

Findings of the New Northwich Market engagement



1. Background to the engagement

The engagement invited the public to feedback their views on a new market for Northwich.

The Council has committed to open a new modern market for Northwich in Barons Quay. This will replace the existing market within Weaver Square, a short distance away, which will be demolished and replaced with new homes as part of an ambitious plan to regenerate the town centre.

This will be the biggest investment in Northwich Market since 1960s, and the new market will benefit from an investment of around £1.8 million to enable a town centre market to remain open and create a market ready for the future where current and future traders can thrive.

The new market will provide a significantly improved experience for customers and traders alike with a wider choice of stalls and facilities. Units 12 and 13 are currently vacant and occupy a key corner position within Barons Quay which will provide an ideal location for the new market.

We are working with our existing Northwich Market traders to offer space for them in the new market, and bring in new traders to ensure the market can expand and flourish in its new location.

We currently expect the new market will open sometime during 2026, and the existing market in Weaver Square will remain open until just before the new market opens.

2. How the engagement was carried out

The engagement was open for 5 weeks, starting on 6th May 2025 and closing on 9th June 2025.

The principal feedback route was via an online survey which was hosted on the Council's Participate Now platform and via two drop-in events held in the proposed new market space in Barons Quay on 22 May between 12 and 7pm and on 23 May between 12 and 5pm.

People could also share their views via email, post and telephone. Paper copies of the survey were also made available at the council's Norwich contact point, on request via the Council's contact centre and at the drop-in events, however no paper responses were received during the engagement period.

In order to ensure that the public and key stakeholders were made aware of the consultation and given the opportunity to have their say, a wide range of communication channels were utilised. These included a media release, coverage in local media, a new market website, emails to key stakeholder groups and potential

traders that had registered an expression of interest on the market website, local Northwich Member Briefings, via Radio Northwich, social media and in the consultation section within the Council website.

3. Summary of the findings

- The new Northwich Market engagement attracted high levels of interest and was widely shared on social media and by the local media including Northwich Radio and the Northwich Guardian.
- The total number of responses to the survey was 1,184, almost 90% of respondents were resident in Northwich and almost 70% were female. Most respondents were in the 25 – 54 age group, accounting for 65% of the responses, with 55 – 74 making up a further 28%.
- In addition, one email response was received from an organisation separately to the online survey.
- 93 people attended one of the two drop-in events as well as 10 potential traders.
- Support for the new market in Barons Quay was very strong with 93% of respondents supportive of the plans for a new market in Barons Quay; of which, over 70% were very supportive. Only 5% were not very much or not at all supportive.
- Support for the design of the new market was also very positive; 88% of respondents were supportive, of which, over 54% were very supportive. Only 5% were not very much or not at all supportive.
- There was strong support for including a range of food and drink stalls in the new market; 88% of respondents felt this would be important in the new market; the most popular options were Asian, brunch/breakfast, Mexican, a bar and pizza with over 60% of responses choosing these options. The least popular were seafood and a wine bar.
- Similarly, there was high levels of support for including a range of produce, goods and services in the new market, with 93% support; the most popular were a bakery, cheese/deli, flowers/plants and a greengrocer followed by a butcher, fishmonger and vintage clothes. There was least support for a barber or ladies' hairdresser.
- When asked about opening times, respondents' most popular preferences were for Saturday followed by Sunday and Friday; the least popular day was Monday; the most popular times were Saturday afternoon (82%), Saturday morning (74%) and Sunday afternoon (71%)
- In terms of shopping behaviour, over half of all respondents (56%) rarely or never visit the current market at Weaver Square, of those that do visit, only 20% visit at least once a month. When asked why they didn't visit regularly many felt that the current market was not of interest, scruffy, run down and out of the way and that it was old fashioned, unwelcoming and looked very unappealing.
- In contrast, nearly half the respondents (45%) visited Barons Quay once a week, and almost 90% once a month. Only 3% rarely or never visited. When

asked why they didn't visit more regularly many respondents did not like the look of Barons Quay and felt it offered little for them and the high number of empty units or lack of independent retailers was off-putting, although some cited the cinema as their main reason for visiting.

4. Detailed consultation findings

Chart 1: Frequency of visits to the current Northwich Market

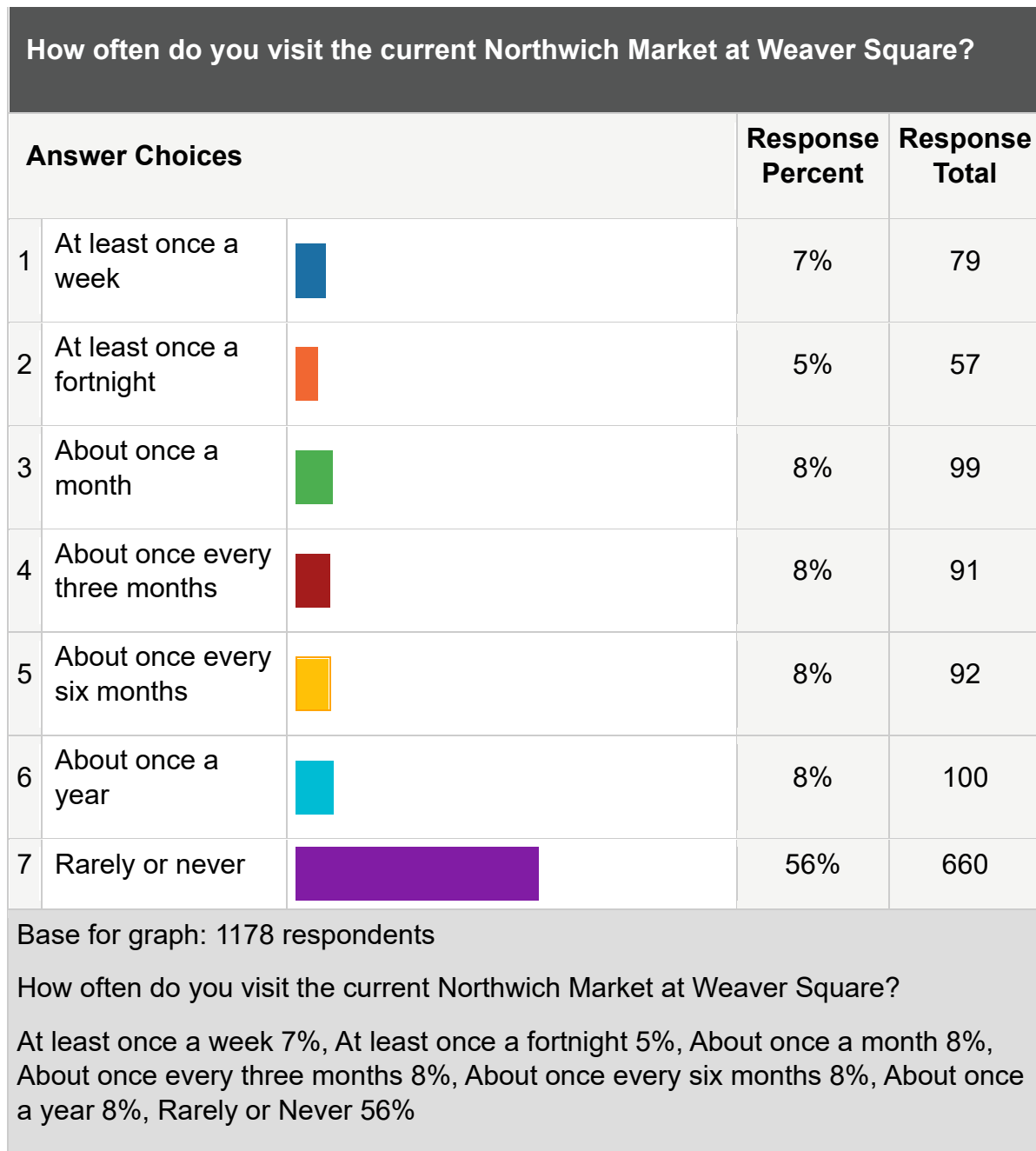


Chart 1 above shows that over half of all respondents (56%) rarely or never visit the current market at Weaver Square, of those that do visit, only 20% visit at least once a month.

Respondents had the option to provide comments about why they rarely or never visit the market. 744 comments were received, the key themes from these comments are summarised below.

- Many responses included reference to the current market being scruffy, run down and out of the way

- Many also felt the Weaver Square location was old fashioned, unwelcoming and looked very unappealing
- Many also cited that the market was not of interest, it was outdated
- Some felt the stalls were not relevant or didn't appeal to them and some also said they were not aware when the market was open
- A few respondents thought that the market had already closed.

Chart 2: Frequency of visits to Barons Quay

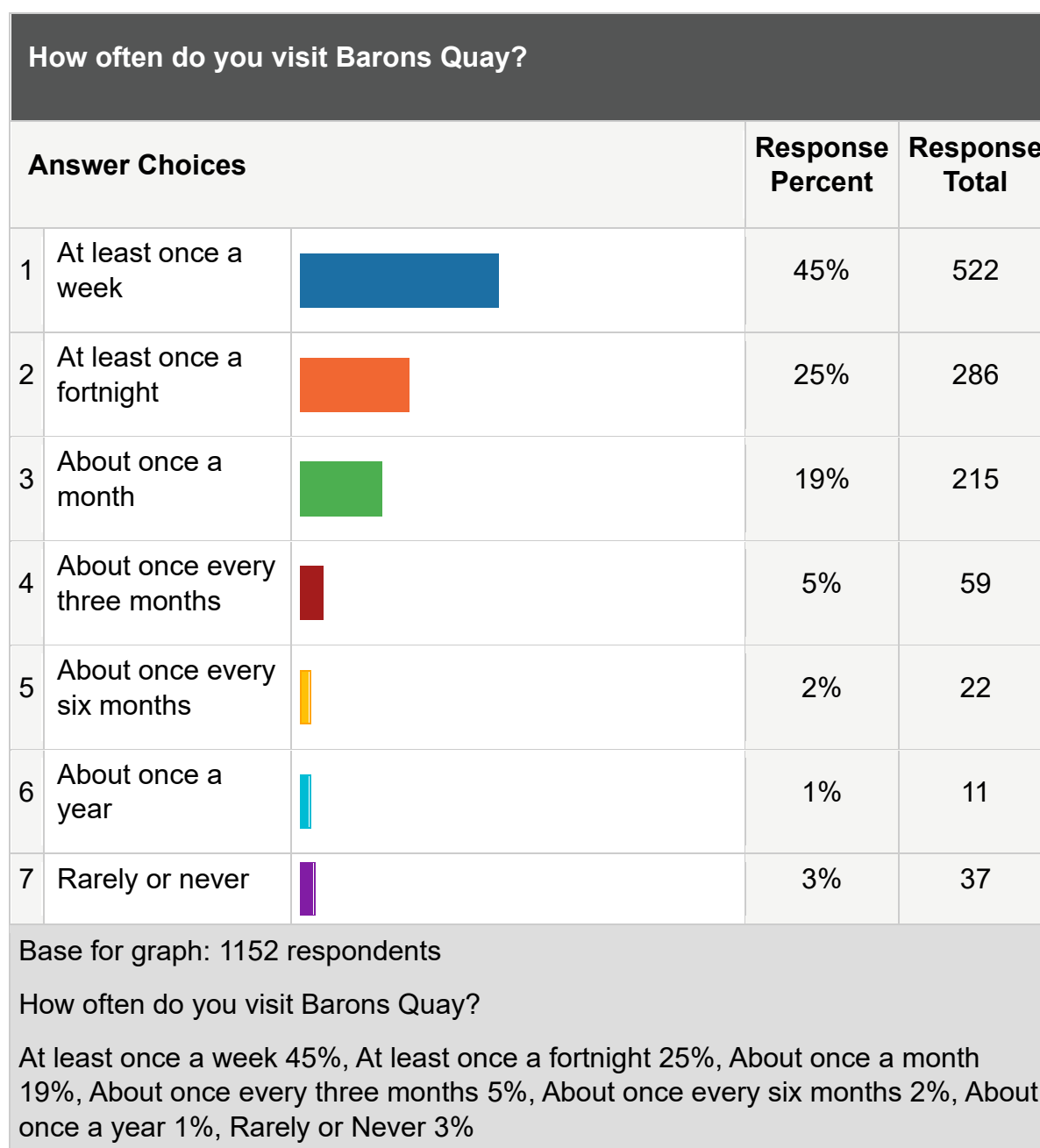


Chart 2 shows that nearly half the respondents (45%) visited Barons Quay once a week, and almost 90% at least once a month. Only 3% rarely or never visited.

Respondents were also asked to tell us why they rarely or never visited Barons Quay. 131 comments were received, the key themes from these comments are summarised below.

- Many respondents did not like the look of Barons Quay and felt it offered little for them
- Many also didn't like the high number of empty units or lack of independent retailers which was off-putting.

- Some people used phrases such as soulless and lacking in appeal
- A few respondents felt the lack of Marks and Spencer was a factor in not visiting
- A few respondents cited the cinema as the main reason for visiting.

Chart 3: Support for the new market plans

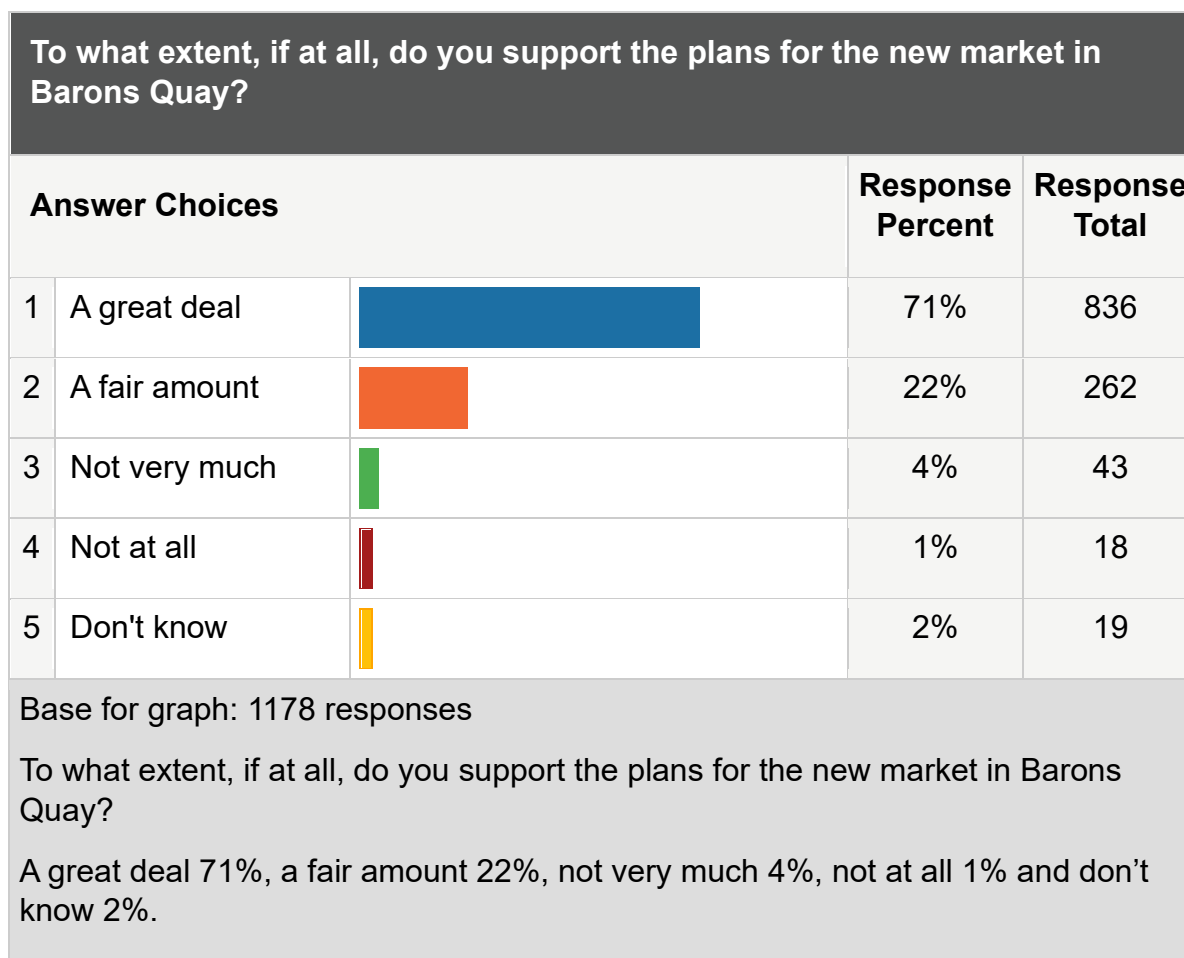


Chart 3 shows that 93% of respondents were supportive of the plans for a new market in Barons Quay, of which, over 70% were very supportive. Only 5% were not very much or not at all supportive.

Respondents were asked to tell us about the reasons for their answer. 845 comments were received, the key themes from these comments are summarised below.

- Most respondents felt the new market would help revitalise the town centre
- Many also felt it would boost Barons Quay and help attract other retailers to locate there
- Many also were inspired by other markets nearby such as Chester and Altrincham and wanted to see something similar in Northwich with a strong food and drink offer
- Many hoped the new market would be a good destination to visit, similar to Altrincham or Chester Market
- Some felt the new location would be more convenient, more centrally located and accessible

- A few respondents had concerned that traders would not be able to afford the rents
- Those not in favour of the new market felt larger stores would be better suited to Barons Quay or that it would not be a success and a waste of money.

Chart 4: Support for the proposed market design

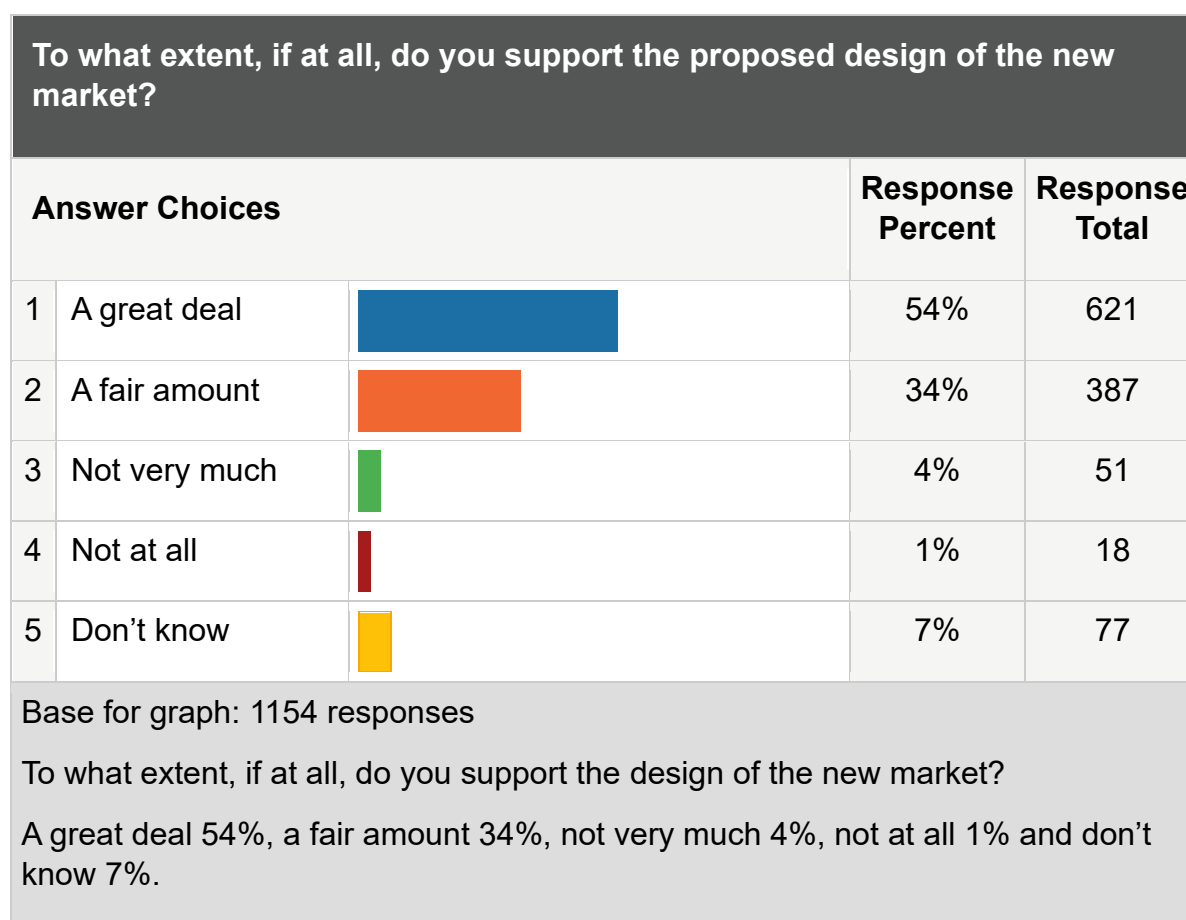


Chart 4 shows that 88% of respondents were supportive of the design of the new market in Barons Quay, with 54% supporting it a great deal.. Only 5% were not very much or not at all supportive.

Respondents were asked to tell us about the reasons for their answer. 592 comments were received, the key themes from these comments are summarised below.

- Most comments were supportive and felt the design of new market was modern, smart, clean and vibrant
- Many also liked the seating area alongside the food and drink stalls and potential for outdoor seating
- Many also felt the design was welcoming and inviting
- Of those that didn't like the design, some felt the design was not traditional enough or that there were too many food stalls.

Chart 5: Importance of food and drink stalls

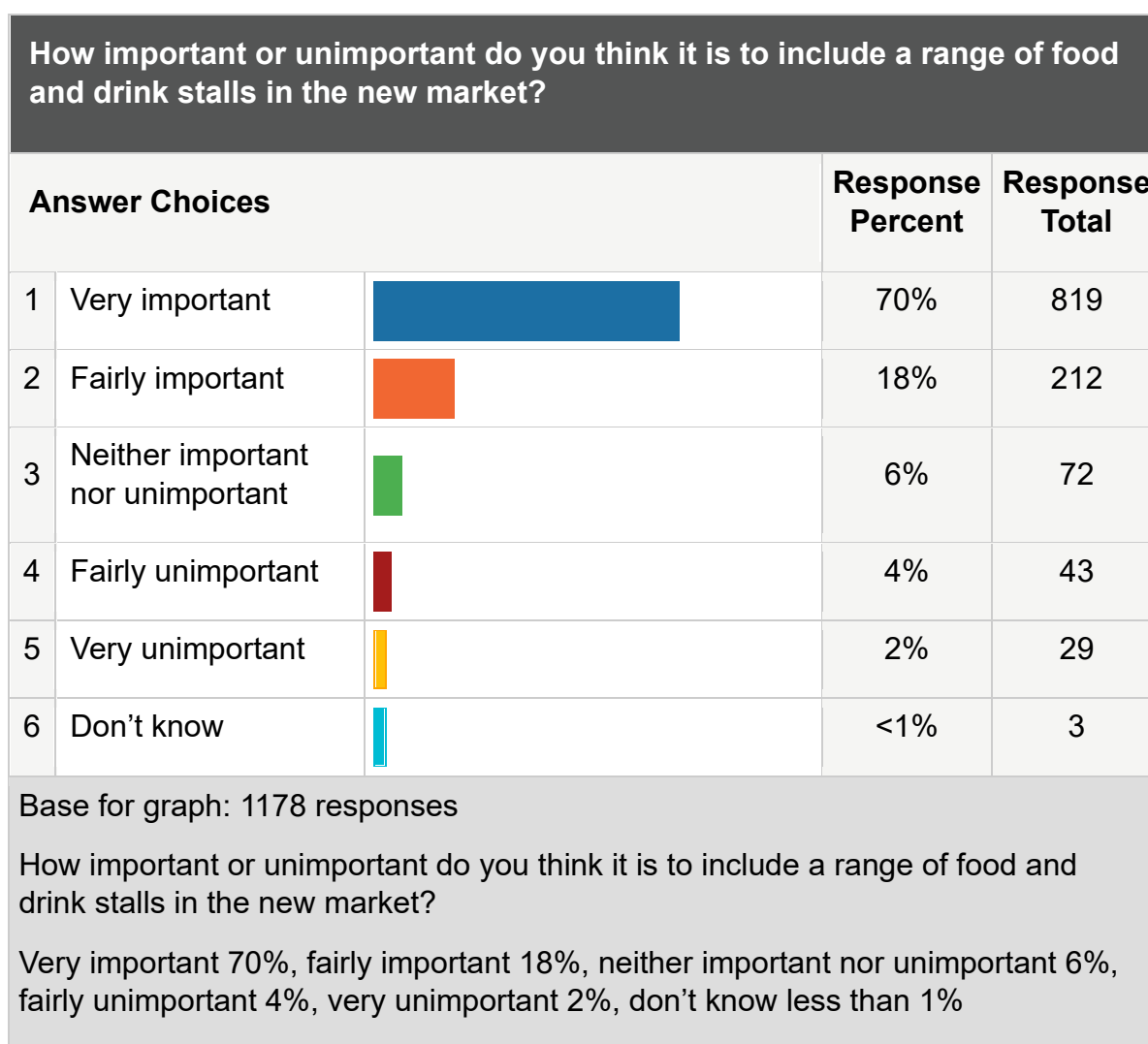


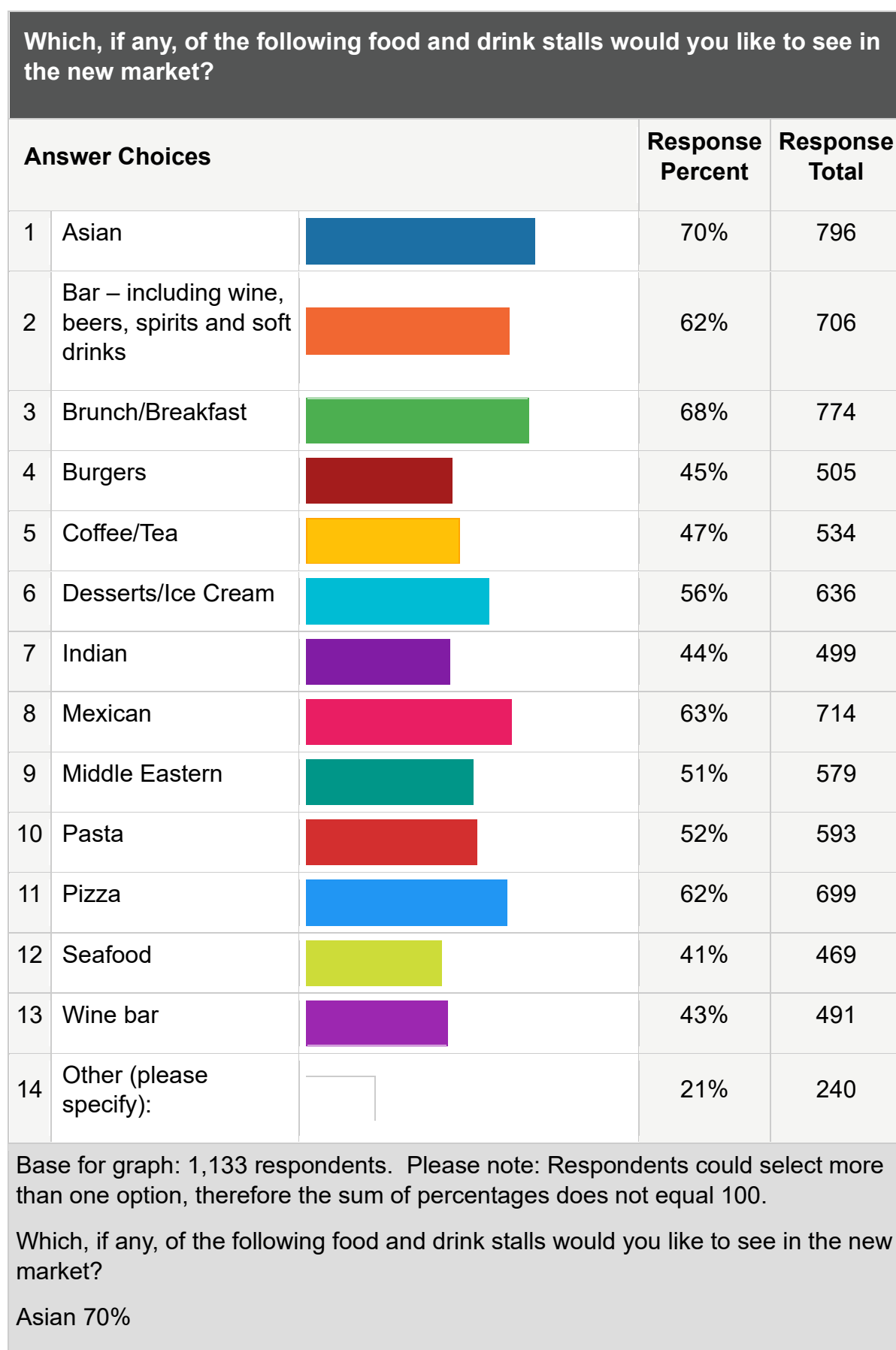
Chart 5 shows that 88% of respondents felt including a range of food and drink options would be important in the new market. 6% felt it was neither important or unimportant and 6% felt this was unimportant.

Respondents were asked to tell us about the reasons for their answer. 712 comments were received, the key themes from these comments are summarised below.

- Many respondents liked the concept of being able to choose from a range of food options and cited other markets such as Chester, Warrington and Altrincham where this works well
- Many welcomed the opportunity to replicate this in Northwich and would be a key reason to visit the market
- Having a range of diverse and authentic food options was mentioned by many, and the potential to increase time spent in the market was welcomed
- However, some responses cited that there were lots of cafés and coffee shops in Northwich already, so they did not want to have similar outlets in the new market

- Some were concerned that prices would not be affordable.

Chart 6: Preference of food and drink stalls



Which, if any, of the following food and drink stalls would you like to see in the new market?

Bar – including wine, beers, spirits and soft drinks 62%

Brunch/Breakfast 68%

Burgers 45%

Coffee/Tea 47%

Desserts/Ice Cream 56%

Indian 44%

Mexican 63%

Middle Eastern 51%

Pasta 52%

Pizza 62%

Seafood 41%

Wine bar 43%

Other (please specify): 21%

Chart 6 shows that there was a fairly even spread of food and drink choices respondents would like to see in the market. The most popular choices were Asian, brunch/breakfast, Mexican, bar and pizza with over 60% of responses choosing each of these options. The least popular were seafood and a wine bar.

Respondents also could suggest other choices. 240 comments were received.

- The most popular other food options suggested were Greek/Turkish, Spanish/Tapas, Mediterranean and Chinese
- Other popular choices were a deli or sandwiches
- A few other choices mentioned were for vegan or vegetarian and Thai foods.

Chart 7: Importance of produce, goods and services

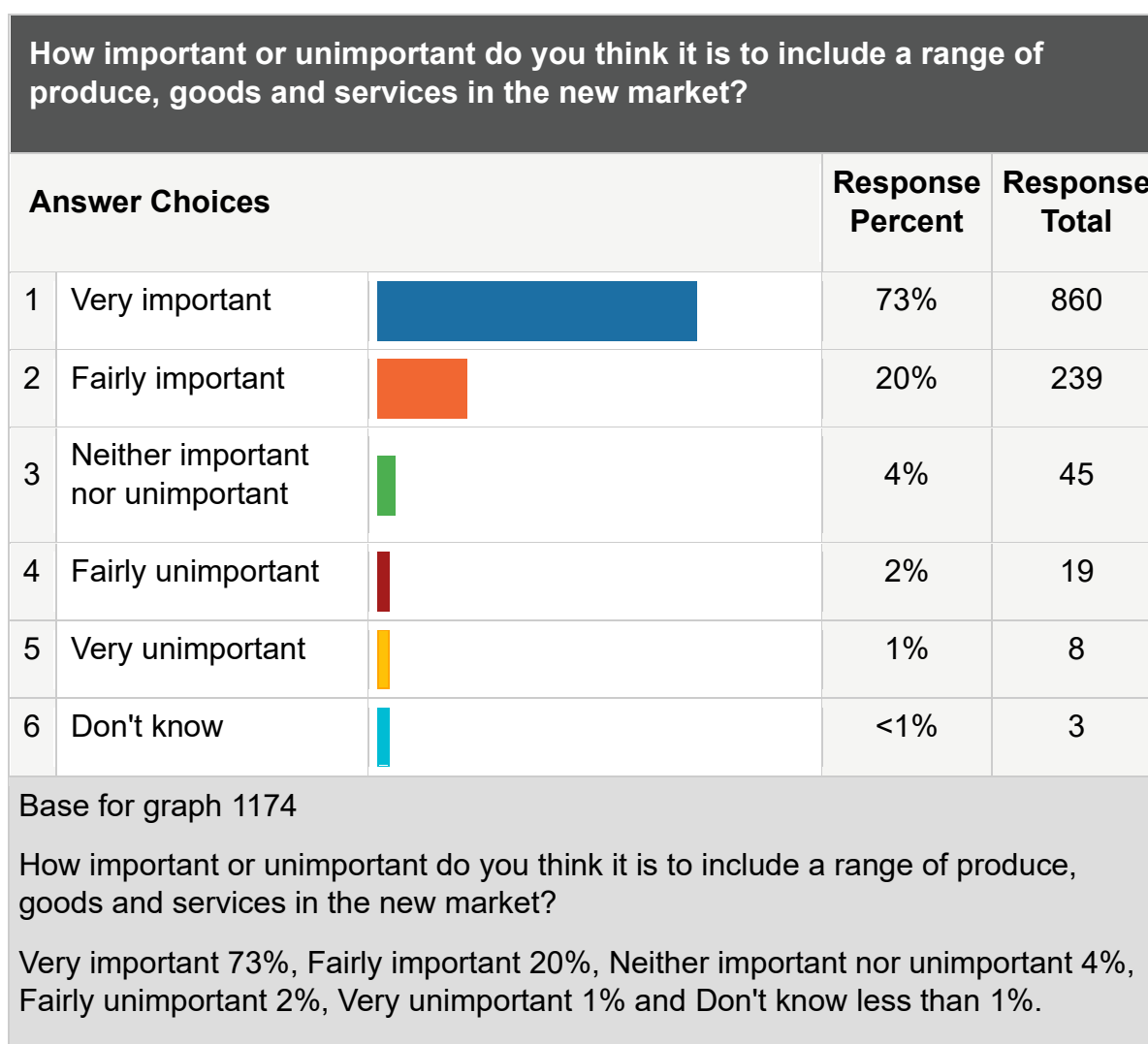




















Chart 7 shows that the majority of respondents (93%) felt it was important for there to be a range of produce, goods and services in the new market, of which almost three quarters (73%) felt this was very important. 3% felt this was not important.

Respondents were asked to tell us about the reasons for their answer. 525 comments were received, the key themes from these comments are summarised below.


- Many respondents wanted to see a good variety and choice of non-food stalls, as this was the essence of a market and will help attract a diverse range of customers and ages
- Factors such as being able to buy from local, artisan and independent traders were mentioned by many as well as fresh produce from local suppliers
- Many also mentioned the need for stalls to be offering unique goods and services, not to replicate what is already available in the town centre and attract customers from further afield

- Some respondents had concerns about prices – either too high and excluding some customers; or being too low and having stalls selling low quality goods at discounts
- A few respondents felt fresh produce was not needed as this was already available in the supermarkets and was felt likely to offer better value for money.

Chart 8: Preference of produce, good and services

8. Which, if any, of the following produce, goods and services would you like to see in the new market?				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Asian supermarket		36%	415
2	Bakery		89%	1029
3	Barber		6%	64
4	Butcher		65%	752
5	Cards and gifts		40%	470
6	Cheese/Deli		83%	964
7	Computer repairs		18%	206
8	Fashion and clothes		43%	502
9	Fishmonger		58%	676
10	Flowers and plants		67%	778
11	Greengrocer		68%	790
12	Haberdashery		38%	441
13	Jewellery		30%	353
14	Ladies' hairdressing and beauty		10%	115
15	Mobile phones and repairs		14%	167
16	Musical instruments and tuition		23%	271
17	Pet store		32%	369
18	Records and tapes		36%	419

8. Which, if any, of the following produce, goods and services would you like to see in the new market?

19	Vintage clothes		50%	583
20	Other (please specify):		11%	125

Base for graph: 1,162 respondents. Please note: Respondents could select more than one option, therefore the sum of percentages does not equal 100.

Which, if any, of the following produce, goods and services would you like to see in the new market?

Asian supermarket 36%

Bakery 89%

Barber 6%

Butcher 65%

Cards and gifts 41%

Cheese/Deli 83%

Computer repairs 18%

Fashion and clothes 43%

Fishmonger 58%

Flowers and plants 67%

Greengrocer 68%

Haberdashery 38%

Jewellery 30%

Ladies' hairdressing and beauty 10%

Mobile phones and repairs 14%

Musical instruments and tuition 23%

Pet store 32%

Records and tapes 36%

Vintage clothes 50%

Other (please specify):11%

Chart 8 shows that respondents chose a wide range of options, the most popular were a bakery (89%), cheese/deli (83%), followed by flowers/plants and a greengrocer with over 60% of responses choosing each of these options. A butcher and fishmonger were the next most popular choices, vintage clothes was also a popular choice chosen by 50%. There was least support for a barber or ladies' hairdresser.

Respondents also could suggest other choices. 125 comments were received.

- The most popular suggestions were for makers/crafts, arts and crafts, haberdashery and courses
- Other suggestions included books, stationery, DIY goods and homeware, antiques, shoes, hobbies and gaming plus vegan and zero waste goods.

Chart 9: Preference of times for visiting the new market

Day/time	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Monday	32%	35%	26%
Tuesday	32%	36%	27%
Wednesday	30%	36%	30%
Thursday	33%	38%	40%
Friday	37%	50%	63%
Saturday	74%	82%	63%
Sunday	62%	71%	39%

Base for graph: 1,151 respondents. Please note: Respondents could select more than one option, therefore the sum of the percentages does not equal 100.

Chart 9 shows the percentage of respondents that would prefer to visit the market in the morning, afternoon, and evening across each day of the week. The most popular days were Saturday followed by Sunday and Friday, the most popular times were Saturday afternoon (82%), Saturday morning (74%) and Sunday afternoon (71%). The least popular day was Monday.

Respondents were asked to tell us about the reasons for their answers. 573 comments were received, the key themes from these comments are summarised below.

- Most respondents wanted to ensure that the market would be open at weekends when they were not working, as they would not wish to or be unable to visit during the day or during the working week
- Opening in the evenings was a key issue for many also – to create more of an evening economy in the town centre
- Conversely for some, daytime and lunchtimes suited their lifestyles better as that's when they are already visiting the town centre for other shopping or that they preferred to go out during the day.

Additional comments

Respondents were asked if there was anything else they thought needed to be considered or improved as part of the plans for the new market. 553 responses were received; a summary of the key themes are summarised below.

- The most popular comments were to ensure that goods and produce were to be affordable and high quality
- This was closely followed by a wish for quality entertainment, pop-up events and a play area
- Affordability of rents for independent traders was also mentioned by some along with learning from other successful markets elsewhere
- Some mentioned the need for free or affordable parking, good public transport links
- A few additional comments included the need to have good WiFi, accessible toilets, and to be dog friendly.

Feedback received at the drop-in events

93 people attended one of the two drop-in events held in the proposed market space, this included some Cheshire West and Chester Borough Councillors and Northwich Town Council Councillors, Northwich BID and some existing market traders and staff. 10 potential traders also attended to find out more.

As with the online engagement, most feedback was very positive, and people welcomed the proposals and were pleased to see the empty unit being used.

Other points raised included:

- Many liked the opportunity to have an al fresco seating area
- Many liked the proposals to open later and create more of an evening economy in Barons Quay
- Some wanted to ensure existing traders would be offered space in the new market and whether rents would be affordable
- Some also wished to see a wider range of goods being available and traditional stalls such as haberdashery and a grocer
- Some wanted reassurance that the market would be accessible and that toilets would be provided.

5. Next steps

The engagement findings will be considered by the Council's Northwich Market project team during the summer of 2025 and will be used to help shape our plans for the design and make-up of the new market.

This summary of the findings will be made available on the Council's website and the Northwich Market website.

6. Appendix 1: Who took part

Chart 10: Respondent type

Are you responding as...? (Please select all that apply)				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	A resident of Northwich		89%	1047
2	A market trader in Northwich		.1%	4
3	A local business in Northwich		5%	59
4	A resident of Cheshire West and Chester		24%	285
5	A local business in Cheshire West and Chester		3%	30
6	An elected Member of Cheshire West and Chester Council		1%	3
7	A local Town or Parish Councillor		1%	16
8	A visitor from outside the Northwich area		3%	38
9	A representative of a voluntary or community organisation		1%	15
10	Other (please specify):		3%	34

Are you responding as...? (Please select all that apply)

Base for graph 1179

Are you responding as...?

A resident of Northwich 89%

A market trader in Northwich 1%

A local business in Northwich 5%

A resident of Cheshire West and Chester 24%

A local business in Cheshire West and Chester 3%

An elected Member of Cheshire West and Chester Council 1%

A local Town or Parish Councillor 1%

A visitor from outside the Northwich area 3%

A representative of a voluntary or community organisation 1%

Other (please specify): 3%

Chart 10 showed that the vast majority of respondents were local residents of Northwich, 89% or from within the borough, 24%.

The 34 other category respondents mainly cited local villages nearby and some in neighbouring Cheshire East and some who worked in Northwich.

Group responses

The survey also asked if responses were on behalf of a group or organisation. There were 19 responses, and included Cheshire West and Chester Liberal Democrats, Radio Northwich, Sustainable Northwich, Willowsway Cat Rescue, Cex Northwich, Toppers of Northwich and Gaia Café Bistro.

Postcodes of respondents

The map below shows all the postcodes given by respondents that could be mapped (941 postcodes). 916 postcodes lie within the Cheshire West and Chester borough boundary and 25 postcodes lie outside.

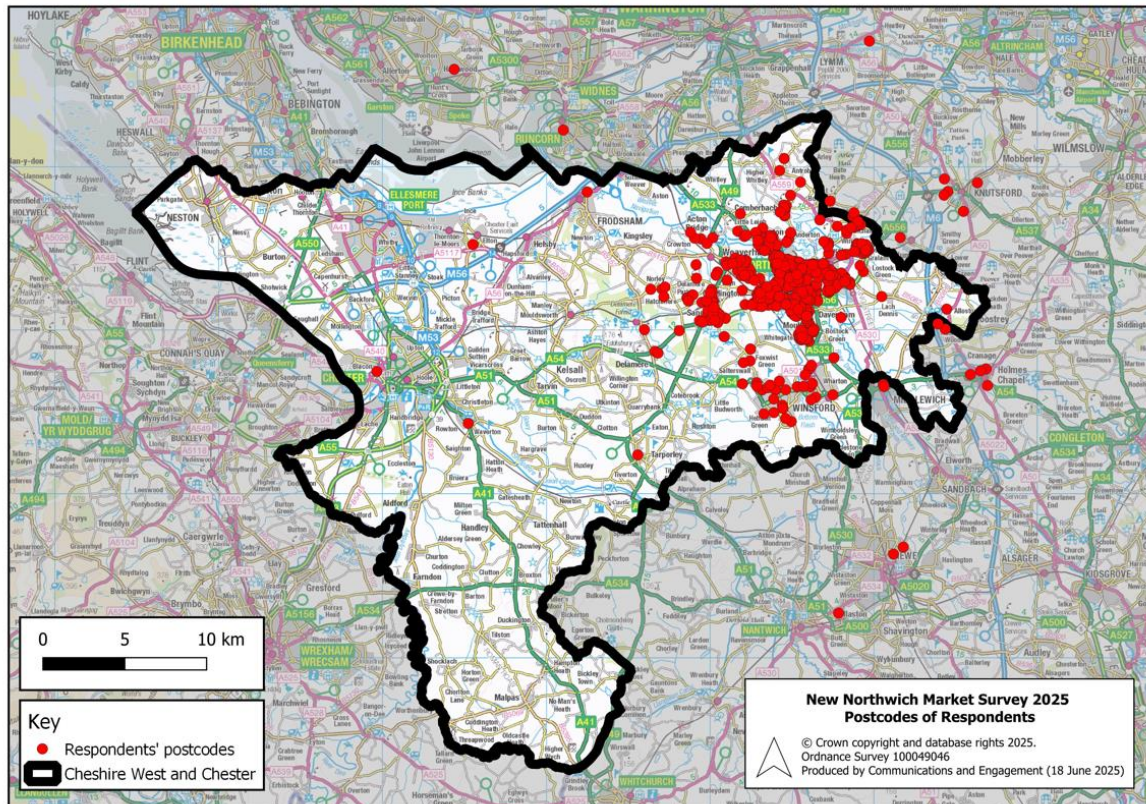


Chart 11: Gender

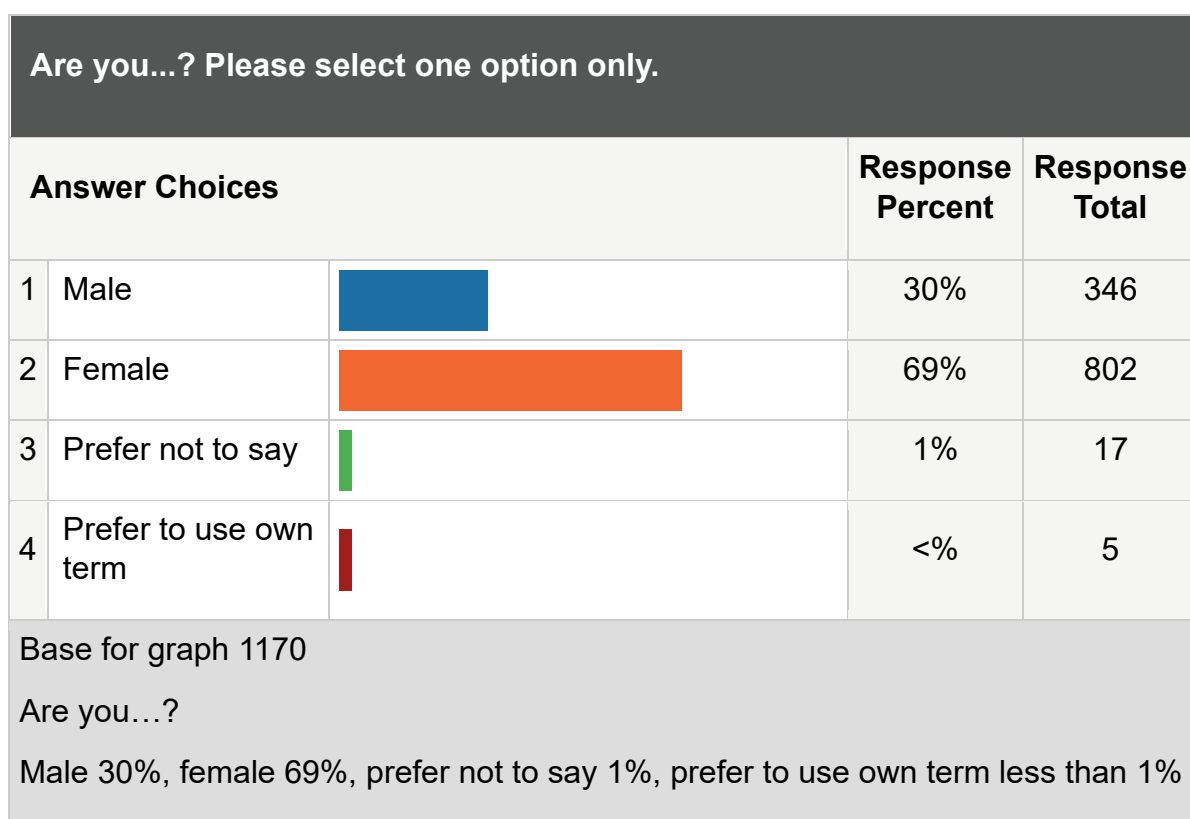
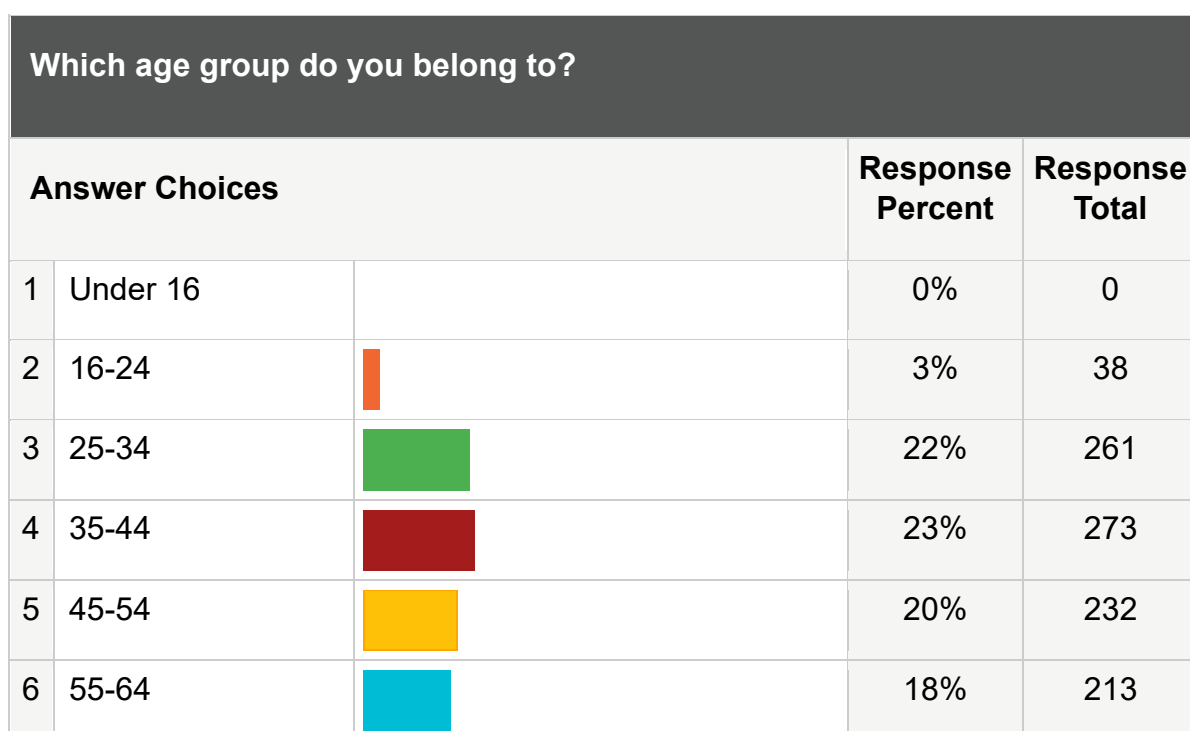


Chart 11 shows that almost 70% of responses came from females and 30% from males.

Chart 12: Age group



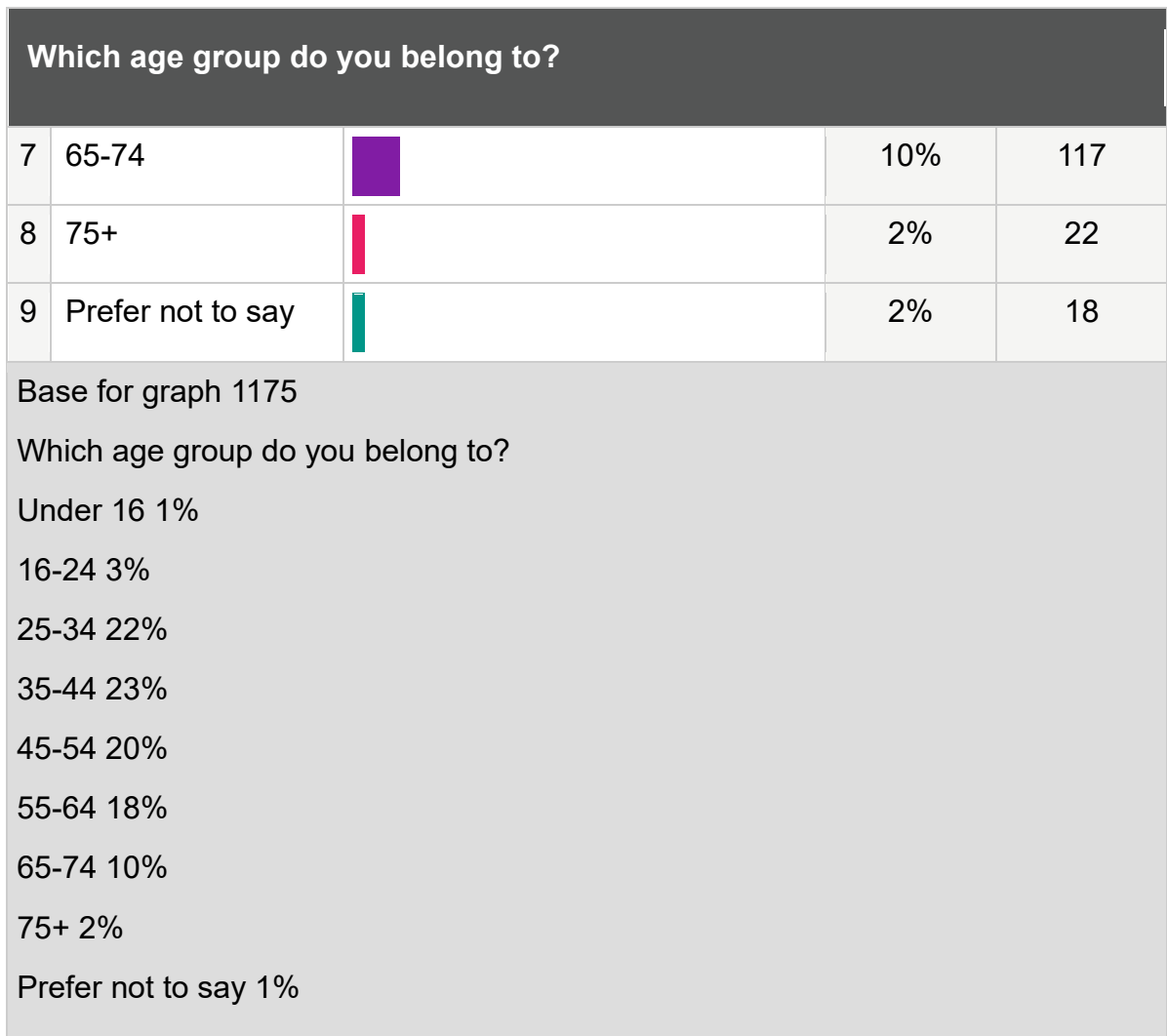
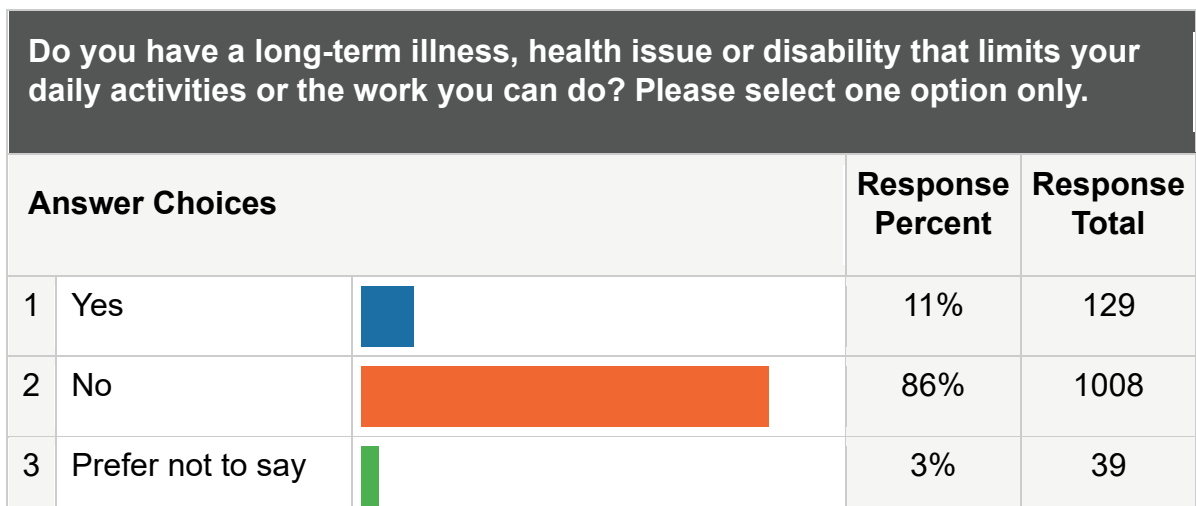


Chart 12 shows that most respondents were in the 25 – 54 age group, accounting for 65% of the responses, with 55 – 74 making up a further 28%.

Question 13: Long-term illness, health issue or disability



Do you have a long-term illness, health issue or disability that limits your daily activities or the work you can do? Please select one option only.







Base for graph 1176

Do you have a long-term illness, health issue or disability that limits your daily activities or the work you can do?

Yes 11%, no 86%, prefer not to say 3%.

Chart 13 shows that the majority of respondents, 86% did not suffer from a long-term illness or disability that impacted on their daily lives, with only 11% having such a condition.

Chart 14: Type of long-term illness, health issue or disability

If you answered 'yes' please indicate which of the following applies to you? Please select all that apply.				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Physical impairment that causes mobility issues, e.g. wheelchair user		36%	49
2	Visual impairment		4%	6
3	Hearing impairment		13%	17
4	Learning disability or difficulty		5%	7
5	Mental health issue		17%	23
6	Long standing illness or health condition		60%	81

If you answered 'yes' please indicate which of the following applies to you? Please select all that apply.

7	Other (please specify):		11%	15
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Base for graph 135

If you answered 'yes' please indicate which of the following applies to you?

Physical impairment that causes mobility issues, e.g. wheelchair user 36%

Visual impairment 4%

Hearing impairment 13%

Learning disability or difficulty 5%

Mental health issue 17%

Long standing illness or health condition 60%

Other (please specify): 11%

Chart 14 shows that of the majority of respondents who had a long-term illness, health issue or disability, 60% had a long-standing illness or condition, followed by 36% with a physical impairment.

Respondents also cited 15 other health conditions which included speech impairment, autism and ADHD, Covid and Neurodivergent.

7. Appendix 2: Organisation responses

One separate response submitted independently of the online survey was received by email from The Chester Archaeological Society.

Summary of their response:

- The Chester Archaeological Society in principle welcomes the proposal for a new market, as envisaged in the Northwich Development Framework.
- Given the timescale, we are sceptical as to whether the present consultation can result in more than cosmetic changes to the proposals.
- Nevertheless, these comments are offered in good faith, to encourage the building of a more positive architectural legacy for the future. Is the Barons Quay area an appropriate site for a market or is it too peripheral?
- Like the other Barons Quay buildings, that proposed for re-use as a market is bland and the whole area is at odds with the design principles of the Northwich Development Framework.
- Over time, the Barons Quay buildings should be re-fronted to make them more distinctive and interesting.
- The proposed market should mark the start of this process, with the use of a greater variety of materials, more interesting articulation and detailing, and a more varied roofline.

The full response is available via:

https://chesterarchaeolsoc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/CAS_PlanConsult25_NorthwichMarket_Comments_V02.pdf