

SOUTH BANK FRAMEWORK PLAN CONSULTATION 2016 FOR LEEDS CITY COUNCIL



BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

South Bank refers to a number of investments and proposed activities aimed at regenerating 185 Ha of land that lie south of the River Aire. The regeneration of South Bank will double the size of Leeds City Centre, creating a leading European destination. It has the potential to create over 35,000 jobs and over 4,000 homes and is one of the largest city centre regeneration initiatives in Europe.

Leeds City Council has published a comprehensive draft plan called The South Bank Regeneration Framework which sets out a vision for the future of the area and detailed guidance on how the South Bank will change and develop.

The Council undertook a comprehensive three month consultation on the draft Framework, with the aim of using responses to form a final framework for the future development of South Bank Leeds.

A wide range of methods were used to gather the views of residents including a survey made available in paper format and online; a survey targeted at younger people; email responses; social media contributions from Facebook & Twitter; and a series of in-depth workshops carried out with residents and other stakeholders to discuss specific aspects of the Regeneration Framework.

All responses were analysed by Qa Research and a summary of findings from the consultation are outlined in this short report.



90% of respondents classified themselves as 'white'

5% classified themselves as being from other ethnic backgrounds

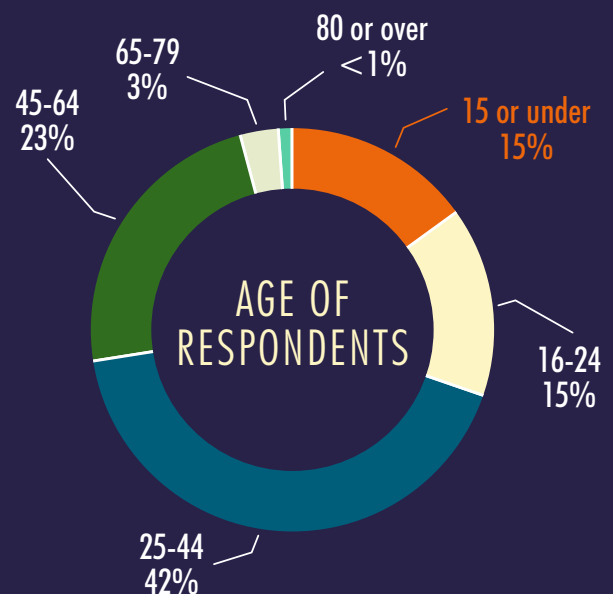
5% were unwilling to say

WHO RESPONDED TO THE CONSULTATION?

2,209 members of the public took part in the consultation

32,773 points of data (this is the number of individual questions answered, suggestions given, and other inputs into the consultation).

32 different responses from partner organisations, businesses, landowners and other stakeholders



Of those aged under 15 and under, this includes responses from 26 different schools; the highest number of respondents came from Ruth Gorse Academy located in South Bank itself.

RESPONDENTS POSTCODE

19%

'Neighbouring communities' - those in the LS10 and LS11 postcode areas, these are the communities in and around South Bank, principally Holbeck, Hunslet, and Beeston

62%

Other LS postcodes - those in LS postcodes but who do not fall into the above two categories

8%

'City centre community' - those in the LS1 and LS2 postcode areas, located in the city centre

11%

Non-LS postcodes - those not in the LS postcode area; this included a variety of locations but was principally those from WF (Wakefield) and BD (Bradford)

THE OVERALL FRAMEWORK VISION

Across the consultation, a range of comments were made about the overall vision as laid out in the Regeneration Framework.

Respondents tended to focus on positive aspects of the Framework and to talk constructively about how the South Bank could be developed and enhanced. Comments were made in support of the overall vision for the area and about specific aspects such as a desire for green and public spaces, improved facilities, and changes to transport, buildings and infrastructure. Wider concerns such as crime, flooding and the need for employment opportunities were mentioned less often.

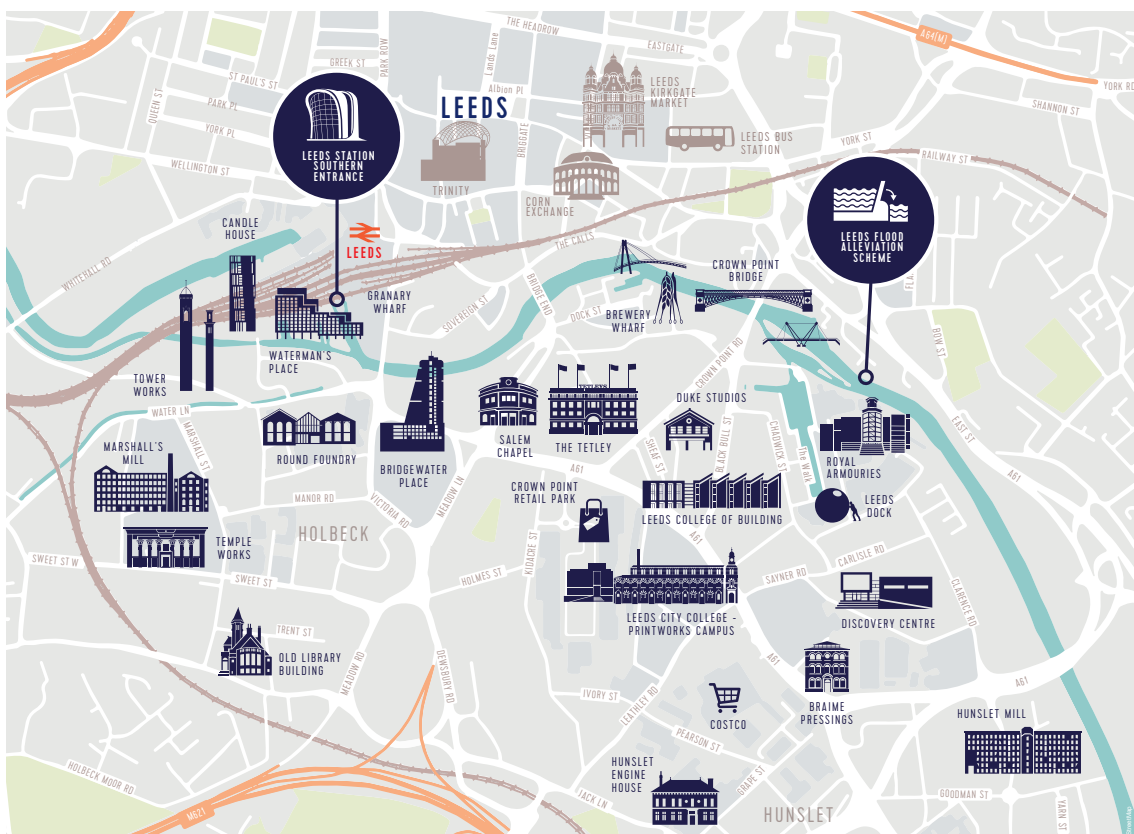
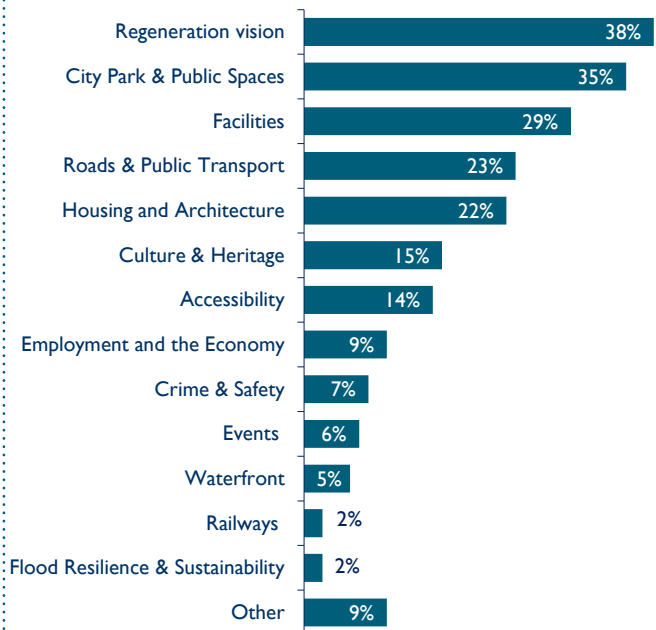
When talking about the 'Regeneration Vision', respondents said that the South Bank:

Needs to feel full of life or vibrant	5%
Requires a mixed use (leisure, business, homes)	4%
Should establish a sense of community, a place for people	4%
Needs to be family friendly	4%
Needs to feel like an extension of the city centre	3%
Needs to look smarter, cleaner, and less neglected	3%
Needs to be eco-friendly	3%
Needs to be an area for relaxing	3%
Should include sufficient infrastructure (e.g. schools, doctors)	3%
Should make the waterfront, river or canals an accessible feature	3%

"I want a more vibrant hub of places. More bars and restaurants and to know it's like a community"

"Lots of cool, quirky, unique shops/bars/public spaces to really continue putting Leeds on the map as one of the UK's coolest and most forward thinking cities"

Q1. What do you want to see happen in this part of the city centre and what would you consider a successfully regenerated South Bank to be?
- comments broadly relating to... -



WHAT'S IMPORTANT FOR THE CITY CENTRE AND SOUTH BANK

Respondents felt that 'a City Park and new green spaces' were important, as well as developing the 'waterfront for public use' and many would like to see 'new homes, commercial, leisure developments; high buildings and maintaining heritage buildings' given the right level of consideration in a redeveloped South Bank.

Younger respondents felt strongly that 'accessibility and community safety' were important, but were less concerned about how HS2 and a new Leeds Station could be integrated to form a Yorkshire Hub.

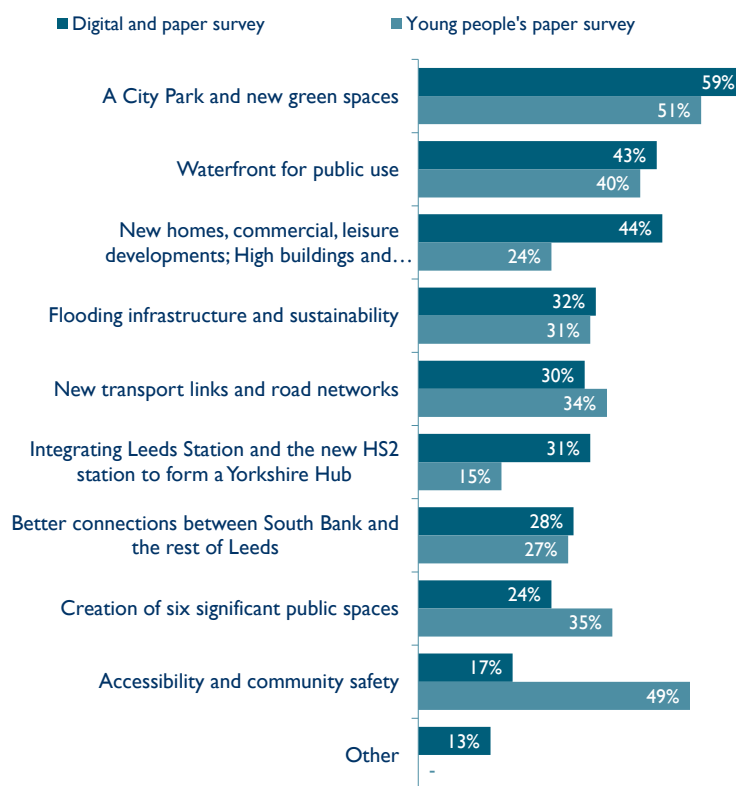
After prompting with a list, the following were important to the city centre and South Bank;

Those who lived in the neighbouring communities to the South Bank (LS10/11) and in the city centre community (LS1/2) were significantly more likely than other LS postcodes and non-LS postcodes to say the following were important:

- A City Park and new green spaces
- Waterfront for public use
- Accessibility and community safety

Other aspects not specifically asked about but mentioned as being important included the need for 'community infrastructure (e.g. schools, doctors)', 'more or better cycling routes' and 'parking for residents and visitors'.

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO SEE HAPPEN IN CITY CENTRE AND SOUTH BANK



CHALLENGES

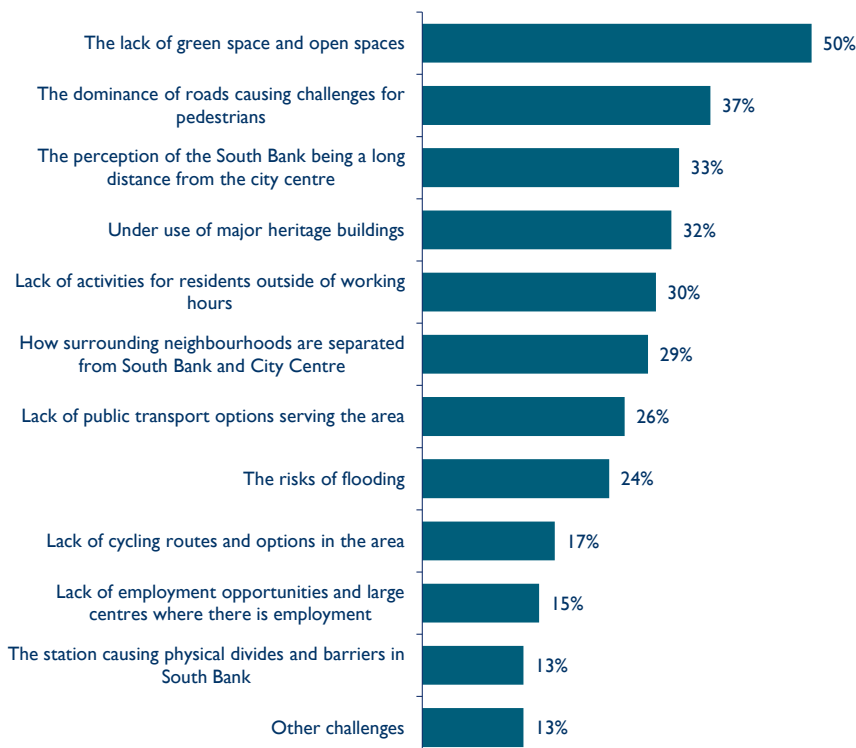
It's recognised that the South Bank faces challenges, particularly around the 'lack of green space and open spaces' and also the 'dominance of roads causing challenges for pedestrians' and there's a view that there is a 'lack of public transport options serving the area'.

Residents are also aware that there is a 'perception of the South Bank being a long distance from the city centre' and recognise that 'surrounding neighbourhoods are separated from South Bank and City Centre'.

Looking forward it's felt that there is an 'under use of major heritage buildings', a 'lack of activities for residents outside of working hours', and the 'risk of flooding'.

Respondents chose the following when asked which challenges for South Bank they thought were important:

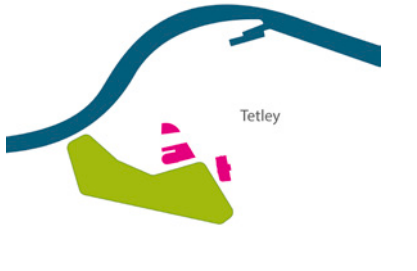
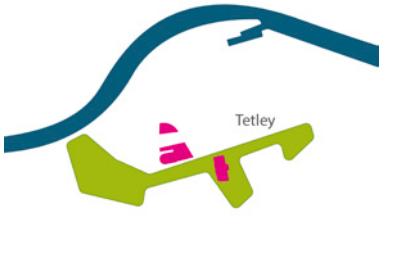
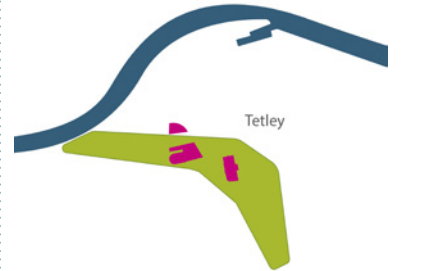
MOST IMPORTANT CHALLENGES FOR SOUTH BANK

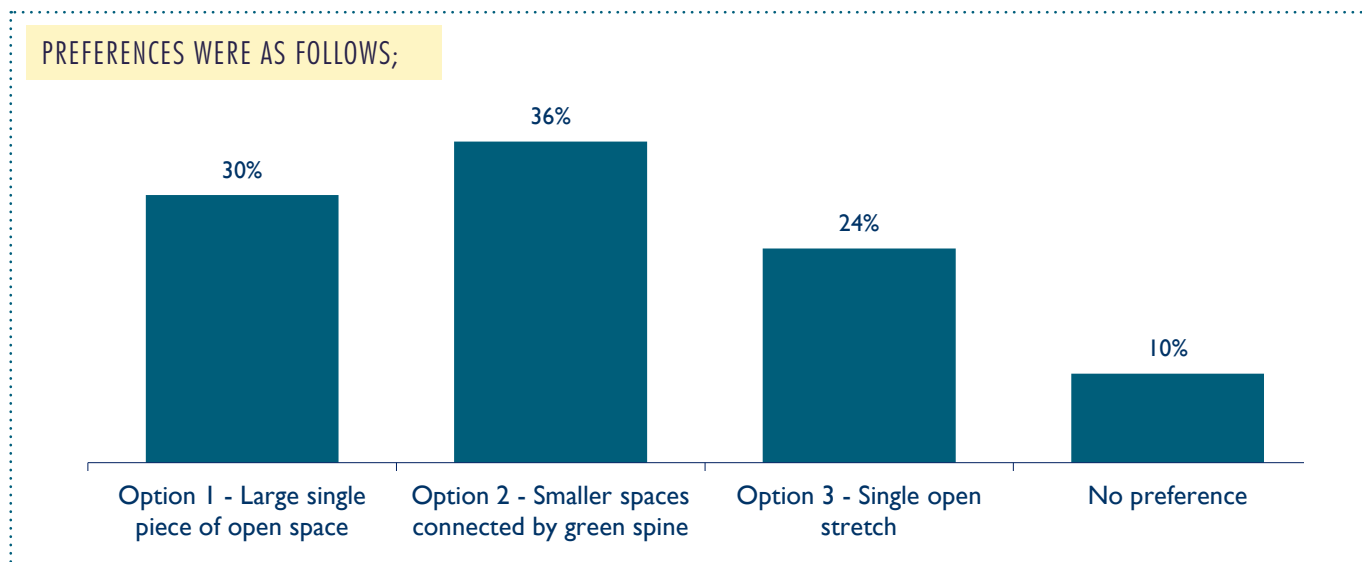


CITY PARK, GREEN SPACES AND PUBLIC SPACES

The consultation highlighted a general view that there was too little green space in the South Bank area with too much space given over to roads and places tended to be poorly connected. Successful green spaces include something for everyone, including families, young children, and young people.

Three options for a new City Park were described to residents and all received support, with no clear preference evident.

		
<p>OPTION 1:</p> <p>A large single piece of open space, able to accommodate larger events as well as everyday users. Its proportions allow uses and activities to be highly flexible. It is situated between the river and the Tetley building.</p>	<p>OPTION 2:</p> <p>A series of smaller, more intimate pieces of open space connected by a central green spine. A larger degree of variety offers distinctiveness and individuality to adjacent development.</p>	<p>OPTION 3:</p> <p>Stretches a single piece of open space between the river and Hunslet Road. It creates a clear movement corridor from the river to the Education Precinct and Leeds Building College.</p>



In terms of what they wanted to see in the park, adult respondents tended to express a preference for a more serene city park experience. They were most likely to want to see 'green space', 'gardens', and 'seating', as opposed to the more bustling park with 'shops', 'sports' and 'play areas' favoured by young people:

"Seating areas with greenery; cafes and eateries"

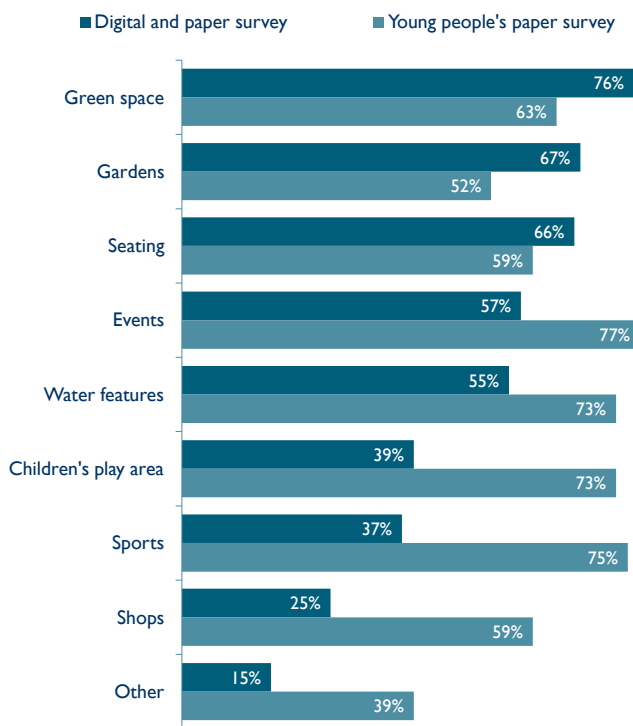
A range of other suggestions were made:

Cafes	12%
Sculpture, public or community art	9%
Bars	7%
Trees	5%
Street food or pop up cafes	5%
Performance spaces	5%
Wildlife habitats	5%

“Legal Street art - see Barcelona or Bogota. Excellent free public art by (usually) young sometimes disenchanted or disadvantaged but very talented individuals”

“Lots of trees, sweet chestnuts, possibly fruit trees, varieties that look great in autumn – i.e. Japanese maples/ katsuras that smell wonderful. Trees that engage people and encourage them to enjoy nature, not just peripheral anonymous greenery.”

TYPES OF FEATURES YOU'D LIKE TO SEE IN A CITY CENTRE PARK



COMMENTS FROM WORKSHOP

In relation to public spaces, there was a feeling that these needed to benefit wider communities too and not just the city centre. Spaces should be a 'destination' and should be placed somewhere where they can benefit workers and residents i.e. not spaces that are only used during office hours.

Discussions in the workshop emphasised that successful spaces would be green and include something for everyone, including families, young children, and young people. Some commented that there were not enough public spaces for families in Leeds and a lack of space for young people.

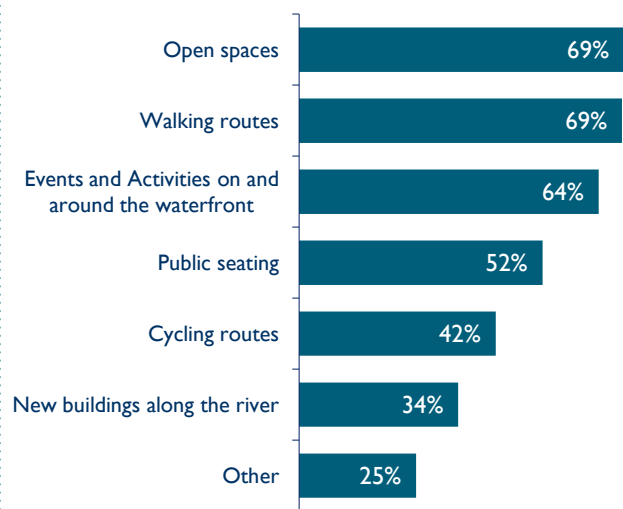
Flexibility was also mentioned, e.g. areas that can be used for specific events and also general public use. Practicalities were also important, including toilets, cafes and covered spaces so that people could use the facilities in all weathers. Some participants felt that public art would be a useful addition and should offer variety and be integrated with the landscape e.g. sculpture. Temporary artworks and art trails were also examples suggested in the workshop.

RIVER AIRE AND THE WATERFRONT

It was felt that the waterfront on the River Aire has potential to be a good focal point for the area, but work would be needed to make the canal stretches more attractive, bring the walkways closer to the water and improve general accessibility. There was also a view that more could be made of the river as a transport route; river taxis were cited as a positive example.

Respondents also indicated a number of other potential uses or features they wanted to see on the waterfront. One of these was leisure activities such as boat trips and sports on the water, or the use of water-taxis and the extension of transport infrastructure to the river. Some respondents also suggested the need to clean up the canals and river/riverbanks, and they were seen by a minority as dirty and polluted.

PREFERENCE FOR FEATURES ON THE WATERFRONT



“Get some real boats on the dock maybe day trips on the canal; open this up for people to experience or travel on the canal.”

“A riverside walkway, cafes and bars etc. to encourage recreational use of the riverbank. I'd love to see new markets and inventive retail spaces similar to those in London e.g. borough market, Camden Town”

LEEDS STATION, RAILWAYS AND HS2

Nine-in-ten survey respondents agree that 'HS2 viaduct crossings should be well lit, active spaces that are a natural extension of the adjacent streets'. Where comments were made about plans for the viaduct crossings and the proposal to remove traffic from Neville Street these generally in agreement (45%) although **the impact on wider traffic was a concern**. Specific comments included the following:

Traffic will be a problem or needs to be addressed	11%
Pedestrianisation is important	8%
Improve transport, buses and roads (general comment)	4%
Do not want HS2	3%
More or better walking routes required	3%
More or better cycling routes required	3%
Better roads required	2%

"There must be car accessibility into the city centre for disabled people. Neville street is key access point for this. Could create a bridge instead!"

"Closing Neville Street would make my journey home from work much longer. Access to the city via car is very important"

Comments specifically about the design of the station or the 'Dark Arches' of the viaduct generally presented a vision of an attractive, modern, and bustling area, especially for the latter. However, there was some concern over the darkness of the arches and the need for them to be well lit.

"The dark arches used to be a vibrant alternative shopping area. It has now been gentrified along with the rest of Leeds. It would be great to see it reinstated to its former glory. Not convinced we need more bars and restaurants"

"Definitely need to make more of the dark arches. They could be beautiful, real attractions and they're being wasted."

Respondents were also asked if they had any suggestions or comments on the proposals for the future of Leeds Station. Not everyone answered this question, but of those who did a broad mix of comments were given. A strong theme amongst supporters was a desire for integration of HS2 into Leeds station and public transport in Leeds in general and a summary of verbatim comments made included:

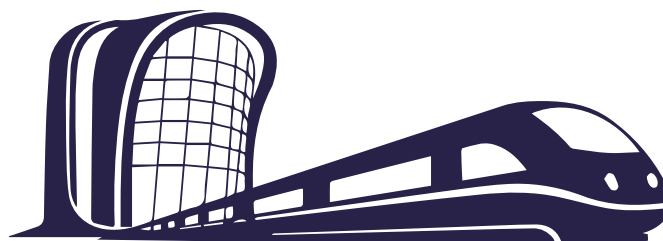
Integrating Leeds Station and the new HS2 station	12%
Leeds Station – expand or needs to be re-developed	12%
Introduce trams	5%
Need public transport that does not rely on roads	5%
Do not want HS2	5%
Accessible to all	5%
Facility needed - parking for residents and visitors	4%
Improve transport links to rest of city or region (general comment)	4%
Other comments related to railways	18%
Other comments related to accessibility	18%

"Create a super integrated station for HS2 and HS3. This should be a landmark building, selling the city and Yorkshire as a whole. Push the boat out"

"I like the idea of making the station itself a destination in itself rather than just a place to go through for a train"

Many comments here related to accessibility, suggesting that this is an issue that will need to be resolved in any redevelopment of the station. This is not just accessibility by cars, but also the way people move about the station as 'traffic' and existing pinch-points which cause bottlenecks to the flow of people.

13% of respondents said that Leeds Station currently causes physical barriers and that this was a challenge that South Bank faced.



ROADS, CYCLING, PEDESTRIAN ACCESS AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT



Respondents to the consultation agreed that **'the pedestrian core and public transport box should be extended into the South Bank'** (83%) and the majority also agreed that 'traffic should go around the city centre using the inner ring road rather than through it' (63%) and that 'a city boulevard (loop) should be created for general traffic to get to its destinations in the city centre' (63%).

There was almost universal agreement that **'in South Bank, streets should help to provide strategic green links e.g. trees, plants and verges'** (93%) and more than seven-in-ten agreed that 'streets should complement the adjacent buildings and their uses' (78%) and that 'the pedestrian and cyclist environment is most important' (72%).

Although still supported by the majority, lower levels of agreement were recorded that 'bus lanes should be provided on main bus routes' (64%) and 'shared pedestrian / cycle and vehicle spaces are appropriate on quieter streets' (62%).

When asked to consider how best to target future investment on transport into South Bank, respondents to the paper and online survey chose the following as most important:

Walk	44%
Bus	17%
Train	10%
Cycle	9%
Car and Park & Ride	8%
Car	8%
Taxi	1%

Pedestrianisation, specifically walking, was seen as the most important area of investment to improve access to South Bank. 44% said it was the most important, more than twice as many as the next most important.

CLIMATE CHANGE, FLOODING AND SUSTAINABILITY

As part of the consultation respondents were asked if they had any ideas or comments on the proposals to protect the South Bank area from flooding and the impact of climate change.

A wide array of responses were given, some of which were ideas and others were reiterations that there was a risk of flooding and a subsequent need to protect from that.

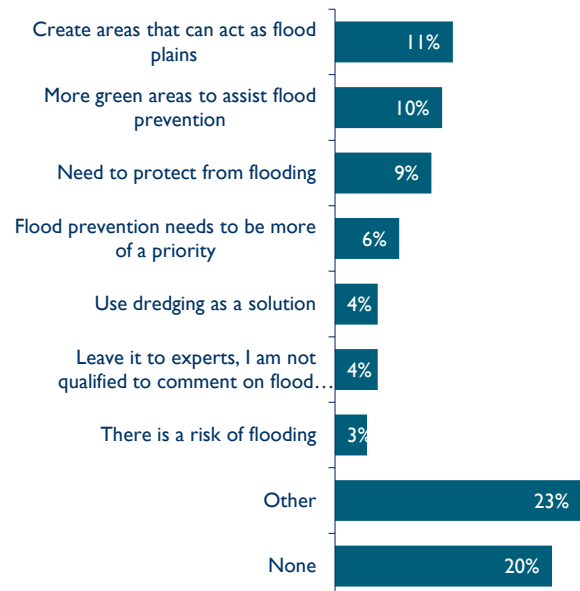
In addition, a wide variety of disparate comments relating to flooding were also given (coded into the 'other' category including the following:

"A more holistic view incorporating upstream flood mitigation methods which should be used in conjunction with hard engineering methods in Leeds City Centre"

"Could a drainable lake be part of the park? Could be lowered ahead of expected flooding to take floodwater?"

"Artificial levees or diversion spillways around the river. The south bank should also try to be eco-friendly during construction and after"

TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE AND FLOODING



COMMENTS FROM WORKSHOP

In a workshops about flood resilience and sustainability, a general recurring theme throughout the discussion was that of integration, e.g. incorporating measures around flooding and the environment as a central part of the development rather than leaving it as an afterthought. In terms of other environmental issues, participants commented that wildlife and tree planting appeared to be underemphasised within the plan and some thought needed to be given to how this could enhance the public spaces.

CULTURE AND HERITAGE

Culture and heritage were not directly referred to in the consultation but emerged as themes throughout. For example, verbatim responses to question on land use and heritage mixed use facilities from the digital and paper survey generated the following responses which relate to culture and heritage:

Under use of major heritage buildings currently	6%
Galleries needed	3%
Need to attract tourists to the area	3%
Museums (general) needed	2%
Concert venues needed	2%
Public art needed	1%
Outdoor performance area	1%
Leisure or entertainment complex (e.g. Xscape at Castleford)	1%
Major leisure or cultural destination required	1%
Lack of activities for residents outside of working hours currently	1%

Specific comments made included the following;

“Conservation of old buildings to maintain Leeds history and heritage”

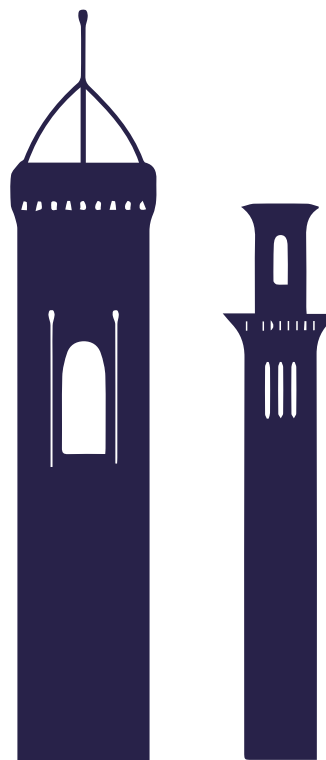
“Use of heritage buildings contrasted with the new modern buildings; a good viewing platform across the city”

“Not to demolish old buildings and replace them with modern generic structures that mean nothing. All our heritage must be kept!!”

Respondents talked about the need to ‘regenerate old buildings’ (4%) and that ‘large or iconic building(s) are required’ (2%) were needed to make an impact in South Bank. When asked if they had any other ideas for ‘what you would want to see more of in an extended city centre’ 9% mentioned the need to ‘regenerate old buildings’.

Contributors to a workshop about linking neighbouring communities undertaken as part of the consultation talked about the challenges of how to implement the vision for South Bank whilst preserving the individual character/history of the communities in the area (e.g. Holbeck, Hunslet and Beeston). These communities were seen to have a clear industrial heritage and a strong sense of community spirit. An important element of this was the need for the council and investors/developers to engage with the communities and ensure that the developments reflect their needs and deliver real benefits including jobs.

Some people described a culture of leisure in the public spaces, with suggestions of public art, sculpture, and events integrated into the design of the park and waterfront. There were also suggestions for family facilities and cultural facilities in terms of building use. Heritage would naturally be a part of this, not only in the aesthetic design of the environment, buildings, and landscape, but the more intangible sense of the vibrancy and lack of homogeneity in the surroundings. Crucially, there was arguably an underlying desire to create an area of ‘character’ that built upon and preserved the existing heritage of South Bank



“A cultural centre, with performers, artists, musicians , cheap street food (no more restaurants!), cafes serving coffee until late, a green oasis in the heart of the city”

“I think there’s plenty of shops and eateries in Leeds already, close enough to South Bank. How about more cultural spaces like theatres, libraries, evens venues?”



CONCLUSIONS

The consultation revealed aspirations for a well designed, modern and vibrant South Bank, that connects well with the existing city centre and works with & maintains the culture and heritage of the area. There is a desire to see a mix of retail, leisure, cultural and residential spaces, with some making reference to creating a European city feel in South Bank.

Green and open spaces are a vital part of the vision for South Bank, and this was common to all age groups who took part (even though the interpretation of what such space should look like differed). The River Aire waterfront was also an important part of the vision and was seen as a feature of South Bank that could be accentuated and utilised as a focal point for the area.

Throughout the submissions to the consultation, there is strong evidence of a desire for the South Bank to be an area that it encourages people to spend their time there, with well thought out transport and accessibility, people focus traffic management, cultural and leisure activities and an ambiance and amenity that make it an attractive destination.

Maintaining and reinvigorating the existing heritage of the South Bank (particularly iconic buildings) is seen as a desirable objective, but an appetite does also exist for modern and icon new buildings. This character was seen as grounded in the industrial heritage of the area, typified in buildings such as The Tetley, and there was a strong desire not only to preserve but also to reuse these structures and make them an integral part of the new South Bank.

Responses to the consultation frequently emphasised the importance of infrastructure as well as existing problems with accessibility and connectivity with the existing city centre and these comments highlight that residents are realistic about the practicalities of redeveloping the area. In particular, the importance of adequate transportation is a key theme and aspirations for the South Bank are driven by a desire to see better facilities for walking, cycling and public transportation, although recognition of the need for car access and parking is apparent.

