Summary Report

Regents Court Development Proposal Summary report

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Background

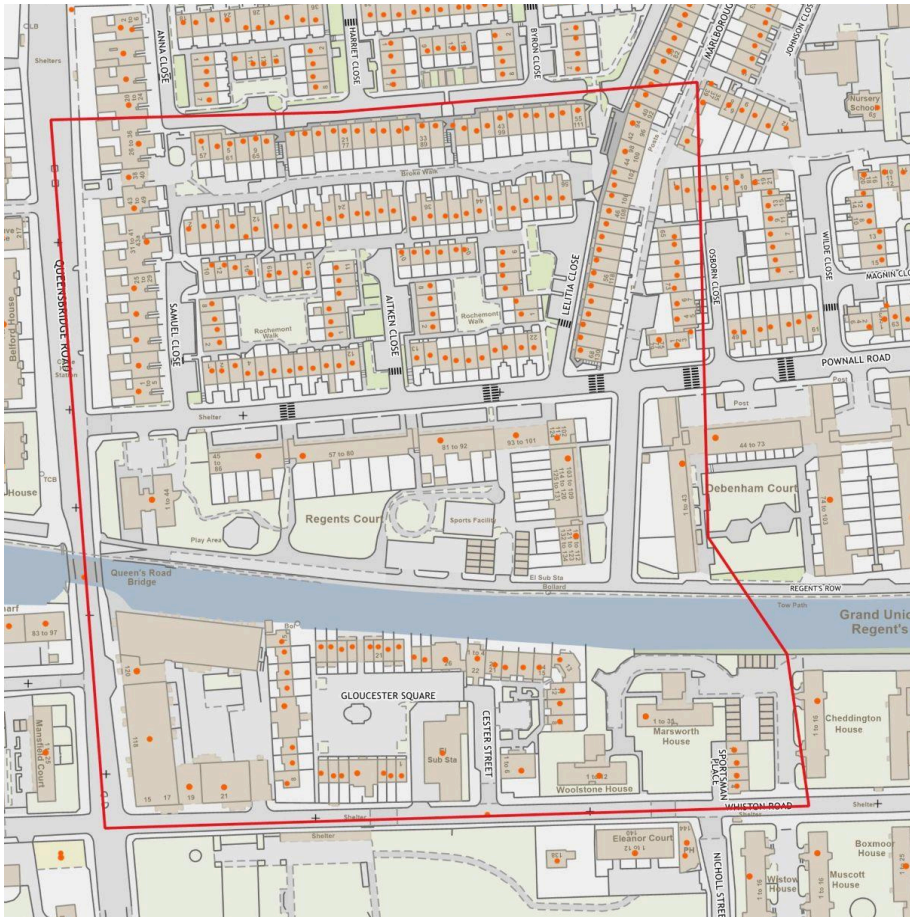
This report summarises the engagement methods and feedback received during the first phase of the New Homes Programme. This stage of consultation was a targeted site-specific discussion with neighbours and local residents around the development of new homes being built on the Regents Estate. This engagement took the form of 2 site-specific events and an online survey that ran for 2 weeks, from Saturday 20 July 2024 to Sunday 4 August 2024.

Purpose of this report

This report provides a neutral account of the engagement that took place and the feedback received. The scope of the first stage of engagement was to gain an understanding of resident's views and ideas regarding the early design work for the new homes. As a result, would allow the Council to better understand how to develop the designs for residents' use and interact with the areas around them.

Distribution

- 710 letters were sent to the surrounding area.



Engagement

- An online survey was hosted on Hackney Council's consultation hub between Saturday 20 July 2024 and Sunday 4 August 2024.
- Two events were held on Saturday 20 July and Monday 22 July in the open space adjacent to the garages.
- Door knocking was also conducted at the events to encourage residents to attend the public events or fill in the online survey.
- Contact details were provided in the letter sent to residents who wished to ask any questions.

Responses

● 10 responses were received from the online survey, including 37 comments collected at the events.
● Around 35 local residents attended the public engagement events.

Feedback

General feedback

Overall, the feedback from the public engagement suggests that there are concerns over the impact that the new design would have on views, daylight/sunlight, and the impact on the estate's existing amenity provision. There was a particular focus on the height of the new building and its relationship with the estate.

There was general support for widening the existing entries and pathways, and improving the lighting around the estate to improve safety.

There were mixed responses as to the preferred option. Some residents felt that Option 1 had the least impact on existing residential properties although it was noted that the properties directly to the north would lose their view, while other residents felt that Option 2 had a more equal impact, and minimised the impact on the existing estate amenity space, as well as affecting less properties to the north views.

Residents top priorities for the landscape are for more planting and biodiversity, more trees to provide natural shade and the retention or re-provision of all play equipment and the ball court.

Specific issues raised

The Options

Whilst more people preferred Option 1, this was not conclusive, as there were still unresolved issues / concerns around the impacts on the existing homes being resolved. It was felt that option 2 was in the wrong location and should not be centred on cut-throughs from Pownall Road. With a suggestion that it could be moved west to a more central location creating two positive green spaces, and an entrance facing the ball court. Concerns about Option 1 are reflected below around cut throughs.

Options - Cut throughs

There were questions about the nature of the cut through between the new building and the existing block / back gardens to the north. Some felt it was too tight, would attract drug use and fly tipping; others mentioned the need for lighting and others were uncertain whether it would be gated.

Options - daylight and sunlight

Residents are concerned about the impact on daylight and sunlight and have requested to see studies showing shadow projects across the year.

Options - Noise

Residents have noted an existing problem with noise reverberating throughout the estate. Some residents were concerned that this would be exacerbated with the proposal for a new building and associated balconies.

Options - Other

A resident questioned why the original capacity study placing the new homes on the garage site had been rejected, and why an option to deliver townhouses along the length of Regents Canal had also been rejected.; before the public engagement.

Options - Bins

A number of residents are not happy with the proposed location of bin stores, as these are seen as attracting vermin and not being hygienic. They suggest the bins should be located within the new building.

Options - Construction process

Some noted that the choice of options should also take into consideration how the project will be delivered - and that option 1 would require the ball court to be used as a construction site, leaving very little green/play space during the construction process.

Loss of car parking and garages

There is concern over the loss of garages from current occupiers and one resident suggested that some of the bays of hard standing in front of the blocks on Pownall Road could be converted into parking spaces. Others were concerned about the loss of parking spaces for existing residents questioning what will be provided as part of the proposed new plans, given what is perceived to be a lack in local streets.

Undercroft and cycle storage

A number of residents mentioned at the public engagement events that the undercroft space at the north east corner of the estate attracts ASB and makes a dangerous entrance to the estate. It also causes damp to the flats above as there is no insulation. They would like to see this area enclosed for example for cycle storage.

Overview of results

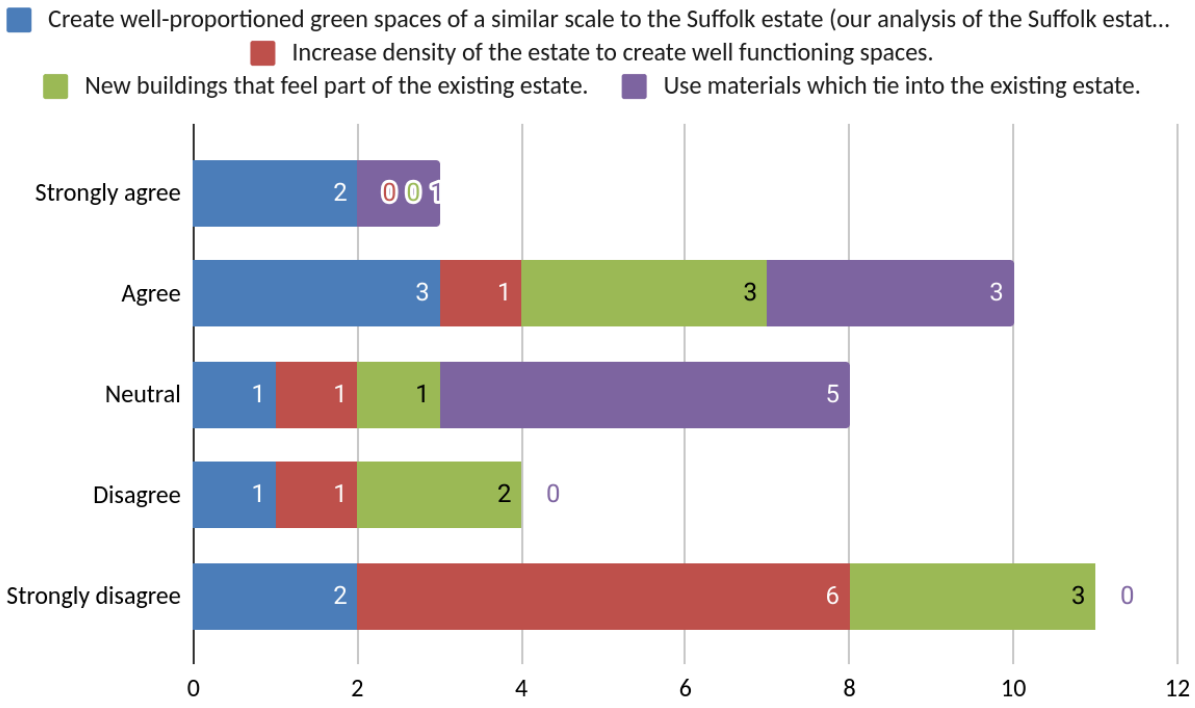
A mixture of quantitative and qualitative questions were asked concerning the Character of the Regents Court estate, Access & Movement within the estate and around the new proposed building, existing and proposed amenities such as the open green spaces and play provision as well as around shared principles for the design approach and options for the provision of new homes on the Estate. There were additional questions around signage, wayfinding and block naming. The aim of which was to give participants an opportunity to tell us their views and ideas and allow the Council to better understand how residents use and interact with the areas around them. The feedback to each of these questions is summarised below:

Character of the Regent's Court Estate – Board 3

Question 4. What are the things you most love about the neighbourhood?

Nine of the respondents spoke about their love for the views and proximity to Regents Canal. The majority of residents also spoke about the importance of the communal green space that currently exists on the estate.

Question 5a. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the Shared Design Principles to:



	Create well-proportioned green spaces of a similar scale to the Suffolk estate (our analysis of the Suffolk estate shows that courtyards and open spaces function better with increased density).	Increase density of the estate to create well functioning spaces.	New buildings that feel part of the existing estate.	Use materials which tie into the existing estate.
Strongly agree	2	0	0	1
Agree	3	1	3	3
Neutral	1	1	1	5
Disagree	1	1	2	0
Strongly disagree	2	6	3	0

People mostly agreed with the proposed shared design principles in particular creating well proportioned green spaces and using materials that blend into the existing estate

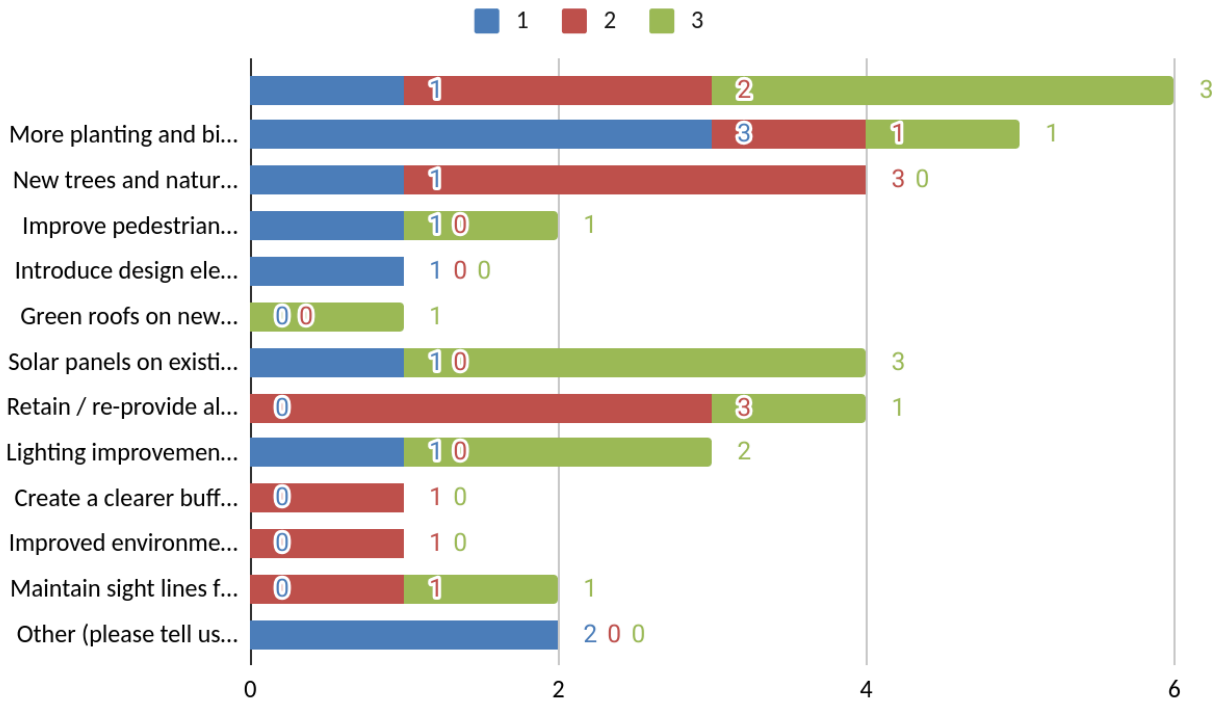
However, seven respondents disagreed with the principle of increasing the density of the estate to create well functioning spaces.

Question 5b. If you have any additional comments, please write here:
One resident said, “this seems like sugar coating the proposal for development, well functioning green spaces could easily be developed without more building.”

Some residents also expressed concern over the height and loss of views due to the new building, with one resident saying, “*the design principles suggest a trade-off between maintaining open views and building a new block. It's crucial to consider whether this build can be designed in a way that preserves or enhances views rather than obstructing them.*”

Green spaces and play – Board 4

Question 6a. Of the design principles listed below, please choose your top three priorities (other than housing) for improvements to the landscape and outdoor areas in and around Regent's Court (please number your options 1 to 3, number 1 being the highest priority).



	More planting and biodiversity.	New trees and natural shade.	Improve pedestrian movement and experience	Introduce design elements along Regents Row to provide more eyes on the streets for safety.	Green roofs on new buildings	Solar panels on existing buildings	Retain / re-provide all play provision, including the multi-user games court.	Lighting improvements.	Create a clearer buffer between Regent's Row and the estate.	Improved environment around bin stores.	Maintain sight lines from Pawnall Road.	Other (please tell us more below)
1	3	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	2
2	1	3	0	0	0	0	3	0	1	1	1	0
3	1	0	1	0	1	3	1	2	0	0	1	0

Weighted scores where top priority = 3 points, 2nd priority = 2 points and 3rd priority = 1 point with the below results:

More planting and diversity = 12 points
New trees and natural shade = 9 points
Retain / re-provide all play provision = 7 points
Solar panels on existing buildings = 6 points

The top priority for the respondents was for more planting biodiversity, with **three** respondents selecting that as their priority.

One resident said "*Greening of the estate is a benefit that will come after years of maturity. We should do all we can to protect (or repurpose) existing mature trees on the estate. Solar panel installation on existing blocks (that would reduce residents' bills) would be a huge benefit to the local community and set Regents Court above other estates in the borough. I encourage the project team to explore this opportunity.*"

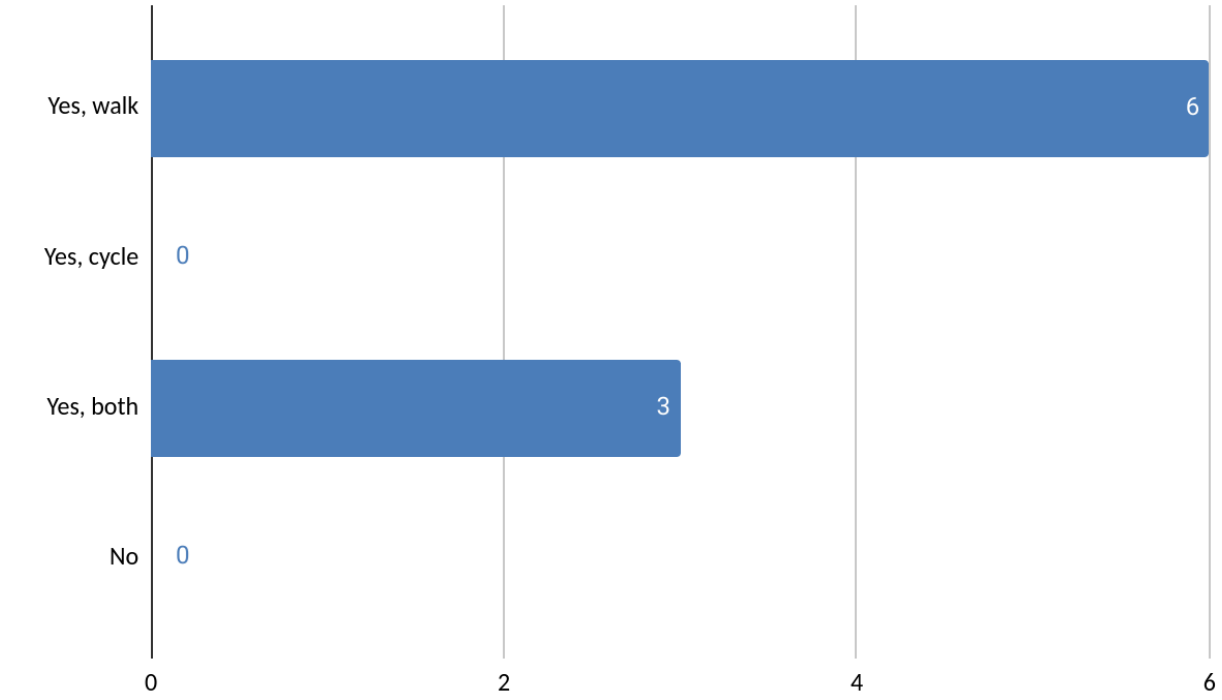
Question 6b. Other:
Some residents raised their concerns about the new building and the effect it will have on green spaces, views and overcrowding

Question 7. Are there other improvements or changes you would like to see in these areas to better meet your needs and preferences?
Respondents said that improving safety in the area, through additional lighting would help prevent crime and address an important local issue.

One resident said *"please focus your attention on the underpass area. Although it is not part of the new block, this area will inevitably be used by all new residents to access and exit the estate. There is a significant opportunity to improve this location by designing out crime, providing new amenities such as bike storage and bin refuge, and addressing chronic damp issues for the residents living above due to the lack of insulation."*

<u>Access, movement and servicing – Board 5</u>

Question 8. Do you walk or cycle through and around Regent's Court estate regularly?

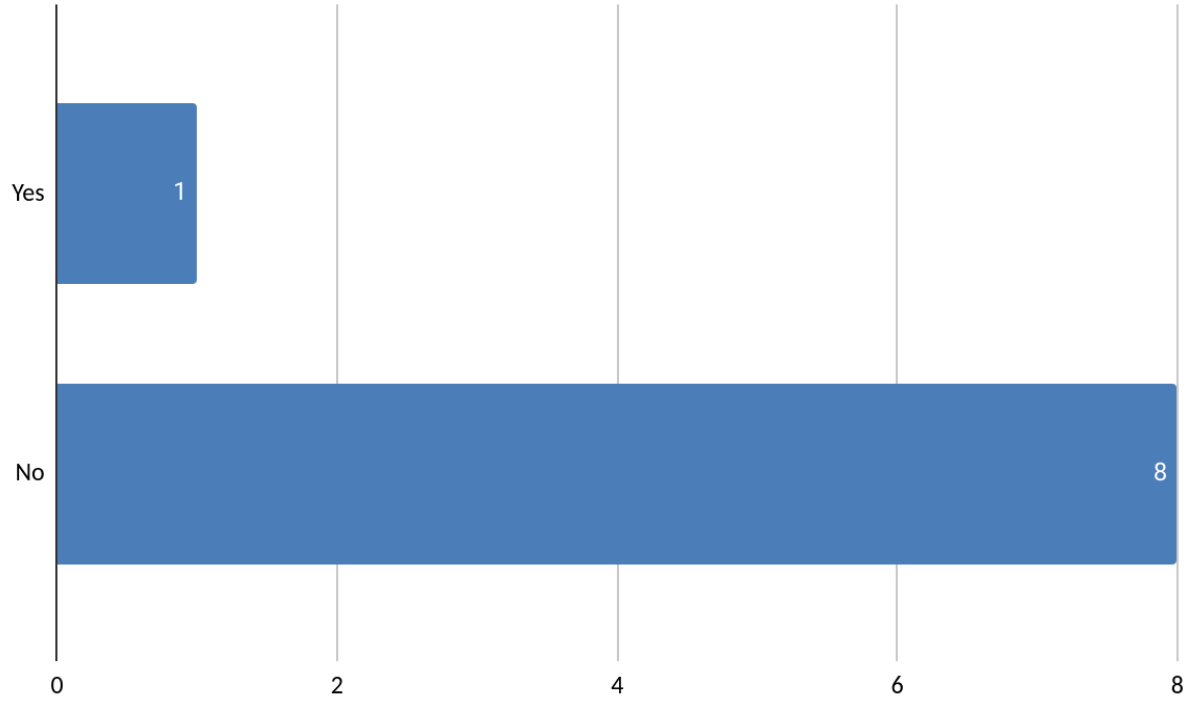


Yes, walk	6
Yes, cycle	0
Yes, both	3
No	0

9. If yes, what improvements or changes would make walking and cycling more enjoyable and safer for you?

When asked about improvements to the estate that would make movement through the estate safer and more enjoyable, **Four** respondents said that better lighting and wider pathways along key pedestrian routes could improve the movement, with one resident saying *"more direct pathways to access all the main buildings. Pathways should be well-lit at night and ideally shaded by trees to improve walkability"*.

Question 10. Do you have a mobility issue that affects your ability to get around the area?



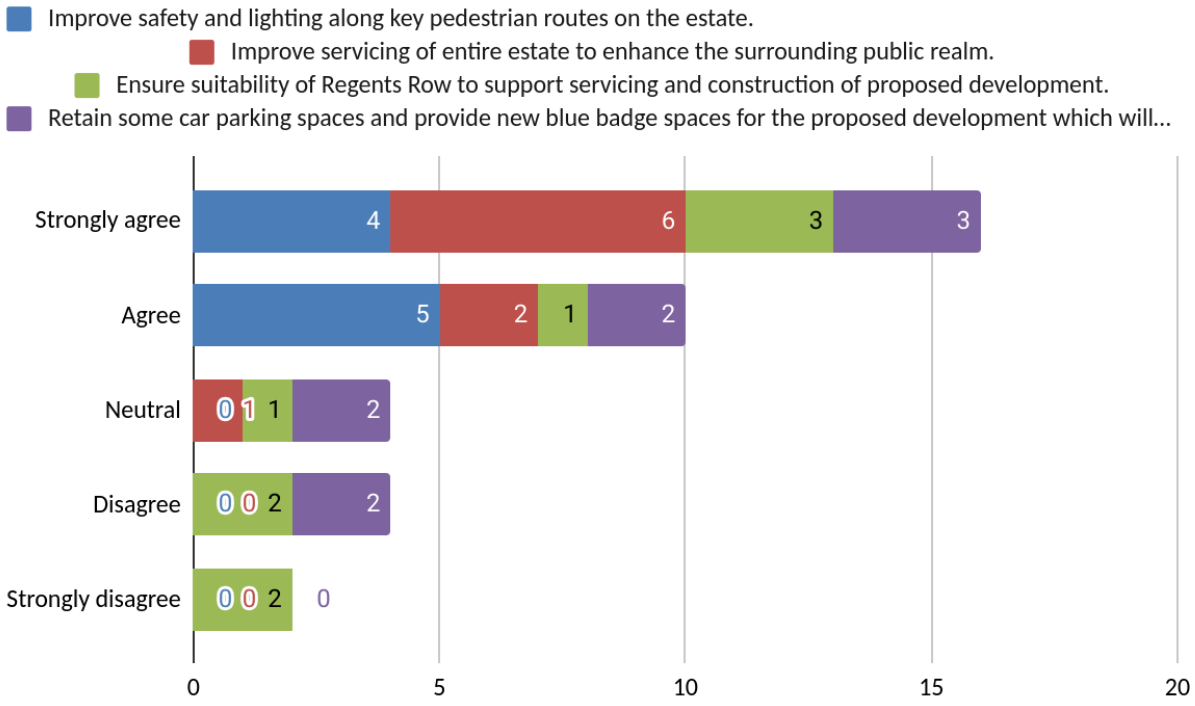
Yes	1
No	8

Question 11. If yes, what improvements or changes would make getting around the estate easier and safer for you?

There were no responses to this question.

Board 6 - Design approach

Question 12. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the below proposed Shared Design Principles?



	Improve safety and lighting along key pedestrian routes on the estate.	Improve servicing of entire estate to enhance the surrounding public realm.	Ensure suitability of Regents Row to support servicing and construction of proposed development.	Retain some car parking spaces and provide new blue badge spaces for the proposed development which will otherwise be car free.
Strongly agree	4	6	3	3
Agree	5	2	1	2
Neutral	0	1	1	2
Disagree	0	0	2	2
Strongly disagree	0	0	2	0

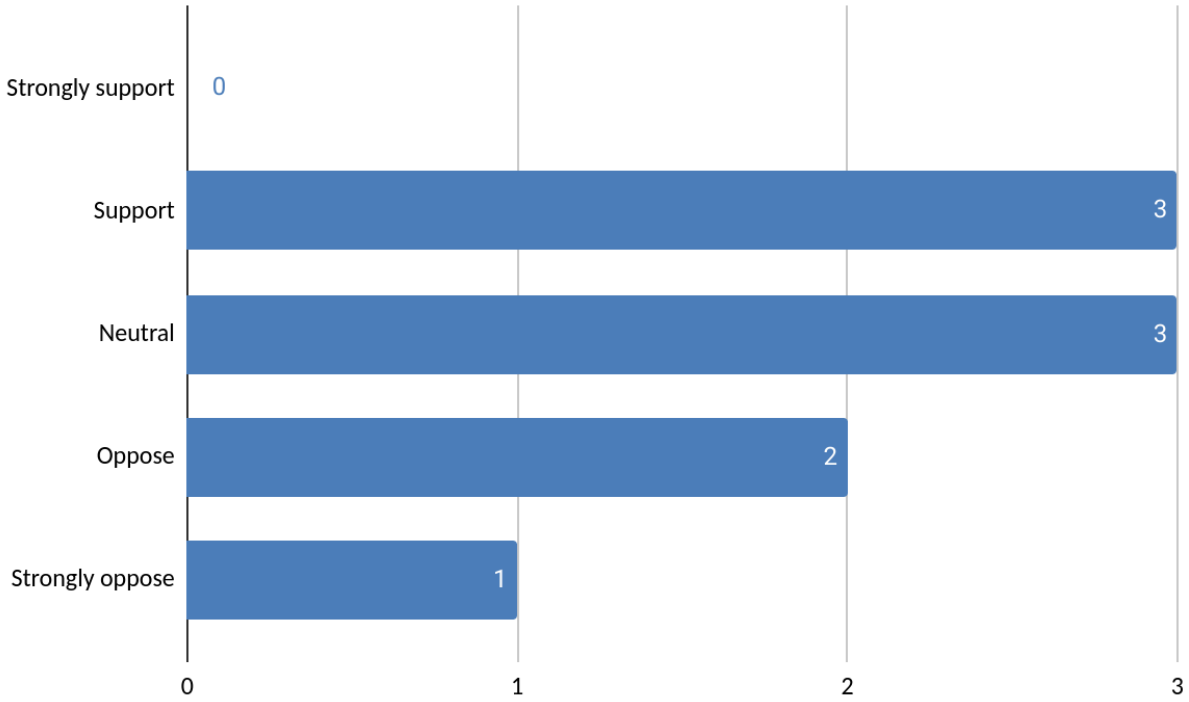
All **nine** respondents agreed or strongly agreed to Improve servicing of the entire estate to enhance the surrounding public realm.

Some respondents raised concerns about the new building and the removal of parking spaces for existing residents, with one resident saying "*there should be additional car parking spaces that are accessible for existing residents as well as those in the new development.*"

Question 13. If you have any additional comments, please write here:
There were questions at the public engagement about what would happen to the amenity spaces during the construction and if they would be accessible?

Some residents noted that Regents Row may have structural problems that could impact access for construction as well as generally.

Question 14. Do you support or oppose the idea of removing the existing railings along the canal tow path that separates Regents Row and Regents Court Estate from the towpath?

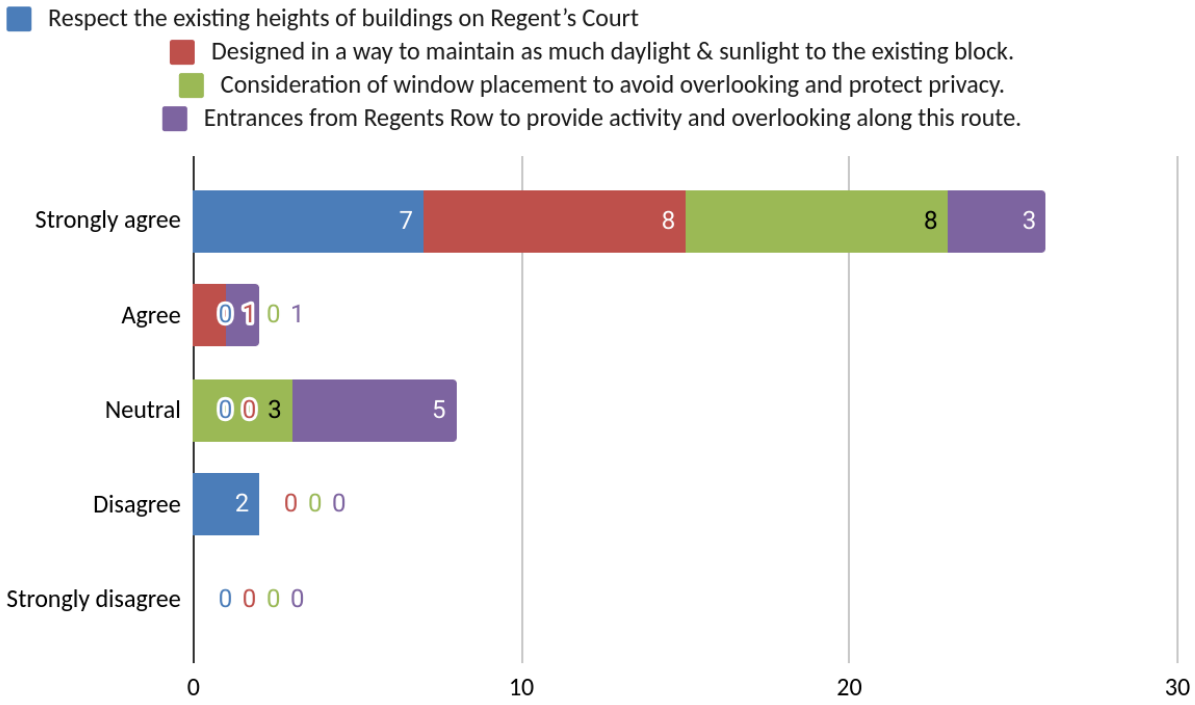


Strongly support	0
Support	3
Neutral	3
Oppose	2
Strongly oppose	1

Residents' views on this were mixed with only one resident commenting on their support for this idea at the public engagement events.

<u>Design approach / shared design principles – Boards 6</u>

Question 15a. Do you agree or disagree with the Shared Design Principles listed below:



	Respect the existing heights of buildings on Regent's Court	Designed in a way to maintain as much daylight & sunlight to the existing block.	Consideration of window placement to avoid overlooking and protect privacy.	Entrances from Regents Row to provide activity and overlooking along this route.
Strongly agree	7	8	8	3
Agree	0	1	0	1
Neutral	0	0	3	5
Disagree	2	0	0	0
Strongly disagree	0	0	0	0

The proposed shared design principles are broadly supported.

Seven of the respondents agreed to the principle of respecting the existing heights of buildings on Regent's Court.

All of the respondents agreed that the new design should be designed in a way which maintains as much daylight and sunlight to the existing block.

Eight of the respondents agreed that consideration of window placement to avoid overlooking and protect privacy should be a principle.

Question 15 b. If you have any additional comments, please write here:

Four respondents spoke about the design's impact on the light and views of existing residents and **three** raised concerns about the height of the new design, saying that the height of the new building should be lower than the existing surrounding buildings.

One resident said, *"I think it's absolutely essential that the new development is designed to be as low as possible to not obstruct views and light for the remainder of the estate."*

<u>Design development – Board 7</u>

Question 16. Option 1 (5 and 3 storey U-shaped building) What do you like about this option?

One respondent said, *"I think it is better placed aesthetically to have it here. I also think the 'stepped down' element means the impact of the building spatially is slightly reduced."*

From the written evidence, we can see a preference for Option 1 (U-block), with at least **seven** residents noting their preference.

One resident said *"I like the U block. Will the space between be private? I like the way it creates 2 courts."*

Question 16. Option 1 (5 and 3 storey U-shaped building) What don't you like about this option?

The majority of the respondents feedback negatively on this option, citing its size and its imposing nature on the existing estate, with one resident saying it *"will make the area too busy and feel cramped."*

Question 17. Option 2 (Villa building 6 storeys +) What do you like about this option?

Three residents preferred this option compared to option 1, stating it is less imposing and helps to retain residents' views.

One resident we spoke to at the public engagement said *"I'm happy with this design (option 2) progressing, it's a bit tall but probably the best balance between height, footprint, views etc."*

Question 17. Option 2 (Villa building 6 storeys +) What don't you like about this option?
Three residents were concerned about the impact this option poses on their views and **four** residents were concerned about this option's impact on their light.

At least **four** people we spoke to at the public engagement did not like the height of Option 2, with one expressing preference for option 1 as it had one less storey.

Question 18.If you have any additional comments, please write here:
One resident at the public engagement told us "I am not a young person, however I believe that young people deserve good quality homes to live and grow up in, this means, light, air, space and amenities. Whilst the proposal to re landscape the existing amenity space is all well and good young people living in the existing blocks will also be affected by reduction in light, views and a feeling of overcrowding."

Four people spoke about the opportunity to make improvements to the existing estate bin stores.

Five people spoke about possible improvements to the cut throughs within Regents Court estate.

In particular, one resident said that *"cut throughs should be widened with lighting"*.

A number of residents also highlighted concerns that the new designs could negatively impact the already compromised cut throughs.

For example on Option 1, one resident suggested "a *simple gate at either end/both ways of the passage*", to secure the cut through.

<u>History & Identity – Board 8</u>
Question 19.Please share your memories and anecdotes about living on the Regents Court Estate:
There were no responses to this question.

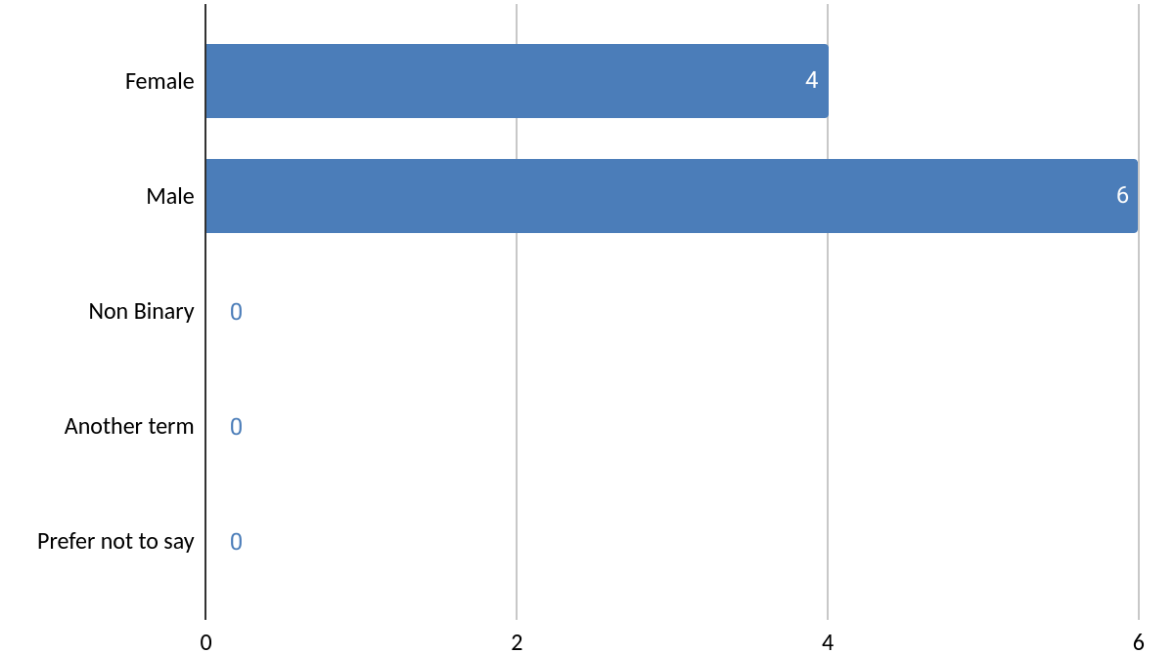
Question 20.Who is your local hero?
There were no responses to this question.

Question 21.The Regents Court Estate is named after the canal it looks on to. Do you have any suggestions of a name for the new building?
There were no responses made to the online survey, however one person at the public engagement felt that the new building should not have a different name but be part of Regents Court estate.

<u>Youth engagement – Board 9</u>
Question 22. As a young person and/or as a parent and/or carer - what's your idea to improve the area for / life on the estate for young people?
There were no responses to this question.

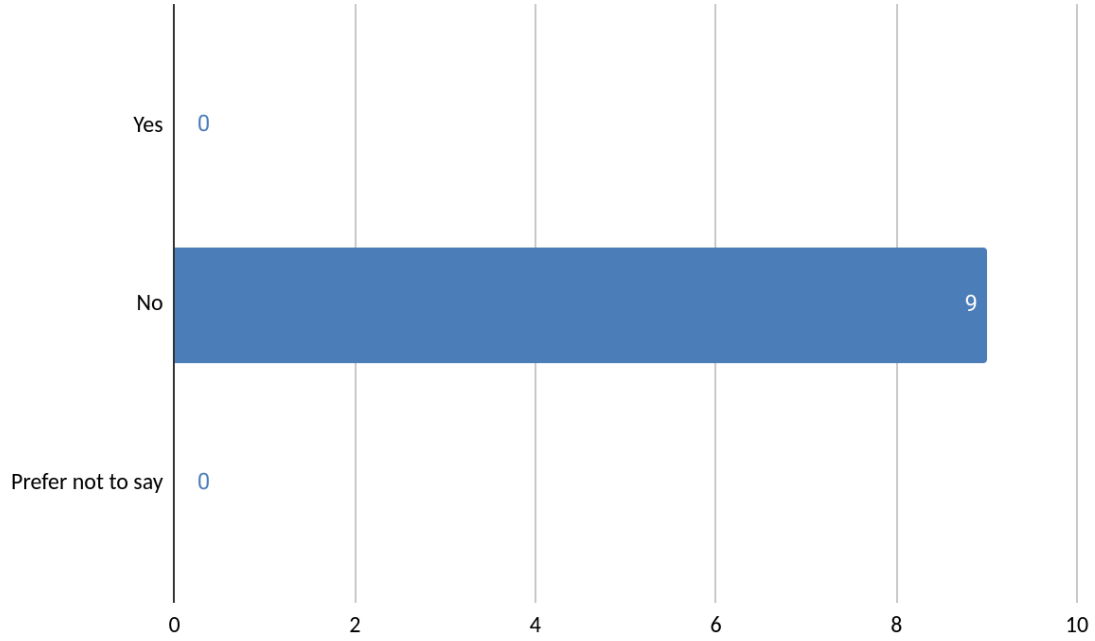
About You

Gender: Are you...



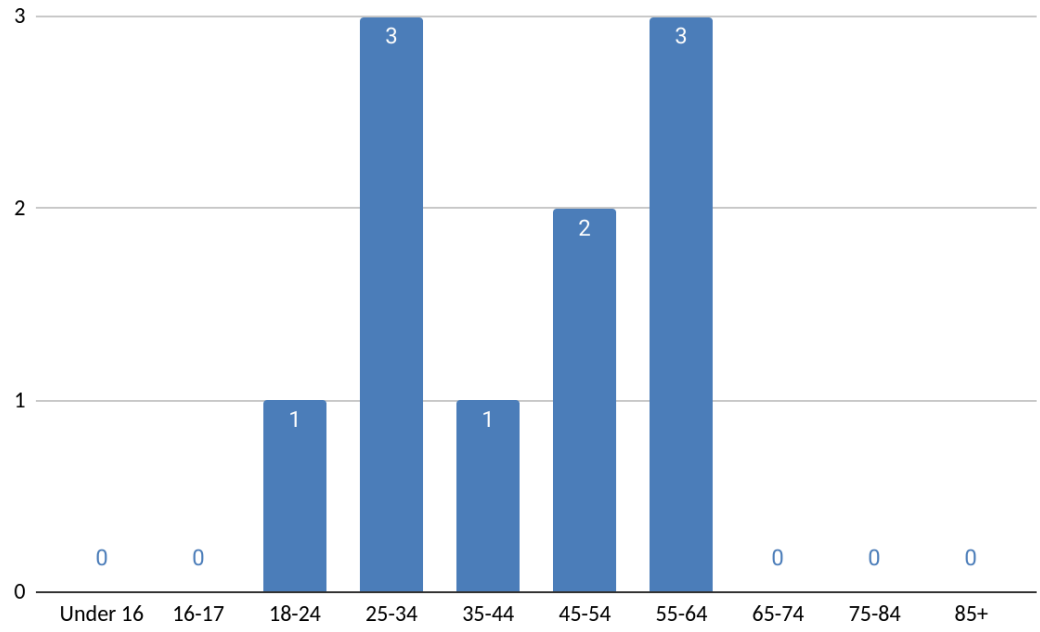
Female	4
Male	6
Non Binary	0
Another term	0
Prefer not to say	0

Are you transgender or do you have a history of being transgender?



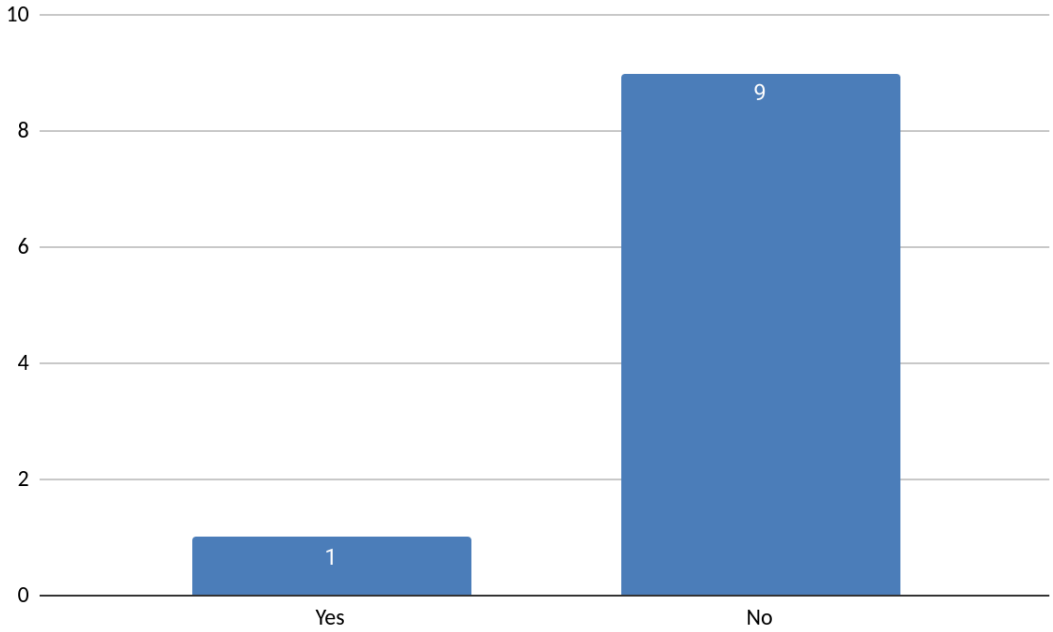
Yes	0
No	9
Prefer not to say	0

Age: what is your age group?



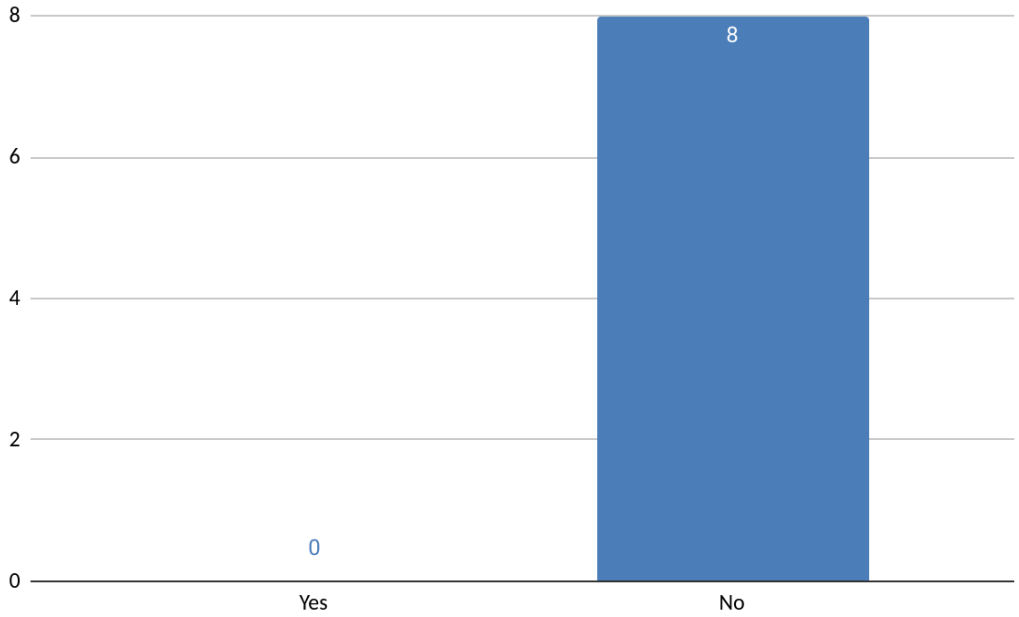
Under 16	0
16-17	0
18-24	1
25-34	3
35-44	1
45-54	2
55-64	3
65-74	0
75-84	0
85+	0

Disability



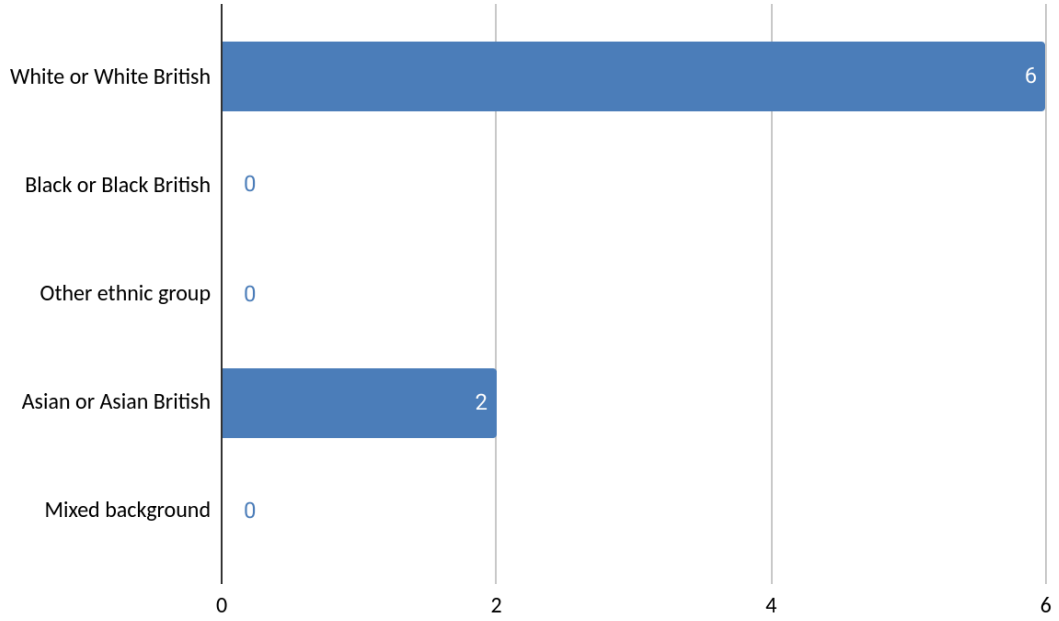
Yes	1
No	9

Caring responsibilities



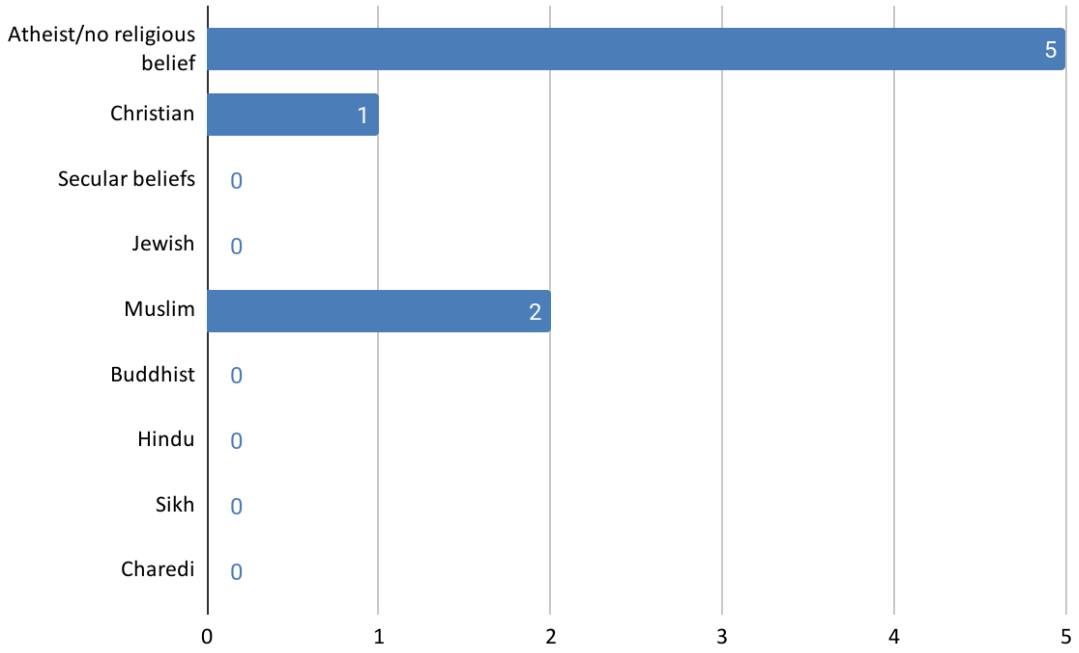
Yes	0
No	8

Ethnicity: Are you...



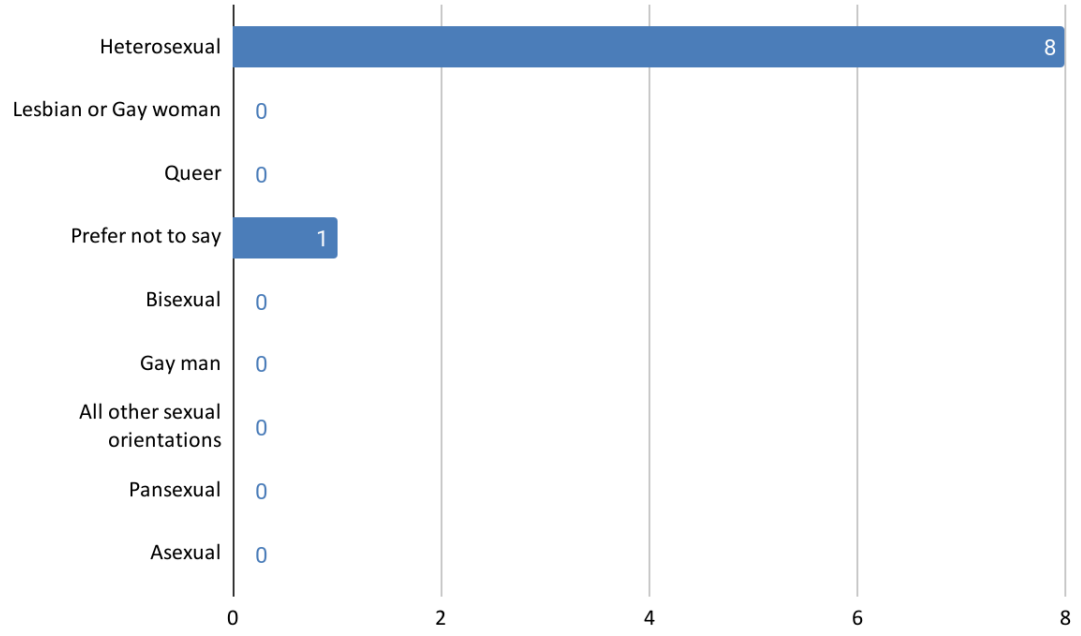
White or White British	6
Black or Black British	0
Other ethnic group	0
Asian or Asian British	2
Mixed background	0

Religion or belief: Are you or do you have...



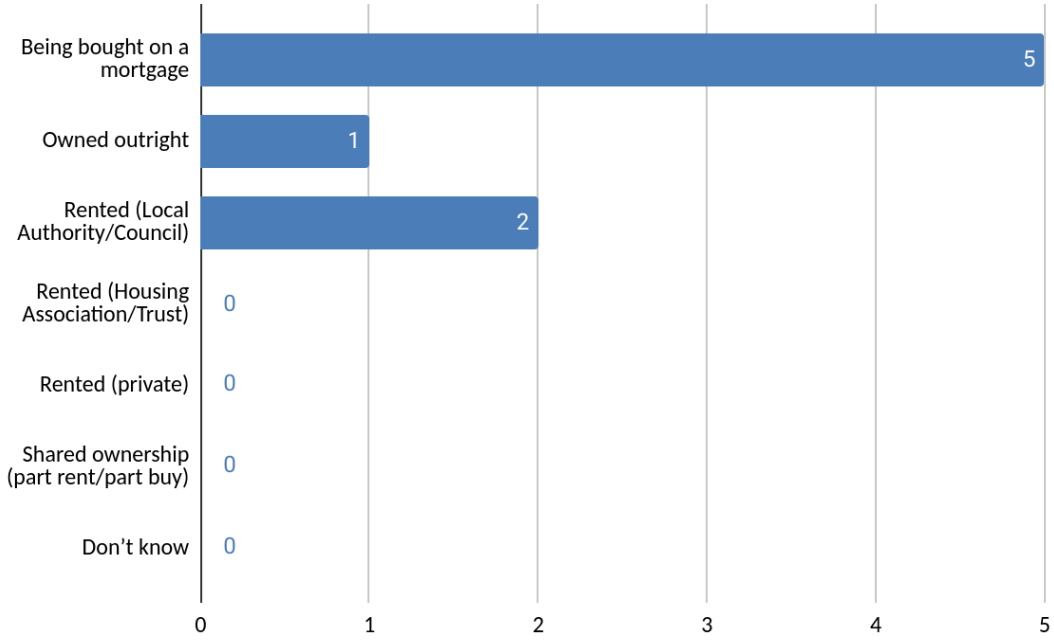
Atheist/no religious belief	5
Christian	1
Secular beliefs	0
Jewish	0
Muslim	2
Buddhist	0
Hindu	0
Sikh	0
Charedi	0

Sexual orientation: Are you...



Heterosexual	8
Lesbian or Gay woman	0
Queer	0
Prefer not to say	1
Bisexual	0
Gay man	0
All other sexual orientations	0
Pansexual	0
Asexual	0

Housing Tenure:



Being bought on a mortgage	5
Owned outright	1
Rented (Local Authority/Council)	2
Rented (Housing Association/Trust)	0
Rented (private)	0
Shared ownership (part rent/part buy)	0
Don't know	0

Next steps

The project and design team will review the feedback from this Stage 1 engagement as part of an assessment of the Stage 1 work, to inform the next stage of design development and the selection of a preferred option to carry forward. The feedback from residents will sit alongside that of Hackney Planning officers, and a viability assessment carried out by Exigere cost consultants.

The next public consultation on the preferred strategy and options will take place at the end of RIBA Stage 2 likely to be in the new year (2025). Meetings with the Resident Steering Group (RSG) and engagement with key stakeholders and targeted groups will continue to take place between public consultation events. Minutes of RSG meetings are kept and available on request.

In the summer of 2025 a planning application is anticipated and a public exhibition will inform residents of the final designs to be submitted and the process of the planning application, at which point a statutory consultation will take place managed by Hackney planning department. Residents and stakeholders and the public can register their formal support or objection at this stage and before a final decision is made to grant or not grant the scheme planning approval.

This process of engagement will be captured in a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) which will be submitted with the planning application documents.