

West Reservoir Improvement Project

Report Date: July 2023

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Introduction

The report provides a summary of the responses received from the consultation on proposed improvements to West Reservoir, including creating access to new green space as well as upgrading some elements of the West Reservoir Centre facilities.

The consultation ran for eight weeks, from 6 April to 31 May 2023 and we received 794 responses.

Background

The West Reservoir Centre is located on 23 acres of water in a 30 acre site and, along with the West Reservoir itself, is one of the most significant leisure and natural resources in inner London. It provides both adults and children the opportunity to take part in a variety of watersports and open water swimming, surrounded by green space and nature.

As an inner London borough, we think it's important to give residents as much access to green and blue space and opportunities for physical activity as possible. We are committed to working with communities to create more welcoming spaces and to be more environmentally sustainable.

We proposed some improvements to increase the accessibility of West Reservoir, including creating access to new green space as well as upgrading some elements of the West Reservoir Centre facilities. The improvements are a significant opportunity to deliver inclusive facilities that enable more people to experience the site.

We consulted on proposals for both the landscape surrounding the reservoir as well as changes to the West Reservoir Centre itself. These included:

West Reservoir surrounding landscape

- a new accessible green space for local residents and visitors allowing people to circulate around the eastern bank
- an accessible bridge across the New River (the current bridge has steps)
- enhanced habitats for wildlife
- improved landscaping
- a more accessible path network (better linking West Reservoir to Woodberry Down estate, Woodberry Wetlands and Green Lanes)
- new reed beds in the Reservoir
- stabilisation of the New River banks.

West Reservoir Centre

- a new 'introduction to open water swimming' area for beginner swimmers and other groups
- new indoor 'village changing' facilities with showers and additional toilets
- relocation of the cafe with new outdoor seating area, to maximise the space inside the building
- upgraded conference spaces
- upgraded boat workshop and learning spaces.

The main **aims and objectives of the consultation** were to:

- inform current users of the Reservoir, potential users, relevant stakeholders and local residents of the proposed improvements to the site
- work with user groups and relevant stakeholders to understand their views on the proposed improvements
- ensure a balance between the views of different user-groups and stakeholders.

We also wanted to inform users of the Reservoir that we will be upgrading the New River Path on the west side of the West Reservoir. It is currently in poor condition and will continue to deteriorate if not addressed soon, so we will be undertaking some resurfacing works later this year.

Consultation & Engagement Approach

We provided details of the proposals on the Council's online consultation platform, Citizen Space:

<https://consultation.hackney.gov.uk/leisure-parks-green-spaces/west-reservoir-improvement/>

This explained the purpose of the consultation, set out details of the proposals and included a questionnaire that respondents could fill in to give their views on the proposals. Consultees were also able to request a paper copy of the questionnaire to be posted to them by contacting the Consultation Team email address.

The proposed improvements to the site provided an opportunity to engage with a diverse range of residents that currently use the facilities, as well as prospective users who would benefit from the proposals. We identified the following groups to be consulted:

- current users of the Reservoir and their representative bodies
- local residents, schools and interested stakeholders

- prospective users of the Reservoir, and
- localised residents impacted by the proposed opening up of the east bank.

The online consultation was publicised via the following methods:

- consultation flyers were distributed to over 7500 local residences surrounding the Reservoir
- the Consultation Officer hand-delivered consultation flyers with an invitation to a dedicated meeting, to residents of Allerton Road and Queen Elizabeth's Walk who back onto the Reservoir
- an article was published in the 'Have your say' section of Love Hackney (published 23 April), the Council's magazine that is sent to every household in the borough
- a press release was issued
- emails sent to key stakeholder, including schools, local health services, community groups and special interest groups, who were also offered face-to-face meetings
- emails sent to the West Reservoir Centre's users, sent on the Council's behalf by GLL colleagues
- stocks of consultation flyers were provided to local libraries, businesses, health centres, social and youth hubs, and faith centres
- large (8ft x 3ft) banners were placed around the West Reservoir Centre
- A4 posters were placed on noticeboards in local estates, in community centres and at the West Reservoir Centre
- promotion via digital media, including the Council's social media accounts
- promotion in the Parks and Green Spaces newsletter
- details of the consultation were disseminated to local residents via the Stamford Hill neighbourhood panel, the Green Lanes TRA and by text message to a number of local housing estate TRAs and representatives

- ward councillors, Cllr Selman and Cllr Young, and Cabinet Member for Families, Parks and Leisure, Cllr Woodley, were briefed about the consultation and asked to promote it.

We held the following three public drop-in events, at which members of the public could view details of the proposals and speak to members of the Project Team, including the architects and landscape architects for the project. Around 65 people in total attended across the three events:

- 19 April from 15:00 - 18:00 at the Redmond Community Centre
- 25 April from 16:00 - 19:00 at the West Reservoir Centre
- 29 April from 10:00 - 13:00 at the West Reservoir Centre

As the largest user group, open water swimmers were invited to a drop-in event at the West Reservoir Centre on 18 April to speak to members of the Project Team and raise any concerns or questions they had about the proposals. Around 45 people attended the event.

On 19 April, members of the Project Team met with the Woodberry Down Community Organisation Board to discuss the proposals and provide the opportunity to answer questions. Six board members attended the meeting.

Residents of Allerton Road and Queen Elizabeth Walk who back onto the Reservoir were invited to a drop-in meeting at the West Reservoir Centre on 3 May, to discuss any concerns or questions they may have about the proposal to open up the green space on the eastern bank. Around 20 residents attended.

The Consultation Officer also attended the Friends of Woodberry Down over 50s social group on 16 May, to speak to attendees about the proposals and fill in paper questionnaires, to counter digital exclusion.

Response rate

A total of 794 respondents took part in the consultation.

The error level at 95% confidence is +/-3.3% . This is within our 5% tolerance level for accuracy and representation of the survey results. +/-3.3% confidence means that if we were to carry out the same survey 100 times but with different groups of people, we would expect to get around the same results with a 91.7% to 98.3% accuracy each time.

Executive summary

The report provides a summary of the responses received from the consultation on proposed improvements to West Reservoir. The consultation ran for eight weeks, from 6 April to 31 May 2023 and we received 794 responses.

Respondent Profile (Base 794):

Are you a current user of the reservoir?

- The majority of respondents, 78% (621 respondents), were current users of the West Reservoir.

What is your main reason for using the centre?

- The largest response was from open water swimmers with 66% (525 respondents).

Summary feedback:

GREEN SPACE

What are your first impressions of the proposed new design for the green space surrounding West Reservoir? (Base 794)

- The majority of respondents either absolutely loved (19%, 151) or liked (48%, 380) the proposed design for the green space surrounding the West Reservoir.

Residents of Allerton Road and Queen Elizabeth's Walk cross-analysis - What are your first impressions of the proposed new design for the green space surrounding West Reservoir? (Base 57)

- The majority (61%, 35) really disliked it, whereas 18% (10 residents) said that they liked the proposed design.

What features of the proposed design do you like and why? (Base 954)

- The top three features that respondents most liked were:
 - The new / upgraded bridge over the New River (127)
 - Enhanced habitats for wildlife (116)
 - Access to the new green space on the east bank of the reservoir (84)

What features of the proposed design do you dislike and why? (Base 513)

- The top three features that respondents most disliked were:
 - Worried about the potential negative impact on existing wildlife (80)

- Negative impact of opening up the east bank on swimmers, being overlooked by the general public (71)
- Worried that opening up the east bank will encourage antisocial behaviour / noise (37)

Which accessible bridge option do you prefer? (Base 794)

- The majority of those respondents who had a preference (29%, 229) chose the proposed new bridge.

WEST RESERVOIR CENTRE

What are your first impressions of the proposed new design for the West Reservoir Centre? (Base 794)

- The majority of respondents either absolutely loved (17%, 132) or liked (42%, 333) the proposed design for the West Reservoir Centre.

Open-water swimmers cross-analysis - What are your first impressions of the proposed new design for the West Reservoir Centre? (Base 525)

- The majority of open water swimming respondents either absolutely loved (16%, 87) or liked (42%, 211) the proposed design for the West Reservoir Centre.

What features of the proposed design do you like and why? (Base 793)

- The top three features that respondents most liked were:
 - Updated changing facilities / village change (198)
 - New cafe / cafe design / proposed new location (167)
 - Introduction to open water swimming area (156)

What features of the proposed design do you dislike and why? (Base 522)

- The top three features that respondents most disliked were:
 - Proposed new cafe location / conflict with swimmers / green space (113)
 - Updated changing facilities / village change generally / not needed / not well-designed (105)
 - Dislike cubicles / want to retain some communal changing (78)

Would any of our proposals encourage you to use the centre and reservoir, if you don't already? (Base 794)

- 41% of respondents (326) told us that our proposals would encourage them to use the centre and reservoir, if they didn't already.

Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the proposals or other things you would like to see? (Base 519)

- The top three things that respondents wanted to see or wanted to tell us were:
 - They would like a sauna (152)
 - They had queries / concerns about cost, discounts / price reduction for locals / low income / payment options (26)
 - They would like more cycle parking / secure cycle storage (23)

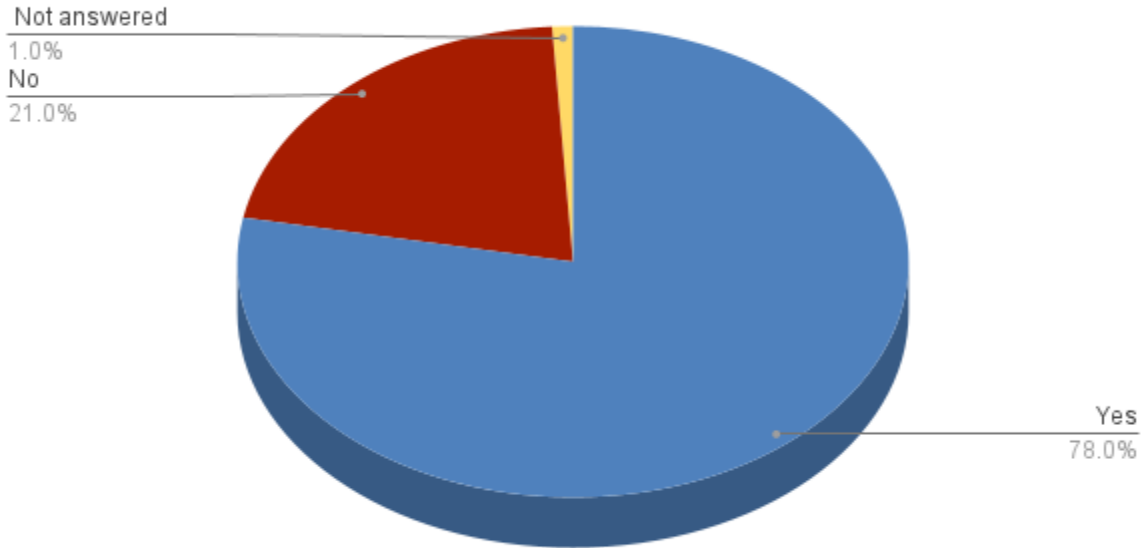
Equalities summary:

- 64% (502) of respondents to this question stated they were female, followed by male (31%, 239). 3% (22 respondents) preferred not to say and 2% (13 respondents) stated they preferred to self-describe.
- The group with the highest number of respondents was 35-44 year olds (28%, 216), closely followed by 25-34 year olds (24%, 184) and 45-54 year olds (22%, 174).
- The majority of respondents stated they do not have a disability (88%, 672) while 6% (45 respondents) said they did. 6% (48) preferred not to say.
- The majority of respondents stated they were white/white British (85%, 629), the second highest was a mixed background (4%, 32), while all the other ethnicities counted for smaller numbers.
- The highest number of respondents (65%, 499) described their home as being bought on a mortgage/owned outright, followed by 23% (171 respondents) who rent from a private landlord.

Overview of results

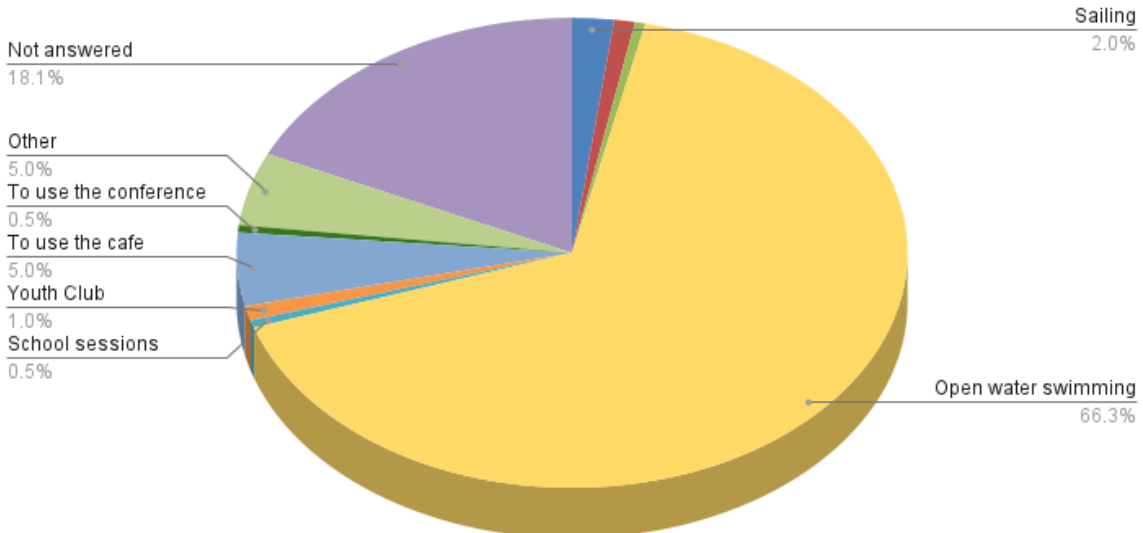
Base rate: There were 794 responses to the consultation survey. The results by question are as follows:

Are you a current user of the reservoir?



The majority of respondents, 78% (621 respondents), were current users of the West Reservoir with 21% (167 respondents) confirming that they did not currently use the reservoir.

What is your main reason for using the centre?

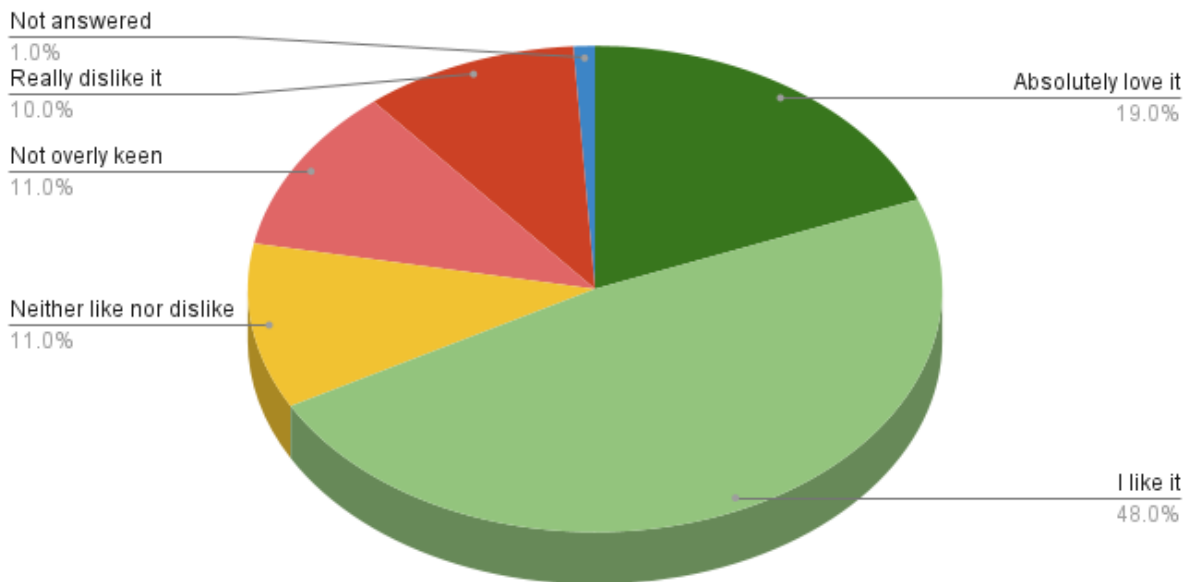


The largest response was from open water swimmers with 66% (525 respondents), followed by those who use the cafe with 5% (46 respondents).

Of the respondents who selected 'other', the reasons included a mixture of the activities available as well as to walk around the reservoir.

Green space / landscaping

What are your first impressions of the proposed new design for the green space surrounding West Reservoir?



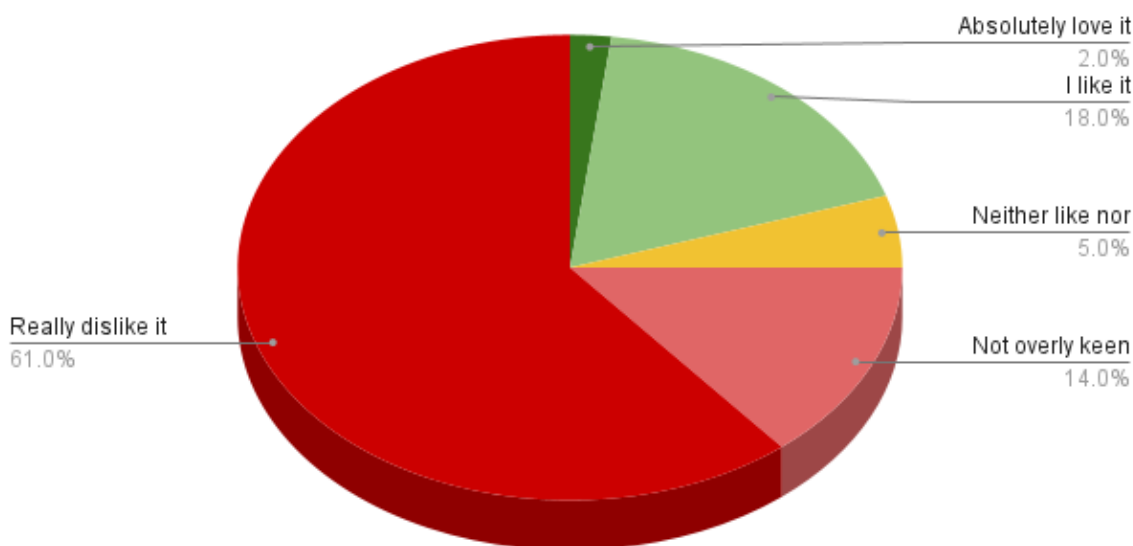
The majority of respondents either absolutely loved (19%, 151) or liked (48%, 380) the proposed design for the green space surrounding the West Reservoir. 11% (88 respondents) were neutral, whilst 11% (88 respondents) were not overly keen and 10% (78 respondents) really disliked it.

Cross-analysis

Residents of Allerton Road and Queen Elizabeth's Walk

Given the proximity of properties on Allerton Road and Queen Elizabeth's Walk to the proposed new green space on the east bank of the Reservoir, we have cross-analysed the views of residents of those streets - determined by the postcodes

N16 5UF and N16 5UG - on their first impressions of the proposed new design for the green space:



Of the 57 residents who responded, the majority (61%, 35) really disliked it, whereas 18% (10 residents) said that they liked the proposed design.

All respondents were also asked:

What features of the proposed design do you like and why?

A total of 954 comments were made and the following key themes emerged:

Features of the proposed green space design that you like	Comments
New / upgraded bridge over the New River	127
Enhanced habitats for wildlife	116
Access to the new green space on the east bank of the reservoir	84
The proposed new pathway along the east bank of the reservoir	83
Better access to the space overall	82
The proposed relocation of the cafe	76
The ability to walk a full circuit of the Reservoir	69
New reed beds	48

A number of respondents used this section to tell us their dislikes about the green space as well as their views on the proposals for the West Reservoir Centre.

New / upgraded bridge over the New River

Respondents told us that the new/upgraded bridge would make it much easier for them, their family and friends to access the West Reservoir and surrounding pathways:

“The new bridge (in the new location) will make it more accessible - I have taken my 83 year old father along the current bridge and he finds it difficult.”

“I like the accessible bridge because I could visit with my friend who is in a wheelchair.”

“The new accessible bridge - the current one is difficult to cross with prams, bikes, wheelchairs...”

Enhanced habitats for wildlife

There were a number of general, positive comments about the proposals to provide enhanced habitats for wildlife, including new reed beds:

“I like the proposed extra wildflower and tree planting and it’s always excellent to enhance wildlife habitats.”

“Wildlife corridors - big fan of anything to improve lives of wildlife in the area - there are tons and tons of frogs around - also is there anything we can add for the bats?”

Access to the new green space on the east bank of the reservoir

Respondents highlighted the benefits to them of providing access to the green space on the east bank:

“Opening up more green space gives more leisure, walking and calm time immersed in nature leads to wellbeing of local people.”

“New green space to the east will make it more inclusive and accessible to the public.”

“It’s brilliant that you’re considering giving people access to the reservoir, I always thought it was a missed opportunity.”

The proposed new pathway along the east bank of the reservoir

Similarly, respondents were enthusiastic about a pathway on the proposed new green space:

“Really like the new path along the east bank because it improves access and provides a nice walking loop.”

“A new path gives extra walking space. I walk along the existing path several times a week and will definitely make use of the new space.”

Respondents were then asked:

What features of the proposed design do you dislike and why?

A total of 513 comments were made and the following key themes emerged:

Features of the proposed green space design that you dislike	Comments
Worried about the potential negative impact on existing wildlife	80
Negative impact of opening up the east bank on swimmers, being overlooked by the general public	71
Worried that opening up the east bank will encourage antisocial behaviour / noise	37
Worried that opening up the east bank will lead to unauthorised access of the reservoir / safety concerns	30
Proposed cafe location takes away existing green space	30
Worried that opening up the east bank will lead to litter / pest / vermin issues	28
Negative impact of opening up the east bank on privacy /safety / security of residents of Allerton Road / Queen Elizabeth’s Walk	28
No need to move the cafe / like the cafe as it currently is	25

Changes not needed / there are other places to walk / other green spaces that people can use	22
Proposed cafe location will result in swimmers being overlooked	21

A number of respondents also used this section to tell us their views on the proposals for the West Reservoir Centre.

Worried about the potential negative impact on existing wildlife

Respondents raised a variety of concerns about the potential negative impact on wildlife, particularly in relation to the conflict between increasing public access, and protecting and encouraging wildlife:

"I worry that allowing more access and increasing spaces for biodiversity might be difficult to achieve simultaneously."

"Have slight concerns that the east bank path might become too busy and disturb the wildlife, especially nesting birds."

"Strongly object to the new proposal for the eastern pathway - it completely contradicts the support for biodiversity and environmental- effectively reducing wildlife habitat."

Negative impact of opening up the east bank on swimmers being overlooked by the general public

We received various comments specifically relating to the potential impact of opening up the green space on the east bank on those swimming at the reservoir:

"It is not clear how close the new path will be - it would be good to know that swimmers will still have a sense of privacy when swimming."

"I am really unsure about people being able to walk around the West Reservoir so close to swimmers. The beauty of swimming there now is that I don't feel observed by members of the public and we can swim freely, no judgement or insecurity."

"I am strongly opposed to a new path round the east side because people walking will be in eyesight of swimmers - for me (and all other users I know) the benefits of being in a wide open natural space without hearing and seeing passers by are huge and it's something that makes West Res really special."

Worried that opening up the east bank will encourage antisocial behaviour / noise

Some respondents were concerned that opening up the east bank would lead to an increase in noise and antisocial behaviour:

"I'm wary of the pathway round the East side of the reservoir becoming very noisy with a lot more people using it..."

"I'm not keen on the whole concept of having people able to walk around the whole reservoir. It will likely lead to less relaxing swims, due to potential anti-social behaviour by people on the banks."

Worried that opening up the east bank will lead to unauthorised access of the reservoir / safety concerns

Many respondents expressed concern that the new green space would make it easier for people to access the reservoir without authorisation (i.e. without a swimming booking), which could potentially be dangerous:

"One concern I have is the walking path near the open swimming. I would be concerned about people thinking they could jump into the reservoir."

"Despite reed beds, it will still be difficult to prevent people accessing the concrete bank of the reservoir, which would represent a safety hazard."

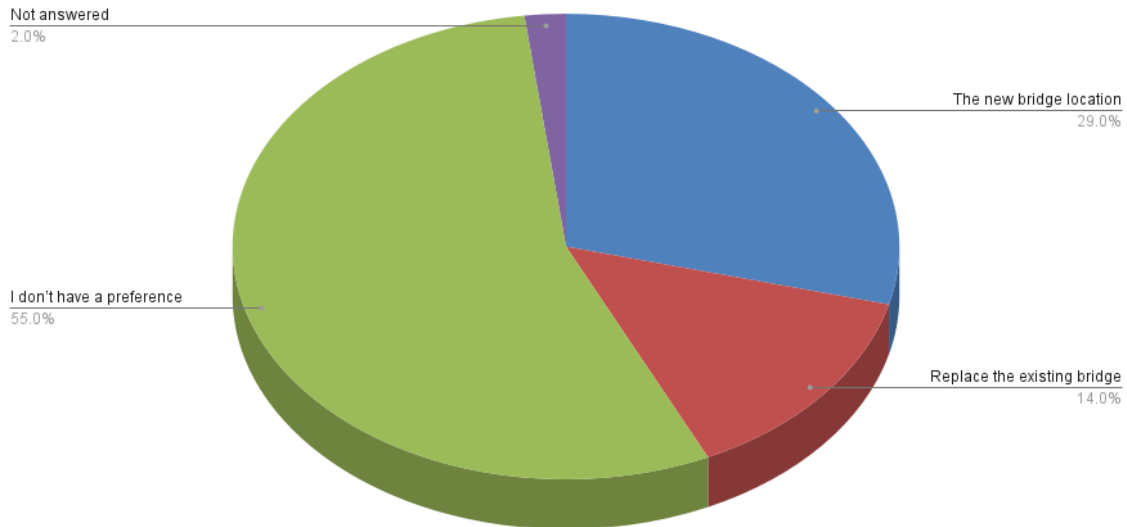
Proposed cafe location takes away existing green space

There were a number of comments about the proposed cafe location and how it appeared to take away from an area of green space that is currently heavily utilised:

"It's a shame the new cafe is going on the grass area. People clearly like to sit there after swimming - the new designs should work around this, not remove an area that's already highly used in summer."

"The proposed area for the new cafe, that area is much used by swimmers post swim in the sun and does not need another building there."

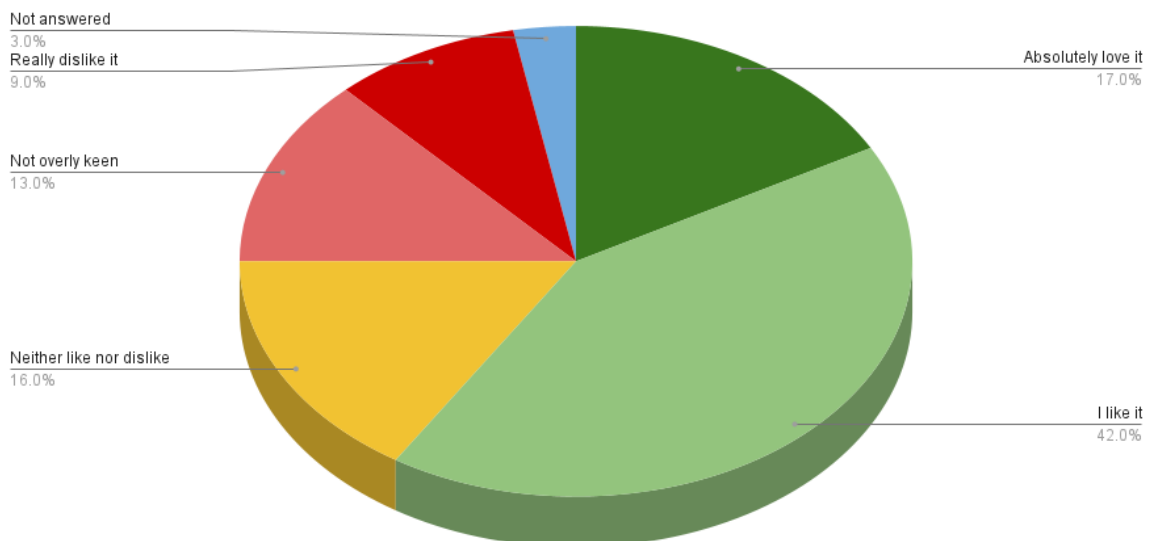
Which accessible bridge option do you prefer?



Whilst the majority of respondents (55%, 437) did not have a preference on the bridge option, the majority of those respondents who did (29%, 229) chose the proposed new bridge.

West Reservoir Centre

What are your first impressions of the proposed new design for the West Reservoir Centre?

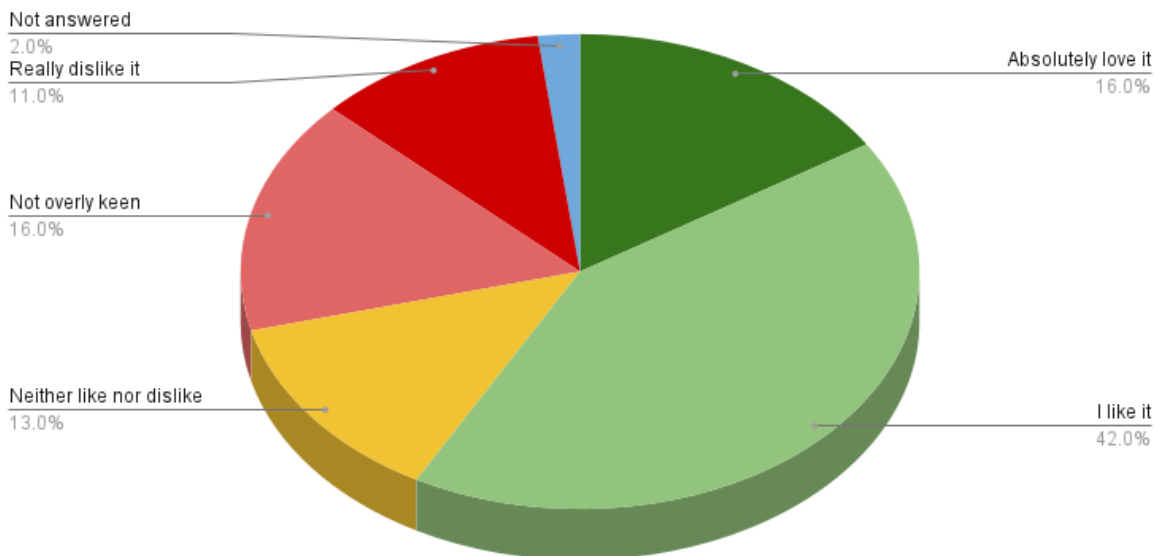


The majority of respondents either absolutely loved (17%, 132) or liked (42%, 333) the proposed design for the West Reservoir Centre. 16% (128 respondents) were neutral, whilst 13% (102 respondents) were not overly keen and 9% (73 respondents) really disliked it.

Cross-analysis

Open-water swimmers

The design proposals for the West Reservoir Centre include a number of changes that would impact those who use the open water swimming facilities. We have therefore cross-analysed the views of the respondents who told us they were open water swimmers on their first impressions of the proposed new design for the West Reservoir Centre:



The majority of open water swimming respondents either absolutely loved (16%, 87) or liked (42%, 211) the proposed design for the West Reservoir Centre. 13% (69 respondents) were neutral, whilst 16% (84 respondents) were not overly keen and 11% (57 respondents) really disliked it.

All respondents were also asked:

What features of the proposed design do you like and why?

A total of 793 comments were made and the following key themes emerged:

Features of the proposed West Reservoir Centre design that you like	Comments
Updated changing facilities / village change	198
New cafe / cafe design / proposed new location	167
Introduction to open water swimming area	156
Improved shower facilities	55
Overall design / All of it	35
Use of central entrance / better reception experience	31
Lockers	29
Cafe open to public / more accessible	22

A number of respondents used this section to tell us their dislikes about the West Reservoir Centre as well as their views on the proposals for the green space.

Updated changing facilities / village change

A large number of comments expressed support for the proposed village changing facilities:

“Having indoor changing rooms would be great, instead of having to shimmy out of your wet swimming stuff in front of people outside.”

“Changing rooms are so needed. Puts me off using the centre, especially in winter, that there's no changing facilities indoors.”

“So so good to have changing facilities and showers! Love this idea, it'll massively improve the centre and usability.”

New cafe / new cafe design / proposed new location

Many respondents were also in favour of relocating the cafe and the proposed new design:

“I think the cafe offer makes sense too with some nicer outside seating which would also get the benefits of more sunlight in the day I think.”

“Stand-alone cafe is a great idea - I’ve attended the reservoir multiple times and didn’t realise that there is a cafe onsite.”

Introduction to open water swimming area

Positive comments on the proposed new ‘introduction to open water swimming’ area highlighted its benefits:

“...a 'pool' for beginners is a great idea and will make a huge difference to the experience. It took me a long time to take up open water swimming at the reservoir because I felt intimidated with the open water and the distance. Having a smaller, more 'enclosed' space would have made the world of difference.”

“Beginners swimming area will encourage newbies and those of us who are seasonal swimmers to enjoy open water safely and comfortably.”

“The area for new swimmers is brilliant. I have several friends who would like to start but are daunted by the idea currently.”

Respondents were then asked:

What features of the proposed design do you dislike and why?

A total of 522 comments were made and the following key themes emerged:

Features of the proposed West Reservoir Centre design that you dislike	Comments
Proposed new cafe location / conflict with swimmers / green space	113
Updated changing facilities / village change generally / not needed / not well-designed	105
Dislike cubicles / want to retain some communal changing	78
Dislike indoor changing rooms / want to retain some outdoor changing	54
Management- / programming- / operations-related	23

Introduction to open water swimming area unnecessary	21
Cafe should be larger / needs more seating / more covered outdoor seating	20
Need separate male/female changing rooms / showers / toilets	18

A number of respondents used this section to let us know some positives about the West Reservoir Centre as well as their views on the proposals for the green space.

Proposed new cafe location / conflict with swimmers / green space

This theme was also raised in relation to the landscape proposals and many respondents raised their concerns in response to this question about the proposed design for the West Reservoir Centre:

“The cafe area now overlooks swimmers entering and exiting the water, very close up. This may well discourage swimmers/make some swimmers very uncomfortable.”

“The area that the cafe is on is often well-used by swimmers in the summer for changing on when it is busy. I'm not sure there will be enough space left for swimmers in the busy summer months.”

“Loss of green space with placement of the building in the 'prime' section of the current green free space - right next to the reservoir. Priority should be given to retaining the current outdoor grassed area right next to the reservoir.”

Updated changing facilities / village change not needed / not well-designed

Respondents raised a variety of issues with the proposal to introduce a village changing facility:

“I don't like the introduction of the changing village, in my experience of indoor swimming pool facilities, these cramped areas become filthy quite quickly.”

“I don't like the village changing room, it's claustrophobic. Most people at the centre enjoy the mixed open plan changing area and the opportunity to connect and chat with friends and new people.”

Dislike cubicles / want to retain some communal changing

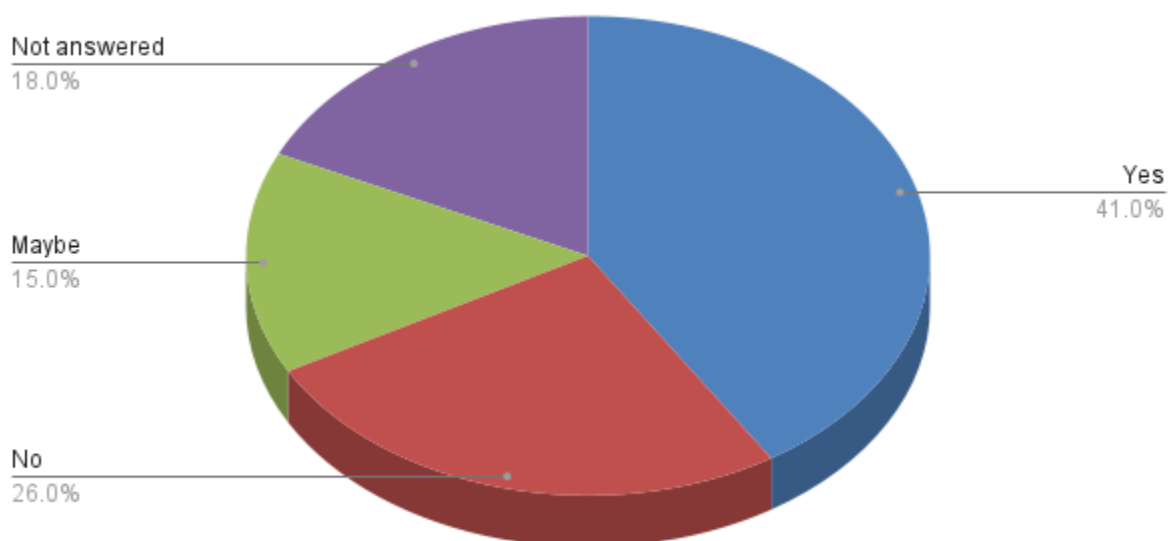
Many comments were specifically related to the cubicle aspect of the proposed updated changing facilities:

“Would really value there still being some communal (open) space to change. During colder months, it can be really helpful changing communally as you can watch out for each other if someone gets too cold etc.”

“The changing village looks a bit inconvenient to get into a wetsuit if confined in a small changing cubicle. There is something nice about the culture and community of the outside / open room changing area.”

“The proposed new changing rooms are really unpleasant - the openness and unity of the current changing space brings people together, this should be preserved.”

Would any of our proposals encourage you to use the centre and reservoir, if you don't already?



41% of respondents (326) told us that our proposals would encourage them to use the centre and reservoir, if they didn't already, whilst 26% (209) said that they wouldn't.

Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the proposals or other things you would like to see?

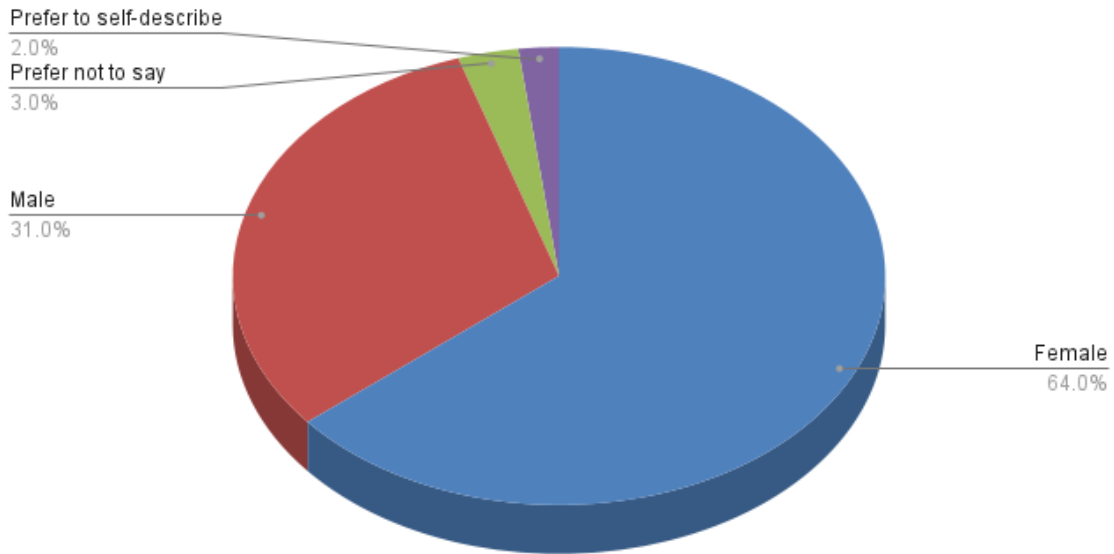
A total of 519 comments were made and the following key themes emerged:

Anything else to tell us / things you would like to see	Comments
Would like a sauna	152
Queries / concerns about cost, discounts / price reduction for locals / low income / payment options	26
Would like more cycle parking / secure storage	23
Would like hot / warm outdoor showers	20
Requests to keep as much space for nature as possible / further increase / protect wildlife habitat	20
Queries / concerns regarding the timing of potential building / landscaping works and impact on the centre's activities	18
Concerns / queries regarding availability of swimming slots / booking during busy periods	16
Suggestions to limit the number of parking spaces / encourage active / sustainable transport options	14
Would like a creche facility	13

In addition to using this section to reiterate their comments both opposing and supporting the proposals, respondents also provided views on the consultation and design development process.

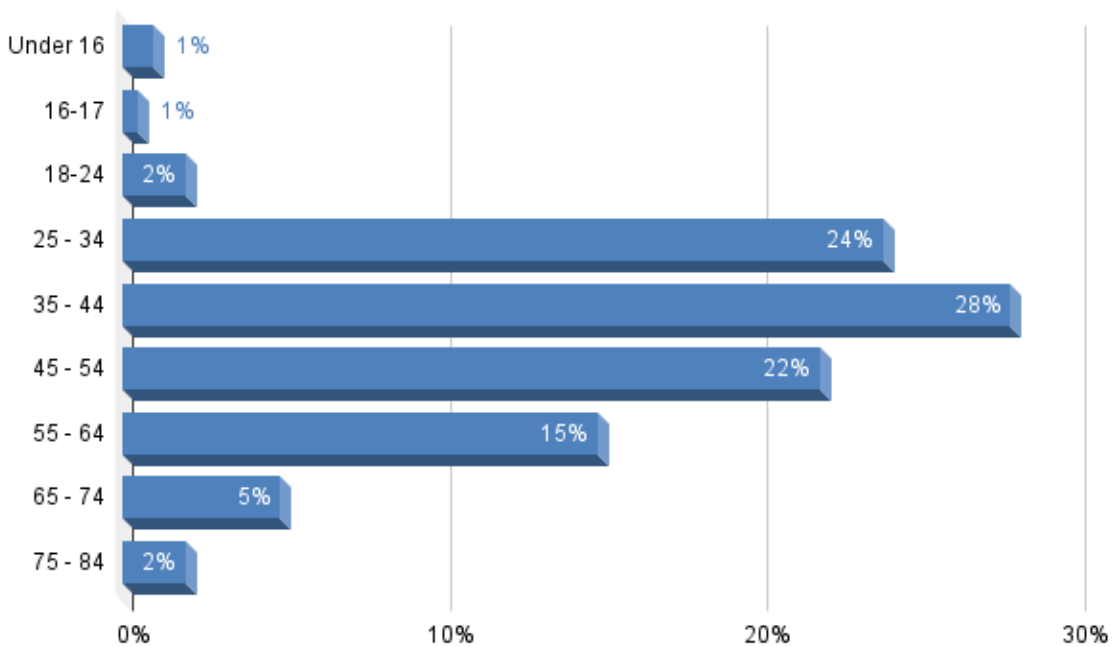
About you

Gender: Are you... (Base 776)



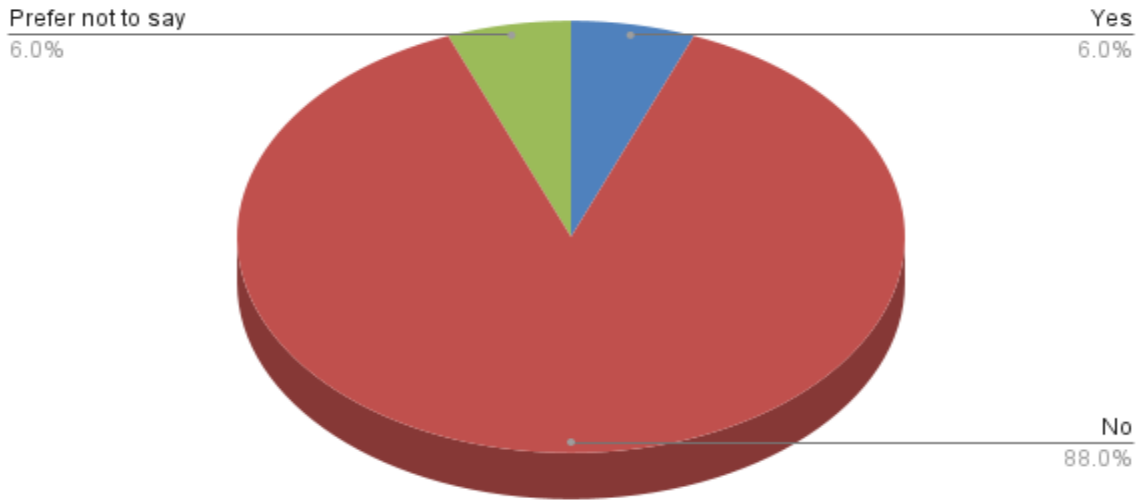
64% (502) of respondents to this question stated they were female, followed by male (31%, 239). 3% (22 respondents) preferred not to say and 2% (13 respondents) stated they preferred to self-describe.

Age group: Are you... (Base 775)



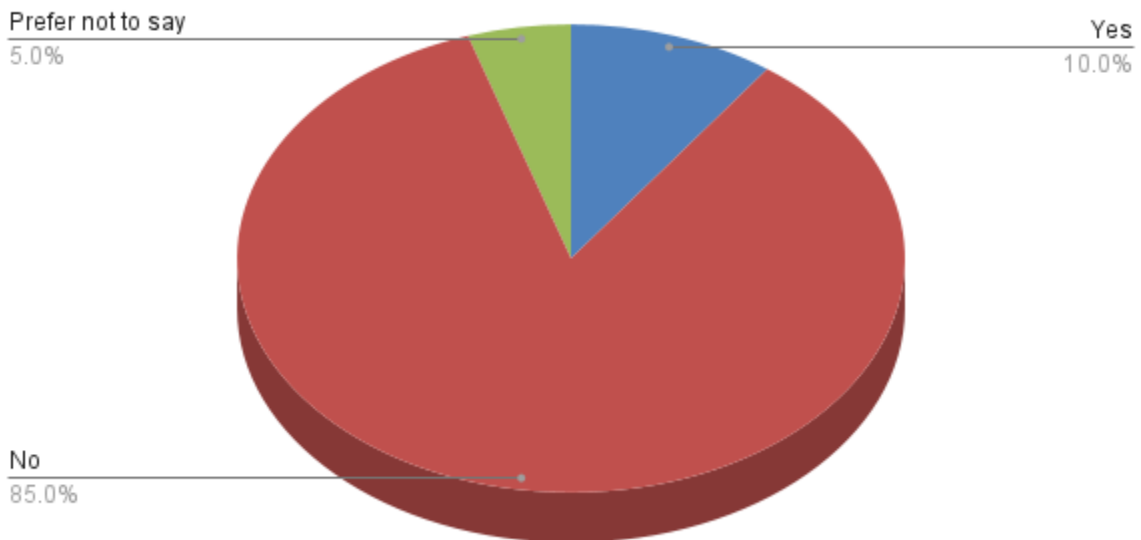
The group with the highest number of respondents was 35-44 year olds (28%, 216), closely followed by 25-34 year olds (24%, 184) and 45-54 year olds (22%, 174).

Disability: Do you consider yourself to be disabled? (Base 765)



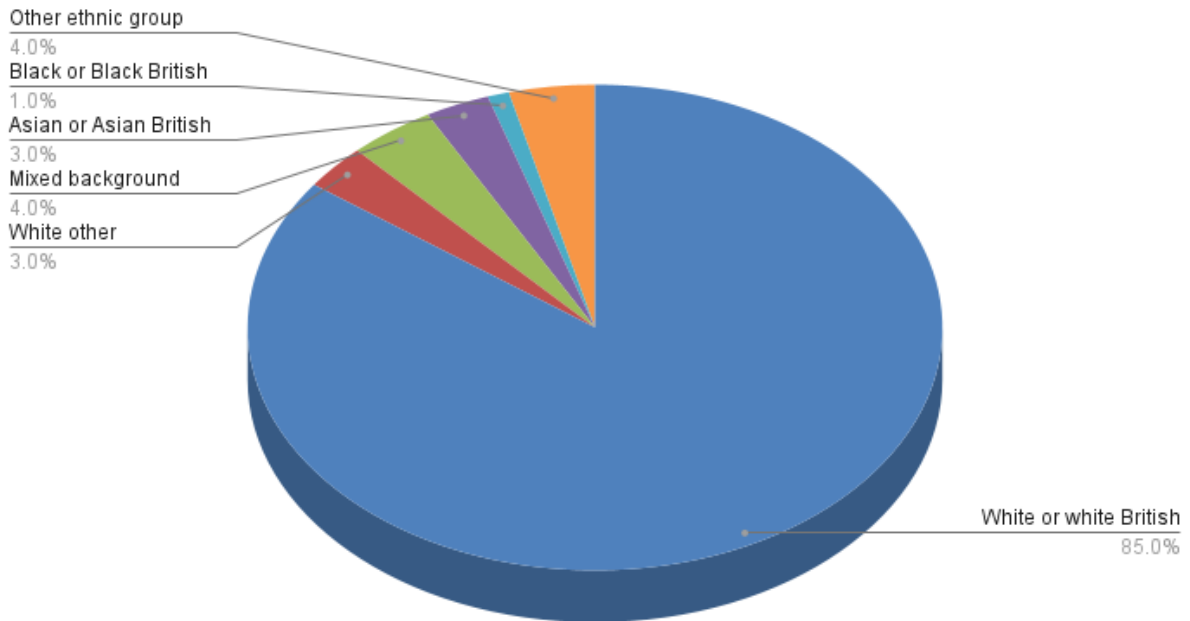
The majority of respondents stated they do not have a disability (88%, 672) while 6% (45 respondents) said they did. 6% (48) preferred not to say.

Caring responsibilities: Do you regularly provide unpaid support caring for someone? (Base 764)



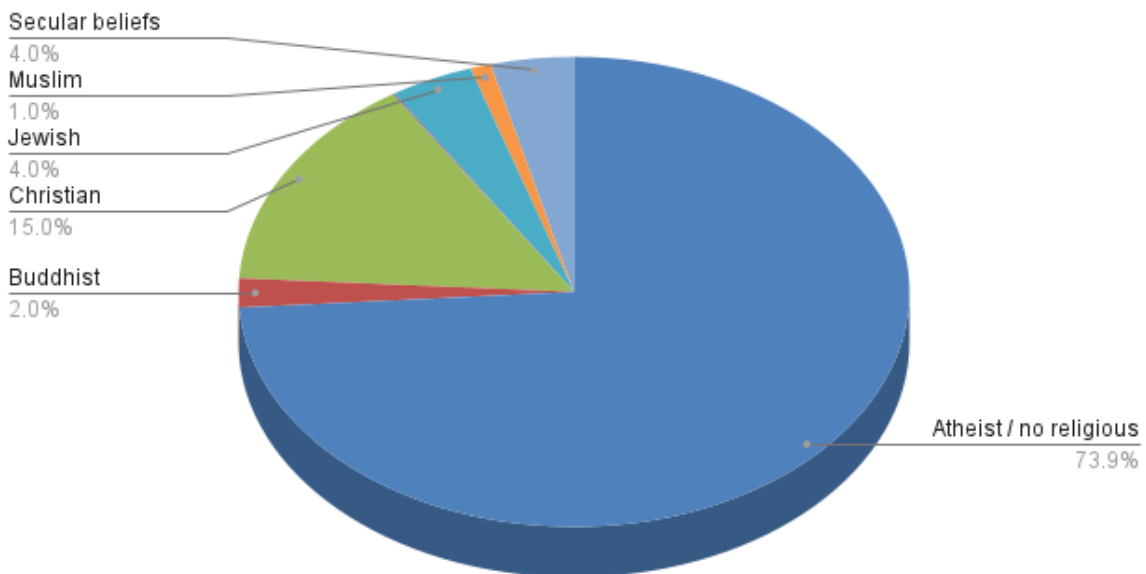
The majority of respondents stated they do not have caring responsibilities (85%, 648) while 10% (77 respondents) said they did. 5% (39) preferred not to say.

Ethnicity: Are you... (Base 741)



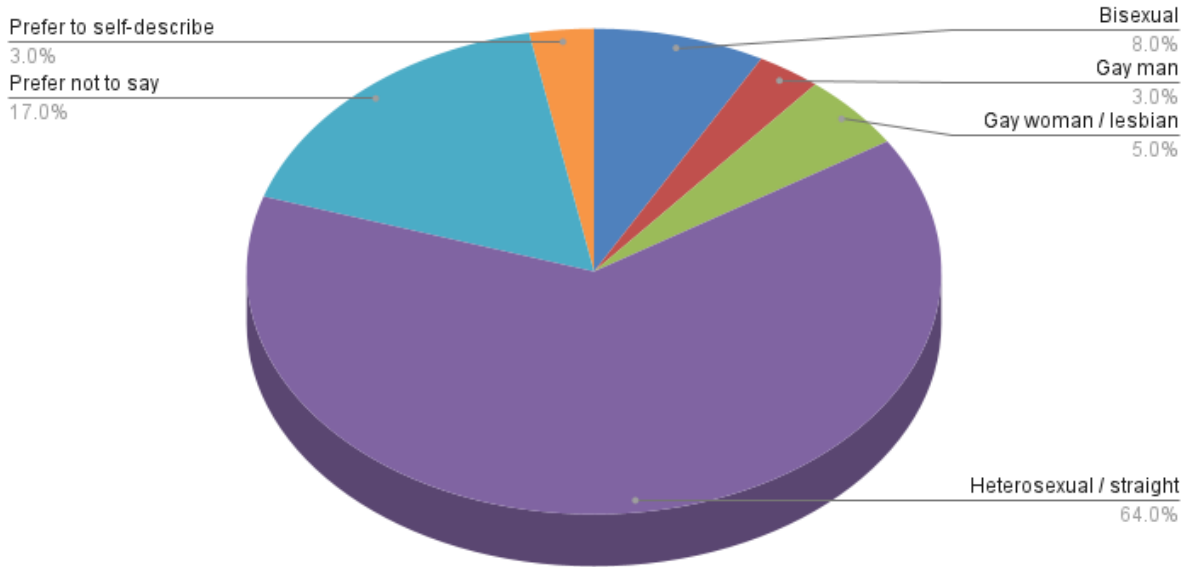
The majority of respondents stated they were white/white British (85%, 629), the second highest was a mixed background (4%, 32), while all the other ethnicities counted for smaller numbers.

Religion or beliefs: Are you... (Base 626)



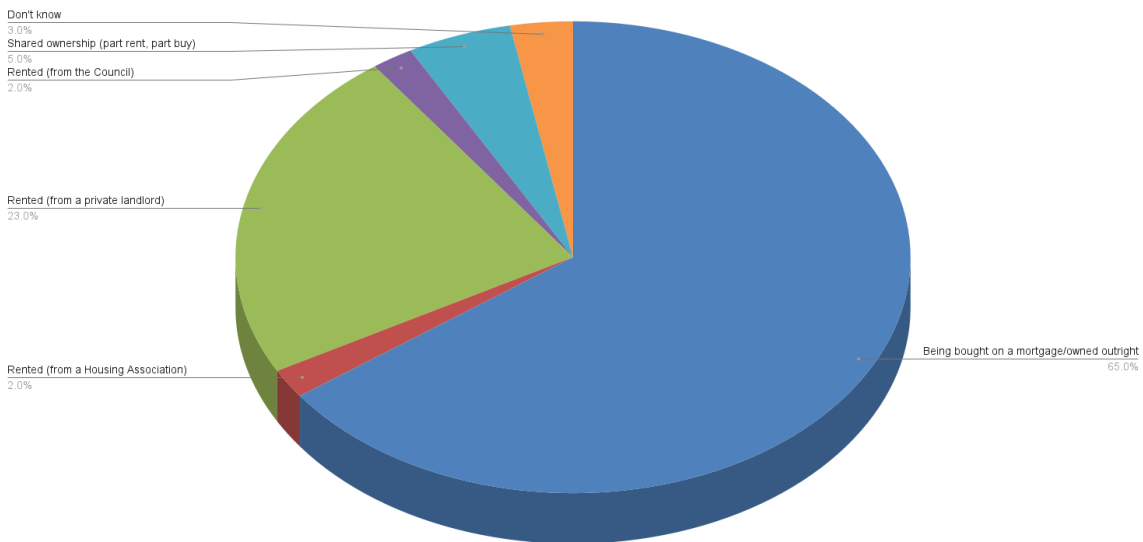
The majority of respondents stated that they were atheist or had no religious beliefs (74%, 464), followed by Christian (15%, 99).

Sexual orientation: Are you... (Base 718)



The majority of respondents stated that they were heterosexual (64%, 462), followed in much smaller numbers by Bisexual (8%, 55), gay woman/lesbian (5%, 33 and gay man (3%, 23)

Housing Tenure: Which of the following best describes the ownership of your home? (Base 761)



The highest number of respondents (65%, 499) described their home as being bought on a mortgage/owned outright, followed by 23% (171 respondents) who rent from a private landlord.

Next Steps

All feedback from this consultation has been provided to the design team and will be reviewed and carefully considered, informing the next stages of the design process.

Some of the proposed changes to the West Reservoir Centre and surrounding landscape will require planning permission, for which we will follow the necessary processes.

We will continue to engage with stakeholders as we further develop the proposals.

Appendix

Stakeholder response: we received one stakeholder response from the New River Renewal Campaign, which was submitted separately to the online questionnaire:

NEW RIVER RENEWAL CAMPAIGN

www.newriverrenewal.co.uk

RESPONSE TO THE WEST RESERVOIR CONSULTATION

Introduction

This Consultation is intended to gather the views of local people on how the West Reservoir, the paths around the reservoir and the facilities can be improved. The reservoir is currently used for swimming, boating and watersports and has a small café. There are now ample opportunities to improve and enhance the reservoir and facilities for local people, for wildlife, green spaces and for nature. The reservoir was won for local people through a huge campaign in the 1990 and now is the time to ensure that the reservoir, the adjacent paths and the facilities and substantially improved, made welcoming and safe for all.

1) The London Borough of Hackney is committed to working with communities to create more welcoming spaces

We need restoration and regular maintenance of the existing path around the West Reservoir. Currently, the path is extremely hazardous after it has rained and prevents many people from walking on the path. It excludes people with disabilities and those who are frail.

We need to ensure everybody is able to walk along both the existing path and the proposed new path. We do not believe that it is practically possible for the path to accommodate the needs of both older vulnerable and frail people, others with disabilities, and people riding on bikes and

scooters.

An example of the problem currently is Clissold Park which is becoming a threatening environment, because of the increasing numbers and speed of bikes and scooters. We don't want a similar situation on the restored and the new West Reservoir path.

2) Environmental Sustainability - Enhanced Habitats for Wildlife

The New River from the Castle to Lordship Road is not 'environmentally sustainable'. It is regularly contaminated with a dye (Dyofix Shadow Power) to prevent the growth of river plants. The result is that this entire section of the New River has no growth on the riverbed. The river containing the dye flows into the West Reservoir by Lordship Road and prevents the growth of plants on the bottom of the whole of the West Reservoir. <https://www.dyofix.co.uk/product/lake-shadow-powder-dye/>

3) The West Reservoir Is Not a Natural Resource

Dyofix contamination of the river and reservoir is designed to make the reservoir sterile and safer for swimmers and boaters, but those contaminating the river and reservoir, seem to show no consideration or regard for its impact on the growth of plants life and how this may impact on animal life.

4) Improvements to Habitat to Support Nature and Biodiversity

This will require the cessation of contamination of the reservoir and river with dye to prevent the growth of plants and the consequent impact on wildlife. We also suggest that if the path is to support and enhance nature and biodiversity, that dogs are not permitted on the path around the West Reservoir.

5) Improved Access to the Reservoir and River Path – Why Some Residents Don't Currently Use the Facilities

We fully support the proposal to increase accessibility to the West Reservoir and the creation of an additional path and green space.

Whether these changes result in a significant opportunity to deliver inclusive facilities that enable more people to experience the site, will partly depend on the effectiveness of the maintenance of paths around the West Reservoir.

Enhanced accessibility to the site and increased activities for families, community and minority groups, will require that the paths are safe for all including frail and vulnerable people and children. We agree this should be a major priority. Improving access to the bridge is also very important, but the bridge improvement will not be sufficient to make the path accessible.

6) Dustbins Along the Length of the New River

London Borough of Hackney, Better.com and Thames Water have consistently failed to protect wildlife, by taking virtually no action to install and regularly empty rubbish bins along the length of the New River in Hackney. As a result, rubbish blows into the New River and birds are frequently seen nesting in plastics, e.g. there are no bins close to the New River on the section from the Castle and the children's playground.

7) Resurfacing works on the New River path

We agree that the New River path on the west side of the West Reservoir needs upgrading. It is currently in poor condition and will continue to deteriorate if not restored soon. We want to see **high quality, safe and environmentally friendly** resurfacing of the path – not “**some resurfacing works**” throughout spring 2023.

The path from the Castle to the children's playground needs major works, not just “some resurfacing”. Poor quality renewal of this path was tried two years ago and failed because as soon as it rains the path deteriorates becomes unsafe to walk on.

Cycling on the path is a safety hazard for people who are vulnerable and elderly and also for children. Some cyclists speed down the path and rarely use bells to warn people they are just behind. Many older people avoid the path because of these safety issues. Remember the Equality Act 2010.

8) Previous Engagement 2018 – Outcome

The London Borough of Hackney held three community engagement events in September/October 2018, with the aim of engaging local residents, community groups and existing site users, and gathering ideas and suggestions as to how the West Reservoir site and facilities could be improved.

We asked London Borough of Hackney (consultation@hackney.gov.uk) if there was any actual outcome to these meetings? Not just in terms of things being done, but a plan or strategy. They replied:

The key findings from the 2018 consultation were that those who responded wanted:

- a better café
- improvements to the habitat to support nature and biodiversity •
enhanced accessibility to the West Reservoir and increased activities for families, community and minority groups.

The main outcome of the 2018 consultation was the development of the current consultation and obtaining resources for the upgrading of the reservoir and facilities.

We hope this consultation will have a real impact on improving access for all and enhancing the environment for wildlife.

We hope this consultation will have a **real impact** on improving access for all and enhancing the environment for wildlife.

New River Renewal Campaign

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