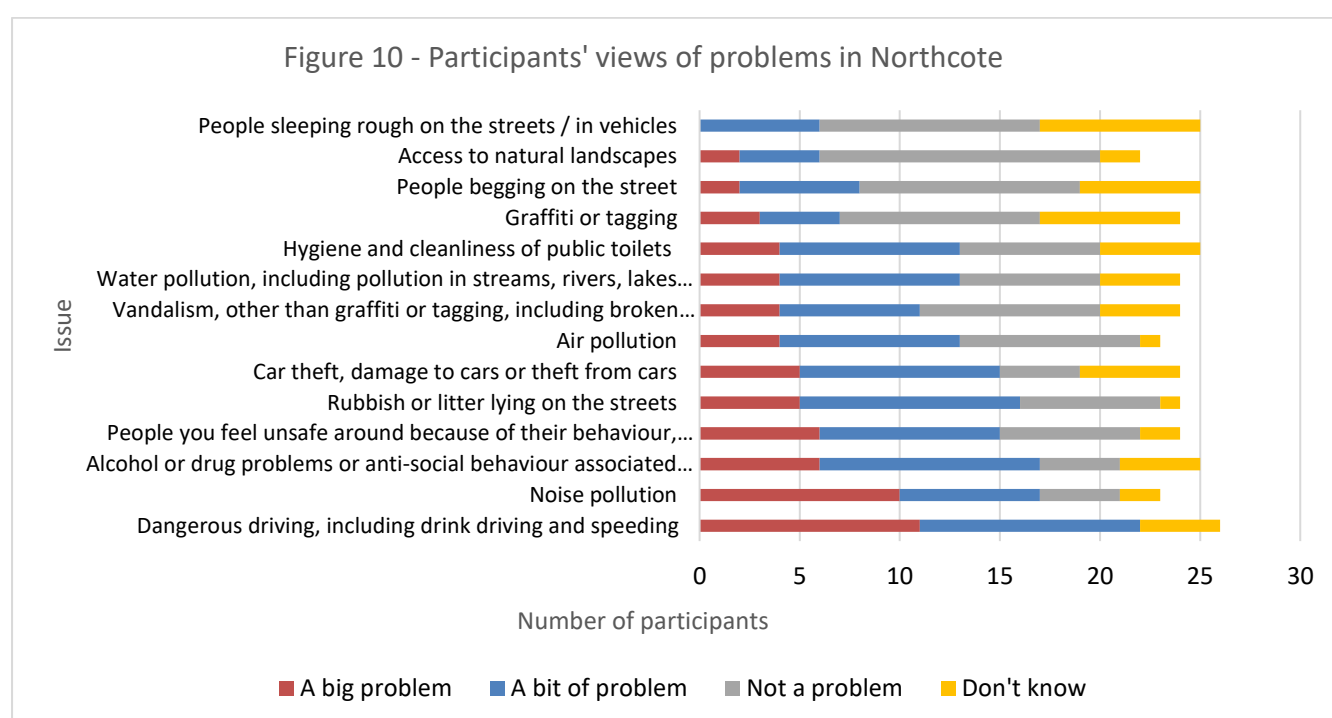
*“...I do think the council need to demonstrate to us, - those who have invested in homes and the long-time residents – how they plan to ensure the influx of 1000’s of people (love the idea of these homes) does not overwhelm the capacity of the streets and amenities. I want to feel acknowledged by these decision makers. This is a good start though – so kudos – looking forward to seeing the upgrades [to] the amenities kick off and come quickly – so that it’s in lockstep with the people moving.” (Participant IN01)*

This contrasts with the 15% of homeowners and private tenants who were satisfied/very satisfied that their voice had been heard during the Northcote Development. 22% of residents did not know whether their voice had been heard and 11% were neither dissatisfied/ nor dissatisfied.

## 3.2.4 Challenges & opportunities for Northcote Residents

### 3.2.4.1 Challenges

The figure below summarises the results to question 26 where participants were asked about the extent to which listed items have been a problem in Northcote over the previous 12 months.



The top four big problems identified were ‘Dangerous driving’, ‘Noise pollution’, ‘Alcohol or drug problems’ and ‘People you feel unsafe around...’, though “Rubbish or litter lying on the streets” had a slightly higher overall score.

Question 22 asked participants about what challenges they face today and their responses pointed to a variety of diverse factors:

- Traffic, especially at peak times
- Financial challenges
- Access to food banks

- Health issues including, daily stress, insufficient support with health issues, lack of privacy and mental health problems
- Lack of space, both within the houses and outside (especially green)  
*"Too much concrete, no space outside our homes to kick a ball around..." (Participant IN019)*
- Dog related issues, specifically concerning dog poo on the footpaths and aggressive dogs on the fields
- Anxiety and uncertainty about the future; this is largely around 'what is going to happen' and not feeling confident people will be listened to.

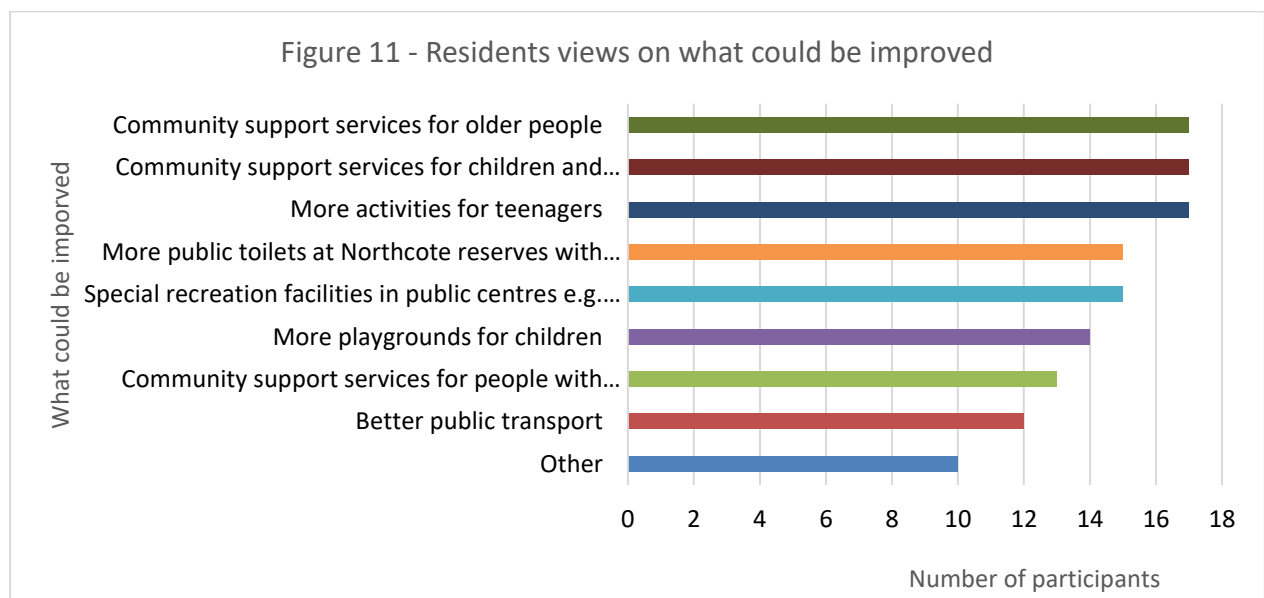
*"...To be honest, I think my main Northcote/environment related challenge is traffic – but also we are trying to figure out whether to stay or sell - as we are very uncertain about the future of Northcote – I guess the key question is – will all the additional people and social housing bring crime and over population? This is a very real thing we consider almost every week. Our home is such an investment – financially but also in roots (schools, familiarity) – I don't want to find that such great changes result in the neighbourhood becoming unsafe... I know many residents are asking the same question. This is change driven uncertainty – not nimbyism." (Participant IN012)*

*"Those wishing to change things in Northcote do not listen to locals... and... just ride roughshod over all others." (Participant IN018)*

- Finding employment
- Limited public transport at off peak times

### 3.2.4.2 Opportunities for change and improvement

Question 17 lists areas participants may like to see improvements in. Figure 11 below summarises the responses to this.





Under 'Other' were a number of suggestions, these included: a need for a larger library with meeting spaces, better tenant management by NZ social housing and improved traffic management, while one noted:

*One comment made under 'Other' states "The most important issue facing Tangata Whanau is the downsizing of land area around homes that prevent us from having hangi and for teaching our youth hangi making." (Participant IN019)*

### 3.2.4.3 What would you like to see happening in Northcote

Question 23 asks participants what they would like to see happening in Northcote. Some also comment in other questions, for example, question 31.

There is variety in the mix of what people would like to see happen, including:

#### **Community shared facilities**

Many participants would like the existing community facilities retained, as well as the addition of more facilities. Comments included: a swimming pool, a playground and parks for the children, more places for teenagers, community hall, more public seating within the parks and an aspiration:

*"More people enjoying the green spaces, shopping locally, sending their kids to the nearest schools and using the walking bus." (Participant IN008)*

Some would also like to see the Northcote town/shopping centre 'revamp' happen more quickly, with more shops, including takeaways, and underground parking and amenity capacity. One person who focuses on the shopping centre also states:

*Please be proactive in liaising to ensure amenity capacity matches demand and does not lag. (Bold in original) (Participant IN012)*

#### **Community activities**

The majority of participants wanted more community activities and community support services. Several comments expressed a need for more activities for children and teenagers and other comments included aspirations for more local communal events (e.g. concerts in the parks, family days, cook outs, events to engage neighbours), more activities for older people and more community groups.

#### **Housing**

Housing continues to be a focus. Comments include requests for 'separate homes not units', better social housing management, more communication and engagement. A comment was made that 'Not many offer to share the family': it is unclear whether this comment is in response to overcrowding and/or wanting support.

#### **Diversity**

Diversity, both in housing and other areas was a focus. Comments made addressed the hope for a greater balancing of the future culture, more affordable housing options (private and Kāinga Ora rentals) within the Northcote community, especially for Pasifika and Māori and more interactions between the different cultures. One participant suggests:

*'Adopting the basic principles of the Tiriti of Waitangi and adherence to them instead of ignoring them and the wishes of Tangata Whenua.'* (Participant IN018)

## **Safety**

Some expressed a hope for Northcote to be safer at all times.

## **3.3 Community stakeholders' voice**

Six representatives from the Police, Plunket, Northart Gallery, and the Northcote Public Library actively participated in stakeholder interviews with the researcher for this study. The interviews mainly centred around the stakeholders' views of:

- Northcote's strengths and challenges
- Northcote's community services
- The impact of the Northcote Development programme on the community

The stakeholders were also encouraged to share any additional points they wanted discussed.

### **3.3.1 Northcote's strengths & challenges**

#### **3.3.1.1 Northcote's Strengths**

The strengths identified by the community stakeholders were:

#### **Diversity**

The community stakeholders all expressed that one of Northcote's key strengths is its culturally and age diverse community; its diversity also extends beyond culture and age with a mix of social and private housing.

#### **Community facilities**

The community stakeholders felt that there was a "well- balanced" variety of community facilities within Northcote Central. These included the supermarket, shops, library and community organisations such as Citizens Advice Bureau 'CAB', Hearts & Minds, the Fono and the Northart Gallery.

#### **Accessibility**

The majority of Northcote's facilities are easily accessible and are primarily located within the Northcote Central shopping centre, which has free car parking. The latter was viewed as important as it can support the needs of residents, especially those with young families/whanau and those with disabilities. The importance of accessibility was also echoed by many of the residents surveyed:

*"...that's important, especially when you've got young families, then you have to get from one side of the mall to the other, and you know you've got doctors help [presence of a medical clinic] going on and you're doing your groceries and you're busy and having things placed well is a benefit."* (Participant IN008)

### 3.3.1.2 Northcote's challenges

Northcote's strengths also have a flip side.

#### Diversity

Whilst diversity was highlighted as a key strength, community stakeholders also identified it as a challenge. Specifically, Northcote is home to a diverse range of individuals with different cultures, different needs and different resources which makes planning community driven programmes, events and meeting the needs of all residents a challenge. In addition, it was noted that many Northcote community service centres leaders do not live around this part of Northcote, which can influence their observations about residents' needs and challenges.

#### Community Facilities

The community stakeholders raised several points concerning the community facilities:

- The quality and age of the facilities within Northcote Central was raised as an issue. The community stakeholders are clear that a lot of the buildings are extremely old and neglected and the playgrounds look *"quite tired and sad"*.
- There is a need for more space and separate spaces within many of the community facilities.  
*"Space really defines what we can do." (Participant IN008)*

#### Essential services

The community stakeholders felt that the lack of police presence and banks within the town centre is a challenge for Northcote.

It was also noted that there is a limited number of GPs and physios within Northcote which means that residents needs are not always easily met.

Lastly, there are five alcohol licences located in Northcote ("Active Alcohol Licences - Detailed List," 2020) and some community stakeholders identified a need for better transport services for drivers who have been drinking and may be over the limit.

#### Accessibility

Some stakeholders noted that while Northcote is reasonably flat, it can be an issue for the frail elderly and those with disabilities, using walkers.

In addition, access to some of the community organisations within Northcote was identified as a challenge. Specifically, the community stakeholders felt that buildings without lifts (e.g. Hearts & Minds Community Hub) can *"knock out"* people with physical impairments and prevent them from receiving suitable support.

#### Limited Space

The community stakeholders noted that there is limited physical space, besides lack of financial support, in Northcote to provide community activities which the community can participate in; for example, community kitchen or art workshops, or places where people from the range of cultures can get together for activities.

### 3.3.2 Northcote's community services

Several organisations are supporting the Northcote Central community during the Northcote Development programme. One of them is Kaipatiki Community Facilities Trust (KCFT) whose work was acknowledged:

*“...they're working really hard to connect all the new residents...they are very well aware of new homeowners and [this] area that's had a lot of Kāinga Ora housing, that there is going to be a little bit of angst between them [residents], so they wanted to break down some of those barriers.” (Participant IN011)*

### 3.3.3 Views on Northcote urban redevelopment

The community stakeholders recognised the need to improve the quality of social housing and to make the landscape more attractive within Northcote.

It was acknowledged by the community stakeholders that there will be a significant increase in housing and residents over the next three to five years as a result of the Northcote Development programme.

This is of very real concern to the community stakeholders because they feel that the current services are overwhelmed and they are not clear on how these concerns will be addressed going forward. They expressed a need for some ongoing “solid investment” to be identified.

*“Liaison that we have had with various organisations that are responsible for the redevelopment of Northcote. I think that there is at this point-in-time a sense of confusion and uncertainty around what Northcote is truly going to look like. I mean, we sort of have the master plan that we're looking at. .... I feel that we're still sort of slightly unsure of how other community wellbeing services are going to be achieved in this local area, so the feedback that we've been giving to the community needs (the) assistance (of) surveys...” (Participant IN003)*

As is the case with some residents, the community stakeholders are unclear about what Northcote will look like, and how other community services will be achieved.

In addition, the community stakeholders noted that they required more clarity around the allocation of space for Northcote community service centres, especially the ones that are currently located within and around the town centre. This is important as it will impact on how they operate in the future and how they can support the community.

Consideration of the type of facilities that would help with keeping the community “knowing each other” is required. At this point:

*“...there's a real sense of mixed messaging” (Participant IN003)*

*“...there's still some uncertainty you know about who might come here.”  
(Participant IN008)*

*"I'm really worried about the future with this huge influx of people that is starting to come in and it will be even more so as it changes" (Participant IN010)*

### 3.3.4 Community stakeholder views on how residents are coping with the Northcote Development programme

The Northcote Development programme has created a lot of change. Within the last two years many families with a long history of living in Northcote, who have significantly contributed to Northcote and its character, have moved out of the area. They believe that this has been hard on the community:

*"There are people who lost, you know, lifetime friends who they've always been next door, and now they've been moved out. This is going to be hard, isn't it?" (Participant IN010)*

*"What I know is that a lot of our clients were moved out to other areas, and moved into other areas, and then sometimes moved on from those areas, so I would say it's pretty tough for families to be moved out, moved on and moved around into emergency housing. So, for families I don't think this is great." (Participant IN001)*

Discussion also focussed on the anticipated changes to the Northcote Central shopping centre, specifically around the shops and food places that may be demolished. The community stakeholders acknowledged that these buildings would likely be replaced with more modern and attractive buildings, but felt that there would be an impact on the community as they are part of Northcote's identity.

The stakeholders' observations were that residents were finding these changes difficult. They were loosely grouped into two groups of people:

- Those who are aware of the changes and have great anxiety over it; *"it is going to be gentrified"* and feel that the new houses look like *"little boxes"* without *"sense of soul or community"*
- Those who had no idea what the changes were going to be and once they realised were shocked. *"Talking to some of older residents is quite difficult; it seems a lot have been pulled out which is a worry. They are afraid that they are going to be surrounded by a concrete jungle"*.

Stakeholders try to emphasise the positive aspects of these changes:

*"You know, we can't be 100% sure, but I've said to them, but it's positive I try to view in the positive way for them. You know. It's a positive change because when we do look at, they will do see buildings in a very bad state, so we do need to fix that." (Participant IN010)*

In general, the community stakeholders are not sure that they know enough about how well Northcote residents are coping with all these changes. However, they do agree that people have concerns regarding the changes and the new residents expected to arrive.

Emphasis was placed upon the importance of planning and investing in more facilities, to support the growing community in Northcote; noting that an *“incredible amount of time”* will be required to build new relationships with residents new to the area. One of the stakeholders said, *“we are prepared for that”*.

### 3.3.5 Community Stakeholder Suggestions for Further Discussion:

Four key suggestions were put forward for further discussion:

#### 3.3.5.1 More consultation and communication across community stakeholders

When the community stakeholders were asked how community services could be improved, it was highly recommended that there be more consultation and communication with the different organisations providing support to the community:

*“I always think that we need some more coordination around that [community lead things] and everything.” (Participant IN010)*

#### 3.3.5.2 Work with the Northcote community on their hopes and concerns

There is a need to learn more about what Northcote residents’ expectations are for the different community organisations within Northcote Central. To address this, it was suggested that a greater level of engagement be undertaken. For example, the establishment of regular community group discussions or a central hub in the town centre where residents can share their hopes and concerns with the community stakeholders.

*“Now asking the question of what people actually want from us, because we think we’ve missed the boat a lot with some of our most vulnerable.” (Participant IN011)*

They believed that a greater level of engagement with the community would benefit all, including community organisations and organisations like Kāinga Ora and Panuku.

#### 3.3.5.3 A place for the community stakeholders in the heart of Northcote

Another recommendation made by the community stakeholders concerned planning and could impact on the Northcote Development programme. They recommended that community organisations were placed in easily accessible and visible locations within Northcote, with forethought given to the availability of free parking spaces and transport.

#### 3.3.5.4 A Community Hall

Some stakeholders support an easily accessible community hall where people can meet and/or participate in community activities

On a smaller scale, the community stakeholders felt that there is abundant room for smaller changes. They suggest:

- The employment of more multilingual people within key community services to ensure that the needs of all residents can be addressed and supported:

*“...so, if they do want some assistance, they know they've got someone who they can talk to. You know, small things like that. But they are really huge.” (Participant IN010)*

- The provision of more targeted support for the different communities, including the Chinese community; to assist them with integration into the community; it was noted there were queries made by several Chinese residents about learning Te Reo
- The provision of more facilities, other than the basics, for the growing Northcote Central community; including more access to facilities delivering arts, culture and leisure. For example, common spaces and platforms where residents can learn more about Māori culture or perform/exhibit their work

*“It's those type of things . . . it's not just about the things that are there to help people when they're at their worst it's also to help people enjoy living so like I say cool arts facilities.” (Participant IN010)*

## 4.0 Taking Stock

The Northcote Development programme has had an impact on the wellbeing of the study participants. This section summarises the key insights from the research undertaken and explores the impacts.

It is important to note that the scope of the research was heavily impacted by four lockdowns in Auckland, as a result of Covid, restricting the data collection to a four-week period which meant that only residents and stakeholders who were available within this timeframe were recruited.

This research is simply one short snapshot in time about how participants and community stakeholders currently feel and think about the Northcote Development programme and why.

The key insights are:

- The People: the Northcote participants
- The Northcote Development programme and housing
- We like living in Northcote, the people, our identity
- Northcote's shared facilities and services
- Outdoor Spaces: local parks, trees, community gardens
- The Northcote Town Centre: a community hall
- The Town Centre: community stakeholders and retailers
- Let's talk more
- Wellbeing

### 4.1 The People: the Northcote Participants

Of the 27 participants in this survey:

- Just over 81%, or 22 residents, live in Kāinga Ora (14) and private rental homes (8). They are mostly of Maori and Pasifika heritage, and a few NZ European/Pakeha.
- The 59% of people who have lived in Northcote Central the longest (over 10 years) are tenants, with 69% Kāinga Ora tenants and 31% private tenants. Kāinga Ora participants have all lived in Kāinga Ora housing for at least 5-15 years, with the majority having lived there between 25-45+ years.
- Home ownership is limited to five participants, including Chinese, NZ European/Pakeha, and one Other (unstated), who have lived in Northcote for 10 years or less.
- A majority of residents were in full or part time work, five were job seekers, and three were retired; there was one caregiver and one volunteer, and two who preferred not to say.
- No residents new to Kāinga Ora housing in Northcote were among the participants.

The above suggests residents in rental accommodation, given their long tenure are likely to have helped provide substantial stability within the Northcote population over time, with potential positive flow on effects for themselves and the community, for example, through knowing neighbours and the neighbourhood, creating lasting friendships and connections, and contributing to its diverse multicultural character.



## 4.2 The Northcote Development Programme & Housing

Kāinga Ora states *“housing needs is more than a warm, dry, safe place for people to live with. It needs to reflect the diverse needs and identity of established community both now and into the future”* (Kāinga Ora, 2021).

The Northcote Development programme, to date, has led to substantial changes in how Kāinga Ora tenants are housed. Some Kāinga Ora participants have regrets about the demolition of much of the previous social housing stock and their shift into newly developed more intensive housing, because:

- Their previous homes had more space indoors and out which supported them to meet their diverse needs, including cultural needs; they enabled family/whanau to stay as needed, and for outdoor spaces to be used for games, living, hangi, family, social gatherings and gardening.
- Some participants deeply feel the loss of previous larger Māori and Pacific families/whanau not allocated new housing who had to move away from Northcote. These were often long-term friends and neighbours who they may be concerned for and miss.
- Some Kāinga Ora (and other) participants felt some new social housing tenants are less friendly, or mind their own business. For long term (and possibly new) Kāinga Ora residents Covid lockdowns in 2020 and 2021, grappling with the change, and health issues have made making new connections hard.
- There are some signs of potentially emerging concerns: including safety, inconsiderate neighbours, noise and noisy traffic late at night, narrow streets parked up, as well as rubbish, trolleys, and dog poo on the footpath and aggressive dogs in the park.

It may be that in its planning of the redevelopment Kāinga Ora and other agencies were unable to take into account some of the factors Barton considers relevant to housing policy. For example, from the participants it appears there may be accommodation for possibly old sole residents, but less so for large families who wanted to remain (and who may no longer meet social housing criteria).

The departure of established families within the community and the reduced friendliness of some newcomers has also been noticed by others in the community, not just Kāinga Ora participants. One such resident noted their family, with roots in the community, is feeling uncertain about their future in Northcote, given the changing and increasing population with social housing (and with the emergency housing during Covid in 2020 when there were some *“dodgy cats about”*). Some mention the importance of safety, while some participants, are stressed and anxious.

To tackle the issues raised, two participants suggested that there is a need for more effective management of social housing. Community programmes may also support social integration.

Concerns also came through when participants were asked about problems in Northcote over the previous 12 months. The top four ‘big’ problems were identified as ‘Dangerous driving’, ‘Noise pollution’, ‘Alcohol or drug problems’ and ‘People you feel unsafe around because of their behaviour’. There appears to be concern around whether increased social housing will tip the Northcote community’s balance, and undermine it, and the need to ensure that there are appropriate facilities and infrastructure in place to support good outcomes.

Some others wanted the previous cultural diversity reinstated in Northcote through more affordable housing for Pasifika and Māori and active balancing of the future culture.

However, while it is a key concern and hope, it is unclear how realisable it may be in practice, and may well be an area for research. Changes to organisations, not just names, but mandates, may make these less certain. These include impacts from the 2014 changes which made state (now social) housing tenancies no longer guaranteed for life; changing criteria and their application to access to social housing tenancies, given the housing crisis, and also the criteria associated with limited financial support to buy a home. Research into these areas, including how organisations' changing mandates and criteria, including their application change over time and impact on particular communities, and how these communities engage with these agencies may be helpful, if not already available

The participants' mixed views about whether the housing changes have improved Northcote may reflect how much, either directly or indirectly, the changes have affected and are affecting specific participants, their ethnic community, and their feelings around change, safety, and identity.

### 4.3 We Like living in Northcote, the People, our Identity

Northcote Central is commonly characterised by its diversity and character. For many residents Northcote is also defined by the people, the familiar faces and the families/whanau that live there or have lived there, in some cases, for decades.

85% of participants like living in Northcote and 81% feel part of the community; this includes the nearly one third of residents who voiced their concerns regarding the departure of friends, families/whanau and familiar faces from Northcote, and the introduction of new less friendly people. Relationships tended to impact on whether an individual felt part of the Northcote community. Half of those who didn't feel part of the community pointed to the lack of relationships within the community or that they did not belong to any groups or organisations, while the others did not say.

Northcote was mostly valued for its convenience to shared facilities, the friendly diverse community, good access to public transportation during peak hours, its proximity to work and good neighbours. The strongest undercurrent running throughout the research related to people: the importance of the friendly community and familiar faces. All, apart from one person, used a range of means to keep in touch with neighbours. Most felt safe out and about during the day, and at home alone at night, though a third have safety concerns when out alone at night.

At the same time, when participants were asked about problems in Northcote over the previous 12 months, the top four 'big' problems were identified as 'Dangerous driving, including drink driving and speeding', 'Noise pollution', 'Alcohol or drug problems or anti-social behaviour associated...' and 'People you feel unsafe around because of their behaviour...'. These responses suggest some sense of disquiet in the community.

While the aim of the Northcote Development programme is to improve liveability, housing, amenities and infrastructure, some residents have concerns that Northcote is losing its identity. For some this may partially be attributed to the departure of long-standing Maori and Pasifika friends and whanau from the area and the changing landscape, including built structure, of Northcote.

*"It is not the same. We were a small tightened community and everyone knew who you were and family connections. It is changed now, lots of different faces . ... Heart and soul of the community has been lost." (IN019)*

While there appears to be concern around whether the increased population may tip the Northcote community's balance, such that it might undermine it, there is insufficient data to come to any conclusion, given the size of the participant sample, and the lack of baseline research. What it points to is a need to ensure that there are appropriate facilities and infrastructure in place to support good outcomes.

At the same time some other residents are more open to some change, provided the anticipated infrastructure and amenities keep pace with the increasing population. For example:

*"Please, invest in Northcote. I will be very, very cross at all involved if we welcome another 2000 people without investing in our environment and amenities..." (Participant 18 in Q 31)*

#### **4.4 Northcote's Shared Facilities and Services**

A range of questions focus on many existing shared facilities (16, 17, 21, and 30), in addition to other comments. All participants who rated the importance of shared facilities rated the local shops as important/very important to Northcote (24). Next came local parks, trees and greenery, and community gardens.

Most residents wanted the existing shared facilities to be retained, while also wanting new facilities, including a community hall and a swimming pool.

When asked what could be improved one resident wrote *"Retention of services already here and support their growth as population increases."*(participant INO15) Many would like to see more such services, for wider age and ethnic/cultural groups, from children, to teenagers, families/whanau, as well as more events for older people. A wide range of community events were suggested, from concerts in the park, to cook outs, classes on specific topics, and even a space for chess meet-ups. In addition, community stakeholders suggested more English language courses, given the number of non-English speakers living in Northcote, including Chinese, and spaces where members of that community could play chess.

Some participants pointed to ease of access/use issues with parks, playgrounds and sports clubs, and to a lesser extent public transport. The importance of community connection places, while lower at 59%, may reflect occasional rather than frequent or regular use, while the rating for the children's playground may in part reflect the age and life stage of participants.

Some participants appear to have a broader approach to what 'local' is, with one noting their main shop was generally outside Northcote. This may reflect the diversity of workplaces, as indicated by concerns about traffic queues and motorway access, as well as the greater mobility of some participants over others, given their work and income. It may be that some shared facilities are more important for those with limited incomes, given this may limit their mobility (unless they have a gold card), and/or who may not be able to afford holidays away from Northcote.

#### **4.5 Outdoor Spaces: Local Parks, Trees, Community Gardens**

Space and the need for more and different kinds of spaces was a key point repeatedly highlighted. Half of the participants wanted more outdoor and green community space. The Te Ara Awataha greenway is expected to connect "the community via network of parks, shared cycling and walking

paths and wildlife” (Northcote Development, 2020), and has included community input. It is hoped this may meet many of the needs raised.

One way to meet current Kāinga Ora participants’ identified needs, and so compensate for the loss of private space around homes, as well as meet other participants’ needs (and possibly those of future residents) would be for some key activities to be provided for as part of the common spaces and public parks. Barton (2003) considers that the availability of properties with large gardens, or very close to allotments for keen gardeners, can be an important policy factor.

It is not known whether Kāinga Ora or Panuku are making provision for having spaces for hangi, which will also enable whanau to pass on of skills around hangi, as well as family/whanau and other community gatherings. These are aspects of their previous homes, that Kāinga Ora particularly Maori and Pasifika participants, most regret not having. Such spaces could also support neighbourly and community connections, an alternative to the old front yard where neighbours could engage with the community as people passed by.

Such provision would support what participating residents wanted when asked ‘What are three things that would improve your health and wellbeing?’ The vast majority selected:

- More physical activity
- Eat more fresh and whole food
- More relationships with family, friends and neighbours

Space can have a significant positive impact on the fulfilment of these. Some participants also mention a range of events in parks, a playground and a park for kids, more green space for physical activity, physical exercises areas and more seating in parks and the planting of fruit trees.

#### **4.4 The Northcote Town Centre: A Community Hall**

In the Northcote Town Centre Benchmark Masterplan (Auckland Council, 2019) there are provisions for a new town square which will be a dedicated place for events, activities and celebrations; greater investment in public spaces; a community hub; more community shared facilities (i.e. community recreational facilities and recreation) as well as the Te Ara Awataha greenway.

A community hall in the heart of Northcote Central is the mostly strongly supported new facility, with support from the community stakeholders and around half of the participants. They point to the need for more easily accessible community spaces for workshops, cultural events, classes and groups. Flexible, appropriate community spaces, including meeting rooms, as part of a community hall complex sounds rather like the Auckland Council’s Masterplan’s visible and easy to access multi-purpose hub centre.

Given such a facility was not foreshadowed in any questions, it has strong support, including from Pasifika, and appears to fit to quite an extent with what the Council and Panuku envisage. In addition, the town square, and planting within the town centre, fits with some of the comments on outdoor spaces.

There are also concerns about some of the spaces occupied by community stakeholders within the Northcote Town Centre. While their location is supports their community outreach and effectiveness, there are limitations, for example, in terms of easy access for all, or privacy for meetings, given others around or waiting areas.

## 4.5 The Town Centre: Community Stakeholders and Retailers

At least some of community stakeholders are uncertain as to what the final outcomes for the Northcote Town Centre will be, how they will be achieved, and within what timeframe. Community stakeholders are also unsure whether they will be able to operate within the Centre once any demolitions start to occur, whether there will be opportunities to locate close to the Town Centre, and whether they will have space in new buildings once these are constructed. They would welcome greater clarity around the allocation of space as this will affect how they operate and support the community in the future. At the same time, their services are under pressure and the need for them is increasing.

Retailers and others providing services, such as health clinics, may be in a similar position to the community stakeholders with their locations. Some participants are looking forward to an updated town/shopping centre, with more of the kinds of shops and facilities they would like, possibly including underground parking. It is not known if they are clear what changes are anticipated, or any uncertainty around these. Two participants are concerned to ensure local retailers are supported through the changes:

*“Please also recognise the role of our local retailers in building community, and in any change they should be nurtured \*to be clear I am not a local retailer\*” (Participant 18 in Q 31)*

*“...nourish and support the local retailers and eateries... I feel like we could make it all a bit more local and unique to here.. . These guys should be protected and celebrated... (Participant IN012).*

Their comments are in line with Barton (2003) who points to the need to consider the availability of accommodation for successful businesses who want to remain in the area.

For community stakeholders, given the issues they raise, until new builds have occurred and spaces obtained, there may be a need for other temporary and strategic opportunities that utilise use or possibly re-located resources for use.

## 4.6 Engagement: Let’s talk more

Engagement with the community on large change programmes in multiple ownership is complex. It is clear there is uncertainty among both community stakeholders and residents about what the outcomes of the Northcote Development programme will look like on the ground, and what that will mean for residents and the community. Who will be living there? What will Northcote be like after all the changes?

Over half of the participants (mostly Kāinga Ora residents) were dissatisfied with the level of engagement they have had with the Northcote Development programme. No Kāinga Ora participants were satisfied with the level of engagement, and only a small percentage didn’t know or were neutral. Given that Kāinga Ora residents have been and are more likely to be impacted by the redevelopment this should not be a surprise. In some ways some Kāinga Ora residents’ views about engagement may reflect both the engagement and the sense of “overwhelm” about what is happening in Northcote that at times comes through some comments. These include comments on mental health, including anxiety and stress. These may be around what the programme has already delivered, and what it might deliver in the future, and may also include other personal factors, including financial difficulties. It is accepted that urban regeneration has the potential for social disruption and displacement, as well as positive outcomes for individuals and their communities.

Of those in private rentals or home ownership, 15% of participants were satisfied with the engagement whilst the rest were dissatisfied or neutral.

The community stakeholders interviewed want to engage with the local community to learn more about their hopes and concerns; they also want to communicate among community stakeholders more to support their own clarity about the coming changes, including to the Northcote Town Centre so they can help keep the community informed. They hope this will help the community, the stakeholders and also Kāinga Ora and Panuku, the agencies involved. Some community stakeholders would like to see the provision of more targeted support for those new to Northcote, both for specific communities, and across the community to support people's integration into the community.

Research suggests that resident engagement in helping shape the changes in their environment can support people to move on, to take some ownership and help create outcomes that can also work for them (Kent et al, 2011). The community outreach could assist with this.

Some community stakeholders would also like to see more multilingual staff people within key community services to ensure that all residents' needs can be addressed and supported

The community stakeholders considered that many residents have found the changes difficult, with two loose groups: those who are aware, anxious and concerned about gentrification, and those shocked by the changes, and thoughts of a concrete jungle. From the data, some of these may include those fearful for the future of their community in Northcote Central.

While stress can be a positive aspect of life, and can motivate reassessment and change, too much may reduce our wellbeing, and may reduce our ability to thrive, at least in the short term. For some of those experiencing stress being able to talk about their key concerns in groups and with safety including confidentiality, can support people to move on and find ways to engage. For others key confidants can be sufficient.

Participants acknowledged a wide range of potential stressors. These range from loss of family/whanau, friends, and previous homes, coping with new different homes that connect people less, and with possibly less friendly neighbours. It includes other stressors such as financial, work and job seeking, to having a family/whanau members move in or moving in with a family/whanau member, to health, including cancer and mental health issues, such as anxiety and depression.

At the same time some are also considering what they would like to see happening, and how to meet their needs in the future, as shown by some participants' support for community gardens and for the building of a community hall.

The data would also support the existence of a third group that appears open to change, including more housing and an increasing population. For some participants it includes openness to changes to the Northcote Town Centre with a greater variety of shops, and with improved infrastructure and amenities. This includes some across all tenure types, including some who may regret some changes, and/or also have some concerns about the coming changes.

## 6.0 Conclusion

Northcote Central is a strong community shaped by its historical and contemporary ethnically and culturally diverse people, its infrastructure and housing, and its valued existing shared spaces, including in particular the Northcote Town Centre. Most of the participants feel part of the community and like living there.

The aim of the Northcote Development programme is to improve liveability, increase access to higher quality housing (including social housing, affordable housing and houses for sale) and to support the upgrade of the infrastructure and amenities. By the end of the programme in the mid-2020s the population of Northcote Central is expected to more than double.

Some participating Kāinga Ora residents have marked reservations about the changes to date. These have been considered previously and include some culturally based matters. There are also signs of some potential concerns among both some Kāinga Ora and other participants and stakeholders in terms of the friendliness of new residents, neighbourliness issues and possible changes to the community 'feel'.

The research suggests the Northcote Development is having mixed effects on the wellbeing of the participating residents and stakeholders. Some feel positive and see the potential for good outcomes; some want to ensure that the anticipated needed amenities and infrastructure are delivered at the same time as the increasing population arrives. Some are mixed.

Some others, more directly affected, feel concerned about the changes that have already occurred and/or that they currently live with, and less certain about what the future will bring, how it will affect them, their ethnic/cultural community, and the Northcote community as a whole. Within this group, some are more directly affected, feel more vulnerable, and possibly need more support.

Some of the participating community stakeholders were also concerned about vulnerable members of the community and put forward a number of suggestions for further consideration. These include:

- More consultation and communication among the different organisations providing support to the community to better support the community
- Working with groups of residents to get a better sense of residents' hopes and concerns, possibly through regular community group discussions

They considered that a greater level of engagement with the community could benefit all, including community organisations, and Kāinga Ora and Panuku. Involvement of key organisations on a range of levels could help with ensuring community stakeholders are kept up to date. Some acknowledged their own uncertainty about some of the changes expected, and the importance of up-to-date, clear, factual information, particularly as aspects could well change. This could support stakeholders in their future discussions and engagement with the community.

Most participants provided comments on what they would like to see in the future, in terms of shared facilities, and future community services and housing outcomes.

On the topic of shared facilities, participants rated the Northcote Town Centre as the most important. Some community stakeholders appear uncertain as to what the revitalisation of the



Northcote Town Centre will result in and what it may mean for them both during and after the changes.

Secondly, a good half of the participants support having outdoor and green community space, followed next by community gardens. The Te Ara Awataha greenway may help with this.

Thirdly, the one new shared facility that the majority of participating community stakeholders and around half the participants would like is an easily accessible community hall where people can meet and participate in community activities and services to support the Northcote community. This is in response to concerns around the lack of easily accessible spaces to meet diverse needs. It appears consistent with the Auckland Council's Masterplan's multi-purpose hub centre.

Some community stakeholders would also like to see more multilingual staff people within key community services to ensure that all residents' needs can be addressed and supported, and the provision of more targeted support for those new to Northcote, both for specific communities and across the community to support people's integration into the community.

The sample of 27 participants, while diverse, does not fully reflect the Northcote population. What it does do is provide one short snapshot in time about how participating residents and community stakeholders currently feel and think about the Northcote Development programme and why.

As highlighted previously, this research was affected by a number of Covid lockdowns, impacting on the time available for participant recruitment and data collection, which meant there has been less participation from some population demographics.

It is recommended that further random research, with a larger sample size, be undertaken to substantiate these insights.



# Appendices

## Community Research Project: Northcote's Community Wellbeing

### *We invite you to take part in the Northcote Community Wellbeing Project*

- If you live in the Northcote community, you are warmly invited to have your say.
- Taking part in this research project is completely voluntary (your choice).
- Your voice is important.
- If you agree to participate, you will be asked to complete a survey (approximately 20 minutes). You may also be invited to participate in a group discussion.

### *What is the purpose of the Northcote Community Wellbeing Project?*

Northcote is undergoing change with many old houses being removed and new homes being built.

The purpose of this research project is to hear from the local Northcote community your thoughts and ideas about the changes occurring in your neighbourhood.

As a community organisation, Hearts & Minds is leading this research along with our community partners (Kaipatiki Community Facilities Trust (KCFT), Te Puna Hauora Health & Social Services and The FONO) - ensuring that the diverse voices of the Northcote local communities are heard.

- We want to understand how the Northcote community feels about the changes taking place and what this means for you.
- The strengths of the Northcote community.
- Areas for improvement in the Northcote community.
- Ways that you have managed through these changes.
- How the changes affected your wellbeing.

### *What do I do if I have questions about this research project?*

Any questions regarding this research project should be notified in the first instance to **Dr Shabnam Jalili-Moghaddam**. She is a Community Researcher at Hearts & Minds.

Shabnam is going to start the collection of information from 16 March 2021.

You are welcome to share her contact details with people from your network living in Northcote who may be keen to be a part of this community research project.



Dr Shabnam Jalili-Moghaddam

Email: [shabnam@heartsandminds.org.nz](mailto:shabnam@heartsandminds.org.nz)

Phone: (09) 441 8989 ext 707

## Appendix B

### Information sheet for residents

#### Community Research Project: Northcote's Community Wellbeing



#### We invite you to take part in the Northcote Community Wellbeing Project

- If you live in the Northcote community, you are warmly invited to have your say.
- Taking part in this research project is completely voluntary (your choice). If anything is not clear, we can provide you with more information.
- If you need time to consider this invitation to participate – you have one week to let us know.
- Your voice is important, if you decide to take part, you will be given a copy of this information and your signed consent form.

#### What is the purpose of the Northcote Community Wellbeing Project?

Northcote is undergoing change with many old houses being removed and new homes being built.

The purpose of this research project is to hear from the local Northcote community your thoughts and ideas about the changes occurring in your neighbourhood.

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- We want to understand how the Northcote community feels about the changes taking place and what this means for you.
- The strengths of the Northcote community.
- Areas for improvement in the Northcote community.
- Ways that you have managed through these changes.
- How the changes affected your wellbeing.

#### How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research project?

You were identified as a potential participant through the Northcote community network.

#### Can I withdraw from this research project?

Yes, your participation in this research is voluntary (it is your choice). You are able to withdraw from the research at any time - simply phone or email us.

#### What happens in this research project?

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to complete a survey (approximately 20 minutes). You may also be invited to a community group discussion (maximum 2 hours).

#### What are the benefits?

The main benefit for you is that your voice is heard. What you have to say is important and your recommendations can improve our understanding of community wellbeing for future housing developments.

#### How will my privacy be protected?

All research files and information that you provide will remain strictly confidential. Your name and contact details will be removed from the transcripts. No material that could personally identify you will be used in any reports or discussions about this study.

#### Will I receive feedback on the results of this research project?

Yes, you can receive a copy of the final report via email or hard copy by request.

#### What do I do if I have questions about this research project?

Any questions regarding this research project should be notified in the first instance to the Researcher, **Dr Shabnam Jalili-Moghaddam**, [shabnam@heartsandminds.org.nz](mailto:shabnam@heartsandminds.org.nz), (09) 441 8989 ext 707.

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research project contact **Hearts & Minds**, [info@heartsandminds.org.nz](mailto:info@heartsandminds.org.nz), (09) 441 8989.

**Please keep this Information Sheet and a copy of the Consent Form for your future reference.**



## Appendix C

### Consent form for residents and stakeholders



## Community Research Project: Northcote's Community Wellbeing

### Consent Form

Study ID: IN .....

Researcher: Dr Shabnam Jalili-Moghaddam

Email: shabnam@heartsandminds.org.nz

Phone: (09) 441 8989 ext 707

Please tick to indicate you consent to the following:

- ☐ I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet.
- ☐ I understand and agree that the identity of all participants is confidential to the research group.
- ☐ I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- ☐ I understand that notes will be taken during the interviews and that it will also be recorded and transcribed.
- ☐ I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary (my choice) and that I may withdraw from the study at any time.
- ☐ I agree to take part in this research.
- ☐ I wish to receive a summary of the research findings (please tick one): Yes ☐ No ☐

Participant's signature: .....

Participant's name: .....

Participant's Contact Details - mobile or email address (if appropriate):

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Date: .....

*Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form.*



## Appendix D

### Consent form for group discussion



## Community Research Project: Northcote's Community Wellbeing

### Consent Form

Study ID: FG .....

Researcher: Dr Shabnam Jalili-Moghaddam

Email: shabnam@heartsandminds.org.nz

Phone: (09) 441 8989 ext 707

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Please tick to indicate you consent to the following

- ☐ I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet.
- ☐ I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- ☐ I understand and agree that the identity of all participants is confidential to the research group.
- ☐ I understand that notes will be taken during the focus group and that it will also be recorded and transcribed.
- ☐ I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary (my choice) and that I may withdraw from the study at any time without being disadvantaged in any way.
- ☐ I agree to take part in this research.
- ☐ I wish to receive a summary of the research findings (please tick one): Yes ☐ No ☐

Participant's signature: .....

Participant's name: .....

Participant's Contact Details - mobile or email address (if appropriate):

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Date: .....

*Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form.*



Study Number:	Participant Initials:
---------------	-----------------------

## About you

### 1. What is your age?

Please circle one answer

18-24 years old	1
25-34 years old	2
35-44 years old	3
45-54 years old	4
55-64 years old	5
65+ years old	6
Prefer not to say	7

### 2. Are you:

Please select one answer.

Male	1
Female	2
Other	3
Prefer not to say	4

### 3. What ethnic group do you belong to?

Mark all that apply.

Māori	1
New Zealand European	2
Samoan	3
Cook Islands Māori	4
Tongan	5
Niuean	6
Chinese	7
Indian	8
Other- please state .....	9
Prefer not to say	10

### 4. Which describes you the best?

Born in NZ	1
Migrant more than 10 years	2
Migrant between 5 to 10 years	3
Migrant less than 5 years	4

Study Number:	Participant Initials:
---------------	-----------------------

**5. Number of adults (older than 16 years) in your household:**

**6. Number of children (is or younger than 16 years) in your household:**

**7. What is your current employment?**

Please circle **one** answer.

Full time	1
Part time	2
Self-employed	3
Casual	4
Job seeker	5
Full time caregiver	6
Volunteer	7
Other- please explain .....	8
Prefer not to say	9

Study Number:	Participant Initials:
---------------	-----------------------

## Your health and wellbeing

**8. In general, how would you rate your health?**

Poor	1
Fair	2
Good	3
Very good	4
Excellent	5
Don't know	6
Prefer not to say	7

**9. In the last twelve months have you noted any changes to do with following areas?**

	Yes	No	Don't know	What has changed?
Health and wellbeing				
Relationships (family, friends, neighbours and community centres)				
Living arrangements				
Employment status				
Financial status				

**10. What are three things would improve your health and wellbeing?**

More physical activity	1
Eat more fresh and whole food	2
Stop smoking	3
Reduce alcohol intake	4
More relationships with family, friends and neighbours	5
Share your problems with a friend	6
Balance workload and take more breaks	7
Less financial pressures	8
Better manage stress and mindfulness	9

Study Number:	Participant Initials:
---------------	-----------------------

## Your home and neighbourhood

### 11. What type of home do you currently live in?

Owned by you or someone in this household	1
Rented from a private landlord	2
Rented from Kāinga Ora (previously called Housing New Zealand)	3
Other (please specify)	4
Don't know	5

### 12. How long have you lived in Northcote?

### 13. Do you like living at Northcote?

Yes	1
Yes and No	2
Don't know	3
No	4
Other	5

### 14. How long have you lived in your current home?

### 15. How do feel about your neighbourhood?



Study Number:	Participant Initials:
---------------	-----------------------

### 16. What do you most like about living in Northcote?

Mark all that apply.

- |                                                                         |                                                                                                     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Good neighbours                                | <input type="checkbox"/> Friendly community                                                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> It's convenient—close to shops, amenities etc. | <input type="checkbox"/> It's convenient—close to where I work                                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> It's safe, crime free neighbourhood            | <input type="checkbox"/> It has good access to public transport                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Has great parks and access to the beach        | <input type="checkbox"/> A good mix of community and privately-owned homes                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Housing is good value for money                | <input type="checkbox"/> Variety of community cultural events and gatherings e.g. Easter egg hunter |

Other—please specify .....

### 17. What do you think could be improved in your neighbourhood?

Mark all that apply.

- ☐ More playgrounds for children
- ☐ More activities for teenagers
- ☐ Better public transport
- ☐ Community support services for children and younger people
- ☐ Community support services for older people
- ☐ Community support services for people with disabilities
- ☐ Special recreation facilities in public centres e.g. ramps, easy stairs and easy access to public toilets
- ☐ More public toilets at Northcote reserves with baby changing facility (e.g. at parks, beaches and playgrounds)
- ☐ Other, please specify .....

Study Number:	Participant Initials:
---------------	-----------------------

## Northcote area

**18. Do you feel you are part of a Northcote community?**

Yes	1
No	2

Please explain .....

**19. What are the main ways that contact you with your neighbours?**

**Mark all that apply**

- ☐ Phone call and text messages
- ☐ Use social media i.e. Facebook, Neighbourly and email
- ☐ Hang out in your front yard
- ☐ Take walks around the neighbourhood
- ☐ Hold neighbourhood events
- ☐ Other please specify .....
- ☐ I don't connect with my neighbours.

**20. How safe or unsafe do you feel at Northcote?**

	Very unsafe	A bit unsafe	Fairly safe	Very safe	Don't know
At home by yourself at night?	1	2	3	4	5
Walking alone in your neighbourhood during daytime hours?	1	2	3	4	5
Walking alone in your neighbourhood after dark?	1	2	3	4	5
Letting children walk or cycle to school	1	2	3	4	5

Study Number:	Participant Initials:
---------------	-----------------------

**21. Is it easy to access/ use the following facilities in Northcote?**

Sport clubs/ sport grounds	Yes	No
Access to health centres	Yes	No
Access to public transport	Yes	No
Access to supermarkets	Yes	No
Access to local shops (e.g. fruits and vegetable store)	Yes	No
Access to local parks and playgrounds	Yes	No

**22. What are the challenges you face today?**

**23. What would you like to see happening in Northcote?**

**24. What did you like about Northcote before the housing project started?**

Study Number:

Participant Initials:

**25. What did you NOT like about Northcote before the housing project started?**

**26. To what extent has each of the following been a problem in Northcote over the past 12 months?**

Please circle **one** answer for each problem.

	A big problem	A bit of a problem	Not a problem	Don't know
Rubbish or litter lying on the streets	1	2	3	4
Graffiti or tagging	1	2	3	4
Vandalism, other than graffiti or tagging, including broken windows in shops and public buildings	1	2	3	4
Car theft, damage to cars or theft from cars	1	2	3	4
Dangerous driving, including drink driving and speeding	1	2	3	4
People you feel unsafe around because of their behaviour, attitude or appearance	1	2	3	4
Air pollution	1	2	3	4
Water pollution, including pollution in streams, rivers, lakes and in the sea	1	2	3	4
Noise pollution	1	2	3	4
Alcohol or drug problems or anti-social behaviour associated with the use of alcohol or drugs	1	2	3	4
People begging on the street	1	2	3	4
People sleeping rough on the streets / in vehicles	1	2	3	4
Access to natural landscapes	1	2	3	4
Hygiene and cleanliness of public toilets	1	2	3	4

Study Number:	Participant Initials:
---------------	-----------------------

**27. How much do you agree or disagree with the following?**

*"Northcote has improved with the housing changes".*

Please circle **one** answer.

Strongly disagree	1
Disagree	2
Neither agree nor disagree	3
Agree	4
Strongly agree	5
Not applicable	6
Don't know	7

**28. How much do you agree or disagree with the following?**

*"Northcote has a good sense of belonging and community".*

Please circle **one** answer.

Strongly disagree	1
Disagree	2
Neither agree nor disagree	3
Agree	4
Strongly agree	5
Not applicable	6
Don't know	7

**29. Overall, do you feel that your voice was heard during the housing project?**

Please circle **one** answer.

Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	6

Study Number:	Participant Initials:
---------------	-----------------------

**30. How important are the following for your neighbourhood?**

	Not important	Important	Very important	Don't know
Trees and greenery	1	2	3	4
Children's playground	1	2	3	4
Community connection places (e.g. libraries and community centre)	1	2	3	4
Community gardens	1	2	3	4
Local community market	1	2	3	4
Local shops	1	2	3	4
Local parks	1	2	3	4

**31. Any other comments you would like to make?**

**32. Do you think this survey is a useful way of gathering information to help with improving your health and well-being?**

Yes	1
No	2
Other	3
Don't know	4

**Thank you for completing our survey!**

What you said is important and can improve our understanding of Northcote community wellbeing for future housing developments.

## Appendix F

### Information sheet for residents

#### Community Research Project: Northcote's Community Wellbeing



##### We invite you to take part in the Northcote Community Wellbeing Project

- If you live in the Northcote community, you are warmly invited to have your say.
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##### What is the purpose of the Northcote Community Wellbeing Project?

Northcote is undergoing change with many old houses being removed and new homes being built.

The purpose of this research project is to hear from the local Northcote community your thoughts and ideas about the changes occurring in your neighbourhood.

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- The strengths of the Northcote community.
- Areas for improvement in the Northcote community.
- Ways that you have managed through these changes.
- How the changes affected your wellbeing.

##### How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research project?

You were identified as a potential participant through the Northcote community network.

##### Can I withdraw from this research project?

Yes, your participation in this research is voluntary (it is your choice). You are able to withdraw from the research at any time - simply phone or email us.

##### What happens in this research project?

If you agree to participate, you will be invited to an interview session (maximum 30 minutes). You may also will be asked to complete a survey (approximately 20 minutes).

##### What are the benefits?

The main benefit for you is that your voice is heard. What you have to say is important and your recommendations can improve our understanding of community wellbeing for future housing developments.

##### How will my privacy be protected?

All research files and information that you provide will remain strictly confidential. Your name and contact details will be removed from the transcripts. No material that could personally identify you will be used in any reports or discussions about this study.

##### Will I receive feedback on the results of this research project?

Yes, you can receive a copy of the final report via email or hard copy by request.

##### What do I do if I have questions about this research project?

Any questions regarding this research project should be notified in the first instance to the Researcher, **Dr Shabnam Jalili-Moghaddam**, [shabnam@heartsandminds.org.nz](mailto:shabnam@heartsandminds.org.nz), (09) 441 8989 ext 707.

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