

# Strengthening Portobello Road

## Consultation results

July to October 2024

Growth and Delivery Team

Planning and Place

Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea

[GrowthandDeliveryTeam@rbkc.gov.uk](mailto:GrowthandDeliveryTeam@rbkc.gov.uk)



THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF  
**KENSINGTON  
AND CHELSEA**

## Contents

Introduction.....	2
Key findings .....	3
Questionnaire.....	6
Road safety .....	6
Traffic barriers.....	6
Pavement and road surface .....	7
Safer junctions.....	8
Infrastructure .....	9
Lighting.....	9
Power supply .....	10
Reducing flooding .....	11
Experience .....	12
Signage and wayfinding.....	12
Greening.....	13
Seating .....	14
Antiques Gateway: Phase 1.....	15
Chepstow Villas to Westbourne Grove, including Denbigh Terrace junction .....	15
About you and how you use the market.....	17
Portobello Market offer.....	17
Demographics .....	18

# Introduction

This report covers feedback on draft proposals to improve the infrastructure of Portobello Road. Feedback was received during an extended 12-week consultation period between Monday 22 July and Sunday 13 October 2024.

The draft proposals were prepared with the local community, over a multi-stage participatory process that started in spring 2023. The purpose of this process was to find a balance between improving the infrastructure of the road, while celebrating and protecting the market for generations to come.

You can find more information about the full participatory process on the [project webpage](#).

## *Methodology*

The 12-week consultation was designed by representatives of residents, street traders, businesses and charities who joined the Portobello Engagement Oversight Panel.

Consultees could choose what to comment on and there were quick survey options online and on paper. Comments were received via the Council consultation hub, paper forms, the interactive digital chat tool and direct emails.

The consultation was promoted in person, online, and by post.

At least 2,600 people became aware of the project through online platforms, including 1425 individual users of the interactive chat tool Hello Lamp Post (HLP), over 930 clicks on social media adverts, and 332 clicks from various council newsletters. The project was also promoted online via email to the project mailing list (about 300 addresses) and to all street traders on Portobello and Golborne market (including the Westway).

Paper forms were posted to 1,400 addresses and distributed to 20 key community hubs (including charities, health providers, faith congregations, schools, and leisure centre). On-street banners and stickers carrying contact details for the interactive chat tool were distributed across the project area.

The project team had well over 200 conversations in person at the market during 10 drop-in sessions at market hours and during outreach to street traders and businesses along the entirety of the project area.

The team also held workshops with Morley College students and with Action Disability Kensington and Chelsea (ADKC).

## Key findings

We received 452 responses to the consultation.

This number includes 155 questionnaires received through council consultation platforms (paper form and online form) and 281 through the interactive chat tool. We also received 16 emails from individuals and residents' associations.

All proposals were well supported, the highest at 82% (tree planting and greening) and the lowest at 61% (seating).

The quantitative data below draws from multiple choice questions about the extent of support for proposals. Because most questions were optional the sample varies for each question.

### *Ranking of draft proposals by extent of support and strongly support:*

1. Greening	82%
2. Lighting	76%
3. Safer Junctions	73%
4. Signage & wayfinding	71%
5. Antiques Gateway	70%
6. Surfaces	68%
7. Power Supply	67%
8. Denbigh Terrace	63%
9. Seating	61%

The qualitative analysis about key reasons for supporting proposals, key concerns, and suggestions is based on written feedback captured through all consultation platforms, including emails. It provides a nuanced picture of local sentiment, highlighting points of contention and potential solutions.

### *Key reasons for supporting proposals:*

- Opportunity to implement flood mitigation measures.
- Improved pedestrian environment with better pedestrian accessibility and road safety.
- Opportunity to improve the current operation of traffic barriers with safer and more effective barriers against dangerous driving, including cars, cycles and e-scooters.
- Improved safety and security after dark.
- Enable seasonal lighting.
- Opportunity to improve signage and wayfinding within the market (signposting market sections and points of interest such as toilets) as well as to and from public transport (not only Notting Hill Gate station)
- Opportunity to better identify the areas of Portobello market while safeguarding residential streets from market crowds.

- Opportunity to celebrate the history and heritage of the market.

#### *Key concerns:*

- Car access issues on side streets (particularly mews and closes), loss of parking spaces, additional challenges for business deliveries.
- New road safety barriers may not operate properly or be well maintained in the future.
- Proposals may worsen traffic on surrounding streets.
- Proposals may aggravate existing issues such as littering, anti-social behaviour, and congregation of tourists on residential streets.
- Proposals may undermine Portobello's authenticity and cater only for tourists, not residents.
- Poor value for money for "prettifying" the road.
- Coloured lamp posts and power bollards would not be in keeping with local heritage and may not age well.
- Unclear strategy to tackle blocked drains and sewers before implementing proposals.
- Insufficient flood mitigation measures, particularly sustainable drainage.
- Additional street clutter, particularly trees, signs, seating, and bike racks.
- Noise produced by cars driving on the new road surface.
- Disruption to trading during construction works.
- Unclear council strategy to support the antiques trade, including stalls and arcades.
- Unclear council strategy to curate retail offer, encouraging more food stalls and supporting shops useful to locals, while curbing "tourist tat".

#### *Misconceptions which helped drive opposition:*

- The sense that proposals would fully pedestrianise Portobello Road and remove all parking bays.
- Incorrect assumption that new road safety barriers would remain active 24/7.
- Incorrect assumption that the new paving proposed is akin to cobblestones.
- Mistaking new drinking fountains for water features.

#### *Consultees' suggestions to address concerns:*

- Ensure full-time access to residents' and emergency vehicles even on market days when road safety barriers are active.
- Prioritise safer junctions and road safety over other proposals.
- Survey underground utilities before implementing any changes and prioritise flood mitigation infrastructure.
- Keep changes to a minimum not to undermine Portobello's "charm".

- Retain traditional paving as much as possible and, where needed, use new plain paving.
- Additional street furniture should be in keeping with the traditional character of the area.
- Refrain from any attempts at “branding” or planning a “look” through “jazzy” paving, street furniture or any other interventions. Keep designs “unfussy” and “unassertive”, in keeping with character of the area.
- Further consultation requested on the design of lamp posts and power bollards, if coloured.
- Install more bins throughout the road, particularly next to any new seating areas to curb littering and help control where people eat takeaway meals.
- Improve waste collection, clean up graffiti and pavements.
- More CCTV surveillance to curb anti-social behaviour and littering.
- Be considerate of residential properties when installing new seating and clarify how proposals for temporary seating would be properly managed.
- Build more toilets, particularly accessible toilets.
- Ensure no loss of parking for traders and businesses due to new electric vehicle charging on Portobello Road.
- Clarify the cost of proposals and how delivery will be funded.
- Clarify timeline for implementing improvements and potential disruption to trading.
- Clarify impact on parking spaces in and around Portobello Road.

# Questionnaire

We asked for feedback on the following nine proposals, organised under three groups:

- Road safety: traffic barriers, safer junctions, pavement and road surfaces
- Infrastructure: lighting, power supply, reducing flooding
- Experience: signage and wayfinding, greening, seating

We also asked for feedback on focused interventions to the Antiques Gateway between Chepstow Villas and Westbourne Grove, including Denbigh Terrace junction. This section is intended as the first phase of construction.

## Road safety

### Traffic barriers

#### We asked

For comments about the following approach to road safety, although recognising that the Council is required to ensure the safety of market crowds using defensive vehicle barriers:

- Minimal and effective traffic barriers that can also defend against dangerous vehicles
- Install sliding barriers operated automatically to ensure access for emergency vehicles and those with permits, such as disabled residents, traders and deliveries
- The sliding barriers will only be active during market hours

This approach was based on the following recommendations put forward by participants in the Portobello Conversations workshops held in early 2024:

- Increased safety at market hours without interfering with the functioning of the market
- Preference for sliding bollards that don't obstruct the flow of pedestrians
- Allow access for emergency vehicles and permit holders

#### You said

- Consultees accept the need for better road safety barriers if they are operated effectively, allowing access for residents and emergency vehicles, and provisions for business deliveries, loading and unloading.
- There are concerns around loss of parking spaces due to the new barriers. Nevertheless, some call for parking to be removed altogether or at least on weekends.
- Some suggest extending road closure hours and widening the car free zone to the entirety of Portobello.

## Pavement and road surface

### We asked

To what extent do you support or oppose the following approach to pavement and road surfaces:

- Retain kerb, parking bays and market pitches
- Repave pavements, parking bays, carriageway, market pitches, and junctions in new materials
- Ensure dropped kerbs on opposite sides match for better accessibility

This approach draws from the following recommendations from the Portobello Conversations:

- High quality, 'grippy', accessible and well-maintained surfaces
- Ensure Portobello still looks like a road, in-keeping with the identity of the market
- Retain kerbs and avoid single level pavement and carriageway
- Avoid 'funky designs' although subtle design to promote wayfinding is accepted

### You said

Quantitative results:

- ✓ We received 150 responses to the quantitative question about the approach to surfaces
- ✓ 68% of answers to this question support or strongly support the proposals
- ✓ 16% neither support nor oppose the proposals
- ✓ 16% oppose or strongly oppose the proposals

Qualitative commentary:

- Reasons for supporting include wider pavements, quality permeable materials, opportunity to repair or repave forecourts.
- Concerns include the noise of cars driving on the new road surface, risks with raising parking bays to pavement level, loss of traditional paving, and maintenance of new paving.
- For consultees, improving the area for pedestrians also means finding a solution for bicycles, scooters and mopeds.
- Although pedestrianisation was not included in the proposals, consultees did raise it as a way to improve pedestrian safety. There were about 20 comments supporting pedestrianisation and 8 against.



## Safer junctions

### We asked

To what extent do you support or oppose the following approach to improve pedestrian safety on junctions:

- Wider pavements and levelled surfaces to slow down traffic and increase pedestrian accessibility and safety
- Ensure traffic calming measures like raised crossings do not undermine drainage
- Opportunity for new water fountains, trees, wayfinding signage, and cycle stands at junctions

This approach draws from the following recommendations from the Portobello Conversations:

- Safer junctions as pedestrians don't realise side streets remain open during market hours

### You said

- ✓ We received 158 responses to the quantitative question about the approach to junctions
- ✓ 73% of answers to this question support or strongly support the proposals
- ✓ 13% neither support nor oppose the proposals
- ✓ 13% oppose or strongly oppose the proposals

Qualitative commentary:

- The top reason for supporting proposals for junctions is the opportunity to improve dangerous crossings.
- Consultees raised concerns over the impact of the new measures on traffic, particularly Chepstow Villas, Lancaster Road and Westbourne Grove – the latter two already suffer from congestion issues.
- Westbourne Grove is thought to be particularly challenging because of Saturday trading on the road.
- Some fear proposals for Denbigh Terrace junction may worsen existing issues such as littering, anti-social behaviour, and congregation of tourists. Also concerns around loss of parking spaces.

## Infrastructure

### Lighting

#### **We asked**

To what extent do you support or oppose the following approach to lighting:

- Use lighting to improve security and celebrate special features of the market street
- Traditional style colourful lamp post to celebrate the character of colourful Portobello
- Able to support seasonal lights, decorations and banners
- Ensure lighting does not disturb flats on Portobello Road

This approach draws from the following recommendations from the Portobello Conversations:

- Improved lighting for better security, particularly in the winter
- Lamp posts in-keeping with the character and heritage of the market street
- Seasonal lighting to celebrate Christmas and other festivals
- Consistent lighting across Portobello Road

#### **You said**

- ✓ We received 148 responses to the quantitative question about the approach to lighting
- ✓ 76% of answers to this question support or strongly support the proposals
- ✓ 18% neither support nor oppose the proposals
- ✓ 7% oppose or strongly oppose the proposals

Qualitative commentary:

- Consultees believe better lighting is key for safety and security after dark.
- Some oppose coloured or creative lamp posts and would rather replicate the style of the existing black Victorian lamp posts.
- There are concerns around loss of parking spaces due to new electric vehicle charging.

## Power supply

### We asked

To what extent do you support or oppose the following approach to new power bollards:

- Replace all power bollards and underground power points, adding power where these are missing or removing where those are over provided
- Ensure universal access and pay as you go system
- Enable electric vehicle charging
- Colourful and unique bollards to celebrate the character of Portobello

This approach draws from the following recommendations from the Portobello Conversations:

- All trading pitches to have access to electricity
- Modernise power supply to allow for sharing between different traders

### You said

- ✓ We received 141 responses to the quantitative question about the approach to power
- ✓ 67% of answers to this question support or strongly support the proposals
- ✓ 20% neither support nor oppose the proposals
- ✓ 13% oppose or strongly oppose the proposals

Qualitative commentary:

- Most consultees welcome the opportunity to improve traders' access to electricity.
- Like lamp posts, consultees want to retain the style of the existing black bollards.
- There were also comments in support of drinking fountains and improved water supply for traders, and calls for improving the Acklam food area.

## Reducing flooding

### We asked

For comments about the following approach to reducing flooding, although recognising that the Council is committed to working with the community to find additional opportunities to mitigate flooding and support people affected by flooding:

- Introduce flooding resilience under the pavement to reduce potential flooding impacts
- Use permeable surfacing solutions to improve drainage
- Raised crossing designed with sloping to remove risk of flooding

This approach draws from the following recommendations from the Portobello Conversations:

- Mitigate flooding and improve drainage
- Avoid making flooding worse with speed bumps or raised crossings

### You said

- Flood mitigation is well supported and seen as a top priority, including bolder sustainable drainage measures.
- Some call for underground utilities to be thoroughly surveyed and drains and sewers repaired before starting any improvement works.

## Experience

### Signage and wayfinding

#### **We asked**

To what extent do you support or oppose the following approach to signage and wayfinding:

- Signage that celebrates history and heritage and attracts visitors
- Welcoming signs at gateways such as Westbourne Grove
- More signage for market sections and points of interest without adding street clutter
- Promote route to and from Golborne Market and north end of Portobello

This approach draws from the following recommendations from the Portobello Conversations:

- Better functional signage to facilities such as toilets and points of interest
- Signage to promote a welcoming environment such as 'Welcome to Portobello Market' or 'Market Open' rather than 'Road Closed'
- Signs to encourage footfall to the north end of the market and Golborne Market

#### **You said**

- ✓ We received 151 responses to the quantitative question about the approach to wayfinding
- ✓ 71% of answers to this question support or strongly support the proposals
- ✓ 19% neither support nor oppose the proposals
- ✓ 10% oppose or strongly oppose the proposals

Qualitative commentary:

- There is high demand for improved wayfinding, including more signs along the market and welcoming gateway signage, provided signs do not add to street clutter.
- Consultees see signage and wayfinding as an opportunity to celebrate the history, heritage and identity of the market.
- Consultees expect to be involved in designing new signage.
- A few consultees asked for improvements to the appearance of the rail bridge.

## Greening

### We asked

To what extent do you support or oppose the following approach to planting new trees without interfering with the market:

- Planting new trees where feasible at junctions and outside core market areas not to impact the movement of people or market operations
- Introduce water fountains at junctions and designated seating areas

This approach draws from the following recommendations from the Portobello Conversations:

- Greening that does not interfere with the functioning of the market

### You said

- ✓ We received 152 responses to the quantitative question about the approach to greening
- ✓ 82% of answers to this question support or strongly support the proposals
- ✓ 10% neither support nor oppose the proposals
- ✓ 8% oppose or strongly oppose the proposals

Qualitative commentary:

- Support for new trees is high while a few also mentioned other greening measures such as flower baskets and planters, provided there is adequate maintenance.

## Seating

### We asked

To what extent do you support or oppose the following approach to seating in specific areas not to interfere with the functioning of the market:

- Managed seating areas off the market recognising that the flow of people is integral to market function
- Prioritise temporary seating
- Inviting social spaces for resting while discouraging antisocial behaviour

This approach draws from the following recommendations from the Portobello Conversations:

- Limited seating areas where it will not restrict the flow of people or take up space on pavements
- Temporary and supervised seating that can be removed at the closing of trade to avoid pockets of antisocial behaviour

### You said

- ✓ We received 153 responses to the quantitative question about the approach to greening
- ✓ 61% of answers to this question support or strongly support the proposals
- ✓ 22% neither support nor oppose the proposals
- ✓ 16% oppose or strongly oppose the proposals

Qualitative commentary:

- Despite calls for more seating, especially to support people with a disability and reduced mobility, many consultees believe public seating attracts anti-social behaviour, particularly after hours.

## Antiques Gateway: Phase 1

The consultation proposed that improvements be delivered in phases, starting at the southern end of the road which acts as a major gateway to Portobello from Notting Hill Gate.

## Chepstow Villas to Westbourne Grove, including Denbigh Terrace junction

### We asked

To what extent do you support or oppose the following proposals for the Antiques Gateway:

- Strengthened road safety through new traffic barriers
- Extend existing road closure during market hours (Fridays and Saturdays) to include Chepstow Villas to Westbourne Grove
- Pavements enhanced and upgraded surfaces
- Parking bays at same level as pavement
- Clear marking of the carriageway with kerbs
- New colourful lamp posts and electric vehicle charging

To what extent do you support or oppose the following proposals for Denbigh Terrace junction:

- Water fountain
- New trees where possible
- Cycle stands
- Traffic barriers for pedestrian safety active during market hours (Fridays and Saturdays)

### You said

Chepstow Villas to Westbourne Grove:

- ✓ We received 162 responses to the quantitative question about the approach to the Antiques Gateway
- ✓ 70% of answers support or strongly support the proposals for the Antiques Gateway
- ✓ 21% oppose or strongly oppose the proposals
- ✓ 9% neither support nor oppose the proposals

Denbigh Terrace junction

- ✓ We received 158 responses to the quantitative question about the approach to Denbigh Terrace junction
- ✓ 63% of answers to this question support or strongly support the proposals
- ✓ 25% oppose or strongly oppose the proposals
- ✓ 11% neither support nor oppose the proposals

Qualitative commentary:

- Consultees are broadly supportive of an improved pedestrian environment in this section of the road, and see the project as an opportunity to repair pavements and forecourts.



- Consultees are concerned that new road safety barriers and road closure may limit access to Denbigh Close as well as for business deliveries and customers.
- Many believe the proposals may negatively impact Denbigh Terrace by removing parking spaces and encouraging congregation of tourists on this residential street.
- New street furniture and paving should not undermine the character of conversation areas.
- A few said that other sections need investment first, such as along the Spanish school.
- A few also expressed opposition to parking spaces at pavement level and flat surface because pedestrians tend to lose sense of the carriageway.
- A few businesses asked for permits to park elsewhere on busy days to free up space for pedestrians.

## About you and how you use the market

### Portobello Market offer

This section captures comments about how the market works and how often consultees visit it, despite the focus of the consultation which looked at infrastructure improvements rather than changes to how the market operates. Operations remain covered by the Market Action Plan 2022-2027.

#### **We asked**

Community members on the Portobello Engagement Oversight Panel were keen to explore what would encourage locals to visit the market more often, based on the perception that residents did not use the market much. Therefore, the extended questionnaire included two questions to this effect: about frequency of visit and encouragements to visit more often. There were, however, many unprompted comments about how the market works in response to other questions.

#### **You said**

- ✓ We received 82 responses to the question about how often do you visit Portobello Market
- ✓ Most respondents (78%) live within a 10-minute walk from Portobello Road, while 6% are either businesses, street traders, or answered other connection to the road
- ✓ 60% of respondents visit daily, 32% weekly, and 8% monthly

Qualitative commentary:

Regarding what would encourage locals to visit more often, responses captured across all consultation platforms suggest:

- A more curated retail offer is the top priority, including more fresh food stalls and shops for daily needs such as hardware. Also, less restaurants, cafes, and “tourist tat”.
- Cleaning up the street with better waste collection and removing graffiti.
- Making it safer by tackling anti-social behaviour and crime, and installing more surveillance cameras.
- Protecting antique shops and stalls to safeguard the authenticity and identity of the market.
- Improving the pedestrian environment through strengthened road safety and traffic management, better walking routes including gaps between stalls and curbing oversized stalls, and tackling dangerous cycling.
- Activating spaces with buskers, public art and greening, particularly along the Spanish school.

## Demographics

### *Connection to the area*

There were 564 responses<sup>1</sup> to the question about connection to the area across all platforms. 50% were residents, 33% visitors, and 16% workers (10% street traders and 6% businesses).

The interactive chat tool helped to boost responses from visitors because of the on-street publicity. The *visitor* category also includes dozens of Morley College North Kensington Centre students.

Traders and businesses submitted more responses using paper forms and the council online feedback form, reaching 22% of responses on council platforms.

Most of the 82 respondents who provided a postcode<sup>2</sup> were based in North Kensington (90%), with a clear cluster in the southern end of Portobello Road, around the Antiques Gateway area.

### *Age*

There were 516 responses to the question about age. Most were adults between 35 and 74 years old (62%), 26% were under 34 (including 5% under 18), and 5% over 75 years old. The age distribution of respondents was very similar across all platforms.

### *Note on protected characteristics*

Demographic data is skewed by the fact that most respondents were not asked about ethnicity, sex, religion or belief, and long-term disability.

This was a methodological decision to encourage higher take-up of the survey by reducing the length of the questionnaire and removing data protection concerns. The quick survey options which significantly boosted the number of survey responses, paper forms and the interactive chat tool, did not include demographic questions other than age.

The project team sought to balance protect characteristics, particularly ethnicity, by targeting local organisations representative of local demographics such as schools (state and independent), charities and community groups (including youth clubs and community centres), faith congregations, and health centres.

The project team ensured that the ethnicity of participants in Portobello Conversations workshops and the Portobello Engagement Oversight Panel reflected census data.

The team also organised workshops with Morley College students and Action Disability Kensington and Chelsea to reach specific demographics.

---

<sup>1</sup> This number is higher than the total number of questionnaires received because some users of the interactive chat tool only answered the two initial screening questions about age and connection to the area, without providing any further feedback. Despite not counting as responses to the consultation, they do provide an understanding of the demographics who became aware of the project.

<sup>2</sup> Sharing a postcode was voluntary and it was only included on the extended questionnaire.