

St George's Churchyard Consultation Response Evaluation

Executive Summary

This report details the results of the Public Consultation exercises that were undertaken in relation to the St George's Churchyard project that seeks to turn the closed churchyard at St George's church in the Cultural Quarter into a public open space. The survey also asked respondents whether they supported the installation of an outdoor gym, an Architecture Feature Lighting scheme, and the relocation of the Mermaids artwork to the site.

Three public consultation exercises were carried out from the 6th July to 3rd August; two public exhibitions and 1 online consultation exercise. The consultation was widely publicised through local media and to residents and businesses within the Cultural Quarter.

287 survey responses were received and a further 11 non-questionnaire responses mostly in the form of letters and emails from stakeholders and members of the public. The majority of respondents identified themselves as coming from areas within the City and who used the Cultural Quarter for a variety of reasons. Their responses have been analysed for both their quantitative and qualitative content. It was found that;

- 49.8% were in support of Option 1 (to remove 26 trees).
- 33.1% were in support of Option 2 (to remove 9 trees).
- 64.5% did not support the installation of the outdoor gym.
- 51.6% supported the relocation of the Mermaids artwork.
- 83.6% supported the installation of an Architecture Feature Lighting scheme.

Of the 11 additional letters and emails received:

- 4 letters support Option 1 (to remove 26 trees).
- 1 letter supports Option 2 (to remove 9 trees) over concerns of the impact of felling 26 trees as proposed in Option 1.
- 4 letters supported neither of the proposed options; these included two letters submitted by two residents' collective, these responses were concerned with the felling of trees, the impact of the larger scheme on residents, and ecological impacts.
- 2 letters did not state which option they supported, however, one stated that they did not support option 1 but did not explicitly state whether they supported option 2. The other commented that the existing trees block light into surrounding buildings but made no reference to which option, if any, they preferred.

Introduction

During the period 6th July 2016 – 3rd August 2016 three consultation exercises were carried out for the St George's Churchyard project. The consultations provided an opportunity for local residents, businesses and members of the public to express their views on the Council's vision for the Churchyard.

These consultation exercises were made up of two public exhibitions and one online consultation survey (see appendix 1):

- The online consultation ran from the 6th July until 3rd August inclusive and allowed all the information publically displayed at the exhibitions, including plans and images of the proposals, to be viewed online with an accompanying questionnaire to submit responses.
- The first of the two exhibitions was held at LCB Depot from 6th – 11th July inclusive and included a staffed day from 10am until 7pm on Wednesday 6th July.
- The second event was held at Phoenix from 25th – 31st July inclusive. Surveys and a comments box were left with both exhibitions to ensure that responses could be collected.
 - Both of these venues were chosen due to their location within the Cultural Quarter and proximity to St George's Churchyard.

The responses evaluated in this document were gathered from the 70 hand-written questionnaires returned during the exhibitions, and from the 217 online survey responses together with letters received from various stakeholders and members of the public.

The questionnaires included a series of closed questions along with requests for comments on the elements of the proposed options including which of the two schemes was preferred, whether the Mermaids artwork should be brought back to the Cultural Quarter, if an Architecture Feature Lighting scheme and outdoor gym should be installed.

Publicity

The event was publicised in a number of ways; firstly through Leicester City Council's Press team who run the Council's social media accounts on Facebook and Twitter. Secondly, the Press team also contacted the Leicester Mercury who then ran a series of articles connected to the consultation both in their newspaper and online. The consultation was also publicised by the BBC on Leicestershire's BBC Local Live webpage and on BBC Radio Leicester where Friends of the Earth and Assistant City Mayor Councillor Waddington spoke about the proposed changes.

Workspaces within the Cultural Quarter including LCB Depot and Phoenix were contacted to disseminate the information to their tenants through their newsletters published for tenants and via email. Other major stakeholders were contacted by email and telephone including the Serbian Orthodox congregation that uses St George's Church as a place of worship. The LE-One board was also informed as was Leicestershire Business Voice.

The Cultural Quarter Association was also contacted so that they could inform their members of the opportunities to comment. The Cultural Quarter Association is made up of residents and businesses within the Cultural Quarter.

Specific Meetings

1. Castle Ward Meeting - Summary of Minutes

St. George's Churchyard falls within the city's Castle Ward. Project Officers therefore attended the Castle Ward meeting on the 12th July to publicise the opportunity for residents to engage with the consultation exercise. At the Ward meeting some of the consultation information, including plans of the proposed works was displayed and Officers explained the proposed options and answered any questions that attendees had. Surveys with a return address were handed out at the meeting. Ward meetings are open forums for all to attend to discuss local matters.

The minutes noted:

- Several attendees voiced concerned about the loss of more trees following the recent works along Centenary Walk at Victoria Park.
- The Police commented on the proposals and fully supported Option 1 to help address the anti-social behaviour in the churchyard by making it lighter, more open and accessible expecting this to lead to the area being used more frequently.
- The appropriateness of the outdoor gym proposal was questioned.

2. Economic Development, Transport and Tourism Scrutiny - Summary of Minutes

A Leicester City Council Economic Development, Transport and Tourism Scrutiny meeting was held on the 4th July where the panel was asked to note that the St George's Churchyard consultation was ongoing. The Scrutiny meeting can be attended by any member of the public.

Report Methodology

This report has been laid out to include a breakdown of the answer to each question including quantitative and qualitative aspects.

For each question a table has been created to show the number of respondents who selected each answer and the total percentage of respondents who selected that option. This has been displayed as a pie chart to ensure accessibility. These total 100% of the 287 respondents.

Further to the quantitative (i.e. numerical) data, which was collated from closed questions where respondents were given a choice of answer, all of the qualitative comments where respondents were asked to give their view throughout the survey have been analysed and grouped into categories. The most common themes drawn from the comments have then been included within the analysis below to allow for a deeper understanding of the reasoning behind the numerical figures. It should be noted that:

- the qualitative tables detail the number of comments made not number of people.
- not all respondents made comments when given the opportunity to do so

- many respondents made more than one comment, as such, the figures are given as the total number of comments that were placed within a category, rather than as a percentage of total comments.

-for the above reasons the number of comments do not necessarily total 287.

The most common categories and number of comments allocated to them have been laid out as tables in the report below.

Results

Q1. What is your interest in the Cultural Quarter?

From the survey responses it is possible to assess how many respondents lived, worked or visited venues in the Cultural Quarter. Not all respondents who completed the surveys filled in this section and therefore the resulting figures are not fully representative, however, they do give some indication of the connection respondents had to St George's Churchyard. Those filling in both the online survey and the paper version were able to select more than one option i.e. select that they both 'Live in the Cultural Quarter' and 'Visit Venues in the Cultural Quarter', this has led to more answers than respondents demonstrating the multiple roles the Cultural Quarter plays within Leicester.

Question 1: 'What is your interest in the Cultural Quarter?'

Answer	Number of responses
Live in the Cultural Quarter	38
Work in/ near the Cultural Quarter	88
Visit venues in the Cultural Quarter	230
Visit the Cultural Quarter for other reasons	68

Table 1

Further to this, two groups of residents, totalling 36, signed 2 letters and so would not have been counted within this section of survey responses, however, their comments have been noted below within the 'non-questionnaire responses' section of this report for inclusion within the overall conclusion. Due to the anonymity of the survey it is not possible to tell if the same residents who submitted the letters also filled in the surveys, as such they are being treated as different responses.

Postcode Analysis

Question 2: 'What are the first four characters of your postcode?'

Through the analysis of the postcodes provided (see figure 1.), which was an optional response and therefore does not include data from all respondents, it is possible to understand in which postal area respondents live. The highest density of respondents came from the Cultural Quarter and the Clarendon Park / Knighton area of Leicester. High levels of interest were also shown from those living in several other areas of the City including; Aylestone, Dane Hills, New Parks, Belgrave West, Coleman, Humberstone and Hamilton. There was also some low-level interest in the surrounding county, most notably to the east and west of the City.

MAP OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES ABOUT ST GEORGES CHURCHYARD

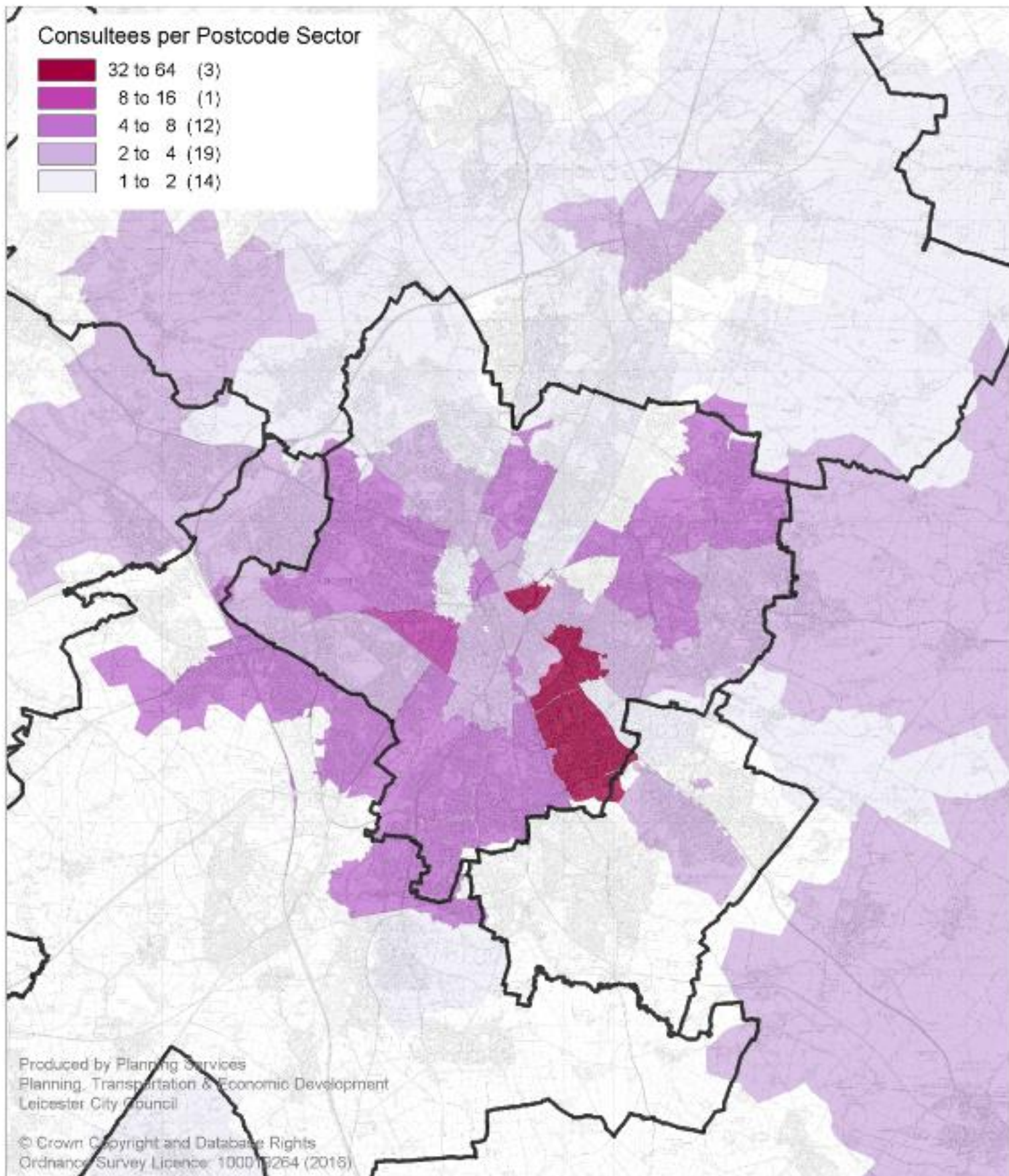


Figure 1 Map showing densities of respondents by postcode

Questionnaire responses – Analysis

Option 1 & 2

Question 3: ‘Which of the 2 options presented for the St George’s Churchyard Project is your preferred option?’

Of the surveys returned, including both electronic and paper copies, the percentages in favour of each option shows that 49.8% of the respondents were in favour of Option 1 (to remove 26 trees and replant 15), a third were in favour of Option 2 (to remove 9 trees). Of the respondents 12.5% noted that they did not want any trees to be removed from the Churchyard and whilst not offered as an official response 3% wanted a mix of Option 1 and Option 2. Just over 1% of respondents did not answer the question. This can be seen in table 2 below.

Question 3: ‘Which of the 2 options presented for the St George’s Churchyard Project is your preferred option?’

Preferred Option	Number of respondents	Percentage of total
Option 1	143	49.8%
Option 2	95	33.1%
Neither Option	36	12.5%
Mix of Option 1 and 2	9	3.1%
Not Answered	4	1.4%

Table 2

Which of the 2 options proposed for the Churchyard project is your preferred option?

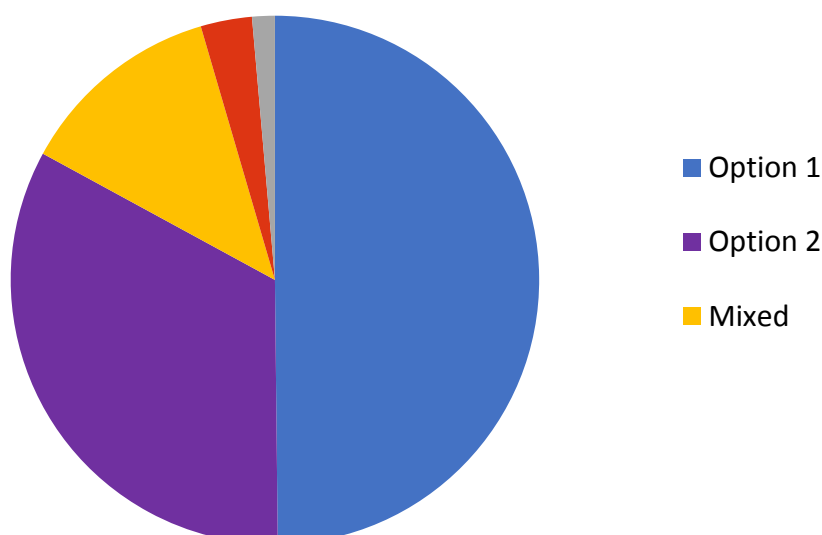


Figure 2

Qualitative comments-Most common reasons for supporting the scheme

The reasons that were given for supporting the development covered a wide range of issues. The **top four** reasons for supporting the proposals were:

Reason for supporting the scheme	Number of comments
Comments recognising the creation of a more open churchyard environment.	59
Comments noting the potential to make the churchyard safer.	54
Comments recognising the potential benefits to the aesthetics of the Churchyard, including opening up views of the Church.	36
Comments noting the potential that the development could lead the site to playing a more positive role in the Cultural Quarter.	26

Table 3

Note: The data given above shows how many individual comments were categorised into each theme, it does not show the number of people, or what percentage this is of the number of comments made over all.

Qualitative comments-Most common reasons for not supporting the scheme

The most common reason for not supporting the development was the proposal to remove trees from the churchyard. Comments were received from both those opposed to and those supportive of the overall scheme. The comments regarding tree removal have been broken down into further sub-categories:

Reason for not supporting the scheme	Number of comments
Comments noting general concerns about the extent of tree removal.	49
Comments noting strong objections to tree removal.	34
Comments with negative environmental factors about tree removal.	25
Comments noting that tree removal would negatively affect the character/history of the Churchyard/Church.	9

Table 4

Note: The data given above shows how many individual comments were categorised into each theme, it does not show the number of people, or what percentage this is of the number of comments made over all.

Question 4: ‘Do you want to see an outdoor gym installed in St George’s Churchyard?’

The proposal to install an outdoor gym was not supported with 64.4% of respondents stating that they did not want to see an outdoor gym installed. 29.6% of respondents did want the gym installed which is further broken down by location in the table below. Whilst 3.5% of respondents said they would possibly like an outdoor gym to be installed, 2.4% did not answer the question.

Answer	Number of respondents	Percentage of total
Yes - to the front of St George’s Church	19	6.6%
Yes - within the churchyard near to the children’s play area	64	22.3%
Yes, but with no opinion where	2	0.7%
Possibly	10	3.5%
No, neither	185	64.5%
Not answered	7	2.4%

Table 3

Would you like to see an outdoor gym installed in St George's Churchyard?

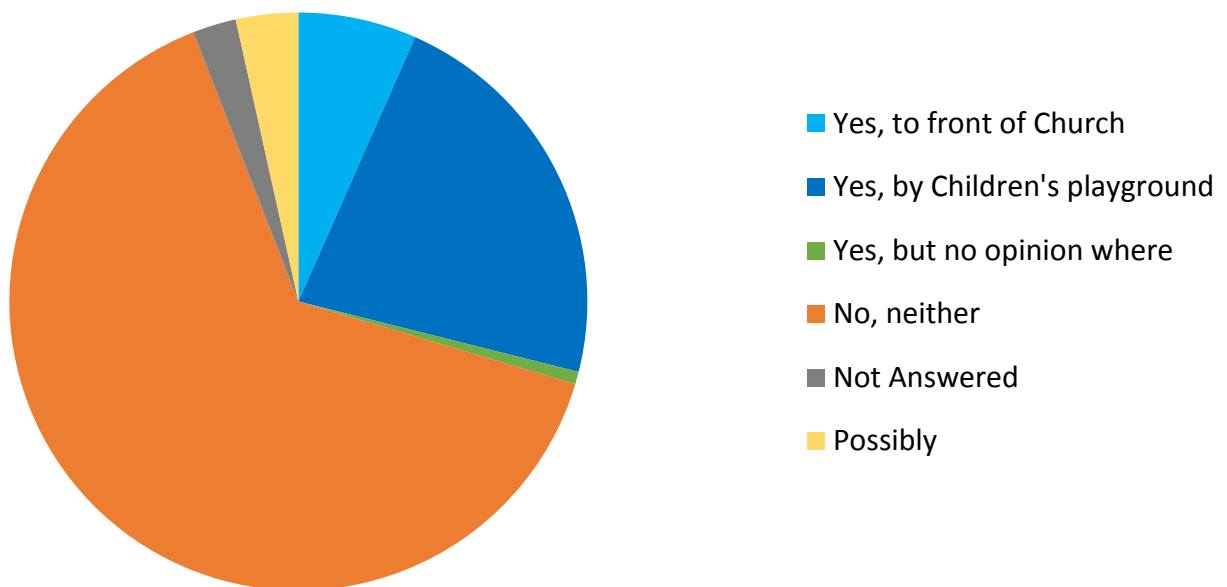


Figure 3

Not all respondents gave a reason for supporting or not supporting an outdoor gym, with those against the proposal more likely to comment than those for. The comments provided were analysed and are laid out in the tables below:

Qualitative comments-Most common reasons given for not supporting the installation of an outdoor gym

Reason:	Number of Comments:
Comments noting that an outdoor gym would be detrimental to the character of the Church and/or churchyard (negative).	13
Comments noting that an outdoor gym would be disrespectful near a Church or in a graveyard (negative).	9
Comments noting that there are other outdoor gyms nearby.	8
Comments noting that the presence of an outdoor gym may cause anti-social behaviour to increase (negative).	3

Table 4

Note: The data given above shows how many individual comments were categorised into each theme, it does not show the number of people, or what percentage this is of the number of comments made over all.

Qualitative comments-Most common reasons given for supporting the installation of an outdoor gym

Reason:	Number of Comments:
Comments noting the potential to reduce antisocial behaviour	2
Comments noting the potential to increase footfall and passive security	2

Table 5

Note: The data given above shows how many individual comments were categorised into each theme, it does not show the number of people, or what percentage this is of the number of comments made over all.

Question 5: 'Would you like to see the Mermaids artwork relocated to St George's Churchyard?'

Answer	Number of respondents	Percentage of total
Yes	148	51.6%
No	106	36.9%
Possibly	14	4.9%
Not answered	19	6.6%

Table 8

Note: The data given above shows how many individual comments were categorised into each theme, it does not show the number of people, or what percentage this is of the number of comments made over all.

There was less strong support for the relocation of the Mermaids artwork than for the installation of an Architecture Feature Lighting scheme. 51.5% of respondents were in favour of the relocation with 36.9% against the proposal to relocate the artwork. 4.8% said they ‘possibly’ wanted the artwork relocated whilst 6.6% of respondents did not answer the question. For those that indicated a preference for the location of the artwork within the Churchyard between Option 1- to the front of the Church by LCB Depot, and Option 2- to the rear of the Church near the children’s playground, 100% indicated Position 1 to the front of the Church.

Would you like to see the Mermaids artwork relocated to St George's Churchyard?

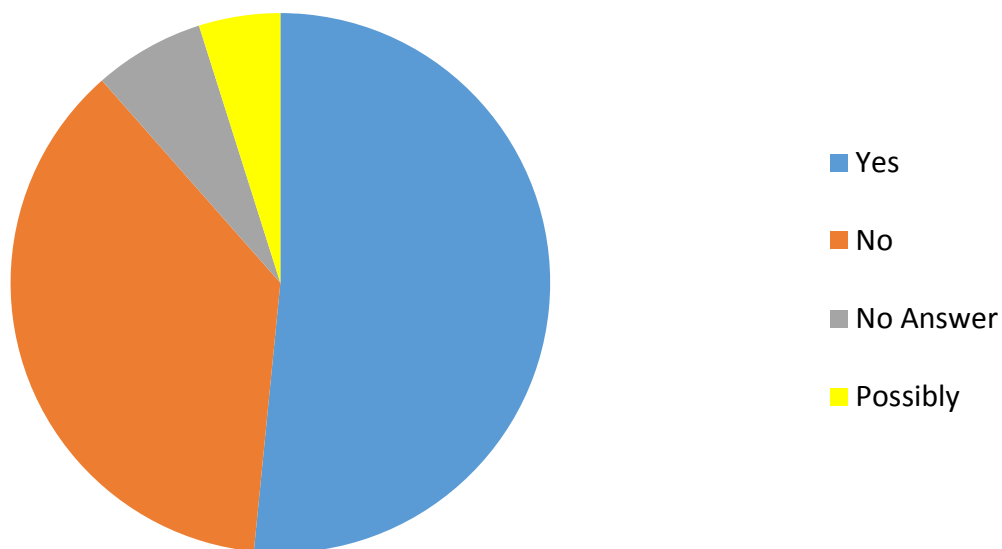


Figure 4

Qualitative comments-Most common reasons given for supporting the relocation of the Mermaids artwork

Reason:	Number of Comments:
Comments noting that the potential locations would suit the history of the artwork and/or would improve the character of the Churchyard (positive).	7
Comments noting the preference for public art in the Cultural Quarter.	5
Comments noting the potential to create a concentration of Public artwork within the Cultural Quarter (positive).	3

Table 6

Note: The data given above shows how many individual comments were categorised into each theme, it does not show the number of people, or what percentage this is of the number of comments made over all.

Qualitative comments-Most common reasons given for not supporting the relocation of the Mermaids artwork

Reason:	Number of comments:
Comments noting that the potential locations would not suit the History of the Artwork and/or would not improve the Churchyard (negative).	12
Comments noting that the cost of relocating the artwork (negative).	12
Comments noting that the relocation may lead to a cultural loss at the artwork’s current site (negative).	9
Comments noting that the Artwork is a feature outside of the City Centre (positive).	2

Table 7

Note: The data given above shows how many individual comments were categorised into each theme, it does not show the number of people, or what percentage this is of the number of comments made over all.

Question 6: ‘Do you want Architecture Feature Lighting installed at St George’s Churchyard?’

83% were in favour of having an Architectural Feature Lighting scheme, 11% were against the proposal whilst 1.7% were ambivalent about the proposal. 3% of respondents did not answer the question. This can be seen in table 11.

Answer	Number of respondents	Percentage of total
Yes	240	83.6%
No	33	11.5%
Not answered	9	3.2%
Ambivalent	5	1.7%

Table 11

Note: The data given above shows how many individual comments were categorised into each theme, it does not show the number of people, or what percentage this is of the number of comments made over all.

Would you like to see Architecture Feature Lighting on St George's Church?

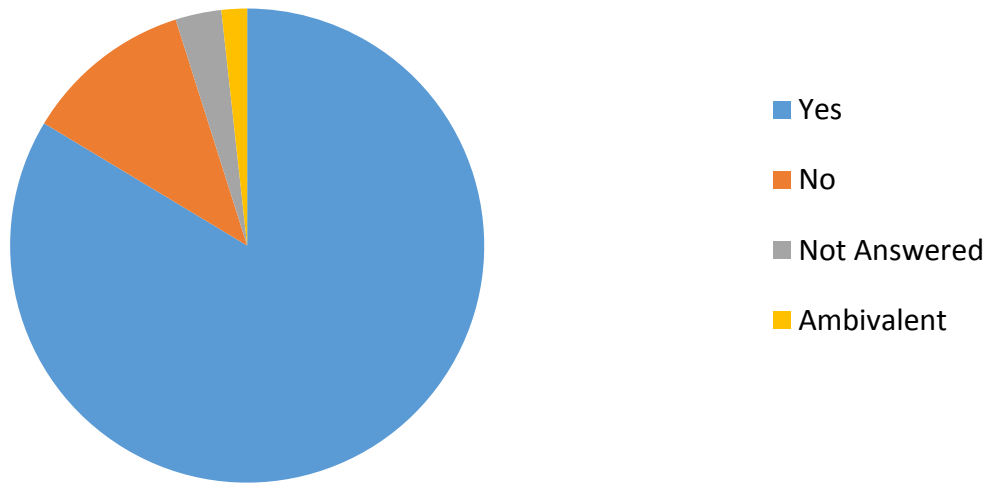


Figure 5

Qualitative comments-Most common reasons given for supporting the installation of Architecture Feature Lighting

Reason:	Number of comments:
Comments noting the potential that more lighting will make the churchyard safer (positive).	11
Comments noting the potential to improve the aesthetics of the churchyard (positive).	11
Comments noting that lighting could allow for the heritage/history of the Church to be showcased (positive).	11
Comments noting that lighting may improve the role the Churchyard plays in the Cultural Quarter (positive).	5

Table 12

Note: The data given above shows how many individual comments were categorised into each theme, it does not show the number of people, or what percentage this is of the number of comments made over all.

Qualitative comments-Most common reasons given for not supporting installation of Architecture Feature Lighting

Reason:	Number of comments:
Comments noting the effect on the environment and wildlife (negative).	10
Comments noting the effect on residents (negative).	6
Comments noting that lighting the Church would show how dirty the building is (negative).	2

Table 13

Note: The data given above shows how many individual comments were categorised into each theme, it does not show the number of people, or what percentage this is of the number of comments made over all.

Questionnaire Conclusion

- Option 1 to remove 26 trees and replant 15 more suitable specimens was the most favoured option being supported in more than 49% of the consultation surveys received.
- The installation of an Architecture Feature Lighting scheme was supported by 82% of respondents.
- The relocation of the Mermaids artwork was supported by 52% of respondents.
- The proposal to install an outdoor gym was not supported with 64% of respondents against the idea.

Non-questionnaire responses

The following are summaries taken from the letters and emails submitted by stakeholders and members of the public.

1. Local Community Group

Supports Option 1

- State that the existing trees have, and continue to cause, large amounts of damage to the Church building.
- Believe that Option 1 would remove the attraction of the churchyard as an area for antisocial behaviour as it would no longer be a concealed space which is invisible from Orton Square.
 - State that this anti-social behaviour has been prevalent for over ten years.
 - Believe that this antisocial behaviour happens due to the hidden nature of the Churchyard as the trees shield the Church and those carrying out the anti-social behaviour from view.
 - Option 1 would deter the open urination and defecation that members of the group have often witnessed in the Churchyard or on the Church steps.
- State that because it is shielded from view the Churchyard is frequently used for drug taking.
- It is dangerous and dirty with used needles and other drug related paraphernalia frequently found on the ground.
- One member of the group has been pricked by a used needle and required preventive injections.
- Believe that Option 1 will help to solve a further issue which is of rough sleepers using the doorway at the back of the Church.
- The gathering of groups of people around the entrance to the Church is intimidating for passers-by.
- Believe that Option 1 would prevent the criminal damage currently being caused to the Church by those who loiter on the steps.
 - There have been incidents of theft from the Church when it is open.
 - Cars have been vandalised.
 - There have also been incidences of graffiti, including religious slurs.

- Rats are also an ever growing problem, overrunning the Church and the Churchyard.

2. Local organisation

Supports Option 1

- Acknowledges opportunity to provide greater visibility into and through the churchyard from Olton Square and Colton St, as well as offering better protection to the church building.
- Would support replanting of equivalent number of trees, if not at this site, then elsewhere in the Cultural Quarter.
- Acknowledge increased footfall from improvements and improved connectivity to train station.
- Recommend good quality signage for pedestrians, cyclists and drivers, and, the opportunity for all venues to provide venue listings information perhaps in Orton Square.
- Supports the Architectural Feature Lighting for St George's Church.
- Not clear on the benefits on relocating the Mermaid artwork.
- No specific view on Gym provision.
- Support any steps that make the Cultural Quarter a safe area.

3. RIBA (Leicestershire & Rutland Branch)

Support Option 1

- Option 1 is a bold proposition.
- Possibility of bringing the church back into public view and conscience.
- Removal of the trees is acceptable as it restores the presence of the Church (likely to resemble the original prominence and setting after its completion in 1827).
- Would allow the Church to contribute to the urban ensemble.
- Relocation of the Mermaids artwork should be to Location 1.
- The Outdoor gym would be most beneficial in location 2, creating footfall and providing passive security.

4. Cultural Quarter developer.

Supports option 1

- Any proposed improvement works to St George's Churchyard are to be warmly welcomed. The current environment is overgrown and features far too numerous trees causing a dark, dreary, overbearing and very intimidating space, day or night, for those wishing to walk through it.
- There have been numerous examples of anti-social behaviour. Many leaseholders at Shahista House avoid using this route.
- Option 1 shows great promise-option 2 does not go anywhere near far enough.
- Many trees onsite have long out lived their amenity value.

5. Local Interest Group no. 1

Supports Option 2

- Concerned over the number of trees to be removed in Option 1 and the proposed replanting ratio.
- St Georges Churchyard is a salient part of the Air Quality Action Plan and tree removal would be contradictory to the Plan.
- Recent improvements in the city centre had led to a reduction in the number of trees and would like to see a commitment to replant on a 2:1 ratio.
- It is preferable for the Mermaid's artwork to stay where it is current located but if it is to be moved then a prominent site closer to the original location should be found.

6. Local Resident's collective no.1 - (26 signatures)

Support neither option

- Option 2 is the lesser of two evils and needs to be considerably revised.
- Objection to the felling of trees including the detrimental effect on air quality, loss of privacy and increased noise pollution by at 'least tenfold' as the trees currently dampen the acoustics created by the built environment and road traffic.
- Believe that there will be increased anti-social and nuisance behaviour due to the proposed openness of the Churchyard.
- The plans are not sympathetic to the Churchyard's history.
- Installing Architecture Feature Lighting will increase light pollution and negatively affect the wellbeing of nearby residents.
- Installing an outdoor gym would increase anti-social behaviour by providing a comfortable place.
- The proposed developments are likely to result in the deterioration of the area, decrease the quality of life of residents and the values of property in the buildings surrounding the churchyard.
- Money earmarked for the redevelopment would be better spent on routine street cleaning and policing.

7. Local Resident's collective no. 2 – (9 signatures)

Support neither option

- Submission is a replica of the response received from Local Resident's collective no. 1- See no.6 for details.

8. Member of the Public - name withheld no. 1

Supports neither option

- The trees remove carbon dioxide from the City and water from the ground preventing flooding. They also cause people who live near them to be emotionally healthier.
- Replacing the mature trees with smaller trees does not make sense as they will not remove as much CO2.
- Cutting down the trees will not prevent anti-social behaviour.

9. Member of the Public- name withheld no. 2

Supports neither option

- Neither option is satisfactory with both being rejected.
- There is insufficient ecological information available.

10. Cultural Quarter building owner.

Preference not stated

- Existing trees totally block out the light into the building.
- Blocked guttering cause's water to flood into the building.
- Wishes to see trees adjacent to the property removed to help bring it back into full use.

11. Leicester Civic Society

Preference not stated

- Believe that Option 1 is completely unacceptable and will open up the Churchyard too much.
- The loss of tree cover will have an adverse effect on biodiversity and detract from the enclosed character of the Churchyard and the wider Cultural Quarter.
- St Georges is an early 19th Century church and needs to be respected as such.
- Gravestones should not be moved to 'tidy things up'.
- That the removal of the 9 trees needs a more robust justification.
- The walled entrance and gateway from Orton Square should be cleaned and restored.
- A Lighting scheme is welcome but the idea of an outdoor gym is not.
- Closing the churchyard at night would be a better option for removing the anti-social behaviour problems.

Non-questionnaire responses- Conclusion

Of the 11 letters:

- 4 letters support Option 1 to remove 26 trees and replant 15 more suitable specimens.
- 1 letter supports Option 2 to remove 9 trees over concerns of the impact of felling 26 trees as proposed in Option 1.
- 4 letters supported neither of the proposed options; this included two letters submitted by two residents collective, these responses were concerned with the felling of trees, the impact of the larger scheme on residents and ecological impacts.
- 2 letters did not state which option they supported, however, one stated that they did not support option 1 but did not explicitly state whether they supported option 2. The other commented that the existing trees block light into surrounding buildings but made no reference to which option, if any, they preferred.

Appendix 1: Questionnaire

St. George's Churchyard and Orton Square Public Consultation [ONLINE version]

The consultation can be completed online at:

https://consultations.leicester.gov.uk/communications/st-georges-churchyard-public-space/consult_view

Alternatively fill out the form below and return by **Wednesday 3rd August 2016** to:

Development Team,
Leicester City Hall,
Charles Street,
Leicester,
LE1 1FZ

Questionnaire:

1) What is your interest in the Cultural Quarter-Do you: (tick one or more of the following)

Live in the Cultural Quarter?

Work in or near the Cultural Quarter?

Do you visit venues and attractions within the Cultural Quarter? **Yes** **No**

Do you visit the Cultural Quarter for any other reason? If yes, please specify:

2) Please state the first 4 characters of your postcode: _ _ _ _ _

Comment on our proposals to improved St. George's Churchyard

3) Which of the 2 options presented for the Churchyard project is your preferred option? (Please tick)

Option 1

Option 2

Comments: -

Additional Features

1) Would you like to see an outdoor gym in the city centre? (Please tick)

- Yes
- No
- Possibly

4) Would you like to see a new outdoor gym located within the area? (Please tick)

- Yes-Option 1- to the front of St. George's Church
- Yes-Option 2- within the churchyard near to the children's play area
- No-neither

5) Mermaid's artwork (Please tick)

Would you like to see the Mermaid's artwork relocated to St. George's Churchyard?

- Yes
- No

Do you have any additional comments on the Mermaid's artwork option?

6) Architectural Feature Lighting

Would you like to see Architectural Feature Lighting on St. George's Church? (Please tick)

- Yes
- No

Do you have any further comments on potential additional Features for the site?

7) General Comments: Please add any final comments you may have about the proposed improvements to the public space in and around St. George's Churchyard.
