

Folkestone – A Brighter Future (FABF) phase three feedback

Thank you for engaging with us

Thanks to everyone who engaged with us during our third phase of engagement in March/April 2024. Whether you participated online or at the public engagement event at Folkestone Town Hall your views and comments were much appreciated. This type of feedback helps us understand if the original design principles are being met and if not, what needs to change. Your feedback so far has been essential in refining the scheme to make it work better for the community.

As you may already know tangible changes to phase one of the scheme have already been made thanks to your comments, such as the removal of the proposed new roundabout at the junction of Cheriton Road and Gardens.

Changes were also made as a result of the feedback we received through phase two of our consultation. The design on Shellons Street was changed to keep a mature tree which was previously due to be removed. We've also made sure that the bus shelters will be installed with the main shelter facing the road after specific feedback around this point.

The main themes of your feedback have been collated below and we've responded to these in turn. We've also included the [detailed metrics from your feedback](#), for you to see how the wider community responded.

Overview

The FABF project facilitated its third public engagement window from 4 March to 2 April 2024, with the public able to view plans, immerse themselves in the project area in virtual reality (VR) and watch fly-through videos of the proposals. The associated surveys for phase three could be completed online or by hard copy during this time. A total of 263 surveys have been completed both in hard copy and online during this engagement window.

A face-to-face public engagement event was held at Folkestone Town Hall on Friday 8 and Saturday 9 March. An event also took place at Folkestone Academy, specifically for students on Thursday 7 March. Over the three days, a total of 535 visitors attended the event.

Demographic data on those who responded via survey (both online and hard-copy) can be found in [appendix A](#). Comparisons in demographics between the three engagement events can be found in [appendix B](#).

Concern: Won't moving the bus station be unsafe and/or have a detrimental impact on those with accessibility needs.

Your comments

'Leave the bus station where it is.'

'Moving the bus station will mean further to walk for people.'

'How can we reduce the impact of this for people using wheelchairs/other mobility aids?'

'Moving the bus station would impact people carrying heavy bags from the neighbouring supermarkets, especially the elderly and disabled.'

'I am concerned where the buses will be sited as some of us have mobility issues.'

Our response

The bus station is moving to Middelburg Square for a number of reasons, namely:

- The current bus station was built for older buses and has difficulty accommodating newer, larger buses
- The new, linear design can better accommodate people with additional accessibility needs. There is a reduced radial for buses to manoeuvre which helps reduce the gap between the kerb and the bus. A linear design can allow buses to get closer to the kerb.
- The new design improves pedestrian safety. Pedestrians currently cross the bus station between buses. The new bus station will greatly reduce the need for pedestrians crossing the carriageway.
- Buses currently pull in front of one another and wait for each to enter and exit. This will not be the case with new layout.
- The new, linear bus station will solely be on Middelburg Square. The two Shellons Street bus stops will be retained and a bus stand added for driver provision only. Therefore, there will be no need for pedestrians to walk to Shellons Street to catch a bus they currently catch from the bus station.
- A linear layout has been used elsewhere and works well (such as Dartford and Gravesend) and should improve the pedestrian experience.

The bus services have been assigned to each bus stop by Stagecoach based on their knowledge of the services and the potential connections required.

Thorough Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs) have been conducted for the different phases of the Folkestone - A Brighter Future scheme which consider the impacts on various potential users of the area. You can read them here <https://www.folkestone-hythe.gov.uk/folkestone-levelling-up/equality>. These are currently being reviewed by Kent County Council to ensure that they continue to be appropriate for the scheme.

Concern: The road changes will cause more congestion.

Your comments

'Losing the current bus lane along Shellons St could be a backwards step and could increase congestion.'

'Cheriton road is now too narrow...nothing will be able to get past anything that is parked, or slowly moving on the left hand side.'

'The single lane for traffic is too narrow.'

'Traffic will be backed up along this part of Cheriton Road, and Shellons Street (both sides). Congestion everywhere.'

'I think the two way change of traffic on the north side of Middleburg Sq is problematic. In time, locals will get used to it, however, traffic entering the car park in the centre of Middleburg Square will have to cut across traffic going the other way.'

Our response

Traffic modelling was undertaken as part of the design development and large areas of congestion are not anticipated at any time during the day. It is likely that small pockets of congestion could occur during peak times in the morning and afternoon, but these are not anticipated to be significant.

Any slight increases of congestion at peak times within the project area would be an outcome of providing much improved crossing facilities, improvements to road safety and the displacement of the bus stops to enable the Bouverie Square park area.

The proposed infrastructure improvements across the FABF scheme aim to make local journeys easier for all those that live in and visit the town. This is achieved by upgrading, improving and making safer connections around the town. This aids easier, safer movement to and between key locations such as the town centre, Bouverie Square & Folkestone Central train station.

The proposed carriageway and footway improvements aim to improve the experience of all users. The scheme will help encourage residents and visitors to walk, cycle and use public transport throughout the improved connections around the town.

The proposed measures emphasise priority for pedestrians, and cyclists across the scheme, but also minimise the impact to vehicle traffic. This is achieved by introducing measures like strategically positioned crossing points, both controlled (toucan crossings) and uncontrolled (zebra/parallel crossings), raised tables across junctions that help to maintain a constant walkway for pedestrians but also provide a measure to decrease vehicle speeds and improve pedestrian safety. Narrowing carriageway widths by installing rain gardens will also help to enforce lower speed limits and create a safer environment.

Concern: There will be an increase in anti-social behaviour in the garden square and other green areas.

Your comments

'Need to allocate budget to keep any new park clean – it could become a mecca for vandals, litter louts and graffiti 'artists''

'Only one issue I'd have is the planting of tree positions...I wouldn't make it overcrowded with thick trees, no hidden spaces for crime!'

'Leave the bus station alone...it will be a space for junkies and druggies to hang out!'

'...There will need to be CCTV and police visits and good lighting. Otherwise, families and minorities will not feel they can safely be there.'

'Make sure the open space is safe and not a place to avoid. Keep it lively and provide plenty of reasons for people to come and enjoy the town. Keep it busy.'

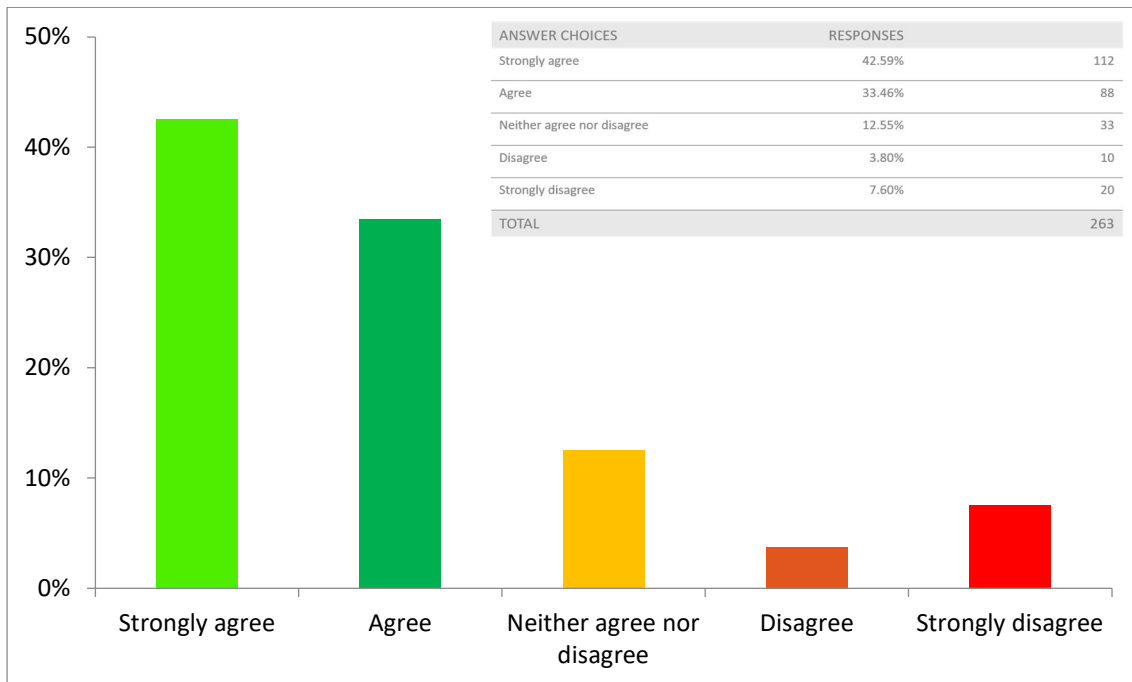
Our response

The Square has been specifically designed to ensure passive surveillance is maximised. No mounds or planting greater than 1.5m in height will mean that sightlines will be unimpeded naturally deterring anti-social behaviour. The trees and plants earmarked for this space have also been selected to complement this purpose. The new area will include CCTV and new lighting both of which will discourage anti-social behaviour in the space too.

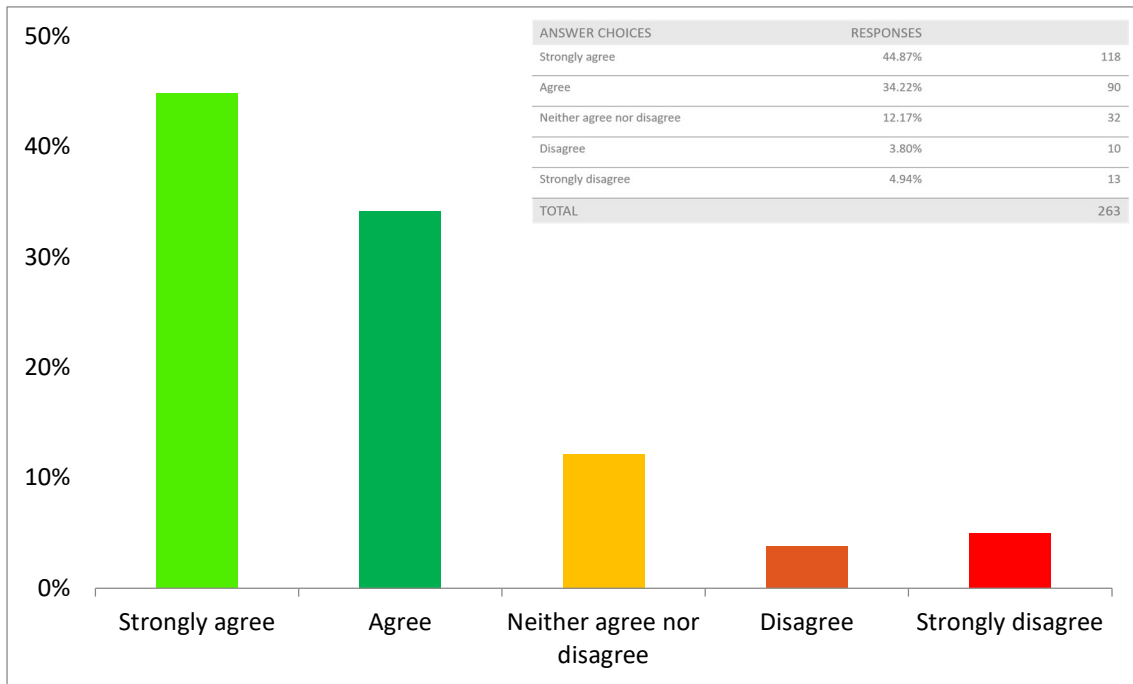
Detailed feedback

The online survey posed seven Likert scale questions, asking respondents to what extent they agreed with the phase three elements of the scheme, as well as the scheme overall.

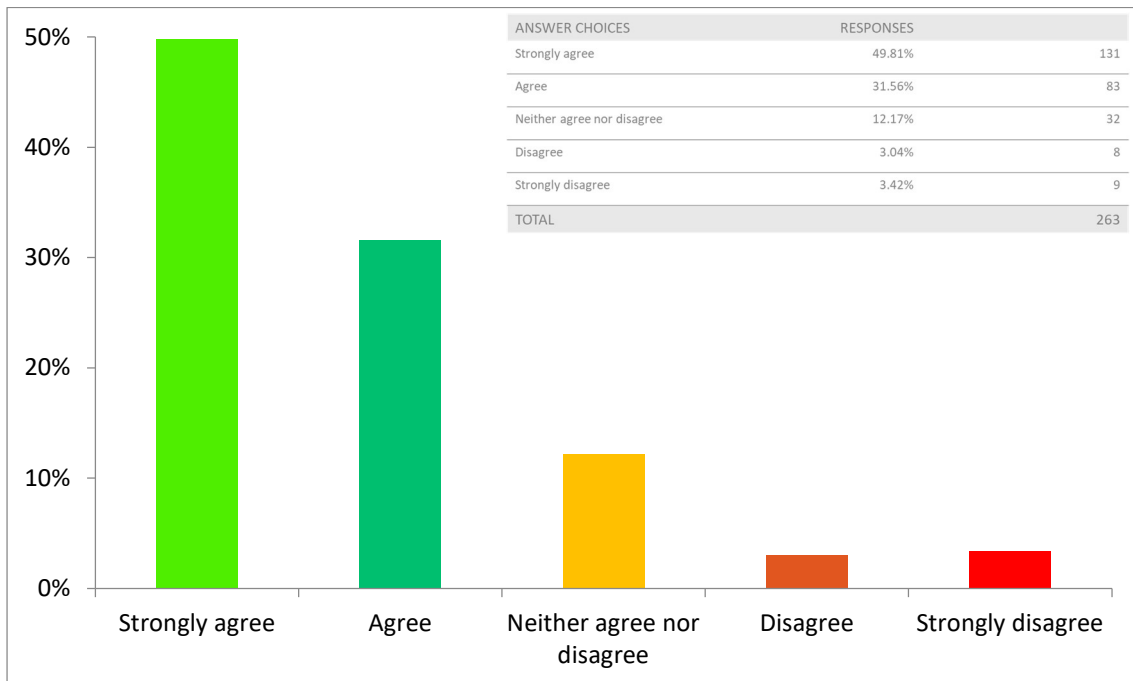
Q1. I am in favour of the updated proposals for Shellons Street, including the bridge connecting Guildhall St North, green spaces and improved pedestrian and road surfaces



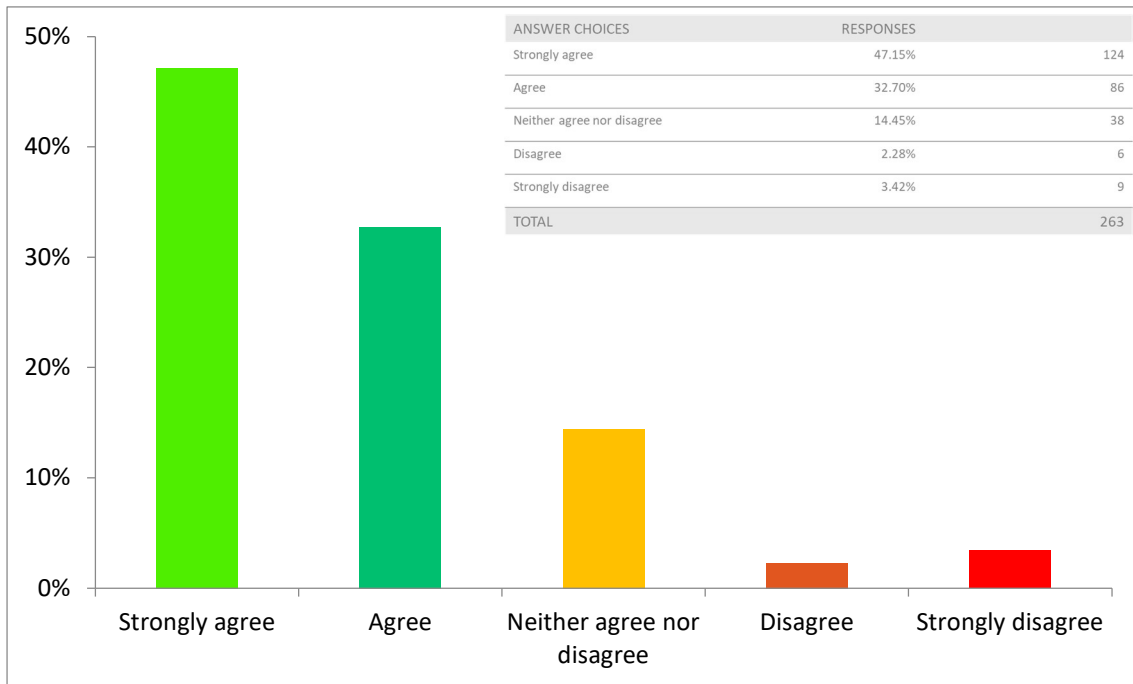
Q2. I am in favour of the proposals for Guildhall St, including the introduction of rain gardens and timber benches.



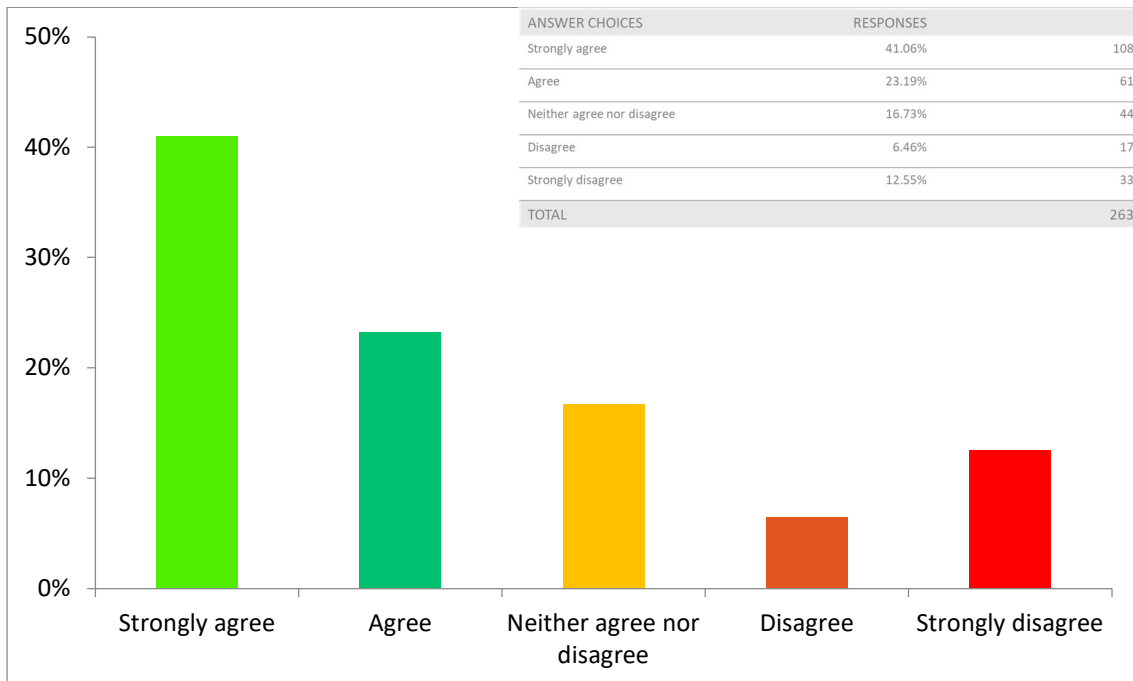
Q3. I am in favour of proposals for the pedestrianised area of Sandgate Road, including the proposed trees, planting and seating areas.



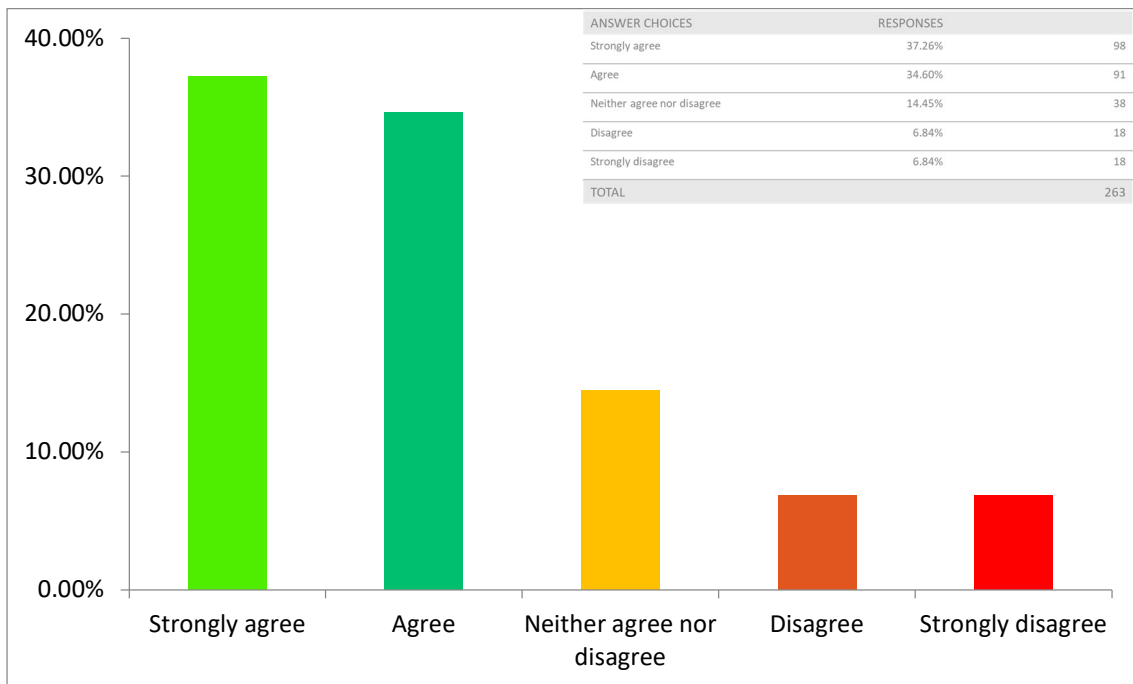
Q4. I am in favour of proposals to include improved market stalls and event space in the pedestrianised areas of Sandgate Road and Guildhall Street.



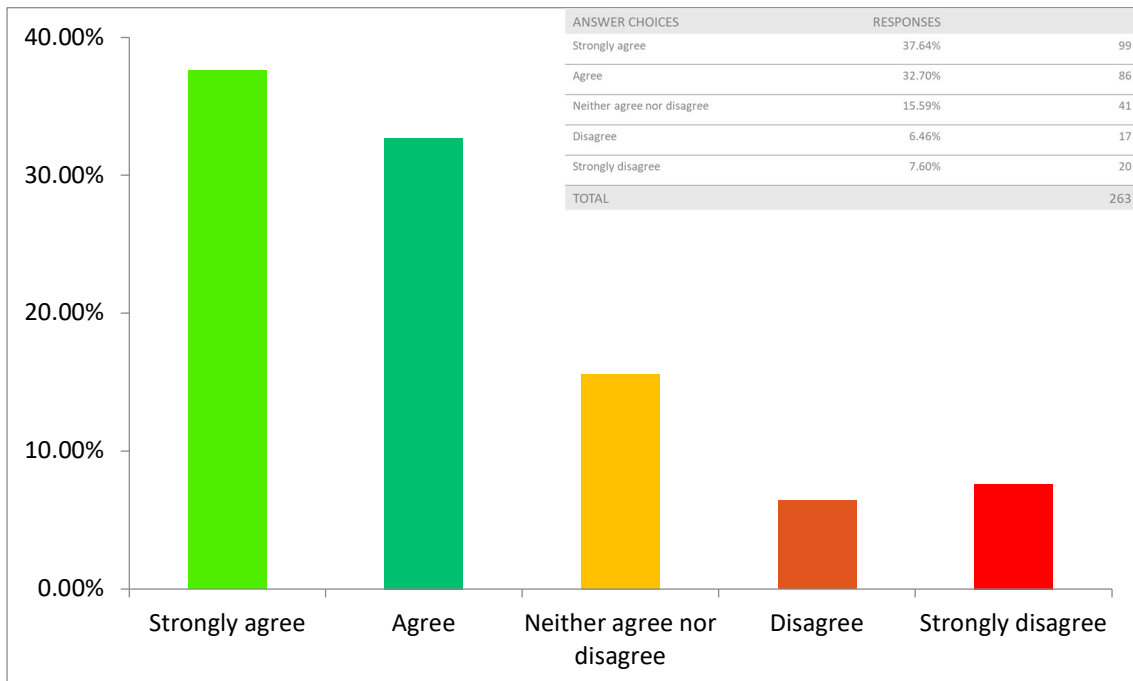
Q5. I am in favour of the proposals of how Bouverie Square (current bus station) might be used as a community space.



Q6. Overall, I am in favour of the proposals of phase three of the project, which comprise of the improvements to Guildhall St, Sandgate Rd and the park in Bouverie Sq.



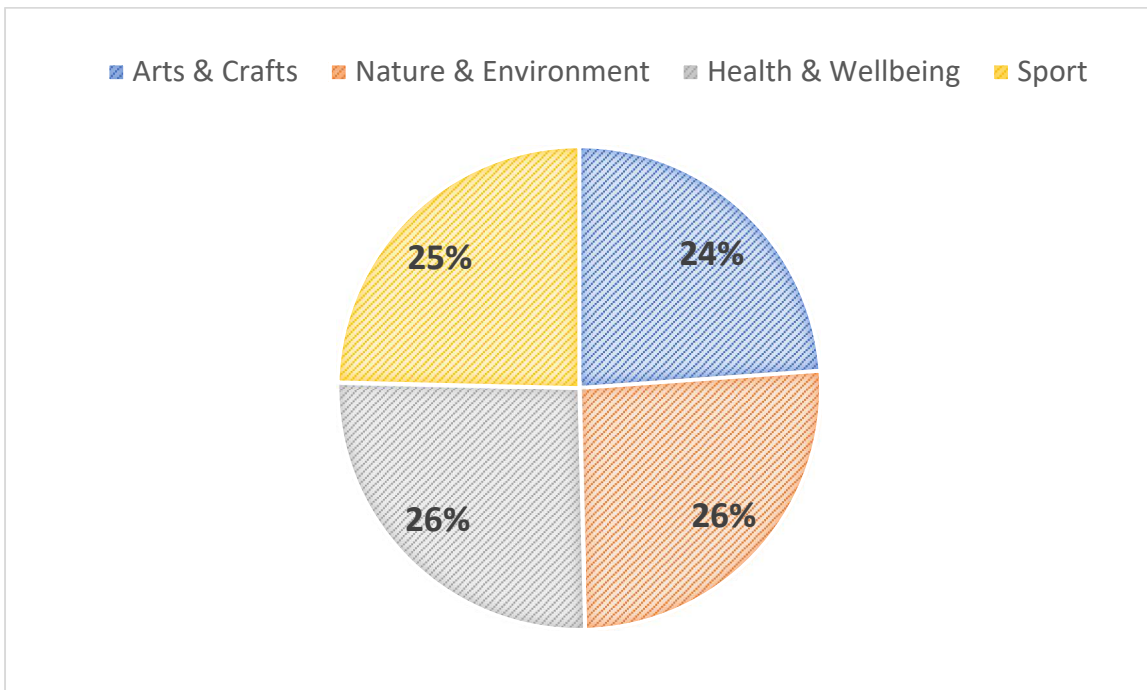
Q7. Overall, I am in favour of the proposals for the whole project area, which comprise of the areas from Folkestone Central station, Cheriton Rd, Cheriton Gds, Middelburg Sq, Shellons St, Guildhall St, Sandgate Rd and Bouverie Sq.



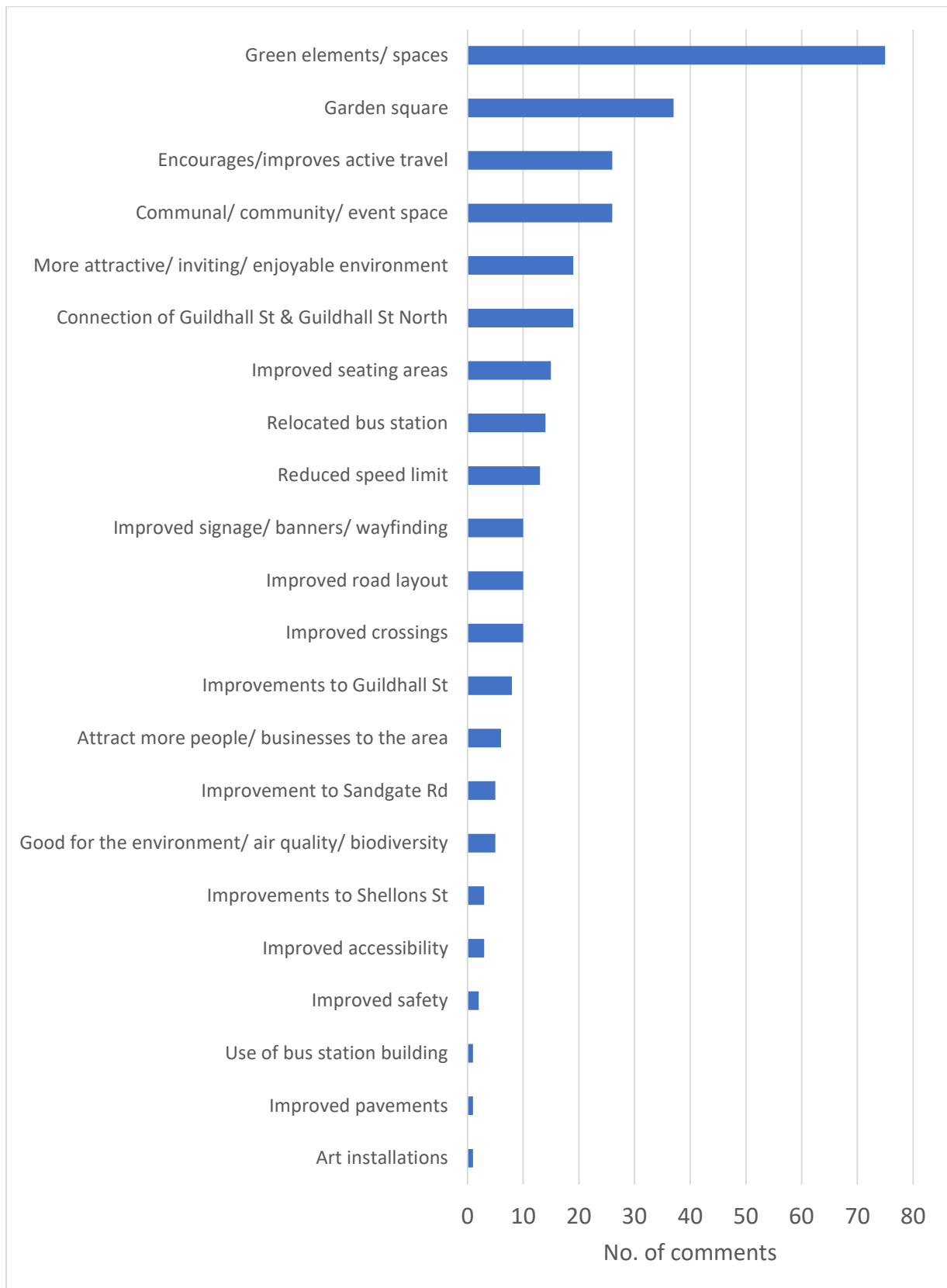
During the events, attendees were invited to drop two coins in vessels to show their preferences for different activities in the town centre. A total of 264 coins were deposited and the results were almost exactly split between the four options.



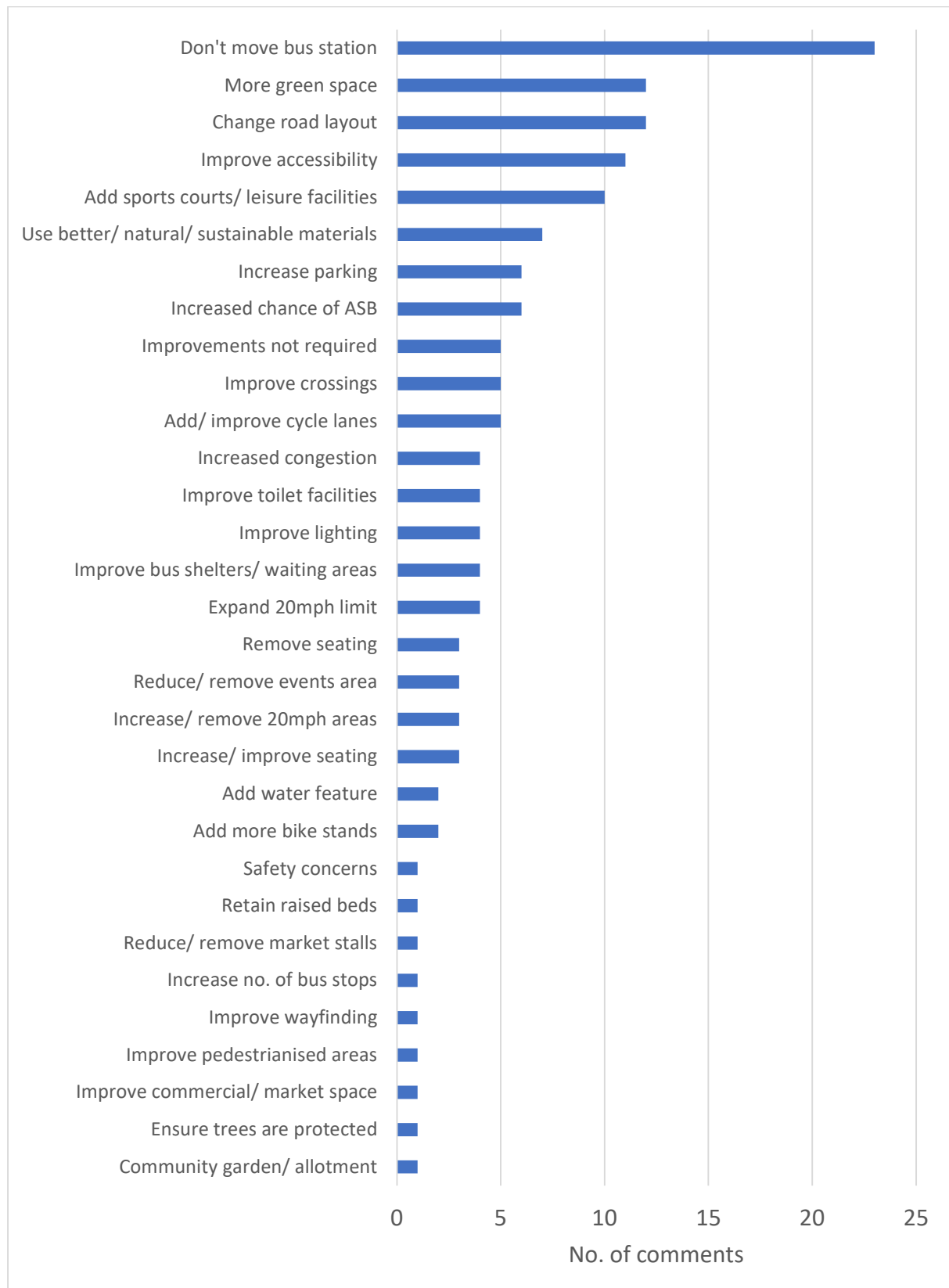
What type of events would you like to see in Folkestone town centre?



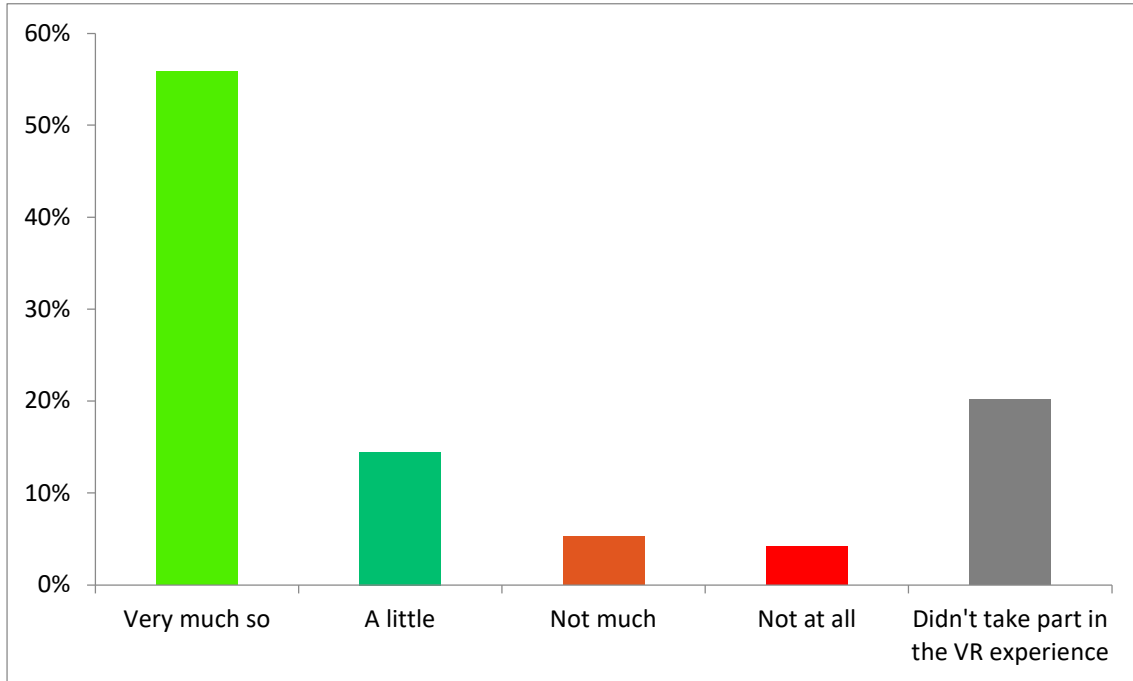
Q8. What proposed element(s) do you most like about phase two of the project?



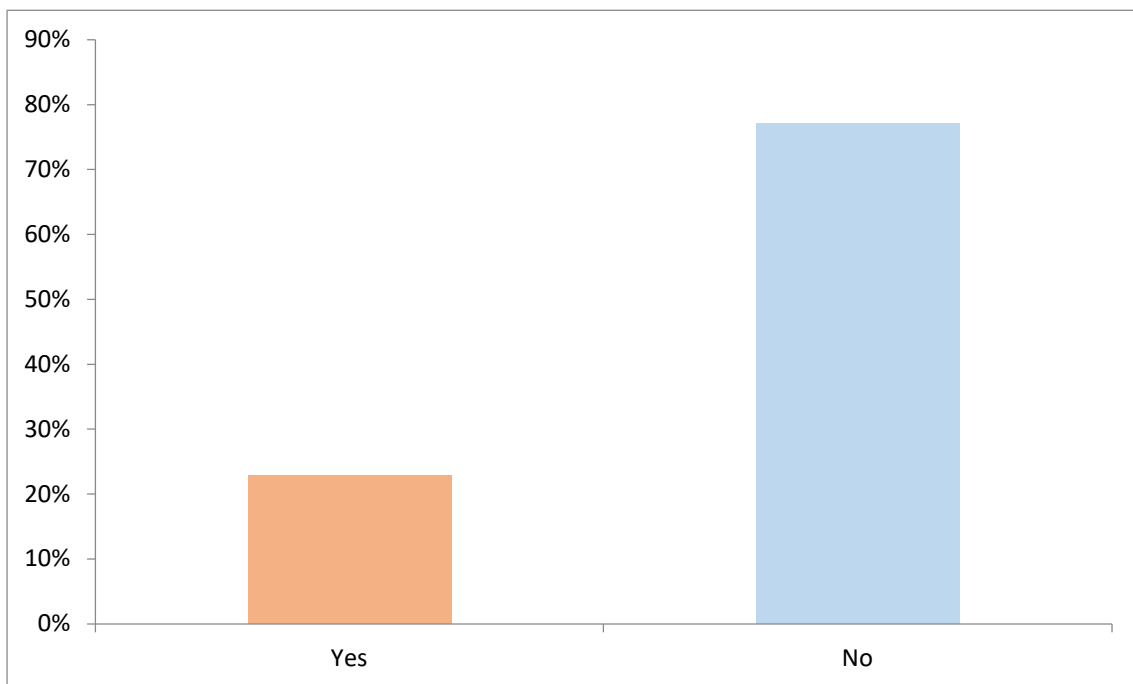
Q9. What proposed element(s) would you change about phase two of the project?



Q10. If you took a ride on our virtual reality (VR) magic carpet, to what extent has the experience helped you better understand the proposed changes to Folkestone town centre?

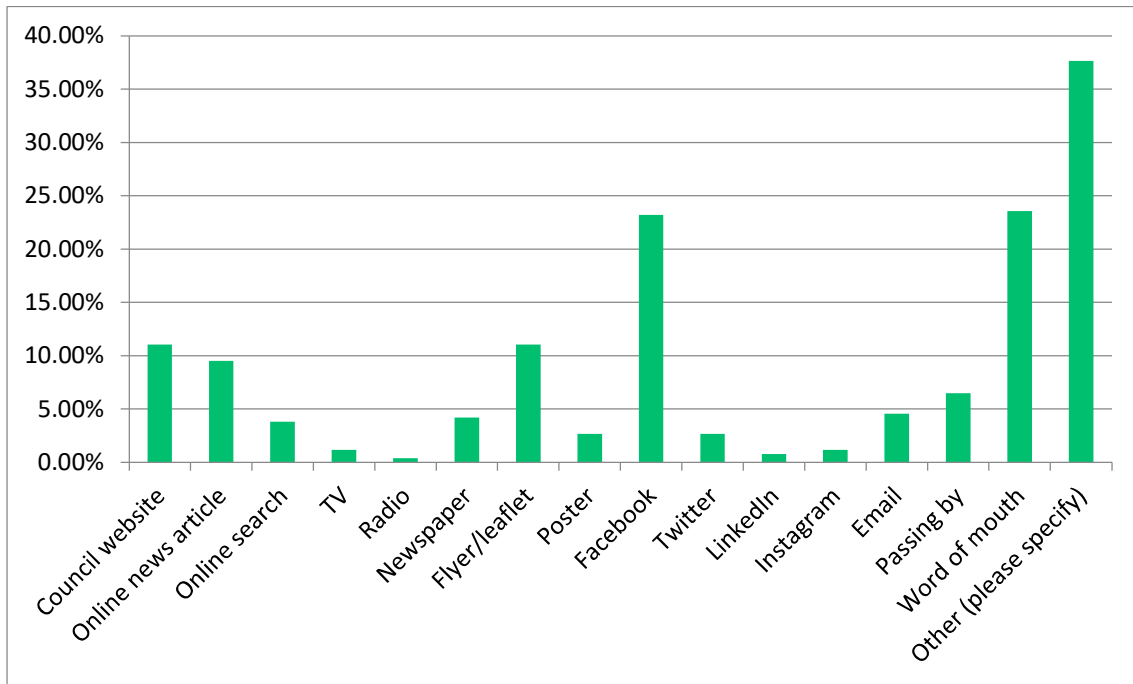


Q11. Did you attend the previous phase one engagement event in July 2023, or give feedback on the draft phase one proposals?

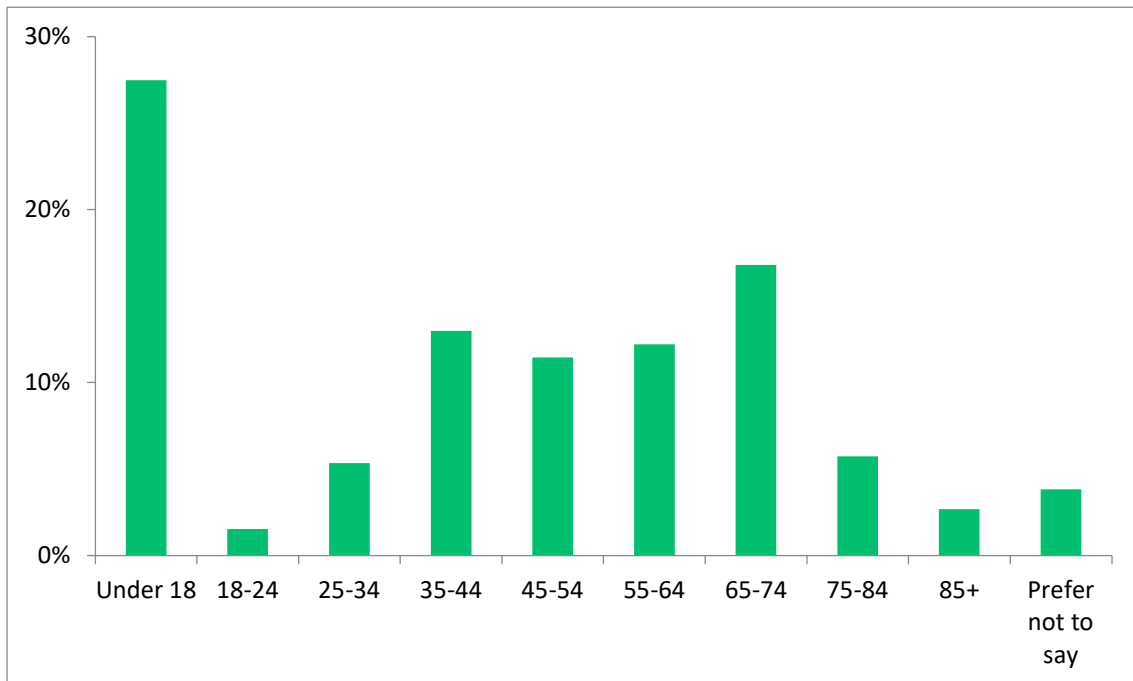


Appendix A

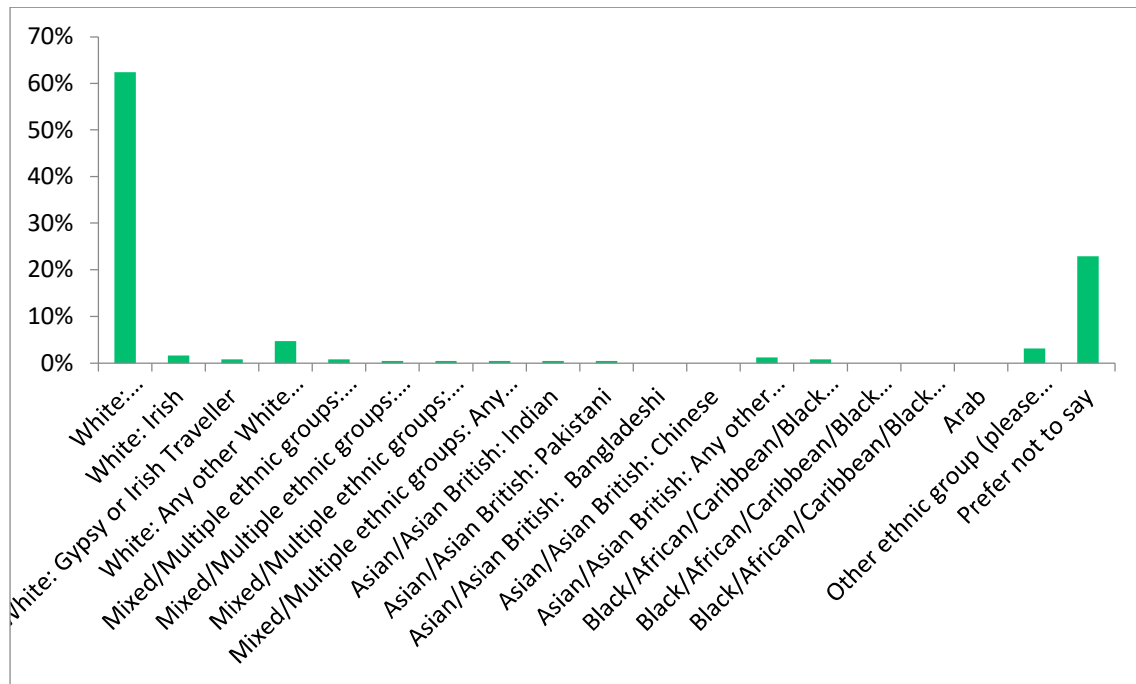
Q12. How did you hear about the phase two community engagement for the project?



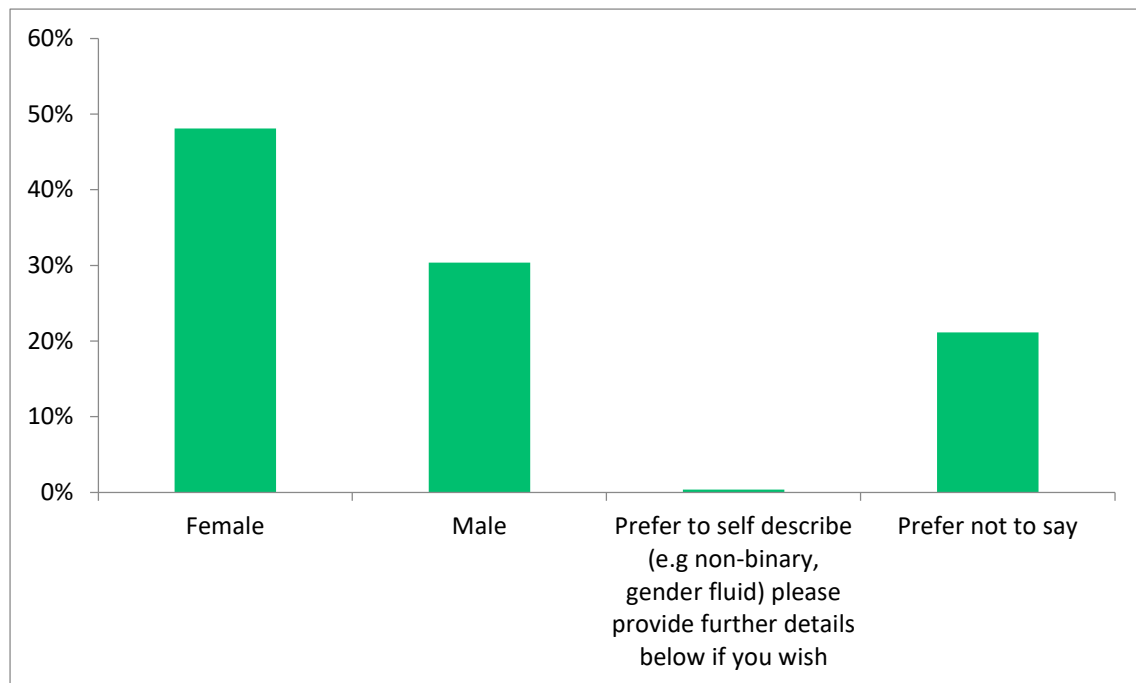
Q13. How old are you?



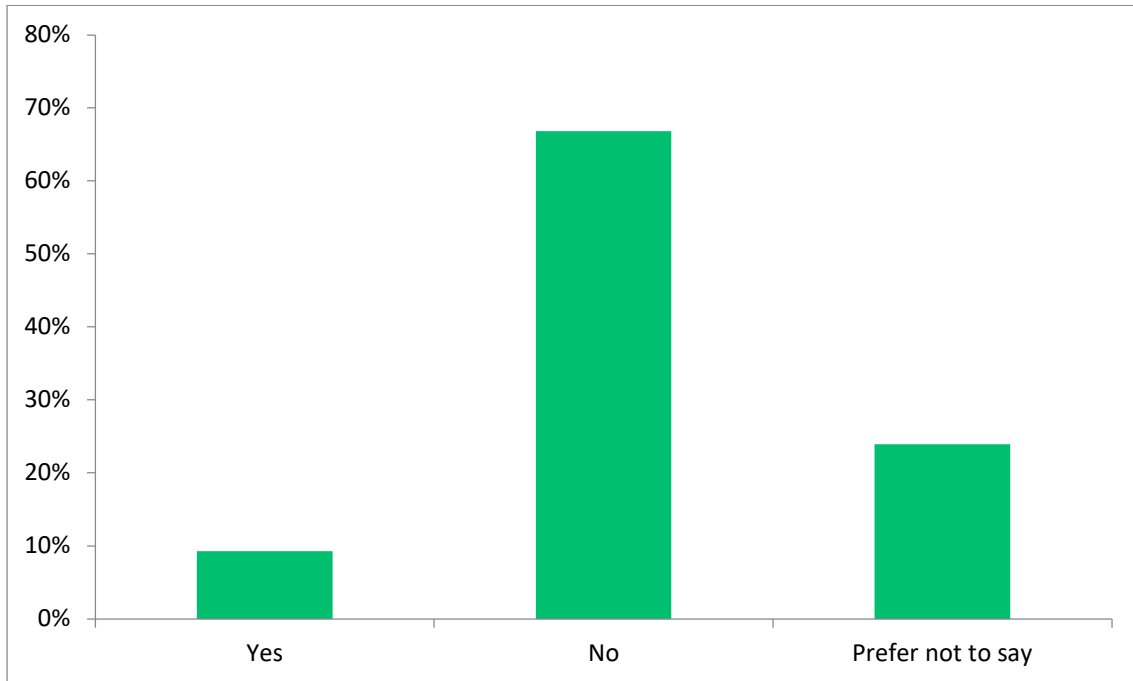
Q14: What is your ethnicity?



Q15: What is your gender?

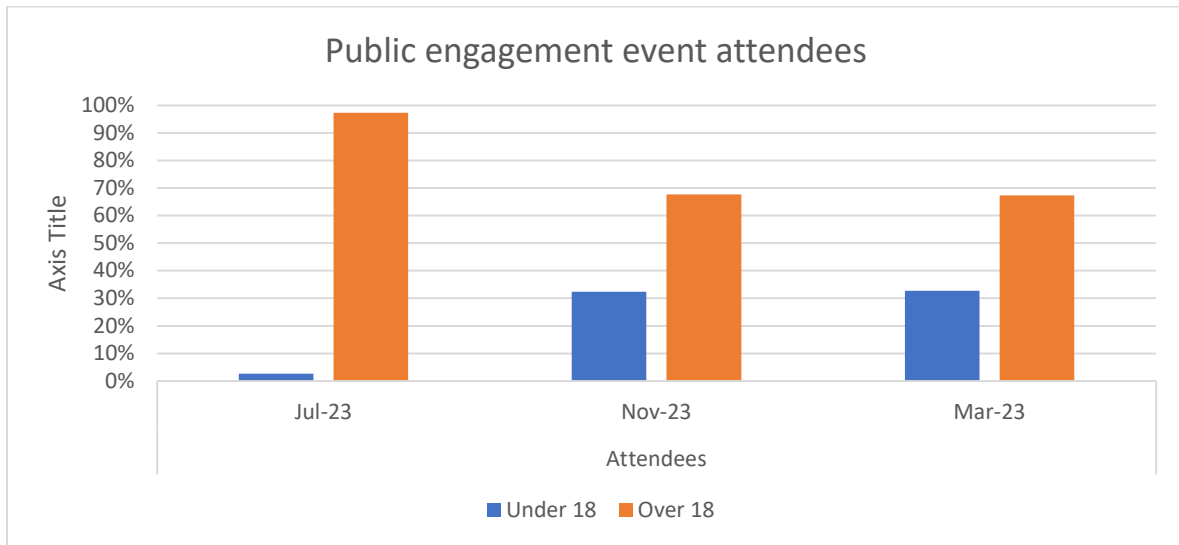


Q16: Do you consider yourself to be disabled?



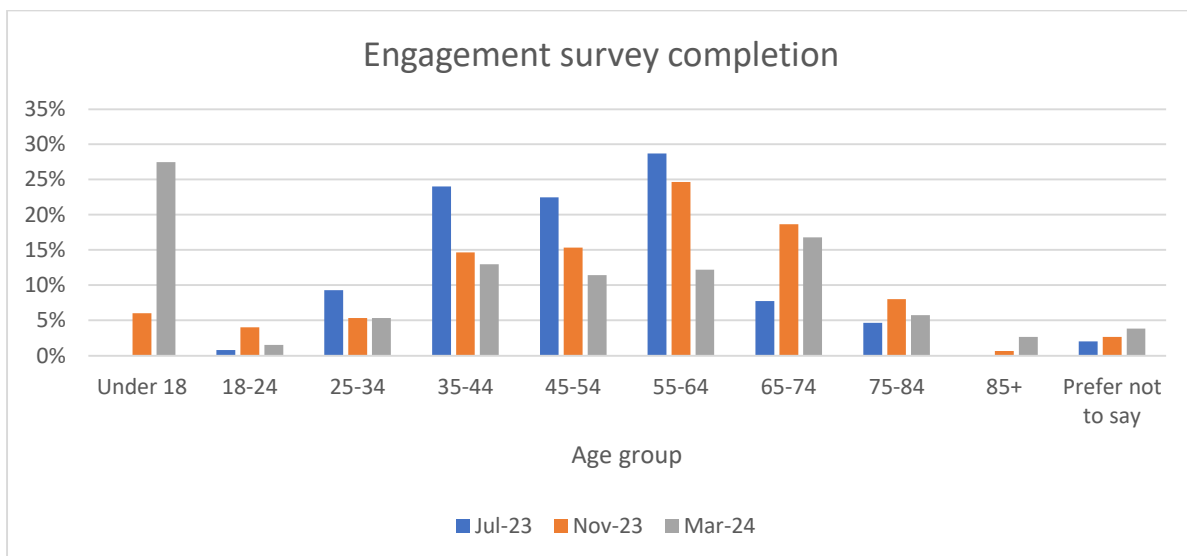
Appendix B: Demographic comparisons between engagement events

Event attendees – under 18s and over 18s



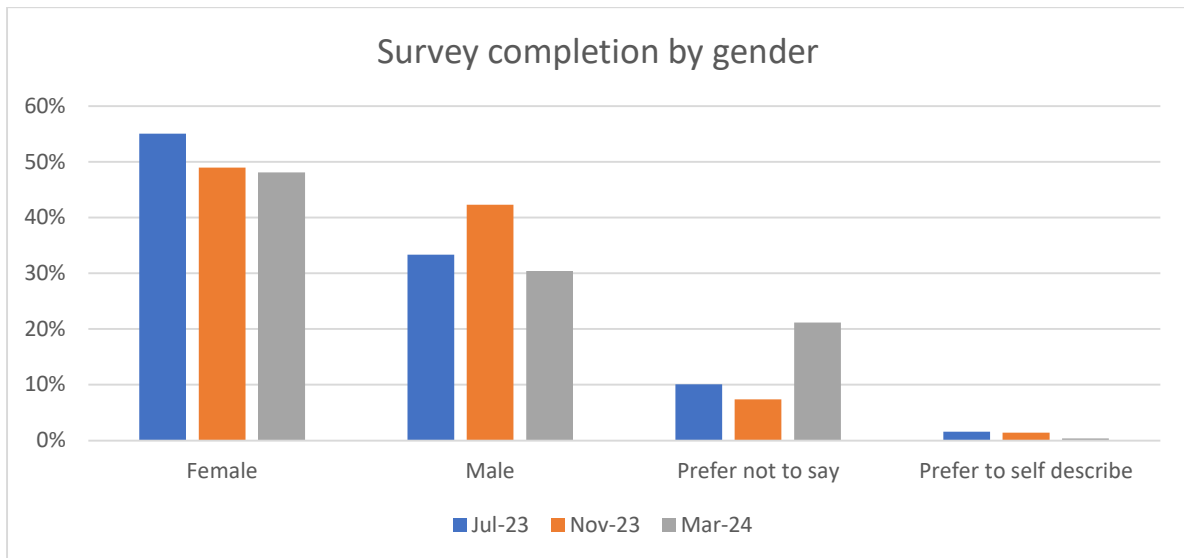
32% of attendees were under 18 in the November and March events compared to 3% in the July 2023 event. While more under 18s attended the public engagement events in November and March, a large number of the U18s that attended events were at the school-specific sessions which did not happen in July 2023.

Survey completions by age group



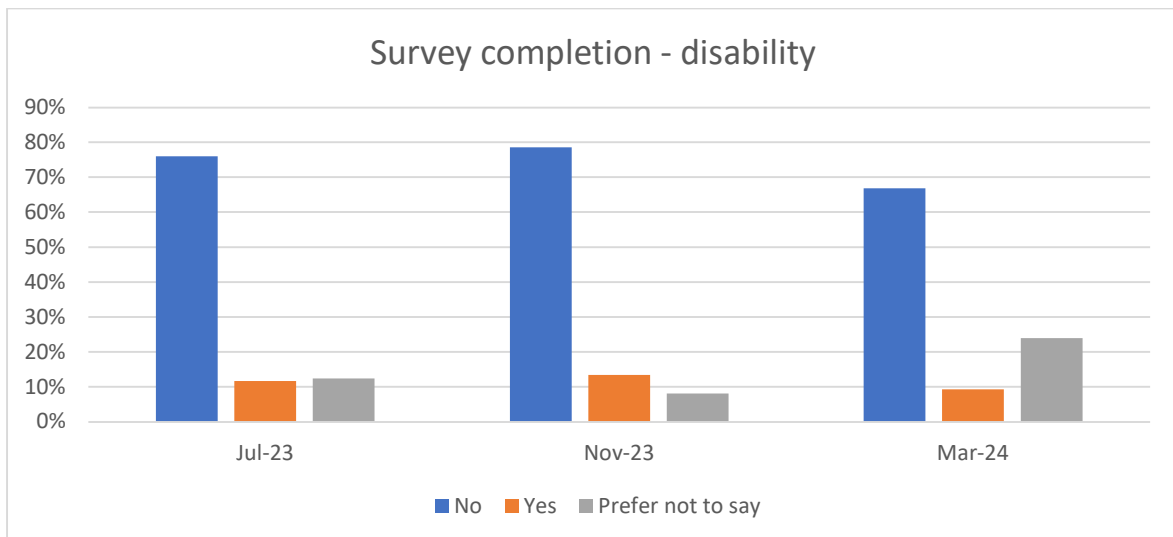
10% of survey respondents were under 24 in the November engagement window (6% under 18), and 29% in March (27% under 18). This is compared to 1% in July 2023 (0% under 18).

Survey completions by gender



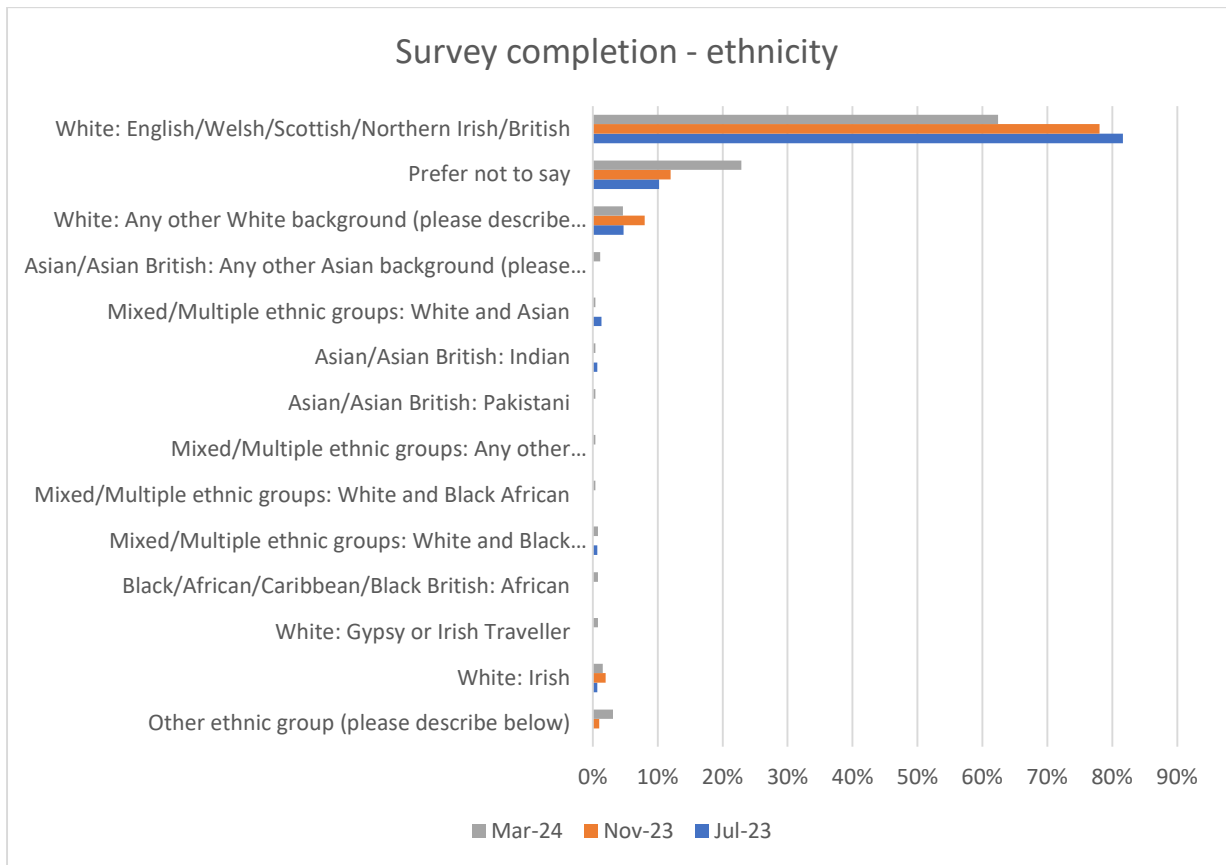
The November event encouraged more male participants (42%) compared to the 33% from the July event. May more respondents in the March event preferred not to disclose their gender.

Survey completions by disability



The surveys across the events had a similar percentage of respondents in terms of those with disabilities.

Survey completions by ethnicity



The survey completions from the November and March events had a slightly wider spread in terms of ethnicity than the July engagement survey.

