



Grow Community

SOPWELL

COMMUNITY GARDEN RESIDENTS ENGAGEMENT

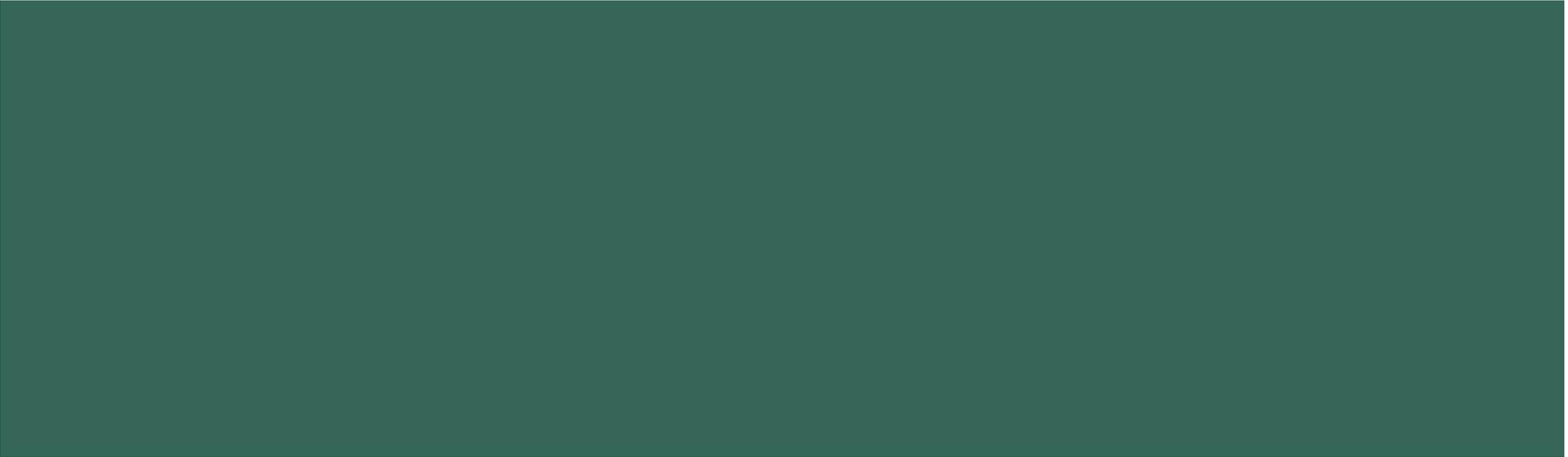
About Grow Community - Sopwell



'Grow Community – Sopwell' supports Sopwell residents to grow their own food at home and in community spaces. They also encourage people to reduce food waste and look after the local environment, as well as providing activities to bring the community together.



Recommendation for a community garden in Sopwell



Following community engagement, we will create a Community Garden on an area next to Berners Drive Play Area

- Initial work proposed to begin Spring 2021
- The garden will grow edible and wildlife-friendly plants without pesticides or artificial fertilisers
- Initially, the site will simply consist of two raised beds to grow fruit and vegetables in. These will be bordered by plants: a variety of edible, wildlife-friendly and attractive low-maintenance plants (Phase I on plan, outlined in green)
- Sustainability infrastructure (for compost/water) and a bench will be added later in the year
- The site will be gradually expanded over time to a size of approximately 250 square meters (Total site, outlined in red).
- Local residents will be invited to help care for the plants, and to pick them for eating when they are ready
- Monthly maintenance and teaching sessions will take place at the garden in accordance with current coronavirus guidelines. Additionally, occasional small community events may take place there





Introduction



We consulted local residents about the creation of a community garden in Sopwell

- We take inspiration from FoodSmiles St Albans Community Gardens in the city centre
- We wanted to know where best to locate the garden, as well as other views on the project



FoodSmiles St Albans Russell Avenue Community Garden



The consultation was administered online by St Albans City & District Council

- The consultation was open for three weeks beginning on June 12th 2020
- The public were asked to comment on where they thought the garden would be best located, as well as other views they had on the project
- Notices were displayed in community notice boards and local shops, and were shared on local social media sites
- Residents who lived very close to the proposed sites received a hand-delivered leaflet about the consultation



Grow Community - Sopwell Consultation - closing 03/07/2020

Local residents are asked to take part in a survey on a proposed community garden in Sopwell ward. You are invited to comment on where you think the garden would be best located, as well as other views you have on this project.

The community garden will be created and maintained by a local volunteer gardening group, 'Grow Community – Sopwell'. The proposed sites are on St Albans City and District (SADC) land. The Project is partly funded by SADC Community Grants Fund.

[Find out more information on the consultation and the proposed locations.](#)

The Council will share the survey results with 'Grow Community – Sopwell' who will feed back to respondents.

The survey should take around 5 minutes to complete.

[Have your say and complete the survey online.](#)

The three proposed sites were all on Council-owned land



A: An area next to Berners Drive Play Area *



B: An area on Holyrood Crescent Green



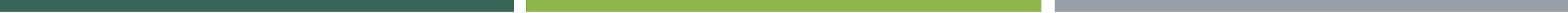
C: An area on Holyrood Crescent further along from the play areas

Factors considered for the choice of locations

- Suitability for growing
- Safety of residents visiting the site
- Accessibility of the site
- Proximity to residents with most need versus central location for the whole ward

Note: Due to the potential redevelopment of the Marlborough Pavilion, this site was not considered at this time

* We have slightly adjusted the siting of the garden at the Berners Drive site (see p4)



Results

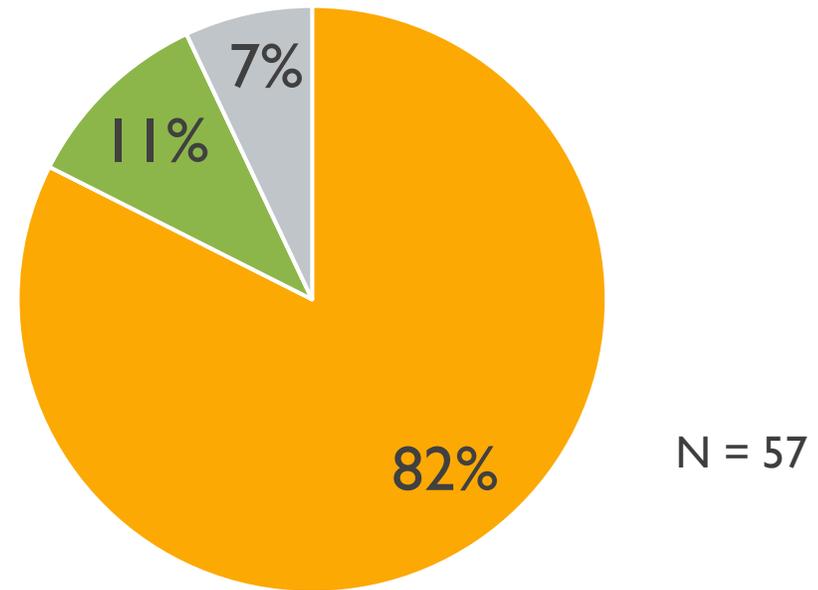
“Exactly the sort of project we should be encouraging with positive environmental and community aspects.”

“I feel it would be a useful resource providing all sorts of opportunities for community activity, involvement and education, as well as food. With positive health benefits both physical and psychological.”

The majority of respondents live in Sopwell and agree with having a Community Garden in the area

- **57** respondents completed the survey
- **88%** (50) stated they lived in Sopwell
- **82%** agreed with the idea of a community garden in Sopwell and no-one disagreed

Please say whether you agree or disagree with having a Community Garden in the Sopwell ward
% respondents



■ Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Disagree ■ Not stated

Community wellbeing and education were key reasons for respondents agreeing with having a Community Garden in Sopwell ward

Community wellbeing

Education (food growing and environmental sustainability)

Health benefits

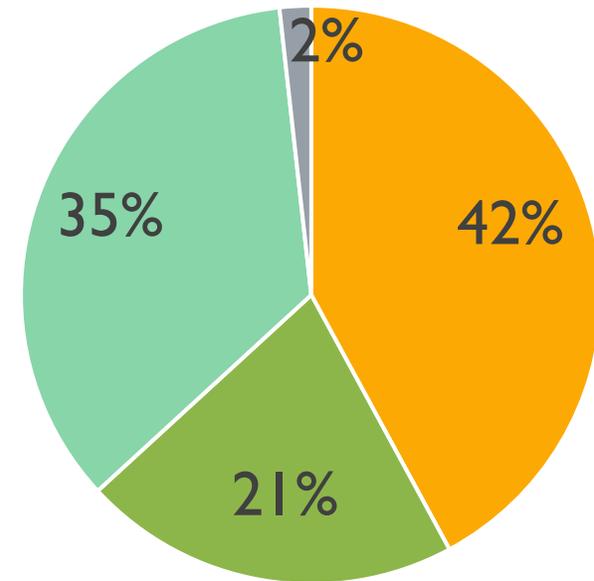
Aesthetic improvements to the area were also mentioned

- *“Building community, health and wellbeing of the community, the environment and aesthetics!”*
- *“It's a great initiative to engage more local people - especially children - in where our food comes from, and why it is important to look after nature.”*
- *“Good to build local community food growing capability and knowledge, and bring the community together, especially in the light of major recession / Brexit on the horizon.”*
- *“Covid-19 has started to pull our community together but all at a distance. This would provide an outdoor socially, active meeting space for our community.”*

The majority of respondents favoured the area next to Berners Drive Play Area (A) as the location for the community garden

- **24** respondents (42%) favoured location A: The area next to Berners Drive Play Area
- The second most preferred option was location C: The area on Holyrood Crescent further along from the play areas (35%, n=20)
- These results were broadly similar when data was analysed from only those stating they live in Sopwell ward

Which proposed option do you prefer?
% respondents

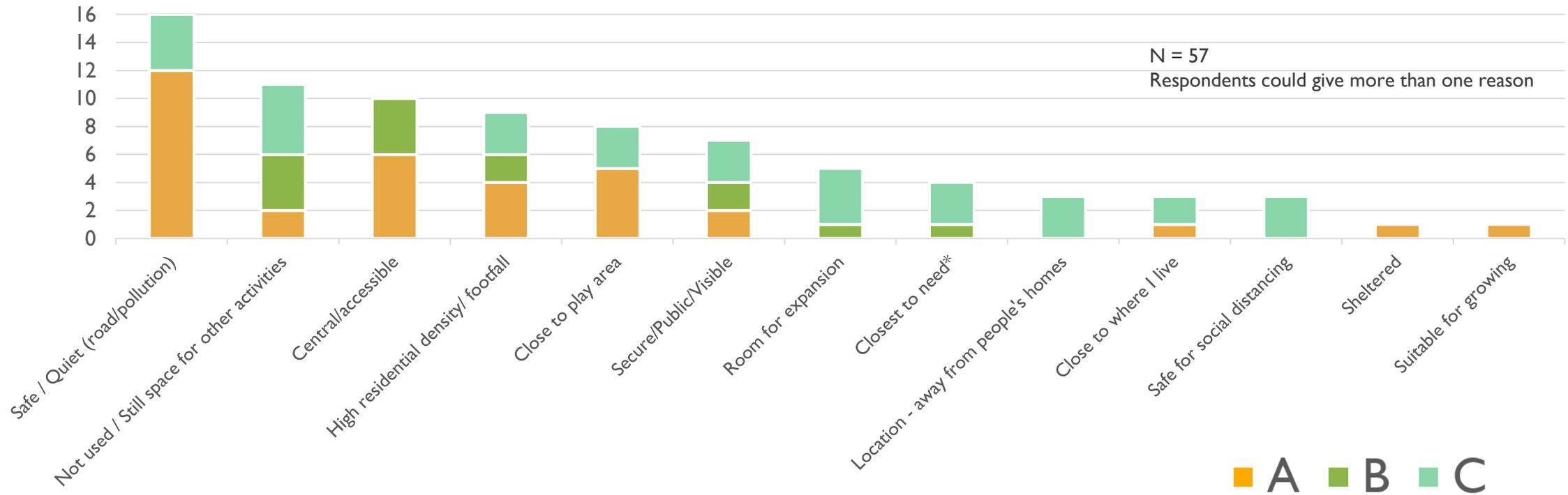


N = 57

■ A ■ B ■ C ■ Not stated

Overall, in their choice of location, respondents mostly valued safety, ensuring there is room for other activities and being centrally located

What do you like about the one you chose?
Number of responses



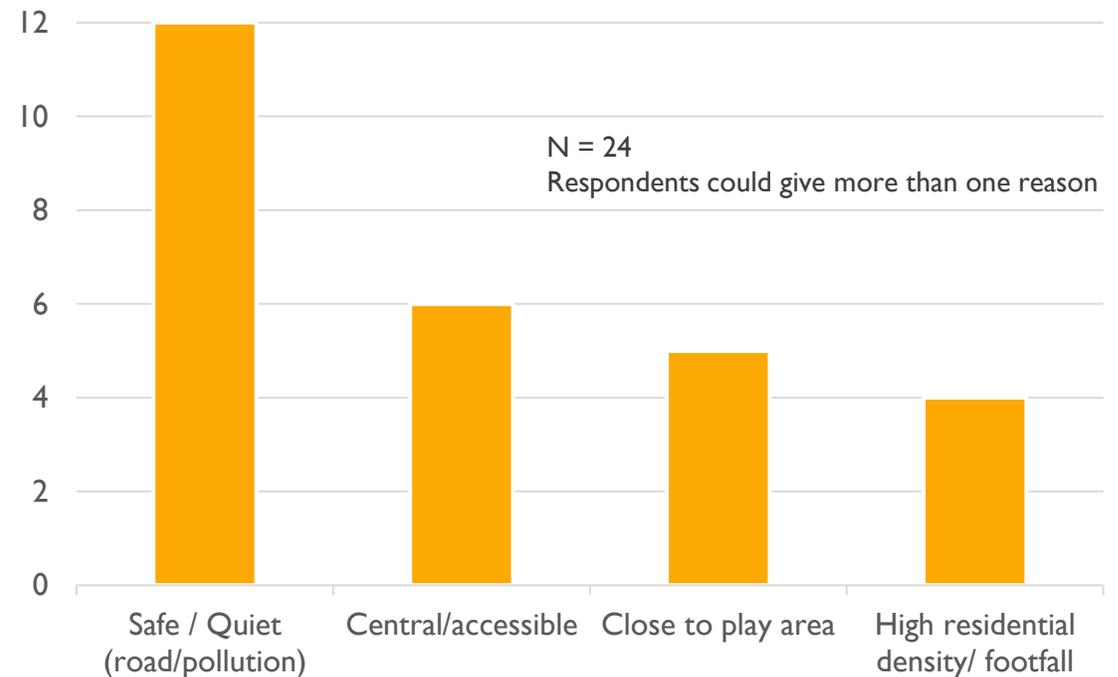
TOTALS ARE SPLIT BY THE NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS CHOOSING EACH LOCATION | A: THE AREA NEXT TO BERNERS DRIVE PLAY AREA | B: THE AREA ON HOLYROOD CRESCENT GREEN | C: THE AREA ON HOLYROOD CRESCENT FURTHER ALONG FROM THE PLAY AREAS
* PERCEIVED NEED = POORER RESIDENTS, THOSE WITHOUT GARDENS, THOSE ATTENDING WATLING VIEW SCHOOL

Those that selected location A mostly highlighted that it was safe from the road

A central location in the ward, convenience of being close to a play area for users with children and it being close to a main pedestrian thoroughfare were also important.

- *“It’s away from busy road and car fumes.”*
- *“Not near any busy roads, feels safer for kids and more peaceful.”*
- *“Everyone in the community can access it and it is in the middle of the community rather than on the edge.”*
- *“Near playground so will encourage young families to get involved. Most footfall as near Alban Way and Sainsburys.”*

What do you like about the one you chose?
Number of responses

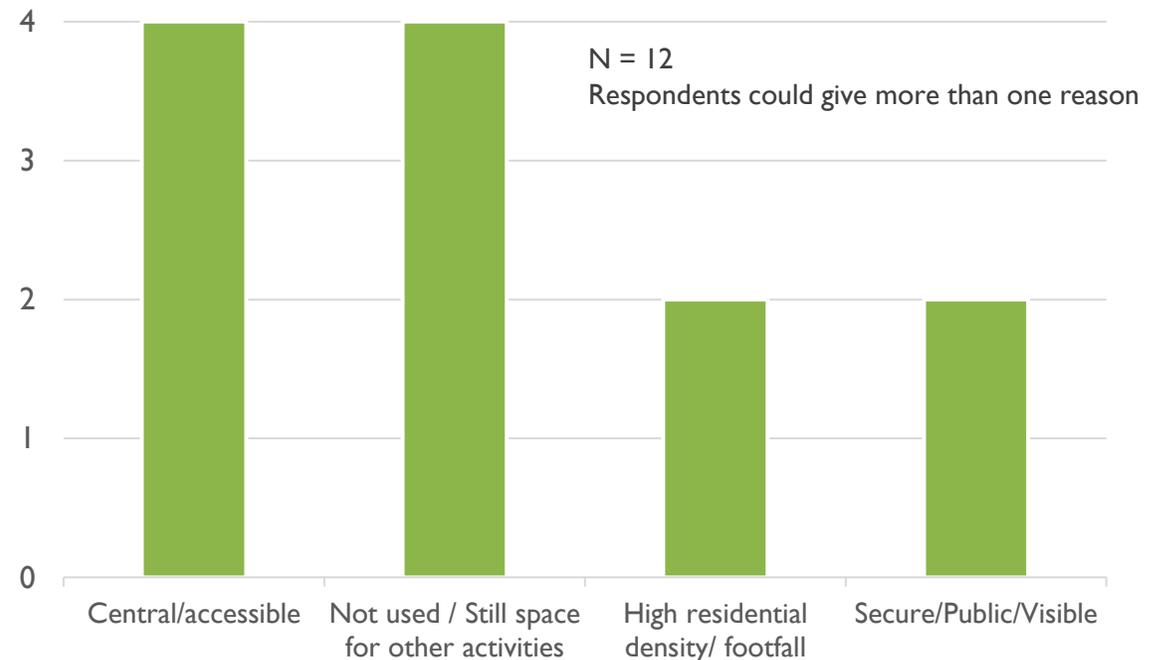


Those that selected location B liked that it was central and that the space was not used for anything else

Respondents believed that being close to houses and the local shops would guarantee high footfall. Also, from a security point of view, that it was more public and visible compared to the other sites.

- *“Good spot in the heart of the community.”*
- *“It is central to Sopwell, close to other amenities and in an area of high residential density. It is also more public and visible than the other sites.”*
- *“It's right in the middle of the community the project is trying to serve.”*
- *“It's a good use of an unused space.”*

What do you like about the one you chose?
Number of responses

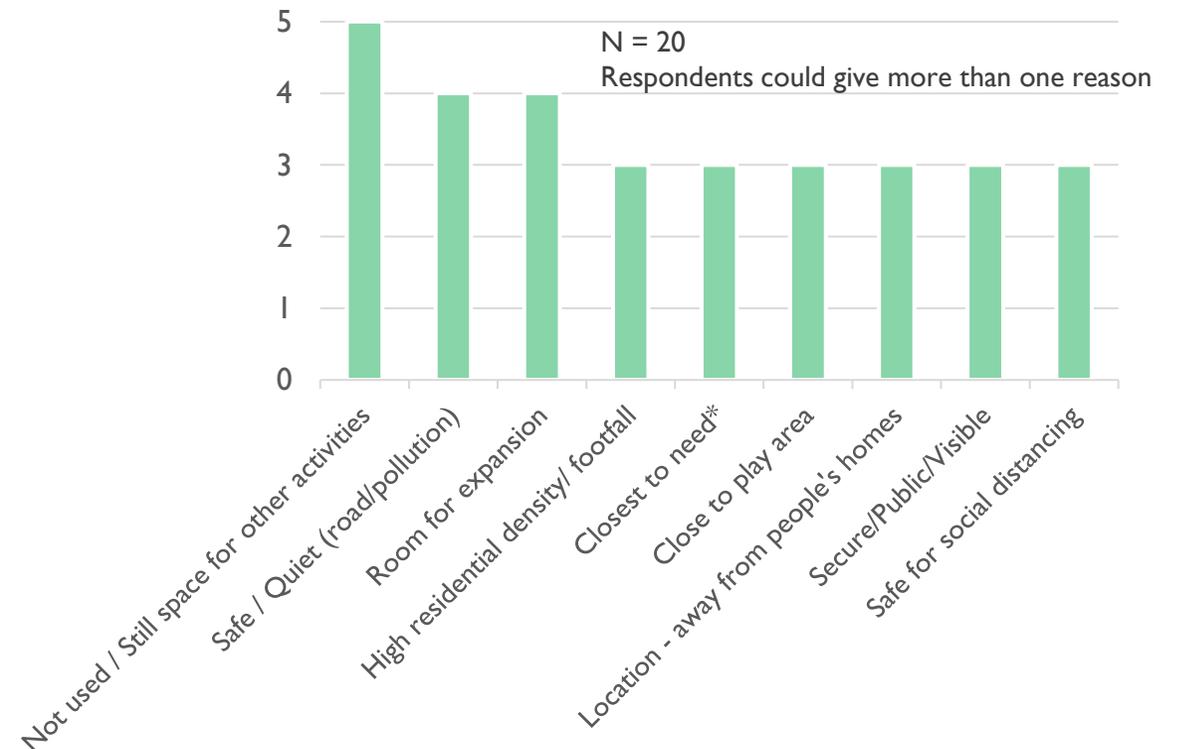


There were many reasons why respondents chose location C. Being a large, safe, recreational area were key attractions

Being close to those with the greatest need* was also highlighted by those who chose this location.

- *“There is still plenty of recreational space left for children and adults to relax and enjoy.”*
- *“Less exposure to transport fumes and away from people's homes.”*
- *“It's an open space and not enclosed like the other two places. Also being in the park, easily accessible for dog walkers, passers-by and all local people. In good view of neighbouring houses to keep an eye on. In this location everyone will be able to maintain social distance.”*
- *“It has better room for expansion if needed. Also it is close to the schools, esp Watling View, if they wanted to help out.”*
- *“It's in a poorer part of Sopwell with many people/families in flats nearby with no access to a garden. It's away from the play area thereby reassuring parents of children's safety but near enough for parents/carers to take the children over to explore/discover. It's also highly visible and near the road for additional safety of the public/protection of the garden.”*

What do you like about the one you chose?
Number of responses



Respondents believed the proposal could be made better by:

- Ensuring it is fully inclusive
 - Intergenerational
 - Culture / Race
 - Socio-economic
 - Additional needs
- Providing infrastructure
 - Water-collection
 - Composting
- Providing educational activities
- Using it as a venue for wider community events
- Expansion
 - Making the garden larger
 - More gardens

Potential vandalism and parking were raised as concerns about the Community Garden

Vandalism

- *“It’s a nice idea, so long as it’s managed and does not get trashed.”*
- *“Option A: It’s in a more open area so won't be vandalised as much as it would as in option C at night where people hang out drinking and leaving cans all over the play area.”*
- *“I'm not really in favour of this at all - it will be vandalised at the earliest opportunity and end up an eyesore very quickly.”*
- *“Berners Drive is very busy with people using the cut through over the railway line and the Alban Way and I think it would have too many passers by not from the Sopwell area coming past and potentially abusing it”*

Parking

- *“[Option A] is a cramped corner for cars to park if they are coming to bring tools.”*



Appendix



Survey questions

- Do you consent to your information being used for the purposes set out in the Privacy Notice?
- We have three options for locating the Community Gardens. Which proposed option do you prefer?
 - A: An area next to Berners Drive Play Area
 - B: An area on Holyrood Crescent Green
 - C: An area on Holyrood Crescent further along from the play areas
- What do you like about the one you chose?
- What if anything could make this proposal better?
- Please say whether you agree or disagree with having a Community Garden in the Sopwell ward
- Please say why you agree or disagree to a Community Garden in Sopwell Ward
- Please say whether you live in Sopwell ward

Additional quotes: Please say why you agree or disagree to a Community Garden in Sopwell Ward

Agree

Community Wellbeing

- *“Covid-19 has started to pull our community together but all at a distance. This would provide an outdoor socially, active meeting space for our community.”*
- *“Encourages community involvement.”*
- *“Great to bring the community together.”*
- *“Helps integrating different communities.”*
- *“Good to encourage a sense of community.”*
- *“It would strengthen our community and make it a better place.”*
- *“I think it will add to the community and make people mix more and give them pride in the area.”*
- *“Brings people of all ages and cultures together.”*
- *“Local need for community cohesion and intergenerational activity.”*
- *“Discovering ‘Grow Community – Sopwell’ this year has made me feel more welcome and connected to my neighbourhood.”*
- *“It will help create a community feel to the area It is something I would be interested in participating in.”*
- *“Building community, health and wellbeing of the community, the environment and aesthetics!”*

Additional quotes: Please say why you agree or disagree to a Community Garden in Sopwell Ward

Agree

Educational

- *“There are many children and young people in the local area without much to do - so a Community Garden that provides enterprise & educational opportunities could be highly beneficial and enriching.”*
- *“Great way to learn gardening, get to know your neighbours.”*
- *“Anything that encourages the community to learn about growing vegetables and also encouraging the community to work together has to be a good thing.”*
- *“Good to build local community food growing capability and knowledge, and bring the community together, especially in the light of major recession / Brexit on the horizon.”*
- *“Learning: community and resilience.”*
- *“It's a great initiative to engage more local people - especially children - in where our food comes from, and why it is important to look after nature.”*
- *“It will be a focal point for spreading the word about how we all need to eat more sustainably.”*
- *“Lovely way of bringing the community together, encouraging and educating about the environmental benefits of growing your own.”*

Additional quotes: Please say why you agree or disagree to a Community Garden in Sopwell Ward

Agree

Health benefits

- *“Would encourage the community to get outdoors and involved in gardening/healthy eating, especially for those who do not have access to a private garden/allotment.”*
- *“Help people access fresh food and help to continue growing their own at home.”*

Agree

Other

- *“Improvement to the aesthetic of the area.”*

Additional quotes: Please say why you agree or disagree to a Community Garden in Sopwell Ward

Neither agree nor disagree

- *“It's a nice idea but as a stay-at-home mum with young kids I wouldn't take my kids too as they wouldn't understand what it is and be bored after a short while of being there.”*
- *“It's not something that would interest me at all - but if others would like it so be it.”*

Additional quotes: What if anything could make this proposal better?

Ensuring the garden is fully inclusive

- *“Have a theme. A cultural garden builds ties with other countries by incorporating exotic plants, fencing etc.”*
- *“Bangladeshi community will plant coriander, bottle gourds and tomatoes.”*
- *“Make sure it’s very accessible to those with additional needs to see and work on. Plant sensory friendly plants - smell / tactile / colours etc.”*
- *“Wide advertising proactively approaching deprived areas / homes and families who could benefit - i.e. not just on Facebook / council website.”*
- *“A campaign of local leafleting once location is chosen.”*

Additional quotes: What if anything could make this proposal better?

Additional planting ideas

- *“It would be great to plant some apple trees too.”*
- *“More wildflower space.”*
- *“I would also like to see more biodiverse spaces in our area as much of it is just grass and brambles.”*

Infrastructure and Education

- *“Watering point close by.”*
- *“Add more elements to the community garden concept. For example, a community composting element and a water harvesting element - this could add value in a number of ways and would allow the Community Garden project to become more than just growing veg in planters - which is what the local community needs. If composting and water harvesting elements were added to the concept as necessities - the project would also provide a flagship sustainability model - that would be useful for the local generations of people. It could also be a source of enterprise and education.”*

Additional quotes: What if anything could make this proposal better?

A venue for wider community events

- *“Make more use of the green - stage small, local events i.e. craft fairs or small music events.”*

Expansion

- *“Ultimately, I hope this can grow into a larger garden - in which case, perhaps option C is preferable as it offers more space to expand.”*
- *“Have two areas!”*
- *“Being near an indoor space for water and indoor activities.”*

Contact

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