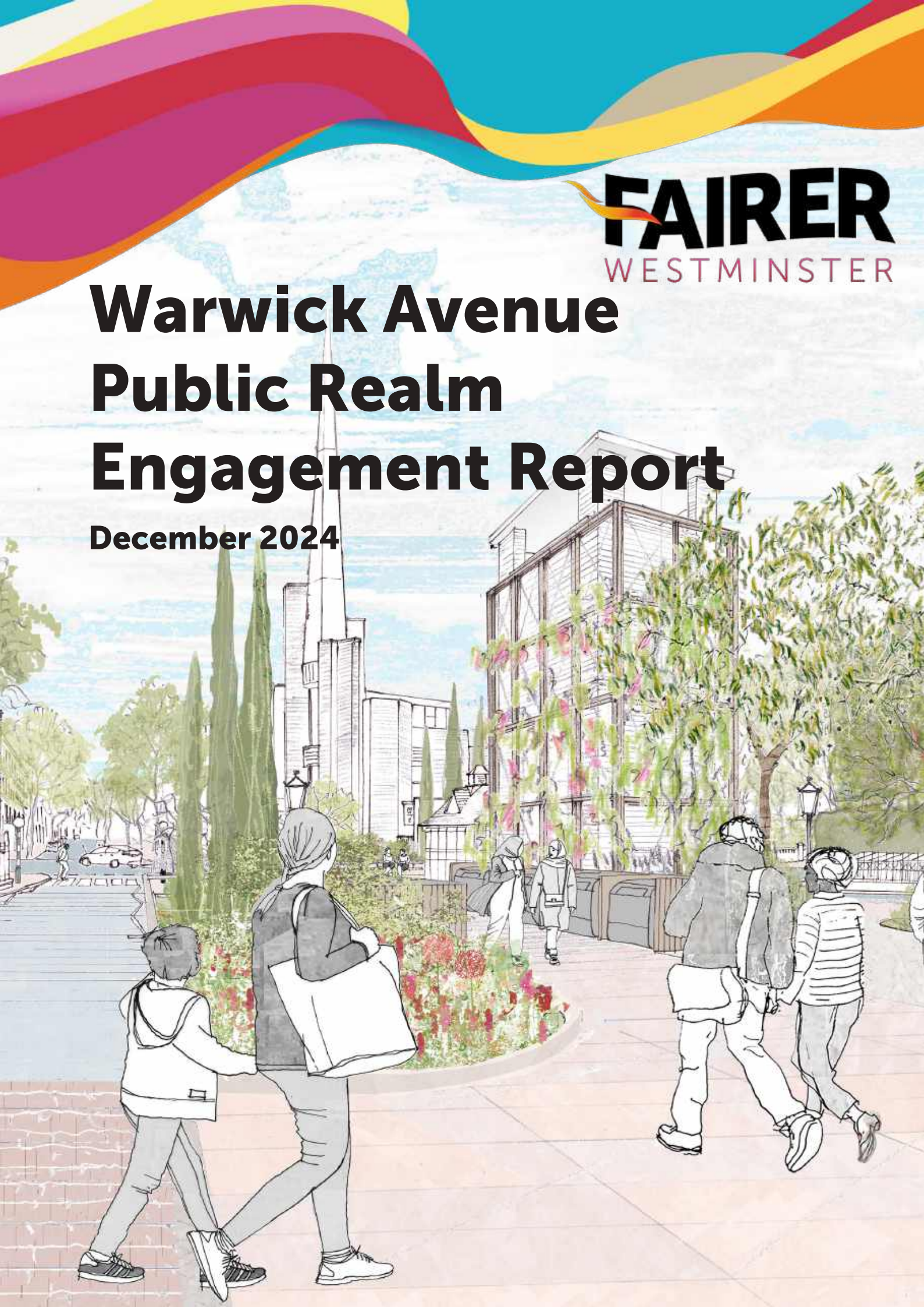
FAIRER WESTMINSTER

Warwick Avenue Public Realm Engagement Report

December 2024



Executive summary

Warwick Avenue is the first site to come forward for design development from the **Paddington Public Realm Strategy** which identified key opportunity areas for public realm improvement. The Warwick Avenue Public Realm Proposal was publicly launched in February 2024 with an initial community engagement phase designed to understand local sentiment and aspirations for the area. Alongside community engagement, a professional site appraisal, technical surveys, and interviews with key stakeholders took place to understand the opportunities and challenges. In response to community feedback and technical assessments, the Design Team developed four design proposals that differed in degrees of change proposed. The feedback received is summarised in this report.

The purpose of this engagement was to solicit feedback from the local community in response to the four design proposals for Warwick Avenue's public realm improvements. In total, 338 people responded to the survey - a high response rate in comparison to similar surveys - which is indicative of strong local engagement and has given us invaluable feedback for the next stage of design development.

The **key findings**:
1. there is broad agreement on the project objectives;
2. there is a majority of positive responses in support the baseline proposal;
3. there were significant positive responses to certain design elements within the other three proposals which could be explored in a hybrid proposal.

The **methodology** of this engagement was focused on promoting the project specifically within the local community and encouraging as many locals as possible to submit their feedback via a **digital survey**. A highly visible public exhibition showcasing the design proposals was positioned in a prominent location in Warwick Avenue for three weeks, and two community events were held in conjunction with the exhibition which allowed locals to speak directly with the Design Team and Council Officers. The survey was promoted via print and digital avenues: emails were sent to all those who participated in the early engagement and the wider stakeholder network, letterbox leaflets were distributed across the Little Venice Ward, posters were attached to lampposts in high footfall areas. The survey was designed to solicit open-text responses to each proposal rather than being a referendum on the proposals.

The **demographic profile of the 338 survey participants** was generally older and less diverse than the local demographic profile of the Little Venice Ward (which is reflective of the demographics of respondents in other public realm schemes). Of those that did submit their home postcode (59% of all respondents), 95% provided a Little Venice postcode, which means a majority of respondents are local residents. Also, there weren't any patterns or relevant differences in the responses between people that are local residents, or the overall responses received, therefore we haven't separated these in this report.

The **main themes** that cropped up in the open-text responses across the four proposals were: **parking, traffic, greenery, street furniture.** It is important to note that there was a diversity of views across these themes, but a methodical analysis and categorisation has allowed us to distil the feedback into key recommendations.

To respond to the feedback we will develop a hybrid proposal that builds upon the baseline 'a neighbourhood space' and incorporates popular elements from the other proposals. This hybrid proposal needs to consider the following recommendations:
1. balance the local desire for improvement whilst minimising disruption from construction;
2. deliver an acceptable parking capacity that balances the current demand with the Council's commitment to promoting walking and cycling infrastructure;
3. offer clarity on the maintenance of new greenery and other additional features.

The **next steps** of design development and indeed delivery are subject to further technical studies, the identification and approval of budget, and a statutory public consultation on a hybrid proposal in due course.

To stay tuned to the project updates please do subscribe to the Warwick Avenue Public Realm engagement platform on ***https://warwickavenue.commonplace.is/.***

- **Place Shaping Team, December 2024**





Introduction to the programme & summary of survey findings

Introduction to the project

Programme

In February 2024 Westminster City Council launched the Warwick Avenue Public Realm Project with the ambition of creating a more welcoming, accessible, and greener public space.

Throughout spring we carried out initial community engagement to understand local experiences and aspirations for the space, as well as concerns about any changes. We listened to views and distilled this feedback into key objectives, which informed the subsequent design approach and proposals developed by the team.

In the summer of 2024, we held a public in-person and online exhibition showcasing the design proposals that came out of this initial phase. A short online survey was open for four weeks from 10th July until 7th August, to gather feedback on these proposals. This document summarises the results of this survey. These results will help us to refine a hybrid proposal that best meets the appetite of the local community, to take forward to the next stage.

Background

In 2023, the Council published its Paddington Public Realm Strategy which focused on improving public spaces and connections for walking and cycling across this part of Westminster, on account of the divisions and impact of the environment caused by the Westway, Harrow Road and surrounding infrastructure. The strategy sets a framework for future projects that may be considered for funding. As part of the Council's research for the strategy, the local Paddington Waterways and Maida Vale Society proposed Warwick Avenue as an opportunity site, where a potential project could be explored, in relation to funding available for infrastructure projects in this area from the Neighbourhood Community Interest Levy. As a result, the Warwick Avenue Public Realm Project is the first place-based project to be developed further with a view to securing funding.

More information about the Paddington Public Realm Strategy can be found here:
www.westminster.gov.uk/paddington-place/paddington-public-realm-strategy

Team

The Council's Place Shaping and Highways teams are managing the project and have appointed a design team led by Context Office urban designers, with BBUK landscape design, Studio Dekka lighting design, NRP traffic and transport, alongside WSP highways engineers.

Design approach

A set of project objectives for improvements to Warwick Avenue's public realm was developed in response to earlier community engagement findings, as well as the project team's appraisal of existing site conditions, surveys, discussions with key stakeholders and technical inputs.

The project objectives in turn informed the design development process. The design team developed four proposals that differ in degrees of scale and level of change. These proposals include a baseline proposal with minimal road changes, two additional design ideas that could be added to the baseline proposal, and another proposal involving more substantial changes to the road network.

The online survey included feedback on the project objectives as well as the baseline proposal and additional proposals.

More information about the project and design ideas presented can be found at:
https://www.westminster.gov.uk/place-shaping/paddington-place-plan/warwick-avenue

Project site



The proposals and ideas that were presented

The following four design proposals were shown in a public exhibition on Warwick Avenue, and were presented online, forming the basis of the online survey questions.

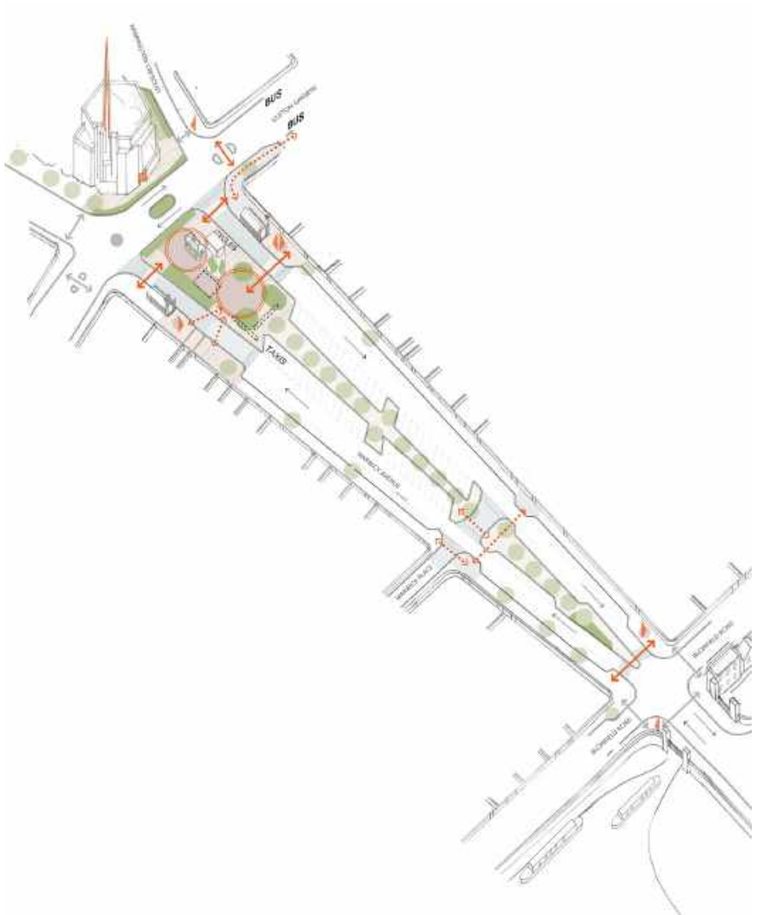
Baseline proposal — Additional ideas — Most ambitious approach











Baseline proposal
aims to create an improved neighbourhood space.

Improvements focus on protecting the street's character while re-arranging existing features to create more generous, pleasant places and a better use of space around the Underground station, vent shaft, Cabmen's Shelter and gateways into Warwick Avenue.

The baseline design proposal would involve minimal changes to kerblines and parking to unlock the opportunity of a new neighbourhood space.

The proposal features upgraded, step-free pedestrian crossings to improve accessibility, new way-finding, and improved lighting. Existing trees would be retained and protected. Additional trees would be planted where appropriate, and new areas of low level greenery would be created.



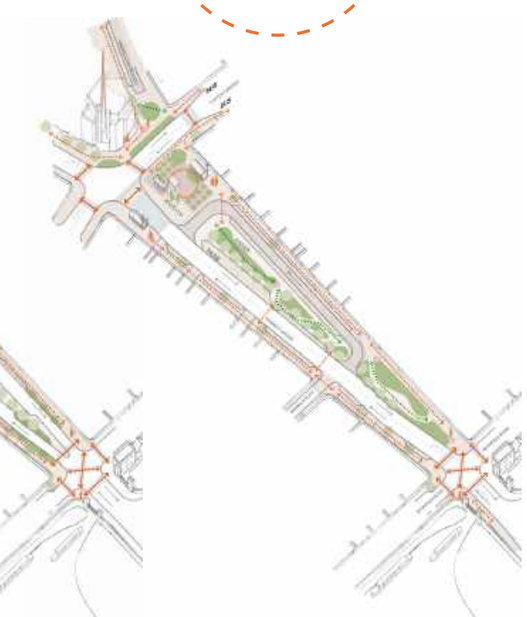
A central green route
could be added to the baseline.

This idea includes all the benefits of baseline proposals and additionally creates an accessible green walking route on the median down the centre of Warwick Avenue.



An enhanced avenue
could be added to the baseline.

This idea includes all the benefits of baseline proposals and additionally creates wider footways, more greening, trees and other improvements down both sides of Warwick Avenue.



A series of gardens
takes a different approach from the baseline.

This idea would be the most ambitious, simplifying road layouts to create a two-way street and a new series of gardens from north to south, while maintaining access on Warwick Avenue.

The engagement survey

Purpose of the online survey

In order to gather feedback on the objectives and proposals developed to date, a short online survey was launched and was available for four weeks, from Wednesday 10th July until Wednesday 7th August 2024. We requested feedback and reached out to the local community through email contacts lists, letterbox flyers, and on-street posters. Additionally, a public exhibition of the design ideas was held on site between the 10th July and the 2nd August, with two evening presentation and Q&A events.

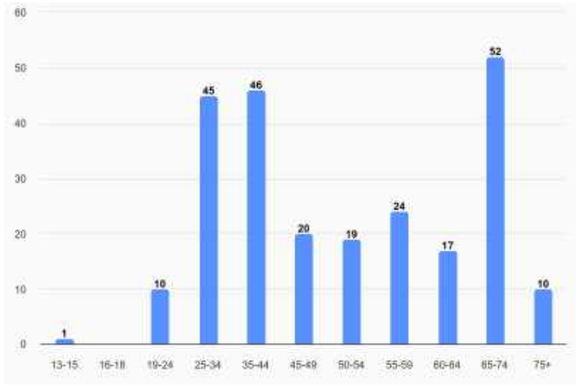
The purpose of this engagement was to give the local community an opportunity to have their say on the design proposals in order to gather feedback to inform a subsequent design development.

Responses and analysis

The online survey was completed by a total of 338 respondents. The demographic profile of respondents meaningfully reflected all ages, except for under-18s and was highest with over 65s and 25-44 year olds. In relation to the demographic profile of the Little Venice Ward, the profile of respondents was generally older and less diverse (higher proportion of white ethnic groups, lower proportion of groups with disabilities and long-term health conditions). This profile is representative of respondents who typically engage with other Westminster public realm schemes. 201 respondents (59% of all respondents) provided postcode information, and out of those who did, 190 (95%) provided a Little Venice W2 or W9 postcode.

This document summarises the findings of the survey responses, and includes both quantitative and qualitative results. All qualitative comments have been reviewed manually for each survey question in turn, with comments analysed and reviewed for recurring themes.

Additionally, during the same period, 28 emails were received in the project's inbox, making the total number of respondents 366. These email comments were logged alongside survey responses, and all who wrote in were directed to fill out the online survey to ensure their views would be captured in the results.



Age of respondents who engaged with the project via the CommonPlace online platform

366 total respondents

Summary of feedback on project objectives

Overall, the survey results can be read as a sign of considerable local support for a public realm improvement project at Warwick Avenue.

The project objectives for Warwick Avenue's public realm presented the aspiration to create an improved neighbourhood space, to make crossings and routes safer and more accessible, and to upgrade and soften the area through improved greening and lighting, all while respecting its residential character and historic setting. Objectives were grouped under three main aims:

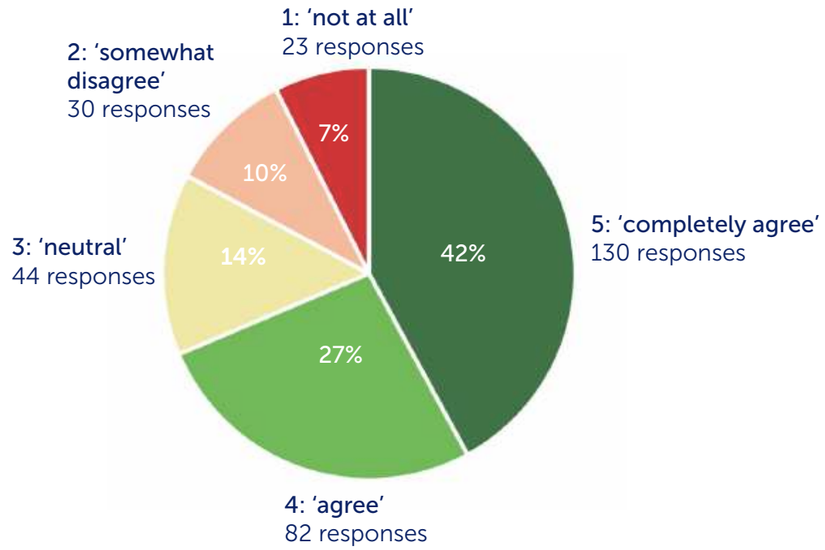
- Protect existing character
- Enhance spaces for all users
- Create appropriate spaces & clear routes

The full list of project objectives can be viewed within the exhibition boards, available at: *https://www.westminster.gov.uk/place-shaping/paddington-place-plan/warwick-avenue*

The online survey asked respondents to what extent they agreed with the project objectives on a scale of 1 to 5 (with 1 being 'not at all', and 5 being 'completely agree').

On the whole, the response to these was positive and there was good engagement with the question (309 total responses). A large majority of 69% (212 participants) stated either complete agreement or agreement with the project objectives (ie they responded '4' or '5'). Of the 190 people who provided a W2 or W9 postcode, 66% (125) stated either agreement or complete agreement with the project objectives. Out of the 53 respondents (17%) who disagreed with the project objectives (ie they responded '1' or '2'), 23 (7% of the total) went on to say they disagree with the premise and need for this project.

'To what extent do you agree with the Project Objectives?' (309 responses)
on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being 'not at all' and 5 being 'completely agree'



Summary of feedback on baseline proposal

Baseline proposal (354 comments)

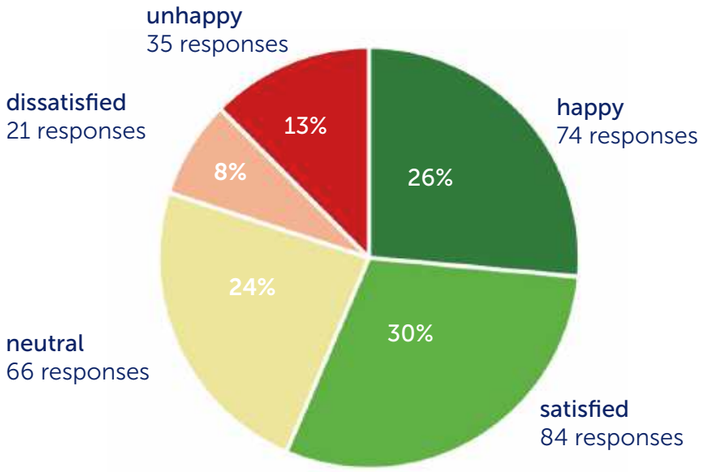
The online survey included three questions about the baseline proposal, to gain specific feedback on levels of support, likes and dislikes among the local community. In contrast, feedback on the additional ideas was more open-ended, and survey questions were limited to one for each proposal.

The baseline proposal was well received, with a majority of 158 (56% of the 280 total responses) saying they were either happy or satisfied with the proposal, compared to 56 (20%) who said they felt unhappy or dissatisfied. Analysis of subsequent comments suggests that of the 56 who selected 'unhappy' or 'dissatisfied', 13 (5% of total responses) believed the baseline proposal doesn't go far enough, while 11 (4% of the total) were opposed to a public realm scheme here altogether.

The survey asked participants what they like about the baseline proposal. There were 193 comments, and 94 of these (49%) mentioned the additional greenery and trees. Many also liked the improved accessibility, crossings and pedestrian spaces. Commenters liked that the proposal keeps parking and road layout changes to an acceptable, minimal level and retains the area's character and feel. Other popular features included the provision of cycle storage, improvements to the waste facilities and lighting proposals.

When asked what they don't like, 40 comments (25% of the 161 total) said the baseline proposal doesn't go far enough, often calling it unambitious. Many wanted to see a greater prioritisation of pedestrians, more meaningful changes to the road layout and junctions, and a further reduction in parking. Conversely, some felt that too many parking spaces are lost in the baseline scheme. Other comments included concerns about new seating areas worsening antisocial behaviour problems in the area. Some were against a project at Warwick Avenue altogether.

'How do you feel about the Baseline Proposal?' (280 responses)



Summary of feedback on additional proposals



'A central green route' (240 comments)

The 'central green route' proposal was mostly positively received, with many saying it strikes a good balance between parking changes and improved pedestrian and green space, improving the existing median strip without impacting the area's overall character. However, for some the extent of parking loss is too great to justify these benefits (30 comments - 13%), and opinions about the usefulness and popularity of the central walking route were mixed. Some critics appeared to be against any changes to the area at all (24 comments - 10%), while others felt this proposal doesn't go far enough in prioritising pedestrians (21 comments - 9%).



'An enhanced avenue' (231 comments)

Feedback on the 'enhanced avenue' proposal was mixed, although positive on balance. Many felt that this proposal prioritises useful pedestrian routes, reduces the dominance of parked cars and enhances the avenue feel of the street. Others felt this design was less impactful than other approaches, or felt that the parking loss was too significant (30 comments - 12%). As with 'a central green route', a small proportion felt the proposal simply wasn't ambitious enough (16 comments - 6%), while others felt the proposed improvements are all unnecessary (24 comments - 10%).



'A series of gardens' (252 comments)

There was a great deal of enthusiasm and passion for the 'series of gardens' proposal, with recurring descriptions like 'fantastic', 'best' and 'exciting'. Many liked the simplified road layout in particular (30 comments - 11%) and the transformative benefits it unocks, including improved safety. However, this scheme also elicited the strongest negative reactions, primarily due to the major road layout changes and to the associated parking loss, which many deemed unacceptable (37 comments - 14%). Some also felt this proposal would go too far in changing the street's existing character and residential feel, especially given the proposal's asymmetry.



In-depth analysis of feedback for each design proposal

Baseline proposal: ‘An improved neighbourhood’

Design approach

The aim of the baseline proposal is to create an improved neighbourhood space with minimal changes to kerb lines and parking, re-arranging existing features to create more generous, pleasant places and a better use of space while protecting the area’s existing character. The proposal also features upgraded, step-free pedestrian crossings to improve accessibility, new way-finding, improved lighting and additional tree planting and greenery.



Feedback on the baseline proposal

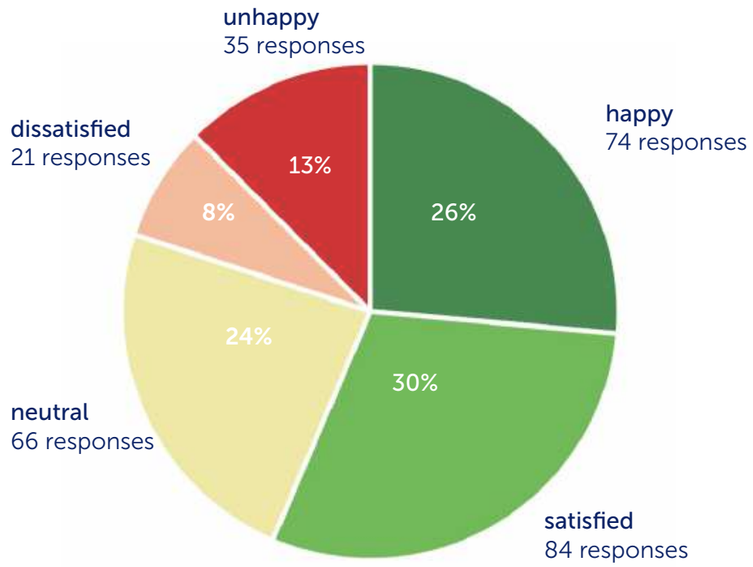
Survey results

The online survey asked respondents how they felt about the baseline proposal, with five choices ranging from happy to unhappy. A majority of 158 out of 280 (56%) were either happy or satisfied, compared to 56 (20%) who said they felt either unhappy or dissatisfied. Analysis of subsequent comments suggests that out of the 56 who selected ‘unhappy’ or ‘dissatisfied’, 13 (5% of total responses) believed the baseline proposal doesn’t go far enough, while 11 (4% of the total) were opposed to a public realm scheme here altogether.

“This is what the area needs. Essentially, a tidy up, and making the space look more inviting, with minimal change to road layout.”

Participant comment

‘How do you feel about the Baseline Proposal?’ (280 responses)

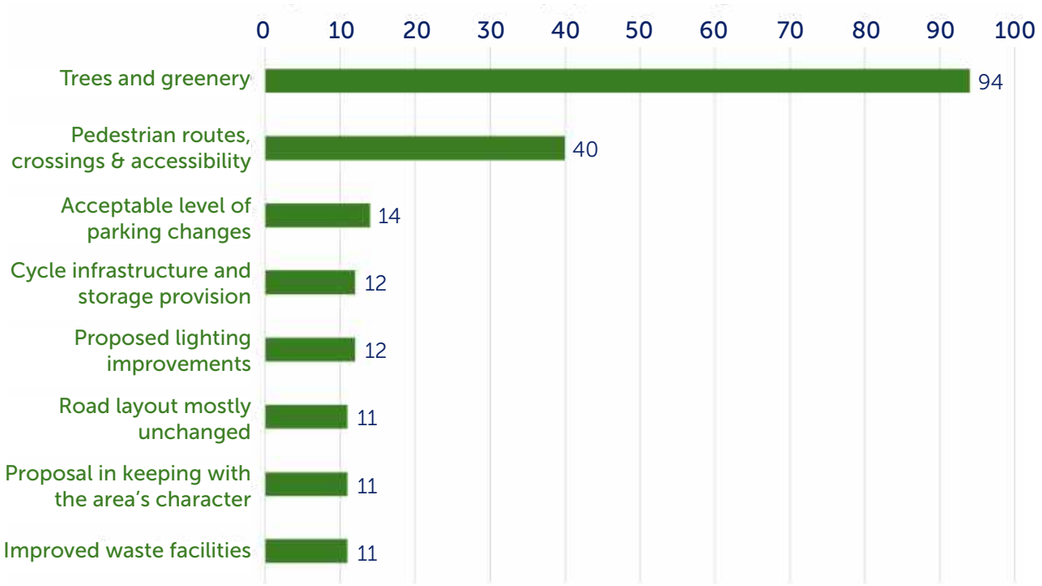


Feedback on the baseline proposal

What respondents liked about the baseline proposal

The survey asked participants what they like about the baseline proposal. There were 193 responses, and 94 of these (49%) mentioned the additional greenery and trees. Many also liked the improved accessibility, crossings and pedestrian spaces. Commenters liked that the proposal keeps parking and road layout changes to an acceptable, minimal level and retains the area's character and feel. Other popular features included the provision of cycle storage, improvements to the waste facilities and lighting proposals.

'Tell us what you like' (193 comments in total)



Selected participant comments

"A good use of space and allows a share for pedestrians, traffic, parking and added greenery with an improvement to services."

"More greenery, and seems to be making the area look much more attractive. I'm particularly a fan of the idea to make this a place that people come to relax: at the moment it feels like a series of islands cut up by roads where vehicles dominate."

Recurring themes in the feedback

Comments about the liked features of the baseline proposal were reviewed and categorised thematically. Recurring themes have been summarised opposite and below.

✓ Trees and greenery

Greening was seen as a significant benefit of the proposal, with planting and trees mentioned in almost half of all comments. Some commenters specifically liked the proposed greening of the Underground vent shaft (12 comments), and were also pleased to see existing trees and greenery retained (9 comments). Some also praised the proposal's garden-like feel.

✓ Pedestrian routes, crossings and accessibility

Commenters liked the additional pedestrian space the scheme creates. People also commented positively on accessibility improvements, particularly for those with prams and wheelchairs. The proposed new crossings were well received and deemed a significant safety improvement. Some pointed out the benefits of extending the median strip southbound towards the Blomfield Road junction.

✓ Acceptable level of parking changes

Commenters liked that the proposal makes better use of space while retaining what they deemed to be a positive and acceptable number of parking spaces.

Other features people liked

Other recurring themes (with over 10 comments) about the positive features of the baseline proposal include:

- ✓ **Cycle infrastructure and storage provision**
  Respondents welcomed the proposals and locations for cycle stands and hangars, and were pleased to see TfL cycle hire facilities retained.
- ✓ **Proposed lighting improvements**
- ✓ **The road layout is mostly unchanged**
  Commenters were pleased to see improvements to the public realm that don't rely on major changes to the area's roads.
- ✓ **The proposal is deemed to be in keeping with the area's character**
- ✓ **Proposed improvements to waste facilites and bins**
  Commenters were pleased to see the bin area addressed, including improvements to their appearance and location.

Feedback on the baseline proposal

What respondents didn't like about baseline proposal

The survey asked participants what they don't like about the baseline proposal. Out of 161 total comments, 40 (25%) said the baseline proposal doesn't go far enough, often calling it unambitious. Many wanted to see a greater prioritisation of pedestrians, more meaningful changes to the road layout and junctions, and a further reduction in parking. Conversely, some felt that too many parking spaces are lost in the baseline scheme. Other comments included concerns about new seating areas worsening antisocial behaviour problems in the area. Some were against a project at Warwick Avenue altogether.

'Tell us what you don't like' (161 comments in total)



Selected participant comments

"Zero ambition. Retaining too many car parking spots. Not enough trees and greenery. Too much area dedicated to the road and car parking spots"

"The loss of 8 residents' parking spaces is unacceptable. If eight parking spaces are needed they should be taken from the black cab spaces as these are never fully utilized"

Recurring themes in the feedback

Comments about the disliked features of the baseline proposal were reviewed and categorised thematically. Recurring themes have been summarised opposite and below.

✕ Not ambitious enough

Many said the proposed changes in the baseline scheme don't go far enough, often going on to say they'd like to see more substantial changes to the road layout and a greater prioritisation of pedestrians over vehicles.

✕ Risk of attracting antisocial behaviour

Commenters were concerned about proposed seating areas potentially worsening antisocial behaviour problems in the area, particularly after dark. Some were also wary of creating a destination that could attract large crowds.

✕ Too many parking spaces lost

Some felt that the proposal's reduction of eight parking spaces is unacceptable, with some specifically mentioning motorcycle spaces.

✕ Too many parking spaces retained

Some wanted to see a a further reduction in parking spaces, to allow for more pedestrian space.

Other features people didn't like

Other recurring themes about the disliked features of the baseline proposal include:

- ✕ **Too many crossings proposed in close proximity to each other**
  Respondents were concerned about the proposed crossings around the Underground station and potential impacts on traffic queues and safety.
- ✕ **The closure of the taxi crossover**
  This was unpopular with some who feel it is useful and/or is a characterful feature.
- ✕ **Unnecessary project/use of funds**
  Some appeared to be against a project at Warwick Avenue altogether, wanting to see the area remain unchanged or wanting to see funds spent elsewhere.

‘A central green route’ proposal

Design approach

The idea for ‘a central green route’ could be added to the baseline design proposals. This approach would enhance the existing trees along the median strip of Warwick Avenue, leading south from the improved neighbourhood space. An enhanced median could include a more generous accessible footway, additional opportunities to cross the street, new planted areas, rain gardens and sustainable drainage, as well as new benches, public art and improved lighting.



Feedback on ‘a central green route’

Survey results (240 comments)

The online survey asked respondents what they thought of the ‘central green route’. The proposal was mostly positively received, with many saying it strikes a good balance between parking changes and improved pedestrian and green space, improving the existing median strip without impacting the area’s overall character. However, for some the extent of parking loss is too great to justify these benefits (33 comments), and opinions about the usefulness and popularity of the central walking route were mixed. Some critics appeared to be against any changes to the area at all (24 comments), while others felt this proposal doesn’t go far enough in prioritising pedestrians (21 comments).

Selected participant comments

“This would be my preferred option with more green, improved look and feel but overall keeping the local/residential feel.

It looks like a proposal for enhancement for local users rather than ‘branding’ the space. It will retain the character which is so important as Paddington becomes more and more bland and corporate.”

“It’s nice but will people use the middle section?”

“It is an improvement, but the green space loses so much between traffic lanes.”

“Loss of residents’ parking spaces is unacceptable.”

Feedback on ‘a central green route’

Recurring themes in the feedback

The online survey asked respondents what they thought of the ‘central green route’ proposal. Comments were reviewed and categorised thematically, with key themes summarised below.

Parking (44 mentions)

To some of the respondents, the loss of 30 parking spaces was deemed unacceptable (30 comments). Others felt that the proposal strikes a good balance between parking changes and benefits to pedestrians. A few people said too much parking is retained in this proposal – they felt the scheme doesn’t go far enough in prioritising pedestrians. Some also felt taxi spaces could be reduced in favour of residents’ parking, particularly given the extent of parking reduction within this scheme.

Trees and greenery (44 mentions)

On balance, respondents appreciated the additional greenery along the central route (25 comments). Conversely, a significant proportion (19 comments) felt that the area is already green enough and in close enough proximity to many parks, or felt that the added greenery came at too large a cost in terms of parking loss. Some cited concerns over the maintenance of new planting and of water features.

Pedestrian routes, crossings and accessibility (29 mentions)

Most comments were positive about the creation of a pleasant and accessible walking route and felt the proposal made better use of the existing median strip. However, a few respondents said that the central strip is not useful or well-used enough as a route to be worth investing in to such an extent. Some negative comments related to the number of crossings in close proximity to each other around the station, deemed to be excessive.

Other themes

Some commenters challenged the need for additional benches, citing antisocial behaviour concerns. There was also some criticism related to the closure of the taxi and refuse crossover and, to a lesser degree, of the Warwick Place crossover – respondents cited usefulness for drivers and character as reasons. The removal of the planted traffic island was pointed out as a positive design feature by a few respondents. A small number voiced safety concerns over play features in a space that has traffic either side of it.

Selected participant comments

“Not keen to lose so many residents parking bays or pay and display parkings. I do like the greenery but would prioritise the parking place.”

“Still too much impact from motor vehicles.”

“I like the additional green spaces compared with the baseline proposal, and especially think the water feature is a great idea!”

“The amenity value of an avenue of trees already exists on both sides of the existing avenue, and the addition of trees as already set out in the baseline is already enhancing the ‘rus in urbe’ effect.”

“I think would really add to the community and for all of us who walk to and from Paddington. This, along with the garden by the canal would provide the most wonderful green route for both pedestrians and nature.”

“Do not agree to closing vehicle crossovers. This will negatively impact road users”

“Will it encourage anti-social behaviour? Begging and street drinking have become an issue by the station as have pickpockets and phone snatchers.”

“Green walking route is a great idea and island removal makes sense”

‘An enhanced avenue’ proposal

Design approach

The idea for an enhanced avenue could be added to the baseline. wThis idea includes all the benefits of baseline proposals and additionally creates wider footways, more greening, trees and other improvements down both sides of Warwick Avenue.



Feedback on ‘an enhanced avenue’

Survey results (231 comments)

The online survey asked respondents what they thought of the ‘enhanced avenue’ proposal. Feedback was mixed, although positive on balance. Many felt that this proposal prioritises useful pedestrian routes, reduces the dominance of parked cars and enhances the avenue feel of the street. Others felt this design was less impactful than other approaches, or felt that the parking loss was too significant (30 comments). As with ‘a central green route’, a small proportion felt the proposal simply wasn’t ambitious enough (16 comments), while others felt the proposed improvements are all unnecessary (24 comments).

Selected participant comments

“Looks nice and I think I prefer this over the Green Route options because better to keep cars in the middle and widen the pavements either side, which are currently very narrow. I think the cars in the middle are more space efficient, more charming, and you’re always going to have more foot traffic down the sides.”

“I think this is the best balance of delivery, viability and overall improvement.”

“This is my least favorite one. I like the wider footpaths, but I think we need more of a change on the roads. ”

“I’m not clear what the point of this proposal is. It simply loses more residents’ parking for very little improvement. The pavements in Warwick Avenue are never crowded. They are already quite wide, and the west side in particular is always very quiet.”

Feedback on ‘an enhanced avenue’

Recurring themes in the feedback

The online survey asked respondents what they thought of the ‘enhanced avenue’ proposal. Comments were reviewed and categorised thematically, with key themes summarised below.

Pedestrian routes, crossings and accessibility (51 mentions)

Some said they preferred the ‘enhanced avenue’ proposal to the ‘central green route’, with footway widening focused along established walking routes where it is more useful. The improved crossings and raised carriageways, more direct routes and greater accessibility were also liked – the diagonal crossing at Blomfield Road was mentioned as a positive feature several times. Critics said that the footways on Warwick Avenue are wide enough already and don’t have the footfall to warrant such large-scale changes.

Parking (39 mentions)

As with the ‘central green route’, the reduction in parking spaces within this proposal drew a strong negative reaction from many (30 comments) who felt it was too big a loss for local residents. However, the extent of parking reduction also drew some positive comments, with respondents praising the de-prioritisation of cars. A small number were unhappy that proposals didn’t go far enough in reducing the dominance of parked cars.

Trees and greenery (27 mentions)

The added trees and greenery were frequently named as positive features of this proposal (17 comments). Some liked that the impact of parked cars would appear softened by planting. Conversely, some felt the planting wouldn’t make a big difference to existing footways that are already green enough. Meanwhile others felt the proposed greening should go much further.

Other themes

As with the baseline proposal and ‘central green route’, some commenters felt that the ‘enhanced avenue’ proposal isn’t ambitious enough and should go further (16 comments). Conversely, others felt the proposed changes are unnecessary (24 comments). As with other proposals, the closure of the vehicle crossovers was disliked by some (but praised by others), and concerns were raised over added seating and antisocial behaviour. The diagonal crossing at Blomfield Road and the removal of the planted traffic island were both frequently pointed out as positive design features. Cycle storage received a few mixed comments regarding both excessive cycle stands and insufficient cycle hangars. A few also felt that taxi bays could be reduced.

Selected participant comments

“Pavement widening (and hiding parking between trees) would make this area much more pleasant. I think the raised crossings would also make the pedestrian experience much more pleasant.”

“I’m not certain that footfall is large enough on some of the street sections. Think there should be some moderate change but not completely pedestrian focused.”

“The proposal prioritizes cars over residents and tourists, contradicting stated objectives.”

“I believe that the loss of 28 parking spaces is too much. Especially when there is no change to the taxi bays.”

“Love the idea of the enhanced avenue which will not only be visually appealing but will be grounded in nature and greenery whilst encouraging people to walk and cycle with ease.”

“The pavement sides are not in need of expansion, in my opinion, and with the many trees already lining them are quite green.”

“One very strong point of this proposal is the proposed re-design of the crossing on Bloomfield Road x Warwick Avenue.”

“Unnecessary. It is fine as it is.”

‘A series of gardens’ proposal

Design approach

The idea for a series of gardens takes a different approach from the baseline.

This idea would be the most ambitious, simplifying road layouts to create a two-way street and a new series of gardens from north to south, while maintaining access on Warwick Avenue. However, due to the level of parking loss (53 spaces), this proposal would require more significant policy and parking changes across the B/C zone in order to be feasible.



Feedback on ‘a series of gardens’

Survey results (252 comments)

The online survey asked respondents what they thought of the ‘series of gardens’ proposal. There was a great deal of enthusiasm and passion for this proposal, with recurring descriptions like ‘fantastic’, ‘best’ and ‘exciting’. Many liked the simplified road layout in particular (30 comments) and the transformative benefits it unocks, including improved safety. However, this scheme also elicited the strongest negative reactions, primarily due to the major road layout changes and associated parking loss, which many deemed unacceptable (37 comments). Some also felt this proposal would go too far in changing the street’s existing character and residential feel, especially given the proposal’s asymmetry.

Selected participant comments

“I love it. It is a really coherent solution to all the aims of the project stated at the start of the survey. […] Getting rid of the roundabout means there is no need for six pedestrian crossings, and human beings can navigate the space with ease.”

“This is the option my children and I like best - I think it brings the greatest benefits to residents of WA in terms of traffic management and associated benefits and I think the loss of parking spaces is probably a reasonable price to pay.”

“Really don’t think this fits with the area and really don’t like it. Completely lose the charm and heritage of Warwick Avenue with the new layout. Loses too many parking spaces and changes the roads too much.”

“Just unacceptable: extreme traffic and no parking spots. It will make the place pretty for visitors but unbearably inconvenient for residents.”

Feedback on ‘a series of gardens’

Recurring themes in the feedback

The online survey asked respondents what they thought of the ‘series of gardens’ proposal. Comments were reviewed and categorised thematically, with key themes summarised below.

Road layout changes (67 mentions)

Many praised the simplified road layout and its associated benefits (30 comments), often citing the improved safety at junctions. Others said they disliked the proposed road changes. The layout’s asymmetry was unpopular with some who felt it was unfair to the residents on one side of Warwick Avenue. Some people specifically expressed concerns around a potential increase in traffic congestion and slower traffic flows that might be associated with this road layout (25 comments). Further traffic modelling and analysis would determine any potential impacts or improvements to traffic flow, to inform proposals going forward.

Parking (45 mentions)

To many, the extent of parking reduction associated with this proposal was simply too much (37 comments), and they didn’t feel this reduction was justified. While some praised the de-prioritisation of vehicles, others said such a loss of parking would cause frustration and anxiety among local residents. Some commenters also felt that taxi bays should be reduced in favour of residents’ parking spaces.

Trees and greenery (28 mentions)

There were many comments praising the extensive green spaces, de-paving and planting associated with this proposal (21 comments). Supporters felt that the creation of gardens without traffic on both sides would provide a successful neighbourhood amenity, calm the street and be more in keeping with the character of Little Venice. However, a minority felt the creation of new green spaces to be unnecessary with so many parks nearby. There were also some concerns over maintenance and safety after dark in the proposed garden spaces.

Pedestrian routes, crossings and accessibility (20 mentions)

Commenters praised the safer crossings resulting from the simplified road layout and junctions, and liked the idea of exiting the Underground station into a pedestrian space. The prospect of walking the length of the street through gardens and pedestrian spaces and not in between two roads was also seen as a major benefit.

Other themes

As with previous proposals, attracting antisocial behaviour was seen as a significant risk by some, even more so in the garden-like spaces proposed here and especially after dark.

Selected participant comments

“[...] Simplification of the road network along Warwick Avenue is a really great idea. This looks so much safer with fewer points of crossing!”

“Terrible idea! All the traffic down one side of the street? The residents on that side will be up in arms! All the noise and all the pollution. Thanks but no thanks.”

“No way! Loss of 53 residents parking bays is far too high and will lead to huge anxiety for residents who are unable to park anywhere.”

“I think incorporating more greenery and gardens is a fantastic idea. It will make the area a place where people can enjoy and bring a sense of community. This is the kind of thing people would envision when they think of Little Venice”

“Good to have more green space but only if it is kept up and not full of rubbish.”

“This would be a wonderful enhancement to the area, allowing residents to walk to the tube station without dodging cars and kerbs, and being able to keep away from the worst of the air pollution. Please please do this!”

Response to other themes raised

A number of additional queries and themes were raised through the engagement that related to the wider project or beyond the scope of this project to resolve, due to portfolio and budget responsibilities. The following section sets out a response to these queries.

What is the budget for this project?

A specific budget has not yet been allocated to deliver a scheme at Warwick Avenue. A budget will be agreed following the response to this public engagement, which seeks to identify a preferred design proposal.

How will the Council be funding this project? Could this money be used for other alternative services (e.g. social car, dealing with anti-social behaviour, cleansing)?

There is opportunity for Council departments to apply internally for Capital, Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), Neighbourhood CIL and Section 106 funding to be allocated to this project. This funding is allocated for infrastructure projects, such as public realm improvements. While there are other important service priorities in the area (e.g. social care, dealing with anti-social behaviour, cleansing etc), they cannot be funded by the above sources and will require the availability of Revenue funding.

Questions over the need for a substantial investment in this location

Currently there is £1,319,472.27 of Neighbourhood CIL available for Little Venice and Maida Vale Neighbourhood Area to fund local infrastructure projects. A local community group - Paddington Waterways and Maida Vale Society - identified Warwick Avenue as the location they felt could benefit most from the funding due to the significance of this location for the area and the current condition of the public realm in relation to its safety, accessibility and the opportunity to increase greening and wayfinding. Their considerations were incorporated during the engagement to develop the Paddington Public Realm Strategy and therefore this project has been considered.

Concerns over a potential increase in road congestion caused by the proposed options (in all proposals, but especially in 'A Series of Gardens')

Overall road space capacity is not changed by any of the options. Under options 1-3 the impact on traffic and network performance is expected to be unchanged or minimal, due to relatively small changes proposed to the operation and traffic capacity. The "Series of Gardens" option 4 includes new traffic signal infrastructure replacing the mini-roundabout at Warwick Avenue/Clifton Gardens. Traffic capacity would be broadly similar but some traffic modelling would be required to determine any impacts on journey times and to help identify and design mitigation. For each proposal, the road layout changes are as follows:

Changes to road layout and operation that have been included in the options were:

- Option for closure of the southern one-way section of Warrington Crescent proposed in 'A Series of Gardens', along with closing the onwards one-way continuation of Warwick Avenue southbound. Southbound traffic on Warrington Crescent would turn onto Warrington Gardens and turn left onto Warwick Avenue to continue southbound. This would help address a specific road safety issue at the southern end of Warrington Crescent and could help to deter through-traffic from the neighbourhood overall.
- 'Series of Gardens' - A new northbound local access road would provide access around the series of gardens to properties on the east side of Warwick Avenue for parking, refuse collection and emergency vehicles.

Questions over the appropriateness of a new/improved neighbourhood space given antisocial behaviour issues within the area, concerns over a potential increase in antisocial behaviour caused by changes proposed

All proposals will be developed to encourage positive use of the public realm, integrating:

- removal of objects outside station exits that can be used as improvised seating
- review of the railings design
- improved lighting
- Improved wayfinding

In the next stage of design we will work closely with the Metropolitan Police Design Out Crime team to include consideration of all features such as improved location and management of bins and recycling facilities, as well as public seating that does not encourage anti-social behaviour.

Issues raised that are outside the scope of this project

- Requests to improve cleansing regime, management (of e-bikes and bins) and policing. This is beyond the scope of this project but will be raised with the relevant Westminster City Council teams, Metropolitan Police and cycle hire companies.
- Step-free access and improvements to the entrances to the Tube was seen by some as a greater priority than many of the improvements proposed. However, this not under the Council's ownership and remit to cover under its funding. Thus, we will highlight this issue to TfL and London Underground to address.
- Some felt the area's wider problems of traffic flows, speed, noise and congestion were not being tackled in these proposals. Although this is outside of the project area scope, we will review this concern with our traffic consultants as part of the wider *Paddington Public Realm Strategy* and *Paddington Place Plan*.
- Pedestrian priority and improvements of Formosa Street was mentioned as another area of focus. This will be examined via WCC Highways as a supplementary project separately.

Conclusion

The engagement survey was intended to generate feedback, it was not set up as a referendum on options. It generated a range of valuable responses to all the ideas rather than one preferred design approach at this stage. Several design ideas gained clear positive feedback, and several specific features were mentioned repeatedly in responses. This feedback will be taken forward by the council team and carefully considered through feasibility and highways design. A statutory consultation on a preferred proposal will follow in due course

Positively received design approaches:

- Creating an improved public realm on Warwick Avenue
- Protecting the existing trees on Warwick Avenue and enhancing their conditions
- Added trees and greenery were widely supported and liked
- Improved, step-free crossings were generally welcomed
- Greening of the Underground vent shaft was widely seen as a good idea
- Southward extension of the median to the Blomfield Road junction was welcomed
- Proposals for lighting, way finding and signage were positively received
- The removal of the traffic island outside the church was generally well received
- Diagonal pedestrian crossings at Blomfield Road also received positive responses

Design considerations and features for further review:

- The number of proposed crossings around the station raised some concerns in relation to perceived impact on traffic queues and safety
- The proposed closures of vehicle crossovers brought a small number of negative reactions, although others commented on the positive impact of these
- Seating locations, types and number should be reviewed in light of antisocial behaviour concerns
- In reducing the parking offer, some respondents wanted to see the balance of taxi bays and residents' parking spaces re-considered
- In relation to cycle storage needs, respondents appeared to favour cycle hangars over cycle stands
- Maintenance costs will require careful consideration, in particular for any planting or water features
- Extra consideration will be needed on lighting and safety after dark in any spaces that are more garden-like
- Although many found the road layout changes proposed in 'a series of gardens' to be too extensive, there were many comments praising the safety benefits of the simplified junctions and crossings
- There was a desire among some for traffic calming measures for speeding traffic.

Next Steps

Design Development
Winter 2024/25 to Summer 2025

- Update design based on feedback received.
- Conduct Highways feasibility and engineering studies.
- Develop detailed cost plan.
- Secure funding for delivery.

Statutory Consultation

- Conduct Traffic Management Order (TMO) consultation.
- Undertake Planning Application, if appropriate.

Final Design

- Finalise design based on TMO Consultation feedback.
- Prepare construction and delivery package.
- Publish realistic delivery timeframe.

Construction

- Delivery of final design (phased, if appropriate, to minimise disturbance.)

Post-occupancy Monitoring

- Monitor impact of scheme on traffic flow, parking availability, air quality, noise pollution, and anti-social behaviour.

For more information about the project, and to stay tuned to updates, please subscribe to the Warwick Avenue newsletter: *https://www.westminster.gov.uk/place-shaping/paddington-place-plan/warwick-avenue*

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