

BRISTOL HARBOUR PLACE SHAPING STRATEGY

STAGE 1 ENGAGEMENT REPORT

May 2024



DK-CM



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INTRODUCTION

This report sets out findings and analysis gathered during Stage 1 of the development of the Bristol Harbour Place Shaping Strategy (BHPSS).

Our approach to engagement is split into three stages. **Stage 1: What Is** is focussed around establishing the places, qualities, opportunities and challenges which currently exist in the harbour: a collective portrait of the existing condition. This stage has involved a number of complementary engagement strands designed to:

- Capture the views of those who are established protagonists and/or users of Bristol Harbour, including key stakeholders within and adjacent to Bristol City Council, established water user groups, and boaters.
- Capture the views of communities and residents who may not be making use of the Harbour today, or whose use of the harbour may not have been well captured or explored in the past, including residents of South Redcliffe Ward and, through our collaboration with Rising Arts Agency, young people with an interest in the city and its harbour.
- Capture the views of Bristolians in general, at this stage through a dedicated online platform.

The findings from Stage 1, though continuing to be live conversations, are being used to inform a series of principles that will, in due course, define a Vision for the future of Bristol Harbour. This Vision will be tested, challenged and evolved during subsequent stages of the project:

- **Stage 2: What Should Be** will flip the focus from the present day to the future of the harbour area as a whole, to develop a series of key overarching strategic objectives framed as a Vision.
- **Stage 3: How We Get There** involves the development of Place Plans which will build upon the evidence base established in Stage 1 and the overarching strategic objectives established in Stage 2 to develop a series of detailed place- and site- specific strategic proposals, including for the waterspace, and to inform a Strategic Outline Business Case.

This engagement has been undertaken in the wake of recent previous successful engagement activities, notably *Bristol Harbour User Insights* (Mace & Menter, 2022) and *Harbourside Place Shaping Workshops* (Design West, 2022). Findings from these previous sessions has been referred to when preparing this report.

Findings from Stage 1 engagement are captured and summarised in the **Bristol Harbour Atlas**, a visual and map-based document which captures a collective, crowdsourced portrait of what the Harbour is today. This report is intended to be read alongside, and as a support to, the Atlas which is published on the Harbour Place Shaping Strategy website.



Above Engagement boards used during South Redcliffe engagement activity.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Stage 1 of our engagement for the Place Shaping Strategy has focussed upon understanding the existing context of the harbour, as a preparation for developing a Vision for its future in Stage 2.

The team have used a variety of media, methods and engagement strategies, including web-based, walking tours, 1:1 conversations, workshops (in-person and virtual) and drop-in sessions to deliver a targeted engagement exercise aimed at getting vital insights from a broad variety of different users and residents.

The harbour is widely loved and appreciated, and is vital to Bristol's identity. There is broad consensus about what is good about it, most particularly its versatility, its openness, and its cultural and heritage significance. There is broad consensus about the biggest threats and weaknesses, with issues of access, public transport, water quality and the threat of over-development dominating across the board. But there are of course some issues, notably traffic-heavy routes & spaces and car parking, that are more contested.

I LOVE BEING BY THE WATER. MAKES A CHANGE FROM DAILY LIFE, THE COLOURS, THE BOATS.

I CAME TO BRISTOL FROM SCOTLAND WHEN I WAS 16 WITH THE NAVY! CAME BY SHIP STRAIGHT INTO THE HARBOUR

THERE NEEDS TO BE MORE THAN JUST SHOPS I GO TO THE HARBOUR BECAUSE IT FEELS FREE. PEOPLE CAN DO WHAT THEY WANT.

walk around harbour, prefer northside as its more green

I DON'T USE THE HARBOUR BECAUSE I DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT IT

SUN'S OUT? So is the whole of Bristol trying to get a spot near the water

avoid Friday + Saturday nights (crowdy)

More initiatives to swim + better water quality.

The following sets out overarching strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in relation to the harbour:

Strengths

- Versatility and variety of uses, activities and events, throughout the year, wide variety of water based activities available primarily in the west of the harbour
- A vital part of Bristol's tourist and visitor offer
- Rich heritage
- A sense of freedom and openness; a place 'with no obligation' which has sufficient free space to support events programming
- A place that supports wellbeing, especially for the young
- A place of culture and creativity

Weaknesses

- Access is the dominant issue, including sub-issues of poor public realm, lack of facilities, digital accessibility, inappropriate or unsafe surfaces and a lack of seating and shelter.
- Lack of green space and trees
- Limitations of public transport (including Park & Ride), especially Sunday and evening services
- Poor wayfinding, legibility and signage
- Individual safety is a concern, and is especially an issue for teenagers.
- Water quality is widely understood as a challenge and as something that could worsen
- No clear offer for teenagers and young people
- Cost of activities can be prohibitive
- Professional respondents identified particular issues with care and maintenance, both of buildings and of harbour infrastructure.
- The Eastern Reaches are less associated with the Harbour and less positively-regarded generally, with legibility of routes, access to the water and lower quality moorings all noted.

Opportunities

- Quick public realm wins include enhanced sociable seating, shelter and tree-planting
- Better public facilities and amenities would be welcomed by many, and there is a potential for shared facilities to benefit multiple users and stakeholders, including licence-holders. More and better multi-functional and secular community space would also be valued.
- Underutilised land and vacant sites could be better used as part of a more strategic approach to meanwhile uses. Temporary things like the roller disco are widely appreciated.
- Existing heritage provision could be enriched with other stories, narratives, voices
- Better support for existing initiatives, especially those that support young creatives
- Strong desire to protect and enhance existing uses throughout the harbour
- Professional respondents in particular see a strong opportunity to enrich and wild the harbour and expand biodiversity, and for the harbour to play a strong role in climate resilience and carbon neutrality ambitions.

Threats

- Over-development, including perceived 'luxury' development and commercialisation
- Environmental issues, particularly in relation to water quality, habitat protection, flood risk and clean air.
- Many businesses and third sector organisations within the Harbour are held back from expanding by poor premises and lack of long-term security of tenure.

I ENJOY BATHURST BASIN JUST TO SIT AND BE.

DISCOVERIES AND SURPRISES

The following are discoveries that challenge or subvert the team's prior knowledge, briefings or assumptions:

- The Harbour is used by some of Bristol's most disadvantaged communities, however, not so much for waterspace leisure and sport uses, and not in ways that are easily measured.
- The harbour plays a stronger role in wellbeing than might be anticipated, both as a site of leisure (sailing, jogging, swimming) or for mental health, wellbeing and wellness. The 'openness' and sense of freedom that the harbour area has are important to this.
- The eastern reaches, east of Redcliffe Bascule bridge, are typically not really thought of as part of the harbour, suggesting a distinct approach is needed.
- Coaches play a larger role in Bristol's transport offer than anticipated, both in terms of tourist journeys to the harbour and as an affordable long-distance travel option for residents.



ENGAGEMENT IN NUMBERS

- 8 1:1 sessions with organisations delivering water based activities in the harbour
- 2 engagement events with residents living on the Redcliffe Estate near the harbour
- 8 direct engagements with young people through the Rising Arts Agency, as a prelude to much more substantial engagement during Stage 2
- 33 virtual workshop attendees representing a wide array of existing harbour stakeholders
- 40 boaters attending drop-in sessions with a total of 71 boaters completing an online survey
- 253 visitors to the ask.bristol website, postings captured from 45 different users

DIVERGING VIEWS

Some issues were understood differently by different respondents and these are summarised here:

- Private vehicles and car journeys are a significant contested issue. Some organisations are worried about loss of car parking for revenue or disability access reasons, whilst there is a strong desire from professional respondents to reduce vehicle journeys, enhance public realm for pedestrians and cyclists, and lessen the dominance of private car parking, and many public respondents identify areas that are negatively impacted by cars, for example Hotwells Road, Prince Street Bridge and Redcliffe Bascule Bridge.
- The Harbour Festival was widely celebrated among professional respondents and many members of the public, however some of the existing harbour stakeholders feel like it does not celebrate the water and maritime uses enough.
- A tension exists between prized and established 'headline' tourist attractions and the role of the harbour in everyday life - this isn't necessarily a problem but many respondents discussed or were interested in this balance and how it can be improved/rebalanced.

ENGAGEMENT AT A GLANCE

This diagram sets out the key positive, negative and conflicted themes that have emerged from Stage 1 engagement. It is intended as a single page visual summary of how the harbour is currently understood rather than as a summary of all engagement conversations.



TOWARDS A VISION

The next engagement stage will focus on developing a Vision for the future of Bristol Harbour. To contribute to that process a draft set of Vision principles have been developed that directly arise out of engagement activity summarised in this report. These are intended to stimulate debate and development during Stage 2, and are as follows.

Building on its existing strengths, Bristol Harbour will...

- ...be well-integrated to the wider city and accessible to all.
- ...play a vital role in delivering upon Bristol's zero carbon, biodiversity and climate resilience ambitions.
- ...be a comfortable, open and safe place for people to spend time, and that promotes wellbeing.
- ...be a vital part of Bristol's cultural identity, where everyday public life coexists with water uses, and maritime industries.
- ...contribute to a child-friendly city by offering a unique playable quayside to local people and to those visiting the harbour as a destination
-be a place where creativity, making and culture, including local production and provenance, are celebrated and supported.
- invest in its infrastructure to ensure the financial sustainability of the Harbour Estate
- ...ensure that investment benefits, and connects with, the harbour's communities and neighbourhoods.
- ...be a great place to live, with good quality services and amenities including for the harbour's boater communities.
- ...balance its world-class tourist offer and events programming with the needs of its diverse local communities and neighbourhoods.

1. COMMUNITIES & RESIDENTS

1.1. BOATER COMMUNITIES

APPROACH

To engage with those who moor a vessel in the harbour, Bristol City Council's City Docks and Regeneration Teams invited boaters to drop-in sessions at the Harbourside Pavilion. Participants were invited to fill out a survey and feedback on their mooring and berth facilities, services in the harbour, safety in the harbour and alternative mooring locations. Boaters were also asked to explore their favourite places in Bristol Harbour and areas of opportunity using the map presented, these comments have been included within the interactive map. License holders who could not attend in-person were emailed the survey directly.

40+ in person engagements. 71 online surveys completed.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- **Of the 265 license holders in the harbour, 71 responses have been received. Of these, 48 have (or have applied for) a leisure license) and 19 have (or have applied for) a live aboard licence. 1 respondent has or has applied for a visitor license. NB: at the time of writing 15% of all license applications in 2023 have been for live aboard licenses.**
- **Over three-quarters of boaters consider their current mooring location to be good or very good. Boaters often have an affinity with their personal mooring and the benefits it offers them. Welsh Back & Redcliffe Back was the location most commonly rated 'poor'.**
- **The Marina and Bathurst Basin were perceived as being good locations to moor.**
- **Many boaters mentioned either lack of facilities, cleanliness of facilities, concerns about safety, and low quality facilities.**
- **The most common location to access services and facilities is Wapping Wharf. However, almost a quarter of boaters (almost all with leisure licenses) do not use services at all.**

Strengths

- There is an active boater community who use the harbour year-round and moor in a variety of locations. Boaters care about the harbour and its future and are engaged in conversations regarding the harbour.
- The harbour has a strong sense of heritage which offers a unique selling point to boaters.
- Boaters have an affinity with their mooring and where they are located. Over three-quarters of boaters consider their mooring location to be good or very good
- Boaters can contribute to activating spaces and provide passive surveillance to make areas feel safer.
- The eastern reaches of the harbour were perceived as less attractive mooring locations – offering opportunity for commercial or community uses.
- Moorings located next to pontoon are perceived as being better and safer for boaters.

Opportunities

- Celebrate maritime and nautical heritage and increase the diversity of types of boats in the harbour.
- Opportunity to explore short-stay berthing options near pubs and restaurants to add vibrancy to the waterspace.
- Use water space and quayside to accommodate more vessels, tapping into the diverse needs of boat users.
- Enhance the use of the app for communication and other purposes.
- The top three factors identified by boaters when choosing a mooring were water

supply, electricity supply and cost of a license. Proximity to bars, restaurants & cafes, to pump outs and to public transport were the least important.

- Upgrade facilities to reflect boater's needs including secure bike parking, recycling, postage facilities.

Weaknesses

- Lack of locations for boat maintenance, with long waiting lists and different pricing, poses a challenge.
- Parking is varied and inconsistent, parking locations can mean it is challenging to access vessels due to time limits on parking.
- The low quality and poor cleanliness of facilities and services in most locations (with the exception of the Marina)
- Poor communication channels between the harbour office and boaters.
- Some boaters do not feel safe due to a lack of security – particularly single female boaters.

Threats

- Increases in fees not reflected in upgrades and improvements to facilities.
- Tensions in relationship between the harbour authority and boaters.
- Vessels not being secure or accessed safely due to low quality of mooring.

1.2 SOUTH REDCLIFFE COMMUNITIES

APPROACH

South Redcliffe has been identified as an area of interest through demographic mapping and through earlier engagement by Bristol City Council as a community who might not frequently access or use Bristol Harbour. The project team connected with two key community organisations in the area, Faithspace and Redcliffe Community Hub run by St Mary Redcliffe. The team held drop-in sessions at Redcliffe Community Hub followed by a voluntary walking tour to M-Shed, with the sessions located both indoors and out. Through these sessions the team explored how the Redcliffe community perceives Bristol Harbour, their relationship with it and their favourite places to visit.

59 in-person engagements, 31 October - 1 November.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- **Contrary to some expectations a large number of South Redcliffe respondents use or access the harbour.**
- **Bristol Harbour is seen as a versatile place offering activities year round with spaces for both prescribed and non-prescribed activities.**
- **South Redcliffe residents were significantly less engaged with water activities than other respondents.**
- **The harbour is considered a difficult place to navigate, especially with young children and lacks opportunity to allow teenagers or young adults to access the space safely with autonomy.**
- **Lack of public transport and cost of activities are significant barriers to people accessing Bristol Harbour, while there are free activities in the area these are seen as things that can only be experienced once while others are seen as financially inaccessible. Subsidised ticket prices have been effective and welcomed previously along with organised group trips to the harbour.**
- **Green space, in Redcliffe especially, is limited and seen as unsafe. Spaces where children and families can play freely and unchallenged are seen to be in short supply. Green space directly on the harbour, bench or seating that allows social activity to happen and space to 'just be' would be welcomed.**
- **Multi functional community spaces are seen as an asset to people from all kinds of backgrounds and ages. One that is multi-faith or secular might help to encourage more people to participate in activities that may be deemed outside of their comfort zone or 'not for them'.**

1.2.1 Faithspace Drop-in Session

Strengths

- The harbour provides car-free space for activities such as walking, playing, running, cycling, dog-walking, commuting and socialising.
- Being by the water is calming, it takes you away from the city and creates a feeling of freedom.
- The harbour hosts a range of events, particularly in the summer, from triathlons and the 'Tour de Bristol' to the Harbour Festival and silent discos.
- Destinations and activities for all weathers, for example: M-Shed, Millennium Square, Roller Disco, Bathurst Basin and SSGB.
- Good food and beverage offering

Weaknesses

- Limited places and activities that are free or cheap to do and can be visited repeatedly, especially for children and in poor weather.
- The paths and roads around the harbour can get very busy, particularly with scooters and cyclists, making accessibility difficult.
- Limited public transport
- There aren't enough spaces to rest that aren't drinking establishments.
- Some areas of the Harbour can get rowdy on Friday and Saturday nights.

Opportunities

- More music and activation of public places.
- Improvements to water quality and more initiatives to swim.
- Future of the meanwhile use Roller Disco as an open, free space for everyone to use.
- Improved type and frequency of public transport, including water ferries and taxis.
- Providing greater accessibility whilst celebrating the heritage of a place.

THERE NEEDS TO BE MORE THAN JUST SHOPS I GO TO THE HARBOUR BECAUSE IT FEELS FREE, PEOPLE CAN DO WHAT THEY WANT.

places that take you away from the buzz of the city (lido, St John Wesley team)

I LOVE BEING BY THE WATER. MAKES A CHANGE FROM DAILY LIFE, THE COLOURS, THE BOATS.



Above on-site engagement at Faithspace

1.2.2 Redcliffe Community Hub Drop-in

Strengths

- It was noted by participants that the harbour feels like a safe and friendly space, a good place to be active for free and to run, and to access the water recreationally.
- 'The harbour is the lungs of the city'
- Queen Square is perceived as an asset to the Harbour, many different groups of people use it, families, young people, commuters. It is a useful and attractive place to cut through on commutes or on a journey elsewhere.
- The harbour is a good place for cycling.
- The area fosters community activity, e.g. the Left-Handed Giant Running Club.
- Spike Island is a valued place, with practising artists and creatives working side by side with students.
- Redcliffe Stores on Prewett Street is well used by the community.

Weaknesses

- Redcliffe as an area can feel quite unsafe with families feeling unable to use one of the only green spaces in the area, Somerset Square, due to worries that young children will be harassed by older teenagers.
- Lack of barriers on the water edge can be a challenge for those with young children.
- Transport links to the harbour are weak and off-putting to those who live further away and those who live locally but may have children.
- It is hard to continually walk along the harbour, especially on the south side, opposite Welsh Back.
- Road safety is an issue and a worry, especially around Redcliffe and Redcliffe Bascule Bridge.
- There are minimal community spaces that are multi-faith. The Faithspace and Redcliffe Community Hub work very hard as community spaces for all but are ultimately run by the St Mary Redcliffe Church while there is also a large Islamic community in Redcliffe.
- Lack of youth services that feel safe and protected from unwanted activity.
- Lack of gym/swimming facilities that are women only.
- Closest library is in College Green, too far for children to travel on their own.
- Somali community do not have local access to basic ingredients they need to cook with, i.e. there is nowhere to purchase Halal meat other than the supermarket, which can often be more expensive than a specialist butcher.
- While SS Great Britain and We The Curious are great, their ticket prices make them inaccessible to some families and young people.
- Wapping Wharf was considered by some respondents to feel 'very middle class'.

ITS GREAT TO SEE HOW MANY PEOPLE CYCLE AROUND THE HARBOUR

concern over empty building now Hloyds have left



Above Walking tour with members of the community
Bottom left Flyer for South Redcliffe sessions

Opportunities

- More clear bike routes, especially along The Cut
- Multi-faith community space
- A space that has the facilities and staff to assist people with paperwork
- A space that can accommodate less formal activities like Somali Kitchen
- An adult learning centre to help people learn english and exchange skills
- A space that can be hired out for events and community celebrations
- Library space
- More free and varied programmes of activities
- Subsidised ticket prices for activities like SS Great Britain (as has happened before)
- More/Bigger localised greenspaces for children
- Youth Centre for teenagers
- Better public realm, and one that promotes positive activities such as fixed chess tables, table tennis tables, climbing walls, areas to sit that encourage socialising rather than

- uncomfortable benches lined in a row.
- Respondents noted their use of Asda in Bedminster, suggesting that this supermarket does something right in terms of appealing to multiple demographics and backgrounds.
- Subsidised ticket prices for activities like SS Great Britain (as has happened before) boost engagement with the harbour, also organised group trips to the harbour.

The harbour is the jewel in the crown of Bristol.

BRISTOL HARBOUR **PLACE SHAPING STRATEGY**

PLEASE JOIN US TO HAVE YOUR SAY!

Throughout the Bristol Harbour Place Shaping Strategy project, Bristol City Council and DK-CM will be working with local people and stakeholders in and around the Harbour to understand how the Harbour is accessed, or equally why it is not accessed by those who do not use it. There will be in-person events and activities, virtual events and, throughout the process, this website will be updated with new content and new opportunities to engage.

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31.10.23 12-4pm drop-in session	1.11.23 1-3pm drop-in session
Join us to discuss the Harbour alongside Halloween Activities for your kids: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design a ghostly galleon • Write a spooky Harbour themed story • Make a cotton wool ghost for your ghostly galleon 	@ Redcliffe Community Hub, 4, Waring House, Redcliffe, Bristol BS1 6TB 3:45pm After School Walking Tour into the Harbour! Bring your children for some on tour activities ended with teas, coffee and cake. Leaving from Redcliffe Community Hub, 4, Waring House, Redcliffe, Bristol BS1 6TB

@ The Faithspace, Redcliffe Methodist Church, Prewett St, Redcliffe, Bristol BS1 6PB
For more information: <https://ask.bristol.gov.uk/harbour-place-shaping-strategy>
harbourplaceshaping@bristol.gov.uk

1.3 BRISTOL COMMUNITIES (ONLINE)

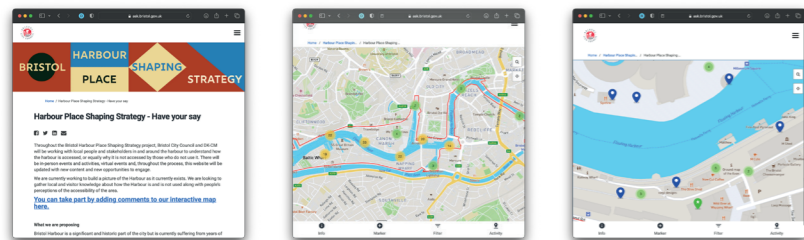
APPROACH

To engage with the wider Bristol community, Bristol City Council have made use of the online platform Bang the Table to launch the Ask Bristol website. For Stage 1 of the Place Shaping Strategy engagement, a microsite and interactive map using this platform was used to ask participants about their favourite places in Bristol Harbour and where the areas of opportunity might be, with space to further comments or context. The same website will be augmented in subsequent stages to allow on-line engagement and consultation with the Visioning and Place Plans stages of the project, whilst also serving as a base for communications about the project.

253 online respondents during Stage 1, 36 users undertook the mapping activity in full.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- **The harbour is understood to have evolved from an industrial part of the city to become a varied, well-used, attractive and historically engaging place to be.**
- **The most popular places were Underfall Yard (11 mentions), Wapping Wharf (6 mentions), Baltic Wharf (6 mentions), Harbour Inlet (5 mentions) and Albion Dock (3 mentions).**
- **The top areas for opportunity are Redcliffe Wharf (8 mentions), Hotwell Road (6 mentions), The Grove Car Park (5 mentions), Albion Dock (5 mentions) and Avon Close (5 mentions).**
- **Accessibility and biodiversity around the harbour are poor with heavy car presence considered a negative factor in places.**
- **There are a number of harbourside locations that are currently underutilised and could better provide for green space, play space and an enhanced heritage experience, for example Albion Dock and existing spaces dominated by car parking.**
- **The current mix of activities on and around the harbour provides a healthy balance for tourism, leisure and residents, however there are concerns that future development could impact this balance.**



Right Screenshots of online map used for Stage 1 online engagement - introduction screen, overall map and zoomed-in map.

Strengths

- Varied activities on offer around the Harbourside including: gigs and festivals, sport clubs and events, pubs and restaurants, creative institutions, and heritage sites.
- Iconic and interesting views across the harbour to the city, SS Great Britain, Clifton's colourful houses, the historic Harbourside infrastructure, Clifton Suspension Bridge, and the balloon festival.
- Greener areas that offer peace and quiet such as Totterdown Basin, Baltic Wharf, Isambard Walk, and Hanover Quay.
- A place to walk, people watch, sit and experience the range of activity on and off the water.
- The historic buildings, infrastructure and industrial uses in Underfall Yard, Albion Dock and Museum Street make interesting and attractive places to explore and learn.
- The once industrial waterspace has evolved to achieve a good balance of residential moorings, leisure, tourism and working uses which attract people to the harbour.

Weaknesses

- Accessibility within the harbour is poor in places due to surfaces, tree roots and clashes between road/path users. Prince Street Bridge, Narrow Quay, Merchant's Quay, Junction Swing Bridge and Mardyke Car Park were particularly highlighted as challenging locations.
- Lack of tree cover, greenery, biodiversity and wildlife around the harbour.
- Loss of Underfall Yard, due to fire, as a working dockside location.
- Millennium Square is considered to be run down and underutilised.
- Busy traffic and noise along Hotwells Road.

Opportunities

- More areas promoting biodiversity, wildlife, and greenery.
- Improve accessibility, utilising better surfacing, more public toilets, clearer signage and separation between pedestrians, cars and cycles.
- Anti-social behaviour has decreased in Redcliffe Wharf since Bump Roller Disco opened, however a long term plan to activate this space needs to be implemented. Opportunity for more public, green or community uses e.g. skate park, open stage, community kitchen.
- Continuous walking route around the harbour, particular improvements required around Albion Docks.
- Children's play circuit around the harbour.
- Harbourside car parks, such as The Grove Car Park and Mardyke Car Park, better utilised as green space, public space or events space.
- Retain and enhance the heritage experience of the harbour and working shipyard.
- Bridge or shuttle boat service towards the west of the Harbour from Mardyke Car Park to Bristol Marina.

Threats

- Overriding concern that the Harbourside could be developed with expensive high rise flats, that would diminish the creative and industrial businesses, as well as water-activating organisations and clubs.

2. YOUNG PEOPLE

APPROACH

The project team are collaborating with Rising Arts Agency throughout the development of the Place Shaping Strategy, and working with them to commission a number of young Bristol creatives to explore the harbour in parallel to the wider Strategy development. As a prelude to this work Rising hosted a workshop to explore how young people in their network value and understand the Harbour. In amongst other activities, we explored favourite and least favourite places and then discussed them, and the following summaries use that discussion to form the basis of comparative findings to the wider engagement.

2 hour workshop attended by 8 young people, 31 October.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- **Young people particularly value the harbour as a place that allows for varied, informal, free activities ('spaces of no obligation') - and for promoting wellbeing. They would like this quality to be protected and enhanced.**
- **The harbour is particularly valued as a place of culture. It could recognise and support the role of young people as cultural producers more.**
- **General issues of access in terms of public realm, wayfinding and facilities were identified (in line with wider engagement strands) but particular emphasis was placed on how people with visual impairments, varying mobility and neurodiversity might experience and access the harbour, and how this can be improved.**
- **The need for enhanced play, shade, green space and sociable seating was particularly emphasised.**

Sitting in the sunshine in summer & feeling a sense of celebration & community w/ everyone else sitting in the sun

TERRIBLE CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE

spaces with no obligation

NOT ENOUGH NATURE CENTRALLY

Strengths

- The Harbour allows space for varied activity to happen, from informal activities such as sitting by the harbourside on sunny days and playing in the fountains at Cascade Steps to more organised activity like silent discos or roller skating at Bump.
- The arts and culture of the harbour is valued by young people with We The Curious holding a particular fondness by young people as somewhere they have visited regularly
- Underfall Yard is enjoyed by many as a place of leisure, whether that be to get good views of Clifton Suspension Bridge, to walk your dog or just be with yourself, to watch the ducks and reflections in the water. Underfall Yard is also considered a good place to get close to the water without going in.
- The Hotwells area is also a good place for walking.
- The ferries are a great asset to the Harbour for both commuters and visitors.

Weaknesses

- Lack of public toilets
- Lack of public transport connection
- Bridge closures cause frustrations and limit access
- Road conditions can make it difficult for cyclists, i.e cobble stones, obstructed routes like south of the harbour opposite Wapping Wharf, around SSGB and Albion Dock and the disused railway tracks outside M-Shed.
- Lack of a continuous walking route all the way away around the harbour, same issues as above with cycle routes.
- While the amphitheatre is a great space, many feel it has bad acoustics for the concerts that often take place there.
- The harbour is not entirely friendly to those with visual impairments.

Opportunities

- Opportunities to make the harbour a more enjoyable place for those with visual, hearing, sensory and/or neurological impairments.
- Anti-graffiti paint applied along Redcliffe Quay, is there the opportunity to remove the anti-graffiti paint and allow this area to be graffitied and become a free space for local artists to express themselves in a public space.
- Opportunity for spaces to sit that are free and warm along the harbour that are an alternative to the uncomfortable benches planted in an unsociable row.
- 'Spaces with no obligation', unprescribed spaces that allow children to freely play and adults to freely be.
- More green space directly on the harbour
- Public toilets across the harbour
- Intentional spaces for play.
- More shady spots to sit in on hot days.



Above Rising workshop underway

3. WATER USERS

APPROACH

Water users here are defined as organisations that make direct use of the water and work to enable access through various forms of water sports. The team invited a range of different water organisations to take part in 1:1 conversations in late October, at which participants were asked about the day-to-day challenges they face in running their activities, the routes they use to actually get onto the water, the areas of the water that they use and occupy and the future aspirations for their organisations. Some of the spatial and organisational insights gained have been used in the Atlas as well as in the following summaries.

8 x 1 hour individual briefings, October-December 2023.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- A key strength of the harbour is the variety it offers in terms of water spaces, activities, businesses, culture and history (though these primarily in the western stretches, and delivered through a handful of businesses which are primarily within the third sector).
- The connectivity of the harbour was highlighted as a weakness, both in terms of navigation when journeying around the harbour, and in terms of poor public transport links to get to different areas of the harbour and wider Bristol.
- A key opportunity is to enhance & support existing harbour activity and businesses to enrich Bristol's reputation for art, culture and watersports.
- The largest threats to the harbour were seen to be new development, and the potential impact on the existing businesses and activities, as well as environmental issues such as flood risks and clean air zones.
- The eastern reaches are often not thought of when people imagine the harbour, and the majority of favourite places are located to the west of Bristol Bridge.
- Opportunities exist to consolidate and share facilities at the western end of the harbour
- Most businesses have ambitions to expand their activities but are held back through limitations of their existing premises and difficulties investing in premises without security of tenure



4. EXISTING HARBOUR STAKEHOLDERS

APPROACH

A number of organisations and stakeholders have been identified, primarily by Bristol City Council, as having a strong existing stake in the Harbour. Many, but not all, of these groups have participated in previous engagement activity such as that recently undertaken in 2022 by Design West. A session with these stakeholders took place via Zoom attended by 33 representatives of these organisations.

1 virtual workshop (1.5 hours), 2 November.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Strengths

- Harbour routes for walking, running and cycling
- Historic and cultural attractions/places in the western part of the Harbour e.g. St Augustine’s Reach, Albion Dock, Museum Street, and Underfall Yard
- Varied water spaces to serve different purposes e.g. Underfall Yard, Bathurst Basin, Feeder Canal, Cumberland Basin
- Morning and afternoon are popular for activities in the waterspace.
- The harbour is popular from morning to evening, particularly in summer, for activities around the harbour; there was a strong sense that the Harbour is to an extent an ‘all day long’ space with uses stretching beyond typical working hours.
- Variety of uses (‘pockets of uses’) around the harbour

Weaknesses

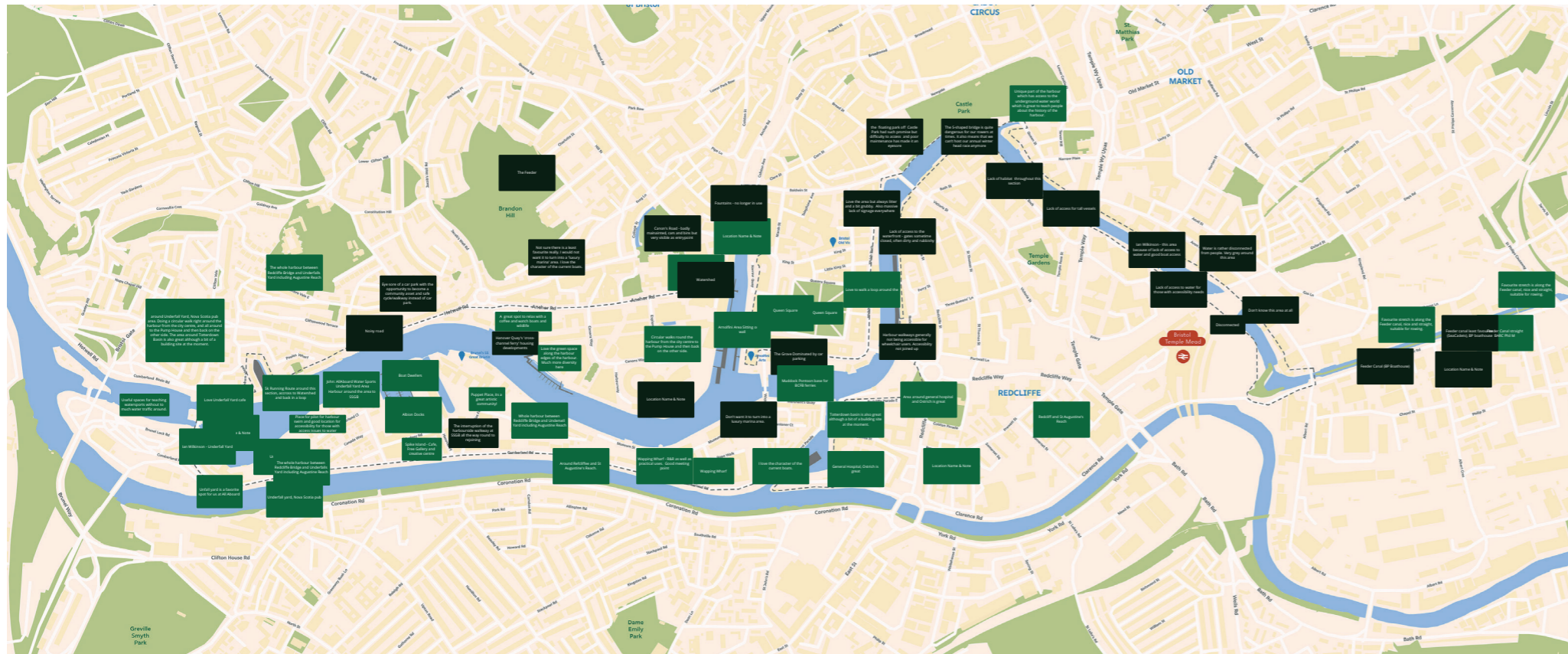
- Roads in proximity to the harbour can be busy, loud, have maintenance issues and dominated by car parking.
- Public transport is not connected, accessible or suitable for some areas and activities in the harbour.
- Harbourside loop is interrupted to the east and around Albion Docks
- Limited signage, confusion between public and private areas, and public realm levels/surfaces all restrict access
- East of Redcliffe Bridge is disconnected from the harbour with limited use and access.
- Perceptions of poor water quality and lack of habitats, tree cover and green spaces.
- Augustine’s Reach can be unwelcoming to some on a Friday and Saturday evening due to nightlife and ASB.
- Limited bicycle parking facilities and poor cycle routes.

Opportunities

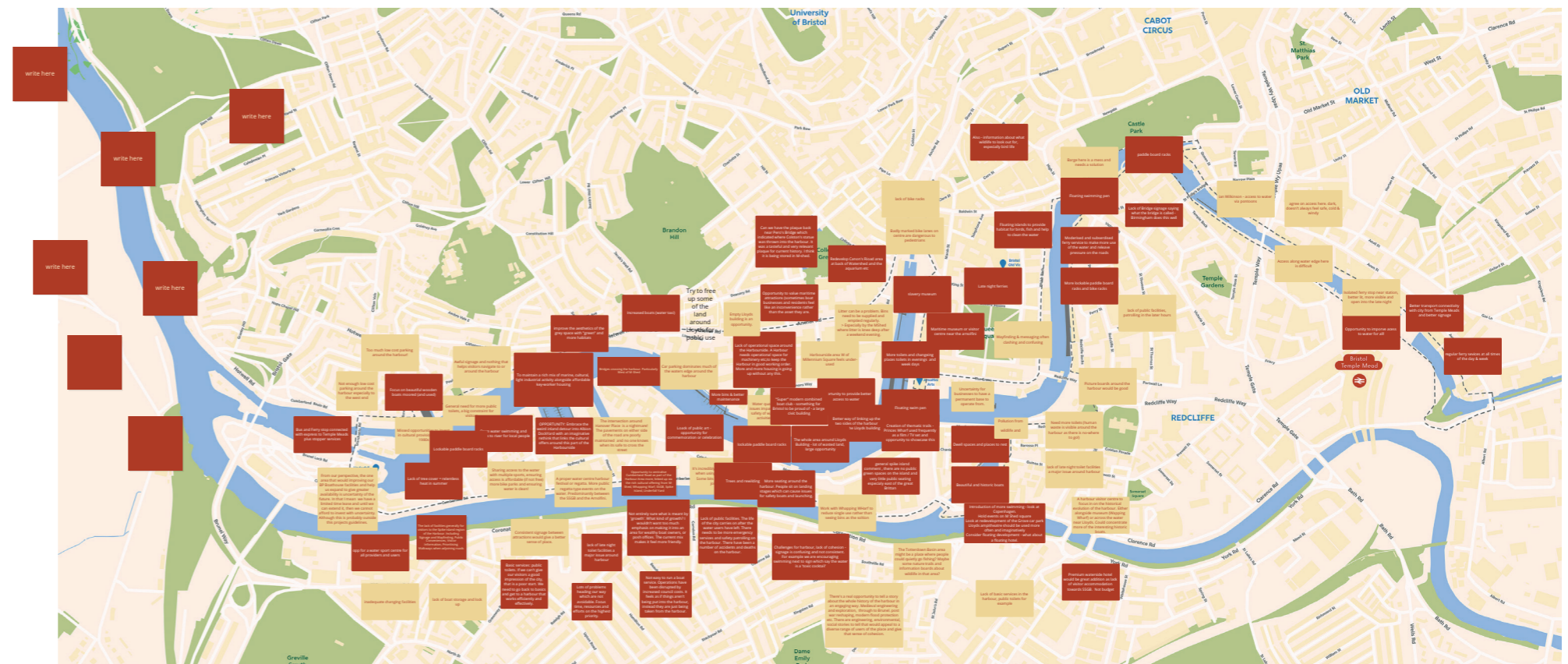
- Improved and more frequent public transport, including ferries and buses, which link areas around the harbour with surrounding suburbs.
- Enhance Bristol’s reputation as a city of art and culture, particularly around Albion Docks, Underfall Yard and Spike Island.
- Tell a coherent story of the Harbour’s history and evolution in an engaging way including maritime, Transatlantic Trafficking of Enslaved Africans, engineering, habitats and cultural information.
- Enhanced public realm alongside the water
- More public toilets
- improved green and blue spaces.
- Better signage to navigate the harbourside, use the water and understand the history of the place(s).
- Central watersports centre to support Bristol Harbour as a place of diverse and accessible water activities, and provide additional shared facilities, and water based events.
- Long term vision to celebrate and enhance existing maritime water uses and how they can co-exist and thrive with each other and the surrounding city.

Threats

- New development not providing for local needs and negatively impacting the existing character, water uses, and industrial, creative and maritime businesses/activities in the area.
- Diminishing operational space on the harbourside to keep the harbour in good running order and allow access by water users.
- Flood risk affecting future certainty of harbour and limiting investment.
- Public transport has not improved to counter the impacts of the Clean Air Zone on people’s access to the harbour.



Above Sample 'ConceptBoard' mapping during Virtual workshop to explore favourite (green) and least favourite (black) spaces within the Harbour.



Above Sample 'ConceptBoard' mapping during Virtual workshop to explore opportunities and challenges within the Harbour. Findings from this and the rest of the 'board' have been recorded in this section.

5. PROFESSIONAL STAKEHOLDERS

APPROACH

A series of briefings took place between the DK-CM team and representatives of Bristol City Council departments and adjacent organisations. Key findings from these sessions have been summarised here in the form of SWOT analysis, enabling us to build a picture of Council and council-adjacent protagonists' sense of the key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to place shaping in the harbour.

9x 1:1 virtual and in-person sessions (1hr each) throughout Stage 1. Professional stakeholders engaged: Transport, Property, Planning and Historic Environment, Events, Climate Change & Ecology and City Docks teams at (Bristol City Council); City Leap Partnership; Visit West and Bristol Avon Rivers Trust

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Strengths

- The harbour's wide variety of community and third sector organisations (particularly organisations offering water based activities) which deliver significant social value to Bristol's communities
 - The harbour's wide and diverse array of culturally significant businesses, organisations and tenants; producers of culture.
 - The harbour's heritage assets - from scheduled ancient monuments and listed buildings to more informal and intangible things.
 - The harbour is well placed to help meet Bristol's climate adaptation and biodiversity ambitions.
 - The Harbour Festival
 - The harbour has a strong presence in people's imaginations of Bristol and is
- a significant place to visitors, thereby making it a vital part of the city's billion-pound tourist economy.
 - The harbour is very well placed to support broader heritage and tourism strategies.

Weaknesses

- The harbour currently costs more to manage and maintain than it generates in income.
- Access, in terms of moving about the harbour, including challenging public realm surfaces, pinch points, and lack of legibility.
- Issues with current provision of public transport and lack of strategic approach to coaches
- Challenges around maintenance, care and investment in buildings and assets

- Challenges in relation to run-off and water quality.
- Poor and inconsistent wayfinding and signage
- Inconsistent provision of water amenities across the estate
- Lack of places to shelter and feel comfortable
- Some lack of capacity in terms of digital access - making it easy to know what's going on, book tickets etc.

Opportunities

- A chance to make the harbour estate financially self-sufficient through the identification and pro-active marketing of under-utilised sites for commercial uses
- Respondents identified a number of key opportunities for intervention. A strategic approach to:
 - walking and cycling
 - exemplar public realm
 - parking, coach parking and drop-offs
 - meanwhile and temporary uses
 - events programming
 - care and maintenance
 - waterspace leisure/sports uses
 - biodiversity, wildness, habitats
 - wayfinding and digital access
- A chance to reduce vehicle movements, traffic and freight in the area and to encourage sustainable means of transport
- A chance to acknowledge and protect spaces that are vital for events programming
- A chance to set out how we 'value' assets

in ways beyond direct income, including intangible heritage, local distinctiveness, local provenance, and how we make the most of our assets.

- An opportunity to share and enhance amenities and facilities
- A chance to boost and intensify industrial and maritime activity
- The emerging Local Plan has policy hooks that support wider ambitions for the Harbour.

Threats

- There's a potential tension between making the harbour estate financially self-sufficient and using assets to deliver social value.
- Speed of change
- Water quality affecting habitats, use of the water, safety and perceptions.
- Loss of space for events, and loss of valued tenants, due to development pressure.
- Public transport improvements are vital, especially evening and Sunday services.
- Works to mitigate flood risk might challenge placemaking in some locations
- Loss of space for events, and loss of valued tenants, due to development pressure.
- Public transport improvements are vital, especially evening and Sunday services.
- Works to mitigate flood risk might challenge placemaking in some locations.

WHERE SHOULD WE BE LOOKING?

Approach

This section summarises responses from all of the above engagement strands that relate to precedent places. Any exemplar places - good or bad - referred to have been clustered here and organised to provide a single list of precedents for further exploration and research, and possible knowledge exchange or learning either within the project timeframe or beyond it. Numbers following recommendations refer to engagement strands that the insight was sourced from.

Summary

Overall, Copenhagen (Denmark), Cardiff, Manchester (UK) and Nantes (France) were the most frequently cited example cities to be learned from, each of these being valued for more than one positive attribute.

Detailed engagement with existing waterspace users yielded a rich array of precedents for good quality watersports provision, both nationally and internationally. Similarly, community respondents provided detailed recommendations for good local examples of community provision.

Exemplar public realm

- Ljubljana - riverfront (4)
- Strasbourg (4)
- Manchester - attractive urban places (4) and rain gardens (5.9)
- Nantes - safe and freely accessible public space created around water (4)

Community

The following were identified as positive local examples of community provision:

- Easton Community Centre - <https://eastsidecommunitytrust.org.uk/> (1.2.2)
- Malcom X Community Centre - <https://www.mxccbristol.com/blog> (1.2.2)
- Family Learning Centre - St Paul's, Bristol (1.2.2)

Public life and uses

- Salford Quays, Manchester - good example of shared amenities and infrastructure. (5.2)
- Copenhagen - good use of waterways including floating businesses (4.1)
- Cardiff - family-friendly around the harbour in the evenings, inclusive of different kinds of visitors, welcoming (4)
- Manchester - floating habitats/islands well integrated (4)
- Nantes - Heavy investment in culture in 1980s encouraged more artists, and public events has caused a boom in visitor spend and tourism (4)
- Newcastle-upon-Tyne BID (NE1) - investment in 'swing' play pavilion space (4)

Waterspace and Sports

- Exeter (Haven Banks and AS Watersports, good examples of activation and retail) (<https://www.haven-banks.co.uk>) (3.1)
- Adventure Dolphin, Pangbourne (<https://www.adventuredolphin.co.uk/>) - charity run shared use space on the thames. Clubs have space here too. (3.1)
- Saltford (<https://avoncountyrowingclub.org.uk/>) - good shared use modern space(3.1)
- Roundhouse Birmingham (<https://roundhousebirmingham.org.uk/>) - Good example of placemaking with water uses at the heart (3.1)
- The Wave, Bristol (<https://www.thewave.com/>) brilliant placemaking, good simple showering and changing facilities, "great cafe for working from home too!" (3.1)
- Rock the Boat, New York - similar organisation to All Aboard (3.2)
- Monmouth Rowing Club (<https://www.monmouthrc.org.uk/>) - club house on short stretch of water shared between canoes and swimmers (3.4)
- Copenhagen - good, safe swimming provision (4)
- Cambridge - water well-used as part of tourist offer (punting etc.) (4)
- Zurich - 'penned in' water for swimming uses on Lake Zurich (4)

Boater facilities

- Berlin - excellent boat services (4)
- Cardiff - affordable and good visitor welcome (4)
- Hull - affordable and good visitor welcome (4)
- Amsterdam - boat facilities good and well-integrated with cycling provision (4)
- La Rochelle - signage offers effective welcome to boaters in the historic centre (4)

Movement

- Copenhagen - good cycling provision and routes (4)
- Manchester - very navigable public realm and (4)
- Birmingham - good wayfinding, legible bridges (4)
- Canary Wharf, London - good wayfinding, signage and outdoor spaces (4)
- Nottingham - good example of city-wide parking strategy (5.1)

GAPS & FURTHER RESEARCH

DK-CM and Bristol City Council are committed to modifying and enriching our engagement process in relation to what we learn as we engage. With this in mind at the end of each stage of engagement we take a moment to understand gaps in engagement in terms of different demographics or communities, and also further research questions of topics that have been raised during the process. This page summarises our current position to this issue.

It is not appropriate for all of our engagement strands to collect or assume demographic information. That said, our current analysis suggests that we have not yet adequately heard from the following groups:

- Visually-impaired people
- Hearing-impaired people
- People with sensory or neurological impairments
- Neuordiverse people
- LGBTQIA+ people
- People with mobility or access issues
- People with a disability
- Young people, aged 25 and under
- People who do not currently use the Harbour
- Residents who live on the Harbour who are not boaters

Steps to tackle this list will be taken in subsequent engagement strands:

- Storyteller commissions have partially been commissioned on the basis of individual young creatives proposing engagements with one or more of the above groups/
- MShed exhibition (Stage 2) will be undertaken in a way that encourages school groups and other youth groups to engage.
- Targeted social media advertising of online tool to reach wider Bristol communities will be explored, as well as existing city-wide datasets to build a wider picture.

As suggested above, some of the engagement activities undertaken to date were designed with a view to capturing those who do not currently use the Harbour. In the majority of cases we learned that some assumptions about who does and does not use the harbour were challenged. In subsequent stages, especially using online tools and promotion, the net should be cast wider to more substantially reach residents who do not use the harbour today.



DK-CM

3 Durham Yard
Teesdale Street
London E2 6QF, UK

+44 (0)20 7729 4140
studio@dk cm.com
www.dk cm.com