

Report summarising the responses to the consultation on proposed changes to New Covent Garden Market Redevelopment

August 2020

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1. Introduction

Purpose of the document

The purpose of this document is to summarise the responses received to the consultation, identify any key themes and set out the next steps.

Background

The consultation was about the three changes that are being proposed to the redevelopment of New Covent Garden Market. They are elements of a proposed settlement agreement being negotiated between the Covent Garden Market Authority (CGMA) and the Covent Garden Tenants Association (CGTA). The agreement will not be signed until it is approved by the Covent Garden Market Authority Board following its consideration of the outcome of this consultation.

The three changes that were consulted on are:

1. Vehicle Loading Area: the enlargement of the vehicle loading areas for Building C and the unbuilt part of Building A, which is achieved by moving back the front of those buildings at ground floor level and removing some of the proposed supporting columns.
2. Buyer's Walk: widening the proposed Buyers' Walk in the yet unbuilt part of Building B to either 6 metres or 8 metres.
3. Canopies: extending the canopies in the unbuilt part of Building B.

How the consultation was run

The consultation ran for 4 weeks from 6th July to 3rd August 2020.

A consultation document setting out the proposed changes was sent to key stakeholders including:

- All existing market tenants
- Market customers
- Members of the two existing Market Advisory Committees
- The CGTA
- Wandsworth and Lambeth Councils and the Mayor of London
- Defra

Very shortly after the consultation was launched, the Authority restarted efforts to reconstitute the other two statutory committees (The Market Traffic Advisory Committee and the Covent Garden Workers Committee). Emails were sent to the bodies who are responsible for nominating members of the traffic committee and to other bodies who the Authority considered could advise on membership of the workers committee. The opportunity was taken to send the consultation document to those bodies at the same time and ask for responses.

In all, the document was sent out to approximately 200 people.

The consultation document was widely publicised, particularly within the market, with posters and handouts being provided to market tenants, workers and customers. It was prominently advertised on the CGMA website.

Consultees were able to respond by using an online survey, by email and by post/delivery. Opportunities were made available for consultees to ask questions about the proposals by email and a total of four face to face engagement events took place in the market with 40 individuals from mainly Fruit and Vegetable market businesses attending.

Questions asked

The consultation was comprised of four main sets of questions, the first three of which were about each of the three proposed changes described above. It asked the consultees to choose from fixed responses (*strongly approve, approve, neither approve nor disapprove, disapprove, strongly disapprove*) to indicate whether they approved of each of the proposals.

Those multi-choice questions were followed by a free text box, offering consultees opportunity to comment on the proposals and asking whether they had any alternative suggestions (including not implementing the proposal at all).

The fourth question provided a free text box for consultees to comment on any other matters raised in the consultation document.

2. Key findings from the consultation

Summary of the responses

A total of 52 responses were received to the consultation, 33 of which were on Survey Monkey and the remaining 19 of which were by hard copy or email.

The majority of respondents were fruit and vegetable market traders and employees of market traders and the rest were other market users. The Covent Garden Tenants Association also responded. No responses were received before the deadline from other consultees.

Responses to the consultation by category		
Respondent Category	Number of responses	Percentage of total*
Fruit and Vegetable Market Trader	28	54%
Flower Market Trader	2	4%
Food Exchange Business	1	2%
Market Customer - Fruit and Vegetables	2	4%
Market Customer - Flowers	0	0%
Other Market user	1	2%
Employee of Market Trader	10	20%
Employee of Market Customer	0	0%
Did not specify	8	16%
Total	52	100

*percentages have been rounded up.

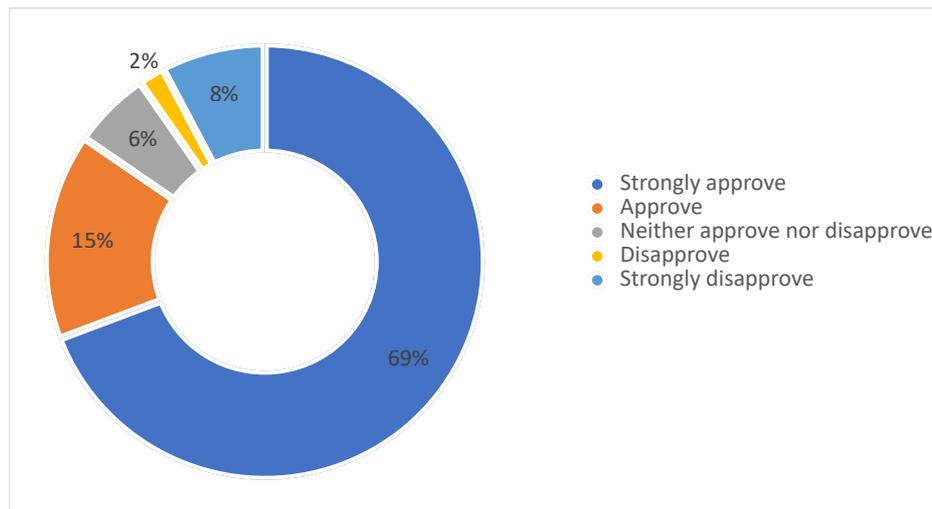
Four responses submitted to the consultation were very similar in nature (in that they appeared to be in the same handwriting and provided identical responses (strongly in favour of the proposals) but these responses were ostensibly submitted by different individuals.

Question 1 – Vehicle Loading Area

Part A: multi-choice

A significant majority of respondents (84%) indicated that they either strongly approved or approved of the proposal for increasing the size of the vehicle loading area. Only 10% indicated disapproval or strong disapproval.

Responses to the vehicle loading area question (% of responses)



Part B: respondents' comments

Individual responses to Part B of this question are set out at Annex A to this document. Most of those who expressed approval for the proposal did not make any comment.

Key themes from those who expressed approval for the proposal were:

- Improved safety. For example, respondents commented that “loading areas are busy, having more space will improve safety”.

Comments from those who expressed disapproval for the proposal included:

- “The reduction in ground floor space is crippling”.
- “The first design was not thought of correctly and the CGTA (Covent Garden Tenant Association) should have been more involved in design”.
- “I am concerned we will lose too much storage space”.

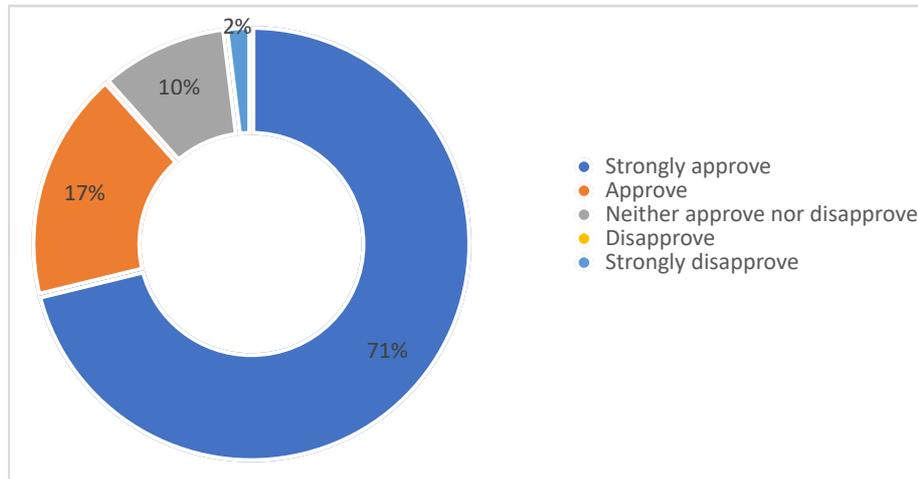
For noting, a late response was received from Lambeth Council, raising concerns about the impact of this proposal on local traffic.

Question 2 - Buyer's Walk

Part A: multi-choice

A significant majority of respondents (88%) indicated that they either strongly approved or approved of the proposal for increasing the width of the Buyer's Walk in the unbuilt part of Building B. Only 2% indicated strong disapproval and none indicated disapproval.

Responses to the Buyer's Walk question (% of responses)



Part B: respondents' comments

Individual responses to Part B of this question are set out at Annex A to this document. Most of those who expressed approval for the proposal did not make any comment.

Key themes from those who expressed approval for the proposal were:

- Fruit and Vegetable Market Traders being supportive of the proposals. For example, respondents commented "the Buyer's Walk must be the widest size possible" and "it is imperative for us as wholesalers to be able to put out a show of our produce. Increasing the width of Buyer's Walk would allow us to do this".

Comments from those who expressed disapproval for the proposal included:

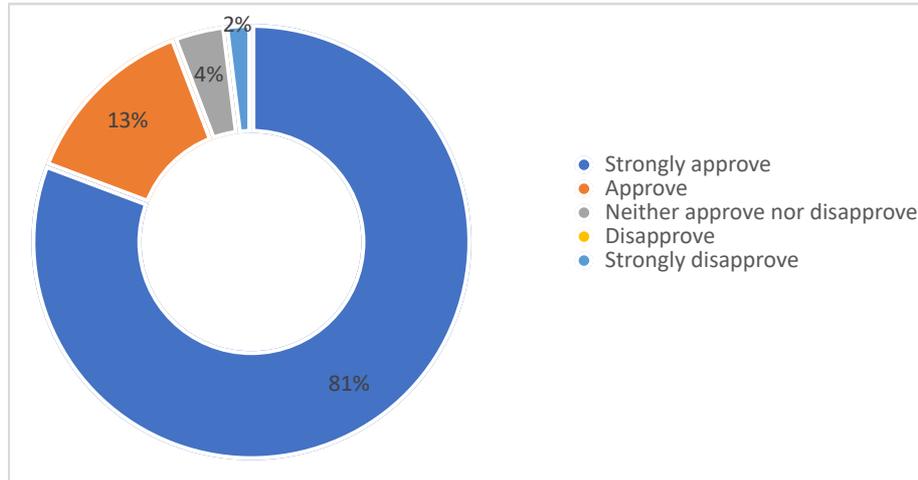
- A query from a Flower Market tenant asking why the Fruit & Vegetable Market tenants are being given metres of lettable space rent free when Flower Market tenants are fined for overtrading.

Question 3 - Canopies

Part A: multi-choice

A significant majority of respondents (94%) indicated that they approved or strongly approved of the proposal for increasing the size of the building canopies on the unbuilt part of Building B. Only 2% indicated strong disapproval and none indicated disapproval.

Responses to the canopies question (% of responses)



Part B

Individual responses to Part B of this question are set out at Annex A to this document. Most of those who expressed approval for the proposal did not make any comment.

Key themes from those who expressed approval for the proposal were:

- Protection of people and produce from the elements. One respondent commented “a larger canopy is important to keep people and produce protected and to avoid waste”. Another commented that they deliver produce to top restaurants and hotels, so it is important to cover vans when loading to avoid damage to the produce.

Comments from those who expressed disapproval for the proposal included:

- “If, as per the drawings, the external walkways are enlarged then the night-time noise increases dramatically”.
- “5m is not deep enough. An extra 3m will be much better for loading vehicles and to protect against rain and wind”.

Question 4: Other comments

Only four respondents made comments in response to the invitation in question 4 to make general comments. One response made general comments in support of the proposals, two raised issues which were unrelated to the subject matter of the consultation and the other stressed the respondent's view that the buildings which have already been built should have extended canopies.

3. Key themes from the consultation responses

- There was strong support for all three proposals from the fruit and vegetable market traders and employees of market traders. No respondents in these categories disapproved or strongly disapproved of the Buyer's Walk and canopies proposals, and only a small handful (3 respondents) disapproved or strongly disapproved of the vehicle loading area proposals.
- A limited number of flower market traders responded to the consultation (2) and their responses did not follow any general pattern.
- Those directly connected with the market engaged well with the consultation (e.g. traders and their employees). There were no responses from other stakeholders, including statutory bodies and the statutory committees.
- Respondents were generally in favour of the vehicle loading area proposals and numerous comments highlighted the fact it would improve safety. Those disapproving of the proposals were most concerned about a loss of floor space.
- Respondents were strongly in favour of the proposals to widen Buyer's Walk, but there was no strong view from respondents as to whether it should be widened by 6 or 8 metres.
- Respondents were also in favour of the proposals to extend the canopies. The general theme in the responses was that extended canopies are necessary to protect workers and their produce from the elements.

4. Next steps

This report will be considered by the CGMA Board on 27th August. The Board will decide whether to implement the proposals (subject to obtaining the necessary approvals from the developers Vinci and St Modwen and to obtaining planning permission where relevant). The Board's decision will be published, and the consultees notified shortly after it is made.

13 August 2020

Annex A – Individual Responses

Category of respondent	Question 1B
Did not specify	The more space, the more easy it is to work safe.
Did not specify	Loading areas are busy, having more space will improve safety.
Did not specify	Currently loading areas are so busy, it will be safer to have more space. Also this can only help the current situation with social distancing.
Fruit and Vegetable Market Trader	How does this affect those units already built?
Flower Market Trader	No trader currently loads their vans under cover or inside - why is this necessary to do so in the new market and would this not create problems with exhausts in confined spaces and food storage areas?
Food Exchange Business	The reduction of the ground floor space is crippling. I need all the ground floor space I can get for ice manufacture and freezer storage etc. I agree with the extra canopy space, like the existing units, so we have cover to load the vans, but not at the cost of usable floor space. Why can't you just increase the canopy out further, like existing, why do you have to reduce floor space? If you decrease the floor space and increase the canopy that is fine, as long as the same amount of floor space is available to rent as already discussed, so you will have to give me more units? I'm happy to keep it as is, or I'll rent one of the new units already built and the reduced sizes can be taken by the F&V companies.
Fruit and Vegetable Market Trader	The first design was not thought of correctly and the CGTA should have been more involved in design.
Fruit and Vegetable Market Trader	The largest vehicle loading area is essential.
Fruit and Vegetable Market Trader	Loading sections are greatly needed for the running of businesses.
Employee of Market Trader	Vehicle loading areas definitely need to be bigger.
Fruit and Vegetable Market Trader	It would reduce the warehouse to half the size which is not viable for our business.
Fruit and Vegetable Market Trader	I am concerned we will lose too much storage space.
Fruit and Vegetable Market Trader	As a future tenant I am very concerned about giving up that amount of interior space which in future can ONLY be used for van parking. I quite understand the necessity to use some of the internal area for van loading but to surrender this expensive space solely for that purpose seems odd. Presumably we could individually decide to reverse our vans right into the unit under the existing construction plan and in this situation there would be no restriction on using that area for something else if the need arose.

Fruit and Vegetable Market Trader	Good to have extra loading area but worried we will lose space for storage.
Fruit and Vegetable Market Trader	Leave as per the original plan and as the first phase is built. Each food service company tenant could build their own loading bay should they want it within the boundary of their own premises. Some may want 3 metres for instance, others 5 metres; other may want no loading bay at all. It should be decision of each respective tenant. This is very, very expensive space and I want to decide what works best.
Fruit and Vegetable Market Trader	Will lose a lot of internal space from storage.

Category of respondent	Question 2B
Flower Market Trader	As a query - if Buyer's Walk is increased in size, traders are allowed to display goods on 4-6 (?)m of this - who pays for the heating service charge etc in this area and why are the F&V market tenants being given metres of lettable space rent free when Flower market tenants are fined for overtrading?
Fruit and Vegetable Market Trader	The Buyer's Walk must be the widest size possible.
Fruit and Vegetable Market Trader	Needs to be increased as it is not wide enough, especially with the social distancing which I think will be in place for a long time.
Employee of Market Trader	Width of Buyer's Walk definitely need to be bigger.
Did not specify	It is imperative for us as wholesalers to be able to put out a show of our produce. Increasing the width of Buyer's Walk to 8m would allow us to do this.
Fruit and Vegetable Market Trader	I feel it should be at least 6 metres.
Fruit and Vegetable Market Trader	We don't use the Buyer's Walk ourselves. But seems a good idea for everyone else.
Fruit and Vegetable Market Trader	As a future tenant this is very important. 4.5m is definitely not room enough.

Category of respondent	Question 3B
Did not specify	We have to deliver to top restaurant and hotels, with limited cover produce gets water and damaged, not what you want for modern market. We need to cover vans when loading.
Did not specify	Loading areas are exposed to extreme weather conditions making it a difficulty working environment. A larger canopy is important to keep people and produce protected and to avoid waste.
Did not specify	Will hugely improve the service we provide. As we currently don't have enough space in the loading area, produce is often exposed to the poor weather. By having this protection it will be a nicer environment to work in and stop the produce getting damaged and stop waste.

Flower Market Trader	If, as per the drawings, the external walkways are enlarged then the night-time noise increases dramatically.
Fruit and Vegetable Market Trader	Again, a poor design made in first stages.
Fruit and Vegetable Market Trader	These canopies must be large and fit for purpose.
Fruit and Vegetable Market Trader	5m is not deep enough. An extra 3m will be much better for loading vehicles and to protect against rain and wind.
Fruit and Vegetable Market Trader	Will the size of the canopies be increased in the already built part of the building?
Fruit and Vegetable Market Trader	We strongly approve of the extending of canopies, however being in phase one we keep running into frustrating challenges which phase two companies won't have to.
Did not specify	Increasing the canopies will also allow us to unload and load vans, lorries etc under some shelter of rain, snow and bad weather. Keeping the produce dry and customers.
Fruit and Vegetable Market Trader	Must have a well-protected loading space.
Fruit and Vegetable Market Trader	Better protection from bad weather.
Fruit and Vegetable Market Trader	Excellent suggestion and should have been included in the original design. As a future tenant in this building this is an essential modification.