



Consultation findings Summary

The Dalston Conversation

Dalston is changing. We think this should result in a better town centre, streets and public spaces, better access to jobs and employment opportunities, and better facilities for local residents and businesses, but we need our communities to tell us what they want to see.

We launched the Dalston Conversation in September 2018 at Hackney Carnival so local people could tell us what they love about Dalston, the challenges they experience, and what changes they would like to see us make in the area.

Our approach is about early, ongoing and honest dialogue with those who live, work and visit the area so that they can influence change in their community. The primary way of hearing your experiences of Dalston has been through the Dalston Conversation website. This platform provided a key way to collect information, giving us a better understanding of the place and how it is perceived by the local community.

Over 4,000 people visited our website, and shared over 2,000 comments or added agreements or likes to these. We supplemented this online engagement through public workshops and focus groups, community events, neighbourhood walkabouts and stalls at Ridley Road Market and Hackney Carnival. Full feedback and analysis of this outreach work is provided in the consultation report.

This summary outlines information you have shared with us since we launched the project. We have produced it to show how we are reflecting on these comments and how we are responding to them.

Your contributions can be found at <https://dalstonconversation.commonplace.is>

What you told us and what we did



Here is a summary of what you've told us and the actions we've taken to address some of your concerns. There's lots more to do in the long-term, but if there are things we can do quickly, we will.

You told us that Dalston has a rich and diverse community and this needs to be protected.

You want evidence on how we are planning for population and business growth, how the whole community can benefit from this, and how we are working to deliver these benefits for the area.

You want to see investment in Ridley Road Market while protecting existing stall holders and retailers

- Together with the Mayor of London, we are investing over £1 million into Ridley Road Market which will include a range of improvements, new gazebos, handheld card machines, and improved public spaces.
- Although we do not own or operate Ridley Road Shopping Village (the indoor market) we have intervened to prevent immediate evictions, are supporting businesses to find new premises, and working with the developer to ensure that the maximum amount possible of new affordable workspace is reprovided if any redevelopment of the building goes ahead. Any application will be scrutinised through the normal planning process.

You want us to protect and enhance local assets such as the cultural quarter (key sites around Ashwin Street and Dalston Lane), the library and the Dalston Eastern Curve Garden

- We will protect and improve Dalston's cultural and educational offer. We have already committed funding to the Dalston Children's Festival and cultural programme.

- The Council's commitment to providing local services and opportunities to its residents and businesses is evidenced through these relationships and support the Council provides to organisations that operate from Council land and buildings in Dalston such as Hackney Pirates, Rio Cinema, Circle Collective, Dalston Eastern Curve Garden, Age Concern, Arcola Theatre, Forest Road Youth Hub and the Hackney Council for Voluntary Services (HCVS). Workspace operators in Council premises including Hackney Cooperative Developments, Bootstrap Company and V22 collectively provide space for in excess of 150 small businesses.

You want assurance that we are planning for better transport which includes public transport, walking and cycling routes and facilities

- We have commissioned a movement study to see how people move about the area and how public spaces could be enhanced alongside workshops and dedicated visits to better understand what residents and businesses want to see improved. This will influence the Dalston Plan and regeneration plans, which will set out what transport improvements we'll focus on, how

we'll go about this and when it's likely to happen.

- We are engaging with the Crossrail 2 team regularly to ensure their plans give consideration to our emerging planning policy for Dalston which is being informed by local residents and businesses.

You are particularly concerned by areas which experience anti-social behaviour, such as Gillett Square

In Gillett Square we have:

- Trimmed back the trees to improve visibility for CCTV
- Increased the number of enforcement officers to tackle anti-social behaviour, particularly around littering and public urination.
- Increased street cleansing, with bins being emptied more frequently.
- Increased police activity, such as drugs and weapons sweeps, which is already disrupting crime and creating a more positive atmosphere.
- Put in place alcohol and drug outreach workers in the area who work with street pastors.
- Commissioned and implemented crime prevention design advice to minimise criminal activity by redesigning elements of the public realm.

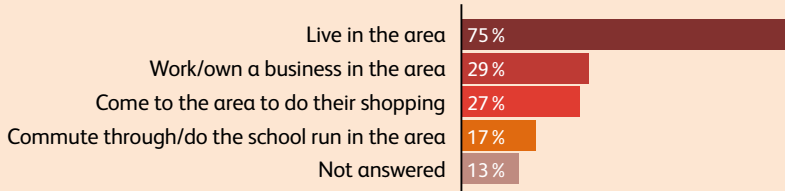
- Delivered the Dalston Children's festival and a Dalston cultural programme including cultural and creative activities in Gillett Square.
- Worked with Hackney Co-Operative Developments (HCD) on the refurbishment of their site at Bradbury Works, which will provide an improved public realm at Gillett Square and more footfall in the area.

You want the whole community to have a voice on future changes in the area

- We held targeted workshops with under-represented groups through various community groups, charities and businesses, ranging from Hackney Council of Voluntary Services (HCVS) to market stall-holders.
- We will continue to have an open dialogue with the community and will consult on new projects that are a result of what you've told us.
- We published a new Inclusive Economy Strategy, which sets the standard for how we ensure fairer access to economic opportunities for local communities as a result of development and investment, while protecting the local facilities and services that are valued by them. We will do this through our planning powers, partnership working, and increased community engagement.

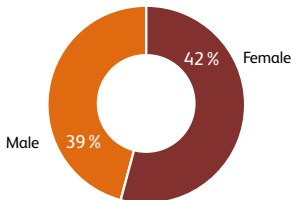
Who's saying what?

4,860 people visited the Dalston Conversation project page. 455 individuals provided over 1,800 responses and there was a further 1,642 agreements to these comments.



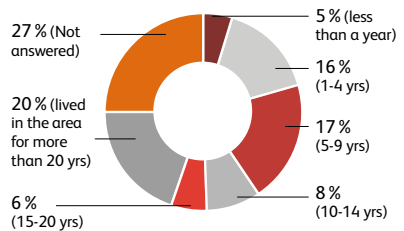
Gender

Those who mention issues such as infrastructure and investment were more likely to be women than men, with women also generating a higher frequency of positive comments. Men were, on the whole, more neutral in the comments when they describe the area. However, anti-social behaviour was frequently identified by both as a key issue locally.



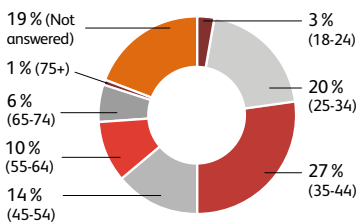
Length of time in the area

Older groups who have lived in the area for extended periods were most concerned about the community and their place in it. This appears to be driven by changes to local demographics and an influx of new residents. Younger groups who have lived in the area for less than 10 years were more welcoming of change if it results in positive outcomes for the local community such as reduced levels of crime.

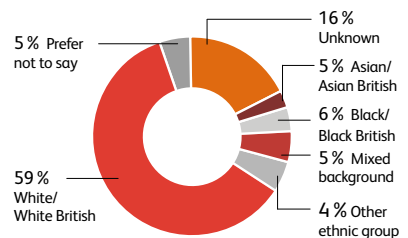


Age groups

The 25-34 age group generally had more positive perceptions about the area and used more positive words in their comments. As respondents' age increases, the frequency of positive comments dropped and became more focused on particular issues around families, housing, social infrastructure and changes to the community.



Ethnicity



Key themes from the consultation

We have identified eight key themes which have emerged from your feedback. Because we are working with a large amount of written information, we have used these themes to code, count and analyse your responses. Some pieces of feedback contained multiple themes – each was counted.

37%

Sense of place



36%

Sense of community



36%

Local economy



35%

Public spaces



54%

Specific locations



29%

Transport & public spaces



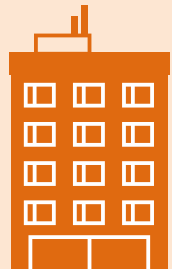
21%

Crime and safety



16%

Housing & development



Engaging with you face-to-face

To supplement our online engagement, we ran a number of workshops, focus groups and community meetings as well as participated in other local events.

This allowed us to speak to a number of residents from different backgrounds who were under-represented in the data, but also test in more detail the ideas and information residents and businesses shared on the platform.

Our events included:

Workshops

Community deliberative event at the Petchey Academy

Access All Areas disability group workshop

Community walkabout and workshop on moving around Dalston (permeability) with Allies and Morrison Architects.

Community walkabout and workshop on mapping social and economic value of Dalston with the University of East London

Community Walkabout and workshop on heritage in Dalston with the Rio Cinema

Young Black Men Inspirational Leaders focus group on an inclusive Dalston with HCVS

Petchey Academy Student Council workshops on the future of Dalston

Conservation Area Advisory Committee workshop on Heritage.

Other Community Events

Project launch event at Hackney Carnival 2018

Presentations at the Dalston Ward Forum

Presentations at the Dalston Pubwatch Forum

Presentation at the Dalston Business Forum

Tenants and Residents meeting at the Shellgrove Estate

Tenants and Residents meeting at the Rhodes Estate

Forest Road Youth Hub event

Presentation and 'How to' session with Age Concern (East London)/ Connect Hackney Senior Citizens IT classes

Market stalls on Ridley Road Market

Market stall-holder surveys

What you've told us about Dalston

The section below provides a summary of what you've told us about Dalston – your issues, concerns, challenges, ideas and aspirations for the area.

Dalston's community

Respondents' comments indicate a strong sense of community spirit and connection to Dalston. They identify and value Dalston's social diversity and a sense of respect and tolerance for others.

However, respondents highlight fears that this sense of community is fragile and is under threat. Comments such as *eroding* or *vanishing* communities appear to relate directly to fears that change in the area is not being well managed, with many comments identifying newer, more transient residents as the driver of this change. Concerns about community spirit and social change increase as an issue

from 15% for those aged between 25-34 to near 60% for those aged 65+, so this is more likely to be an issue for people who have lived in the area longer.

Relating to this is a perceived increase in inequality in the area, with comments identifying private, more expensive homes and new restaurants as contributing to rapid social change and a widening gap between established and newer members of the community. For more established communities – those living in the area for more than 15 years and young people from the area – there is a perception that new housing developments and shops don't cater for their needs and that new development has been alienating them.

Yet, for some, change in the area is not eroding their sense of community, only adding to it. Those aged between 25-34 or those who had lived in the area for less than 10 years were largely more positive towards regeneration in Dalston and identified that this had helped to reduce crime in the area, increased services and made the area better connected.

Around 40
local groups, organisations,
charities and tenants associations
provided responses

Dalston as a place

The majority of public spaces in Dalston that people regularly use or visit retain important social functions and value for local residents and businesses. Comments identify a 'feel-good' buzz from the busy streets, with many respondents identifying an

obvious rhythm of use of public spaces and places that allows different people to interact with each other. Many identify the Arcola Theatre, Dalston Eastern Curve Garden, Rio Cinema, Ridley Road, CLR James Library and Gillett Square as anchor points for the community, and comments reflect how respondents are proud and protective of these organisations and venues. Specifically, the Dalston Eastern Curve Garden is mentioned in over a quarter of all comments as a community asset, with particular mention that it is the only green space in the immediate area.

Similarly a number of respondents commented that Ridley Road Market is not only used by locals but draws shoppers from farther afield which adds to the cultural diversity of the area and brings many social advantages to the local community as a meeting point.

Dalston's public spaces

Comments highlight residents' concerns about the lack of green spaces for rest and play in Dalston. Similarly, walkways of the main walking routes of Dalston are cluttered and the streets are overcrowded, particularly in areas with a lot of extended shop fronts and at bus stops. For accessibility groups, this was raised as a key issue, especially in areas along Kingsland Road and Ridley Road Market.

A key issue raised is crime and safety in public spaces such as Gillett Square.

A frequently raised issue is the land between Colvestone Crescent and Ridley Road. Some respondents think that it should be preserved and used as a green space with trees.

25%

of comments on the site mention the Dalston Eastern Curve Garden

Dalston as a night time venue

Dalston's nightlife is an important part of the cultural and commercial offer with independent bars, cafes and restaurants, giving it a unique and distinctive character.

But opinions of respondents on nightlife are split.

Some respondents are critical of the Council's perceived lenient approach to licensing and there are fears that encouraging further growth of the late-night economy will further disturb local residents. That said, there is recognition of the vibrancy and money the night-time economy brings to the area.

Ridley Road Market was identified by elderly Afro-Caribbean and African communities as an important place to see friends and interact with others, while young people identified there was a lack of safe and welcoming spaces to socialise other than places such as McDonald's.

Ridley Road Market

Ridley Road Market is seen as a key part of the local economy and central to Dalston's social, cultural and historical identity. Respondents are protective of the market and fear redevelopment plans will threaten its future and Dalston's character and vitality.

A number of respondents however said the market's opening hours mean people who work regular hours cannot visit the market. Several responses called for an evening market and for additional opening times on Sunday. Other comments have called for cultural/community activities to take place in the space which the market occupies during the week.

Respondents recognise that improvements are needed in regard to waste, facilities and more toilets for stall holders and visitors. Other respondents were critical about the management of the market, commenting on the need for investment for general up-keep and cleanliness.

25%

of respondents shopped locally,
mostly on Ridley Road Market

Businesses in Dalston

From the uniqueness of Ridley Road Market, to the emerging cafe and restaurant culture in the area, respondents are positive about Dalston's diverse retail offer for shoppers and visitors.

Respondents think that Dalston Square is not fulfilling its potential and its empty shops could be used for SMEs, cultural activities or sports facilities.

Respondents highlight concerns about empty shops and the negative effect this has on the area. Many 'feeling priced out' participants raised the issue of local shops and call on the Council to do more to ensure a range of shops locally which provide for the whole community. As mentioned in the section above, there is individual and community recognition of the changing needs and opportunities in Dalston. That said, there appears to be a strong relationship between the shopping offer at the market and the need to protect the unique community identity in Dalston. This concern is raised by different demographic groups, age groups and those of different Housing tenure.

30%

of respondents were business owners or worked in the area

Several respondents said that the certain businesses – new cafes, restaurants and shops – do not cater for local people and are changing the nature of Dalston and that this needs to be balanced out so all residents benefit. Comments focus on how the Council should set new policies to help existing local businesses owners continue to trade in the area and help fill empty units where possible for small to medium businesses or meanwhile-use.

For young people, there were calls for a broader range of shops and cafes in the area to attract younger shoppers who generally prefer to go to other areas such as Stratford or Finsbury Park. Similarly, our conversations in workshops with young people indicated they wanted to benefit more from Dalston emerging as a creative industries hub through more training, jobs and affordable workspaces.

Crime and safety in Dalston

A number of respondents commented that there is a perceived reduction in crime in Dalston thanks to a number of interventions, but it has continued in pockets around Gillett Square and Ridley Road Market.

Respondents comment that despite investment in public realm improvements, Gillett Square still experiences anti-social behaviour such as drug and alcohol consumption, and public urination. Businesses in the area are particularly concerned that anti-social behaviour is driving away customers. Many respondents who either use the square or live nearby say they do not feel safe in the area and many of the comments raise concerns that the police are not doing enough to tackle these issues.

Local students specifically were worried about issues such as gangs and the increase in the level of homelessness.

Several respondents have also complained about sex workers around Shacklewell Green.

Getting around Dalston

Better public transport links in Dalston are seen as positive for the area, bringing in new visitors and shoppers to the town centre, while helping residents travel to other parts of the borough and London.

Despite this, cyclists think cycle provision is poor in the Dalston area, with respondents on this issue critical of the quality and safety of existing routes and want more options for cycle parking. Respondents see car traffic as overbearing and contributing to noise and air pollution with particular concerns about speeding on Queensbridge Road.

Crossrail 2

Respondents also raised concerns about the impact of Crossrail 2 on Dalston, including house prices, the future of the market, and impact on the community. A key driver for much of this fear appears to be the lack of information about the project. The Council is in regular discussion with the Crossrail 2 team about the project.



Development in Dalston

Fewer comments focused on housing and development, however where mentioned these respondents expressed strong feelings about the type of homes being built, tenure and the quality of architecture in the area. Many of these comments directly link housing and development to negative change in the area and perceive it as a threat to sense of community.

Respondents concerns also focus on the costs of rent and the lack of new affordable homes for existing and new residents. Many comments highlight that more development in the area will affect rents for residential and commercial properties which may price out existing residents and owners in the area.

This fear was expressed around rumours of new developments on the shopping centre site and on Ridley Road. Respondents wanted to see greater control over what is developed locally and ensuring that delivery is responsive to local needs and the local environment.

Respondents also see new developments in the area as “ugly” or of little architectural value. Respondents see more recent developments as contributing little to the character of the area and / or think that their design is out of place.

A small number of respondents commented positively that shared ownership flats in Dalston had allowed them to get a foot on the property ladder.

Carrying on the Conversation

Your feedback will feed into various planning and regeneration programmes of work and help us set the vision and the phased delivery for more inclusive growth in Dalston.

Hackney is committed to working in partnership with the community to ensure that any plans put forward for the area reflect the aspirations and needs you have told us during the Conversation.

There will be various opportunities for community participation and further engagement in the development of the Dalston Regeneration Plan, the Good Growth Fund and Dalston Supplementary Planning Document over the next 12 months. We will keep you updated via the Dalston Conversations news pages or you can sign up for updates at consultation@hackney.gov.uk

In addition to the summary findings report we have also released a consultation report on the project with further information about the events we arranged/attended, our methodology for analysing your contributions and more quantitative data from the findings.

The Dalston Conversation site will remain live to view comments and for updates, but you will not be able to add further comments.