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# NORTH PADDINGTON CANALSIDE ENGAGEMENT REPORT NOVEMBER 2024



City of Westminster

Canal & River Trust
Making life better by water

DK-CM

MAYOR OF LONDON



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# 1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In spring 2024, Westminster City Council launched the **North Paddington Canalside Programme** to improve key public spaces along the Paddington Arm of the Grand Union Canal between Ladbroke Grove and Little Venice. The programme focuses on five key sites: Half Penny Steps, Great Western Slip Road, Westway Canalside, Brindley Canalside and Amberley Canalside. The overarching vision is to increase the connections and access between the canal and the city, improve the quality and maintenance of the waterfront, activate under-utilised public spaces, and preserve and enhance the biodiversity of the canal's environment.

This **Engagement Report** is a summary of the community feedback in response to the RIBA Stage 2 concept design proposals presented to the community in the summer of 2024. It is important to note that these concept designs were shaped by community engagement undertaken throughout spring to ascertain the community's priorities and ideas for improvements, and this early engagement feedback and design proposals are detailed in the **Design Report** (which can be found on the programme page: https://npcanalsidestrategy.commonplace.is/)

The **purpose** of the engagement this summer was twofold: firstly, to understand the level of support for each of the proposals, and secondly, to gather additional feedback and suggestions for the proposals. This report shows a statistical level of support per proposal, as well as key take-aways that are supported by selected quotes that bring to life the community's unedited feedback.

The **methodology** of the engagement was geared towards collecting as many responses from a representative local demographic as possible. For 10 consecutive weeks, we invited people to submit their feedback via a short digital survey. This survey was promoted in three ways: 1) print and social media, 2) a large outdoor exhibition showcasing the designs and signposting the survey, and 3) a series of targeted drop-ins to community groups that are typically lesser heard from.

The **demographic** of the survey respondents was broadly representative of the local area. Of the total of 172 people who responded to the survey, 84% are local residents, and 15% are boaters who moor in the area. Whilst it is often harder to reach the under 25s and over 60s, we are pleased that 20% of the respondents were under 25, and 14% were over 60, suggesting there is a good breadth of age-specific responses.

While detailed findings for each site are presented throughout this report, the key findings across all locations can be summarised in the following points:

1. **→ Less than one quarter of current users are happy or very happy with the Canalside as it is today**, which suggests there is an overwhelming need for improvement.
2. **→ 65% are either satisfied or very satisfied with the design proposals**, which suggests that there is majority support to proceed.
3. **→ 22% feel neutral about the proposals**, which suggests that improvements can be made to the proposals to make them more compelling to the community. Many of the open-text responses included suggestions for how to build upon the concept designs and improve them further.

The **next steps** are to further the designs of the three priority projects – Half Penny Steps, Westway Canalside and Brindley Canalside – for which seed capital funding has been secured. Further engagement to develop the designs in collaboration with the community is expected to commence in spring and summer 2025.

**To stay up to date** with the programme and be the first to know about future engagement opportunities we encourage you to subscribe for to the newsletter by visiting our website: https://npcanalsidestrategy.commonplace.is/

# ENGAGEMENT APPROACH

The North Paddington Canalside engagement strategy, conducted during spring-summer 2024, was multifaceted and delivered across 3 key phases. The engagement process sought to build upon the existing canalside culture whilst encouraging positive future use. Through various engagement events, the project aimed to develop context-specific proposals that directly address local community needs. This collaborative approach enabled participants to share their knowledge, helping identify constraints and opportunities, while informing future strategy development. This approach was specifically designed to reach and hear from the area's diverse communities and demographics, acknowledging existing tensions between different user groups and ensuring all voices could be captured and included in the process.

Our principles emerged during Phase 1 of the project. These principles guided our design process ensuring that future site proposals address community needs effectively. At the heart of this project is our commitment to improving health and wellbeing for everyone in the borough. Each principle supports better health outcomes and increased wellbeing for both residents and visitors.

- → * Health & Wellbeing (core principle)
- → * Accessibility & Safety
- → * Biodiversity
- → * Culture & Activation

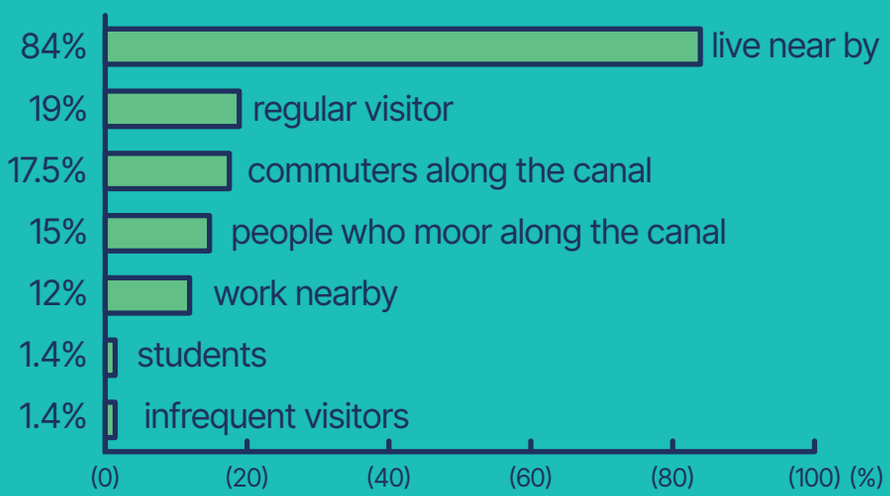
# ENGAGEMENT

Engagement was undertaken in three phases:

- → **Phase 1**: Assessed existing conditions, qualities, and challenges through discussions with stakeholders, community groups, boaters, and the public.
- → **Phase 2**: Focused on future development, testing strategic objectives and developing site-specific proposals.
- → **Phase 3**: Featured an exhibition of site-specific proposals with public feedback.

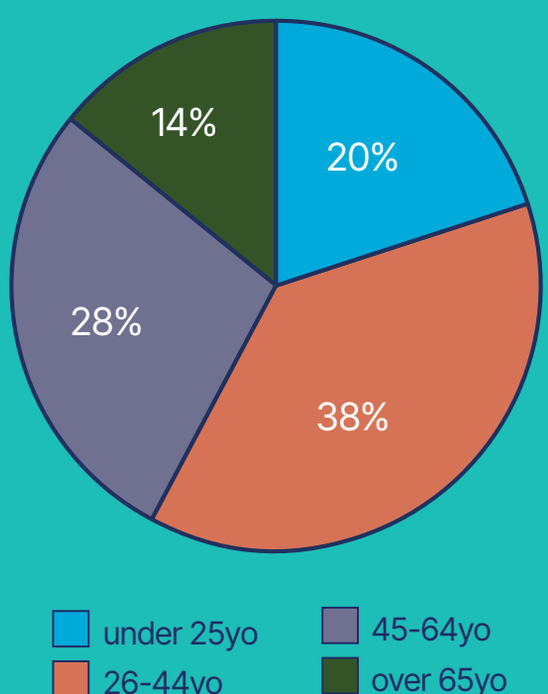
The strategy builds on previous consultations and Westminster City Council engagement, aiming to reach more diverse audiences than before. Implementation included an online Commonplace platform with interactive maps and surveys. This report focuses on Phase 3 findings and the Commonplace platform results. For additional details, refer to the Concept Design Report, November 2024.

## → Relationship to North Paddington Canalside



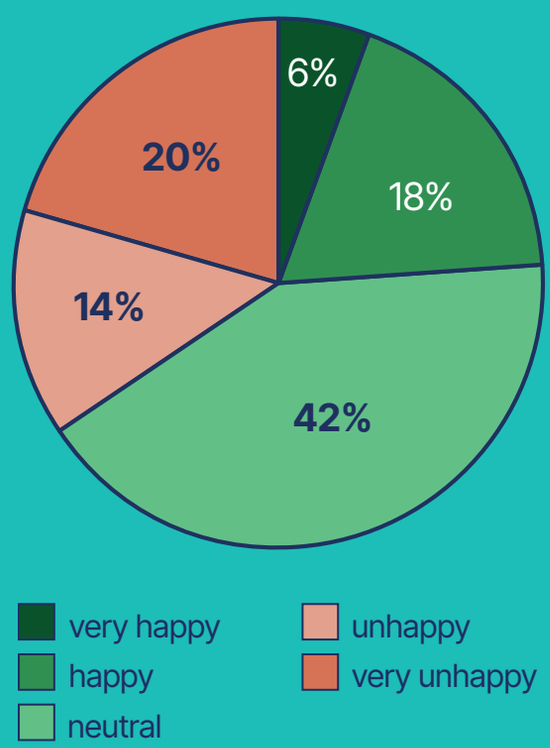

The majority of respondents were local residents, with smaller groups of respondents regularly visiting, commuting, or mooring along the canal. Many respondents have multiple relationships with the area, resulting in the percentages totalling more than 100.

## → Age distribution overview



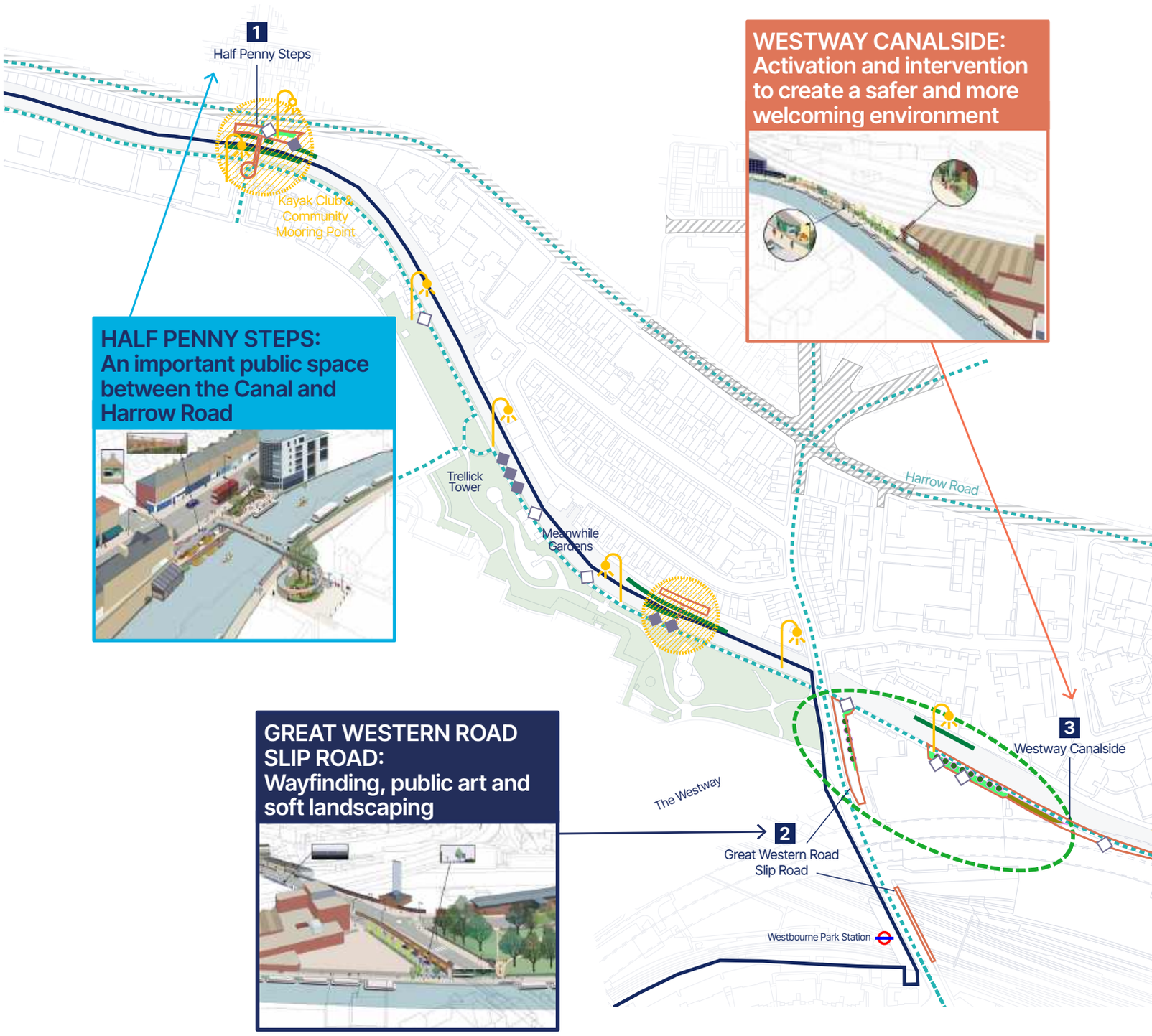

There was generally good representation across age groups including families and teenagers as well as older community members.

## → How do you feel about the North Paddington canalside as it is today?



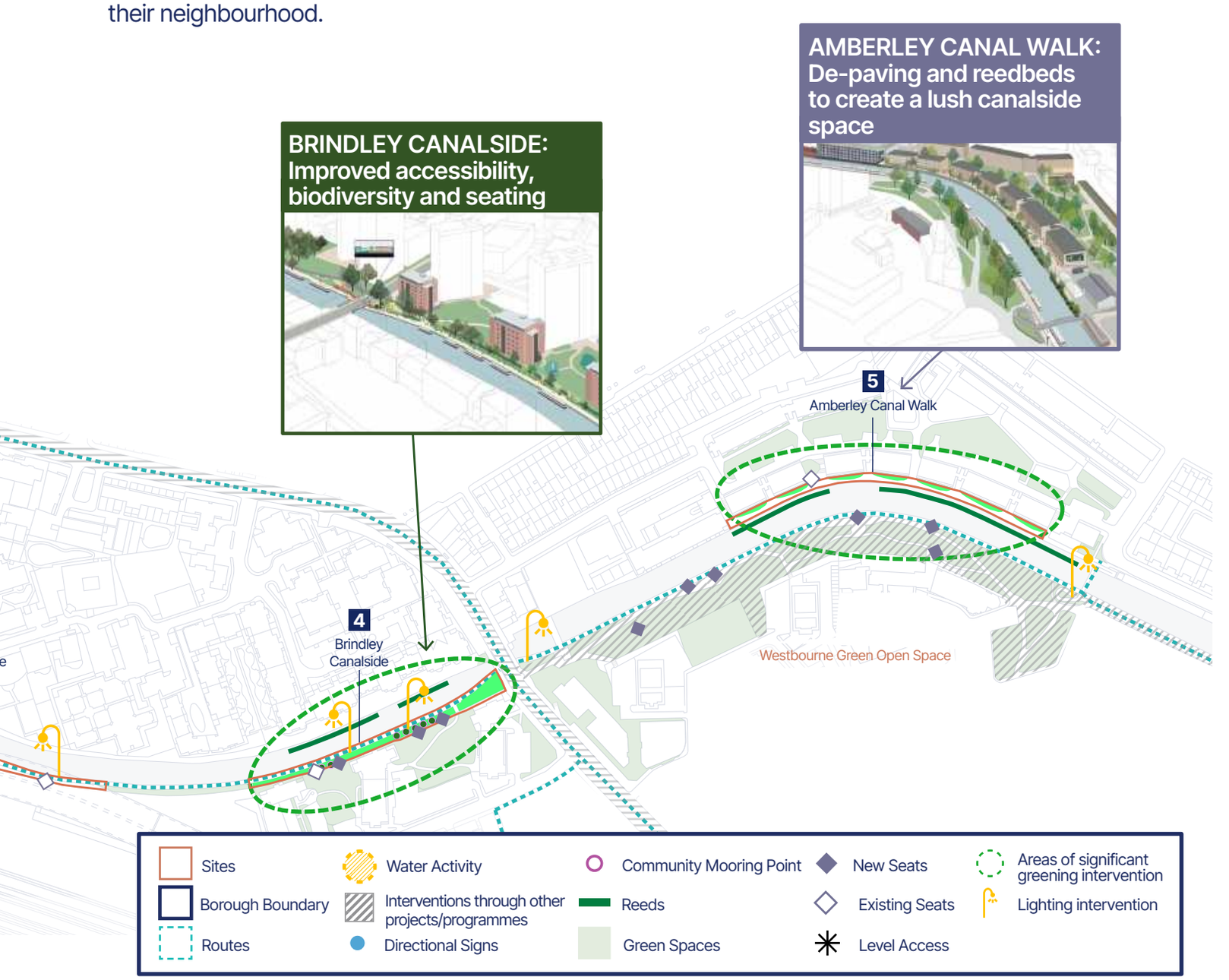

A third of respondents are currently unhappy or dissatisfied, and only a quarter of respondents were happy or satisfied with the canalside as it is today.

# 3 OVERALL PROGRAMME AREA



# Overall vision

The overall vision is to re-imagine the canalside spaces as a connected sequence of vibrant destinations that promote health and wellbeing through accessible outdoor spaces. Improved entrances create safe and inviting access to the canal, linking the main roads to the waterside routes that welcome people of all abilities. De-paving and greening spaces support biodiversity with native planting, community gardens, and reed beds, with new places to sit and rest that encourage better connections to nature. Feature lighting and wayfinding  improve safety throughout, while new structures and terraces activate the spaces through culture and community activities, from watersports to creative projects. Through continued involvement with local groups and stakeholders, these spaces are managed and maintained to meet community needs, with public art encouraging people to discover, connect with nature, and enjoy the canalside route through their neighbourhood.



# → 4 HALF PENNY STEPS

## The engagement overview of the project included:

### Today



*before*

Half Penny Steps is a busy space with many people moving through it from the Harrow Road. It's in a unique location positioned between the high street and canal.

### Proposed



*proposed after*

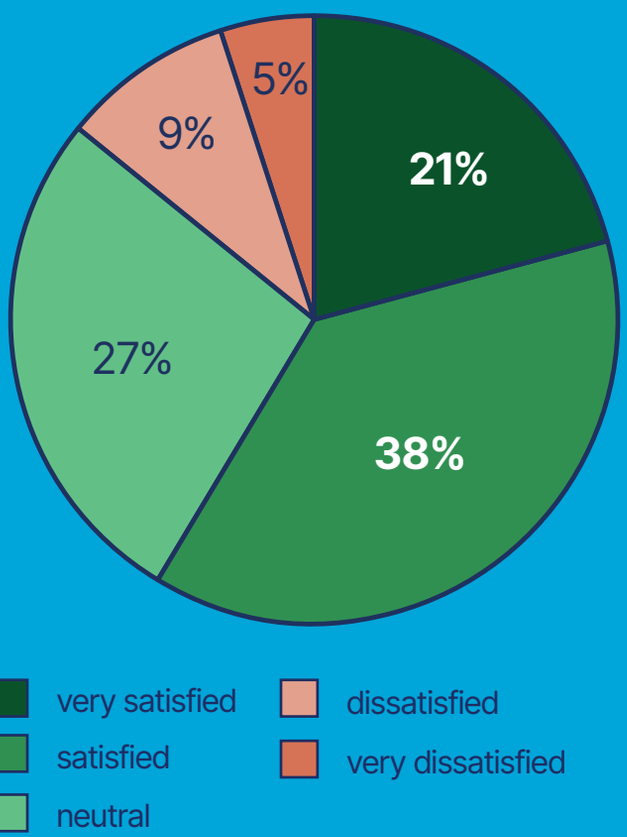
The vision is to transform this underutilised space into a vibrant canalside terrace with new amphitheatre-style seating, wild-flower planting, and feature lighting. A new community mooring point alongside the terrace would encourage the boating community to set-up a floating shop or events episodically. The bridge – an important meeting point between the two boroughs – can be elevated with a piece of public art and a new colour scheme designed in collaboration with local groups. Additionally, there is an ambition to convert the unused space next to the bridge into a launch-spot for watersports such as kayaking.

## Key design moves

- → In-between space turned into public space.
- → New biodiverse planting replacing the existing planting.
- → New furniture wraps around the green space to provide new seating and protect the planting.
- → Explore new community mooring points facing the towpath and the high street to activate the public space and better connect communities.
- → Feature lighting to enhance public space whilst being sensitive to wildlife.
- → Bring on board an operator to provide watersports such as kayaking, canoeing and paddle-boarding.
- → Public art commission to re-enliven the bridge including lighting and re-painting.

# FEEDBACK ON PROPOSALS:

## Summary of findings




### The responses were predominantly positive,

with 86% of responses being supportive or neutral of the presented proposals. The more expansive written feedback primarily focused on issues relating to maintenance and improving basic infrastructure, with emphasis on cleanliness, safety and environmental management.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- → **Main areas of concern were safety, accessibility, and maintenance with the latter needing to be addressed as a priority.**
- → **United support for greening and softening of hard landscaping.**
- → **Support for new water uses, such as kayaking and paddle-boarding, however concerns over how they could impact on existing moorings.**
- → **Challenge to provide more seating and social spaces that don't attract anti-social behaviour.**
- → **Consideration of funding allocated to, and the quality of, public art.**

## Popular phrase cloud:




## Consensus:

Main areas of concern were around issues of maintenance, antisocial behaviour and safety, accessibility and environmental concerns.

→ **Maintenance and cleanliness;** were a critical item of concern. There was general consensus on the need for better maintenance and cleanliness, with today's regime being unsatisfactory. Concerns were raised relating to improvements failing without adequate resources being in place for maintenance.

***"The plans look fine in pictures. But the absolutely key requirement is that any installation or facility or improvement is fully maintained after installation. Top quality maintenance (eg emptying of bins) is more important than initial installation."***

***"This area needs regular cleaning and maintenance only."***

→ **Safety and security;** there was a common shared concern around anti-social behaviour and consensus that better lighting is needed, as well as improved surveillance such as CCTV.

***"Better lighting and CCTV to discourage crime and drug dealers. More child friendly as many children access schools across the canal using this vital bridge link."***

***"Proper lighting-make it female friendly and safe"***

→ **Greening;** Consensus that more and better greening is needed, but it must manage rats, pigeons and other vermin.

***"More greenery could be incorporated"***

***"Hoping there will be a lot more spring, summer, autumn and winter flowering plants for the pollinators and nature along the canal"***

***"There is so much concrete in the new design. Can you add more greenery?"***

## Dissensus & key tensions:

→ **Water-related activities;** Some dissensus relating to the potential loss of mooring spaces and its impact on the boating community. However, predominantly strong support for kayaking and water activities as positive additions.

***"I would love to kayak and canoe along the canal, for a reasonable price. It would be wonderful to see schools and youth groups using a facility like this too."***

***"This is a very busy part of the canal for boaters. In conjunction with Canal & River Trust proposals for paid and booked mooring."***

→ **Seating and social spaces;** Making the area more vibrant and accessible vs managing antisocial behaviour.

***"I'm also opposed to any new seating along Harrow Road, based on the very well-known problems with street drinking and drug dealing in the immediate vicinity."***

***"The green canal side area on that Harrow Road side of the blue bridge is currently frequented by alcoholics, drug users and homeless people, making it feel unsafe"***

→ **Art Installations;** There is support for public art as improvement; however, some view it as a waste of money that will attract graffiti.

***"The artwork will be an utter waste of funding, graffiti will go up within months if not weeks"***

***"Please beware public art which isn't really art. I would prefer to see fewer better sculptures by well-known artists"***

→ **Project Priorities:** Some want to focus on basic maintenance and cleaning first. Others support comprehensive improvements including new facilities Comments included;

***"This is one of the dirtiest places in the area. Both the bridge and the water in the canal. It also feels unsafe. The proposed architectural improvements are good but I think they will fail to attract families with children unless the area is clean and crime in the area is addressed."***

# 5 GREAT WESTERN SLIP ROAD

## The engagement overview of the project included:

### Today



*before*

Access to the canal currently feels disconnected from Great Western Road, and access to it is unclear.

### Proposed



*proposed after*

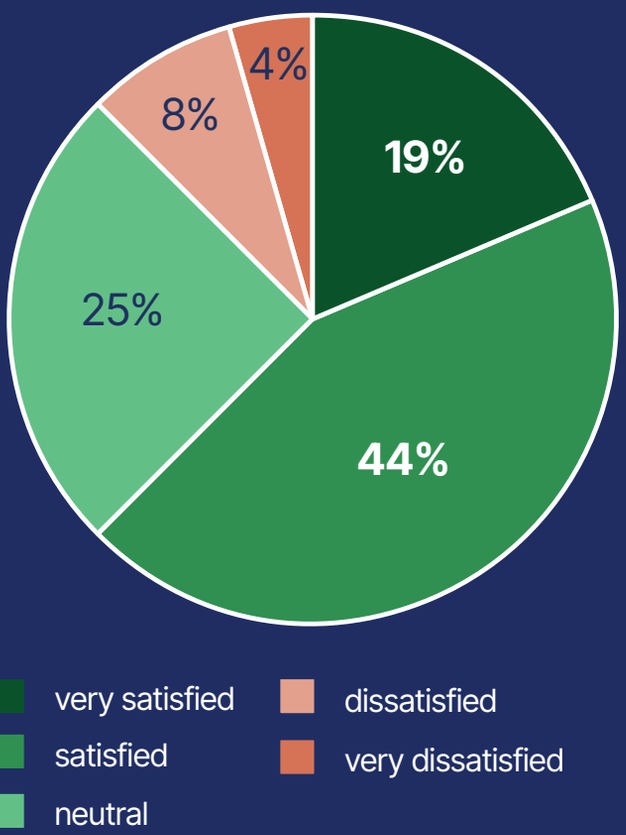
The vision is to create a new gateway to the Canal, attracting people from the station and main road to discover a peaceful canalside route through the neighbourhood. Care will be taken to safeguard space for the existing businesses whilst creating a more inviting pedestrian access point with lighting, planters and wayfinding.

## Key design moves

- → Existing fencing between the slip road and towpath to be replaced with bollards
- → Remove abandoned vehicles and work with existing businesses to create a safer public space
- → Introduce trees to line the street and create a shared surface
- → New crossings, public art commissions and wayfinding to better connect Great Western Road and the towpath and celebrate local culture
- → Public art and lighting commissions to the bridge that are sensitive to wildlife

# FEEDBACK ON PROPOSALS:

## Summary of findings




### The responses were predominantly positive,

with 88% of responses being supportive or neutral of the presented proposals. The written feedback primarily focused on accessibility, safety, and environmental improvements.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- → **Main areas of concern were safety and maintenance with the latter needing to be addressed as a priority to support the successful delivery and phasing of proposals.**
- → **Lighting, CCTV and better visibility to improve safety.**
- → **Support for increased greening with specific purposes e.g. biodiversity, edible planting, growing space.**
- → **Need to balance the requirements of existing businesses with public realm improvements and adjacencies to Westbourne Park Bus Garage.**
- → **Users need to be analysed collectively to balance the impact of proposals e.g. cyclists and the boating community.**
- → **Specificity required over what local culture represents within designs e.g. local communities, canal history.**

## Popular phrase cloud:




## Consensus

There was strong consensus around three key areas: the critical need for improved maintenance and cleanliness regimes; enhanced safety measures including better lighting and CCTV; and increased environmental features with an emphasis on sustainable and edible planting, though all improvements must be supported by robust long-term maintenance plans.

→ **Maintenance and Cleanliness:** Critical concern about ongoing maintenance and cleanliness, today's regime seen as unsatisfactory, and shared concerns about long-term sustainability. Comments included:

***"Please share more details on how this will be maintained longer term? At the moment, it feels like a dumping ground that is periodically upgraded but then falls back into decline"***

***"How can we ensure there is enough funding to keep it clean. Less capex and more opex'***

→ **Safety and Security:** There was a universal agreement on need for improved lighting and surveillance and concerns about current safety, particularly for women. Comments included:

***"Better crime prevention. Lighting and CCTV to deter drug dealers and gangs for loiter and intimidate"***

***"If feels like allowing cars to park in this area will make the road feel less safe, especially parked cars in the night can feel very unsafe for (usually women) walking alone"***

→ **Environmental Enhancement:** A strong support for increased greenery with specific purposes, with an emphasis on wildlife-friendly and edible planting. Comments included:

***"Food growing to be part of the plan with growing manager and volunteers"***

***"Since this is a slanted road leading from the road directly to the canal, runoff from cars should be considered"***

## Dissensus & key tensions

→ **Business Integration vs Public Space:** There was a tension between existing businesses and public realm improvements. Disagreement over parking and vehicle access. Comments included:

***"The current access point works fine - pedestrians use the steps that go down firm the bridge."***

***"Great, only concern is that local businesses are really able to stay - think some are car repair shops so require the parking?"***

***"The existing businesses are responsible for dumping a lot of rubbish here (old tyres etc)"***

→ **Transport and Access Conflicts:** Some disagreement over cyclist access and safety. Comments included:

***"Include designated cycle path on to the new wider section on the west side of meanwhile"***

***"A mirror or signs for oncoming bicycles will also be helpful, I generally come out really cautiously onto the canal, but some cyclists are travelling really fast"***

→ **Cultural and Design Approach:** Varying views on extent of changes needed. Dissensus over art installations and signage. Comments included:

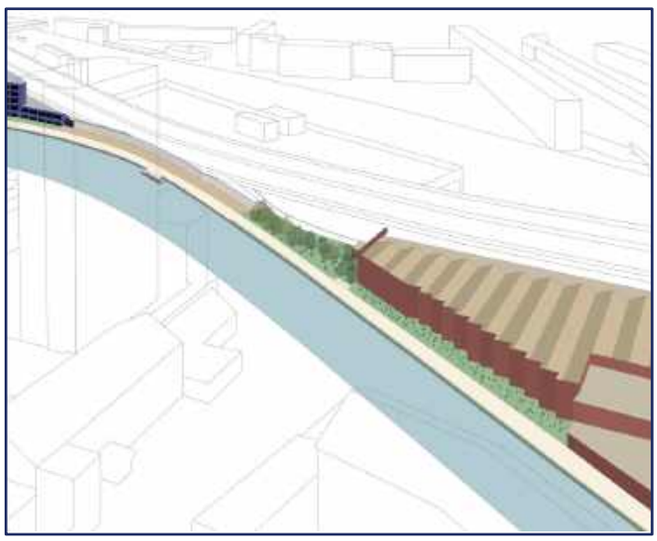
***"It would be interesting to know who decides what 'local culture' is. If this is essentially just related to the Notting hill Carnival this does a disservice to actual local people"***

***"There are strong Irish and Brazilian communities and an interesting industrial past of the canal and canalside that I fear will be overlooked"***

# → 6 WESTWAY CANALSIDE

## The engagement overview of the project included:

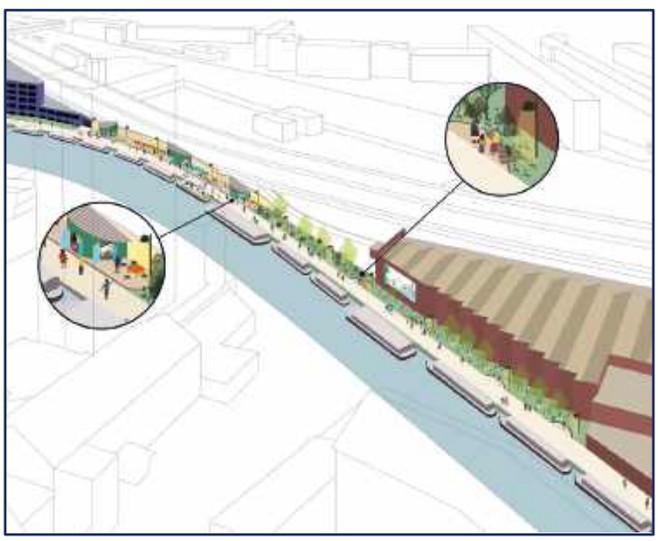
### Today



*before*

The towpath under and to the side of the Westway currently feels unsafe and unwelcoming to any activity.

### Proposed



*proposed after*

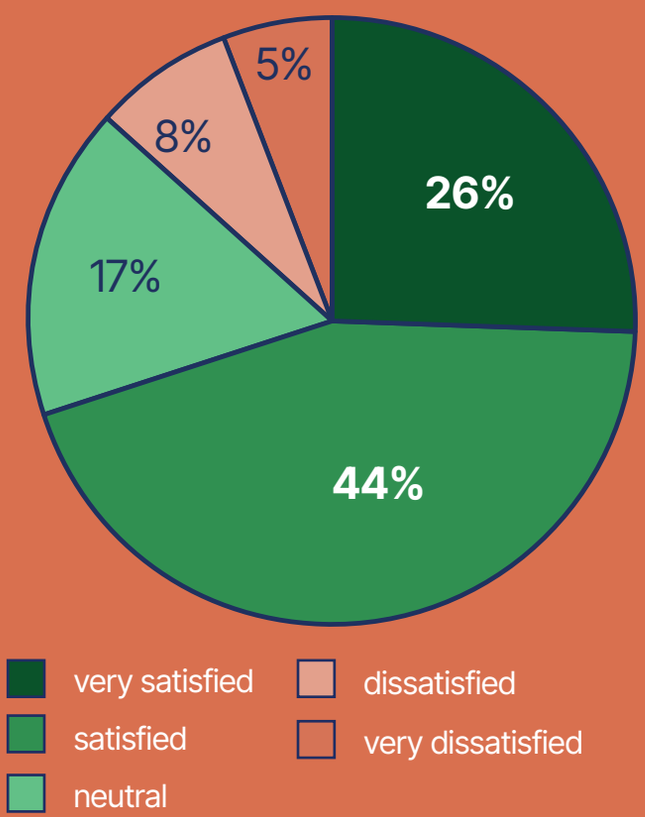
The vision is to create a new destination under the Westway Flyover called Westway Canalside, transforming a dark, unwelcoming site into an inviting space where all are welcome. New structures could host children for 'messy play', maker spaces for tinkering, or exercise classes – these are just some of the activities that could enliven this space. A new linear pocket park with fruit trees will stem off the covered space, and a large 'brick canvas' will create opportunities for a rotation of mural commissions.

## Key Design Moves

- → Bring on board an operator to introduce new uses and provide guardianship of the space.
- → Pursue co-design and co-build of new community facilities with local people.
- → Public art commission opportunities to showcase new activities and cultural history.
- → Explore introducing lighting to dark spaces whilst being sensitive to wildlife.
- → Explore introducing a new community mooring point to activate the space.
- → Remove overgrown shrubbery and introduce park-like planting, including new fruiting trees to provide canopy cover and biodiversity.
- → Bring forward new seating and passing places off the towpath.

# FEEDBACK ON PROPOSALS:

## Summary of findings




### The responses were predominantly positive,

with 71% of responses being supportive or neutral of the presented proposals. Responses do however reveal significant concerns about current conditions and management, with a strong emphasis on maintenance and safety issues. The feedback highlighted complex challenges around multiple stakeholder responsibilities and long-term sustainability.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- → **Main areas of concern were maintenance, management and safety with anti-social behaviour, cleanliness and women's safety all cited.**
- → **Implementation should be phased, starting with basic infrastructure and maintenance improvements to build community confidence before moving to more ambitious changes.**
- → **Dissensus on the use of the canal by cyclists and how this space could be shared through bike lanes and speed reduction measures.**
- → **Disagreement over the approach to homelessness and how proposals and management will help or hinder this.**
- → **Concern that public art will be vandalised quickly in this location.**

## Popular phrase cloud:




biodiversity health culture safety activity other

## Consensus

Strong consensus around three critical issues such as the urgent need for clear governance and maintenance protocols between Westminster City Council and Canal & River Trust, enhanced security measures to address safety concerns and anti-social behaviour, and improved environmental management including waste systems and green infrastructure maintenance.

→ **Maintenance and Management:** Strong concerns about ongoing maintenance and jurisdictional issues. Critical focus on waste management and cleanliness. Questions about funding and responsibility between Westminster City Council and Canal & River Trust Comments included:

*"The plans look fine in pictures. But the absolutely key requirement is that any installation or facility or improvement is fully maintained after installation"*

*"Please share more details on how this will be maintained longer term?"*

→ **Safety and Security:** Universal agreement on need for improved surveillance and lighting. Concerns about anti-social behaviour and rough sleeping. There was a strong emphasis on women's safety Comments included:

*"This is one of the most unsafe stretches of the canal where I have experienced harassment both when walking and cycling"*

*"I know this area well... It really has gone downhill in the past few years. It would certainly need guardianship"*

*"Currently the area feels unwelcoming and unsafe with rubbish, problems with homelessness, etc"*

→ **Environmental Conditions:** Strong concerns about water quality and pollution. Need for proper waste management systems. Desire for increased greenery with proper maintenance Comments included:

*"The canal itself is full of rubbish most of it left there by the boaters"*

*"Although the proposals in principle are encouraging. They will not be successful unless the litter, illegal fly tipping and condition of the water (through contamination and littering) is addressed"*

*"I would add as many trees as possible. Your inspiration should be the High-Line in New York"*

## Dissensus & key tensions

→ **Boating Community vs Public Space:** Disagreement over mooring rights and regulations. Tension between residential boats and public access. Comments included:

*"I would like to see the houseboats and all the other ugly barges removed from the canal"*

*"The moorings for boats should stay available for free 14 days use"*

*"The community mooring space will reduce mooring space available - these mooring spaces are already in high demand"*

→ **Cycling Conflicts:** There was disagreement over cyclist access. Concerns about speed and safety. Comments included:

*"Cyclists should also be banned from the towpath. They hurtle at breakneck speeds"*

*"More visible cycle lanes would be good"*

*"Should be a specified bike lane as it feels dangerous walking along there"*

# 7 BRINDLEY CANALSIDE

## The engagement overview of the project included:

### Today



*before*

Access to the canal from Harrow Road feels unsafe, and the green space here is littered, underused and not accessible.

### Proposed



*proposed after*

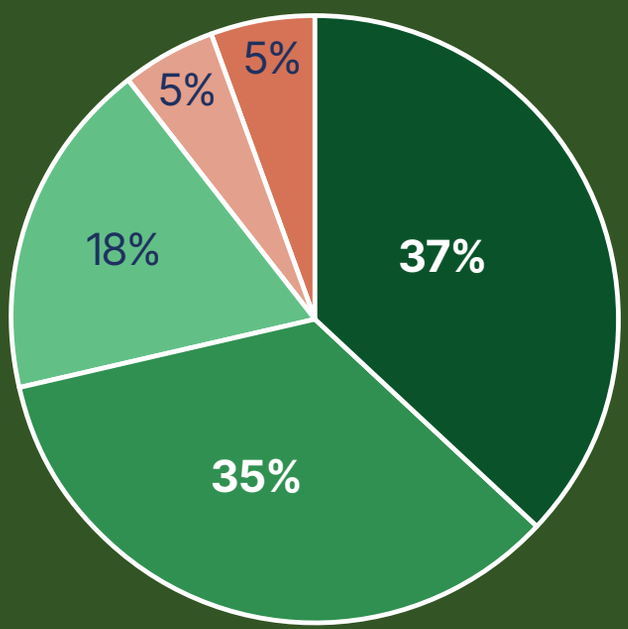
The vision is to transform this overgrown connection from Harrow Road to the canal by introducing vibrant signage on the bridge and upgrading the ramp and landscaping towards the towpath to create an inviting and inclusive gateway. Once people arrive on the towpath, they will be greeted by a new biodiverse hedgerow, colourful planting and new places to sit, rest and enjoy the views, all whilst set back from the towpath and under the shade of trees.

## Key design moves

- → Ramp redesigned, widened and extended so that the link between the towpath and high street is fully accessible
- → Clearing of bushes to improve sightlines, whilst enhancing biodiversity
- → New spaces to rest next to the towpath with formal and informal seating
- → Public art and lighting commissions for Harrow Road bridge
- → New semi-mature trees and hedgerows
- → New bird and bat boxes and bug hotels

# FEEDBACK ON PROPOSALS:

## Summary of findings




### The responses were predominantly positive,

with 90% of responses being supportive or neutral of the presented proposals. Feedback focused heavily on path management, cycling conflicts, and maintenance concerns, with particular emphasis on practical improvements rather than proposed additions.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- → **Support for practical improvements such as wider paths, better access points and improved path surfaces.**
- → **Implementation should follow a phased approach, starting with essential infrastructure and safety improvements in parallel to the development of design proposals, additional amenities, and finally public art and way-finding.**
- → **Support for increased greenery with year-round interest and edible landscapes.**
- → **Dissensus on the use of the canal by cyclists and how this space could be shared through bike lanes and speed reduction measures.**
- → **The need for a simple and effective signage strategy.**
- → **Protocols established include: regular cleaning schedules, speed reduction approaches for cyclists, wildlife-friendly planting schemes, and clear response protocols for issues like fly-tipping and anti-social behaviour.**

## Popular phrase cloud




## Consensus:

Within the written feedback there was strong emphasis on practical improvements, prioritising wider, well-maintained paths to reduce cyclist/ pedestrian conflicts, better access points, and regular waste management. While supportive of environmental enhancements like seasonal plantings and wildlife-friendly vegetation, they stressed that ongoing maintenance is crucial for any improvements' success.

→ **Path Management and Access:** There were strong concerns about path width and maintenance. Issues with puddles and surface quality. And the need for better access points. Comments included:

***"Please extend the ramp sufficiently for safe cycle and pedestrian access"***

***"The path is unpleasant and often a source of tension between cyclists and pedestrians"***

***"A new ramp that's more visible and open will feel safer and hopefully result in less trash being dumped"***

→ **Infrastructure and Maintenance:** Critical focus on basic infrastructure improvements. Need for regular cleaning and maintenance. Concerns about waste management. Comments included:

***"Rubbish levels along the path are disgusting and a health hazard"***

***"I don't think bright vibrant signage is going to offer any benefits or improvements... More important is maintenance"***

***"The plans look fine in pictures. But the absolutely key requirement is that any installation or facility or improvement is fully maintained after installation"***

→ **Environmental Enhancements:** Support for increased greenery with proper maintenance. Desire for wildlife-friendly planting. Express the need for proper waste management.
Comments included:

***"More greenery and all future planting of trees to be fruit or nut"***

***"Could put reeds here too"***

## Dissensus & key tensions:

→ **Cyclist-Pedestrian Conflicts:** Strong disagreement over shared space usage. Concerns about speed and safety Comments included:

***"Cyclists make the canal pathways dangerous for pedestrians. What are you planning to do about this hazard?"***

***"Speed bumps to control electric bikes"***

***"Seating is a good idea, but needs to be accompanied by limitations on cycle speeds"***

→ **Design Priorities:** Tension between design proposals and practical needs. Disagreement over signage and way-finding Comments included:

***"Clearer indication of entry into the canal should be discreet -no more eyesores in the area please!"***

***"Nice signage on the bridge"***

***"The work needs to be simple and effective"***

→ **Social Issues:** There are concerns about antisocial behaviour. Different views on addressing homelessness.
Comments included:

***"There is a guy who has been living in a red tent by that bridge for a year. Maybe some of this money could be spent helping him find a place to live?"***

***"Security cameras as it is where you get large groups of youths on the electric scooters and motors"***

***"The people causing the litter here are youths and bench drinkers"***

# 8 AMBERLEY CANAL WALK

## The engagement overview of the project included:

### Today



*before*

The canalside space along Amberley Estate is currently a hard-paved landscape with semi-mature trees and no furniture.

### Proposed



*proposed after*

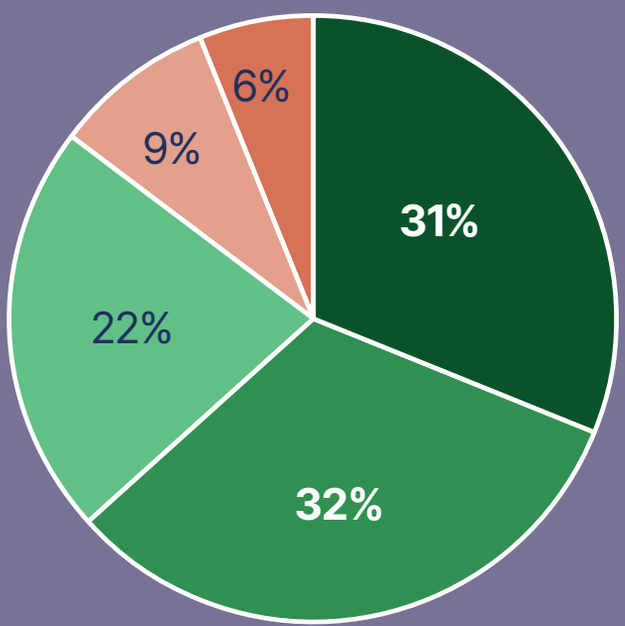
The vision is to transform this barren public space into a lush canal walk and peaceful setting. By de-paving and greening the space beneath trees to improve their health, adding new planters for community gardening, and reed beds along the bank, the Amberley Canalside could become a fertile space for nature, rest and relaxation. Additionally, feature lighting and wayfinding will improve safety and

## Key design moves

- → De-paving the hard landscape, in particular to create a better environment around existing trees and create space for planting.
- → Potential soft play and moveable furniture to be stored away when not in use.
- → New in-canal reed beds.
- → Change lighting to be sensitive to wildlife and provide appropriate atmosphere.

# FEEDBACK ON PROPOSALS:

## Summary of findings




### The responses were predominantly positive,

with 85% of responses being supportive or neutral of the presented proposals. While the more extensive written feedback focused heavily on practical concerns about maintenance and implementation, this does not reflect the overwhelming support for the scheme's vision to enhance the canalside environment.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- → **Strong support for environmental enhancement through reed beds, wildlife friendly features and a reduction in hard landscaping.**
- → **In-water planting to be considered against canal navigation channels and mooring provision.**
- → **To support progression from design to implementation, comprehensive maintenance protocols must be established covering both hard and soft landscaping elements. Key priorities include sustainable planting schemes, waste management systems, and clear responsibilities for ongoing maintenance.**
- → **Implementation should follow a phased approach, starting with pilot projects that can build community confidence. Regular review points will allow for assessment and adjustment, ensuring the project evolves to address local needs.**
- → **New seating and play amenities to be considered against their impact on neighbours and anti-social behaviour.**

## Popular phrase cloud




## Consensus

The engagement revealed strong consensus around three key themes: support for environmental improvements including reed beds and wildlife-friendly lighting; critical importance of establishing robust maintenance regimes; and careful consideration of residential amenity impacts. While concerns exist about implementation details, there is broad agreement these elements are essential to success.

→ **Environmental Enhancement:** Strong support for reed beds and wildlife-friendly features. Enthusiasm for increased greenery and tree planting. Support for wildlife-friendly lighting. Comments included:

***"I particularly approve of two features here: The expansion of the reeds along the canal - a feature that could be implemented elsewhere too - and the replacement of the current harsh light along the Amberley side with softer and more nature and user-friendly lighting"***

*"Excellent idea for canal reed-beds and more nature-friendly plants. That whole side of the canal would be so much nicer with these proposals"*

*"More planting definitely needed on the side with so much hard landscaping. The reed-bed sounds great too"*

→ **Maintenance Concerns:** Critical focus on upkeep and cleaning. Need for sustainable maintenance plans. Concerns about waste management. Comments included:

*"The facilities people from the council flats are sweeping and cleaning this area almost daily. So any design should make upkeep as simple and easy"*

*"Reed beds are a bad idea. They have to be maintained which in other part of the canal is never done"*

*"Although the proposals in principle are encouraging. They will not be successful unless the litter, illegal fly-tipping and condition of the water is addressed"*

## Dissensus & key tensions

→ **Amenity Provision vs Anti-social Behaviour:** there are conflicting views on seating and play features. Concerns about noise impact on residents. Disagreement over furniture placement.
Comments included:

*"The only two existing benches are always occupied by people engaging in anti-social behaviours (e.g. drinking). Adding more furniture might call for more of these behaviour"*

*"Seating and play features should be placed in such a way that it will avoid causing noise and nuisance for residents whose balconies and windows are canal-facing"*

*"Any fixed seating creates alcoholic antisocial behaviour (from past experience)"*

→ **Reed Beds and Boating:** Tension between environmental benefits and navigation. Concerns about maintenance and safety. Comments included:

*"Reed beds will unfortunately impede the industrial canal freight through this area"*

*"It all looks great except the floating reed beds. These will make the river narrower which will make it harder to manoeuvre boats"*

*"I strongly oppose the introduction of reed beds which will restrict the navigation"*



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