



#OurSixTowns

Building a bright future together

# Stockton Waterfront urban park concept engagement

## Summary of findings

Delivered by



Stockton-on-Tees  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

# Introduction

In August 2022, Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council asked the public to help shape the plans for Stockton Waterfront, a new urban park in the heart of Stockton town centre.

Since June, work has been underway to revisit the existing concept design for the urban park element of Stockton Waterfront, which will replace Castlegate Shopping Centre and the Swallow Hotel.

Initial ideas for the future use of the Castlegate Centre site built on those proposed in the 'Let's Talk About Our Towns' public consultation in 2019, which found there was support to repurpose the Castlegate site and connect the High Street and the riverside. There was also broad support for creating more green space in the town centre, with more parks and leisure opportunities.

An online feedback form was available on the Council's website for three weeks and a series of in-person public engagement sessions took place in the Enjoy Stockton unit on Stockton High Street.

These opportunities were promoted widely on social media, the Council's website and in the local press. Invitation postcards were also left in key areas in the town centre.

All responses were added together, giving a total of 856 responses.

This summary presents the findings from the public engagement to help aid the final design of the site.

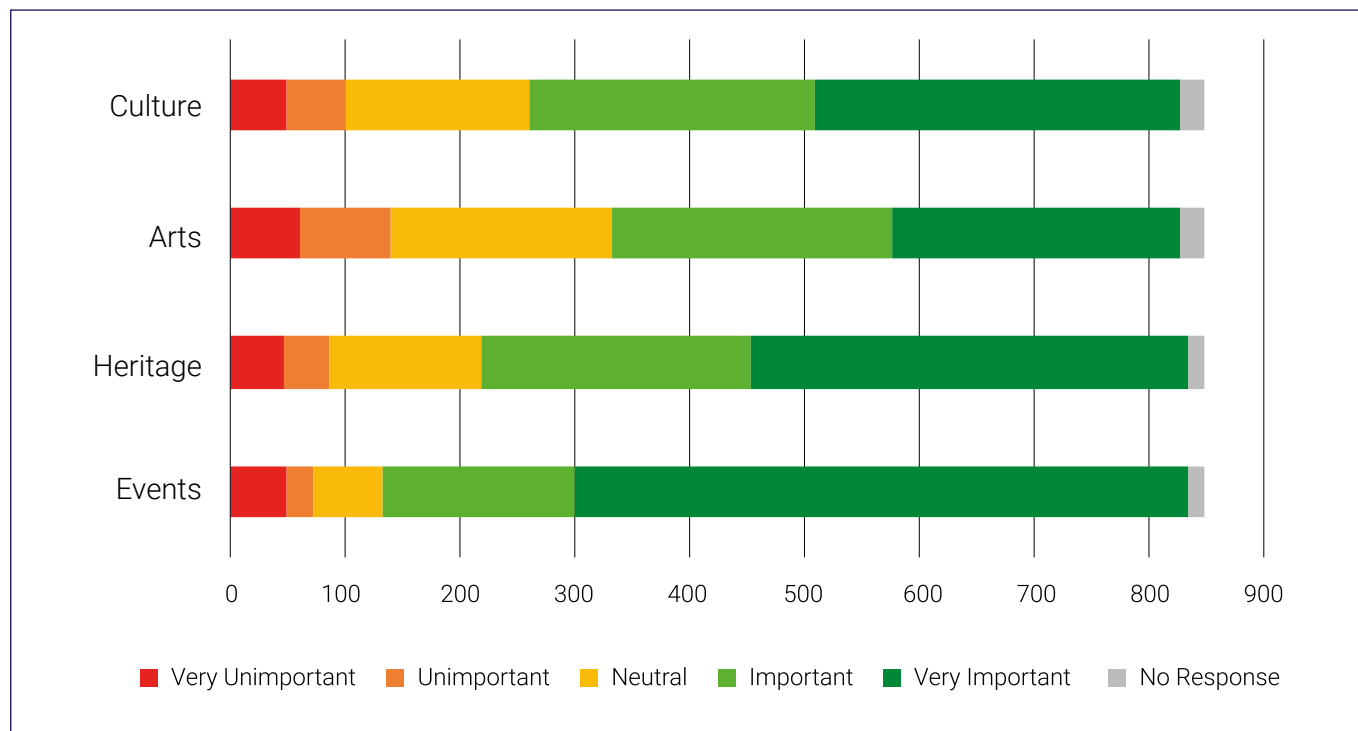
More information on the Stockton Waterfront scheme and the wider Council's Town Centres Investment Programme can be found at: [stockton.gov.uk/our-six-towns](https://stockton.gov.uk/our-six-towns)

# Summary of Findings

Respondents were asked a variety of questions under specific themes covered in the urban park.

## Events, Heritage, Arts & Culture

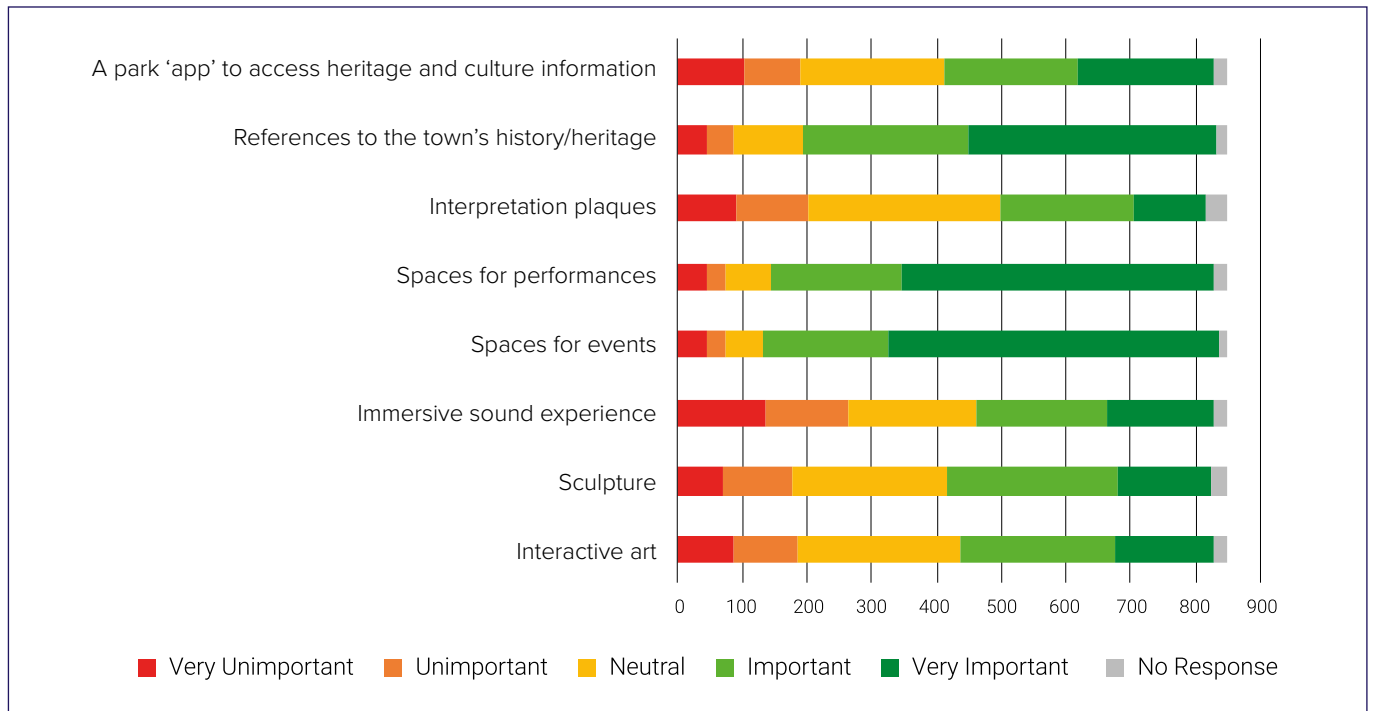
'When you look at the proposals for the urban park, how important do you think it is that the following things are incorporated into the design?'



	Percentage of respondents rated this as:		
	important	neutral	unimportant
Events	<b>84.11</b>	7.12	8.78
Heritage	<b>73.72</b>	15.81	10.47
Culture	<b>68.78</b>	19.02	12.20
Art	<b>60.17</b>	22.97	16.87

All elements were deemed important to include, with events receiving the highest percentage of respondents viewing it as important (84 per cent), followed by heritage (74 per cent), culture (69 per cent) and art (60 per cent).

'How important is it for heritage, arts and culture to be incorporated into the urban park in the following ways?'



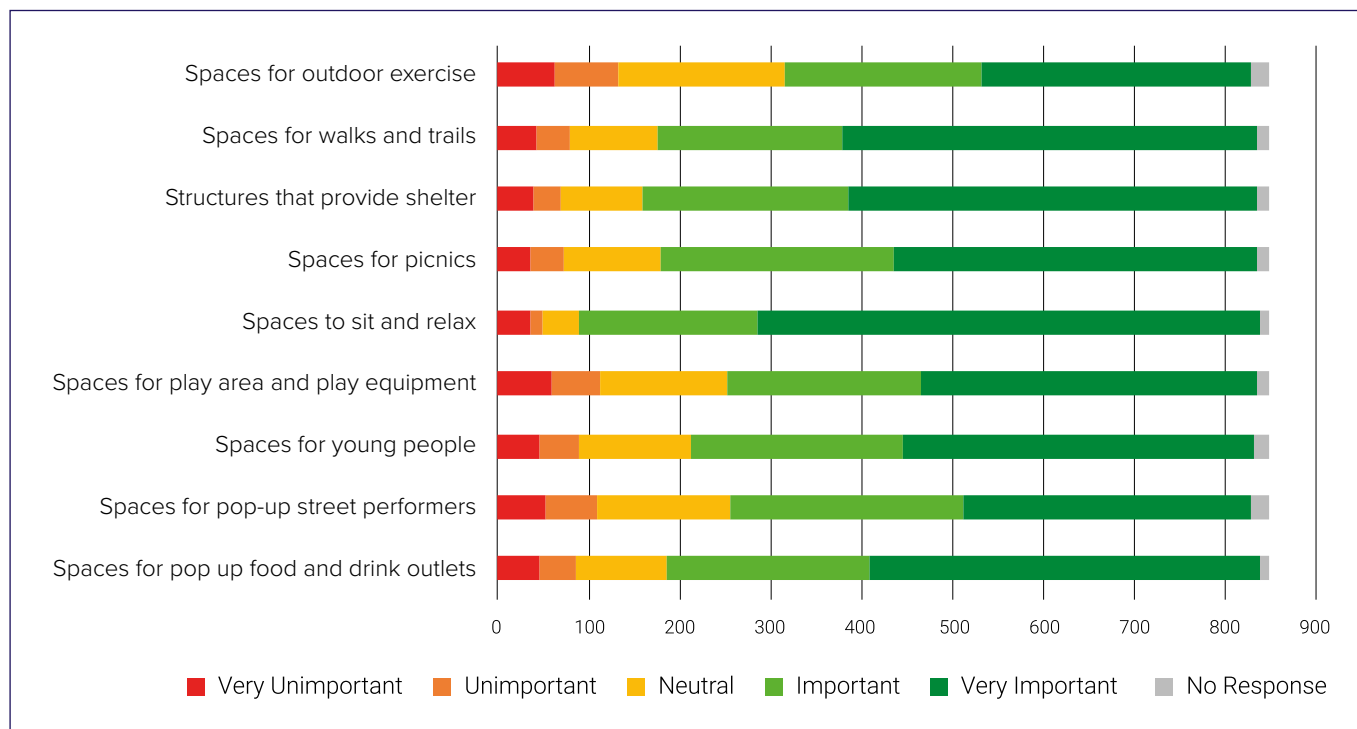
	Percentage of respondents rated this as:		
	important	neutral	unimportant
Spaces for events	<b>84.30</b>	6.61	9.09
Spaces for performances	<b>82.43</b>	8.48	9.08
Stockton's Heritage	<b>76.55</b>	12.86	10.59
A park app	<b>50.72</b>	26.37	22.91
Sculpture	<b>49.52</b>	29.14	21.34
Interactive art	<b>47.50</b>	30.19	22.31
Immersive sound	<b>44.74</b>	23.56	31.70
Interpretation plaques	<b>38.74</b>	36.56	24.70

Spaces for events, spaces for performances, reference to Stockton's heritage and a dedicated park app were deemed important to include overall, with the provision of space for events and performances receiving the highest percentage of respondents rating its importance (84 per cent and 82 per cent respectively).

Marking Stockton's heritage was deemed important by 77 per cent of respondents, but the use of interpretation plaques was deemed less important with only 39 per cent of respondents, demonstrating the need to mark Stockton's heritage in a wider variety of ways.

## Recreation, leisure and play

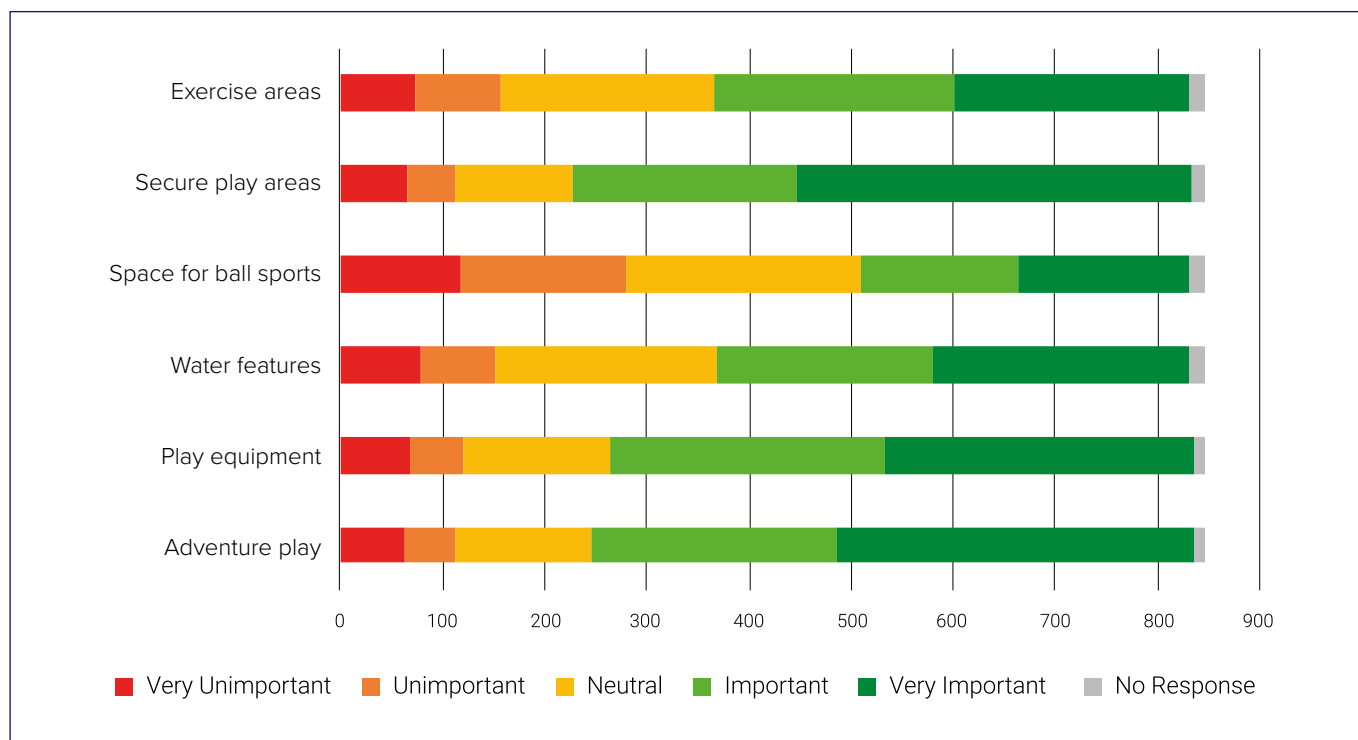
'When you look at the proposals for the urban park, how important do you think it is that the following things are incorporated into the design?'



	Percentage of respondents rated this as:		
	important	neutral	unimportant
Spaces to sit and relax	<b>89.40</b>	4.71	5.89
Structures that provide shelter	<b>80.83</b>	11.01	8.16
Spaces for walks and trails	<b>79.00</b>	11.63	9.37
Spaces for picnics	<b>78.17</b>	13.29	8.54
Spaces for food and drink outlets	<b>77.83</b>	12.03	10.14
Spaces for young people	<b>74.47</b>	14.96	10.57
Spaces for play areas and play equipment	<b>69.82</b>	16.80	13.37
Spaces for pop-up street performers	<b>69.48</b>	17.28	13.23
Spaces for outdoor exercise	<b>61.86</b>	22.05	16.09

All elements were deemed important to include by the majority of respondents, with the highest response rates for providing spaces to sit and relax, providing shelter and space for walks and trails.

'Thinking about play provision for young people, how important do you think the following are?'

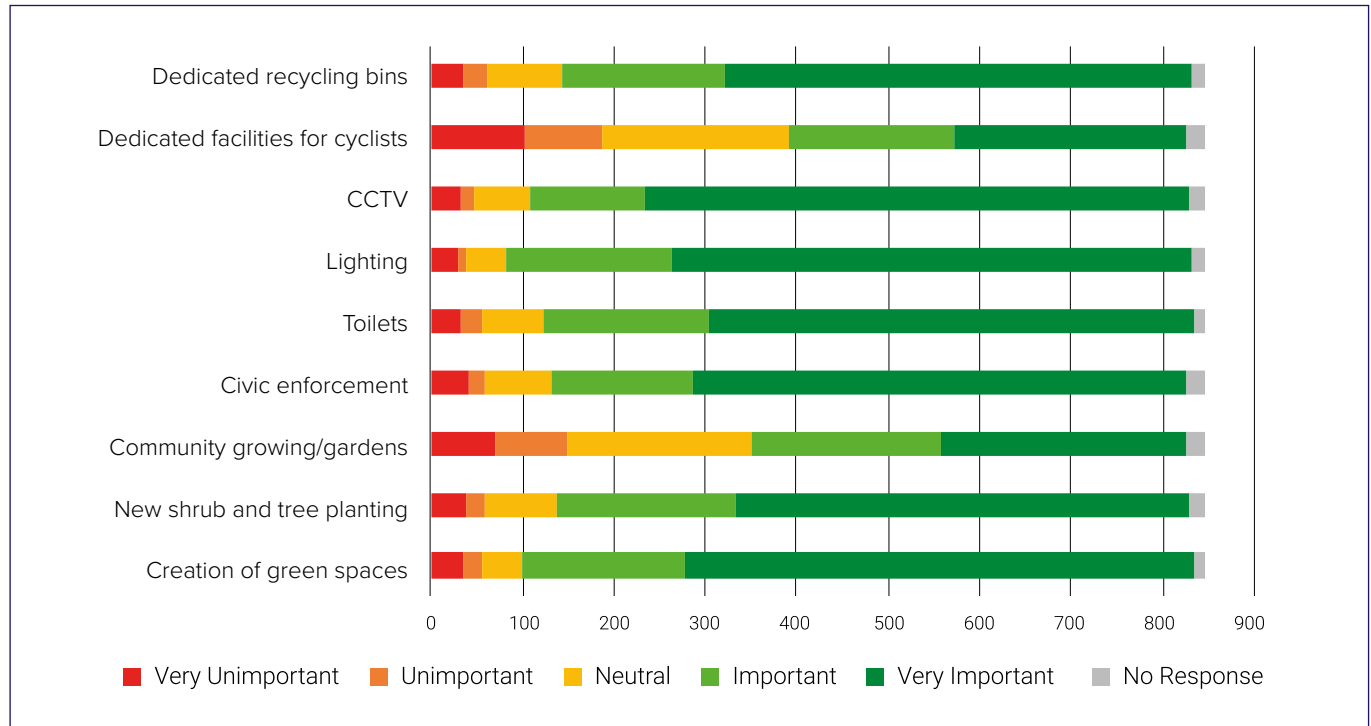


	Percentage of respondents rated this as:		
	important	neutral	unimportant
Secure play areas	<b>72.72</b>	13.76	13.53
Adventure play	<b>70.77</b>	15.62	13.61
Play equipment	<b>68.52</b>	16.92	14.55
Exercise areas	<b>55.78</b>	25.39	18.83
Water features	<b>55.76</b>	25.92	18.31
Spaces for ball sports	<b>38.50</b>	27.77	33.73

All elements were deemed important to include by the majority of respondents, with the provision of secure play areas, adventure play and play equipment receiving the top three response rates.

## Accessibility, inclusion and community use

'When you look at the proposals for the urban park, how important do you think it is that the following things are incorporated into the design?'

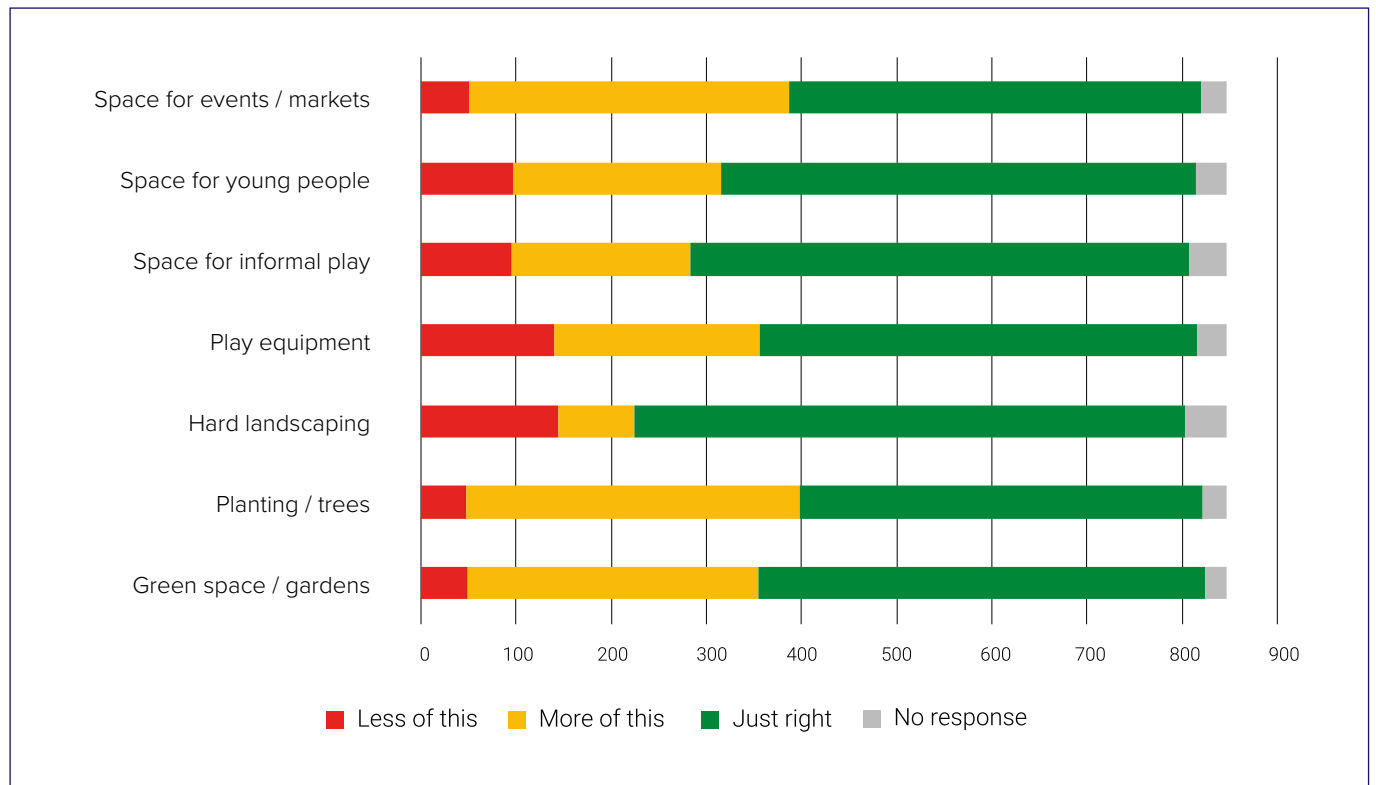


	Percentage of respondents rated this as:		
	important	neutral	unimportant
Lighting	<b>90.25</b>	4.88	4.87
Creation of green spaces	<b>88.02</b>	5.34	6.65
CCTV	<b>86.73</b>	7.41	5.85
Toilets	<b>85.17</b>	8.07	6.76
Civic enforcement	<b>84.17</b>	8.75	7.08
New shrub and tree planting	<b>83.28</b>	9.56	7.17
Dedicated recycling bins	<b>82.62</b>	10.00	7.38
Community growing / gardens	<b>57.60</b>	24.31	18.08
Dedicated facilities for cyclists	<b>53.11</b>	24.52	22.37

All elements were deemed important to include by the majority of respondents. Providing facilities including lighting, CCTV, toilets and civic enforcement were ranked of similar high importance amongst the responses; as well as the provision of green spaces and new shrub and tree planting.

## Thinking about the Stockton Waterfront urban park concept so far, do you think the balance is right on the following?

Respondents were asked a variety of questions under specific themes covered in the urban park.



## Further suggestions for Stockton Waterfront urban park

There were a total of 451 comments offered from respondents on this question.

The comments given explored a range of themes, with the most frequent covering thoughts around accessibility, community safety, food and beverage and sport and leisure opportunities.



## Accessibility

The majority of these comments focused on the need for the site to be inclusive for all and for connectivity to the town centre to be improved.

### Some examples of this are below:

- *'The main goal should be inclusiveness, accessibility and diversity of activities able to be accommodated in the revised central Stockton-on-Tees redevelopment. I believe the Riverside concreted looking terraced area will be a mistake as concrete is unpleasant to sit and stand upon, the finish of this area should emulate the grass terraced area at the bottom of Silver Street.'*
- *'Inclusive of- braille, mobility challenged- ramps, grab rails etc & wheelchair friendly park & play equipment, sensory garden autism friendly, raised beds in community planting growing area, skate/scooter park, school holiday activities & an outdoor cinema.'*
- *'I think more things the disabled young children and older children can access as right now they can't at parks or events be nice to have things everyone can access and enjoy as a family.'*
- *'A lot of effort seems to be targeted at young children, however I would like to see an area which young adults can go and not get moved on where they can have their independence in a safe location.'*
- *'Disabled access and a sensory garden.'*
- *'Like the concept plan for access to river, would prefer more of the road to go through tunnel, maybe extend all the way to Finkle Street or the Bilton to bring that into the plan.'*

## Community Safety

Most of the responses around community safety covered elements of concerns around anti-social behaviour, the need for a security presence on the new site and further efforts to ensure public safety and the success of project.

### Some examples are shown below:

- *'Security and enforcement otherwise park won't be worth visiting due to high levels of anti social behaviour.'*
- *'The area needs to feel safe, clean and welcoming with plenty going on throughout the year, with good communications to let people know what's happening and build engagement. There needs to be a visible enforcement presence at all times and zero tolerance of anti-social behaviour.'*
- *'I want to feel safe for myself and family. Proper enforcement is very important or the area won't be properly utilised which would be a shame for such innovative use of space.'*
- *'This area needs to be monitored so that it doesn't become a space that people don't want to use/visit due to anti-social behaviour/crime.'*
- *'High security monitoring levels needed, love the concept of exercise areas for all ages as they do abroad, my concern is the gangs of youths and anti social behaviour will just destroy and vandalize the good that is put into the project.'*
- *'The area must be policed correctly or you are just wasting our money. It could be Stocktons jewel in the crown if it's looked after right.'*
- *'My main worry about this area is it attracting anti-social behaviour so would really like to see efforts to keep people safe.'*

## Food, beverage and retail

Comments under this theme covered opportunities for 'pop-up' food locations in the urban park, as well as the need for private investment from businesses to allow the area to grow.

### Some examples include:

- *Areas that can be easily converted to accommodate pop up event/food and beverage facilities something such as Middlesbrough orange pip market area.'*
- *'You're really missing a trick to not build a few units for nice riverside cocktail bars, something like pitcher and piano in Newcastle, all glass front with plenty of seating, this type of thing should be exactly what this area is for otherwise it will largely go unused 80% of the time outside of sirf and a few other less important events. Three or four dotted around the riverside would be fantastic. Also a biweekly/monthly food market like orange pip would be great down there. As well as bringing back something similar to Stockton weekend now there will be so much more space it has the capacity to be a fully fledged festival. I'm really really emphatic about things like this coming to the space that will be created.'*
- *'I think that an opportunity is being missed for including riverside food and drink outlets, cafes and bars. The concept is dependent on pop-up businesses being deployed for the duration of events whereas I would like to see units available for businesses to become permanently established throughout the park area.'*
- *'Maybe a stack bar area or museum like Albert dock in Liverpool that celebrate Stockton history.'*
- *'Food and drink will make this work , we have a beautiful river front , on a day like today I would want to be able to walk/chill with food/drinks.'*
- *Cafes and meeting Places right on the river making the river the focal point pop up food and craft stalls supporting community ventures. Great idea thanks have community gardens involving schools/local groups growing produce creating enterprise opportunities.'*
- *'The site must be brought to life 7 days a week /12 months of the year. Pop up bars, cafes, food kiosks catering for use in all seasons open til late especially on the days when events are on at the globe and 1-3k extra people are in the vicinity. We have an amazing riverside. It can't be left for sunny days in the summer only. Let's keep weekend day drinkers in the town and make something that makes other towns want to visit (not all day drinkers are bad and spend big amounts). Look at other local successes such as STACK in seaburn and Newcastle. Go to Thornaby station any Saturday morning and see how many people get in the train to Newcastle and York for this very thing. Let's accommodate families on walks who want to grab a hot chocolate, a coffee or an ice cream. The little van at the barrage is the first time we e had anything regular like that. This would be perfect for here.'*

## Sport and leisure

A lot of comments covered the desire for sport and leisure facilities that made the most of access to the River Tees, as well as.

### Some examples include:

- *'Please consider water sports eg swimming, kayaking paddleboarding. Good opportunity to teach younger people about water safety too. Would need cleaner water way and management of motorised water craft. Maybe a space could be provided for them too so they stop tearing up the natural areas further up stream and keep people safer.'*
- *'Safe entry and exit points to the water for Swimmers. Open water swimming is becoming increasingly popular. Its free to the swimmer. It is good for physical and mental health.'*
- *'Suggested walking routes - red trail, blue trail etc. Lots of policing so it's not a druggie den after a month. Water features that incorporate play similar to Alnwick gardens.'*
- *'Stockton is about the river. Id like to see space to launch paddle boards, row boat hire. i really feel we need to encourage active play and encourage people to be active, along with providing sports facilities for those with disabilities. A scented garden for visually impaired/ trails accessible to wheelchair users and those with low mobility, places to sit and read. discovery trails for children that can be changed throughout the seasons, puzzles to solve.... the possibilities are endless!'*
- *'Ideally no one age group should be over represented, I feel that over provision of installed play equipment may create areas where undesirable groups may gather, plus the inevitable damage to the equipment, it's maintenance and repair. having the park as open and unobstructed as possible will really provide a lasting benefit to the High Street and create a real feeling of being in the countryside, a real open space rather than a manufactured play park that the Borough already has.'*
- *'I would love to see a circular walking trail around the park area that can be used by walkers, prams, wheelchairs users that links up with existing water front pathways. The tees barrage attracts people for walking and running and it'd be good to see that closer to the town centre. Even allowing Park Run to set up in the town centre would be fantastic.'*

# Profile of Responses

Respondents were asked to tick all options that applied to them:

## What is your connection to Stockton Town Centre?

525 said they lived in Stockton, 433 shopped there and 194 worked there. 264 respondents said they visited the town centre for a night out and 25 respondents said they were a business owner.

## When did you last visit Stockton Town Centre?

578 people said they had visited within the last week, 171 within the last month, 59 within the last year and 26 over a year ago.

## Tell us your age

50 per cent of respondents fell within the 41-65 years age group, 29 per cent within the 26-40 years age group, 13 per cent within the 65+ years age group, 5 per cent within the 17-25 years age group, 1 per cent of respondents were aged under 16 and 2 per cent of respondents preferred not to say their age.

# Next Steps

The feedback received will help shape the next phase of detailed design for the urban park element of Stockton Waterfront.

The findings from this engagement activity, along with the next steps for providing a final design will be presented before the end of the year.

The final design will then be presented to residents, businesses and other stakeholders.

Thank you to all who shared their thoughts about the future plans for Stockton Waterfront urban park.

For further enquiries about this scheme, visit: [stockton.gov.uk/stockton](https://stockton.gov.uk/stockton)

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