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Sefton Council

STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Southport Town Hall Gardens

Prepared for Sefton Council

November 2026

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DOCUMENT RECORD

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Executive summary

Sefton Council and DevComms consulted on proposals to regenerate Southport Town Hall Gardens between 21 September and 5 October 2026. 58% of the 266 respondents support the proposals, more than twice the 28% who oppose them.

Building on a Stage 1 public consultation led by Sefton Council in 2025, which received 67 responses, the proposals were tested with Council services and site operators over three phases of pre-application engagement. They were then presented through a two-week exhibition of roller banners and a 3D model at The Atkinson, two staffed events attended by around 60 people, a leaflet to 1,286 addresses, schools workshops led by Social Signature, the Your Sefton, Your Say platform, posters, social media and press coverage.

266 feedback forms were received (104 paper, 162 online), alongside five email responses, one postal response, eight responses from stakeholder groups and the views of more than 85 young people from 28 schools. An ongoing dialogue was also held with Southport Business Improvement District, who viewed the proposals at The Atkinson. 155 respondents asked to be kept updated.

Every design question and element received more positive than negative responses. The themes raised most often were heritage features, access to The Atkinson, long-term maintenance and safety; Section 5 sets out the response to each, including a new low stone wall on the line of the existing Lord Street balustrade and the relocation of the existing globe lighting columns within the Gardens to the new wall.

SUPPORT

72%

support the proposals or are neutral (191 of 266); 28% oppose

USE TODAY

57%

pass through the Gardens several times a week or more

FUTURE USE

74%

expect to use the Gardens as much or more

> I think it will be amazing and a perfect and wonderful memorial to Alice, Elsie and Bebe. Southport needs updating and this will be a positive move.
>
> LOCAL RESIDENT · FEEDBACK FORM

01

Introduction and background

This Statement of Community Involvement has been prepared by DevComms North Ltd on behalf of Sefton Council, in support of a Detailed planning application for the regeneration of Southport Town Hall Gardens.

Introduction

This Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) has been prepared by DevComms North Ltd (DevComms) in support of a Detailed planning application by Sefton Council ('the Applicant') for the regeneration of Southport Town Hall Gardens ('the Site').

An application has been submitted to Sefton Council as the Local Planning Authority (LPA) for the following proposed development:

> *"Full planning permission for the demolition of existing structures, walls and hard landscaping, and delivery of public realm works comprising open space, gardens, a flexible event space (Sui Generis), and a water play feature, plant room with associated infrastructure, lighting, planting and works; and, Listed Building Consent for the Grade II listed deck chair store comprising; repair and refinishing of the existing structure utilising a breathable paint solution, demolition of later alterations to return to the original intended external configuration, new glazed panels, new copper roof finish, copings and flashings to existing structure, installation of a new retractable awning."*

This SCI provides an overview of the stakeholder engagement and public consultation undertaken. It should be read in conjunction with the other technical documents submitted in support of the application.

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ABOUT DEVCOMMS

DevComms is a dedicated property communications consultancy which specialises in undertaking public engagement on development proposals.

DevComms has undertaken community and stakeholder engagement on behalf of the Applicant in relation to the proposals for the regeneration of Southport Town Hall Gardens.

DevComms is committed to promoting and creating positive change by collaborating with clients and communities, and creating better places and spaces within communities.

About the site

The heart of the town. Southport Town Hall Gardens sit at the centre of Southport town centre, fronting Lord Street and Eastbank Street and forming the principal civic space around Southport Town Hall, The Atkinson and Southport Library.

A heritage setting. The Site lies within the Lord Street Conservation Area and is the public-facing setting to listed civic buildings including the Town Hall, Cambridge Hall and The Atkinson. Heritage considerations have been embedded in the proposals from an early stage.

Today's challenges. The relationship with the surrounding highways can make the space feel disconnected and exposed; pedestrian and cycle connectivity is limited, and there is little opportunity for play, events and performances.

The ambition. A safer, greener, more accessible and welcoming civic space, better able to support community life throughout the year.

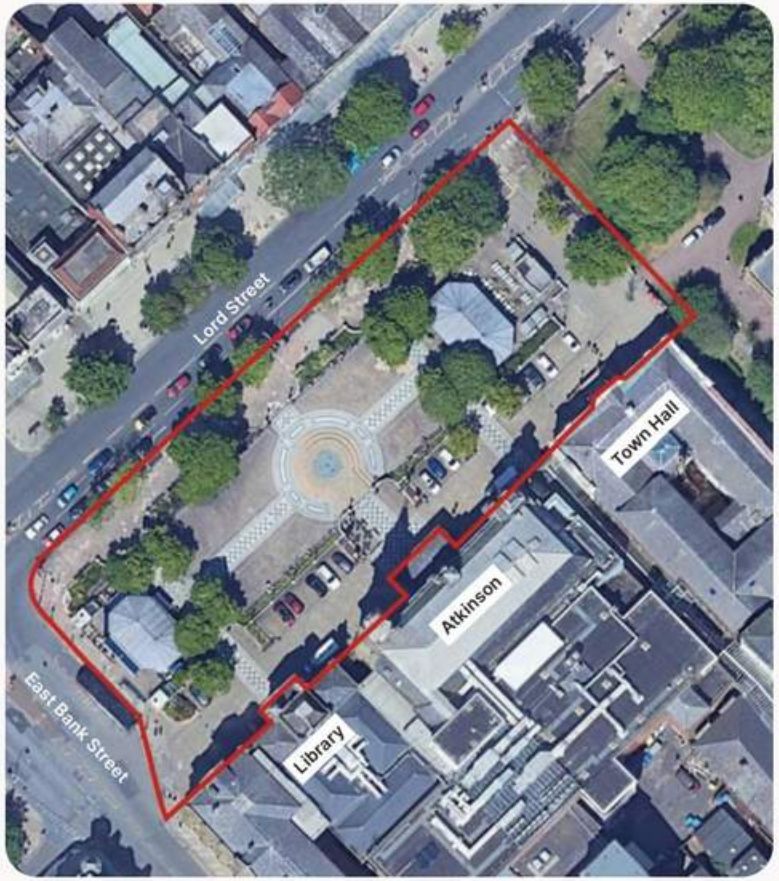


FIGURE 1.1 · SITE LOCATION PLAN
Site boundary shown in red

Consultation strategy

This SCI demonstrates that the consultation programme carried out by Sefton Council and DevComms gave key stakeholders and interested parties effective opportunities to share their feedback.

The proposals had already been informed by a Stage 1 public consultation led by Sefton Council in August and September 2025, and by engagement with local families, community groups and town centre businesses, alongside ongoing input from the Project Board and the wider consultant team.

The Stage 2 public consultation ran for two weeks, from 21 September to 5 October 2026. Roller banners and a 3D model of the proposals were on display at The Atkinson, the materials were also available online through Sefton Council's consultation platform, and two staffed events were held on 25 and 30 September. 266 feedback forms were received on paper and online.

Two workshops were also delivered by Social Signature with primary and secondary school students, exploring how young people can help shape the uses and meaning of the Gardens for years to come. All feedback is summarised in Section 4.

Themes raised most often

65	Heritage features
61	Accessibility and The Atkinson's operations
54	Maintenance and long-term upkeep
52	Safety and management

Number of survey respondents raising each theme

ABOUT THIS REPORT

(i) An overview of the consultation activities undertaken and the methods used to engage key stakeholders

(ii) The main priorities and themes arising from feedback, and how the proposals seek to address them

02

Policy background and consultation

National and local policy both expect early, meaningful engagement on major development. This section sets out those expectations, the best practice followed and how personal data was protected.

National and local policy

NATIONAL POLICY

Community and stakeholder engagement has an important role throughout the planning process, leading to a better understanding of local areas and a well-developed scheme. Decision-making policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2026) support community engagement. 'DM1: Preparing Development proposals' states:

> *1. Proposals for major development should: a. Be informed by early engagement with neighbours and the local community, as well as with the local planning authority, statutory consultees, infrastructure providers, registered providers of social housing and other relevant bodies where appropriate, to identify and seek to resolve key planning matters prior to the submission of a planning application.*
>
> NPPF 2026 · DM1

LOCAL POLICY

Sefton Council Statement of Community Involvement, adopted March 2018

The SCI sets out how the Council involves the community in planning matters. It recommends that applicants consult neighbours and those who may be affected, and for major applications strongly recommends:

- ✓ Consultation events with the local community
- ✓ Consultation with elected members and town or parish councillors
- ✓ Detailed plans available for public inspection, including online
- ✓ Press notices, leaflets or letters to inform nearby residents

Our approach and best practice

The approach was developed with the Council's expectations in mind. Given the public significance of the Site and the sensitivities around the proposals, it goes beyond a single method of consultation, combining:

Targeted stakeholder engagement

Including ongoing dialogue with Southport Business Improvement District

Staffed public events

An extended public exhibition

Online information and feedback

Direct communication channels

Briefing the press

A press release shared with local and industry press ahead of launch

Targeted engagement included an ongoing dialogue with Southport Business Improvement District, and Southport Civic Society attended The Atkinson to review the plans and speak with the project team. The programme reflects the scale and public significance of the project, and the need for transparent, accessible and proportionate opportunities to take part before submission.

BEST PRACTICE PRINCIPLES FOLLOWED BY DEVCOMMS AND SEFTON COUNCIL

- ✓ Prepare plain English, clear, concise and understandable materials
- ✓ Publicise the proposals and the online consultation
- ✓ Make information and material accessible to the local community
- ✓ Contact those most likely to be interested, to explain the approach, brief them and seek feedback

Data protection

A data protection statement was included on the online feedback forms. It explained that the consultation was conducted by Development Communications Limited (DevComms), a Data Processor, acting on behalf of Sefton Council, the Data Controller.

How responses are used

Responses are shared with and considered by Sefton Council and DevComms. Aggregated insights may be published or shared with the relevant local planning authorities as part of a planning application.

Secure storage

Personal information is stored securely for the duration of the project and securely destroyed or deleted on completion. No personal data is shared as part of the planning process.

No one is named

This report does not name individual respondents, other than elected representatives whose details are public. Published results contain nothing that could identify individuals from their feedback.

Contact only by consent

Personal data will never be used for marketing or shared outside DevComms and Sefton Council. Respondents are only contacted again if they asked to be kept updated.

03

Overview of engagement

A carefully sequenced programme: an initial Stage 1 public consultation led by Sefton Council in 2025, technical and operational testing within the Council, then a wide Stage 2 public consultation, followed by a “you said, we did” exercise after submission.

A programme shaped by the Site's significance

The proposals have been informed by a comprehensive programme of consultation, appropriate to both the significance of the Site and the sensitive circumstances from which the project has emerged.

The strategy recognised that different stakeholders have different relationships with the project. It sought to be sensitive and inclusive, with dedicated opportunities for representatives of the bereaved families to shape the designs, reflecting their unique relationship with the project.

The Project Board

Oversaw the project, with an independent Chair, representatives of the bereaved families and senior representatives of Sefton Council.

Engagement has not been treated as a single point: feedback has been shared with the project and design teams throughout, so comments could inform the evolving scheme.

1

AUGUST TO SEPTEMBER 2025

Stage 1 public consultation

Led by Sefton Council: early views on the concept images and project information

2

MARCH TO AUGUST 2026

Pre-application engagement

Council services, technical stakeholders and those who run the space day to day, plus representatives of the bereaved families

3

21 SEPTEMBER TO 5 OCTOBER 2026

Stage 2 public consultation

Open and accessible opportunities for the wider community to review the scheme and give feedback

4

AFTER SUBMISSION

"You said, we did"

Showing how feedback has been considered, and inviting views on the submitted proposals

Stage 1 public consultation

Tuesday 26 August to Friday 26 September 2025
Led by Sefton Council's communications team







What it was, and why

Following approval of a two-stage approach by the Public Engagement and Consultation Panel in June 2025, Stage 1 was a month-long, light-touch engagement. It re-shared the concept images and project information and asked people to "tell us what you think", inviting views on water features, parking, planters, trees and the 1990s pavilions, to inform a more detailed Stage 2 proposal.

How it was promoted and hosted

Launched with a Sefton Council press release on 26 August 2025 and covered by local media. The concept images, project background and a detailed FAQ on the history and ageing infrastructure of the Gardens were hosted on the Council's dedicated webpage, **sefton.gov.uk/townhallgardens.**

How people could respond

Residents could email the Southport Recovery Team, write to the team at Southport Town Hall, or provide their written feedback in person at the Town Hall. All comments were reported to the Town Hall Gardens Project Board at the close of the engagement period.

67
responses: 61 by email and 6 in writing

- Princess Diana fountain and memorial
- Heritage and character
- Green space and landscaping
- Events and regeneration
- Safety, accessibility and maintenance

Feedback directly shaped the emerging design, including additional landscaping and the introduction of a water feature.

Pre-application engagement

The Gardens touch a wide range of operational interests: heritage, highways, events, library and gallery operations, community safety and accessibility. Following the Stage 1 consultation, the programme was therefore sequenced so that internal Sefton Council stakeholders tested the scheme before the Stage 2 public consultation.

OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLE

A scheme of this profile cannot be presented to residents with confidence until the people responsible for running, maintaining and regulating the space day to day have tested it against operational reality.

01

Resolve issues early

Highways capacity, servicing for The Atkinson's theatre programme, heritage constraints, anti-social behaviour and public safety were worked through before they could surface as unresolved questions in public.

02

Build trust across services

Highways, Heritage, Planning, Green Sefton, Civic Buildings and EDI, plus key site operators The Atkinson and Libraries, were engaged ahead of wider exposure.

03

Track every issue

A structured way to log each issue raised, so the scheme could reach the public as tested and considered rather than provisional.

Three phases of internal testing

PHASE ONE · MARCH 2026

Internal workshops

2 March: a Legal Engagement Session with Sefton's legal, procurement and highways leads.

3 March: a cross-departmental session with In-House Services, Environmental Enforcement, Green Sefton, Heritage, Planning, Civic Buildings, The Atkinson, the Principal Architect, Property & Asset Management and the EDI Officer.

Deliberately wide in scope. Each point was logged against a named owner, from specialist input on accessibility, lighting and heritage to requests built into the concept.

PHASE TWO · APRIL 2026

Operational workshops

2 April, morning: Green Sefton, Libraries, Museums & Galleries, Atkinson Operations and Highways.

2 April, afternoon: the events function, with the Head of Events, Major Events Manager and Tree Officer.

Pressure-tested the practical demands of running the space: vehicle access and coach drop-off, event capacity and servicing, planting and maintenance. Some items awaited data from Sefton's own services.

PHASE THREE · BY AUGUST 2026

Digital workbook review

A pre-planning workbook circulated for written comment from The Atkinson, Tourism, Sustainability and Highways.

A structured assurance exercise: each comment carried a named response, a responsible consultant (Ridge, Planit or Mode) and an Open, Closed or Note status.

Unresolved issues went to follow-up meetings, such as the 12 August session on construction-phase access with the CDM Principal Designer, The Atkinson and Highways.

Political engagement

BEFORE LAUNCH

Public Engagement and Consultation Panel

Sefton Council's project team presented the proposals, consultation materials and messaging strategy to the panel, which is chaired by the Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnership Engagement, Councillor Liz Dowd.

This ensured senior officials and elected members were comfortable with the plans and narratives, and that the messaging stood up to scrutiny in explaining the context and the design journey.

SHORTLY BEFORE LAUNCH

Local elected members

The two-week exhibition in The Atkinson was open for all local elected members to attend, review the plans and discuss the designs with the project team. A consistent dialogue has also been held with Leader of the Council, Councillor Marion Atkinson, throughout the project's progress to this point.

During the two-week period, the Sefton Council members for Dukes Ward (the site ward) attended The Atkinson to review the plans and have provided their written feedback. A summary of this feedback has been included in Section 4 of this report.

Patrick Hurley, MP for Southport and the Northern Parishes, also attended the public consultation and has since publicly stated his strong support for the scheme and for the consultation process.

PRE-APPLICATION SUMMARY

Together, the three phases front-loaded technical and institutional scrutiny before the Stage 2 public consultation: broad departmental testing, focused operational refinement, then a formal, trackable assurance process.

This let the public materials present the scheme with confidence. Questions a resident might reasonably ask about access, safety, heritage or maintenance had, in large part, already been tested and answered.

PATRICK HURLEY MP

"I strongly support this project and the consultation process that has accompanied it. Residents have rightly had the opportunity to scrutinise the proposals and help shape what ultimately comes forward."

Patrick Hurley, MP for Southport and the Northern Parishes · public statement

Stage 2 public consultation

The programme combined targeted engagement with groups who have a particular relationship to the project and open, accessible opportunities for the wider community to take part.

A key messaging framework

Set out the principal issues and narratives and stayed consistent across every public-facing material. Prepared by Sefton Council's communications team with key Sefton stakeholders, and built on by DevComms.

An agreed programme

DevComms prepared a consultation programme setting out the key milestones in the lead-up to launch and across the consultation period, agreed across the project team.

THE PROGRAMME SOUGHT TO REACH

- **The Project Board and representatives of the bereaved families**
- **Political, regional and business stakeholders, including Southport BID**
- **Schools and young people**
- **Residents and the wider Southport community**

Programme and delivery

Sefton Council and DevComms delivered the programme between Monday 21 September and Monday 5 October 2026, so every targeted stakeholder group was engaged during the period. This included an ongoing dialogue with Southport Business Improvement District (BID), whose representatives visited The Atkinson to view the proposals.

ENGAGEMENT

Public exhibition

Two weeks at The Atkinson, 21 September to 5 October

PROMOTION

Consultation leaflet

Delivered to 1,286 local addresses on Monday 21 September

ENGAGEMENT

Two staffed public events

At The Atkinson on Friday 25 and Wednesday 30 September, attended by approx. 35 and 25 people

ENGAGEMENT

Two schools sessions

Led by Social Signature on Monday 28 September, primary and secondary

OUTREACH

Two high-traffic public afternoons

Handing out 200+ leaflets in high-footfall areas on Lord Street and Chapel Street to promote the consultation

FEEDBACK

Online consultation

Your Sefton, Your Say, linked to DevComms' Consultation UK feedback form

FEEDBACK

Feedback forms

Paper and online versions asking the same questions

PROMOTION

A4 posters

Displayed in key community spaces to maximise exposure

FEEDBACK

Email, Freephone, Freepost

southport@devcomms.co.uk · 0800 080 3263 · Freepost DEVCOMMS

Publicising the consultation

1,486+
leaflets delivered and handed out.

6,400
interactions across social media posts on Facebook Instagram and LinkedIn.

67,000
impressions/views across social media posts on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn.

Leaflet. A consultation leaflet was delivered to 1,286 addresses in the local area on Monday 21 September (leaflet and distribution area in Appendix B). A further 200+ leaflets were handed out around the town during the two high-traffic sessions on Lord Street and Chapel Street.

Online. Materials were available on Sefton Council's Your Sefton, Your Say platform, with a link to DevComms' Consultation UK feedback form (Appendix C).

Posters, social media and press. A4 posters were displayed in key community spaces (Appendix E). Sefton's communications team prepared social media content and a press release, shared with local and industry press ahead of launch.

PRESS COVERAGE

The press release resulted in coverage across multiple channels, including:

- Liverpool Echo
- Stand Up for Southport
- Place North West
- Lancs Live
- Eye on Southport
- Yahoo News UK

Events and feedback channels

Public consultation events at The Atkinson

EVENT 1

Friday 25 September 2026

12:00 to 16:00

The Atkinson

Approx. 35 attendees

EVENT 2

Wednesday 30 September 2026

15:00 to 19:00

The Atkinson

Approx. 25 attendees

Around 60 people attended across the two events, speaking with and asking questions of the project team.

Feedback channels

Freephone	**0800 080 3263**
Email	**southport@devcomms.co.uk**
Freepost	**Freepost DEVCOMMS**
Online and paper feedback forms (Appendices C and D)	



The public exhibition at The Atkinson









The exhibition ran for two weeks, from 21 September to 5 October 2026. Seven roller banners set out the vision, the illustrative plan, and roads, access and movement, alongside a 3D model of the proposals in a display case, showing how the Gardens would sit with the Town Hall, The Atkinson and Lord Street.

Feedback forms could be completed on site and posted in a dedicated box. The banners are included in Appendix A.

Feedback updates and reporting

DURING THE CONSULTATION

Regular feedback updates

DevComms gave the project team regular, comprehensive updates so emerging views could be considered as design discussions progressed. They were shared with Sefton Council and key partners including the Liverpool City Region. Each update covered:

- Overall support, and views on each element
- How people use the Gardens now and would in future
- The issues that matter most to respondents
- Emerging themes, with representative comments

AFTER THE CONSULTATION CLOSED

Reporting

Following the close on Monday 5 October, DevComms collated responses from every type of engagement and shared them with the project team, so design discussions could continue in the lead-up to submission.

DevComms also drafted this SCI: a record of the engagement undertaken, the rationale for the strategy, a summary of feedback across all channels, and the project team's responses to the principal themes.

Responses were completed once the designs had been finalised.

Tailored engagement, aligned with the formal process

A FORMAT FOR EACH GROUP

Bereaved families
Through the Project Board, at a pace and in a manner agreed with them

Schools and young people
Through Social Signature and the schools, so pupils see how their ideas are reflected

The wider community
Updates on Your Sefton, Your Say; the email, Freephone and Freepost stay open

All feedback will go to the project and design teams. DevComms will record it in an SCI addendum, setting out what stakeholders said and how the team responded, for submission to the Council.

ALONGSIDE THE COUNCIL'S STATUTORY CONSULTATION

Materials will be agreed with Sefton's project and communications teams and the Project Board, with technical responses agreed with the consultants. As Sefton Council is both applicant and Local Planning Authority, applicant-led engagement will be kept clearly distinct:

1. Timing agreed with the planning service, to align with the statutory consultation period
2. All materials state the exercise is project-team led and separate from the formal consultation
3. Stakeholders signposted to formal representations: application reference, planning portal and deadline
4. The SCI addendum submitted in time to be considered before determination

Accessibility and summary of engagement

Accessibility and diversity

Hard copies and accessible versions of all material were available on request for those without internet access or with additional needs.

A dedicated phone line, email address and Freepost address kept the consultation open to people offline.

The consultation website was accessible, including screen-reader compatibility.

The engagement represents a comprehensive and carefully considered programme, reflecting the significance of the project and the sensitive circumstances in which it is being brought forward.

The proposals were tested at each stage: early engagement with Council services and operators addressed practical issues before a broad public programme gave residents, young people, community groups and businesses a range of ways to understand the proposals, speak to the team and give feedback.

Overall, the strategy has provided a transparent, inclusive and meaningful process through which the Southport community has helped inform the future of Town Hall Gardens, with children, families and community life at its heart.

04

Feedback and comments received

A full analysis of the 266 paper and online responses received during the Stage 2 public consultation, 21 September to 5 October 2026, followed by feedback from key stakeholder groups and the views of young people.

266 public responses

8 stakeholder responses

85+ young people

Strong public support for the new Gardens

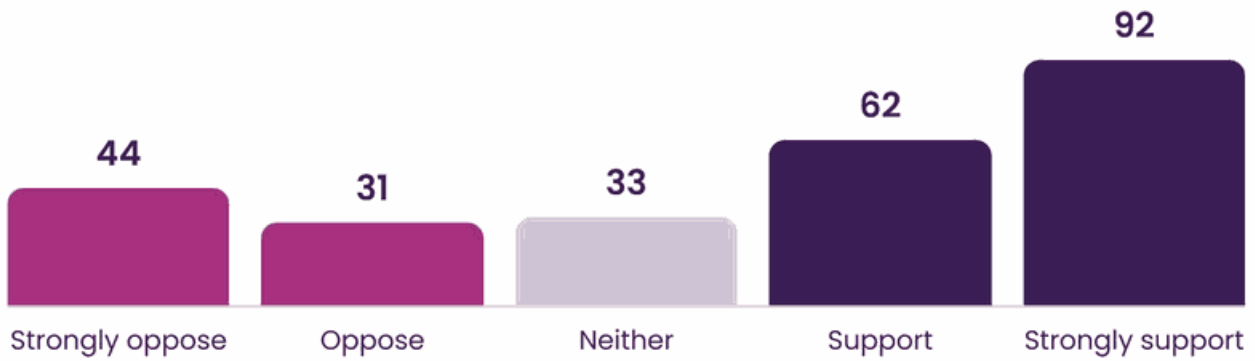
The consultation ran from 21 September to 5 October 2026. People could respond on a paper form or online; both versions asked the same questions. A further five people responded by email, and one by post.

154 (58%)

people support the proposals out of 266 responses, more than twice the 75 who oppose them.

"Strongly support" was the most common single answer, chosen by 92 people.

Overall support: responses from strongly oppose to strongly support



Only 12% were undecided; 4 did not answer.

191 (72%)

of 266 respondents did not oppose the proposals: fewer than 3 in 10 did

5 of 5

design elements rated more positive than negative, led by the Botanical Gardens at 70%

82%

wrote a comment: 218 respondents added their views in writing

155

people asked to be kept updated as the project progresses

Paper and online responses

Both channels show clear support

70%

of paper respondents support the proposals, against 50% online

Online respondents were more often undecided (18% against 4%); opposition is at a similar level in both



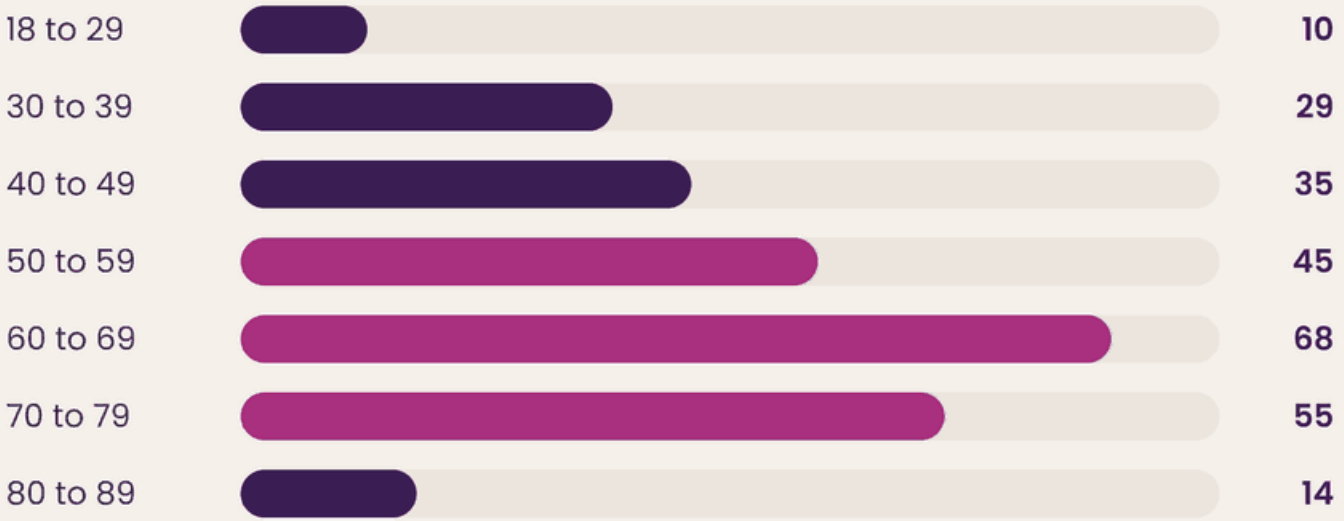
Who responded

57%

pass through the Gardens at least several times a week

151 of 266 respondents, including 33 who visit every day. Only 4 people rarely or never visit.

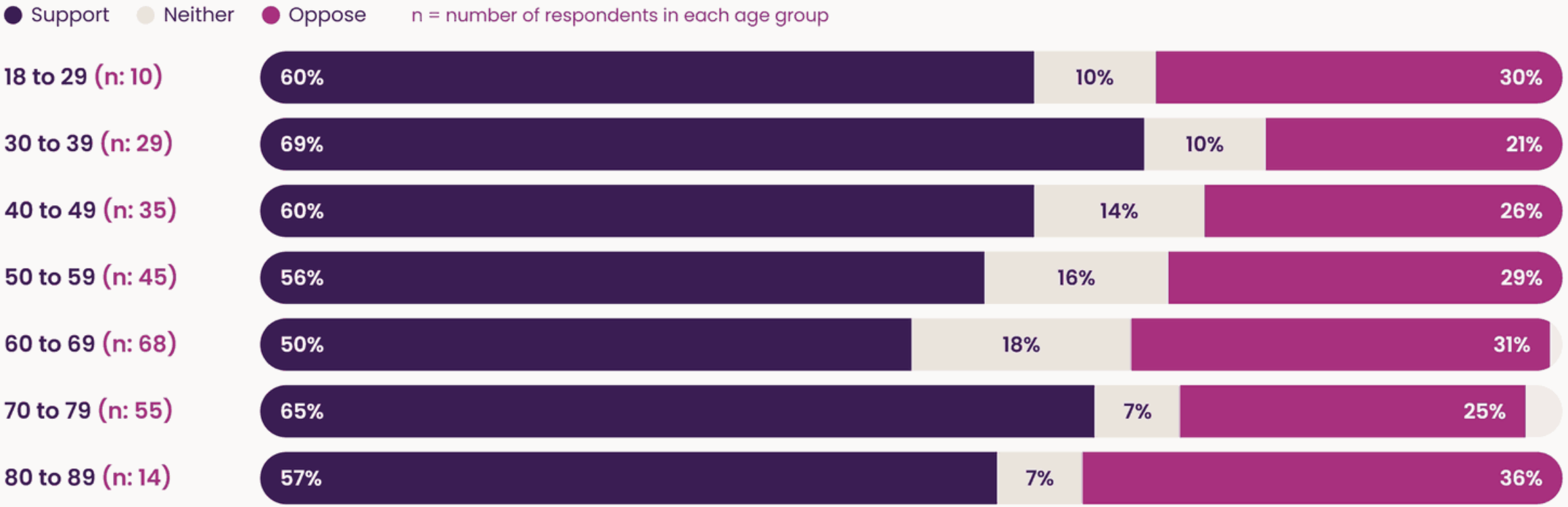
Respondents by age



63% are aged 50 to 79 (highlighted); 39 people (15%) are under 40. 10 did not give their age.

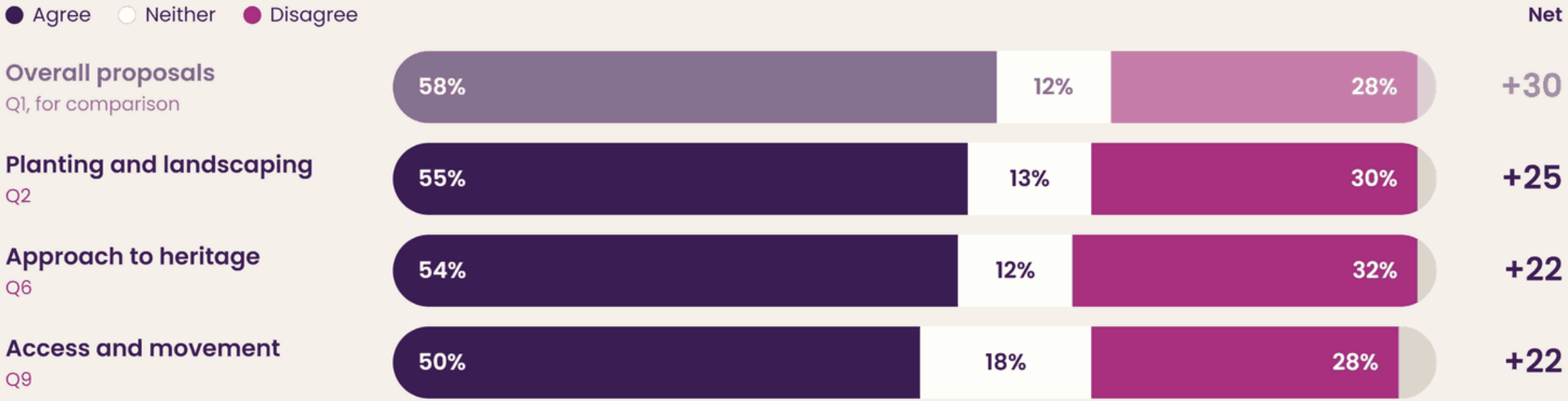
Support by age group

Support outweighs opposition in every age group. It is highest among people in their 30s (69%) and 70s (65%).



The design approach

All three design approaches have more agreement than disagreement. Planting and landscaping is the best received.



Agree includes “strongly agree”; disagree includes “strongly disagree”. Net = % agree minus % disagree. Percentages are of all 266 responses; the grey remainder is no answer.

Behind the design scores

PLANTING

55% agree

The best-received part of the design. Comments focus on long-term care: who will maintain it, and how it will look as it matures.

> *"Please protect the trees. Ensure new trees are established & monitored."*
>
> Strongly supports, aged 60 to 69

HERITAGE

54% agree

Protecting heritage is a joint top priority. Many, supporters among them, want existing features such as the pavilions and balustrades kept or reused.

> *"...many structures in the current layout could be reused or repurposed elsewhere in Southport - to help maintain familiar features, but in a new context."*
>
> Strongly supports, aged 50 to 59

ACCESS AND MOVEMENT

50% agree

The most undecided answers (18%). Comments focus on vehicle access to The Atkinson, disabled parking and drop-off.

> *"Its not clear how equipment for bands and exhibition would gain access to the Atkinson with the reduced space for vehicles."*
>
> Respondent aged 70 to 79

The five design elements

Share of those who rated each element feeling positive or very positive. Every element is rated positively on balance.



Botanical Gardens

Closest match to the top priority: spaces to sit and relax

70%

17% negative

Net +54



Performance Plaza

Well supported, with some questions on servicing and cover

63%

17% negative

Net +46



The Potting Shed

Liked as a base for community gardening and education

62%

20% negative

Net +43



Celebration Dunes

Requests for full access for disabled children and parents

55%

24% negative

Net +31



Mega Ripples

Widest range of views; year-round use and slip safety raised

50%

29% negative

Net +21

Safety and welcome

Two-thirds expect the Gardens to feel at least as safe as they do today. Among supporters, 56% expect them to feel safer.

Would the proposals make the Gardens feel safer and more welcoming?

35% yes, the most common answer

No significant difference	**33%**
Less safe and welcoming	**21%**
Unsure	**8%**

What respondents suggest

About a quarter of comments mention safety; most offer practical ideas rather than objections to the design.

- CCTV and a staffed presence, such as a warden or gardener
- Good lighting, particularly among new trees and planting
- Measures against street drinking and rough sleeping
- Play areas clearly separated from Lord Street and Eastbank Street traffic

Using the Gardens in future

35%

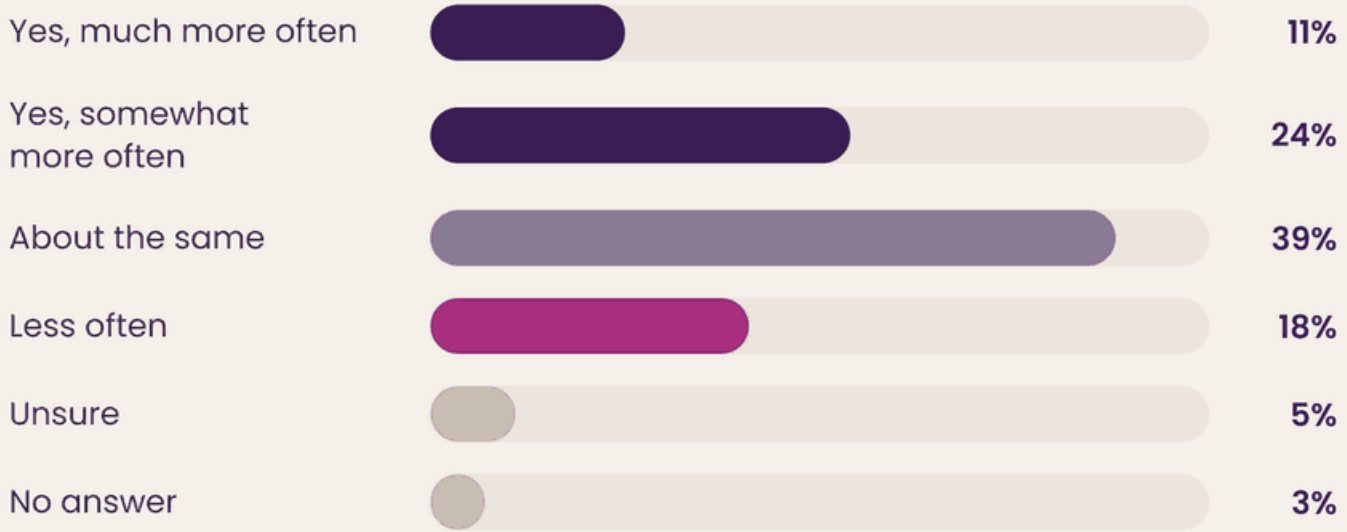
would use the Gardens more often if the proposals go ahead

Nearly twice the 18% who expect to use them less

74%
expect to use them as much or more

58%
of supporters would use them more

Would you use the Gardens more often?



How people would use the Gardens

A setting for social and cultural life, not just a route. Respondents could choose any number of uses.

67%
Walking through the Gardens and town centre

50%
As part of a visit to The Atkinson, Library or Town Hall

45%
Attending performances or community events

44%
Sitting, relaxing or meeting friends and family

44%
Enjoying the planting and landscaped areas

44%
Visiting markets, exhibitions or temporary activities

25%
Attending civic occasions or celebrations

12%
Do not expect to use the Gardens

Family uses (visiting with children 15%, play and water-play 12%) reflect an older respondent profile, so demand from families is likely to be greater than these figures suggest.

What matters most

Respondents chose up to three. Spaces to sit and heritage lead, valued almost equally by supporters and opponents: strong common ground for the design.

Priority	All respondents	Supporters	Opponents
Spaces to sit, relax and socialise	**46%**	**50%**	**43%**
Protecting and enhancing Southport's heritage	**46%**	**44%**	**44%**
Creating a safer and more welcoming place	**35%**	49%	16%
More trees, planting and landscaped areas	**31%**	40%	13%
Supporting more activity in the town centre	**29%**	36%	17%
Events, performances and community activities	**25%**	33%	9%
A stronger setting for the Town Hall and The Atkinson	**24%**	30%	15%
Other (their own priority)	**20%**	13%	37%
Play and activities for children	**20%**	29%	8%
Improved pedestrian routes and accessibility	**16%**	21%	3%
Water features	**12%**	13%	9%
Public art and creative features	**11%**	15%	5%

Themes in written comments

218 respondents (82%) wrote comments, five more people responded by email and one by post. Most are constructive, and most themes are raised by supporters and opponents alike.

65	**Heritage features**	Retain or reuse the pavilions, balustrades and urns, Ionic columns and globe lamps, on site or along Lord Street
61	**Accessibility and The Atkinson's operations**	Disabled parking (including bookable, numbered bays) and drop-off, step-free routes, and access for show vehicles, contractors and emergency services
54	**Maintenance and long-term upkeep**	A dedicated maintenance budget, a gardener or warden, regular cleaning and damage checks, and durable materials rather than reliance on volunteers
52	**Safety and management**	CCTV, good lighting, a staffed presence and a defibrillator, plus measures against street drinking and rough sleeping
47	**Cost and value for money**	How the cost compares with other town priorities, such as wider improvements along Lord Street
35	**Memorials and project context**	Commemorating Princess Diana; a further 12 speak of remembering Alice da Silva Aguiar, Bebe King and Elsie Dot Stancombe

Other suggestions

Smaller themes, mostly practical points the detailed design can address. Figures are numbers of survey respondents.

40

Children's play and road safety

Play areas well separated from Lord Street and Eastbank Street traffic, including a gated play area

35

Design and consultation

Interest in how the design was developed; others suggest more viewpoints or involving local architects

27

Seating

Benches with backs and arms for older and disabled visitors, and smaller seats for children

20

Paving

Non-slip, durable surfaces, with features safe for visually impaired visitors

20

Litter, bins and pigeons

Enough covered bins and a plan for pigeon control

20

Weather and shelter

Some covered space for rainy days and performances

14

A café

Often suggested as a use for one of the pavilions

1 in 5

Added priorities of their own

Heritage features, seating, value for money, upkeep, parking and a café

Email responses

5

people also responded by email

Their points echo the main comment themes. One opposes the current design; the others back improving the Gardens but ask for specific changes.

Heritage features 3 emails	Keep the balustrades, columns, pavilions and lamps. One suggests moving the columns to the mermaid fountain garden; another sees the balustrades as protection from traffic
Accessibility 2 emails	More disabled parking, a drop-off zone and ramps, and continued access for performers to The Atkinson
Memorials and fountain 2 emails	Retain a fountain, as there has been one in the Gardens since the 1800s, alongside a memorial to Princess Diana
Consultation 2 emails	Extend the consultation to 2 November, and involve local heritage campaigners directly
New ideas 2 emails	Reopen the pavilions for food, drink and tourism; parking for shoppers; classical statues and lighting along Lord Street

In their words

"

Watching weddings - so lovely without cars!!

Strongly supports, aged 60 to 69

"

Keeping, refurbishing & maintaining the existing Victorian & Edwardian architecture is paramount.

Opposes, aged 40 to 49

"

It's lovely to have the plants etc but who is going to look after the maintenance of them.

Strongly supports, aged 50 to 59

"

I would put security cameras at each corner for public protection and to save it from being vandalised.

Strongly supports, aged 30 to 39

"

Concerned the 'dunes' will not be fully accessible for disabled kids - must have equal access and for disabled parents.

Supports, aged 70 to 79

"

...a simpler remembrance /planting area would enable moneys to be spent renovating a larger area of Lord street

Supports, aged 70 to 79

Summary of public feedback

01 **Clear support.** 58% of the 266 respondents support the proposals, more than twice the share who oppose them.

02 **Positive across the board.** Every design question and every design element receives more positive than negative responses.

03 **Shared priorities.** The greener, relaxed parts are most popular; spaces to sit and heritage matter to supporters and opponents alike.

04 **Getting the details right.** Comments centre on heritage, access, maintenance and safety, and 155 people want to be kept informed.



04 · FEEDBACK AND COMMENTS RECEIVED

Stakeholder feedback

Responses from key stakeholder groups during the consultation period.

- Southport Civic Society
- The Atkinson
- Dukes Ward Councillors (political)
- Moonlight Events
- Sefton Alzheimer's Society

Stakeholder responses at a glance

Eight responses from five groups. Most back improving the Gardens; their asks centre on heritage, The Atkinson's operations and security.

Group	Who responded	Overall position	Main focus
Southport Civic Society	Chair, for the Society; Secretary and an urban designer member, as individuals	Mixed views	Pavilions, heritage features, design detail, ongoing involvement
The Atkinson	Centre officers (meeting notes) and the Senior Technician	Supportive, with considerations	Vehicle access and loading, parking, security, signage
Dukes Ward Councillors Political stakeholders	Joint response from the three elected ward councillors	Supportive, with considerations	Consultation length, durability, security, seating
Moonlight Events	Director of an event production company	Constructive	Event infrastructure built into the design
Sefton Alzheimer's Society	A carer, through the Society	Prefers the existing character	A familiar, natural look in keeping with the town's Victorian character

> *"We'd much rather it remain as Mum remembers. The shapes chosen are not natural-looking and interfere with the Victorian quaintness of the town and even the architecture of the Town Hall."*
>
> A carer, through Sefton Alzheimer's Society

Southport Civic Society

Three responses with different emphases. The Society is relaunching in 2027 and does not yet speak with one voice.

Chair, on behalf of the Society

Objects as the proposals stand

- Scheme not detailed enough for people to understand it
- Keep the two pavilions: loved, publicly funded and sheltering
- Keep the Mawson-inspired balustrades, columns and trees
- Fears a bleak, windswept space when no events are on
- Calls for a full redesign, with consultation throughout

Secretary, as an individual

Supportive of the regeneration

- Welcomes the investment and a lasting legacy after July 2024
- Asks for a place in a stakeholder group through delivery
- Relocate the kiosks rather than scrap them, e.g. to Hesketh Park
- More eye-level views of how the space will feel
- Offers help telling the history of the Gardens

Member and urban designer

Likes the scheme, with suggestions

- Likes the planting buffer and the stage in the level change
- Keep the column gateways and some globe lamps
- Link The Atkinson to the Gardens with outdoor café seating
- Rethink the paving: less light brown, more historic touches
- Would like to share sketches and help with new drafts

The Atkinson

Centre officers and the Senior Technician both back improving the Gardens, which the technician calls “fantastic and long overdue”. They also make clear that the design must protect the venue’s daily operations.

Vehicle access and loading

Production vehicles, including articulated lorries, arrive daily. Loading bays sit beside public seating: move them to The Atkinson side, and check turning space at the Town Hall corner.

Parking and servicing

Touring vehicles need parking on site, as drivers are often crew. Manage Sharrock Street with permits for contractors and small deliveries, and set clear contractor routes.

Security and emergencies

Counter-terrorism planning needs details of vehicle barriers, bins, CCTV and lighting. Stop cars reaching the level paving, and keep space for emergency vehicles and late-night key holders.

Accessibility and identity

Keep accessible bays for visitors and performers. Return The Atkinson’s banners and signage, and consider funding for its public toilets as visits grow.

Political stakeholders

Dukes Ward Councillors

Supportive overall, but with considerations. Praised the exhibition and the water features added after the Stage 1 consultation, and back co-design with the community.

Consultation period

Two weeks is too short for a scheme of this significance

Durable materials

Hard-wearing materials, with annual maintenance costs assessed alongside the design

Security built in

Stop unauthorised vehicles from day one, so large events need not hire costly barriers

Former Tourist Information Centre

Question whether all demolition is needed; it serves as a coach drop-off and ward surgery

Blend with Lord Street

Avoid a clash with the civic style of the neighbouring Bandstand Gardens

Permanent seating

Most daytime users are older; benches are valued and help deter misuse

Moonlight Events

Moonlight Events, an event production company in Southport, sees a great opportunity to build event infrastructure in now, cutting temporary kit and costs for future concerts, markets and festivals.

HGV access
Keep access for articulated lorries to The Atkinson and the event space

Built-in vehicle barriers
Permanent hostile vehicle mitigation, so events need fewer temporary barriers

Event power
Power points around the space, so stages and stalls can go anywhere

Secure perimeter
Discreet fixings or gates for ticketed events, instead of temporary fencing

Lighting control
An event mode to dim streetlights during performances

Wi-Fi and network
Connectivity for ticket scanners, event control and traders

AV cable ducting
Ducts between stage and control positions, avoiding cable ramps

Christmas tree pit
A permanent pit or anchor point for a traditional tree

Fountain area
Wet surfaces and level changes may be hard to manage at busy events

Common threads across stakeholders

Several points were raised by more than one group, and most echo themes from the public comments.

Theme	Civic Society	The Atkinson	Ward Councillors	Moonlight Events	Alzheimer's Society
Heritage character and features	●	–	●	–	●
Keep or reuse existing buildings and kiosks	●	–	●	–	–
Space for events and performances	●	●	●	●	–
Vehicle access, loading and drop-off	–	●	●	●	–
Vehicle security and built-in barriers	–	●	●	●	–
Safety and management of the space	–	●	●	●	–
Signage, identity and The Atkinson's setting	●	●	–	–	–
Seating, shelter and places to linger	●	–	●	–	–
Consultation and ongoing involvement	●	–	●	–	–

● = raised by the group. Mapped from the stakeholder responses on the previous pages.

04 · FEEDBACK AND COMMENTS RECEIVED

Student voice

Schools engagement with the Southport Learning Partnership, led by Social Signature.

- 85+ students
- 28 schools
- 10 sixth form facilitators
- 100+ people across two sessions

Who took part

Students considered not only what the Gardens should contain, but how the space should make people feel, how it could strengthen the community and what legacy it should leave.

100+

Key Stage 2 and secondary students, sixth form facilitators and teachers in attendance throughout

28

schools represented: 21 primary, 5 secondary and 2 special

Four questions

Our Gardens

What would make people say “our gardens”, not “the gardens”?

Experience

What would make people want to visit and keep returning?

Social Signature

What could the Gardens inspire people to be, feel, do or share?

Legacy

What should the Gardens be remembered for in years to come?

What young people want the Gardens to be

01 A safe, welcoming and inclusive community space

02 A place for friendship, belonging and wellbeing

03 Accessible for people of all ages and abilities

04 A venue for activities, performances and celebrations

05 Somewhere to connect with nature and wildlife

06 Opportunities for volunteering, learning and social action

07 A lasting symbol of Southport's identity, heritage and kindness

Strongest ideas across both age groups

Community · Safety · Inclusivity · Accessibility · Belonging · Nature · Friendship · Kindness · Togetherness

Primary pupils focused on

Play, nature, sensory experiences and chances to help others

Year 9 students added

Youth involvement, cultural inclusion, volunteering, skills and shared responsibility

Making them “our gardens”

What would make the Gardens feel collectively owned by the people of Southport?

Primary pupils linked a shared garden with

- Safety and welcome
- Friendship and family
- Community and togetherness
- Accessibility and inclusion
- Nature, wildlife, flowers and trees
- Southport’s seaside and Victorian identity
- Games, reflection and socialising
- **Friendship or buddy benches**
- Colour, happiness and fun

Year 9 students described them with

Togetherness · Community · Unity · Diversity · Equality · Heritage · Safety · Accessibility · Respect · Hope · Kindness · Belonging

They also introduced volunteering, shared responsibility and involvement groups as ways to make the Gardens truly shared.

Reasons to visit and return

Primary pupils: things to see and do

- Nature, flowers and wildlife
- Swings, games and sport
- A playground
- Sensory spaces
- Water features
- Picnic tables
- Performance areas
- Reading areas and book swaps
- Craft activities
- Food and drink
- Christmas events, markets and light festivals

How it should feel

- Safe
- Peaceful and calm
- Clean
- Welcoming
- Good for seeing friends
- Shelter and seating in all weathers
- Quiet spaces for reflection

Year 9 students: a mix of events, facilities and quieter spaces

- Community games and clubs
- Markets, concerts, fireworks and light shows
- Arts, music and sport
- Holiday activities
- Food and drink
- Picnic and interaction areas
- Sensory spaces
- Youth club provision
- Local artwork
- Wildlife features and bug hotels
- History boards
- School projects
- Outdoor cooking areas

A positive Social Signature

Students believed the Gardens could inspire people to be kinder, happier, calmer, more confident and more connected.

The Gardens could encourage people to

- Volunteer and work as a team
- Look after the environment
- Pick up litter and recycle
- Protect wildlife and grow plants
- Make friends and talk to new people
- Share knowledge and skills
- Support charities and people experiencing homelessness
- Fundraise
- Improve physical and mental wellbeing
- Respect different cultures and religions
- Include others and challenge bullying

Ideas to make it happen

- QR codes linking to learning and volunteering, and a Social Signature map of local opportunities
- Intergenerational befriending, and sharing gardening and arts skills
- An area supportive of people affected by Alzheimer's or dementia
- Wellbeing meetings, exercise, meditation and music
- First-aid clubs, healthy-life skills, careers and charity events

A lasting legacy

Pupils want the Gardens remembered as a safe, beautiful, inclusive and welcoming place for all ages: a hub to celebrate, learn, meet and help others.

Keeping the story of the Gardens alive

- A time capsule
- Annual photographs
- Displayed projects and artwork
- Statues and named benches
- School visits and learning
- Continued planting and wildlife
- Celebrations, music and performances

> A number of primary pupils wrote about remembering Alice da Silva Aguiar, Bebe King and Elsie Dot Stancombe, including naming benches in their memory.

Year 9 students

A place where nobody feels ashamed of themselves, and where different cultures are welcomed.

Love · Kindness · Safety · Happiness · Diversity · Inclusion · Connecting generations · Pride in Southport

Our Gardens, illustrated

During the two schools engagement sessions, illustrators More than Minutes captured students' ideas live on a large canvas.

The illustration is built around the four questions the students explored, and records their ideas in their own words: friendship benches, pledging a pebble, learning to grow food, intergenerational spaces, big shows and a garden that is inclusive and accessible to all.

The finished canvas will be shared with the schools that took part, so they can display what their pupils contributed.

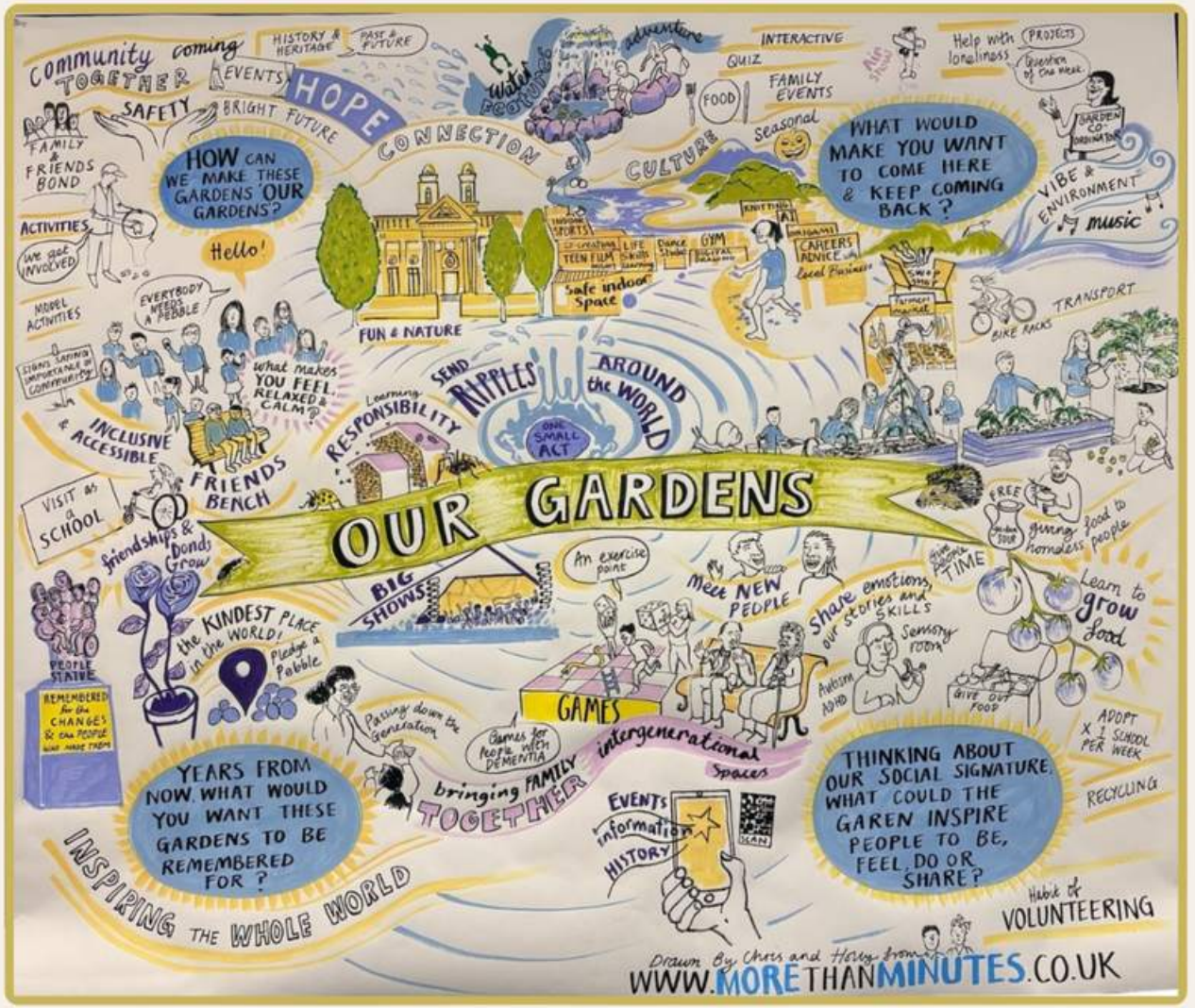


Illustration by Chris and Holly, More than Minutes (morethanminutes.co.uk)

What young people are asking for

A place that is beautiful, but also useful. Activities, but also peace. Somewhere to play, learn and celebrate, but also to volunteer, remember and support others.

Most importantly, they want the Gardens to belong to everyone.

- Their ideas echo the wider consultation: safety, places to sit, nature and events
- Continued engagement with young people will build their sense of ownership

05

Response to comments received

Feedback from the public, stakeholder groups and young people is brought together under the key themes raised across the consultation. The pages that follow set out what we heard under each theme, with the project team's response. These responses are a summary; further detail is set out in the technical reports submitted with the application.

Considerations

Most comments concern details the design can address. These considerations frame the theme-by-theme responses that follow.

Heritage features

Show which pavilions, balustrades, columns and lamps could be reused or relocated

The Atkinson's operations

Confirm access for show vehicles, contractors and emergency services, plus disabled parking and drop-off

Long-term maintenance

Set out the maintenance plan, staffing and durable materials

Safety and management

Describe the lighting, CCTV and on-site management approach

Accessible play and seating

Fully accessible Dunes and play areas, and benches with backs and arms

Memorials

How Alice da Silva Aguiar, Bebe King, Elsie Dot Stancombe and Princess Diana will be remembered

Heritage and access

THEME	WHAT WE HEARD	THE PROJECT TEAM'S RESPONSE
Heritage features 65 survey respondents	Retain or reuse the pavilions, balustrades and urns, Ionic columns and globe lamps, on site or along Lord Street. Heritage is a joint top priority (46%) for supporters and opponents alike. *"Keeping, refurbishing & maintaining the existing Victorian & Edwardian architecture is paramount."* Also raised by: email responses · Southport Civic Society · Dukes Ward Councillors · Sefton Alzheimer's Society representative	The Heritage Statement submitted with the application assesses every heritage feature on the site. The Grade II listed pavilion (the former deck chair store) will be retained and refurbished, with a new copper roof, a breathable paint finish, new glazed panels and a retractable awning, and later alterations removed to return it to its original external form, before being brought back into use as a community Potting Shed. The two Grade II listed K6 telephone kiosks will be preserved in place, and some of the mature trees along Lord Street will be retained and added to with new trees to enhance the boulevard character of the street. Traditional style benches will be re-introduced and key views along the corridor and of the Town Hall Gardens listed buildings will be enhanced. **In response to the feedback we've received, the scheme has been amended.** The existing low-level concrete balustrade wall along the back of the Lord Street footpath will be replaced on the same alignment with a higher-quality low stone wall, with new gateway piers either side of footpath routes into the Gardens. This will retain and enhance this traditional continuous feature along the length of Lord Street. The existing globe lighting columns within the Town Hall Gardens will be retained and relocated to the new Lord Street wall. The two columns with larger black bases opposite The Atkinson will be moved to the new wall piers, and new matching bases will be added to the others so they are all consistent, creating a beautiful linear avenue of columns. Further refurbishment of these columns is being explored. The two modern café pavilions will be removed to reconnect the listed buildings with the Gardens and allow step-free access throughout.
Accessibility and The Atkinson's operations 61 survey respondents	Disabled parking and drop-off, step-free routes, and access for show vehicles, contractors and emergency services. Access drew the most undecided answers (18%). *"Its not clear how equipment for bands and exhibition would gain access to the Atkinson with the reduced space for vehicles."* Also raised by: email responses · The Atkinson · Moonlight Events · Dukes Ward Councillors	Workshops with The Atkinson over the past six months have focused on large vehicles reaching the building for theatre productions. This access will remain, managed by The Atkinson, with loading in front of the building retained, and vehicle tracking has been tested for articulated lorries, event vehicles and fire appliances. A new drop-off on Lord Street provides coach access, the existing coach drop-off on Eastbank Street is retained, and Sefton's Environmental Team is reviewing arrangements on Sharrock Street, including for smaller vehicles unloading. The whole site will be step-free, with wide, smooth paths, tactile paving and new crossings, designed to BS 8300, and a Transport Assessment is submitted with the application. As a civic space focused on safety, accessibility and the visitor experience, some existing ways of working will need to adapt. Engagement with Atkinson staff continues, and a further session will be held to discuss the points raised in more detail.

Maintenance and safety

THEME	WHAT WE HEARD	THE PROJECT TEAM'S RESPONSE
Maintenance and long-term upkeep 54 survey respondents	A dedicated maintenance budget, a gardener or warden, and durable materials rather than reliance on volunteers. Planting is the best-received part of the design, but comments ask who will care for it. *"It's lovely to have the plants etc but who is going to look after the maintenance of them."* Also raised by: Dukes Ward Councillors	A Management and Maintenance Plan covering all planting, hard materials and furniture will be prepared and secured by planning condition, alongside a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan to guide the care of new habitats for a minimum of 30 years. The scheme delivers a 16% biodiversity net gain and a net increase of 28 trees. Materials have been chosen for durability, with natural UK sandstone flags and setts replacing the worn and cracked surfaces of the 1999 scheme, and the existing Yorkstone retained outside the civic buildings. Planting uses resilient coastal species suited to Southport's climate. Alongside the Management and Maintenance Plan, the listed pavilion will become a community Potting Shed, giving local growers and volunteers a base from which to help care for the Gardens.
Safety and management 52 survey respondents	CCTV, good lighting and a staffed presence, plus measures against street drinking and rough sleeping. Stakeholders asked for vehicle barriers built in from the start. 35% of survey respondents expect the Gardens to feel safer, the most common answer. *"I would put security cameras at each corner for public protection and to save it from being vandalised."* Also raised by: The Atkinson · Dukes Ward Councillors · Moonlight Events · young people	Safety has shaped the design from the outset, informed by guidance from the charity Make Space for Girls and trauma-informed design principles. Clear sightlines, defined entrances and exits, overlooking seating and active uses such as the Potting Shed provide natural surveillance, and a lighting strategy keeps routes, seating and planting well lit through winter evenings. A Crime Impact Statement, prepared with Merseyside Police and submitted with the application, sets out how the scheme designs out crime. A permanent secure line of boulders, planting and bollards protects the space from vehicles, with automated bollards controlling access for events, servicing and emergencies, providing the built-in protection stakeholders asked for. Green buffers separate the Gardens from Lord Street and Eastbank Street traffic. Comments on CCTV, staffing and anti-social behaviour will be shared with the Council to inform the day-to-day management of the space.

Cost and memorials

THEME	WHAT WE HEARD	THE PROJECT TEAM'S RESPONSE
Cost and value for money 47 survey respondents	How the cost compares with other town priorities, such as wider improvements along Lord Street. *"...a simpler remembrance /planting area would enable moneys to be spent renovating a larger area of Lord street"*	The project is 50% funded by the UK Government, with matching funding from each of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and Sefton Council (25% respectively), to deliver the ambition of the families of Alice da Silva Aguiar, Bebe King and Elsie Dot Stancombe for a positive and lasting legacy at the heart of the town. Wider improvements along Lord Street fall outside the scope of this application. The proposals seek to make the space safer and more accessible, with a year-round events programme that can bring more people into the town centre, and a catalyst for wider investment along Lord Street. The design also replaces features with high ongoing costs, such as the existing fountain, which has required repeated repairs.
Memorials and project context 35 survey respondents	Commemorating Princess Diana, including retaining a fountain, as there has been one in the Gardens since the 1800s. A further 12 speak of remembering Alice da Silva Aguiar, Bebe King and Elsie Dot Stancombe; some pupils suggested benches named in their memory. Also raised by: email responses · young people	The families of Alice da Silva Aguiar, Bebe King and Elsie Dot Stancombe asked for a place that is positive and lasting, a "thank you" to the town, rather than a memorial. The Gardens are designed as a living legacy of growth and renewal, with an ambition for something to be in flower every day of the year, and will continue to host remembrance ceremonies and memorial gatherings. The families are represented through the Project Board, and suggestions such as named benches will be shared with them. The Princess Diana fountain will be removed with the permission and support of her family, as it carries significant maintenance costs, repeated technical faults and damaged surrounds. Options are being explored to ensure her legacy remains honoured within the new space, and water will remain part of the Gardens through the misting water play of the Mega Ripples.

Play and consultation

THEME	WHAT WE HEARD	THE PROJECT TEAM'S RESPONSE
Children's play and road safety 40 survey respondents	Play areas well separated from Lord Street and Eastbank Street traffic, and fully accessible Dunes and play areas: *"must have equal access and for disabled parents."* Also raised by: young people	Play is set away from traffic. The Celebration Dunes form a planted buffer along Lord Street, rain-garden buffers line Eastbank Street, and boulders and bollards at the entrances form a secure line. Vehicles will enter the Gardens only for drop-off, servicing, events and emergencies, keeping vehicle activity to the edges of the space. All play elements, whether formal or incidental, will be designed to be fully inclusive and accessible, with step-free routes throughout the site, including through the Dunes. Raised seating around the Mega Ripples gives parents and carers clear views over the play area.
Design and consultation 35 survey respondents	Interest in how the design was developed; some suggest involving local architects. Some felt two weeks was too short, and two emails asked to extend the consultation to 2 November and involve local heritage campaigners. Also raised by: email responses · Southport Civic Society · Dukes Ward Councillors	The design has been developed by landscape architects Planit with heritage, engineering and architectural specialists, guided by a Project Board that includes representatives of the bereaved families, and tested through three phases of internal engagement before the Stage 2 public consultation. Key views from Lord Street, Eastbank Street and the Arcades are set out in the Stage 4 design material submitted with the application. The two-week consultation was supported by ongoing dialogue with key stakeholders, and feedback received after it closed has also been considered. After submission, stakeholders will be invited to follow-up sessions through the "you said, we did" exercise, and residents can comment formally through the Council's statutory consultation. Offers from Civic Society members to share sketches and local history are welcomed and will be followed up.

Comfort and facilities

THEME	WHAT WE HEARD	THE PROJECT TEAM'S RESPONSE
Seating, shelter and comfort 27 and 20 survey respondents	Benches with backs and arms for older and disabled visitors, and some covered space for rainy days and performances. Spaces to sit is the joint top priority (46%). Also raised by: Dukes Ward Councillors · young people	Seating is provided throughout, with bespoke dune-inspired benches around the Performance Plaza, timber benches in the Dunes and Botanical Gardens, and traditional style benches re-introduced along Lord Street. Many seats will have backrests and armrests at accessible heights, with space for wheelchair users beside selected benches. The scheme plants 44 new trees, a net gain of 28, giving more shade and shelter as they mature, and the refurbished pavilion will become a glazed community building in the Botanical Gardens. Dedicated event power across the Performance Plaza allows temporary stages and structures to be set up for performances.
Paving, litter and a café 20, 20 and 14 survey respondents	Non-slip, durable surfaces; enough bins and a plan for pigeon control; and a café, often suggested as a use for one of the pavilions. Also raised by: email responses · Southport Civic Society	Paving will be natural UK sandstone flags and setts, with polished exposed aggregate in the Mega Ripples, chosen for durability. The final specification of finishes, including slip resistance, will be confirmed ahead of construction. Comments on bins and pigeons will inform the furniture strategy and the Management and Maintenance Plan. The existing cafés operate from the two modern pavilions, which are proposed for removal to open up views of the listed buildings. The Performance Plaza is designed to host markets and food and drink events, and the Gardens sit alongside the cafés of Lord Street.

06

Conclusion

The consultation has shown a town that cares deeply about the Gardens, and has given the project team clear direction on heritage, access, maintenance and safety as the proposals were finalised.

Conclusion

This Statement of Community Involvement demonstrates a comprehensive, proportionate and transparent programme of engagement in support of the Detailed planning application for the regeneration of Southport Town Hall Gardens.

Engagement began with a Stage 1 public consultation led by Sefton Council in August and September 2025, which received 67 responses and shaped the emerging design. Between March and August 2026, three phases of internal workshops and a digital workbook review tested the proposals against highways, heritage, events, servicing and safety requirements, before the Public Engagement and Consultation Panel and local elected members were briefed ahead of launch.

The Stage 2 public consultation ran from 21 September to 5 October 2026. It was supported by a two-week exhibition of roller banners and a 3D model at The Atkinson, two staffed events there attended by around 60 people, two high-traffic sessions on Lord Street and Chapel Street, a leaflet delivered to 1,286 addresses with a further 200+ handed out in the town, the Your Sefton, Your Say platform, posters, press and social media, a Freephone, Freepost and project email, and an ongoing dialogue with Southport Business Improvement District, who viewed the proposals at The Atkinson. 266 responses were received, alongside five emails, one postal response, eight stakeholder responses and the views of more than 85 students from 28 local schools.

The feedback demonstrates clear support for the regeneration of the Gardens. 58% of respondents support the proposals, more than twice the 28% who oppose them, and every design question and element received more positive than negative responses, with the greener, more relaxed spaces the most warmly received.

At the same time, the consultation has highlighted the matters that most concern the community: retaining or reusing heritage features; access, parking and servicing for The Atkinson; long-term maintenance; safety and management; and the cost of the scheme against other town priorities. These themes were raised consistently by residents, stakeholder groups and young people, and are addressed in Section 5. In direct response, the scheme has been amended to keep a low wall on the line of the existing Lord Street balustrade, rebuilt in higher-quality stone, and to retain the existing globe lighting columns within the Gardens, relocating them to the new wall to create an avenue of columns along Lord Street.

The schools workshops added valuable insight into how the Gardens can become a safe, inclusive and welcoming place that young people feel genuine ownership of, reinforcing the importance of places to sit, nature, events and opportunities to volunteer and remember.

The scheme has also received public support from Patrick Hurley, MP for Southport and the Northern Parishes, who attended the consultation and welcomed the opportunity for residents to help shape the plans.

Sefton Council and DevComms would like to thank everyone who took part in the consultation and took the time to share their views. The comments received have helped shape the proposals and will continue to inform their evolution as the application progresses through the planning process.

Post-submission engagement: “you said, we did”

Once feedback had been considered and the design finalised, the application was submitted to Sefton Council in November 2026. A “you said, we did” exercise will now re-engage the stakeholders consulted: a genuine two-way process, not a one-way update.

Reporting back

Tailored letters to all relevant stakeholders will summarise the feedback received and explain how the proposals have evolved in response to their suggestions.

Where a suggestion has not been taken forward, the letters will explain why, for example a conflict with technical, heritage, operational or safety requirements, or with other feedback. Every comment is shown to have been properly considered.

Continuing the conversation

Stakeholders will be invited to a follow-up meeting or workshop, built around discussion, to:

- ✓ Confirm the response accurately reflects their views
- ✓ Raise further questions about the submitted scheme
- ✓ Share views on detailed design, materials, management and maintenance, and construction
- ✓ Help shape how, and how often, they are engaged through determination, construction and beyond

Next steps

STEP 1 · COMPLETE
Stage 2 public consultation
September to October 2026

STEP 2 · COMPLETE
Application submitted
November 2026

STEP 3
Planning decision
Early 2027

STEP 4
Work starts
March 2027

Continuing the conversation

Finalising the design

The project team considered all feedback from the public, stakeholders and young people, and finalised the design ahead of submission.

"You said, we did"

Tailored letters and follow-up sessions show stakeholders how their input shaped the plans, alongside the Council's statutory consultation.

Ongoing involvement

Bereaved families through the Project Board, schools through Social Signature, and updates for the 155 respondents who asked to be kept informed.

SCI addendum

A record of the further feedback and the team's responses, submitted to the Council before the application is determined.

06 · CONCLUSION

Stay in touch

The project team remains available throughout the planning process. Updates will be shared on Your Sefton, Your Say and with everyone who asked to be kept informed.

EMAIL
southport@devcomms.co.uk

FREEPHONE
0800 080 3263

FREEPOST
Freepost DEVCOMMS

ONLINE
yourseftonyoursay.sefton.gov.uk/southport-town-hall-gardens

devcomms

Sefton Council

A – E

Appendices

The consultation materials referred to in this Statement of Community Involvement: exhibition banners, leaflet, online platform, feedback form and poster.

APPENDIX A

Exhibition banners

The seven roller banners displayed at The Atkinson throughout the two-week exhibition.

7 banners

Pages 74–82

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Sefton Council

Liverpool City Region Combined Authority

Metro Mayor Liverpool City Region

Welcome

Welcome to our consultation event, where you can find out more about our proposals for the regeneration of Southport Town Hall Gardens.

Sefton Council is preparing a Detailed planning application, as we seek to build on the heightened significance the space has taken on in recent years to create a place that delivers a positive legacy for Southport's future and a new chapter for the Gardens.



Illustrative artist's impression of the proposals

Have your say

Feedback from the local community at this stage will help us understand local priorities before we submit a Detailed planning application.

Please take the opportunity to explore our proposals and share your views by completing a feedback form, speaking to a member of the team, or visiting our consultation website.

https://yourseftonyoursay.sefton.gov.uk/southport-town-hall-gardens



Illustrative artist's impression of the proposals

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Metro Mayor Liverpool City Region

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Liverpool City Region Combined Authority

Metro Mayor Liverpool City Region

A positive legacy for Southport's future

Following the tragic events of July 2024, the area outside The Atkinson became a place for thousands to come together in solidarity and support, creating a deeper meaning for the space beyond its previous status and opening a chapter for it to create a new legacy. The space now resonates for many as a place for hope, togetherness and community, where families and individuals alike can share the emotion of their collective lived experience.



From that experience grew an ambition from the families of Alice Da Silva Aguiar, Bebe King, and Elsie Dot Stancombe to create a place that is positive and lasting as a "thank you" to the town – somewhere for reflection, but also for anticipation of the future, where people can gather to celebrate the strength of their community.

Creating a new chapter for Southport's civic heart

Our ambition for Southport Town Hall Gardens is to deliver a place that looks confidently towards the future and creates a positive legacy. Somewhere that children and families feel safe and welcome, where nature and colour are brought into the heart of the town, and where Southport can come together throughout the year to play, meet, perform and celebrate.

That vision has formed the basis of our proposals for Southport Town Hall Gardens and ultimately runs through each element of the designs we are presenting here.



Illustrative artist's impression of the proposals

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Sefton Council

Liverpool City Region Combined Authority

Metro Mayor Liverpool City Region

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Sefton Council

LIVERPOOL CITY REGION COMBINED AUTHORITY

METRO MAYOR LIVERPOOL CITY REGION

The Site

From civic space to the heart of a thriving community

The prospect of regenerating the heart of the town as a flexible, open place that is safe for families, schools and the wider community is too attractive to ignore.

However, achieving that aim cannot be delivered simply through cosmetic improvements. In its current form, the area outside The Atkinson has a difficult relationship with the surrounding roads, poor pedestrian and cycle connectivity, and limited capacity to support play, events or performances.

We are therefore aiming to create a space that serves the community far better than it does at present – reimagining the long-term purpose and function of the Gardens and transforming the area into a community hub that serves the town. The new area will be safer, greener, more accessible, more welcoming and better able to support community life for years to come.



Today



Proposal

Inspired by Southport's Heritage

Heritage considerations are being embedded within the design and planning process, with specialist input informing how the proposals relate to listed buildings and the Lord Street Conservation Area. Adjacent to the site, the Town Hall, The Atkinson and their historic setting are fundamental to the character of the area, and our proposals seek to respond sensitively to this fact. The regeneration does not seek to compete with these buildings, but to create a high-quality public realm setting to enhance them.

As part of the proposals, the Princess Diana fountain will be removed with the permission and support of her family. At present, the fountain incurs significant maintenance costs and suffers from repeated technical issues, while portions of the fountain's surrounds are damaged or broken. Options are being explored to ensure Princess Diana's legacy remains honoured within the new-look space.

Features such as the proposed 'Potting Shed', which is currently a listed building, have also been carefully considered. The proposals intend to treat these features respectfully; recognising their historic importance whilst balancing how they can contribute to the long-term vision for the space.



Today



Proposal

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Sefton Council

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METRO MAYOR LIVERPOOL CITY REGION

Illustrative Plan

The prospect of regenerating the heart of the town as a flexible, open place that is safe for families, schools and the wider community is too attractive to ignore – creating a space that serves Southport far better than it does today: safer, greener, more accessible and better able to support community life for years to come.



Summary of key proposals

1. Eastbank Street footpath
2. Celebratory Garden with sand-dunes inspired planting
3. The Botanical Gardens with beautiful planting and seating – a spill out space for the Town Hall
4. A flexible civic space to host a variety of community events throughout the year
5. An exciting play space with water mist features, mounds and lighting
6. A clear and open movement route with access to the three heritage buildings
7. 'Green Edges' to draw pedestrians into the space
8. Extensive seating to encourage people to dwell, rest and enjoy the space
9. Controlled vehicle access and movement to service the space whilst creating a safe space for pedestrians

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Sefton Council
Liverpool City Region Combined Authority
Metro Mayor Liverpool City Region

Funded by UK Government

Sefton Council

LIVERPOOL CITY REGION COMBINED AUTHORITY

METRO MAYOR LIVERPOOL CITY REGION

Our Vision

Southport Town Hall Gardens has a unique place in the story of the town. The proposals have therefore been shaped by the existing character of the site and its surroundings, and informed by extensive engagement with local families, community groups and town centre businesses, to ensure we create something positive and lasting for Southport.

The project also represents an opportunity to bring to life one of Southport's most important civic spaces. By creating a high-quality, flexible and welcoming destination around the Town Hall, The Atkinson and Library, our proposals aim to support sustained activity throughout the year, acting as a centre point for the local community and creating a place that future generations can enjoy.



Performance Plaza

A place for people to come together and feel the strength of Southport's community

A strong and welcoming heart for the community, the Plaza is a flexible gathering space designed to bring people together and create a true sense of place. Able to host everything from makers' markets and exhibitions to performances, celebrations and community events, it provides a platform for local people to come together, share experiences and celebrate the character of the town. Generous seating encourages people to meet, pause and enjoy the activity around them, while feature lighting brings energy and warmth after dark. Designed to adapt throughout the year, the Plaza becomes a shared space that belongs to everyone.



Mega Ripples

A destination water play space full of fun and joy

A vibrant and joyful play landscape where children can explore, climb, splash and play, while parents relax and enjoy watching them. Inspired by the wind and water-shaped forms of coastal dunes, oversized mega-ripples create a playful setting of raised mounds, pathways and misting water features. Generous seating, welcoming planting and carefully integrated lighting create a comfortable, sociable space that feels lively by day and inviting into the evening.



Botanical Gardens

A tranquil garden space with beautiful planting

A new botanical garden designed as a beautiful destination for weddings, gardening and relaxation, where lush, immersive planting creates a tranquil setting to explore, gather and unwind. Carefully curated gardens, peaceful seating areas and vibrant seasonal planting invite visitors to slow down and enjoy being surrounded by nature, creating a memorable landscape for celebrations, quiet moments and a shared appreciation of plants.



Celebration Dunes

A sand dune inspired garden to meander through

The Celebration Dunes create an immersive coastal landscape that celebrates Southport's unique relationship with the sea, bringing the character of the dunes into the heart of the town. A gently shaped landscape and lush coastal planting create a sense of escape, with winding paths leading visitors through grasses, flowers and natural-looking greenery. Secluded seating pockets, playful artwork and interpretation are woven into the landscape, encouraging people to slow down, explore and become immersed in nature.

The Potting Shed

'The Potting Shed' will breathe new life into Southport's listed heritage deckchair store, turning it into a lively community hub at the heart of the botanical garden. With the aim of putting the community at the centre of caring for the garden, the refurbished pavilion will become a place where knowledge, skills and a love of horticulture can be shared across generations. As the home of the resident gardener, it will support the day-to-day upkeep of the gardens while providing a welcoming base for community gardening, school visits, workshops and seasonal activities.

From sowing seeds and propagating plants to learning about horticulture and looking after the landscape, The Potting Shed will give people of all ages the chance to get involved, connect with nature and play an active part in shaping the garden's future, creating a living legacy for generations to come.

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Sefton Council

Liverpool City Region Combined Authority

Metro Mayor Liverpool City Region

Funded by UK Government

Sefton Council

Liverpool City Region Combined Authority

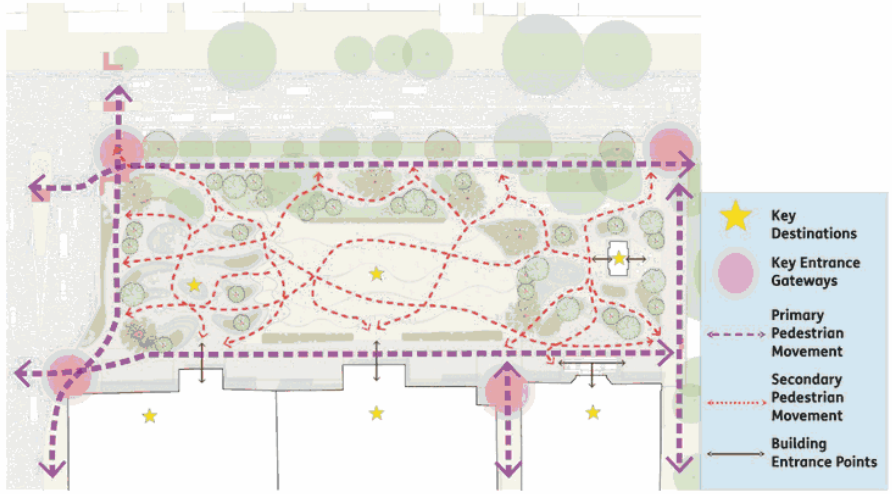
Metro Mayor Liverpool City Region

Roads, Access & Movement

At present, the relationship between the Gardens and surrounding roads can make the town's civic centre feel disconnected and exposed. The proposals seek to address this, improving pedestrian permeability, crossing arrangements and the connection between the Gardens and the wider town centre.

Access requirements with the Town Hall, nearby businesses, public transport, servicing and the need for accessible parking are all important considerations that have informed the proposals, ensuring that the wider area functions effectively.

Pedestrian Movement



The diagram above shows the key entrance gateway points and arrival destinations within the proposals. These include two key entrance points from each corner of the Gardens from Lord St, another entrance point from East Bank St and another from Cambridge Arcade. The space will also be directly accessible from the Library, The Atkinson and the Town Hall.

Vehicle Access

At present, the relationship between the Gardens and surrounding roads can make the town's civic centre feel disconnected and exposed, with vehicles regularly encroaching onto the forecourt outside The Atkinson and Town Hall. This was one of the concerns residents raised most clearly during our first stage of consultation, and it has directly shaped our approach.

Our proposals reduce the presence of vehicles within the Gardens themselves, improve pedestrian crossings and permeability, and strengthen the connection between the Gardens and the surrounding town centre. Clear sightlines, well-used routes, extensive seating and natural surveillance throughout the space are all designed to make the Gardens feel safer and more welcoming, day and night.

Access requirements for the Town Hall, nearby businesses, public transport, servicing and accessible parking have all been carefully considered to ensure the wider area continues to function effectively - while keeping vehicle activity to the edges of the space rather than the heart of it.

A Transport Assessment will be submitted as part of the planning application to support these proposals.



Current parking situation outside The Atkinson.

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Sefton Council

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Sefton Council

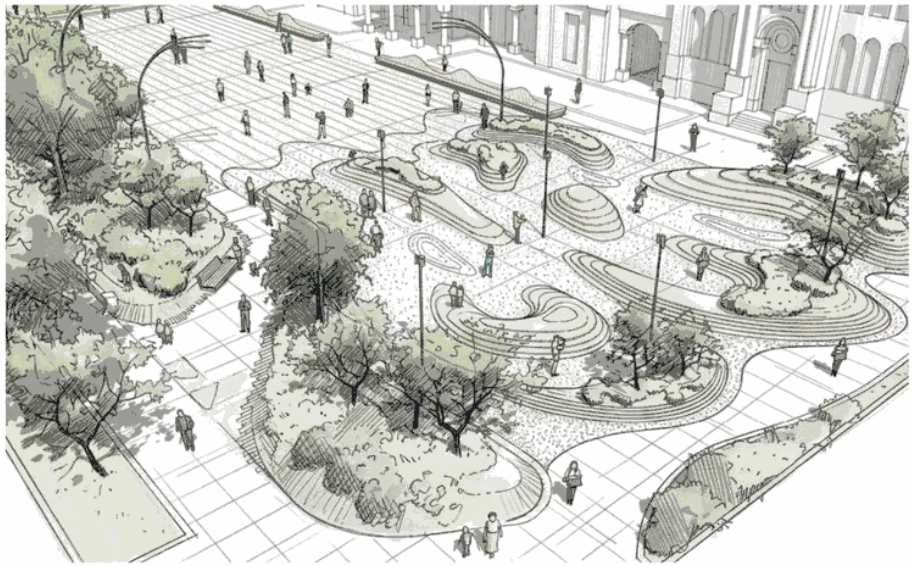
Liverpool City Region Combined Authority

Metro Mayor Liverpool City Region

Have Your Say

Help Shape Southport Town Hall Gardens

Your feedback is invaluable in helping us to ensure we deliver on this vision. All feedback received will be carefully considered before a Detailed planning application is submitted. Please take a few moments to share your thoughts by completing a feedback form. Copies are available today, or you can submit your response online until **Monday 05 October 2026.** Visit https://yourseftonyoursay.sefton.gov.uk/southport-town-hall-gardens or scan the QR code below.



Your views matter

Please take a few moments to share your thoughts by completing a feedback form. Copies are available today, or you can submit your feedback online until **05 October 2026.**

https://yourseftonyoursay.sefton.gov.uk/southport-town-hall-gardens

Contact Us

Email: southport@devcomms.co.uk **Phone:** 0800 080 3263

Next Steps

STEP 1	STEP 2	STEP 3	STEP 4
Public Consultation	**Application Submitted**	**Planning Decision**	**Work Starts**
September/October 2026	October 2026	Early 2027	March 2027

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Sefton Council

Liverpool City Region Combined Authority

Metro Mayor Liverpool City Region

APPENDIX B

Consultation leaflet and distribution area

The leaflet delivered to 1,286 addresses on 21 September, with a further 200+ handed out in the town, and the area it was delivered to.

Front and back | Inside spread | Distribution map | Pages 84–86



PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Southport Town Hall Gardens

Sefton Council is pleased to invite you to our consultation events for the regeneration of Southport Town Hall Gardens, as we seek to build on the heightened significance the space has taken on in recent years to create a place that delivers a positive legacy for Southport's future and a new chapter for the Gardens.

We are preparing a Detailed planning application and would love to hear your thoughts as we refine our proposals.

Have your say

There will be a 2-week exhibition for the proposals at The Atkinson from **Monday 21 September** to **Monday 5 October**, where you can drop in to view the plans Monday–Friday from 10:00–16:00 or on Saturday from 10:00-14:00. We are also hosting two consultation events:

Event 1 — Friday 25 September 2026
The Atkinson, Lord St, Southport, PR8 1DB
12:00-16:00

Event 2 — Wednesday 30 September 2026
The Atkinson, Lord St, Southport, PR8 1DB
15:00–19:00

Members of the project team will be in attendance to answer any questions you may have. We would love for you to visit us.

You can also submit your feedback and review the exhibition materials online at **https://yourseftonyoursay.sefton.gov.uk/southport-town-hall-gardens.** Please submit your feedback by **Monday 5 October 2026.**



Our Vision

Southport Town Hall Gardens has a unique place in the story of the town. The proposals have therefore been shaped by the existing character of the site and its surroundings, and informed by extensive engagement with local families, community groups and town centre businesses, to ensure we create something positive and lasting for Southport.

Help Shape Southport Town Hall Gardens

All feedback received will be carefully considered before a Detailed planning application is submitted. Please take a few moments to share your thoughts by completing a feedback form. Copies are available at our consultation events, or you can submit your feedback online until **05 October 2026.** Visit https://yourseftonyoursay.sefton.gov.uk/southport-town-hall-gardens or scan the QR code.

Contact Us

Freephone: 0800 080 3263
Email: southport@devcomms.co.uk
Mail: Freepost DEVCOMMS

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A positive legacy for Southport's future

Following the tragic events of July 2024, the area outside The Atkinson became a place for thousands to come together in solidarity and support. From that experience grew an ambition from the families of Alice Da Silva Aguiar, Bebe King, and Elsie Dot Stancombe to create a lasting "thank you" to the town – somewhere people can gather to celebrate the strength of their community and look ahead at what the community can jointly achieve for years to come.

Our ambition is to deliver a place that looks confidently towards the future and creates a positive legacy. Somewhere that children and families feel safe and welcome, where nature and colour are brought into the heart of the town, and where Southport can come together throughout the year to play, meet, perform and celebrate.



Illustrative Plan

Performance Plaza



Flexible event space in the heart of the town

Botanical Gardens



A tranquil garden space with beautiful planting

Mega Ripples



A destination water play space full of fun and joy

Celebration Dunes



A sand dune inspired garden to meander through

Key elements

1. Eastbank Street footpath
2. Celebratory Garden with sand dunes inspired planting
3. The Botanical Gardens with beautiful planting and seating - a spill out space for the Town Hall
4. A flexible civic space to host a variety of community events throughout the year
5. An exciting play space with water mist features, mounds and lighting
6. A clear and open movement route with access to the three heritage buildings
7. 'Green Edges' to draw pedestrians into the space
8. Extensive seating to encourage people to dwell, rest and enjoy the space
9. Controlled vehicle access and movement to service the space whilst creating a safe space for pedestrians


Princes Park
Southport Model Railway Village
Royal Clifton Hotel Southport
Esplanade
The Vincent Hotel
Prince of Wales Hotel Southport
Travelodge Southport
The New Talbot Hotel
Holy Trinity Parish Church
Southport College
Southport
Level Up Gym
Lord St
Kingsway
Duke St
Lord St W
Castle Walk
Nelson St
Princes St
Talbot St
Portland St
Eastbank St
Tulketh St
Yellow House Ln
Riding St
Part St
Virginia St
Arbour St
Sefton St
Hodson St
Eaton D
Bath St
West St
Promenade
Victoria St
Stanley St
Union St
Castle St
Hoghton St
Bradley St
Arnside Rd
Wright St
Church St
Anchor St
St George's Pl
Scarisbrick St
Mornington Rd
Vulcan St
Hawesside St
Derby Rd
Kensington Rd
London St
King St
Eastbank St

APPENDIX C

Your Sefton, Your Say and online feedback form

The consultation page on Sefton Council's Your Sefton, Your Say platform, which hosted the proposals, banners and event details, and linked to the online feedback form.

Consultation page | Online feedback form | Pages 88–95

YOUR SEFTON YOUR SAY

Search

Home We Asked, You Said, We Did Sign up for community messages Working Stronger Together
Southport Town Hall Gardens

Have your say on our proposals for Southport Town Hall Gardens

Welcome to our consultation page for Sefton Council's proposed regeneration of Southport Town Hall Gardens. Sefton Council is preparing a detailed planning application for the regeneration of the Town Hall Gardens on Lord Street, as we seek to build on the heightened significance the space has taken on in recent years.

The regeneration will create a place that delivers a positive legacy for Southport's future and a new chapter for the Gardens.

Funded by UK Government Sefton Council LIVERPOOL CITY REGION COMBINED AUTHORITY METRO MAYOR LIVERPOOL CITY REGION

What are the plans?

Following the tragic events of July 2024, the area outside The Atkinson became a place for thousands to come together in, solidarity and support

From that experience grew an ambition from the families of Alice Aguiar, Bebe King and Elsie Stancombe to create a lasting "thank you" to the town – somewhere where people can gather to celebrate the strength of their community and look ahead at what the community can jointly achieve for years to come.

Our ambition for Southport's Town Hall Gardens is to deliver a place that looks confidently towards the future and creates a positive legacy. Somewhere that children and families feel safe and welcome, where nature and colour are brought into the heart of the town, and where Southport can come together throughout the year to play, meet, perform and celebrate.





The proposals

Southport Town Hall Gardens has a unique place in the story of the town. The proposals have been shaped by the existing character of the site and its surroundings, and informed by extensive engagement with local families, community groups and town centre businesses, to ensure we create something positive and lasting for Southport.



Summary of key proposals

1. Eastbank Street footpath
2. Celebratory Garden with sand-dunes inspired planting
3. The Botanical Gardens with beautiful planting and seating – a spill out space for the Town Hall
4. A flexible civic space to host a variety of community events throughout the year
5. An exciting play space with water mist features, mounds and lighting
6. A clear and open movement route with access to the three heritage buildings
7. 'Green Edges' to draw pedestrians into the space
8. Extensive seating to encourage people to dwell, rest and enjoy the space
9. Controlled vehicle access and movement to service the space whilst creating a safe space for pedestrians

▶ Accessible version of key

Have your say!

The Southport Town Hall Gardens

Your feedback is invaluable in helping us to ensure we deliver on this vision. All feedback received will be carefully considered before a detailed planning application is submitted to Sefton Council's planning team. Please take a few moments to share your thoughts on our proposals by completing the online

Closed 5 October 2026



Please submit your response by **5pm on 5th October 2026**.
Further information on the emerging proposals can be viewed here.

▶ View banners

▶ View feedback form

This information is also being displayed during a 2 week exhibition for the proposals at The Atkinson, Lord St, Southport, PR8 1DH from **Monday 21st September** to **Monday 5th October**, where you can drop in **Monday–Friday from 10am–5pm** or **Saturday from 10am-2pm** to view the plans, a 3D model and have your say.

Alternatively, you can attend one of our public exhibition events and meet the team:

- Friday, 25th September 12pm - 4pm, The Atkinson, Lord Street, Southport PR8 1DB
- Wednesday, 30th September 3pm - 7pm, The Atkinson, Lord Street, Southport PR8 1DB

Alternative ways to have your say:

- Call us: 0800 080 3263 (freephone)
- Email us: southport@devcomms.co.uk
- Mail us: Freepost DEVCOMMS

Next steps



Stay in touch

Call us: 0800 080 3263 (freephone)

Email us: southport@devcomms.co.uk

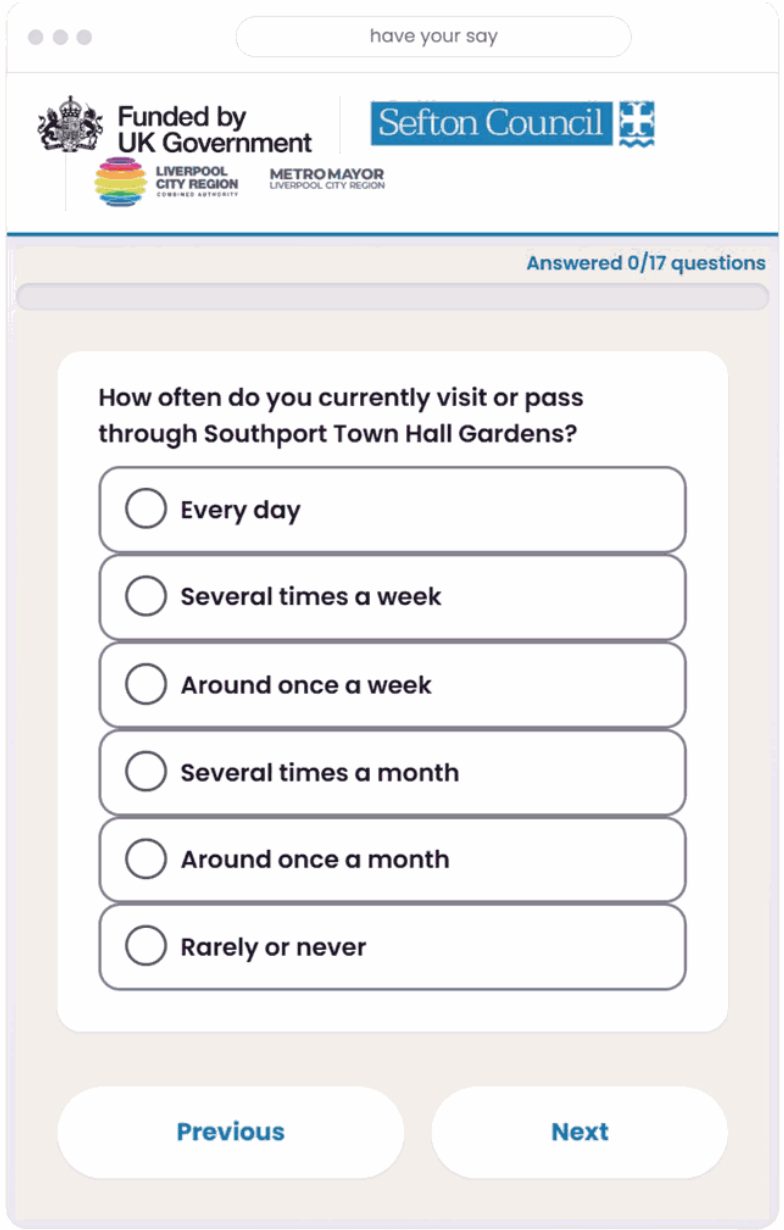
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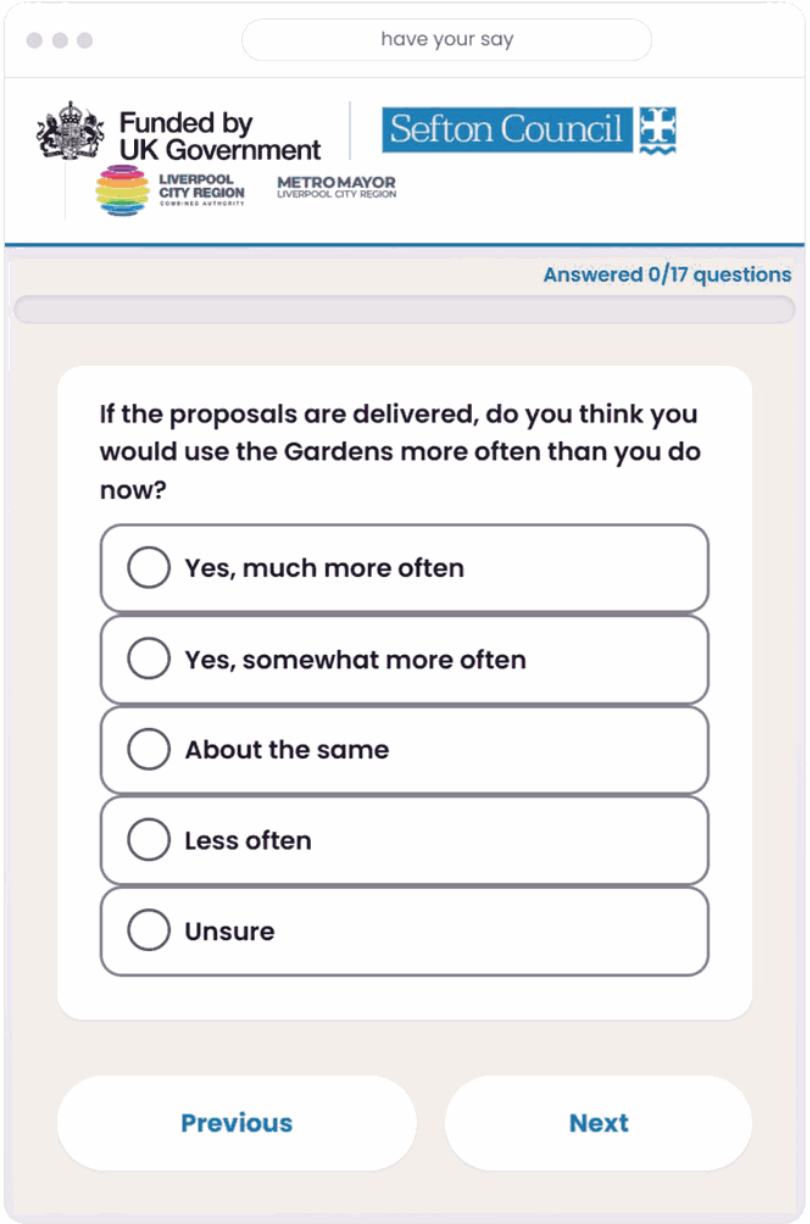
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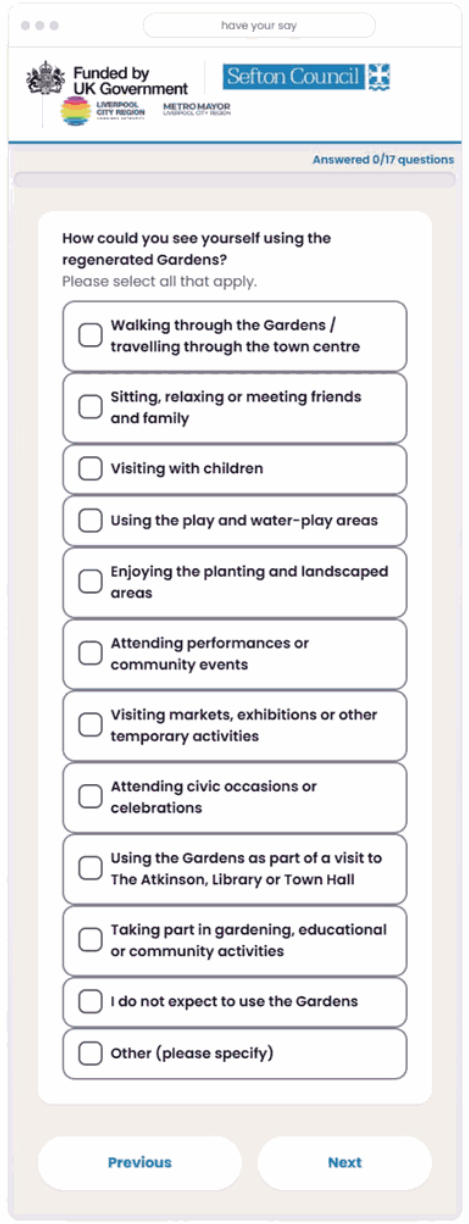

have your say
Funded by UK Government
Sefton Council
LIVERPOOL CITY REGION
METRO MAYOR
LIVERPOOL CITY REGION
Southport Town Hall Gardens Consultation - Sefton Council
The proposed regeneration of Southport Town Hall Gardens.
Thank you for taking the time to share your views on the emerging proposals for the regeneration of Southport Town Hall Gardens. The proposals aim to create a safer, greener, more accessible and welcoming civic space for Southport, with opportunities for play, events, relaxation, planting and community activity throughout the year. Your feedback will be carefully considered by the project team as the proposals are developed ahead of the submission of a Detailed planning application to Sefton Council.
17 questions · about 6 minutes. Press the button below to begin.
Have your say

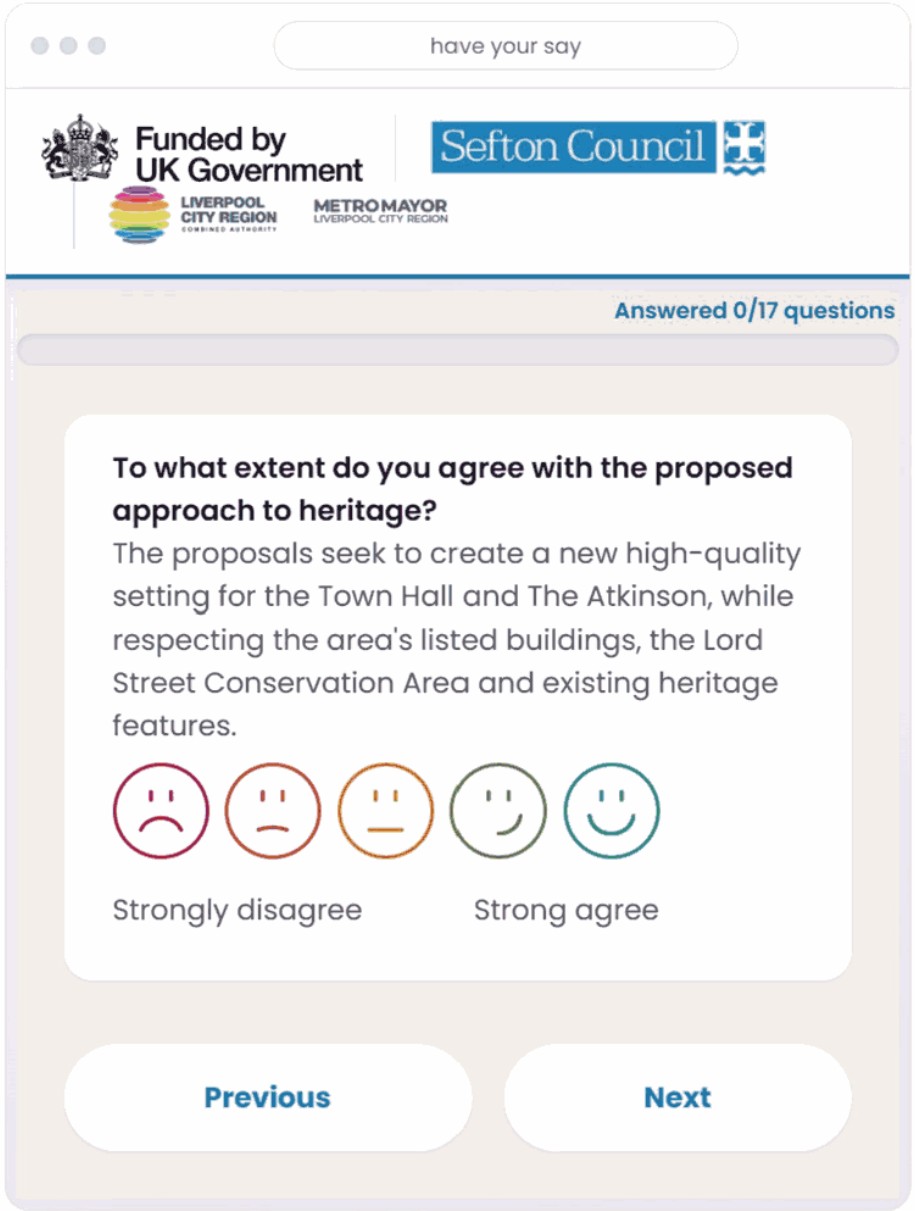

have your say
Funded by UK Government
Sefton Council
LIVERPOOL CITY REGION
METRO MAYOR
LIVERPOOL CITY REGION
Answered 0/17 questions
To what extent do you support the proposals for the regeneration of Southport Town Hall Gardens?
Strongly oppose
Strongly support
Next

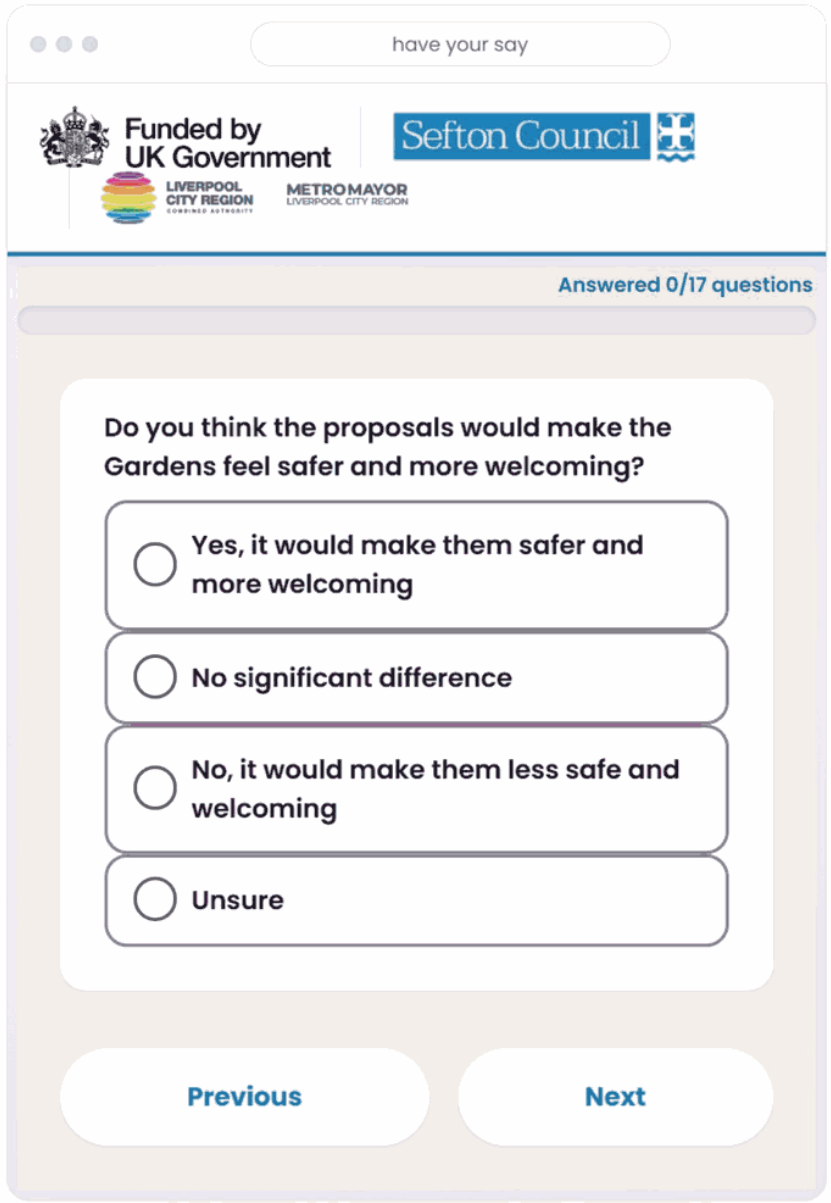

have your say
Funded by UK Government
Sefton Council
LIVERPOOL CITY REGION
METRO MAYOR
LIVERPOOL CITY REGION
Answered 0/17 questions
Do you agree with the proposed approach to planting and landscaping across the Gardens?
The proposals include extensive planting, landscaped mounds, rain gardens, coastal dune-inspired planting, green buffers and new places to sit and enjoy the Gardens.
Strongly disagree
Strongly agree
Previous
Next

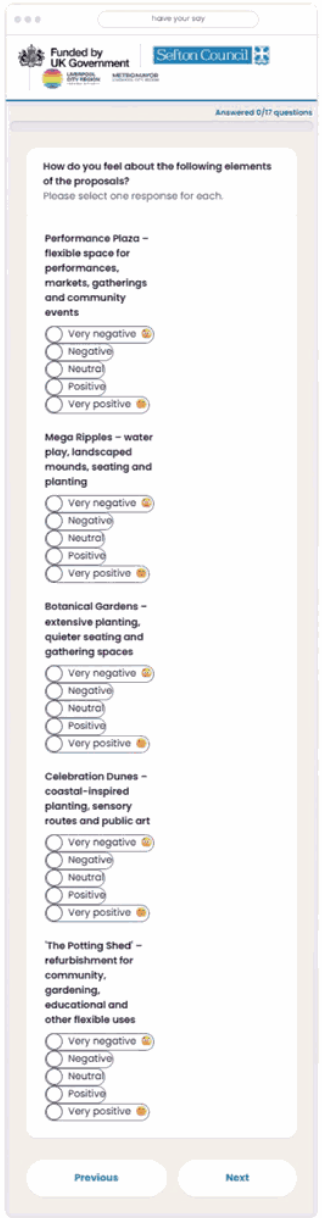

have your say
Funded by UK Government
Sefton Council
LIVERPOOL CITY REGION
METRO MAYOR
LIVERPOOL CITY REGION
Answered 0/17 questions
How often do you currently visit or pass through Southport Town Hall Gardens?
Every day
Several times a week
Around once a week
Several times a month
Around once a month
Rarely or never
Previous
Next


have your say
Funded by UK Government
Sefton Council
LIVERPOOL CITY REGION
METRO MAYOR
LIVERPOOL CITY REGION
Answered 0/17 questions
If the proposals are delivered, do you think you would use the Gardens more often than you do now?
Yes, much more often
Yes, somewhat more often
About the same
Less often
Unsure
Previous
Next

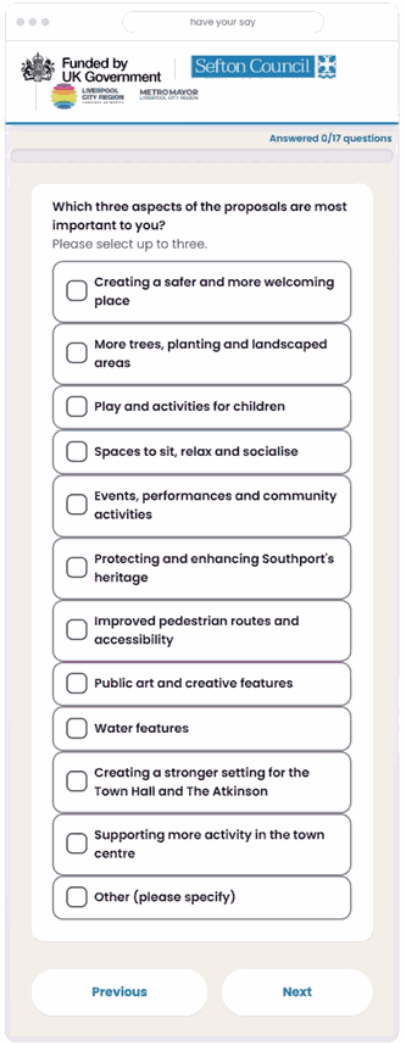

have your say
Funded by UK Government
Sefton Council
Answered 0/17 questions
How could you see yourself using the regenerated Gardens?
Please select all that apply.
Walking through the Gardens / travelling through the town centre
Sitting, relaxing or meeting friends and family
Visiting with children
Using the play and water-play areas
Enjoying the planting and landscaped areas
Attending performances or community events
Visiting markets, exhibitions or other temporary activities
Attending civic occasions or celebrations
Using the Gardens as part of a visit to The Atkinson, Library or Town Hall
Taking part in gardening, educational or community activities
I do not expect to use the Gardens
Other (please specify)
Previous
Next

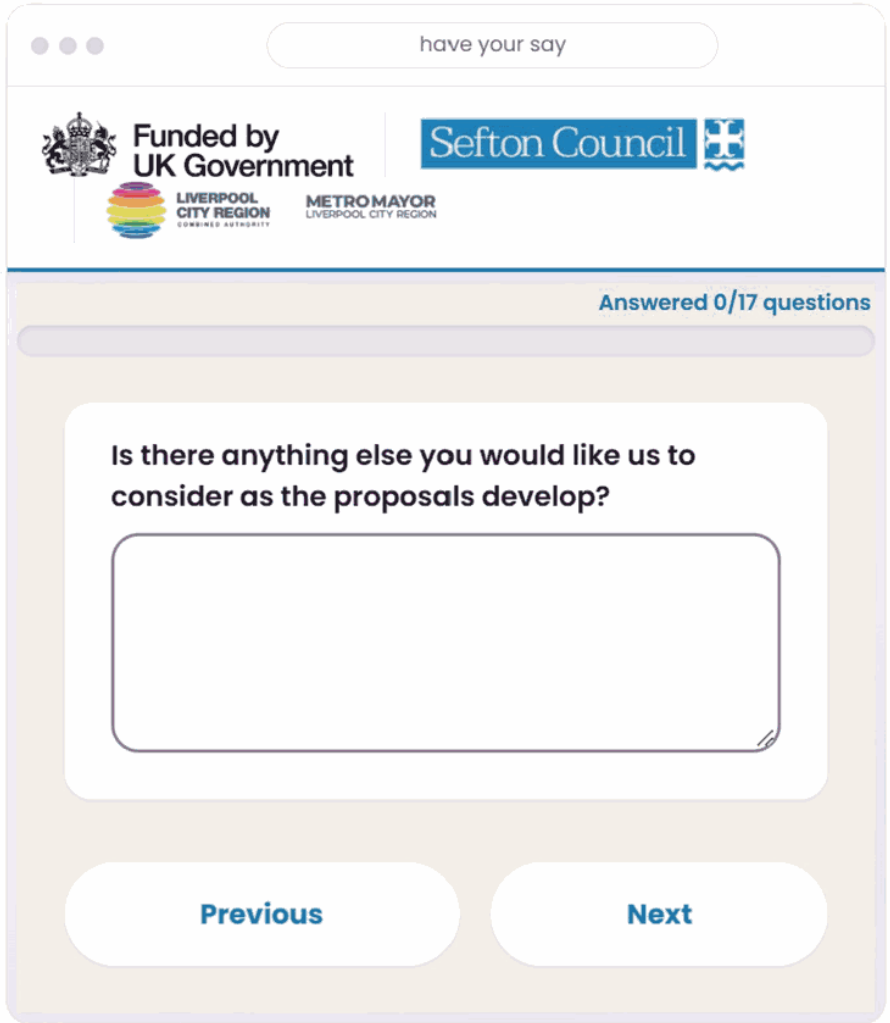

have your say
Funded by UK Government
Sefton Council
LIVERPOOL CITY REGION
METRO MAYOR
LIVERPOOL CITY REGION
Answered 0/17 questions
To what extent do you agree with the proposed approach to heritage?
The proposals seek to create a new high-quality setting for the Town Hall and The Atkinson, while respecting the area's listed buildings, the Lord Street Conservation Area and existing heritage features.
Strongly disagree
Strong agree
Previous
Next

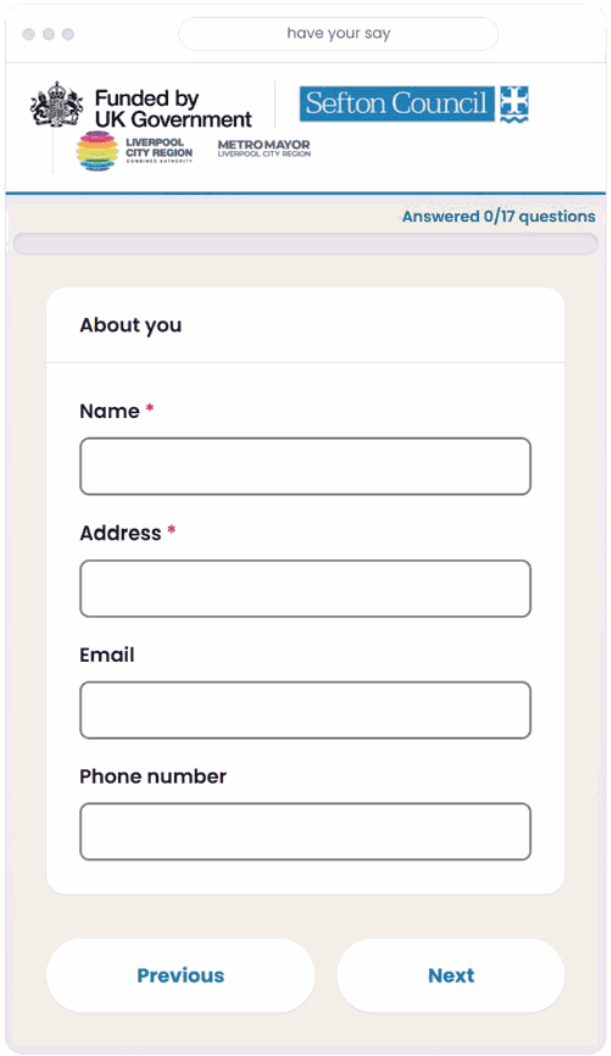

have your say
Funded by UK Government
Sefton Council
LIVERPOOL CITY REGION
METRO MAYOR
LIVERPOOL CITY REGION
Answered 0/17 questions
Do you think the proposals would make the Gardens feel safer and more welcoming?
Yes, it would make them safer and more welcoming
No significant difference
No, it would make them less safe and welcoming
Unsure
Previous
Next

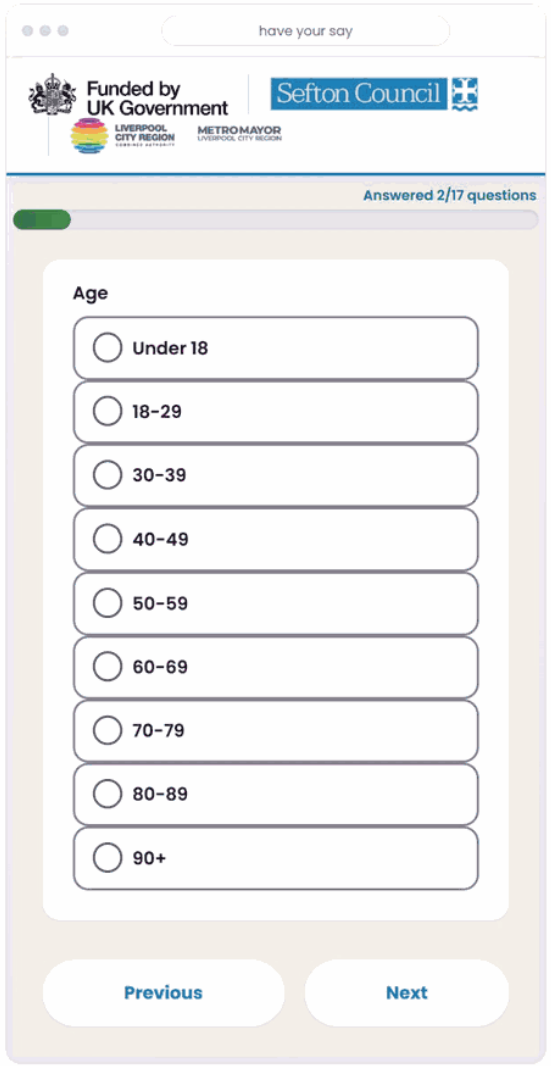

Answered 0/17 questions
How do you feel about the following elements of the proposals?
Please select one response for each.
Performance Plaza – flexible space for performances, markets, gatherings and community events
Mega Ripples – water play, landscaped mounds, seating and planting
Botanical Gardens – extensive planting, quieter seating and gathering spaces
Celebration Dunes – coastal-inspired planting, sensory routes and public art
'The Potting Shed' – refurbishment for community, gardening, educational and other flexible uses
Very negative
Negative
Neutral
Positive
Very positive
Previous
Next

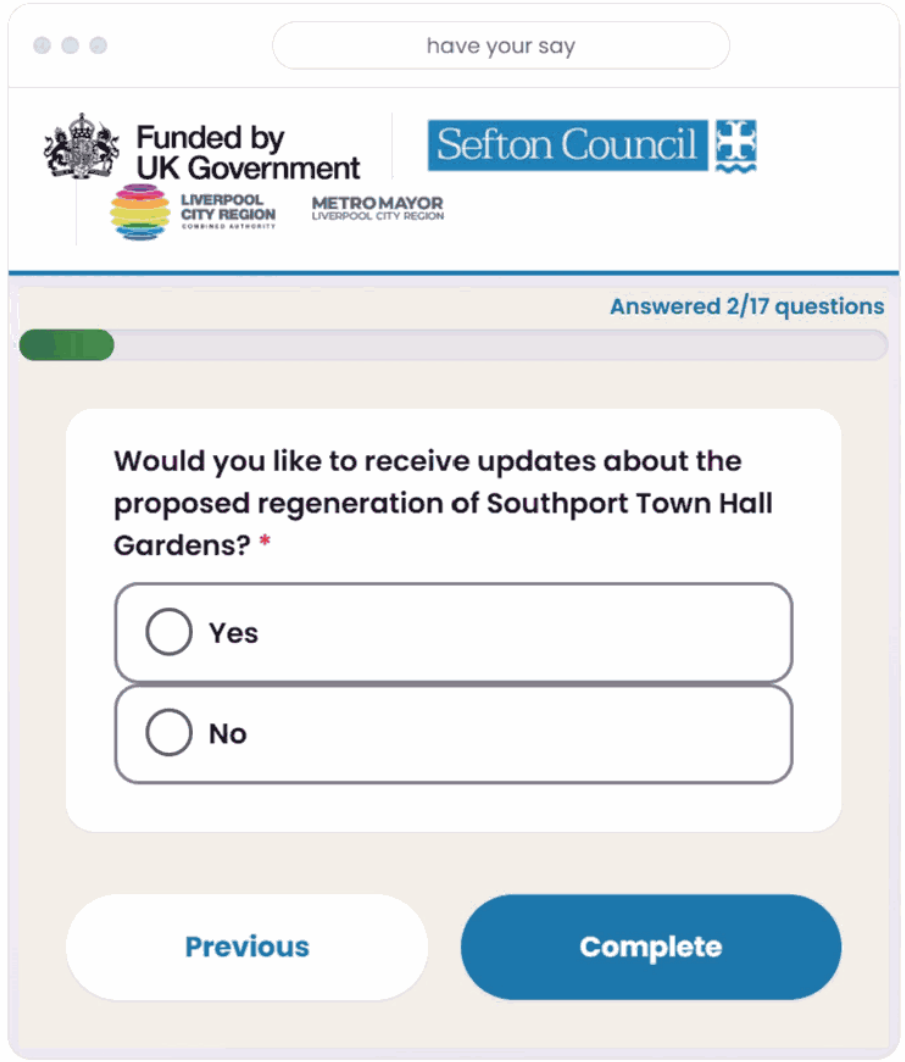

have your say
Funded by UK Government
Sefton Council
LIVERPOOL CITY REGION
METRO MAYOR
LIVERPOOL CITY REGION
Answered 0/17 questions
Do you agree with the proposed approach to access and movement around the Gardens?
The proposals seek to improve pedestrian routes, crossing arrangements and connections to Lord Street, Eastbank Street, The Atkinson, Library and Town Hall, while retaining access for essential servicing and events.
Strongly disagree
Strongly agree
Previous
Next


have your say
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Sefton Council
Answered 0/17 questions
Which three aspects of the proposals are most important to you?
Please select up to three.
Creating a safer and more welcoming place
More trees, planting and landscaped areas
Play and activities for children
Spaces to sit, relax and socialise
Events, performances and community activities
Protecting and enhancing Southport's heritage
Improved pedestrian routes and accessibility
Public art and creative features
Water features
Creating a stronger setting for the Town Hall and The Atkinson
Supporting more activity in the town centre
Other (please specify)
Previous
Next


have your say
Funded by UK Government
Sefton Council
LIVERPOOL CITY REGION
METRO MAYOR
LIVERPOOL CITY REGION
Answered 0/17 questions
Is there anything else you would like us to consider as the proposals develop?
Previous
Next


have your say
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Sefton Council
LIVERPOOL CITY REGION
METRO MAYOR
LIVERPOOL CITY REGION
Answered 0/17 questions
About you
Name *
Address *
Email
Phone number
Previous
Next


have your say
Funded by UK Government
Sefton Council
LIVERPOOL CITY REGION
METRO MAYOR
LIVERPOOL CITY REGION
Answered 2/17 questions
Age
Under 18
18-29
30-39
40-49
50-59
60-69
70-79
80-89
90+
Previous
Next


have your say
Funded by UK Government
Sefton Council
LIVERPOOL CITY REGION
METRO MAYOR
LIVERPOOL CITY REGION
Answered 2/17 questions
Would you like to receive updates about the proposed regeneration of Southport Town Hall Gardens? *
Yes
No
Previous
Complete

APPENDIX D

Feedback form

The two-page A4 paper feedback form, available at The Atkinson and the staffed events, and returnable by Freepost. It asked the same questions as the online version.

Two A4 pages

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Sefton Council

Liverpool City Region Combined Authority · Metro Mayor Liverpool City Region

Southport Town Hall Gardens — Feedback Form

Thank you for sharing your views on the emerging proposals for the regeneration of Southport Town Hall Gardens. Your feedback will be carefully considered by the project team as the proposals are developed ahead of the submission of a Detailed planning application.

1. To what extent do you support the proposals for the regeneration of Southport Town Hall Gardens?

Strongly support · Support · Neither support nor oppose · Oppose · Strongly oppose

2. Do you agree with the proposed approach to planting and landscaping across the Gardens?

The proposals include extensive planting, landscaped mounds, rain gardens, coastal dune-inspired planting, green buffers and new places to sit and enjoy the Gardens.

Strongly agree · Agree · Neither agree nor disagree · Disagree · Strongly disagree

3. How often do you currently visit or pass through Southport Town Hall Gardens?

Every day · Several times a week · Around once a week · Several times a month · Around once a month · Rarely or never

4. If the proposals are delivered, do you think you would use the Gardens more often than you do now?

Yes, much more often · Yes, somewhat more often · About the same · Less often · Unsure

5. How could you see yourself using the regenerated Gardens?

Please select all that apply.

- ☐ Walking through / travelling through the town centre
- ☐ Visiting with children
- ☐ Enjoying the planting and landscaped areas
- ☐ Visiting markets, exhibitions or temporary activities
- ☐ Using the Gardens as part of a visit to The Atkinson, Library or Town Hall
- ☐ I do not expect to use the Gardens
- ☐ Other — please specify:
- ☐ Sitting, relaxing or meeting friends and family
- ☐ Using the play and water-play areas
- ☐ Attending performances or community events
- ☐ Attending civic occasions or celebrations
- ☐ Taking part in gardening, educational or community activities

6. To what extent do you agree with the proposed approach to heritage?

The proposals seek to create a new high-quality setting for the Town Hall and The Atkinson, while respecting the area's listed buildings, the Lord Street Conservation Area and heritage features.

Strongly agree · Agree · Neither agree nor disagree · Disagree · Strongly disagree

7. To what extent do you think the proposals would make the Gardens feel safer and more welcoming?

Yes, safer and more welcoming · No significant difference · No, less safe and welcoming · Unsure

Page 1 of 2 — continued overleaf

8. How do you feel about the following elements of the proposals?

Please select one response for each.

	Very positive	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Very negative
Performance Plaza — flexible space for performances, markets, gatherings and community events	○	○	○	○	○
Mega Ripples — water play, landscaped mounds, seating and planting	○	○	○	○	○
Botanical Gardens — extensive planting, quieter seating and gathering spaces	○	○	○	○	○
Celebration Dunes — coastal-inspired planting, sensory routes and public art	○	○	○	○	○
'The Potting Shed' — refurbishment for community, gardening, educational and flexible uses	○	○	○	○	○

9. Do you agree with the proposed approach to access and movement around the Gardens?

The proposals seek to improve pedestrian routes, crossing arrangements and connections to Lord Street, Eastbank Street, The Atkinson, Library and Town Hall, while retaining access for essential servicing and events.

Strongly agree · Agree · Neither agree nor disagree · Disagree · Strongly disagree

10. Which three aspects of the proposals are most important to you?

Please select up to three.

- ☐ Creating a safer and more welcoming place
- ☐ Play and activities for children
- ☐ Events, performances and community activities
- ☐ Improved pedestrian routes and accessibility
- ☐ Water features
- ☐ Supporting more activity in the town centre
- ☐ Other — please specify:
- ☐ More trees, planting and landscaped areas
- ☐ Spaces to sit, relax and socialise
- ☐ Protecting and enhancing Southport's heritage
- ☐ Public art and creative features
- ☐ A stronger setting for the Town Hall and The Atkinson

11. Is there anything else you would like us to consider as the proposals develop?

About you

Name: _____ Email address: _____

Address: _____ Phone number: _____

Age:

Under 18 · 18–29 · 30–39 · 40–49 · 50–59 · 60–69 · 70–79 · 80–89 · 90+

Which best describes your connection to Southport Town Hall Gardens? Please select all that apply.

- ☐ I live in Southport
- ☐ I regularly visit Southport
- ☐ I work in Southport
- ☐ I use The Atkinson, Library or Town Hall
- ☐ I own/work for a local business
- ☐ I'm part of a local community organisation

Would you like to receive updates about the proposals? Yes · No

Privacy Statement. This public consultation is being conducted by Development Communications Limited (DevComms), a Data Processor, acting on behalf of Sefton Council, the Data Controller. Your responses will be shared with and considered by Sefton Council and DevComms as part of the consultation process on these proposals. Personal information will be securely stored for the duration of the project and securely destroyed/deleted on completion. Aggregated insights might be published or shared with the relevant local planning authorities as part of a planning application. No personal data will be shared as part of this process. You can choose to stop receiving updates from us at any time by contacting us on opt-out@devcomms.co.uk or calling us on 01296 678320. For further information see our Privacy Policy on our website at www.devcomms.co.uk. Please also refer to Sefton Council's privacy policy: www.sefton.gov.uk/your-council/privacy-policy.

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APPENDIX E

Consultation poster

The A4 poster displayed in key community spaces, promoting the exhibition, the two public events and the online feedback form.

A4 poster

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Regeneration of Southport Town Hall Gardens

Have your say!

Sefton Council is preparing a Detailed planning application for the regeneration of Southport Town Hall Gardens, as we seek to build on the heightened significance the space has taken on in recent years to create a place that delivers a positive legacy for Southport's future and a new chapter for the Gardens.

A positive legacy for Southport's future

Following the tragic events of July 2024, the area outside The Atkinson became a place for thousands to come together in solidarity and support. From that experience grew an ambition from the families of Alice Da Silva Aguiar, Bebe King, and Elsie Dot Stancombe to create a lasting "thank you" to the town. Our ambition is to deliver a place that looks confidently towards the future: somewhere children and families feel safe and welcome, where nature and colour are brought into the heart of the town, and where Southport can come together to play, meet and celebrate.





Have your say

There will be a 2-week exhibition for the proposals at The Atkinson from **Monday 21 September** to **Monday 05 October**, where you can drop in to view the plans Monday-Friday from 10:00-16:00 or on Saturday from 10:00-14:00. We will also be hosting two public consultation events at The Atkinson:

Event 1 — Friday 25 September 2026
The Atkinson, Lord St, Southport, PR8 1DB
12:00–16:00

Event 2 — Wednesday 30 September 2026
The Atkinson, Lord St, Southport, PR8 1DB
15:00–19:00

Help Shape Southport Town Hall Gardens

Please take a few moments to share your thoughts on our proposals by completing our online feedback form, or provide feedback in person at our consultation events. Visit yourseftonyoursay.sefton.gov.uk/southport-town-hall-gardens or scan the QR code.

Contact us: Freephone 0800 080 3263 • southport@devcomms.co.uk
• Freepost DEVCOMMS

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