

# **Exmouth Placemaking**

## Consultation Summary Report

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## 1. Summary

The consultation received 208 responses, showing broad support for practical improvements to Exmouth's town centre, seafront and gateways. People prioritised clearer, safer connections between the Station Gateway, Strand and seafront.

There was strong backing for affordable business space, better wayfinding, improved public realm and sensitive environmental enhancements.

Key concerns focused on parking loss, jargon-heavy wording, and ensuring proposals are deliverable and well-maintained. Overall, respondents want clear, realistic, value-for-money actions that enhance Exmouth's character and everyday experience.

## 2. Survey goals and methodology

### Survey goals

East Devon District Council consulted on the final draft of the Exmouth Placemaking Plan (EPP) to confirm the extent to which residents and visitors supported the proposed actions under each of the Plan's strategic objectives. This version has been reviewed following feedback from a consultation exercise carried out in February 2024 and input from council officers, Members and partners, the Council wanted to ensure the plan was focused on local priorities.

A key objective was to understand not only whether people agreed or disagreed with each action, but why. By inviting written comments alongside agree/disagree selections, the consultation aimed to capture practical suggestions, identify unintended impacts of the projects, highlight gaps or areas needing clarification, and surface any delivery considerations such as phasing, feasibility, partners, and alignment with other projects.

The consultation also sought to demonstrate transparency and accountability by providing a clear evidence base for the final Plan. The results will inform revisions to the EPP and will be reported publicly, including a clear explanation of how feedback has been considered and what changes are being made as a result.

### Methodology

The consultation used a structured survey design aligned to the format of the draft EPP. Participants were presented with each action listed under the Plan's strategic objectives and asked to record a response of "agree" or "disagree" for each action. This created consistent, comparable data that can be reported at action level and summarised at strategic objective level.

Alongside the agree/disagree responses, participants were invited to provide optional free-text comments explaining their views. These comments provide qualitative evidence to help interpret the quantitative results, identify recurring issues and priorities, and understand the specific reasons behind agreement or disagreement.

The consultation was delivered through multiple channels to support accessibility and maximise participation. Responses could be submitted online, and paper surveys were

made available for those who preferred not to participate digitally. In-person opportunities to view the Plan and ask questions were also provided through staffed drop-in events.

### 3. Survey process

The final draft Exmouth Placemaking Plan (EPP) was published for consultation, reflecting feedback from earlier engagement and input from officers, Members and partners. The survey asked residents and visitors to record whether they agreed or disagreed with each action under the Plan's strategic objectives, with an option to add comments explaining their views.

The consultation opened on the 4 of November and closed at 11am on 16 December 2025. People could respond online or using paper surveys, and two staffed drop-in events were held at Exmouth Pavilion and Exmouth Town Hall where the Plan could be viewed in person and officers were available to answer questions.

After the deadline, online and paper responses have been collated into a single dataset for analysis. The results will be reported in a consultation summary, showing response numbers, agree/disagree outcomes for each action, the main themes from comments, and how feedback will be used to finalise the EPP.

### 4. Data analysis

This section sets out what the consultation responses indicate. Findings are presented on a question-by-question basis, with the number of responses reported for each question to provide clear context on participation. Each action under the strategic objective was posed as a question and the results for each are shown.

For agree/disagree questions, the results are summarised through graphs showing the distribution of responses for each action, supported by concise narrative commentary highlighting the principal patterns and any notable points.

For free-text questions and comment boxes, responses are reviewed and categorised into key themes to provide a structured summary of the main issues, reasons and suggestions raised by respondents, ensuring the qualitative feedback can be considered alongside the quantitative results.

The survey received 208 overall contributions from the public over the survey period.

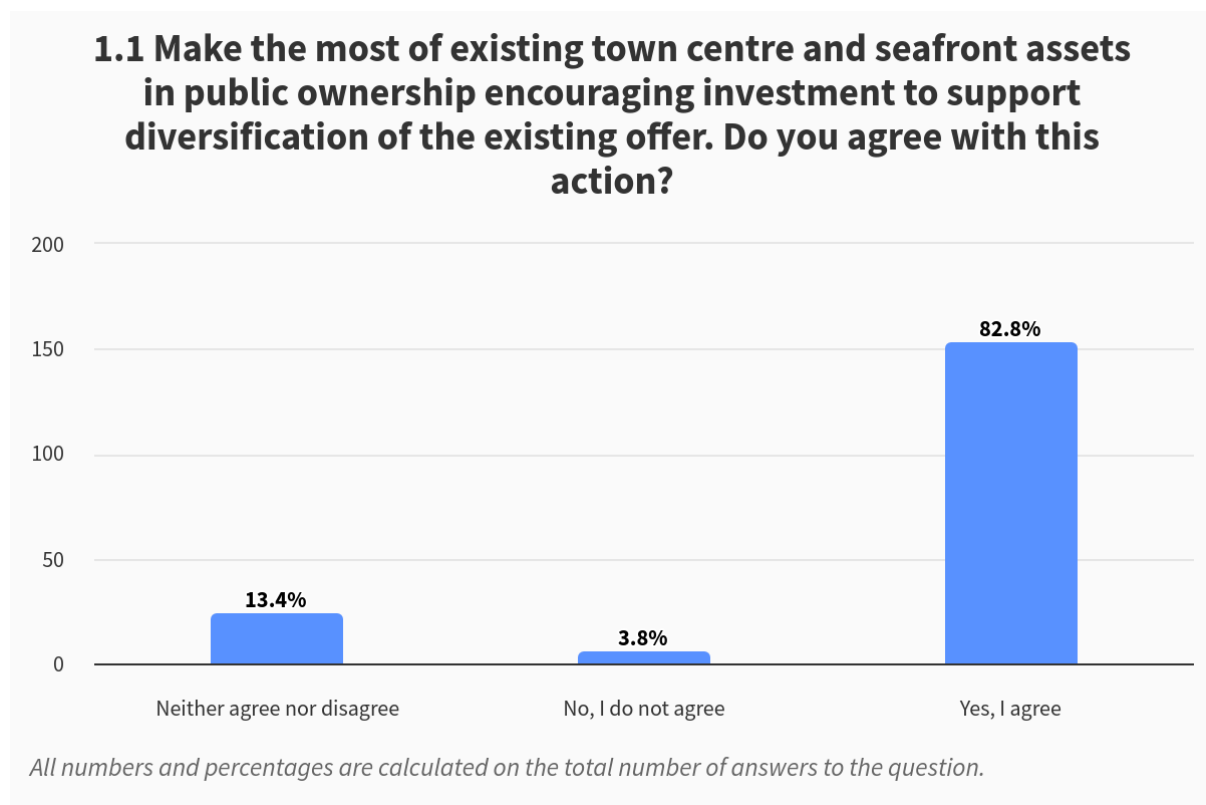
## 4.1 Strategic Objective 1: Consultation Findings Actions

### 1.1 – 1.4

This strategic objective includes four actions (Actions 1.1 to 1.4). The analysis below summarises respondents' levels of agreement with each action and the key themes emerging from the accompanying open-text comments.

**Action 1.1 Make the most of existing town centre and seafront assets in public ownership encouraging investment to support diversification of the existing offer. Do you agree with this action?**

The Action 1.1 question received 186 contributions.



*Figure 1: Level of agreement with Action 1.1 (making the most of existing town centre and seafront assets in public ownership, encouraging investment to diversify the existing offer). Percentages are based on the total number of responses to this question.*

The results show strong support for Action 1.1, with 82.8% of respondents selecting “Yes, I agree”. A further 13.4% were neutral (“Neither agree nor disagree”), indicating a smaller proportion who may be supportive in principle but require additional detail, assurance on delivery, or clarification of impacts. Only 3.8% of respondents disagreed, suggesting limited opposition to the action as presented.

### **Free text response analysis**

Below is a summary of the free-text feedback from respondents who selected Yes, I agree or neither agree nor disagree for Strategic Objective 1.1 and then explained their reasons. The comments for the remaining objectives will be presented in the same format with the respective objectives to show clearly what respondents said in relation to each specific item, including the main benefits they anticipate and the conditions they attached.

- Strategic Objective 1.1: “Agree/Neutral” responses: Respondents generally supported the principle of strengthening the town centre offer year-round, particularly where activities benefit residents and support off-season visitor spend. Many respondents requested clearer examples and a stronger sense of “what this would look like” in practice, with several indicating that the objective is too broad to assess without detail.

Some respondents supported investment and cultural uses but expressed concerns about the implications of private finance and control, and they asked for reassurance that any proposals would remain appropriate for Exmouth's character and community needs.

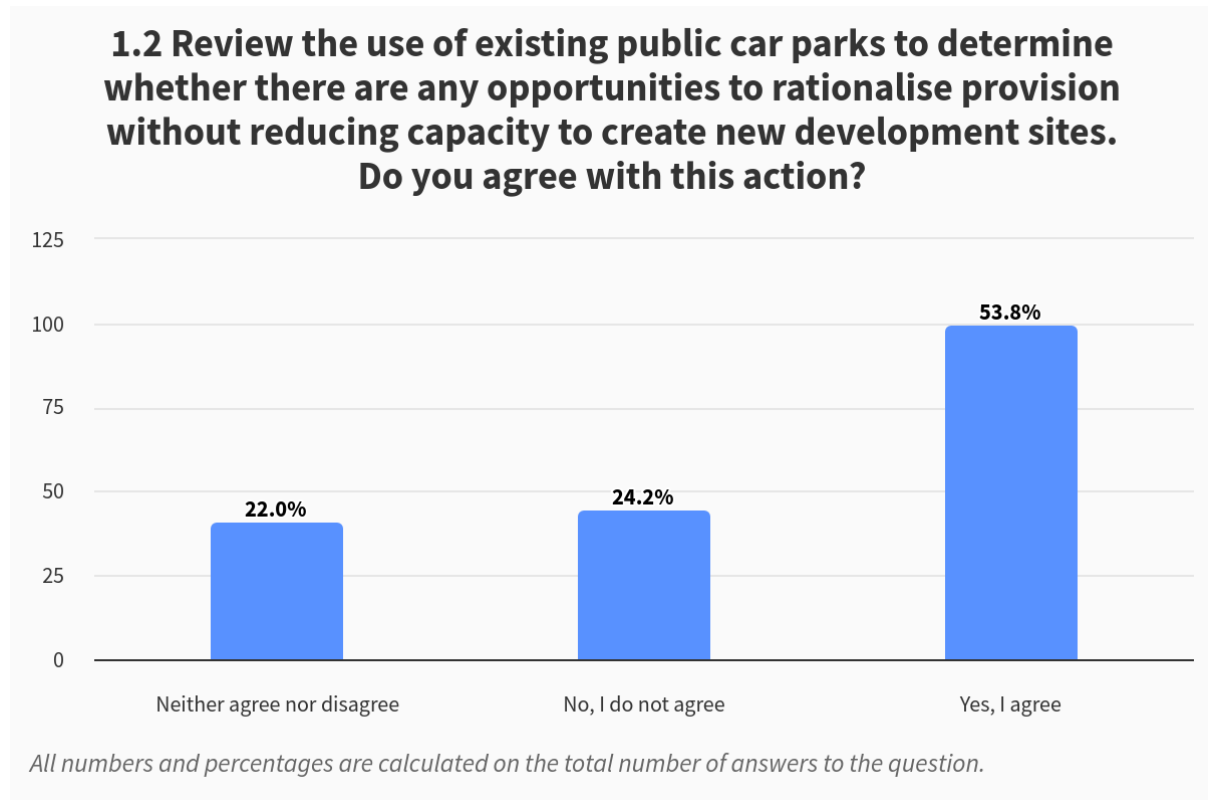
Below is a summary of the free-text feedback from respondents who selected no, I do not agree with Strategic Objective 1.1 and then explained their reasons. The comments for the remaining objectives will be presented in the same format with the respective objectives to show clearly what respondents said in relation to each specific item, including the main benefits they anticipate and the conditions they attached.

Strategic Objective 1.1: "No" responses:

- Respondents who commented generally agreed with the intent to strengthen the town centre, but they felt the action should focus first on improving what is already there and supporting existing businesses and assets.
- Some respondents expressed concern that the objective is not specific enough to judge and could allow inappropriate changes, particularly if proposals are developed without clear safeguards or community input.
- A small number of respondents questioned the balance of emphasis, asking that the plan reflects residents' needs as a priority and supports a broader mix of sustainable businesses rather than relying heavily on tourism.

**Action 1.2 Review the use of existing public car parks to determine whether there are any opportunities to rationalise provision without reducing capacity to create new development sites. Do you agree with this action?**

The Action 1.2 question received 186 contributions.



*Figure 2: Level of agreement with Action 1.2 (reviewing the use of existing public car parks to identify opportunities to rationalise provision, without reducing capacity, to create new development sites). Percentages are based on the total number of responses to this question.*

Responses to Action 1.2 indicate a more mixed view than for other actions. A majority of respondents (53.8%) agreed with the proposal, while 24.2% disagreed and 22.0% neither agreed nor disagreed. This suggests that, although overall support is higher than opposition, there is a substantial proportion of respondents with concerns or reservations, alongside a notable neutral group who may require further clarity on how “without reducing capacity” would be defined and evidenced in practice, and what safeguards would be in place to avoid unintended impacts.

**Free text response analysis**

Strategic Objective 1.2: “Agree/Neutral” responses:

- Respondents frequently indicated that this action requires clearer wording, particularly around what “development” and “rationalisation” mean and how capacity would genuinely be protected.
- Many respondents acknowledged that parking is under pressure, especially in summer, and they supported exploring solutions that increase capacity in less visible locations or through operational changes rather than losing key spaces.

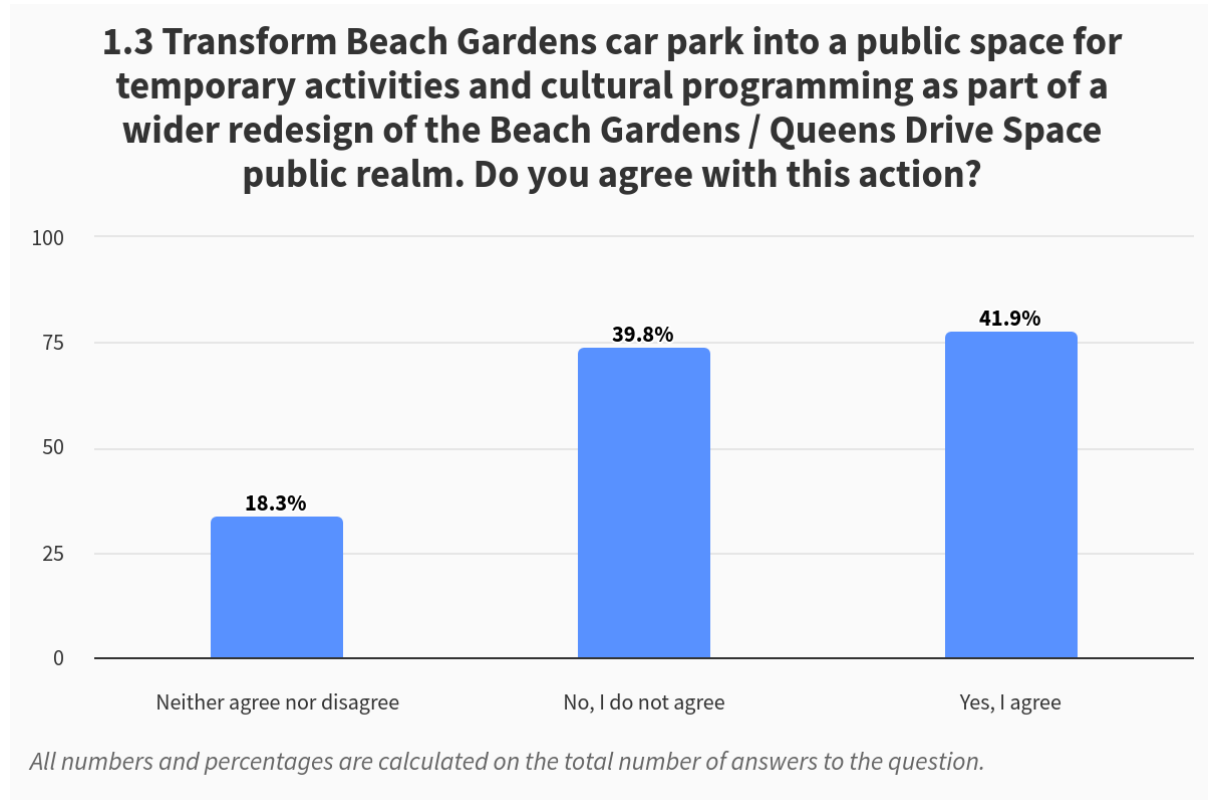
- Several respondents proposed complementary measures, including locally workable park-and-ride options and careful consideration of where any multi-storey provision might be acceptable, provided it is sensitively located and does not remove prime sites.

Strategic Objective 1.2: “No” responses:

- Review car parks and explore rationalisation or development without reducing capacity
- Respondents frequently stated that the action is too unclear, particularly around what “development” means and how capacity would be protected, and this uncertainty contributed to a lack of trust in the proposal.
- Many respondents argued that Exmouth already experiences parking pressure, especially in peak season, and they considered it unrealistic to develop parking sites without reducing convenient access for residents and visitors.
- Where improvements were suggested, respondents typically favoured capacity-neutral options such as solar canopies, modest expansion, better management, park-and-ride provision, and keeping costs reasonable rather than treating parking as a revenue source.

**Action 1.3 Transform Beach Gardens car park into a public space for temporary activities and cultural programming as part of a wider redesign of the Beach Gardens / Queens Drive Space public realm. Do you agree with this action?**

Action 1.3 question received 186 contributions.



*Figure 3: Level of agreement with Action 1.3 (transforming Beach Gardens car park into a public space for temporary activities and cultural programming, as part of the wider redesign of the Beach Gardens/Queens Drive Space public realm).*

Responses to Action 1.3 were closely divided. 41.9% of respondents agreed with the proposal, while 39.8% disagreed and 18.3% neither agreed nor disagreed. This indicates that, although agreement marginally exceeded disagreement, the action is more contentious than others and has generated a substantial level of concern, with a further proportion of respondents expressing neutrality.

**Free text response analysis**

Strategic Objective 1.3: “Agree/Neutral” responses:

- Respondents who commented were often cautious, stressing that Beach Gardens car park plays an important role for Pavilion access and that patrons need certainty about where they would park for events and everyday use.
- Some respondents suggested that temporary use may be acceptable only on an occasional basis and that the car park should revert quickly to parking, with activities directed to alternative nearby spaces where possible.

- Several respondents raised safety and accessibility considerations, including safe vehicle movements around cycle routes and the need to maintain appropriate disabled parking and convenient access to seafront facilities. Strategic Objective 1.2: “No” responses:
- Respondents strongly opposed any reduction in this car park, describing it as well used year-round and important for accessing nearby businesses and key seafront destinations including the Pavilion, Ocean, and surrounding venues.
- Many respondents emphasised accessibility impacts, stating that the location is particularly important for older residents and people with disabilities or reduced mobility, and they felt alternative parking is not sufficiently close in poor weather or off-season periods.
- Respondents commonly suggested that activities should be directed to other nearby spaces, with occasional short-term use of the car park only considered acceptable by some if it is limited, well managed, and followed by a prompt return to parking.

## 1.4 Identify and support the provision of affordable business accommodation opportunities to increase occupancy rates in the town centre. Do you agree with this action?

Action 1.4 question received 186 contributions.

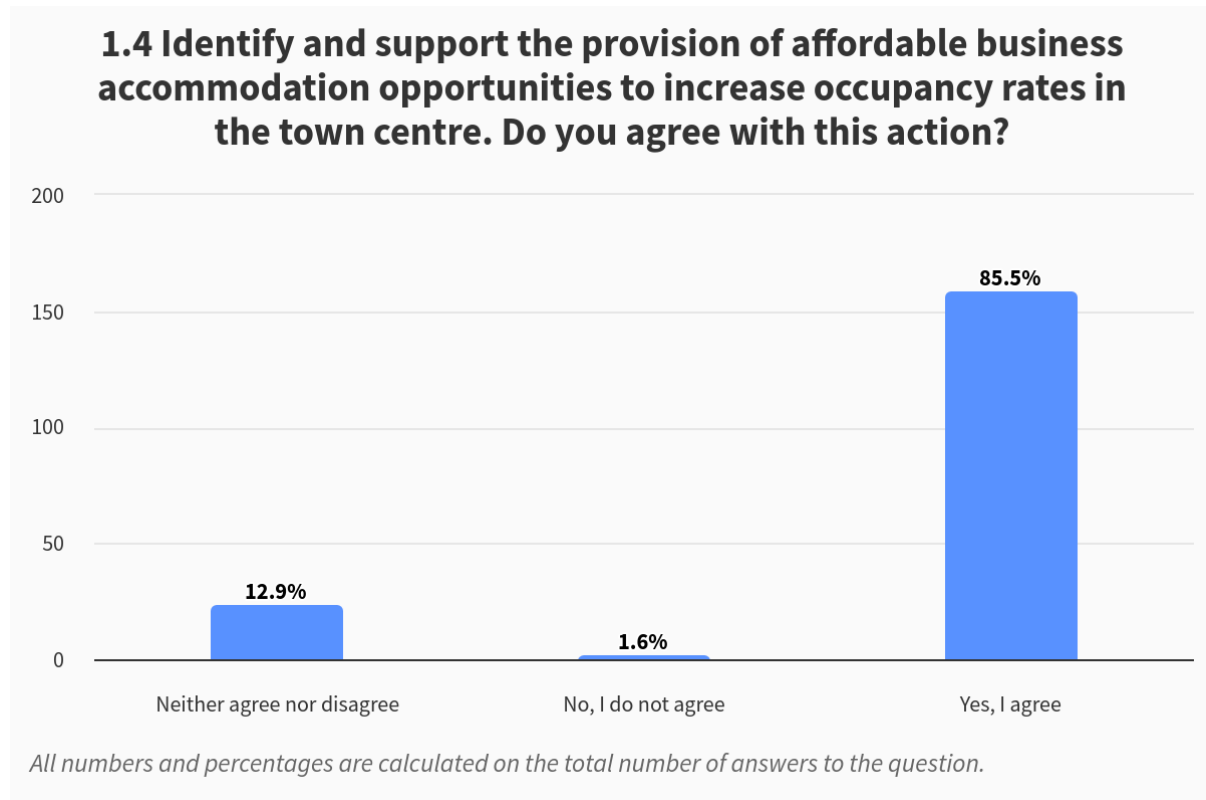


Figure 4: Level of agreement with Action 1.4 (identifying and supporting affordable business accommodation opportunities to increase occupancy rates in the town centre). Percentages are based on the total number of responses to this question.

The results show very strong support for Action 1.4, with 85.5% of respondents agreeing. A further 12.9% neither agreed nor disagreed, while only 1.6% disagreed. Overall, this indicates broad endorsement of the principle of supporting affordable business accommodation to improve town centre occupancy, with limited opposition.

### Free text response analysis

Strategic Objective 1.4: “Agree/Neutral” responses:

- Respondents frequently described this as essential and, in some cases, the highest priority, with a view that reusing space above shops could help address vacant units, increase footfall, and improve town-centre vitality.
- Many respondents linked success to the wider business environment, stating that business rates, rents and affordability will influence whether premises are occupied and whether a broader mix of businesses can be sustained.

- Some respondents also connected this action to wider community outcomes, including reducing pressure from short-term lets, improving town-centre safety and vibrancy, and supporting younger people and the local workforce.

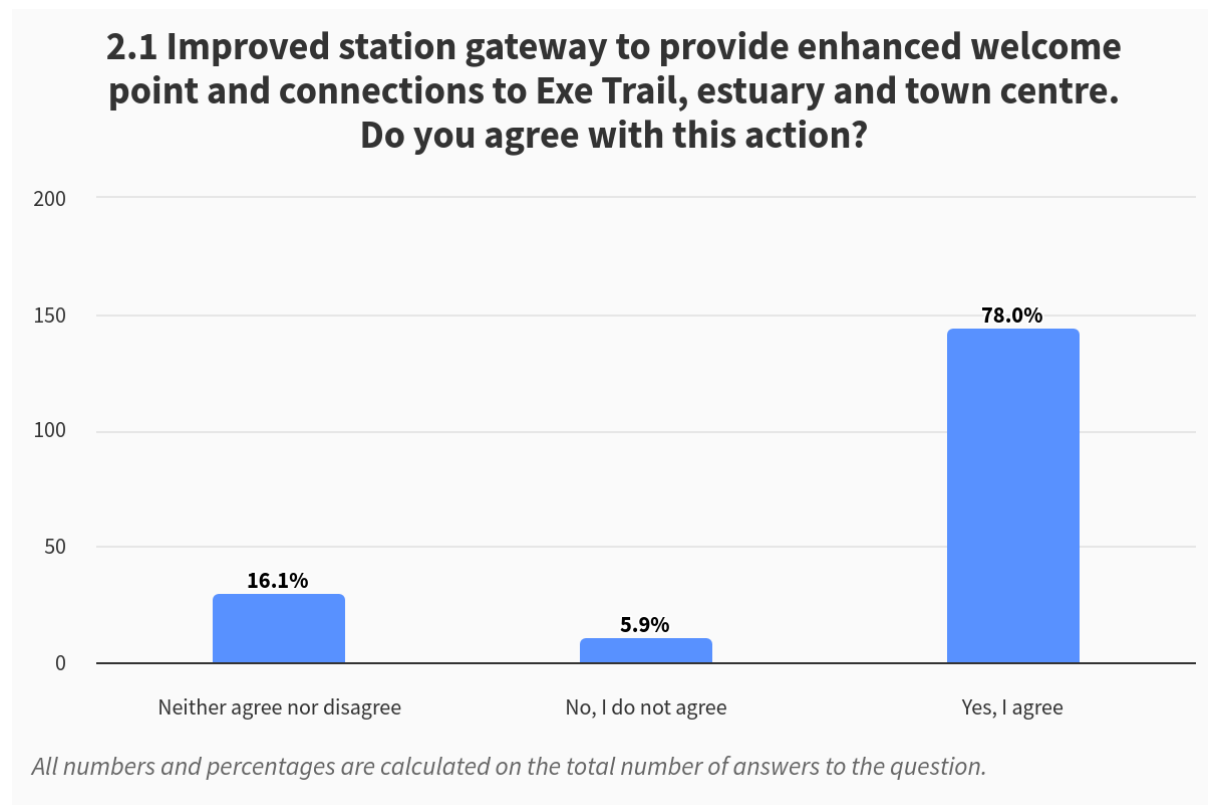
Strategic Objective 1.4: “No” responses:

- Respondents who disagreed with this action tended to question whether business accommodation is the right priority for a seaside town, and they preferred investment that strengthens family-focused and seafront-related activity.
- Some respondents stated that revitalising the town centre requires wider intervention on affordability and viability, and they felt measures such as business rates, rents and the mix of uses are likely to influence outcomes more than this action alone.
- A number of respondents linked their concerns to the broader condition of the town centre, suggesting that reducing the number of commercial units and converting some areas to residential use could be a more realistic response to vacancy.

## 4.2 Strategic Objective 2: Consultation Findings Action 2.1 – 2.7

### 2.1 Improved station gateway to provide enhanced welcome point and connections to Exe Trail, estuary and town centre. Do you agree with this action?

The Action 2.1 question received 186 contributions.



*Figure 5: Level of agreement with Action 2.1 (improving the station gateway to provide an enhanced welcome point and connections to the Exe Trail, estuary and town centre). Percentages are based on the total number of responses to this question.*

The results indicate strong support for Action 2.1, with 78.0% of respondents agreeing. 16.1% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 5.9% disagreed. Overall, this suggests broad endorsement of improving the station gateway and connectivity, with a smaller proportion of respondents either neutral or opposed.

## Free text response analysis

### Strategic Objective 2.1: “Agree/Neutral” responses:

- Respondents frequently described the station gateway as scruffy, confusing, or unwelcoming, and they felt improvements should be treated as an urgent “first impression” priority.
- Many respondents emphasised the need for clearer, safer and more obvious connections between the station, the Strand and the seafront, and they noted that visitors regularly ask for directions on arrival.
- Several respondents supported improvement but asked that proposals avoid repeating previous options that were perceived as poorly designed, overly disruptive, or damaging to important views and the setting.

### Strategic Objective 2.1: “No” responses:

- A small number of respondents indicated they could not agree without clearer detail on what changes would be delivered and what impacts would follow, particularly where previous proposals have been contentious.
- Some respondents suggested the issue is primarily one of layout and connectivity, and they felt physical design solutions should be practical and proportionate rather than driven by additional strategy work.
- One respondent raised a traffic-management concern, suggesting pedestrian crossing arrangements near the station can contribute to congestion and should be reviewed alongside any gateway proposals.

## 2.2 Commission a wayfinding strategy to improve the legibility of the town centre and the seafront. Do you agree with this action?

The Action 2.2 question received 186 contributions.

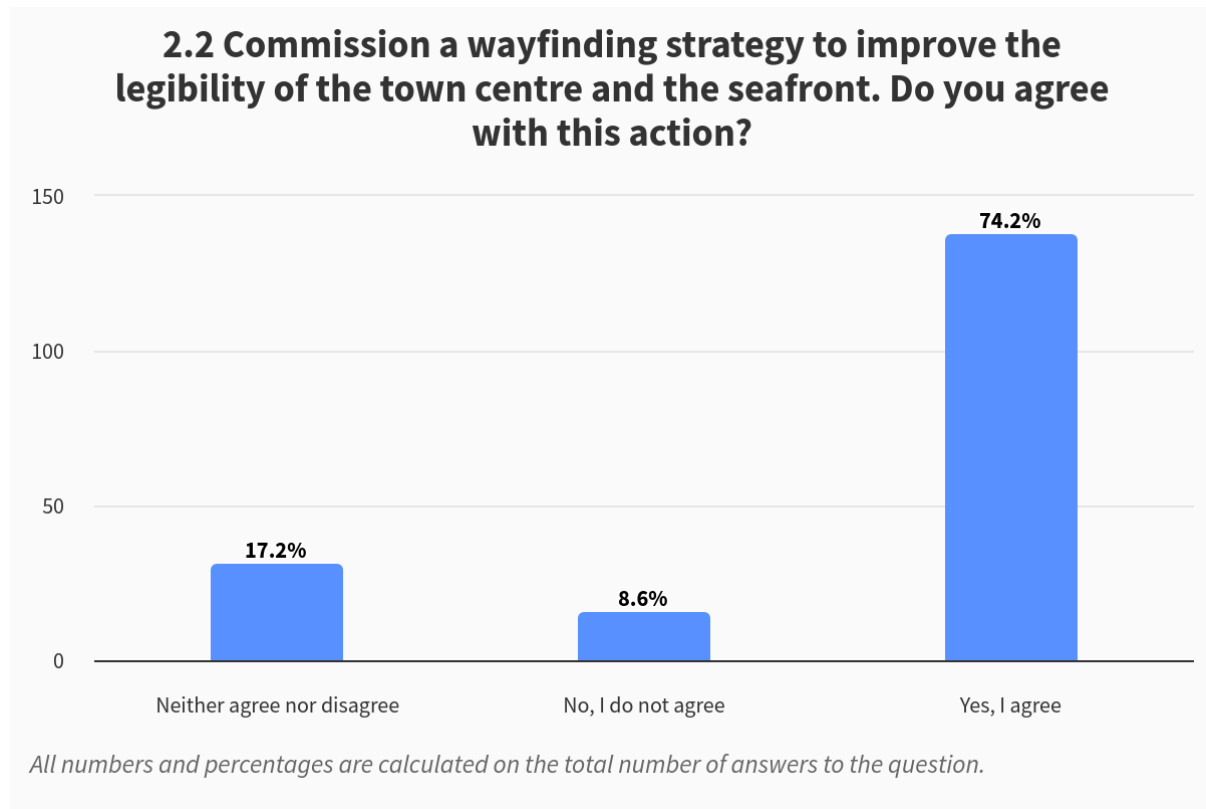


Figure 6: Level of agreement with Action 2.2 (commissioning a wayfinding strategy to improve the legibility of the town centre and the seafront). Percentages are based on the total number of responses to this question.

### Free text response analysis

Strategic Objective 2.2: “Agree/Neutral” responses:

- Respondents commonly supported clearer wayfinding because they believe Exmouth is difficult to navigate for first-time visitors and that current signage does not perform well in practice.
- Many respondents asked for a coherent approach that is easy to follow and visually clear, and they suggested this should be more creative than simply adding or enlarging fingerposts.
- A recurring suggestion was to build on existing assets, including reinstating and refurbishing the existing way marker route, so that improvements represent good value and feel joined-up.

Strategic Objective 2.2: “No” responses:

- Several respondents questioned whether a formal “wayfinding strategy” is necessary, and they felt that clear, common-sense signage could be implemented without further commissioning.
- Some respondents argued that many visitors use phone-based mapping, and they therefore considered additional signage investment to be a low priority compared with improvements to destinations and facilities.
- A recurring request was for clearer wording and presentation, with respondents indicating they were not confident what additional work would deliver beyond what is already known locally.

### 2.3 Commission a public realm strategy that guides improvements to streets and open spaces to reinforce the recommendations of the wayfinding strategy. Do you agree with this action?

The Action 2.3 question received 186 contributions.

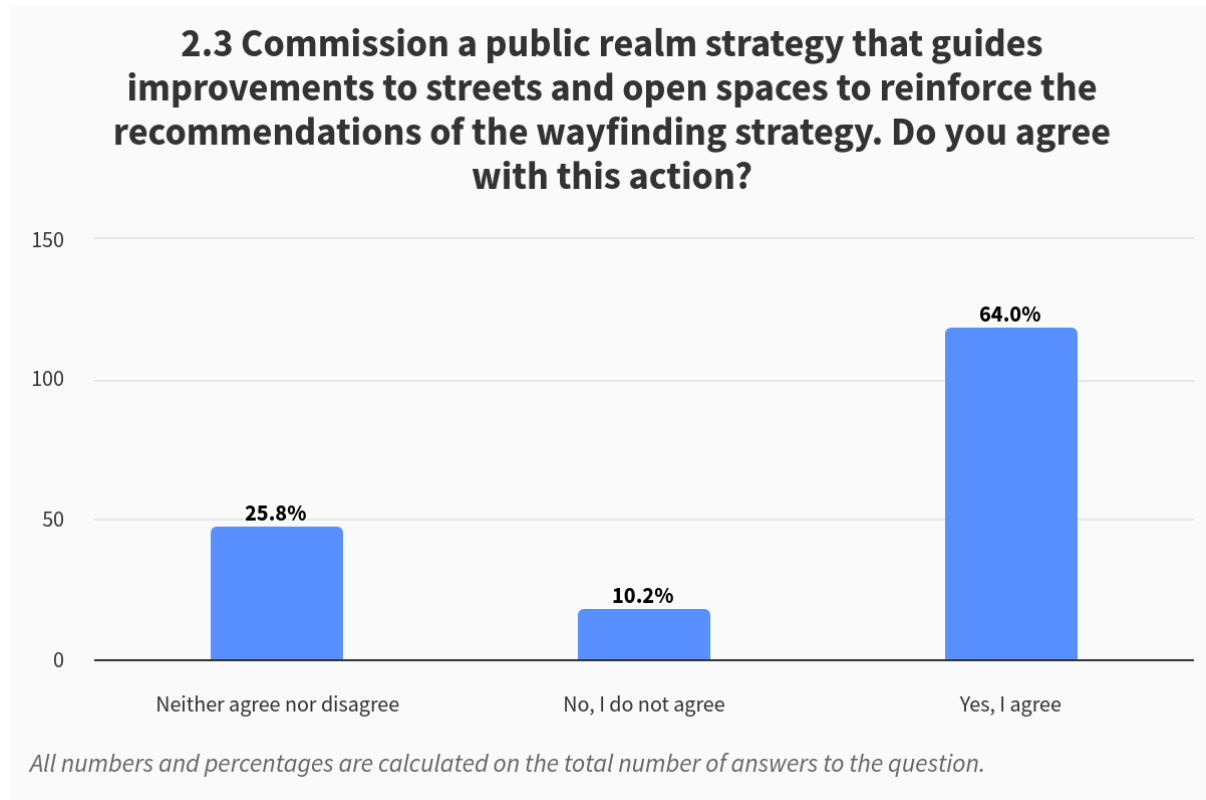


Figure 7: Level of agreement with Action 2.3 (commissioning a public realm strategy that guides improvements to streets and open spaces to reinforce the recommendations of the wayfinding strategy). Percentages are based on the total number of responses to this question.

#### Free text response analysis

Strategic Objective 2.3: “Agree/Neutral” responses:

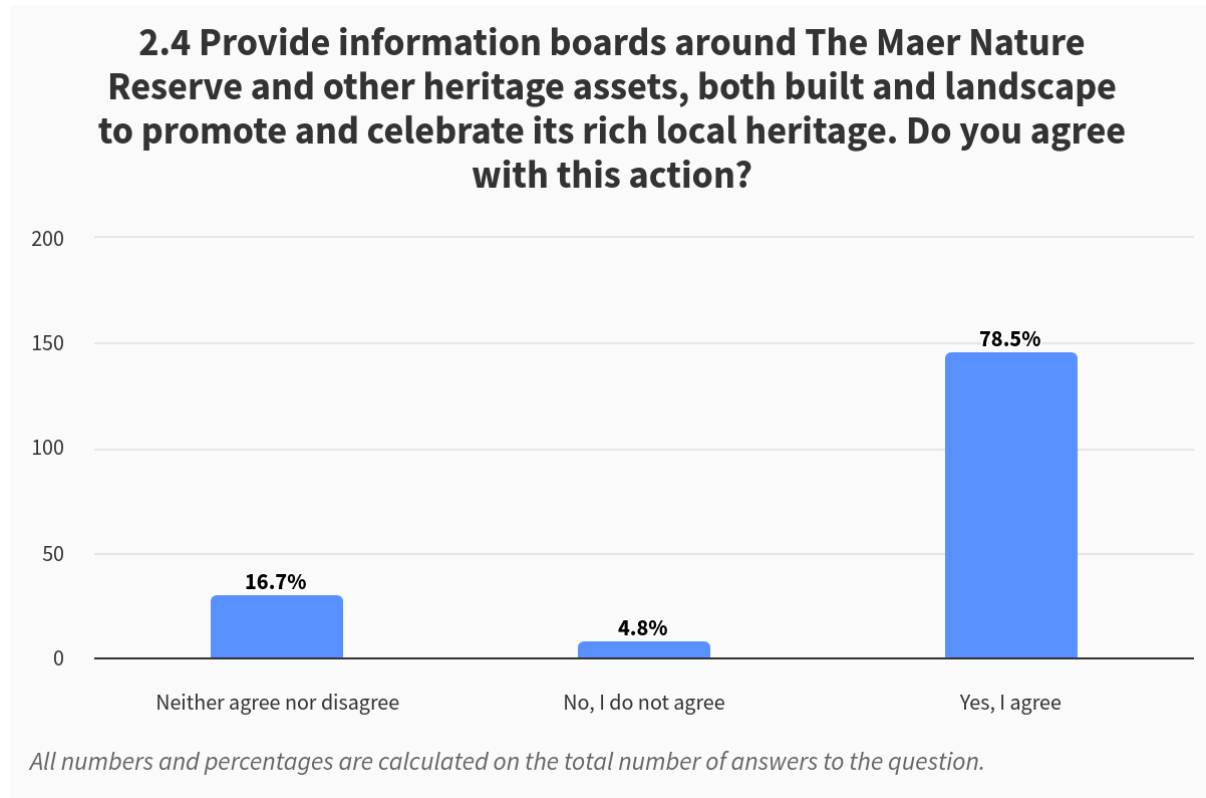
- Respondents generally supported improvements that make routes more attractive and accessible, with suggestions including better lighting, drainage, cleaning and general maintenance along key walking corridors.
- Some respondents proposed practical interventions that could strengthen movement and legibility, such as colour-coded routes, clearer surfacing cues, and more intuitive links that guide people from arrival points to destinations.
- Several respondents linked this action to wider connectivity, suggesting that better movement between the station, town centre and seafront may also require shuttle-style transport options and improved integration with active travel.

Strategic Objective 2.3: “No” responses:

- Respondents frequently objected to further commissioning, particularly where they felt consultants may not understand local needs or may repeat work that has not led to tangible delivery.
- Some respondents explicitly asked for plain English, stating that terminology used in the action read as jargon and made it difficult to judge what would actually change on the ground.
- Several respondents framed this as a value-for-money issue, suggesting that limited budgets should be focused on implementation rather than producing further strategic documents.

**2.4 Provide information boards around The Maer Nature Reserve and other heritage assets, both built and landscape to promote and celebrate its rich local heritage. Do you agree with this action?**

The Action 2.4 question received 186 contributions



*Figure 8: Level of agreement with Action 2.4 (providing information boards around The Maer Nature Reserve and other heritage assets, both built and landscape, to promote and celebrate Exmouth’s rich local heritage). Percentages are based on the total number of responses to this question.*

**Free text response analysis**

Strategic Objective 2.4: “Agree/Neutral” responses:

- Respondents often supported more interpretation, particularly where it helps people understand and appreciate the Maer, the Jurassic Coast context, and Exmouth’s connection to the World Heritage Site.
- Many respondents described information boards as a relatively low-cost way to increase awareness and encourage exploration, provided they are well designed and located appropriately.
- Respondents also highlighted practical considerations, including ensuring boards do not intrude on sensitive landscapes and that materials and placement account for weathering, fading and long-term upkeep.

Strategic Objective 2.4: “Agree/Neutral” responses:

- Respondents who disagreed generally stated that information boards are not essential or should be treated as a lower priority compared with more pressing improvements.
- Some respondents questioned likely usage and suggested that boards may not represent good value if the primary users of certain spaces are already local or if similar information is available elsewhere.
- A small number of respondents implied that vandalism risk and ongoing maintenance should be addressed clearly if information boards are proposed.

## 2.5 Support the provision of more drinking water fountains and shower facilities along the seafront. Do you agree with this action?

The Action 2.5 question received 186 contributions.

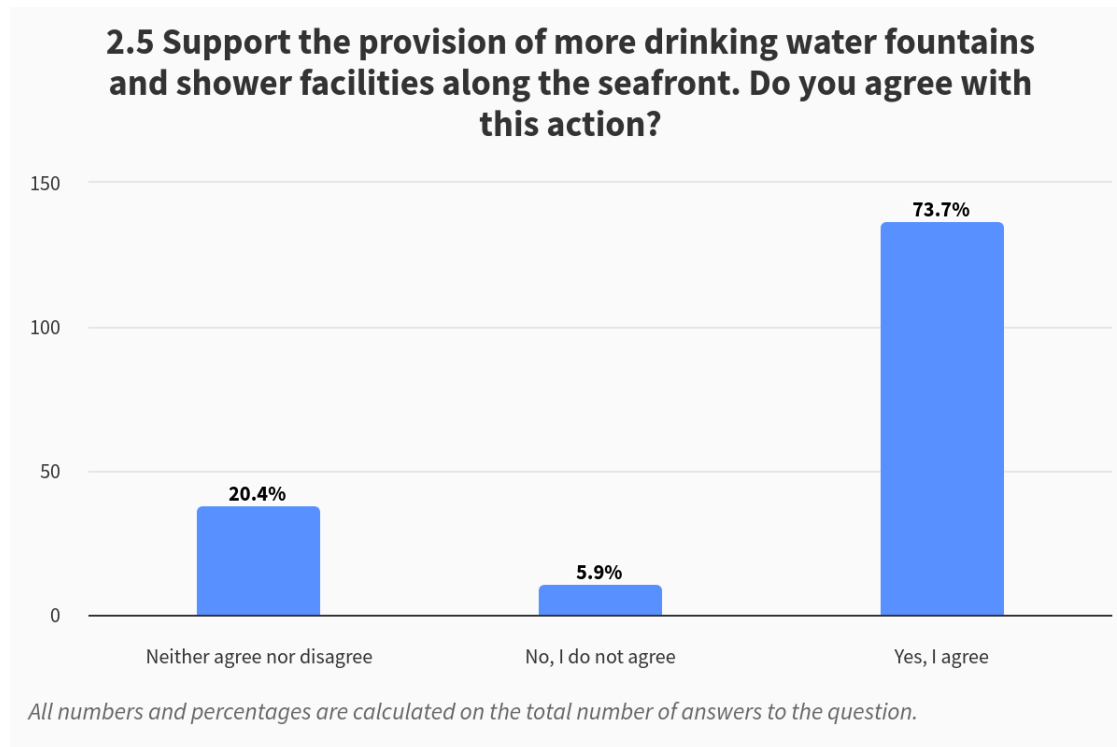


Figure 9: Level of agreement with Action 2.5 (supporting the provision of more drinking water fountains and shower facilities along the seafront). Percentages are based on the total number of responses to this question.

### Free text response analysis

Strategic Objective 2.5: “Agree/Neutral” responses:

- Respondents frequently welcomed improved visitor facilities, describing drinking water and changing provision as practical additions that would improve the experience for residents, visitors and water sports users.
- Many respondents suggested using or adapting existing infrastructure and locations, such as Orcombe, Foxholes, the Maer toilet block and the estuary area, rather than creating entirely new standalone facilities.
- Some respondents supported showers or changing in principle but stressed that maintenance, vandalism risk and operating arrangements should be clear, and that basic provision such as toilets should remain available to match demand.

Strategic Objective 2.5: “No” responses:

- Respondents often described additional showers and water points as “nice to have” rather than essential, and some felt existing provision is adequate or that new infrastructure could be costly to maintain.
- Several respondents raised practical concerns, including vandalism risk and the need for a credible long-term maintenance plan before introducing new facilities.

- Where respondents supported provision in principle, they tended to attach conditions, such as clarity on whether showers are aimed at swimmers, water sports users or camper-van demand, and whether responsibility should sit with other providers where water quality is the driver.

## 2.6 Update the existing shopfront design guide. Do you agree with this action?

The Action 2.6 question received 186 contributions.

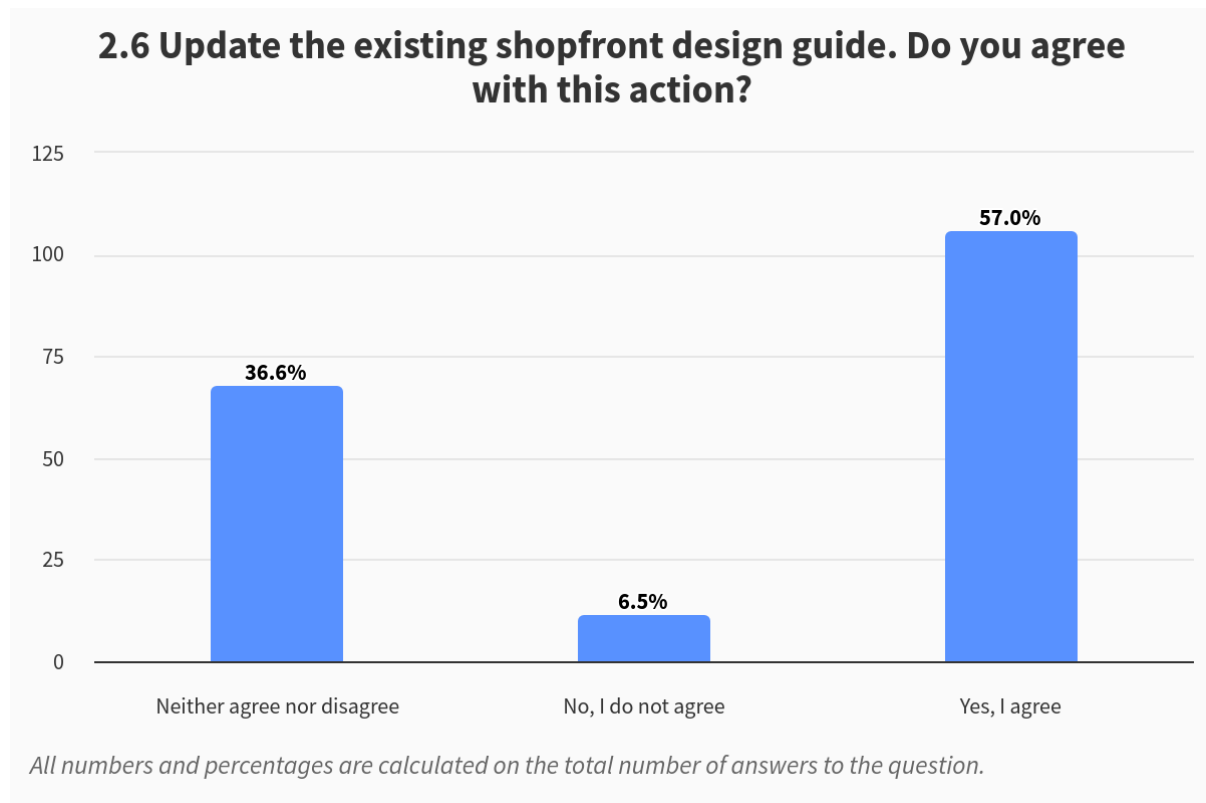


Figure 10: Level of agreement with Action 2.6 (updating the existing shopfront design guide). Percentages are based on the total number of responses to this question.

### Free text response analysis

Strategic Objective 2.6: “Agree/Neutral” responses:

- Respondents who commented often supported stronger application of shopfront guidance, stating that consistent implementation would improve the town centre’s look and feel and protect local character.
- Several respondents raised concerns about overly illuminated or unsympathetic modern shopfront changes, and they felt guidance should help maintain quality and respect Exmouth’s historic aesthetic.
- Some respondents indicated they were not familiar with the current guidance and would welcome clearer communication about what it is, how it is used, and how compliance is encouraged.

Strategic Objective 2.6: “No” responses:

- Respondents who commented tended to support retaining the existing guide, but they emphasised that it should be observed and enforced more consistently in practice.
- Several respondents expressed concern about over-modernisation and the loss of traditional or historic features, and they preferred a well-maintained, coherent appearance that respects Exmouth’s character.
- Some respondents questioned the value of spending additional public funds updating guidance if the main issue is enforcement and day-to-day compliance.

**2.7 Strand refresh - work with all stakeholders to formalise various uses of this key space to ensure that business spill-out, events and meanwhile activities are complementary and compliant with requirements for use and maintenance. Do you agree with this action?**

The Action 2.7 question received 186 contributions.

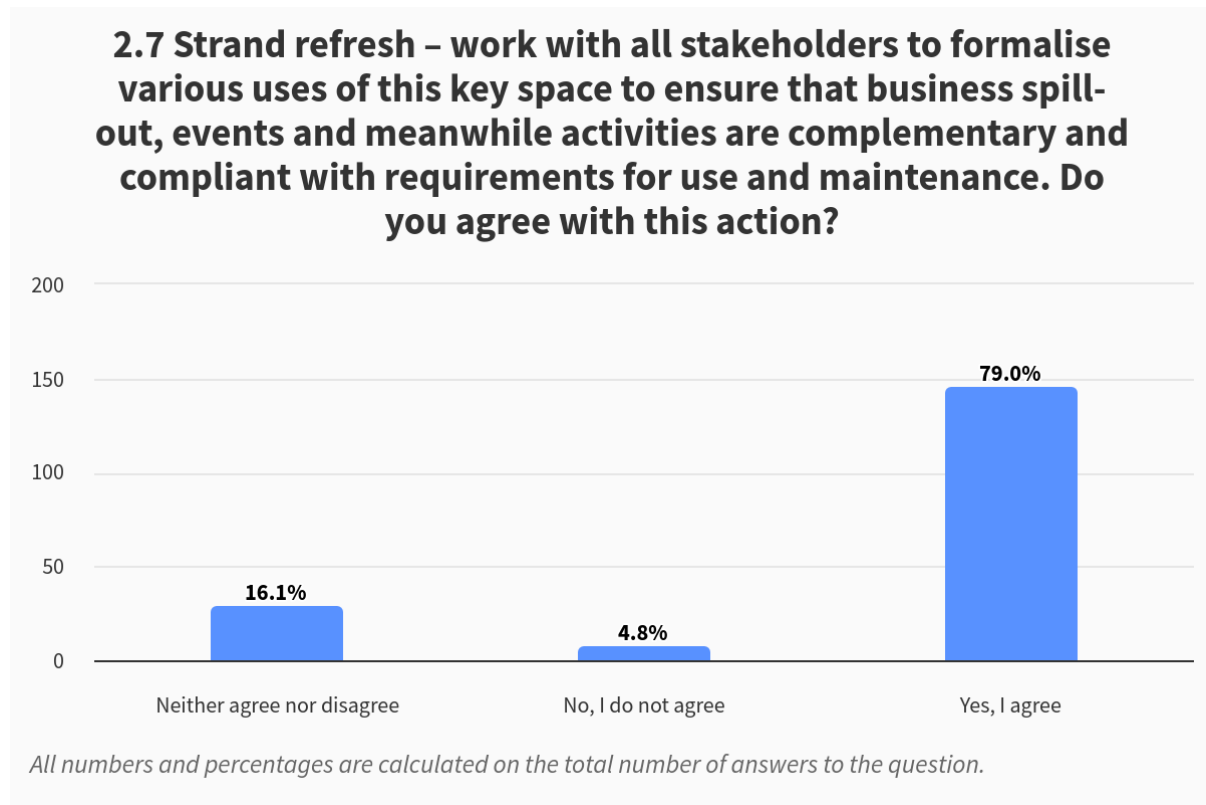


Figure 11: Level of agreement with Action 2.7 (Strand refresh, working with stakeholders to formalise uses of this key space so that business spill-out, events and meanwhile activities are complementary and compliant with requirements for use and maintenance). Percentages are based on the total number of responses to this question.

**Free text response analysis**

Strategic Objective 2.7: “Agree/Neutral” responses:

- Respondents frequently described the Strand as the heart of the town centre and supported events and outdoor seating because these create activity, support businesses and contribute to a positive atmosphere.
- Many respondents emphasised that uses should be well managed, with attention to cleanliness, respectful treatment of the war memorial, and appropriate controls to prevent obstruction and anti-social behaviour.
- Respondents also indicated that council taxpayers and local stakeholders should have a clear voice in how the space is used, and they wanted an approach that supports vibrancy while remaining orderly and inclusive.

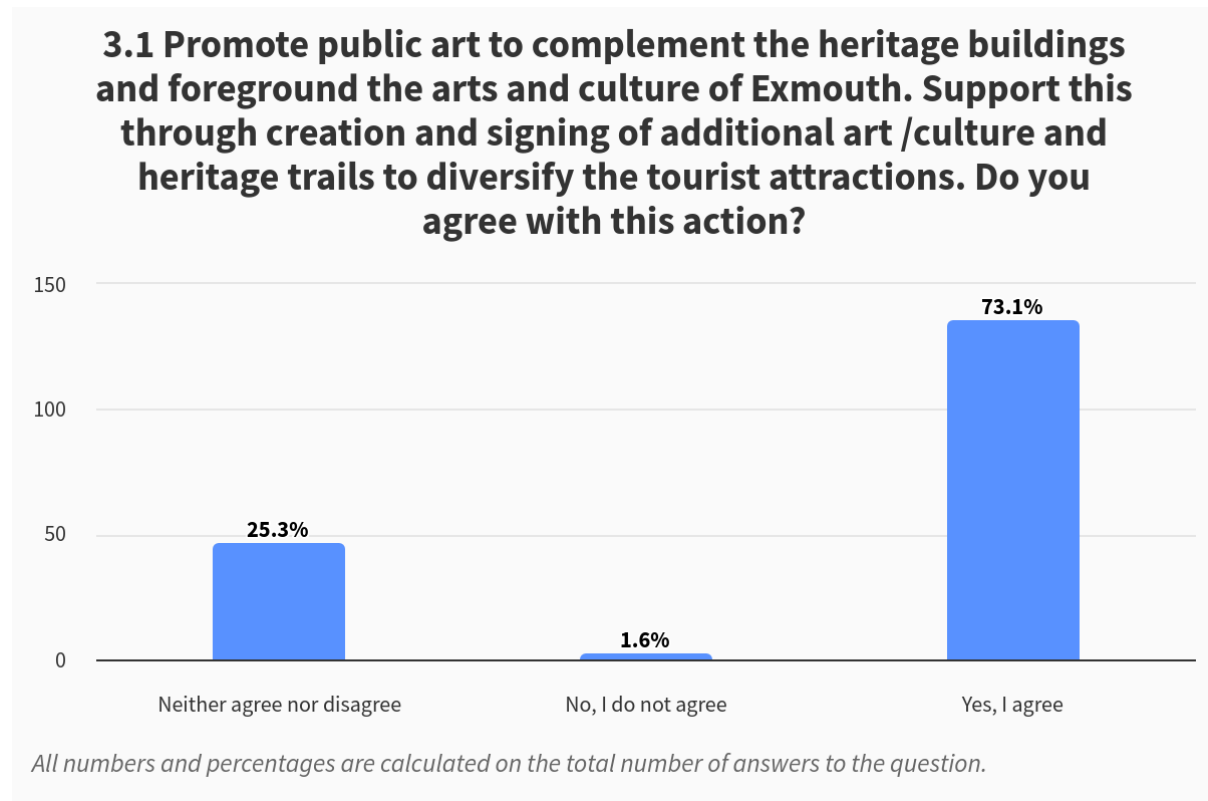
Strategic Objective 2.7: “No” responses:

- Respondents commonly stated that the Strand already works well as a flexible space and they were concerned that additional controls, regulation, or costs could discourage activity rather than enable it.
- Some respondents suggested the priority is simplifying and rationalising existing processes across Council functions, so that businesses and organisers can use the space with fewer barriers.
- Where improvements were supported, respondents tended to focus on practical management and upkeep rather than new rules, and they wanted any approach to remain proportionate and supportive of regular use.

## 4.3 Strategic Objective 3: Consultation Findings Action 3.1 – 3.5

**3.1 Promote public art to complement the heritage buildings and foreground the arts and culture of Exmouth. Support this through creation and signing of additional art /culture and heritage trails to diversify the tourist attractions. Do you agree with this action?**

The Action 3.1 question received 186 contributions.



*Figure 12: Level of agreement with Action 3.1 (promoting public art to complement heritage buildings and foreground the arts and culture of Exmouth, supported through the creation and signing of additional art/culture and heritage trails to diversify tourist attractions). Percentages are based on the total number of responses to this question.*

### Free text response analysis

Strategic Objective 3.1: “Agree/Neutral” responses:

- Many respondents supported expanding arts, trails and place-based features to strengthen Exmouth’s identity, and they asked for delivery that prioritises local artists, schools and community groups to build genuine local ownership.
- Several comments referenced existing positive examples such as murals and themed trails and suggested extending these approaches while ensuring design quality is high and maintenance is planned to avoid deterioration or vandalism.
- A number of respondents supported cultural interpretation (including heritage links and town stories), while others cautioned that themes should be carefully chosen and

not feel overly narrow, with some preferring broader coastal or activity-based identity rather than dinosaurs alone.

Strategic Objective 3.1: “No” responses:

- Some respondents felt additional art and trail-style interventions are not a priority because Exmouth already has arts activity, and the core issue is that existing provision is not sufficiently supported, promoted or maintained.
- Several comments raised concern that outdoor art and installations can be vulnerable to vandalism and weathering, and that without a clear purpose and ongoing maintenance they may become liabilities or eyesores.
- A number of respondents questioned whether Exmouth should pursue a stronger “arts destination” identity at all, suggesting that resources would be better directed toward practical priorities and allowing businesses and community groups to develop offers organically.

### 3.2 Promote evening events throughout the year, especially food focused events that make use of existing and enhanced public realm. Do you agree with this action?

The Action 3.2 question received 186 contributions.

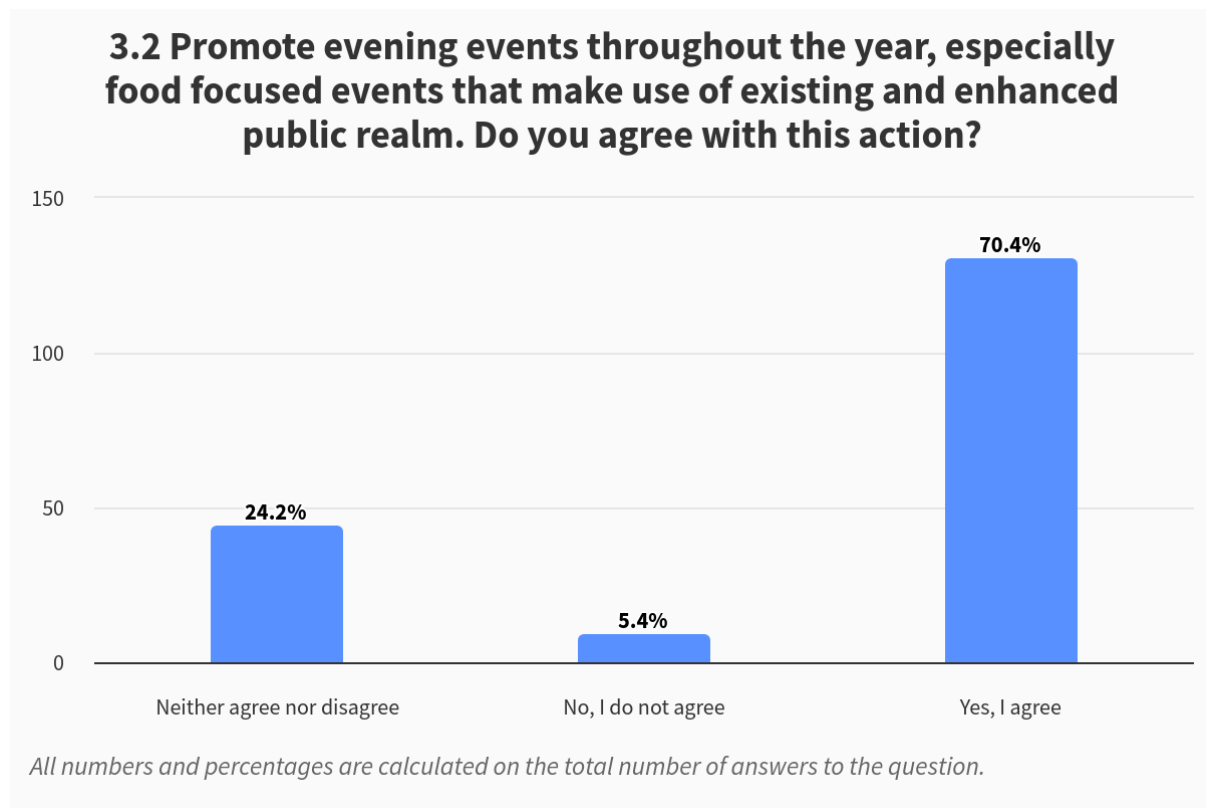


Figure 13: Level of agreement with Action 3.2 (promoting evening events throughout the year, especially food-focused events that make use of existing and enhanced public realm). Percentages are based on the total number of responses to this question.

#### Free text response analysis

Strategic Objective 3.2: “Agree/Neutral” responses:

- Respondents commonly viewed additional events and promotions as a practical way to increase vibrancy and footfall, particularly if programming extends later into the day and is better promoted to residents and visitors.
- Many comments emphasised that events should not be overly food-focused, and that programming should complement existing year-round businesses rather than unintentionally diverting trade from rate-paying outlets.
- Several respondents highlighted operational requirements, including noise and litter management, safe finishing times, and realistic expectations for winter delivery given Exmouth’s coastal weather and the need for suitable shelter.

Strategic Objective 3.2: “No” responses:

- Many objections focused on suitability and impacts of evening events on the seafront, with respondents citing nearby residential areas, the town’s older population, and concerns about noise or disturbance late into the day.
- Respondents also questioned whether regular evening events are realistic outside the summer season, noting Exmouth’s exposure to storms and coastal conditions and suggesting indoor or seasonal approaches would be more appropriate.
- Some respondents felt an over-emphasis on food-focused evening activity could undermine existing cafés, pubs and restaurants, particularly given local spending constraints, and that programming should avoid displacing trade from established businesses.

### 3.3 Provide events infrastructure in appropriate locations to enhance the ease of setting up events. Infrastructure such as charging points, footfall counters etc. Do you agree with this action?

The Action 3.3 question received 186 contributions.

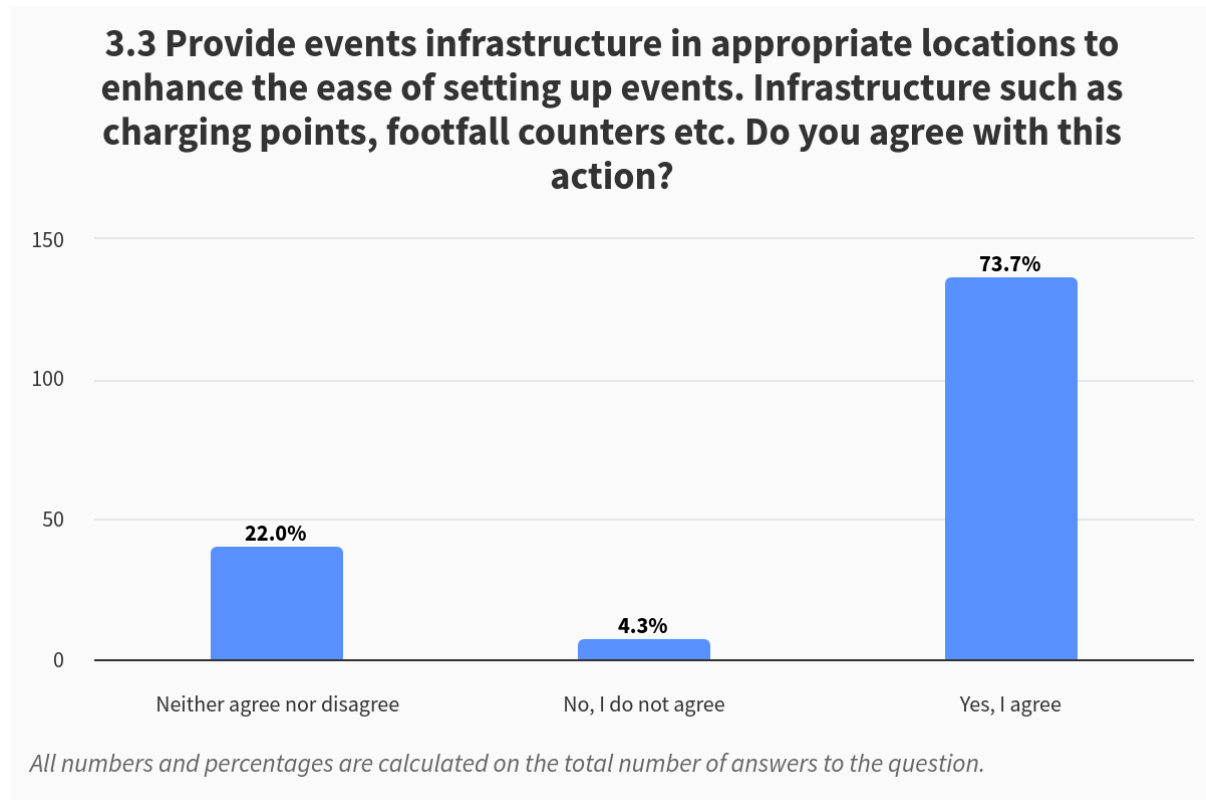


Figure 14: Level of agreement with Action 3.3 (providing events infrastructure in appropriate locations to enhance the ease of setting up events, such as charging points and footfall counters). Percentages are based on the total number of responses to this question.

#### Free text response analysis

Strategic Objective 3.3: “Agree/Neutral” responses:

- A consistent message was that events will only succeed if the “basic enabling infrastructure” is in place, with requests for practical provision such as power access, suitable surfacing, and flexible weather-resilient solutions such as covered structures.
  - Respondents also linked successful event use to the day-to-day condition of the public realm, including cleanliness, repairs, and avoiding a “tatty” appearance, with tree planting and improved presentation cited as supportive measures.
- Several comments noted that costs and processes must be proportionate, as high charges, complex licensing or perceived over-regulation could deter community groups and small operators from using spaces.

Strategic Objective 3.3: “No” responses:

- Several respondents did not support this action because they felt there are not enough appropriate locations for additional infrastructure and event facilities, particularly in sensitive seafront settings.
- Concerns were raised that providing new outdoor infrastructure in exposed coastal conditions could lead to rapid deterioration, higher maintenance burdens and poor long-term value if assets fail or become unsightly.
- A number of comments indicated that proposals need clearer definitions and site-specific detail, because respondents were unwilling to support a broad concept without understanding scale, materials, operating arrangements and maintenance responsibility.

### 3.4 Create opportunities for arts and culture by repurposing the existing assets, complementing them with new facilities and a curation strategy. Do you agree with this action?

The Action 3.4 question received 186 contributions.

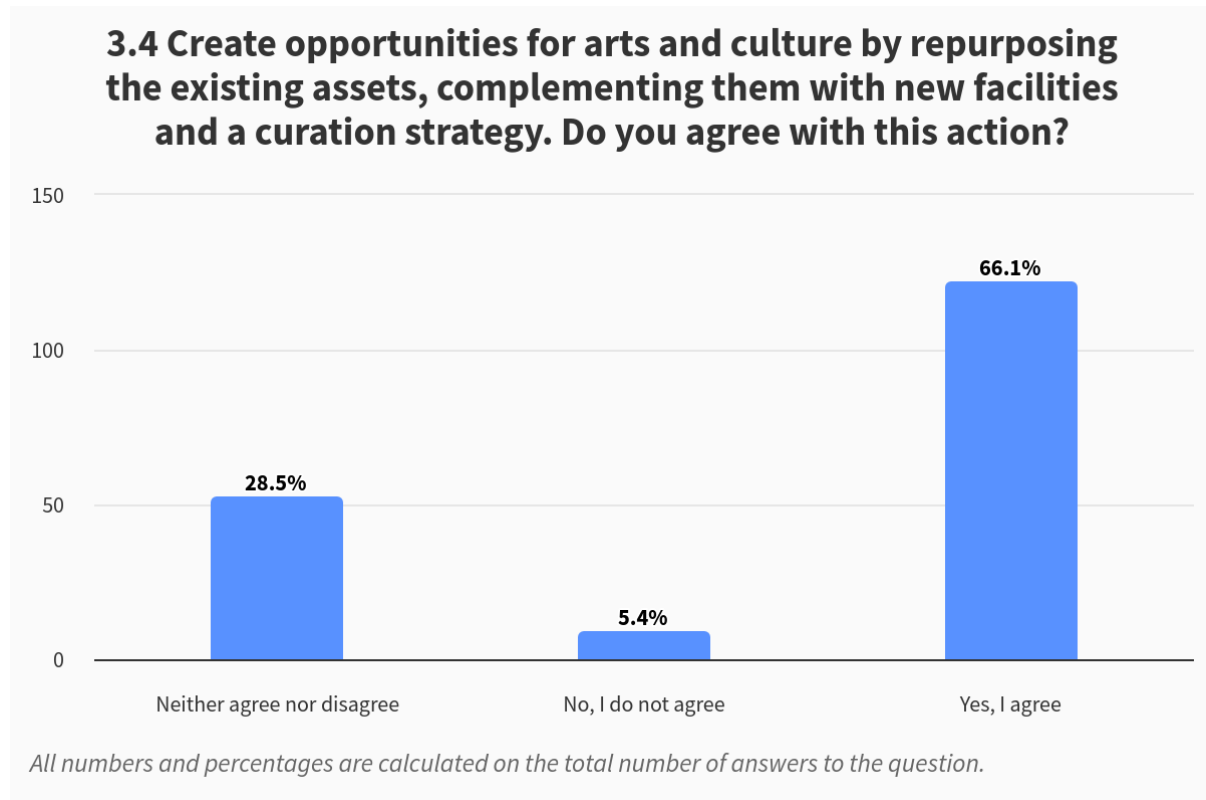


Figure 15: Level of agreement with Action 3.4 (creating opportunities for arts and culture by repurposing existing assets, complementing them with new facilities and a curation strategy). Percentages are based on the total number of responses to this question.

#### Free text response analysis

Strategic Objective 3.4: “Agree/Neutral” responses:

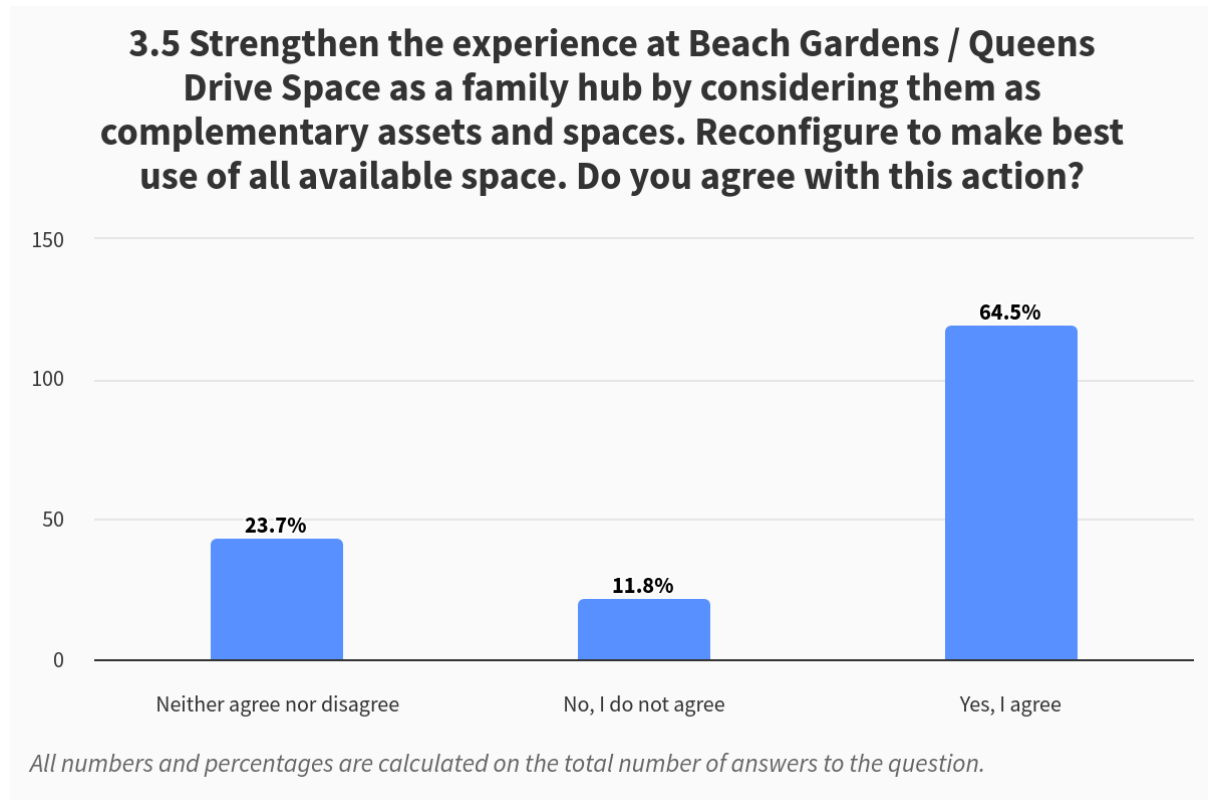
- Many respondents interpreted this action as an opportunity to bring vacant or under-used town centre units back into active use, with repeated calls to repurpose empty premises to improve the overall look and reduce the sense of decline.
- A number of respondents asked for clearer examples of what “repurposing existing assets” would involve, noting that without detail it is difficult to judge suitability, value for money, and whether proposals would be practical or locally supported.
- Views varied on the need for a new dedicated arts venue, with some advocating strongly for an arts centre in a central building, while others felt Exmouth already has venues and that the priority should be coordination, affordability, and enhancement of what exists.

Strategic Objective 3.4: “No” responses:

- Some respondents expressed frustration that proposals remain too vague to assess, and they felt unable to agree to “repurposing” language without clear examples of what assets are in scope and what outcomes are intended.
- A number of comments cautioned against shifting attention away from Queens Drive Space, noting perceived delays and lack of tangible delivery to date and concerns about further spend without implementation.
- Several respondents suggested that investment should prioritise town centre needs rather than additional seafront-led projects, and that resources should focus on practical improvements where there is clear evidence of need and deliverability.

**3.5 Strengthen the experience at Beach Gardens / Queens Drive Space as a family hub by considering them as complementary assets and spaces. Reconfigure to make best use of all available space. Do you agree with this action?**

The Action 3.5 question received 186 contributions.



*Figure 16: Level of agreement with Action 3.5 (strengthening the experience at Beach Gardens / Queens Drive Space as a family hub by considering them as complementary assets and spaces, and reconfiguring to make best use of all available space). Percentages are based on the total number of responses to this question.*

**Free text response analysis**

Strategic Objective 3.5: “Agree/Neutral” responses:

- Respondents broadly supported the principle of a safe, family-friendly hub, but many stressed that Beach Gardens and Queens Drive Space are perceived as distinct areas and should not be treated as interchangeable without a clear explanation of complementary roles.
- A frequent condition of support was that accessibility, and parking must be protected, particularly for disabled people, older residents and families, with strong concerns raised about any approach that reduces convenient seafront parking.
- Several respondents suggested that Queens Drive Space could accommodate more activity and better layout, maintenance and management, while Beach Gardens was often described as needing to remain a traditional open seafront space with an emphasis on low-key, sympathetic improvements.

Strategic Objective 3.5: “No” responses:

- The most consistent reason for disagreement was strong opposition to any approach that reduces or repurposes seafront parking, particularly near the Pavilion, because respondents felt this would disadvantage older residents, people with mobility challenges, and families who rely on close access but may not hold Blue Badges.
- Respondents argued that activities and family uses can be accommodated in existing nearby spaces, particularly Queens Drive Space, without reducing Beach Gardens car park capacity, and several suggested enhancing surrounding green areas instead of removing parking.
- Some comments also raised wider concerns about future demand, noting population growth and peak-season pressure, and stating that reducing seafront parking could reduce footfall for local businesses and deter people from visiting the town and seafront

## 4.4 Strategic Objective 4: Consultation Findings Action 4.1 – 4.3

### 4.1 Create hubs within the town centre and the seafront to harness the opportunity to link into the wider walking and cycling networks. Do you agree with this action?

The Action 4.1 question received 185 contributions.

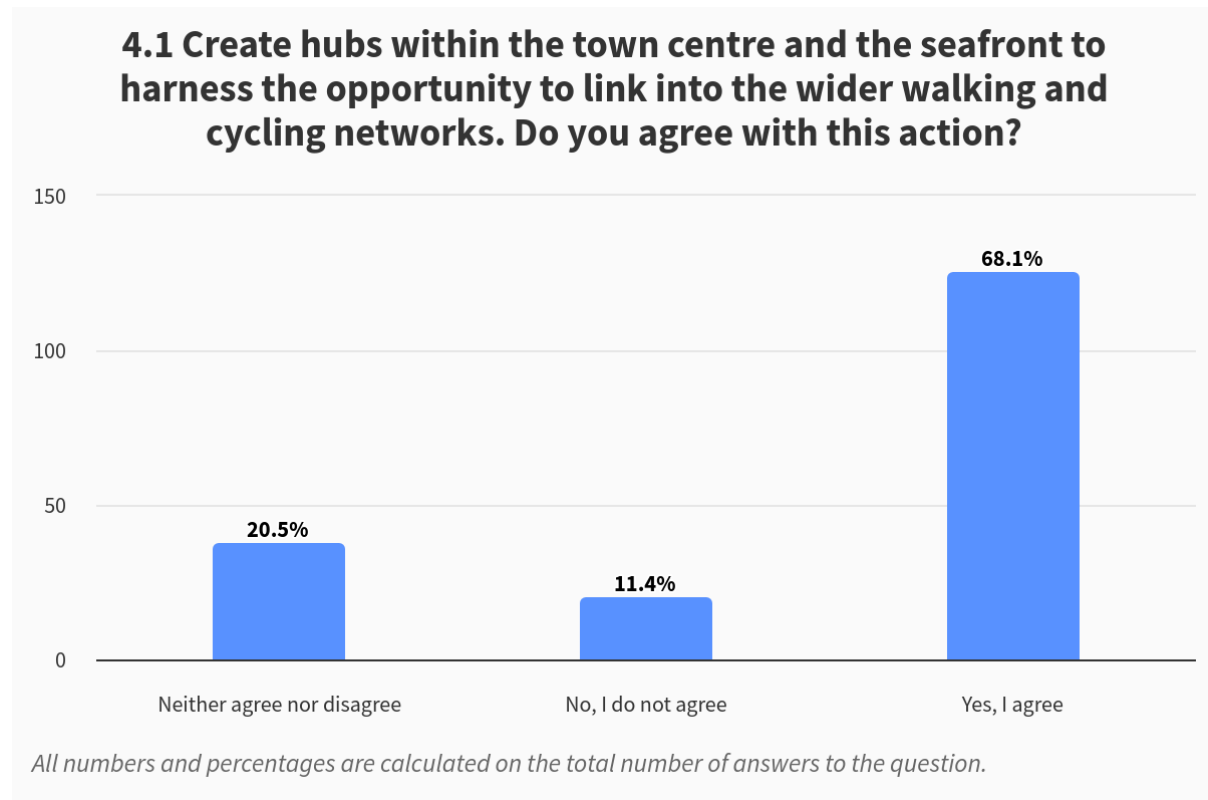


Figure 17: Level of agreement with Action 4.1 (creating hubs within the town centre and the seafront to harness the opportunity to link into the wider walking and cycling networks). Percentages are based on the total number of responses to this question.

#### Free text response analysis

Strategic Objective 4.1: “Agree/Neutral” responses:

- Respondents generally supported the idea of “hubs” and gateways where these would deliver practical wayfinding and connection, particularly to help people understand how to move between key assets (for example, links between the Exe Estuary Trail, the town centre, the marina, the seafront, and onward routes such as towards Budleigh and Littleham).
- A frequent suggestion was that hubs should be light-touch and locally informed, with better signage and route-marking rather than “trendy” infrastructure, and with input from local cycle shops and community partners on what is genuinely useful and maintainable.
- Several comments stressed that hub thinking should be inclusive and multi-modal, recognising that not everyone can walk or cycle, and therefore should be paired with

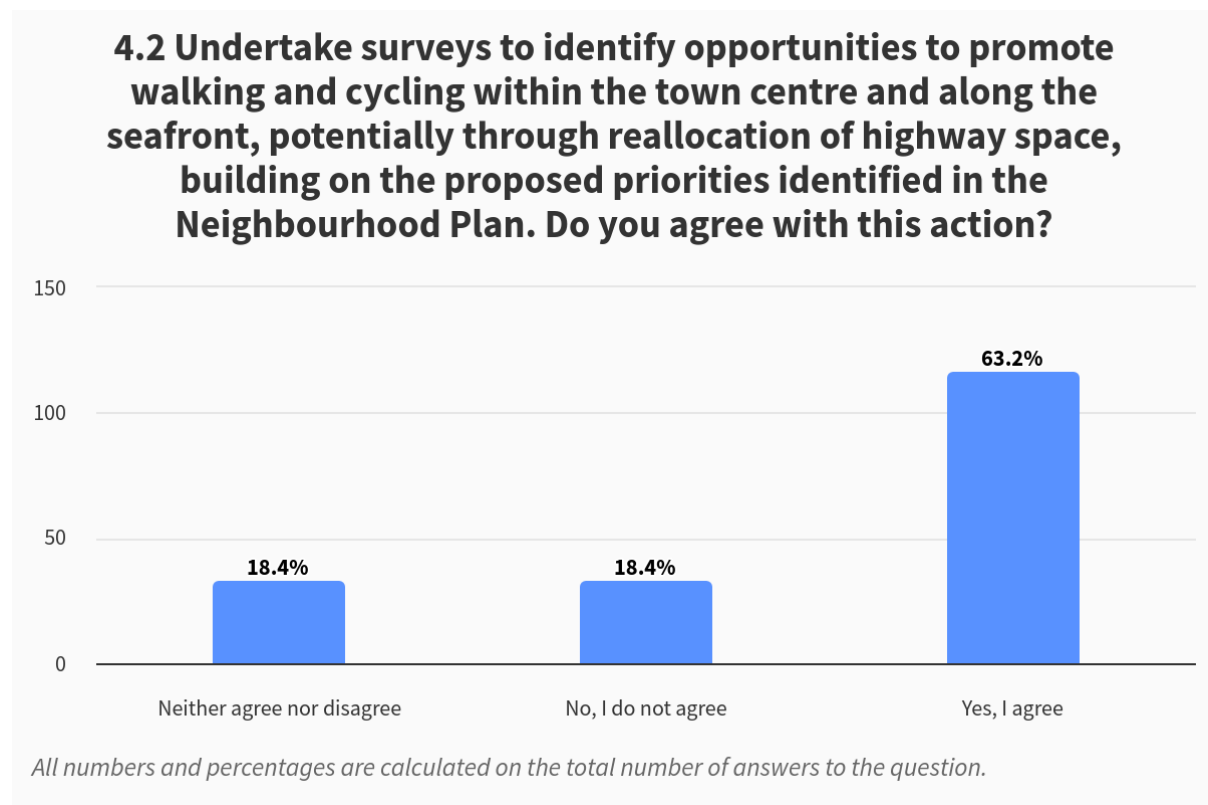
accessible alternatives such as shuttle buses and clear links to toilets and other essential facilities.

Strategic Objective 4.1: “No” responses:

- Many respondents felt that new walking and cycling “hubs” are not required because people already navigate using existing routes, mobile mapping and established networks, and they considered additional seafront development for refreshments or cycle hire unnecessary.
- A common suggestion was that the station area is the only location where a hub-style intervention may be justified, because it functions as the main gateway and is where clearer arrival information, orientation and facilities could add value.
- Several comments expressed concern that further structures along the seafront could dilute the area’s natural appeal and place additional pressure on existing cafés and local businesses, rather than strengthening the current offer.

**4.2 Undertake surveys to identify opportunities to promote walking and cycling within the town centre and along the seafront, potentially through reallocation of highway space, building on the proposed priorities identified in the Neighbourhood Plan. Do you agree with this action?**

The Action 4.2 question received 185 contributions.



*Figure 18: Level of agreement with Action 4.2 (undertaking surveys to identify opportunities to promote walking and cycling within the town centre and along the seafront, potentially through reallocation of highway space, building on the proposed priorities identified in the Neighbourhood Plan). Percentages are based on the total number of responses to this question.*

**Free text response analysis**

Strategic Objective 4.2: “Agree/Neutral” responses:

- Many respondents agreed with the intention to promote walking and cycling but framed their support as conditional on making the seafront environment safer and more legible, because the current shared arrangements were described as confusing, stressful, or prone to near-misses in busy periods.
- A common request was for clearer separation between pedestrians and cyclists, with multiple references to the need for designs that work for disabled people and those with sight loss, and that avoid relying on paint-only solutions which some felt are not effective in practice.
- Respondents also highlighted the need for a joined-up network, noting that routes can “stop and start” and that key links (for example, between the station area, the Strand, and the seafront) are not intuitive, so improvements should focus on

continuity, conflict reduction, and safe crossings rather than simply reallocating space.

Strategic Objective 4.2: “No” responses:

- The dominant concern was safety and comfort on shared seafront routes, with respondents describing the current pedestrian and cycle arrangements as stressful, congested and risky, particularly for families, disabled people, and those accessing vehicles and crossings.
- Many respondents opposed additional or wider dedicated cycle lanes on the seafront, stating that fast or “exercise” cycling can intimidate other users, and they recommended alternative solutions such as clearer separation, stronger behaviour management, or encouraging cyclists to use adjacent roads.
- Respondents repeatedly emphasised that Exmouth has an older population and many residents with limited mobility, and they stated that walking and cycling initiatives must not reduce practical access to the seafront, town and amenities for people who need closer drop-off, parking or affordable transport options.

### 4.3 Promote use of the rail link as a park-and-ride system to reduce traffic in the town centre and seafront. Do you agree with this action?

The Action 4.3 question received 185 contributions.

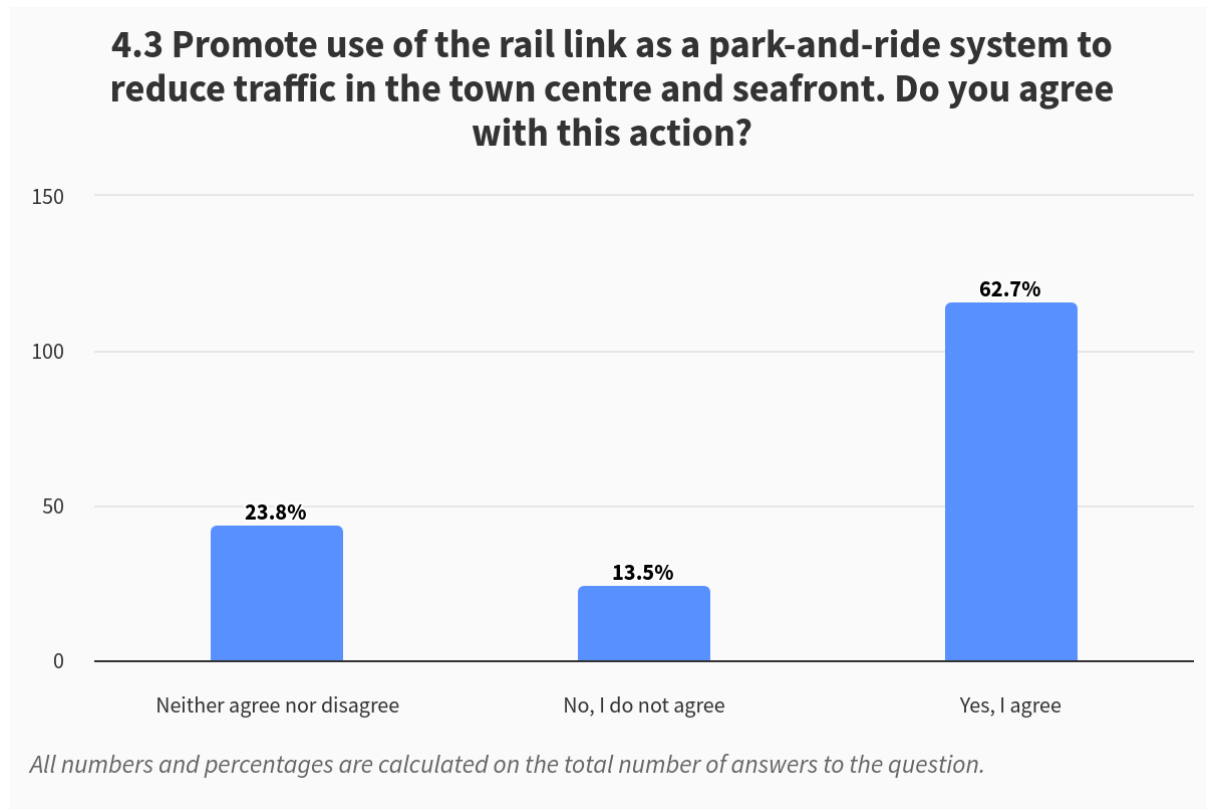


Figure 19: Level of agreement with Action 4.3 (promoting use of the rail link as a park-and-ride system to reduce traffic in the town centre and seafront). Percentages are based on the total number of responses to this question.

#### Free text response analysis

Strategic Objective 4.3: “Agree/Neutral” responses:

- Support for park and ride was typically expressed as support for the principle of reducing congestion and discouraging unnecessary seafront car use, but many respondents emphasised that the “ride” element must be frequent, convenient, and attractive enough to change behaviour.
- The strongest positive theme was the need for reliable, year-round shuttle connectivity, especially buses that link the station, town centre and the full length of the seafront (including safer swimming areas and Orcombe Point), so that the system works for residents as well as visitors and is accessible for less mobile people.
- Respondents frequently suggested that a successful model is more likely to involve sites closer to Exmouth (for example, on the outskirts rather than Exeter), and many also flagged capacity constraints on the rail line and station parking, meaning that any rail-based approach would require careful planning, demand management, and integration with bus services.

Strategic Objective 4.3: “No” responses:

- A strong and consistent objection was that a rail-linked or out-of-town park and ride approach is not practical for a seaside destination, because families and visitors typically carry significant equipment and would be unlikely to transfer bags, beach kit or water sports equipment between car, bus and train.
- Many respondents argued that by the time visitors reach Exmouth Station they have already driven into the town, and they stated that the distance from the station to the seafront makes the concept unworkable unless a frequent, reliable shuttle or “land train” link is included.
- Several comments asked for clearer evidence that park and ride would be used and suggested that resources would be better spent on measures that improve access without deterring visitors, such as enhanced bus services, better value fares, and solutions that reflect how people currently travel to Exmouth.

## 4.5 Strategic Objective 5: Consultation Findings Action 5.1 – 5.5

### 5.1 Enhance biodiversity of flora and fauna along Queens Drive. Do you agree with this action?

The Action 5.1 question received 185 contributions.

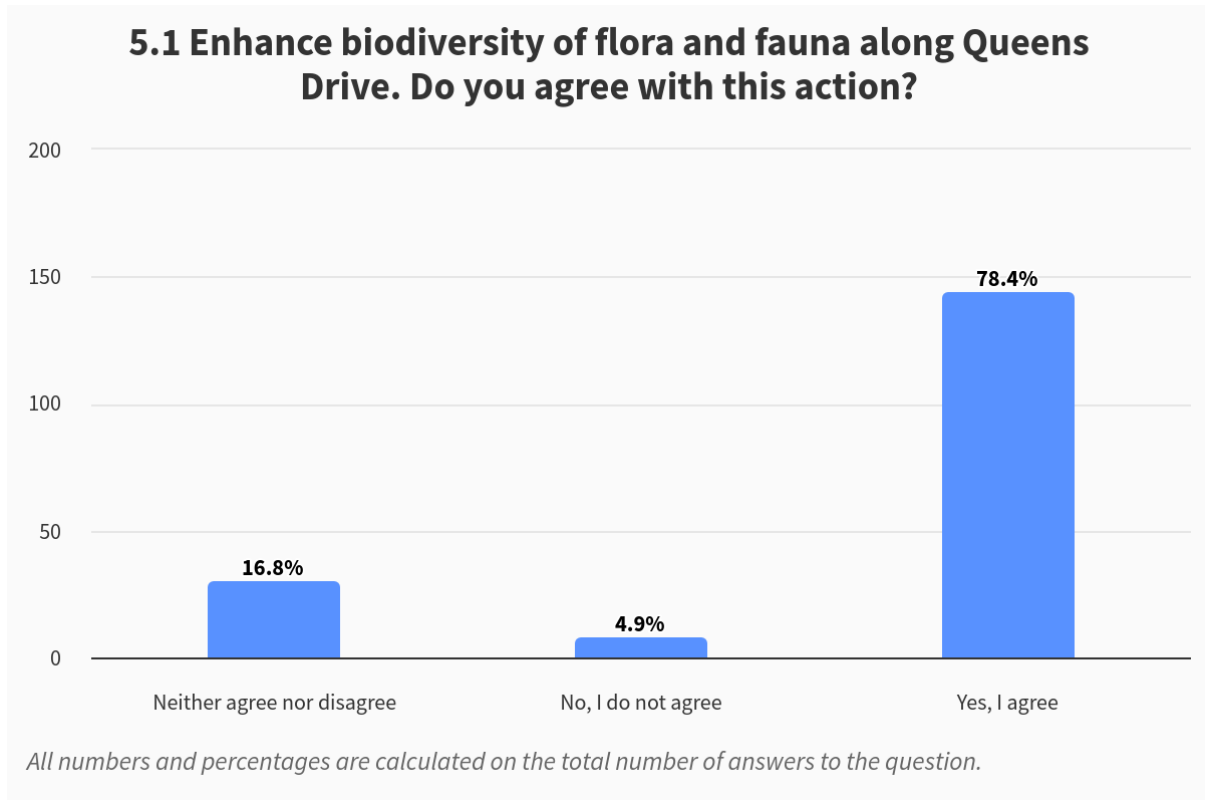


Figure 20: Level of agreement with Action 5.1 (enhancing biodiversity of flora and fauna along Queens Drive). Percentages are based on the total number of responses to this question.

#### Free text response analysis

Strategic Objective 5.1: “Agree/Neutral” responses:

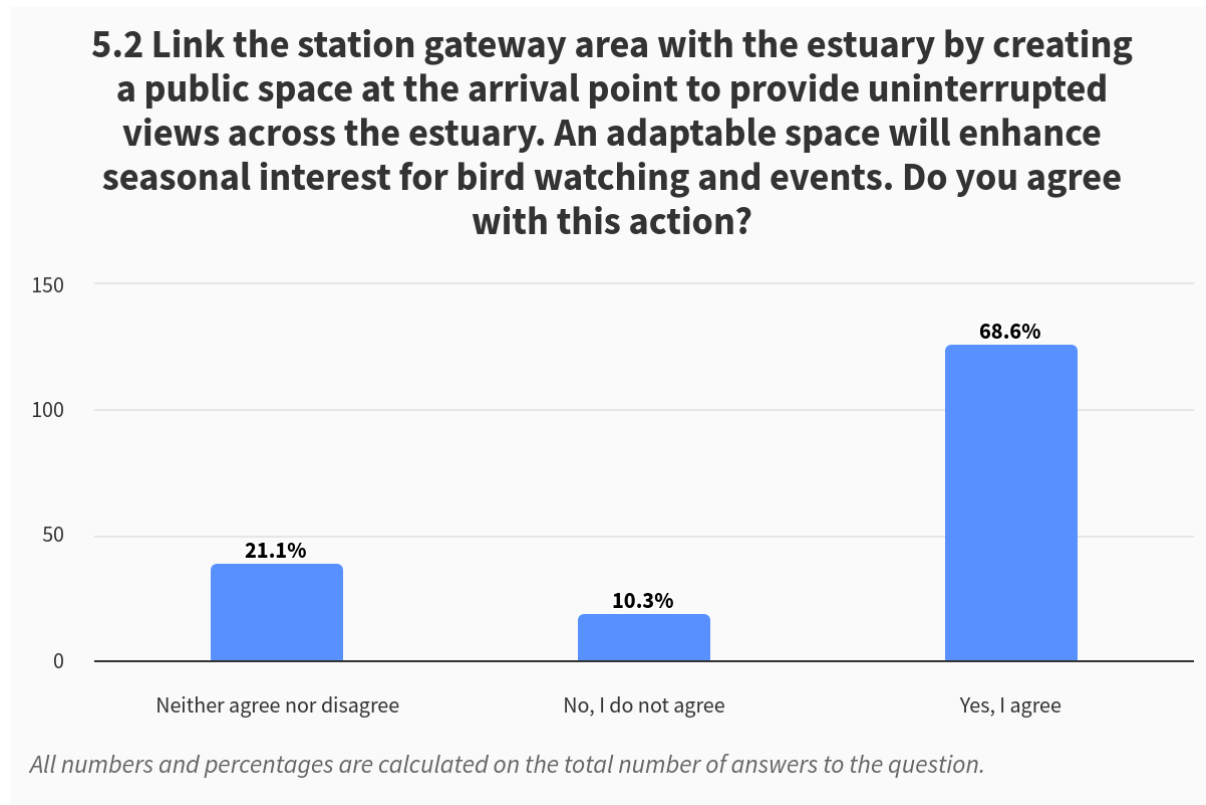
- Respondents supported biodiversity corridors because they are seen as a practical way to protect wildlife, native species and habitats, and to preserve Exmouth’s defining natural setting (estuary, coast and surrounding landscapes).
- Many framed support around a “protect what we have” mindset, including safeguarding green/blue assets from incremental loss, resisting over-commercialisation of natural areas, and treating ecology as a long-term town asset.
- A recurring condition was that delivery must be funded and maintained properly; people referenced the need for realistic maintenance regimes, climate resilience, and avoiding schemes that look good initially but degrade due to underfunding.

Strategic Objective 5.1: “No:

- Respondents questioned whether a biodiversity-led approach is appropriate for an “urban seafront” context, suggesting that traditional, well-maintained formal planting feels more suitable than ecological corridors which they fear could look scruffy or unmanaged.
- A recurring objection was that nature-based enhancements may not generate civic pride if maintenance is inconsistent; several comments framed this as “greenwash” or unnecessary intervention where natural systems are already functioning.
- Some respondents challenged relevance and proportionality, arguing there are higher priorities and that ecological actions should not proceed without clearer justification, visible benefits, and credible maintenance funding.

**5.2 Link the station gateway area with the estuary by creating a public space at the arrival point to provide uninterrupted views across the estuary. An adaptable space will enhance seasonal interest for bird watching and events. Do you agree with this action?**

The Action 5.2 question received 185 contributions.



*Figure 21: Level of agreement with Action 5.2 (linking the station gateway area with the estuary by creating a public space at the arrival point to provide uninterrupted views across the estuary and enhance seasonal interest for bird watching and events). Percentages are based on the total number of responses to this question.*

### **Free text response analysis**

Strategic Objective 5.2: “Agree/Neutral” responses:

- Support often linked to improving the station/gateway experience by making better use of estuary proximity, including ideas such as seating/benches, a small viewing/interpretation feature, birdwatching elements, and better connections from the station to the estuary and onward routes.
- Respondents also liked the concept of enhancing first impressions for visitors and residents, but frequently asked for clearer definition of what “adaptable space” or “uninterrupted views” would mean in practice, and whether it is feasible given existing buildings and land constraints.
- A common delivery theme was “light-touch, functional improvements”: tidying the area, better access, basic infrastructure (seating, wayfinding, possibly a small shelter), and ensuring any change does not create new event pressure where sufficient event spaces already exist.

Strategic Objective 5.2: “No:

- The dominant concern was feasibility at the station gateway, with respondents stating there is limited physical space and that existing buildings (notably the large retail frontage) constrain “uninterrupted” estuary views from the arrival point.
- Several said the issue is not the view but the connection/signposting to what already exists; they recommended simple, low-cost wayfinding (maps, clear walking routes, downloadable information) rather than new infrastructure.
- A strong recurring red line was no loss of car parking and no return to ideas perceived as implying demolition or major restructuring; respondents asked for clarity and consistency given perceived past contradictions.

**5.3 Enhance cohesion of the town centre, links to the seafront and seafront public realm by introducing a unified and appropriate coastal planting palette. Do you agree with this action?**

The Action 5.3 question received 185 contributions.

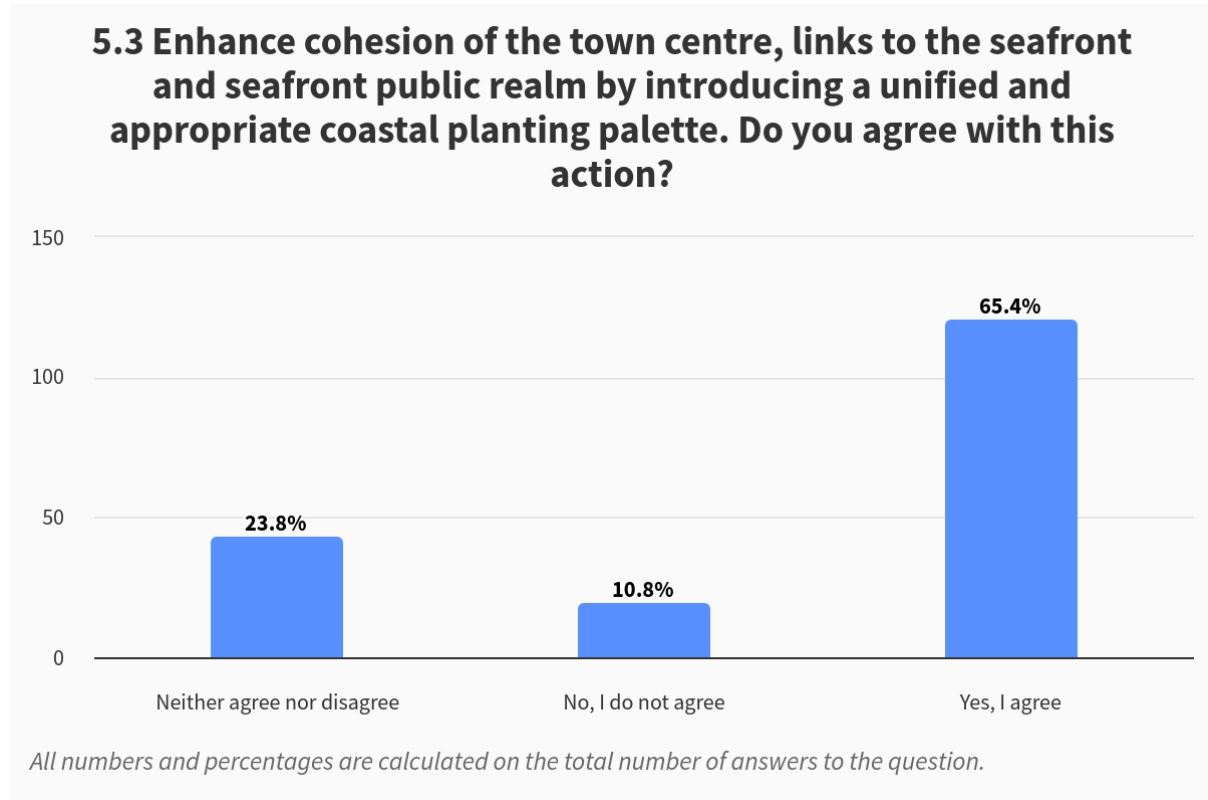


Figure 22: Level of agreement with Action 5.3 (enhancing cohesion of the town centre, links to the seafront and seafront public realm by introducing a unified and appropriate coastal planting palette). Percentages are based on the total number of responses to this question.

**Free text response analysis**

Strategic Objective 5.3: “Agree/Neutral” responses:

- Many agreed with the principle of a coherent planting approach, particularly where it would use local/indigenous species suited to coastal conditions, support pollinators, and reinforce Exmouth’s character rather than importing inappropriate planting that fails or looks out of place.
- Respondents repeatedly praised Exmouth in Bloom/StreetScene (and similar groups), viewing them as trusted local expertise that should be embedded early, supported, and resourced rather than duplicated by new workstreams.
- A frequent caution was against spending money on “palette” language without tangible benefit; respondents wanted clear outcomes (survivability, water use, maintenance, habitat value) rather than an overly designed or homogenised townscape.

Strategic Objective 5.3: “No:

- The most repeated theme was “maintain what you have first”: respondents objected to additional planting or new “palettes” when current beds, verges and assets are seen as under-maintained, reliant on volunteers, or at risk of declining without sustained budgets.
- Several criticised the language as vague or “strategy-led” rather than action-led, and questioned whether a coastal planting palette represents value for money compared with practical town upkeep.
- Suggested improvements focused on maintenance fundamentals: prioritise existing planting, weed management, and basic cleanliness before proposing expansion or aesthetic schemes.

#### 5.4 Develop a green infrastructure strategy for Exmouth to enhance green links that connect the town centre and seafront to the surrounding countryside. Do you agree with this action?

The Action 5.4 question received 184 contributions.

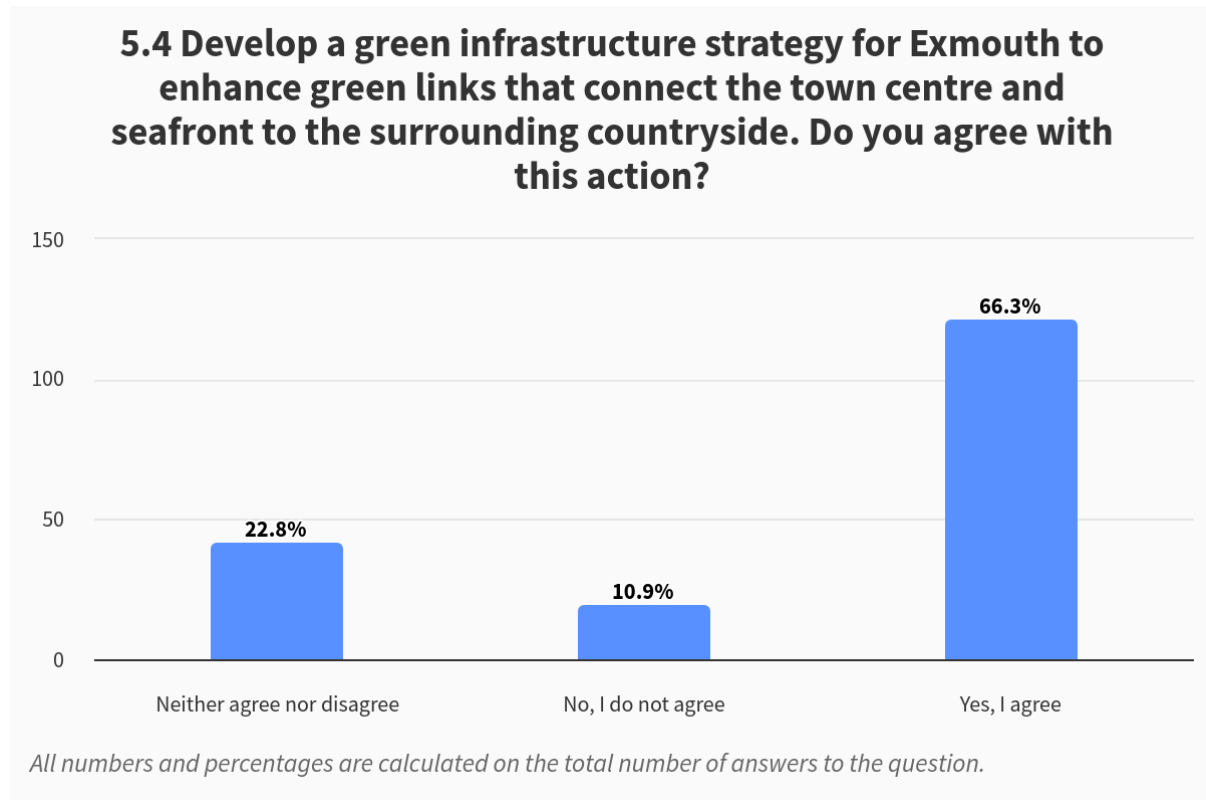


Figure 23: Level of agreement with Action 5.4 (developing a green infrastructure strategy for Exmouth to enhance green links that connect the town centre and seafront to the surrounding countryside). Percentages are based on the total number of responses to this question.

#### Free text response analysis

Strategic Objective 5.4: “Agree/Neutral” responses:

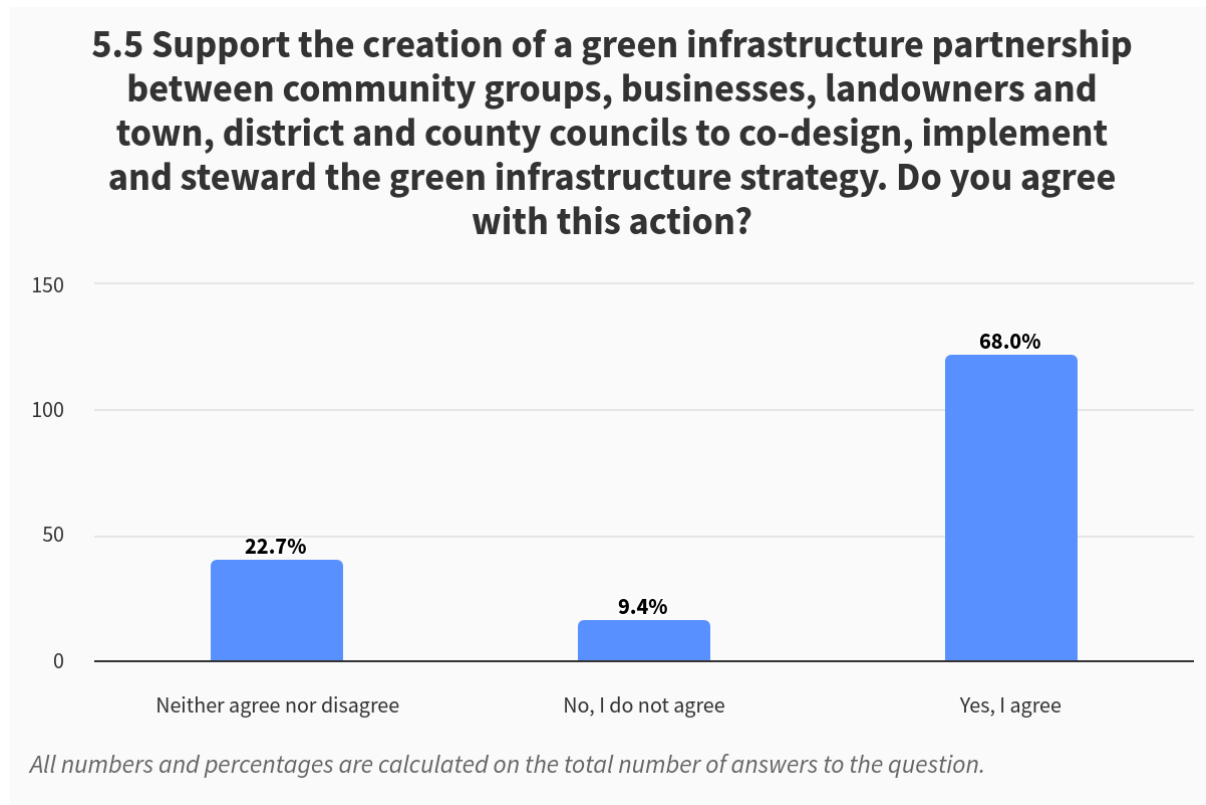
- Support concentrated on the need to strengthen green links from town to countryside, with repeated references to difficulties reaching the National Landscape/Woodbury Common without relying on roads, and the desire for safe, continuous walking and cycling routes.
- Respondents also linked this action to health and wellbeing: enabling everyday access to green space for exercise and recreation, especially for residents, not solely for visitor appeal.
- Several people paired this with transport accessibility, noting that greener connections should also consider those less mobile (for example, better public transport links where walking/cycling isn't realistic), and asked “who pays” plus examples of deliverable routes.

Strategic Objective 5.4: “No:

- Respondents frequently described this action as too vague, with requests for concrete definitions, examples, locations, delivery responsibility, and cost/benefit—particularly how links would work without land take or additional burden on already stressed infrastructure.
- A number of comments reframed the priority as basic maintenance of existing paths and roads first (weeding, surfacing, upkeep) rather than creating new “green links” as a concept.
- Others raised climate resilience concerns (water usage and looming drought conditions), arguing any green-link ambition should be grounded in realistic resource planning and accountability for water/environmental performance.

**5.5 Support the creation of a green infrastructure partnership between community groups, businesses, landowners and town, district and county councils to co-design, implement and steward the green infrastructure strategy. Do you agree with this action?**

The Action 5.5 question received 181 contributions.



*Figure 24: Level of agreement with Action 5.5 (supporting the creation of a green infrastructure partnership between community groups, businesses, landowners and town, district and county councils to co-design, implement and steward the green infrastructure strategy). Percentages are based on the total number of responses to this question.*

**Free text response analysis**

Strategic Objective 5.5: “Agree/Neutral” responses:

- Many respondents welcomed cross-partnership working because they believe nature and biodiversity efforts are currently fragmented across multiple groups; bringing stakeholders together was seen as a way to coordinate action, share workload, and improve delivery.
- Support was often framed as “conservation first”: the purpose should be protecting habitats and resilience for existing residents and wildlife, rather than using nature policy primarily as a growth or promotion tool.
- A recurring caveat was governance practicality: some respondents were uncertain a large partnership could reach consensus or act efficiently, and they asked for clarity on roles, accountability, and whether community groups would receive tangible support (for example, small grants to enable volunteer-led delivery).

Strategic Objective 5.5: “No:

- The most common objection was that partnership working could become an expensive, bureaucratic “talking shop” that is hard to implement, difficult to fund, and unlikely to reach consensus across many organisations.
- Several respondents raised governance and conflict-of-interest concerns, arguing that landowners and businesses on steering groups may have incentives that do not align with conservation outcomes, and that stakeholder roles and safeguards must be explicit.
- Suggested improvements focused on tighter governance and sequencing: define clear measurable objectives, specify who pays and who delivers, consult key statutory bodies early (examples mentioned included nature/conservation organisations), and ensure stakeholder involvement is designed to support delivery rather than delay it.

## **5. Other general free text responses analysis**

The consultation received 4 contributions that we made general comments.

### **Clarity, specificity and cost transparency**

- Respondents frequently asked for clearer, plain-English wording and more specific explanations of what actions would mean in practice, noting that the current phrasing felt overly broad for decision-making.
- Many requested worked examples and more Exmouth-specific illustrations to provide substance and help residents understand likely impacts, trade-offs and deliverability.
- Several respondents sought greater transparency on cost estimates, including the assumptions, confidence levels and rationale for prioritisation and the preferred option.

### **Value for money and delivery focus**

- A recurring expectation was that the programme should demonstrate clear community benefit, including a stronger emphasis on tangible improvements for residents, with particular reference to the seafront and opportunities for younger people.
- Respondents also emphasised that accessibility and inclusive access should be treated as core considerations throughout, including transport connectivity and the needs of people with reduced mobility.

## 6. Strategic Outline Business Case

### 6.1 Do you have any comments on the strategic outline business case?

#### Document clarity and accessibility

- Respondents suggested the Business Case would benefit from simpler language and a shorter, more user-friendly structure.
- Some felt the graphics and examples could be clearer and more specific to Exmouth to aid understanding.
- A few comments implied the document currently feels overly “wordy”, which may make it harder for residents to engage.
- Costs, assumptions and prioritisation.
- Respondents asked for greater transparency on cost estimates, including the assumptions and confidence levels behind figures (with Queens Drive Space referenced).
- Some felt the rationale for prioritisation and the preferred option could be explained more clearly.
- Several comments emphasised the importance of keeping proposals practical, affordable and clearly value-for-money.

#### Priorities for delivery and town outcomes

- Some respondents supported the recommended Option 3 and indicated they are comfortable with it being progressed.
- Others encouraged a stronger focus on improving connectivity between the Station Gateway and the Strand to support footfall and the town-centre economy.
- A small number highlighted specific omissions or opportunities, including investment in existing sporting facilities and improving public access/amenity value at the Marina.

## 7. Key findings

- Overall, respondents supported practical, deliverable actions that strengthen existing assets, improve first impressions, and make the town centre and seafront function better year-round for residents and visitors.
- Respondents repeatedly asked for clearer definitions, examples and safeguards, as many proposals were viewed as too broad or jargon-heavy to judge confidently without more detail on scale, location, costs and impacts.
- Value for money and deliverability were consistent themes, with a preference for visible implementation and robust maintenance plans rather than additional strategy work or further consultant-led exercises.

### Access, movement and transport

- Connectivity between arrival points and key destinations emerged as a priority, with strong emphasis on clearer, safer and more intuitive links between the station area, the town centre, the Strand and the seafront.
- Shared pedestrian and cycle environments, particularly on the seafront, were frequently described as confusing, stressful or unsafe, and respondents called for clearer separation, safer crossings and a more continuous, joined-up network.
- Proposals to reduce traffic or promote alternatives were typically supported in principle only where the “park and ride” element is credible and inclusive, with respondents emphasising the need for frequent, affordable, year-round shuttle-style links and realistic capacity planning.

### Place quality, facilities and stewardship

- Respondents generally welcomed improvements that enhance the public realm and everyday experience, including better presentation, more usable spaces and practical facilities, provided responsibilities for upkeep are clear and long-term maintenance is funded.
- Respondents valued Exmouth’s natural setting and supported sensitive environmental enhancement, but cautioned against initiatives perceived as overly designed, insufficiently specified, or likely to decline without sustained maintenance.
- Partnership working was supported where it improves coordination and delivery, but respondents sought clearer governance, accountability and safeguards to avoid ineffective “talking shop” arrangements or conflicts of interest.

## 8. Recommendations

The following recommendations have been extracted from the results of the survey:

- **Use plain English and define key terms (e.g., “hubs”, “rationalise”, “adaptable space”, “planting palette”).** EDDC response – Some of these terms are used by professionals in the field of regeneration and placemaking, the EPP and SOBC are high level strategic documents that could be used for future funding bids, therefore the terminology needs to be retained, however, terminology identified by the consultation participants will be explained in plain English within the documents.

- **Show what has changed in the plan and why as a result of the survey in a follow up document.** EDDC response – A separate report will be drafted and shared in April, showing all the key changes made as a result of this consultation exercise and key questions raised by larger numbers of participants will be answered e.g. the need for clearer governance.
- **Define a proportionate engagement and governance approach for the next phase, including who will be involved, how conflicts of interest will be managed, and how feedback will influence the final direction.** EDDC response – The Governance approach will be reviewed once all the necessary approvals for the EPP and SOBC are in place.
- **Provide a brief example under each action to illustrate how it would operate in practice, as many respondents reported that the actions were too high-level to assess without clearer, real-world context.** EDDC response – The EPP and SOBC are high level documents that do not require any detail at this stage, as and when the actions are taken forward, key partners, stakeholder and the general public, will have opportunities to reengage when more detail becomes available and before key decisions are made.

## 9.Next steps

The next steps following the final amendments to both the EPP and SOBC are:

- Present EPP and SOBC to Devon District Council, **Devon County Council** and Exmouth Town Council during March 2026, seeking endorsement of both documents.
- Present EPP and SOBC to EDDC’s Cabinet committee on 1<sup>st</sup> April, seeking adoption of both documents.
- Publish the final approved EPP & SOBC on EDDC’s Website in April 2026.
- Publish a report that outlines what changes have been made to the EPP and SOBC documents, resulting from this consultation exercise.
- Review the Governance of the Placemaking in Exmouth and the Seafront Group once EPP has been adopted