

Good Growth Fund: Delivering improvements to Ridley Road and Ashwin Street

Consultation Report

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Introduction

Hackney Council launched the Good Growth Fund consultation in June 2021 to collect feedback and comments on its plans for town centre improvements in Dalston via improvements to Ridley Road Market and public realm upgrades on Ashwin Street and Ridley Road.

The Good Growth Fund consultation ran from 23 June 2021 to 27 July 2021 with several public engagements and co-design sessions held for local residents, community groups and market traders. The primary way of collecting feedback was through the Citizen Space online survey.

This report details the feedback and analysis of the online and engagement work.

About the Dalston Conversation

Project background

The project is focused on town centre improvements in Dalston via improvements to Ridley Road Market and public realm upgrades on Ashwin Street and Ridley Road. The project responds to priorities for Dalston raised by the community during the [Dalston Conversation](#) which was held from September 2018 to March 2019. Ridley Road market received a high number of comments in the conversation with many people keen to see improvements to ensure its long term sustainability. Respondents wanted the market to retain its character, vibrancy and role as a community and social hub.

The following priorities emerged during the Dalston Conversation that led to the Good Growth Funds initial proposals:

- Cultural and community assets (such as the Ridley Road market) are highly regarded and people want to see them protected and enhanced.
- Respondents want to see more green space in Dalston and an improved public realm and street environment.
- Respondents want Dalston to be safer and have concerns about the current levels of crime and antisocial behaviour.

The project will make improvements to Dalston's economy and environment via a new market layout which will provide better access along the street for pedestrians by enabling more spacing between market stalls as well as providing 3 dedicated areas where people can sit and gather, the provision of card payment machines for market traders enabling them to take both cash and electronic payments, new market stalls, new seating and greening along Ridley Road including new benches and trees.

Improvements to Ashwin Street will improve the gateway to Ashwin Street which houses many of Dalston's cultural and creative businesses, improve accessibility for pedestrians via upgraded paving and signage, as well as additional greening via planters and trees.

Consultation approach

The consultation included several public engagements and co-design sessions and ran for a period of five weeks (23 June-27 July 2021). Public events were held in the area immediate to Ridley Road Market and workshops were held with local businesses, market traders and other relevant stakeholders.

Additional briefings were held with these stakeholders throughout the consultation period. A consultation survey was conducted throughout this period and could primarily be accessed through consultation.hackney.gov.uk/streetscene/good-growth-fund/.

A total of 43 responses were received from 41 respondents on the final proposals which included comments on the consultation section of the Council's website and handwritten responses.

Communications

The Good Growth Fund consultation was launched on 23 June 2021 and was promoted through a range of methods. This included letters and flyers distributed to market traders via the Markets Team and hand-delivered to residents and businesses on Ridley Road and Ashwin Street, posters and flyers were also displayed and distributed on Ridley Road Market.

Examples of the promotion of the consultation can be seen below:

- A news story was published on 24 June 2021 on the council's website and can be viewed [here](#).
- Information on the consultation was also included in the council's e newsletter, which can be viewed [here](#).
- The consultation was promoted through the council's social media channels, an example of this can be viewed [here](#).
- The details of the consultation were also published in Hackney Today and can be viewed on page 13 [here](#).

Data Collection Methodology

Data collection

The primary method of collecting data from participants was through the online feedback form, consultation.hackney.gov.uk/streetscene/good-growth-fund/.

Participants were asked the following open text questions:

- What are your overall thoughts about the proposals for improvements to Ridley Road?
- What are your thoughts about the proposed new zones for the market?
- What are your overall thoughts about proposals for Ashwin Street?

Respondents were given open text boxes to respond to the questions above and their names, email addresses, local group affiliations and demographic data was also collected. Three respondents chose not to provide their details or provide demographic information, and as such have been included as anonymous respondents.

Throughout the report, those who have added comments have been recorded as participants or respondents.

Face-to-face engagement

We recognise that Ridley Road Market is at the heart of a diverse community and that we need to use a mixture of data collection methods, to ensure we capture the complexity of residents, businesses and visitors' opinions and views.

This consultation was held while COVID restrictions were still in place in the UK, which limited our ability to hold face-to-face events. However, online briefing and feedback sessions were held with specific stakeholders on the following dates:

- 20 July 2021 - Online session with businesses on Ashwin Street
- 22 July 2021 - Online session with market stall traders, including representatives from the Ridley Road Market Traders Association

Following the relaxing of COVID regulations on 19 July 2021, the project team held a face-to-face street stall on Ridley Road Market. This was a public event that aimed to talk to traders and shoppers about layouts and the design of public spaces throughout Dalston, including Ridley Road and Ashwin Street.

Prior to the public consultation period, the project team held/attended a number of meetings where the proposed changes were discussed, these included:

- Site walkabouts with officers took place throughout January and February 2020 relating to potential design themes
- February 2020 - Meetings with Ashwin Street businesses and stakeholders
- 6 March 2020 - Virtual Workshop with market traders
- April 2020 - Online workshops with market trader representatives, including the Ridley Road Market Traders Association to discuss layout arrangements and other design proposals
- April 2020 - Workshop with businesses from Ashwin Street and residents of the neighbouring area

Analysing your comments and interpreting the data

A total of 42 comments were made on the site, these comments have been posted in open-ended questions in prose format as qualitative data. Officers have read every comment on the platform and used a number of qualitative analysis techniques to analyse these.

It should be noted that respondents are self-selecting, therefore, all results are subject to tolerances, which means that not all differences are statistically significant. Where percentages have been used, they may not sum to 100. This may be due to rounding, the exclusion of “don’t know” categories, or multiple comments in the responses to the questions.

Respondents analysis

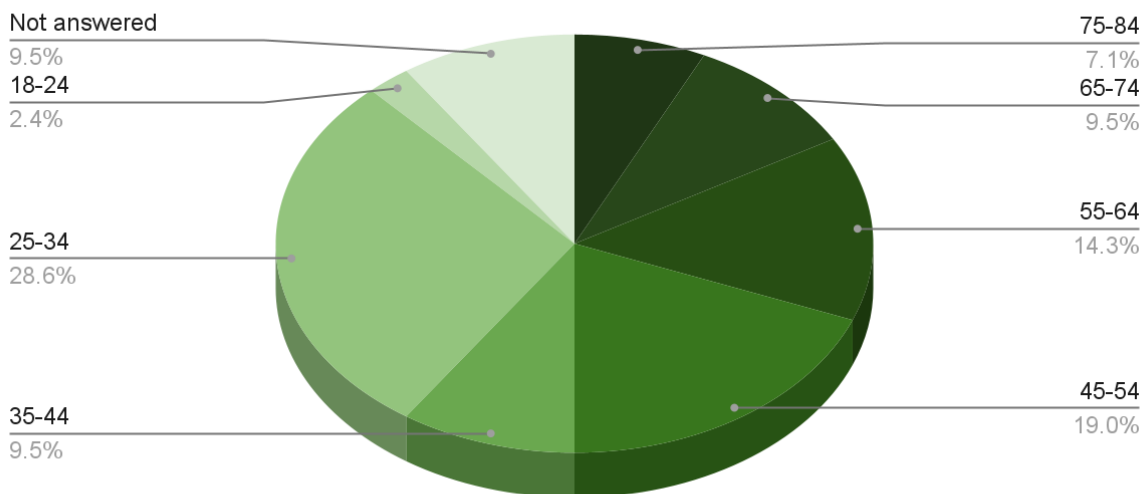
The section below identifies the respondents according to demographics such as gender, age, ethnicity and sexual orientation. This data is collected for equalities monitoring and cross-referencing purposes. Where possible, the report writers have used this data to provide context to issues raised on the platform.

Respondents were asked to provide the following information about themselves. All fields were optional, and the fields marked with an asterisk below allowed respondents to select multiple answers.

- Age group
- Gender identity
- Ethnicity
- Sexual orientation
- Disability

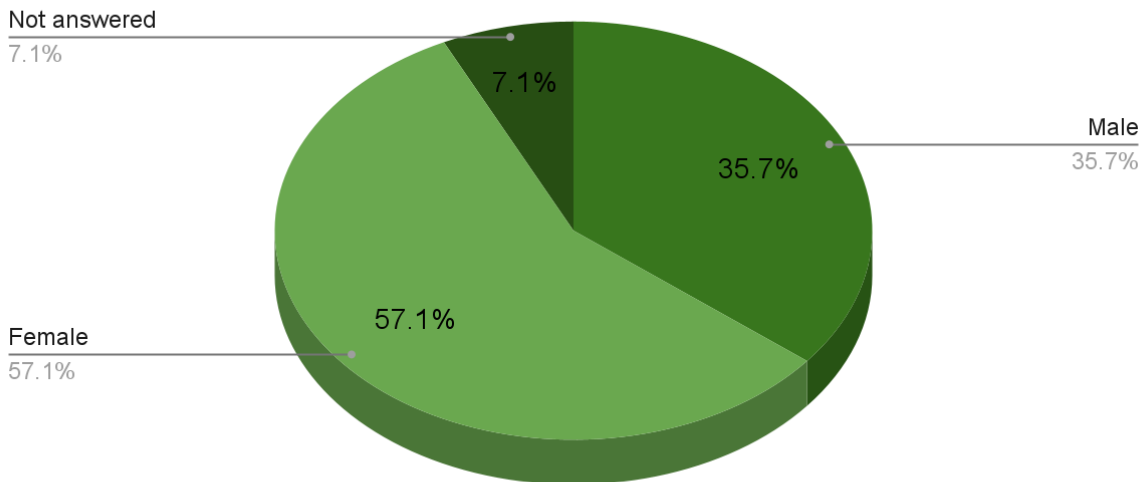
Where possible, officers have sought to ensure that demographic representation of the respondents largely reflected the ward profile for Dalston, although it should be noted that respondents from BAME groups were lower than the ward profile statistics. See Dalston: A snapshot of the area for further information.

Age



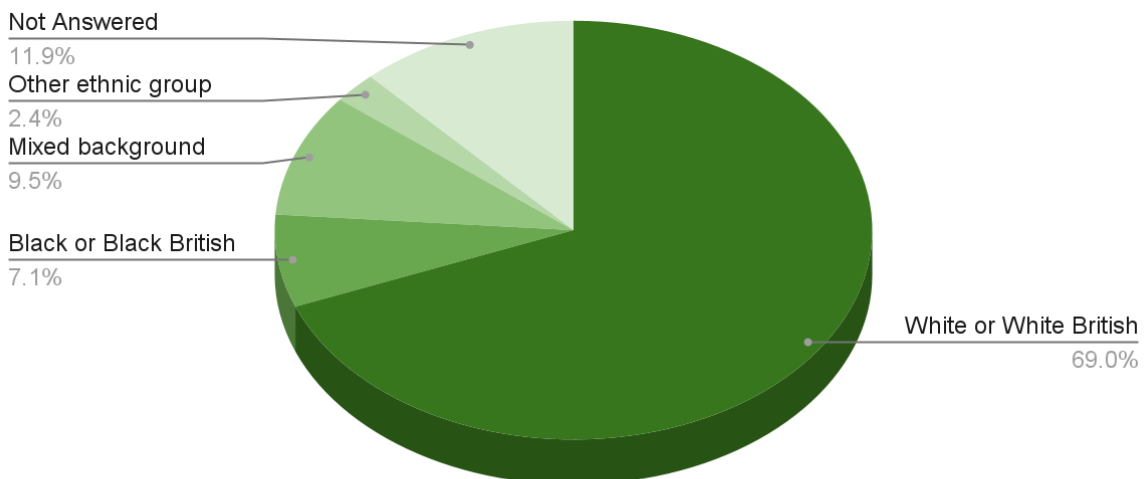
The largest respondent age groups were 25-34 (28.6%) followed by 45-54 (19%), and 55-64 (14.3%). This demographic profile is similar to that of the ward profile for age groups.

Gender Identity



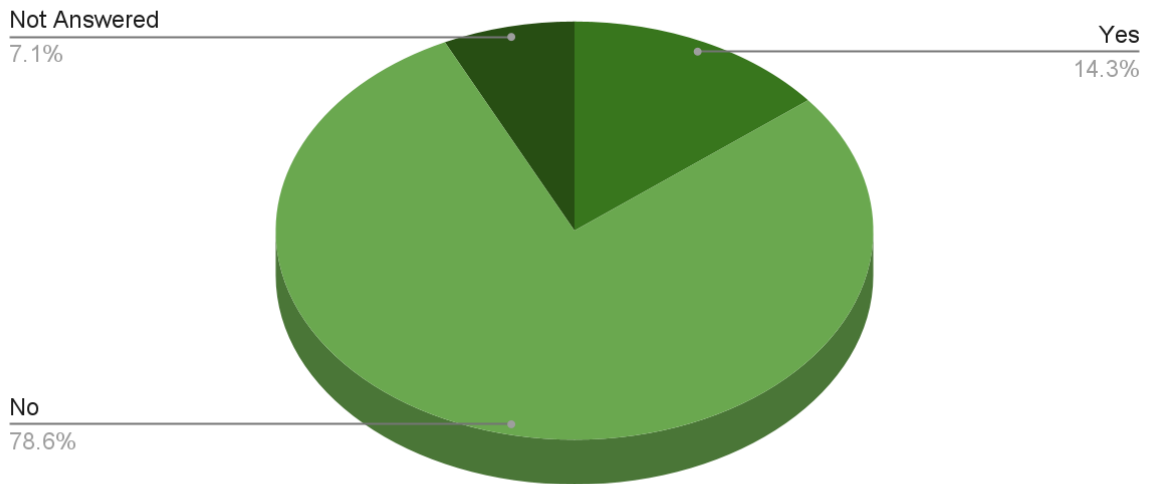
More females (57.1%) responded to the consultation than males (35.7), although 7.1% did not state their gender.

Ethnicity



The largest ethnic group to respond to the consultation were white/white British (69%), with Not answered (12%) the second largest group. Representation of BAME groups was considerably lower than the ward profile with black/black British at 7% of respondents, mixed background at 9.5% and other ethnic groups at 2.5% of respondents. With Asian/Asian British at 0% of respondents.

Disability



When asked if respondents are disabled 14.3% stated yes, 78.6% stated no and 7.1% did not provide a response.

Overview of responses

Question 1- What are your overall thoughts about the proposals for improvements to Ridley Road?

Question one asked respondents specifically about their thoughts on the proposals set out in the plan for improvements to Ridley Road. This question received 43 responses that can be categorised as follows:

- 22 positive responses
 - This positive feedback primarily discussed the need for the market to be renovated and refreshed, with points such as public realm improvements, better accessibility and the provision of seating as important elements of the proposals.
- 2 neutral responses
 - The neutral feedback did not express opinions on the proposals, but both included a desire to see Ridley Road Market and its traders be protected. With one suggesting some of the money be given over to market traders to spend on ensuring the longevity of their own businesses.
- 17 negative responses
 - The negative feedback primarily included concerns over the change in pitch size, the decrease in stall numbers and expressions of worry that any changes to Ridley Road would lead to gentrification of the area.
 - A number of comments categorised as negatives did not include details of their concerns, often with one-word responses such as 'useless' 'poor' and 'risible'.
 - One comment also raised concerns over the introduction of card machines, with concerns that this would lead to the market becoming cashless.

A number of responses across all categories stated that the plans did not go far enough, with requests for permanent pitches, parking provisions and public toilets among the requests for the plan to include.

Question 2 - What are your thoughts about the proposed new zones for the market?

Question two asked respondents for their feedback on the proposed character areas, or zones, of the plan. These character areas focused on; the entrance to the market from Kingsland Road, the horseshoe between the entrance of the market and the central stretch of Ridley Road around Colvestone Crescent and Birkbeck Mews and the introduction of a new area of trees and seating to the east of Ridley Road near St Marks Rise.

This question received 37 responses that can be categorised as follows:

- 23 positive responses
 - The positive feedback included positive support of the hot food area and allowing space for food to be consumed at the market, the increase in

greening throughout the plans and greater accessibility for the whole community.

- A number of comments also noted a need for the market to modernise to meet customer needs and increase the markets offer. These comments were all made with the protection of the market/areas character as an important consideration in any changes.
- 2 neutral responses
 - The neutral comments addressed different elements of the plan overall, there was concern over the emphasis on addressing anti-social behaviour, and a concern that the east end of the market needed more attention
- 12 negative responses
 - The negative comments received included concerns about changing Ridley Road Market so that it loses its character and becomes indistinguishable from other markets.
 - A number of comments also expressed concerns over the hot food area, with concerns ranging from the longevity of these types of businesses and also suggestions that the money can be better spent elsewhere.
 - A number of negative comments focused on the need for the market traders to be priorities in all considerations.

A small number of comments across the categories stated that other developments proposed in the area will have a detrimental effect on the objectives of this proposed plan and the area itself.

Question 3 - What are your overall thoughts about proposals for Ashwin Street?

Question three asked respondents for their feedback on the proposals to build on the character of the street as a focal point for independent creative and cultural business and address some of the issues with the street environment.

This question received 34 responses that can be categorised as follows:

- 22 positive responses
 - Trees and greenery were the main focus for these comments, along with a number of requests for Ashwin Street to be pedestrianised.
 - Respondents also emphasised the need for Ashwin Street and Ridley Road to have 'separate identities'.
 - A number of comments categorised as positive did not include details of their comments, often with only a few words in response such as 'fantastic,' 'I like them' and 'better than now'.
- 6 neutral responses
 - A number of responses categorised as neutral stated they had no strong views/feelings or did not discuss the proposals but emphasised earlier neutral comments
 - One response raised the 'dual entrances' of shops on Kingsland High Street and Ashwin Street and stated that the entrances on Ashwin Street were poorly utilised.
- 6 negative comments

- The negative responses suggested the plans were unnecessary, were a waste of money, did not go far enough and one comment suggested that new trees were not needed in this area.

A number of comments across the categories discuss the couriers that use Ashwin Street, but with a mix of suggested resolutions with some suggesting these drivers are 'moved on' and some stating provision for these drivers should be provided (break areas/toilets).

Summary of overall responses

Overall respondents can be categorised as:

- 23 positive and in favour of the proposed scheme overall, many of the responses were positive about additional greening, seating and maintaining the market's character and vibrancy.
- 10 negative responses with comments ranging from fears relating to gentrification, resistance against change, a feeling that the Council is not listening to traders or the public and issues relating to anti-social behaviour.
- 5 neutral responses with most stating the design could have been more ambitious.

A number of other key points raised by respondents throughout the responses included issues of safeguarding the future of the market, societal and demographic change in the area, the importance of supporting local businesses and issues such as the diversity of the commercial and shopping offer for Hackney residents and others who travel to the area.

The Ridley Road Market Traders Association's (RRMTA) responses in relation to the scheme were largely technical in terms of measurements of pitch sizes, drainage issues, dimensions of the road and their ability to comment on the final drawings. Officers will respond to the comments of the RRMTA prior to the scheme commencing on site. Their other comments focused on operational aspects of the market including access to suitable toilets and ASB, which will be picked up outside of the project.

Next Steps

Hackney Council is using the information from the Good Growth Fund: Delivering improvements to Ridley Road and Ashwin Street consultation, as well as other consultations such as the Dalston Conversation, to feed into the plans for final implementation. various planning and area regeneration documents, strategies and programmes of work.

As a result of this consultation, two minor changes are required to the scheme. These include a reduction in the proposed pitch size from 3mx3m to 2.8mx2.8m to accommodate drainage channels along Ridley Road, and minor changes to the location of some pitches that were identified in subsequent meetings with Ridley Road Market Traders Association.