

BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL

Western Harbour engagement report

Transport Programme Team

25/10/19

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Purpose of report

The Western Harbour engagement exercise was open for responses between the 19th of August and the 15th of September. The context behind the exercise is the need to refurbish the existing Cumberland Basin road system, leading to the investigation of whether the Council has an opportunity to take a different approach that has greater benefits for the area and the city as a whole.

The draft Local Plan review set out the opportunities as follows:

- up to 2,500 new homes with a mix of types, sizes and tenures at densities and forms appropriate to achieving this figure;
- a mix of uses in addition to the new homes, including workspace, student bed spaces and retail and leisure development;
- provision of community facilities required to support the residential and student development;
- high quality public open spaces incorporating green infrastructure and public realm enhancements; and new walking and cycling routes to connect the development to the city centre, surrounding neighbourhoods, public transport facilities and the wider cycle network.

The aim of the exercise was to discuss very early proposals to change the transport network in the Western Harbour area. These proposals would create the space needed for the changes listed above to take place, while also allowing a similar level of access across the New Cut and the River Avon.

Three possible ways to change the transport network were provided for public comment, called the Western Approach, Eastern Approach and Hybrid Approach.

This report will:

- Detail what work took place as part of the Western Harbour engagement exercise, and how many responses were received
- Provide information about where responses came from, including which areas within Bristol and areas of greater and lesser deprivation
- Summarise the main themes of the responses to the engagement exercise
- Provide an initial Council response to the main themes
- Provide information regarding next steps

What work was done to engage with the community?

One of the goals of the engagement exercise was to talk to the community as early as possible, to ensure that we talk about the proposals before lots of design work takes place.

As a result, there were fewer stakeholder meetings before the engagement exercise started compared with a full consultation because this exercise took place as early as possible and is in addition to, rather than replacing, our commitment to consultations.

The engagement exercise had the following aims:

- Publicly display our early work on the proposal, so that citizens have a real opportunity to have their say at a stage when major changes are possible
- Raise awareness of the proposal, to make sure that those affected by the proposal are informed that the Council is considering changes
- Answer questions at an early stage, to increase understanding of why the proposal is being considered and what we are trying to achieve

Before the engagement exercise opened, Council officers met with the Cumberland Basin Stakeholders Group to discuss the proposals and understand the local response to them as well as to discuss how best to engage with the local community.

Local councillors in the surrounding wards, including those in North Somerset, were also offered a briefing on the proposals.

We undertook the following work as part of the engagement exercise to enable as many people to respond as possible:

- An online and paper survey was created to enable individuals to respond as easily as possible
- 1,500 paper copies were supplied to Bristol libraries over the course of the engagement exercise, and a further 500 supplied as part of drop-in events or posted on request
- A mail-drop to approximately 7,500 households and businesses was delivered just before the engagement exercise began, with details of the online survey link and the drop-in events
- Eight drop-in events were organised at four different locations, to ensure residents in different areas could attend to discuss and ask questions. Each event was five hours long and the most popular event attracted around 150 people.
 - Two events were held at Underfall Yard on Spike Island, with high levels of interest and a broad range of conversations
 - Two events were held at the Tobacco Factory in Southville, again with very high levels of interest
 - Two events were held at Holy Trinity Church in Hotwells, with the highest level of attendance of all of our events
 - Finally, two events were held at Broadmead Baptist Church in the centre, to enable those living further afield to have an opportunity to talk to us
- During the engagement exercise, project officers responded to more than 200 emails from citizens

How many responses were received?

We received a total of 2,661 responses, of which:

- 2,609 were online or paper responses to the survey
- 43 were emailed responses
- 9 were responses by letter

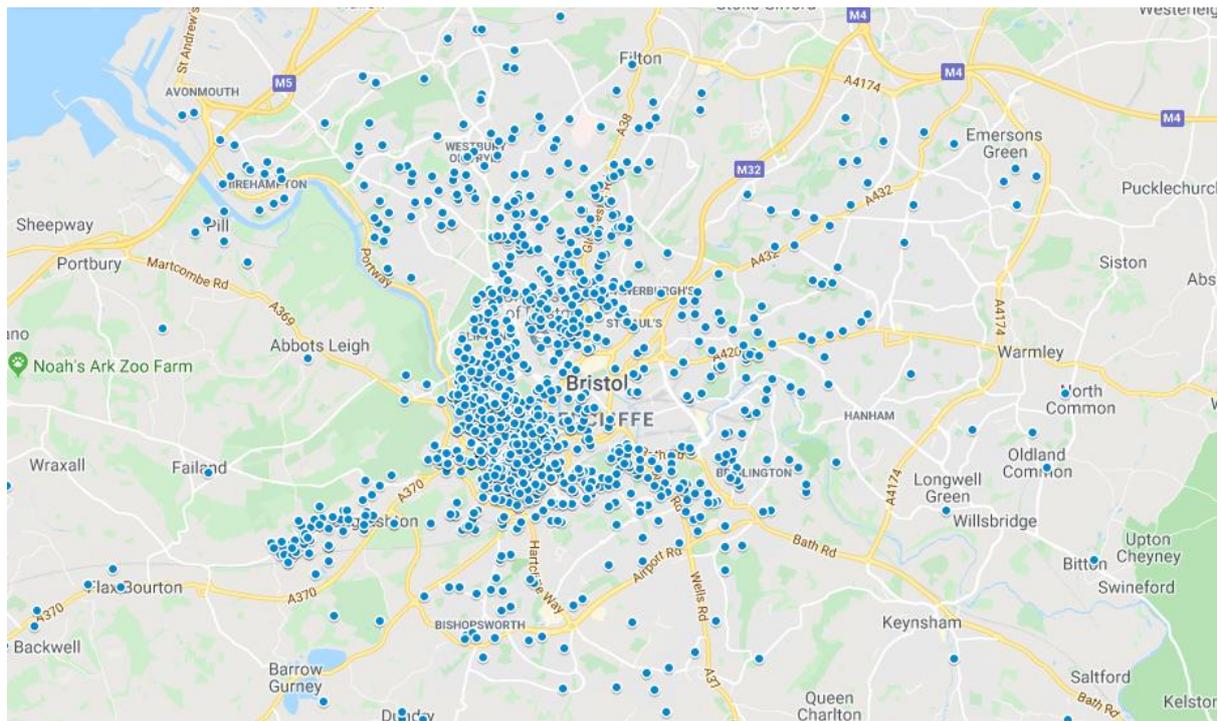
As well as responses that arrived during the engagement exercise, we data-entered any paper responses received in the working week after the engagement exercise closed.

Where in Bristol, or elsewhere, were respondents from?

Overall location

As part of the online and paper survey, respondents were asked to provide a postcode. This allows us to understand which areas respond to our consultations and engagement exercises, and which areas are not as well-served as others. 2,363 respondents provided a postcode.

The below map shows the overall spread of responses in Bristol. Each blue dot is the location of at least one response.



As expected, the number of responses is weighted towards south and southwest Bristol, with comparatively few responses on the northern or eastern side of the city.

However, there are significantly fewer responses than expected further south of Bristol. Southern wards beyond Bedminster would also be affected by any changes to the Western Harbour area, but resident engagement in these areas is lower. For future consultation or engagement, this means we should focus more of our efforts here.

Although there were responses from as far away as London, the vast majority of responses were from near Bristol. Of the 2,363 respondents who provided a postcode, 2,277 had a BS postcode.

Which wards were the responses from?

Using the postcode data detailed above, we can establish which wards had the highest response rate and which had the lowest. This is another useful tool to enable us to focus our attention on areas with comparatively low response rates in future engagement or consultation exercises.

2,017 respondents provided a postcode that matched one of Bristol's wards.

The below table shows the breakdown by ward, sorted by the percentage of each ward that responded to the engagement exercise.

Ward	Number of responses	Ward population	Percentage response
Hotwells and Harbourside	277	6,006	4.61%
Southville	382	12,384	3.08%
Clifton	355	13,552	2.62%
Bedminster	236	12,446	1.90%
Windmill Hill	112	13,673	0.82%
Cotham	66	11,756	0.56%
Redland	52	13,146	0.40%
Central	59	18,798	0.31%
Westbury-on-Trym and Henleaze	62	19,854	0.31%
Clifton Down	39	11,356	0.34%
Knowle	38	13,315	0.29%
Ashley	44	19,019	0.23%
Stoke Bishop	27	12,195	0.22%
Brislington West	28	11,235	0.25%
Bishopsworth	22	11,463	0.19%
Brislington East	18	11,837	0.15%
Bishopston and Ashley Down	28	13,280	0.21%
St George West	11	6,520	0.17%
Avonmouth and Lawrence Weston	25	21,191	0.12%
Easton	19	14,026	0.14%
Horfield	15	13,347	0.11%
Lawrence Hill	20	19,003	0.11%
St George Central	9	12,931	0.07%
Henbury and Brentry	8	12,360	0.06%
Frome Vale	9	13,281	0.07%
St George Troopers Hill	3	5,826	0.05%
Eastville	9	14,621	0.06%
Filwood	8	13,801	0.06%
Hengrove and Whitchurch Park	9	17,414	0.05%
Stockwood	5	11,688	0.04%
Hartcliffe and Withywood	9	19,030	0.05%
Southmead	4	12,670	0.03%
Hillfields	5	12,889	0.04%
Lockleaze	4	13,339	0.03%

For comparison, a large consultation exercise can expect to receive responses from around 1% of the city as a whole. As expected, close-by wards such as Hotwells and Harbourside and Southville have very high response rates, while wards in the east or north of the city have very low response rates.

However, Clifton Down has a notably low response rate, despite its neighbouring Clifton ward having of the highest response rates. Redland and Westbury on Trym & Henleaze, both further away again than Clifton Down, have higher response rates.

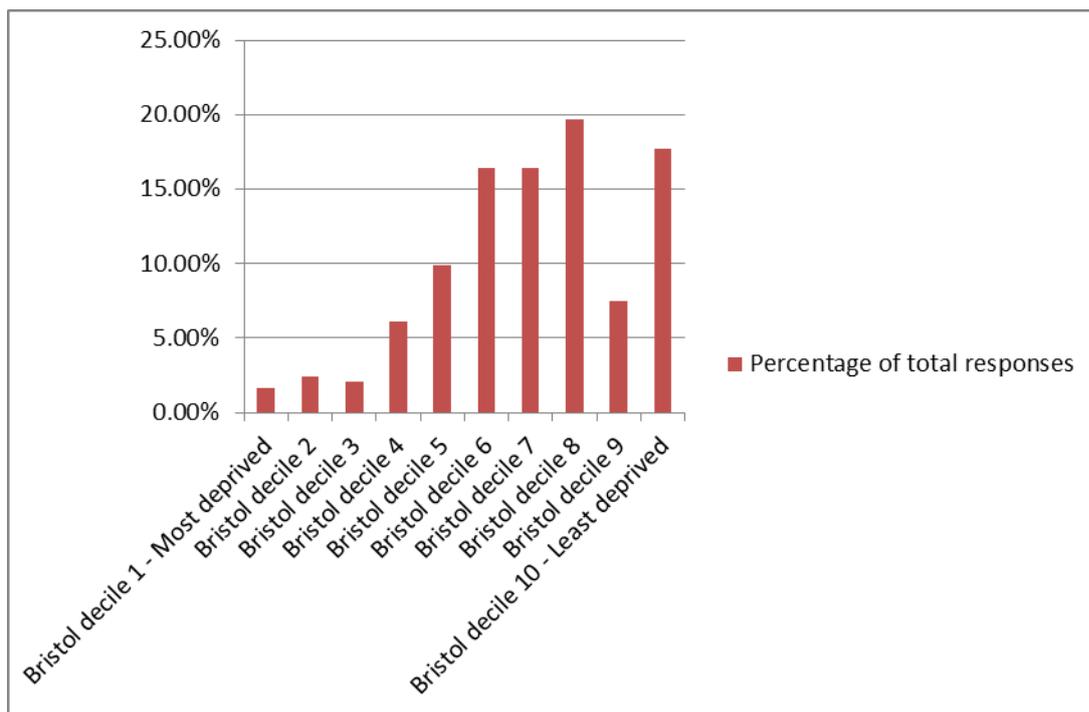
Were the responses from Bristol's most- or least-deprived areas?

We can use data that tells us what services and amenities a place has (like access to green spaces, supermarkets, and leisure activities) to understand which areas of Bristol are more deprived of those services and amenities.

This allows us to understand the city better and plan our initiatives to strengthen areas accordingly.

We can also use this information to understand whether our surveys are reaching people across the city, or if responses are weighted from a particular area.

The figure below shows that the majority of the responses to the Western Harbour engagement exercise came from Bristol's least-deprived areas.



Almost 78% of responses to the exercise came from the 50% least-deprived areas of the city. There were more responses from the two least-deprived deciles than the five most-deprived combined.

While the Western Harbour is situated near some of the least-deprived areas of Bristol, this information can guide us to focus more on ensuring we take time to get the views of those in the more deprived areas of Bristol.

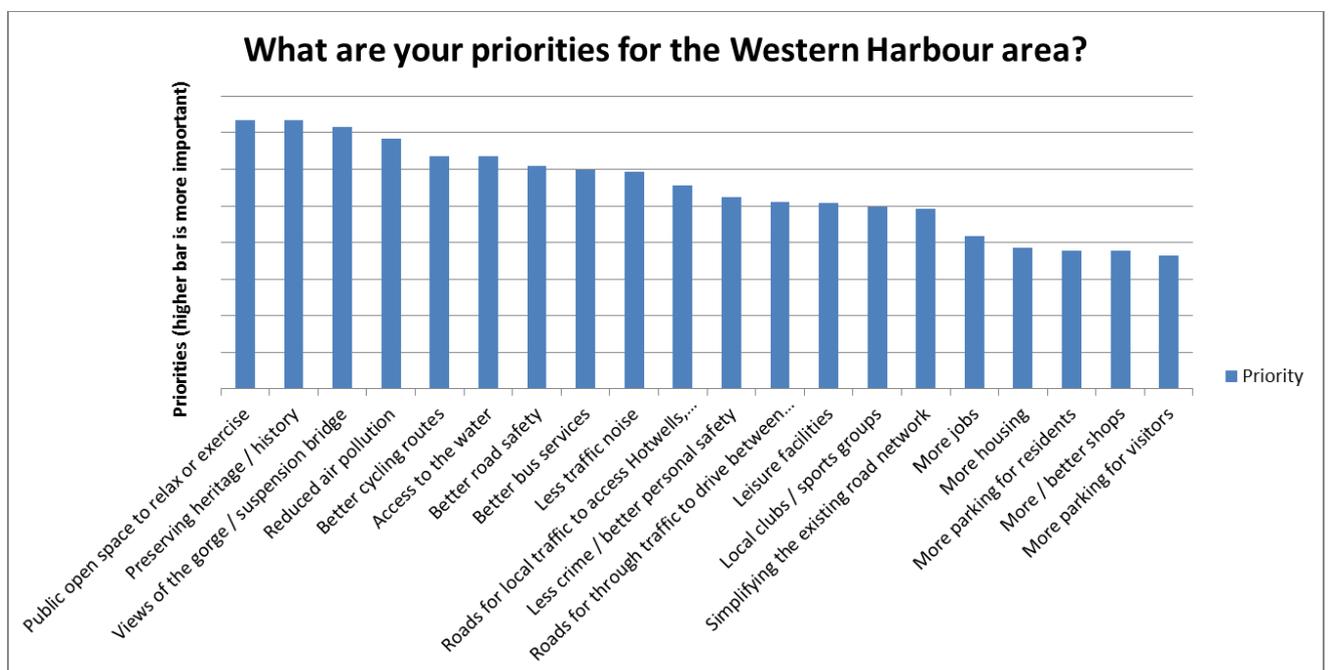
What are the main themes of responses to the engagement exercise?

Multiple-choice questions

The questionnaire focused on understanding what in the area of Western Harbour was important to respondents, beyond just transport proposals. As this scheme is to enable a wide range of changes in Western Harbour, a key question asked:

What are your key priorities for the Western Harbour area?

The figure below shows a summary of responses, with a larger bar meaning a particular aspect is more important to respondents.

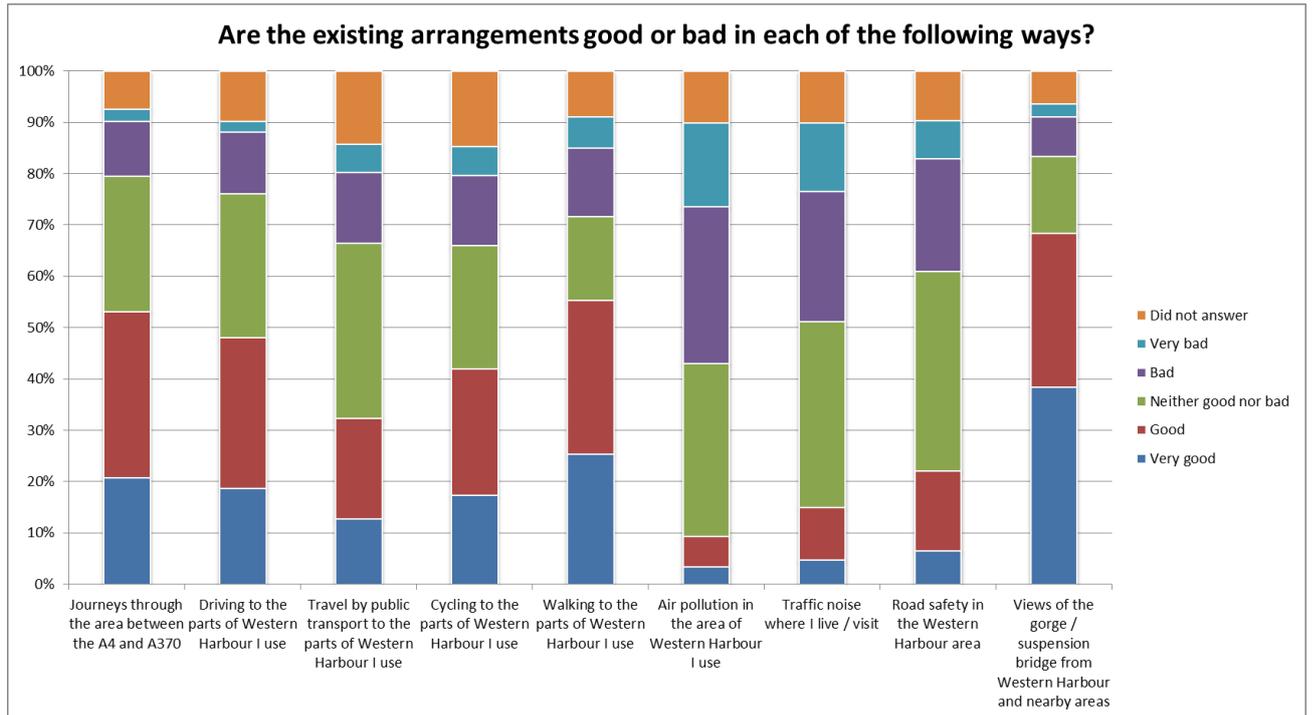


Particularly important to respondents was heritage, open space and reduced air pollution, as well as views of the gorge. This was reflected in conversations at our drop-in events, and will be a key part of any future masterplanning exercise as the proposal progresses.

Are the existing arrangements good or bad in each of the following ways?

This question aimed to establish how respondents felt about travelling around Western Harbour at the moment. None of the options were compulsory, so that respondents could respond about their own particular journeys.

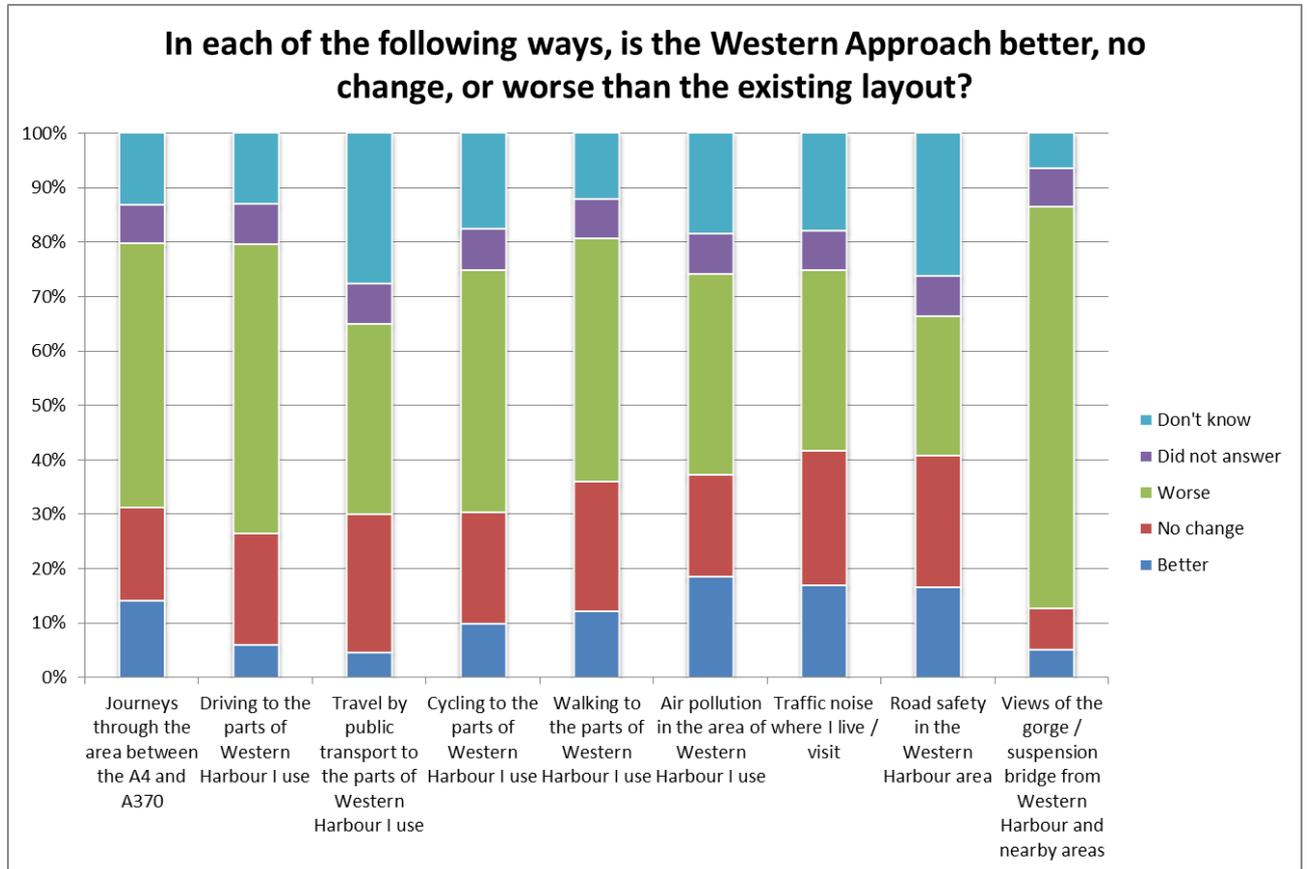
The figure below shows a summary of the responses. The below graph counts how many people responded 'Very good' or 'Good' for each aspect of the existing arrangements and records them as a positive number, then subtracts the number of people that responded 'Bad' or 'Very bad' for that aspect.



Negatives of the current system include air pollution, traffic noise and road safety, but respondents said that the existing system is positive for views of the gorge and for general travel around the area.

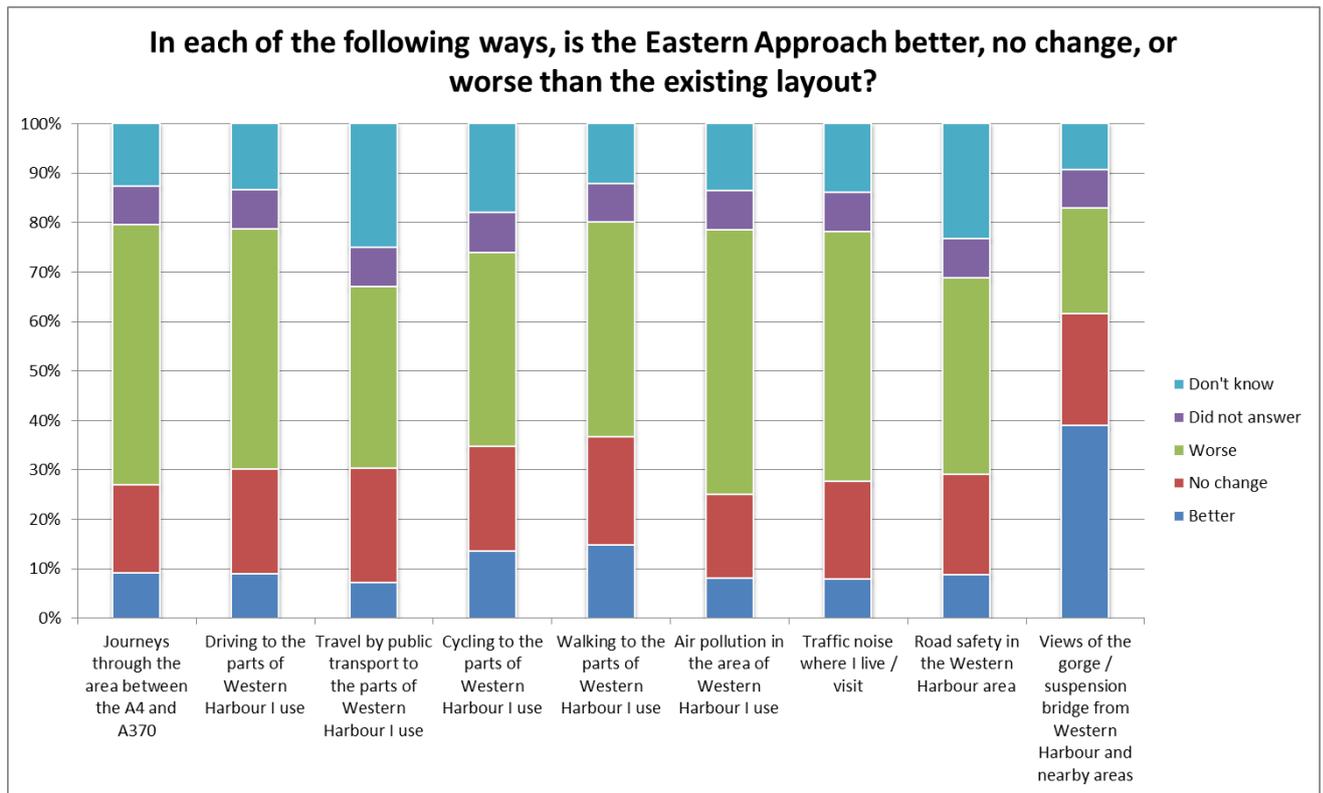
Opinions regarding the Western Approach

Respondents were also asked whether each aspect of the Western Approach was better, worse or no change compared to the existing arrangements. The below graph shows a summary of the responses for each aspect.



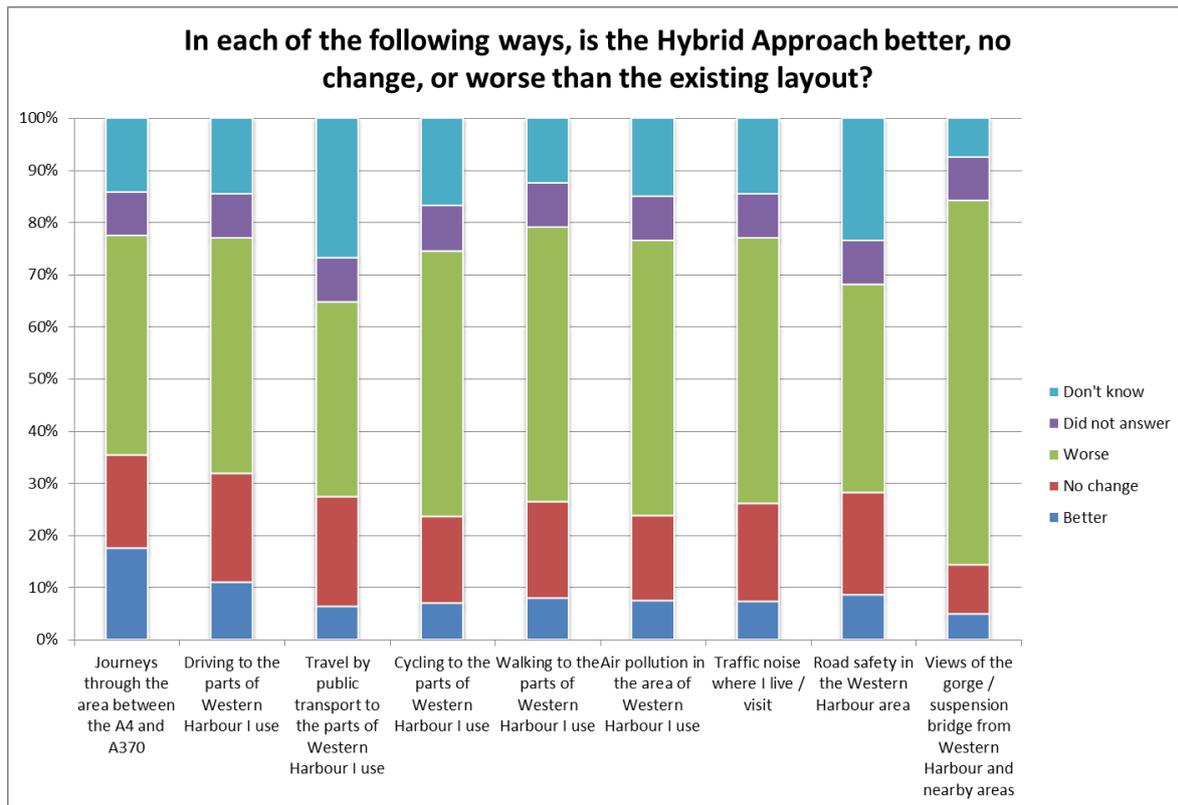
Respondents were particularly worried regarding the view of the gorge, as well as driving and journeys between the A4 and A370.

Opinions regarding the Eastern Approach



Respondents felt the views of the gorge would be enhanced in this option, but again felt that driving and journeys between the A4 and A370 would be particularly badly affected. Air pollution was also a concern, along with traffic noise.

Opinions regarding the Hybrid Approach



Respondents were concerned about a number of factors with the Hybrid Approach, particularly views of the gorge, as well as impact on walking and air pollution.

Responses to the 'free-text' question

In our online and paper survey, we provided the option for respondents to write as much as they wanted ('free-text') about the proposal.

This is an important part of any engagement or consultation questionnaire, to ensure that respondents have the opportunity to discuss the proposal in their own words, as well as answering the multiple-choice questions that give us key data to work with.

We've read through all of the comments and analysed them to make sure we understand what you've told us. We've identified a number of themes, but in this report we'll discuss the most popular six.

Not in favour of changing the Western Harbour area

Just under 25% of respondents to the engagement exercise stated in their response that they were opposed to any of the changes proposed in the area. This was for a number of reasons – principally potential impact on the gorge or the heritage of the city, a desire for more sustainable options or more information on the options, the impact on local businesses or opposition to more housing in the area.

As a result respondents classified as part of this theme are likely to be counted also in later themes in this document.

The key response to this theme from the Council is that there is a significant need for more housing, particularly affordable housing in the region. If housing is not sited at Western Harbour it must be sited elsewhere in the region in locations that are likely to be far less sustainable than Western Harbour. This is a key consideration when deciding whether to proceed with the proposals following the engagement exercise, particularly in the context of the climate emergency we are facing. We understand that changes to the Western Harbour area need to be done correctly if they are done at all – that’s why we’ve undertaken this early engagement exercise to make sure residents have the earliest opportunity to respond.

The proposals are too car-focused; or, respondents want more information on sustainable travel options

22% of respondents mentioned that they wanted to hear more about changes for sustainable transport, rather than the car. Other key elements of this theme were the Climate Emergency, limited information on possible cycle or walking routes, and suggestions of preparing for much lower numbers of cars on the road.

Our response to this theme is that we are deliberately at a very early stage with the design of the scheme: there are no detailed designs for car lanes, bus lanes or cycle lanes. We don’t yet know how we would allocate the space to different users, and that’s why the engagement exercise is so important. With your feedback, we can understand the priorities of Bristol’s citizens. The opposite of this theme, where respondents indicated their support for more space for the private car, matched around 5% of respondents.

Respondents are concerned about environmental impacts, particularly with the Western Approach

This theme was mentioned by around 20% of respondents, and particularly so when discussing the Western Approach. The theme is interrelated with a desire for more sustainability, as well as air quality and flooding.

Environmental impacts will always be an important part of a construction scheme like this. Each of the different Approaches has different benefits and drawbacks, and the potential for a new road on the south side of the Avon is balanced against the benefit of drawing more traffic away from Hotwells.

The engagement exercise is a useful part of the discussion precisely because it means we can understand more about citizen priorities and use that to guide our designs at an early stage. As a result of your feedback on this theme (which correlates with higher support for the Eastern Approach) we can look in further detail at the feasibility of the Eastern Approach to try and take forward the least environmentally impactful option.

More details required

19% of respondents expressed a desire for more information, particularly air quality information, distribution and types of housing, and the full feasibility report behind the designs for the scheme.

This is a natural result of our decision to discuss the proposals with residents as early as possible – as so many of our consultations and engagement exercises happen at a much later stage, residents are naturally used to the Council having more detail and information available.

However, a key part of our rationale behind the engagement exercise was *not* undertaking additional work on exactly where housing would go, the widths and types of roads, etc. This would potentially limit our ability to listen to resident feedback as the designs would already be fairly advanced. It could also unduly focus residents' views on detail rather than first considering the wider issues.

We're now able to progress with the scheme with a much better understanding of resident priorities, which can usefully inform the proposal going forward. Without understanding the priority mix identified in the multiple-choice questions, for example, we would not be able to tailor the design to what residents want from the area.

Impact on the gorge, heritage and views

This theme is again largely a response to the Western Approach, and lots of respondents who were concerned about environmental impacts were also concerned about the impact on the gorge. Around 18% of responses matched this theme. This is also an area where several stakeholders have responded to give views on the potential changes that might result from the Western Approach being built.

This is an area where your views can input on the Western Harbour proposals at an early stage. With a better understanding of resident feedback, we're able to progress with designs that take this into account.

Other options / Option 4

A number of responses questioned why the other options detailed in the Arup report were not released with the three viable options selected for the engagement exercise. Particular attention was focussed on "option 4". The report was not released as the council wished to get views on the viable options and not have the discussion distracted by options that did not meet the objectives of the scheme. The other options are all detailed in the report that is released alongside this report. In short, options were not taken forward for being either undeliverable, less beneficial variants of the proposed options or not meeting the objectives of the study.

Option 4 was not taken forward as it failed to adequately meet the objectives of the study. The minimal removal of existing infrastructure did not deliver a significant opportunity for change and redevelopment and the scheme proposal itself had numerous issues that were felt to be too detrimental to existing residents. The proposal required a new elevated structure alongside the Rose of Denmark and made the Hotwell Road part of the gyratory two way resulting in a significant increase in traffic volumes and the need for overhead gantries to manage flows through a tidal lane flow system.

We do not propose to take forward option 4 or the other options discounted in the report for further study, however we will consider what other options might be viable in light of responses to the engagement process.

Next steps

The next steps for this proposal are discussed in the Cabinet report cover sheet which this report is released alongside.