

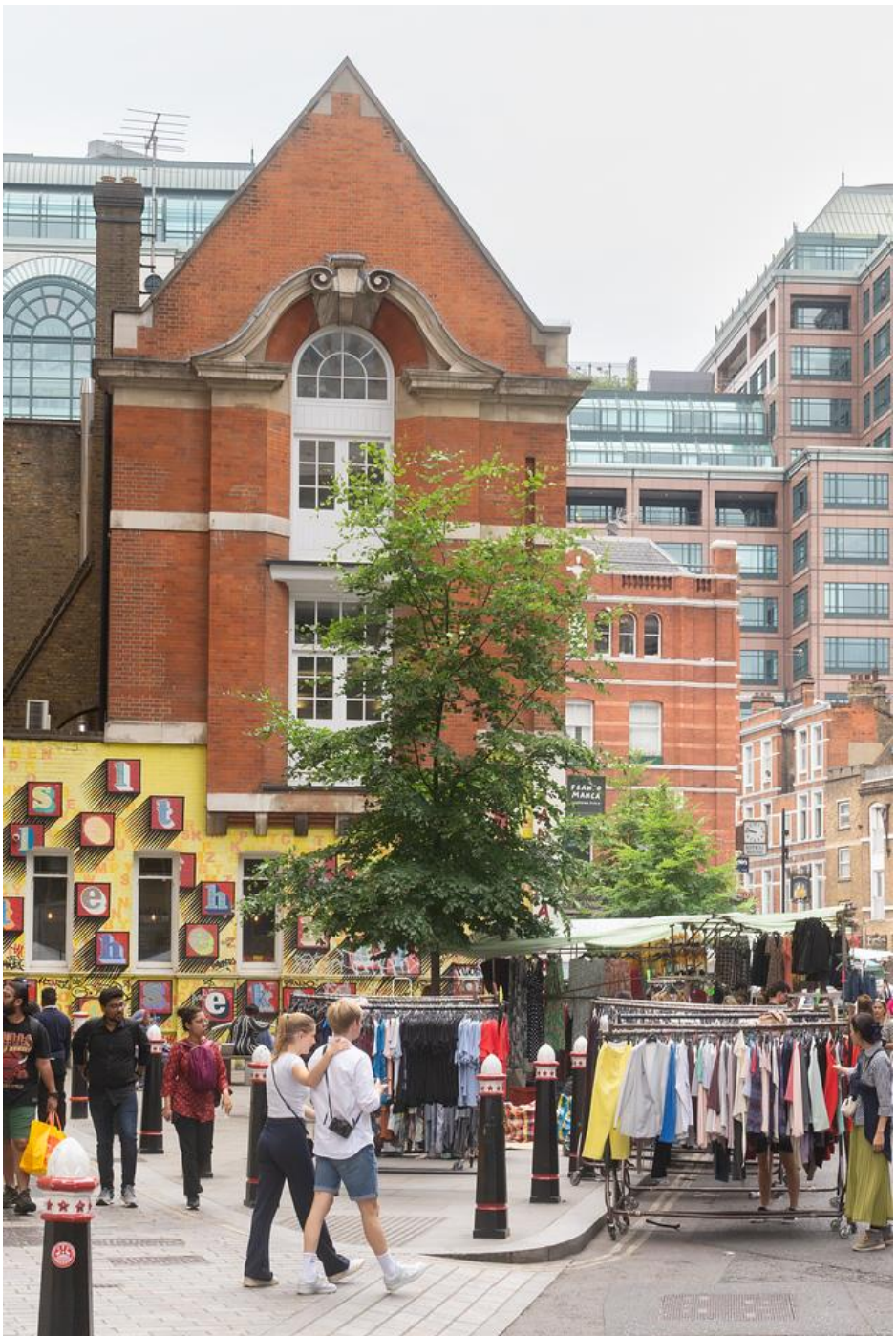
ALDGATE CONNECT BID

Perception Analysis Findings

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Introduction

In April 2020, the local business community voted to establish a formal Business Improvement District (BID) in Aldgate.

The Aldgate Connect BID was formed to champion the local area, investing over £3.6m into key improvement programmes, including public realm and placemaking, staff training, community safety, community and cultural events, and promotional opportunities to help put Aldgate on the map.

Now in the final year of its first 5-year term, the BID is moving towards a renewal ballot to secure its second term and build on the successes achieved so far. To support this renewal process, the BID conducted a Perception Analysis survey to obtain an accurate assessment of the business community's perception of the local area and the BID's work to date.

The findings of this survey will help to shape the BID's next 5-year Business Plan, setting out a clear roadmap of deliverables that meet the needs of the local community.

All programmes will have deep understanding of existing plans and delivery undertaken by the local authorities and existing partnerships to ensure additionality of service and alignment.

Background & Rationale

The Perception Analysis was conducted across an 8-week period, running from **20th March** to **15th May 2024**. The document was circulated as both hard copy brochures and an online survey. The BID team also engaged the local business community through pop-ups and business visits to gather staff feedback.

The survey consisted of a wide range of questions, all carefully selected to help formulate a clear picture of the BID boundary and the business requirements within this area.

Over the 8-week period, businesses across the area and community were invited to complete the survey and we received **399 individual responses**.

Out of the 248 individual businesses eligible to vote in the renewal ballot, 46% completed the survey, totalling to a 51% completion rate by hereditament, (a total of 365 hereditaments); **exceeding the 40% threshold** requirement set out by the City of London.

The questions were designed to establish opportunities for additions and improvements across the area, allowing for effective input from key local businesses. All questions linked directly to the **BID's four key strategic themes**.



Our Strategic Themes

The BID aligns all its projects to 4 key focus areas, ensuring all initiatives and schemes meet at least one of these objectives.

Making the
district more
appealing

Creating a
stronger
community

Keeping
everyone
protected

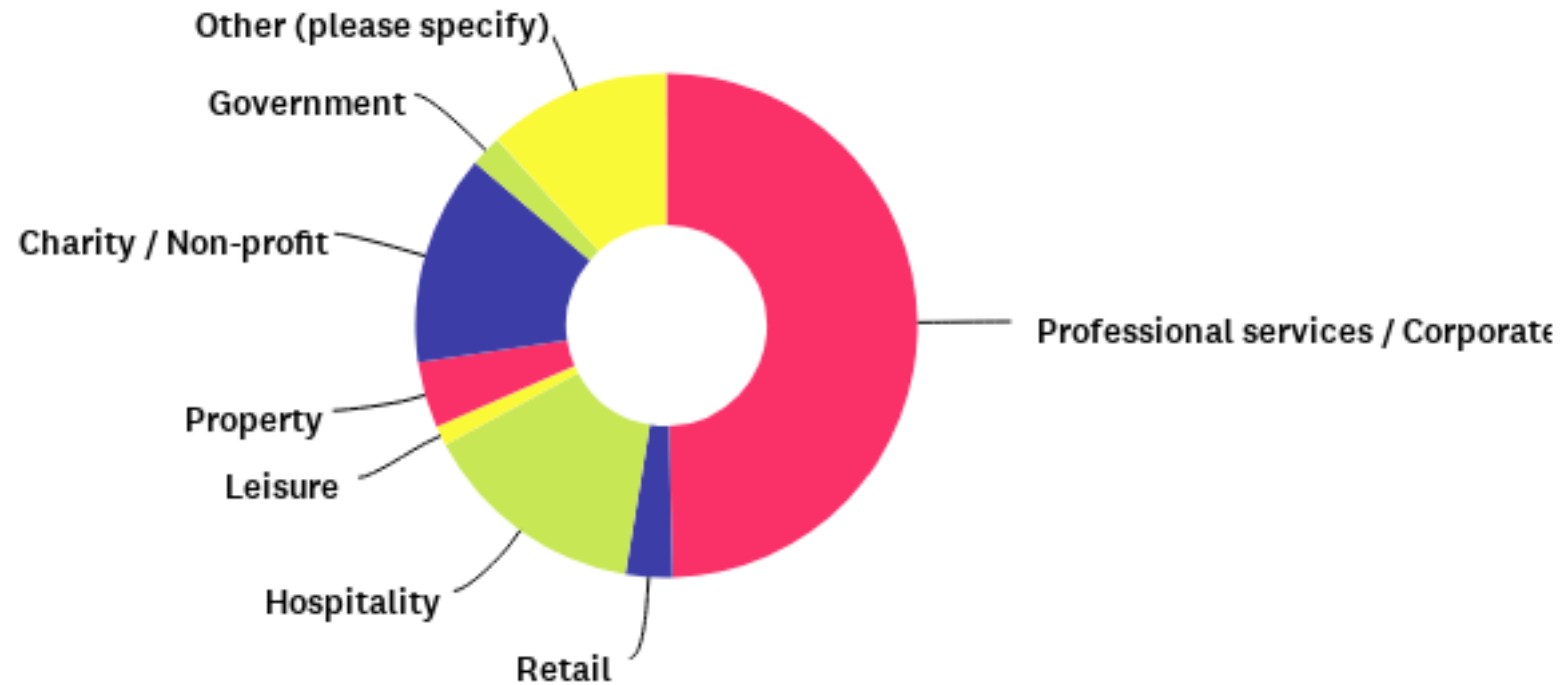
Welcoming
people in

Our themes are underpinned by the local authorities' key agendas around public realm and infrastructure plans, destination, climate action, and business engagement. All projects that sit within the themes will be monitored against these strategies from procurement to delivery.

Key Findings

Respondents

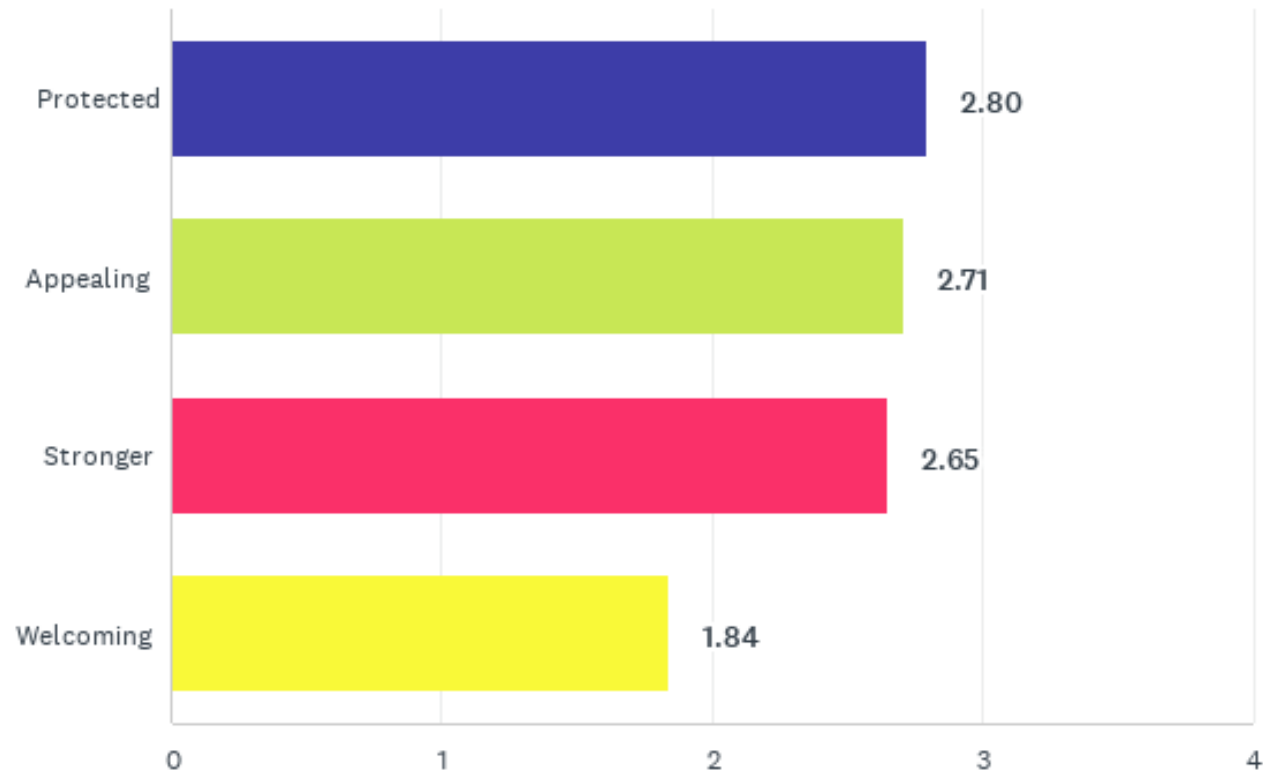
- 399 respondents in total
- Respondents by sector:



Strategic Themes

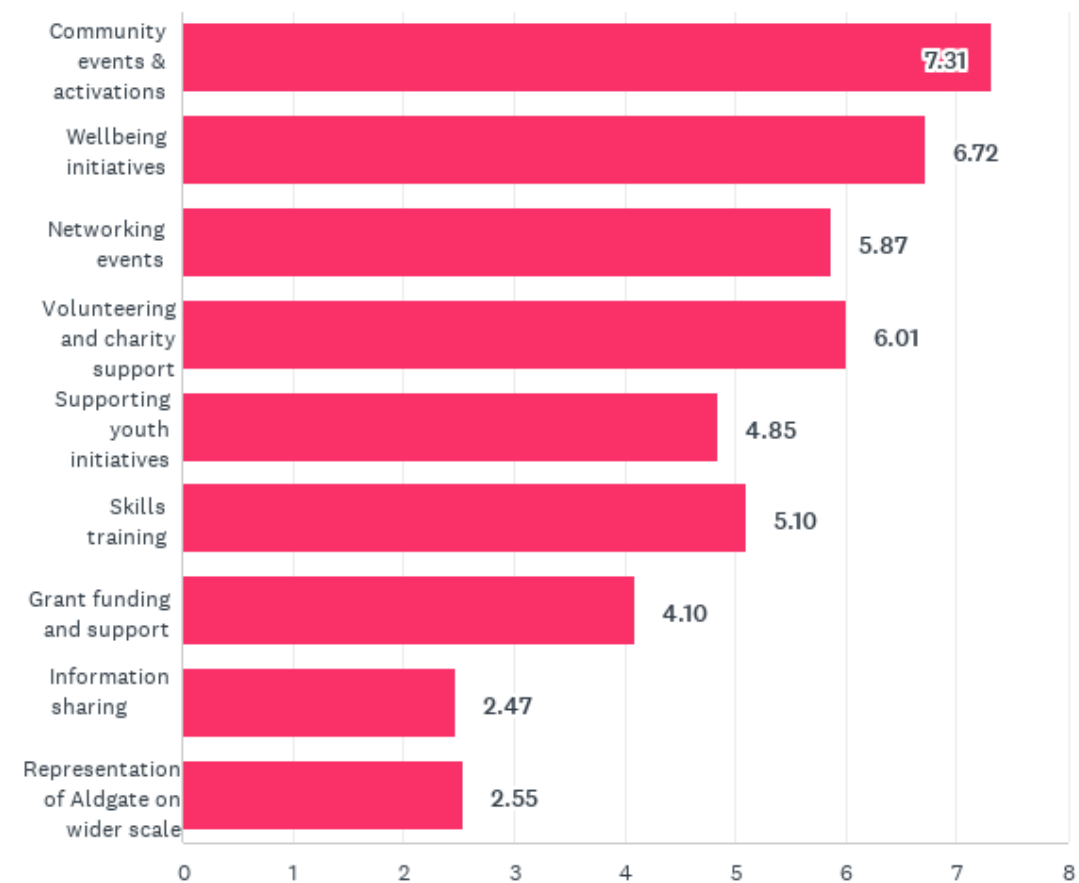
During this survey, participants were asked to evaluate how important each of our four strategic themes are to them and their business.

Our '**Protected**' theme was highlighted as the most important theme to the business community, scoring 2.8 out of 4, with 36% of respondents ranking this as their top choice. The '**Appealing**' theme followed closely behind in second place scoring 2.71/4, and '**Stronger**' and '**Welcoming**' in third with 2.65/4 and 1.84/4, respectively.



Creating a Stronger Community

Our ‘**Stronger**’ theme focuses on community cohesion by creating opportunities for residents, local businesses, community organisations and everyone in between. When asked which BID activities they would like to see more of within this theme, respondents highlighted community & event activations as their top priority, scoring 7.31 out of 8 with 37% selecting this as the most important focus for the next 5 year. Wellbeing initiatives came in second with 6.72/8 and volunteering and charity support in third with 6.01/8.



Creating a Stronger Community

Participants were then asked how involved they feel in the local community, with 8% of respondents feeling very involved and 39% feeling somewhat involved in the local community. Encouragingly, 70% of the respondents reported that they would like to get more involved in the local community, with 43% wanting to support local charity/non-profit organisations, 40% wanting to see the development of a business-to-business network, and 32% wanting more community and local resident engagement and support.



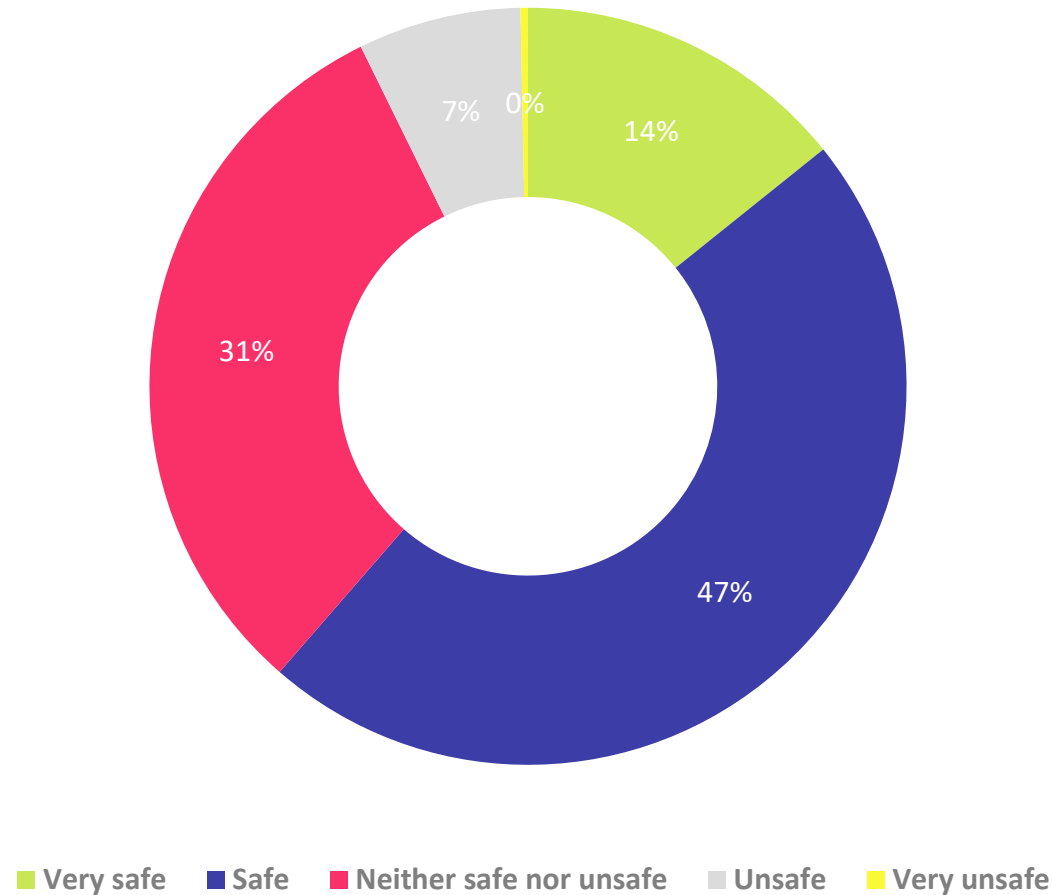
Creating a Stronger Community

To better understand the reasons behind the answer choices, the respondents were asked why a stronger community in Aldgate matters to them and their businesses. Most common answers included:



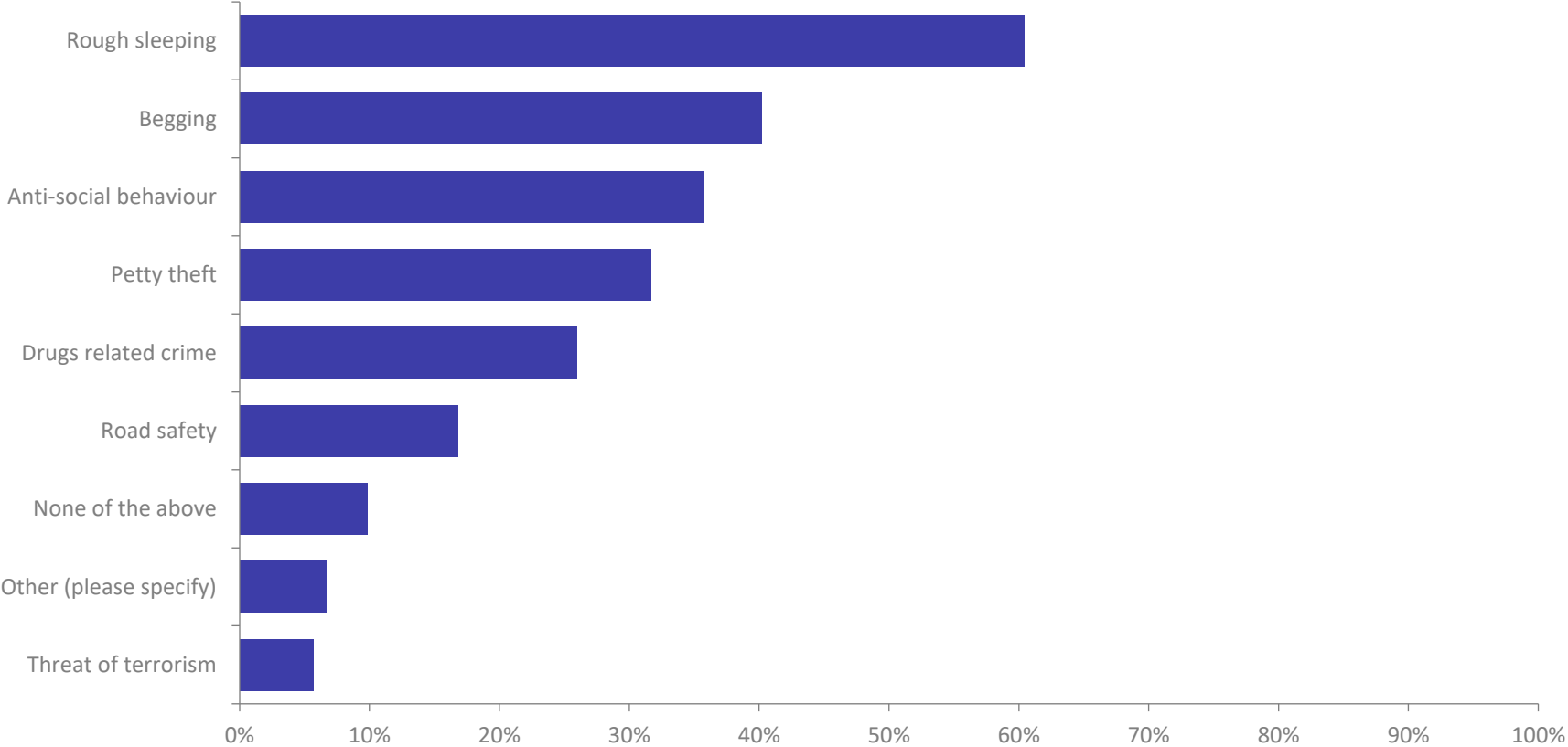
Keeping Everyone Protected

Participants were then asked how safe they feel in Aldgate. It's positive to see that 61% feel either safe or very safe in Aldgate. Only 7% stated that they feel unsafe, whilst no respondents stated they feel very unsafe in the area.



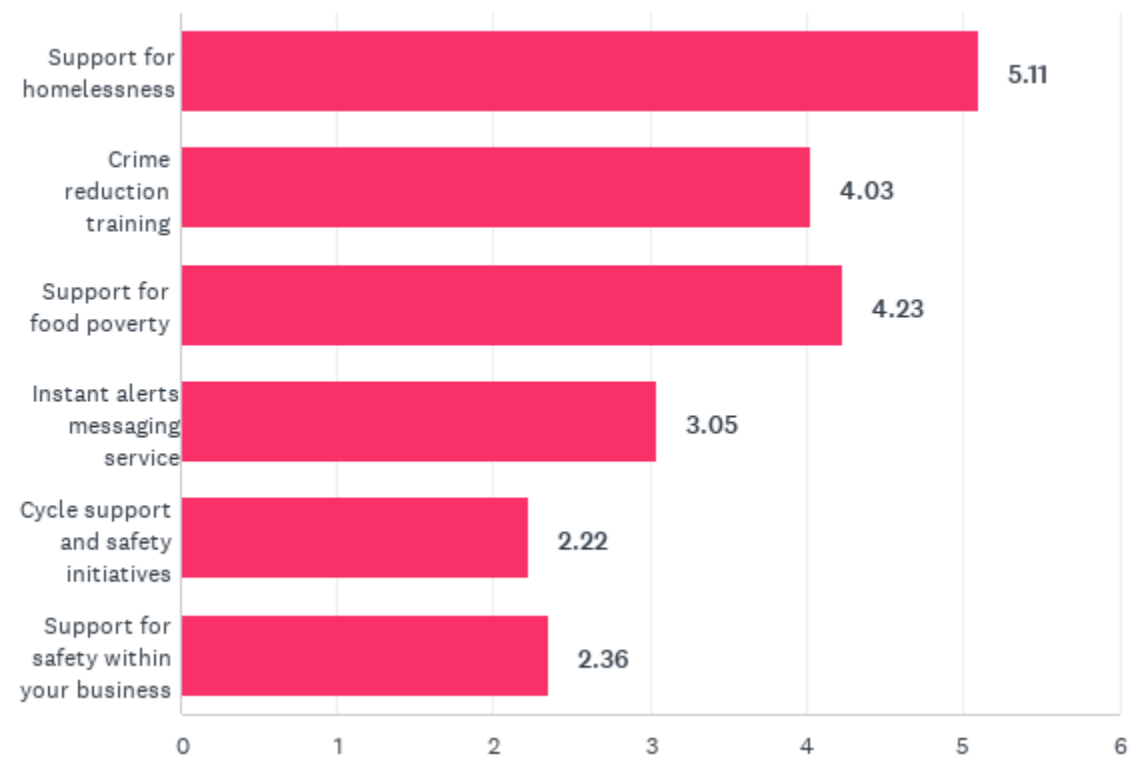
Keeping Everyone Protected

To help identify challenges within this theme, participants were asked to identify the top 3 issues within Aldgate (relating specifically to the 'Protected' theme). Rough sleeping was highlighted as the highest issue overall, with 60% of respondents placing this in their top 3. Begging (40%) was in second place, followed by anti-social behaviour in third (36%).



Keeping Everyone Protected

Participants were then asked to select which safety and security initiatives they would like to see more of over the next 5 years, ranking the below categories in order of importance. Results highlighted support for those facing homelessness was the most important priority, scoring an average of 5.11 out of 7 with 52% of respondents selecting this as their top choice. Support for food poverty and crime reduction training came second (4.23/6) and third (4.03/6) respectively.



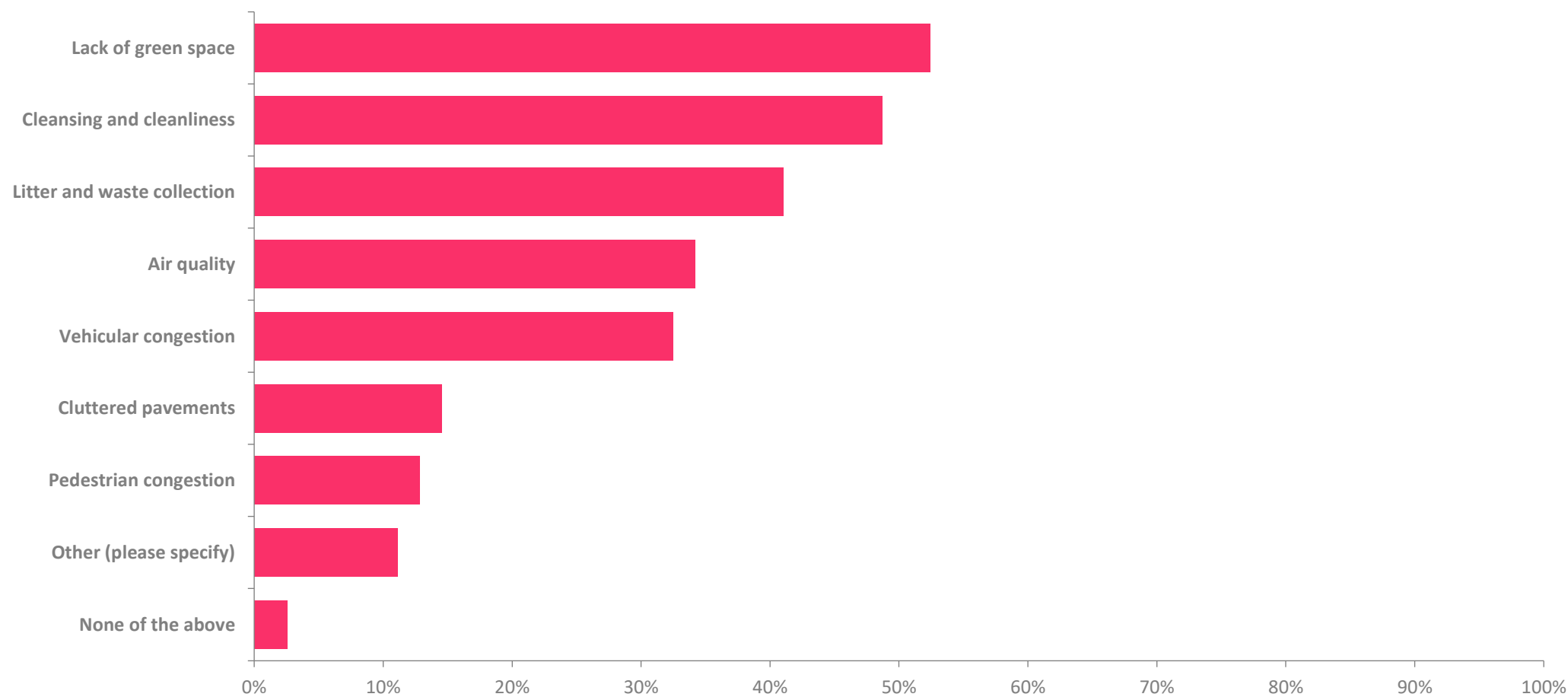
Keeping Everyone Protected

To help us better understand the reasons behind their answers, respondents were asked to state why safety and security initiatives matter to them and their businesses. Most common answers included:



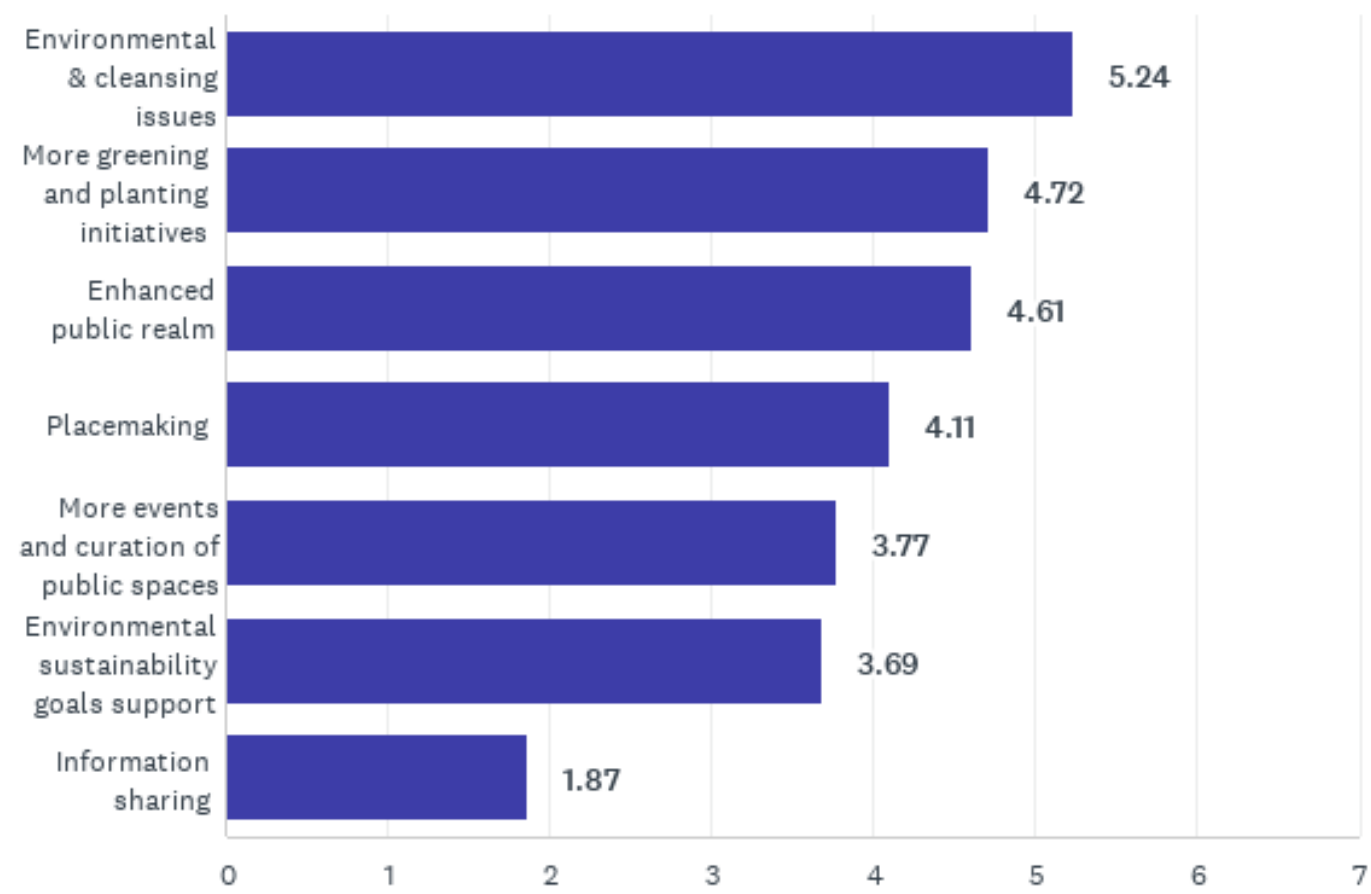
Making the District More Appealing

To understand opportunities for improvement within Aldgate’s public spaces, we asked participants to pick their top 3 public realm issues in Aldgate. A lack of green spaces was highlighted as the biggest concern, with 52% of participants selecting this in their top 3. Cleansing and cleanliness of the area was close behind with 48%, and litter & waste collection in third with 41%.



Making the District More Appealing

Participants were then asked to select which public realm and placemaking initiatives they would like to see more of over the next 5 years, ranking the below categories in order of importance. Results highlighted environmental & cleansing issues as the most important priority scoring an average of 5.24 out of 7, with increased greening & planting (4.72/7) and enhanced public realm (4.61/7) in second and third, respectively.



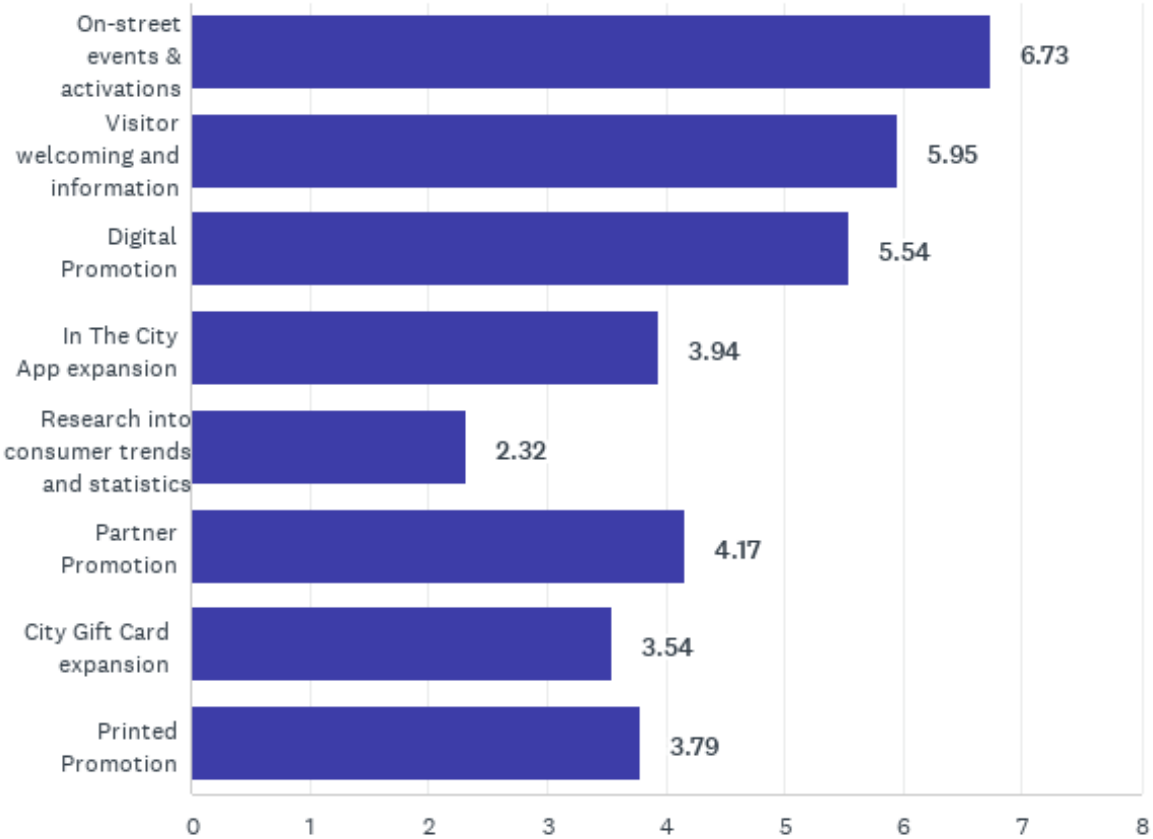
Making the District More Appealing

To better understand the reasons behind the answer choices, the respondents were asked why improved public realm matters to them and their businesses, most common answers included:



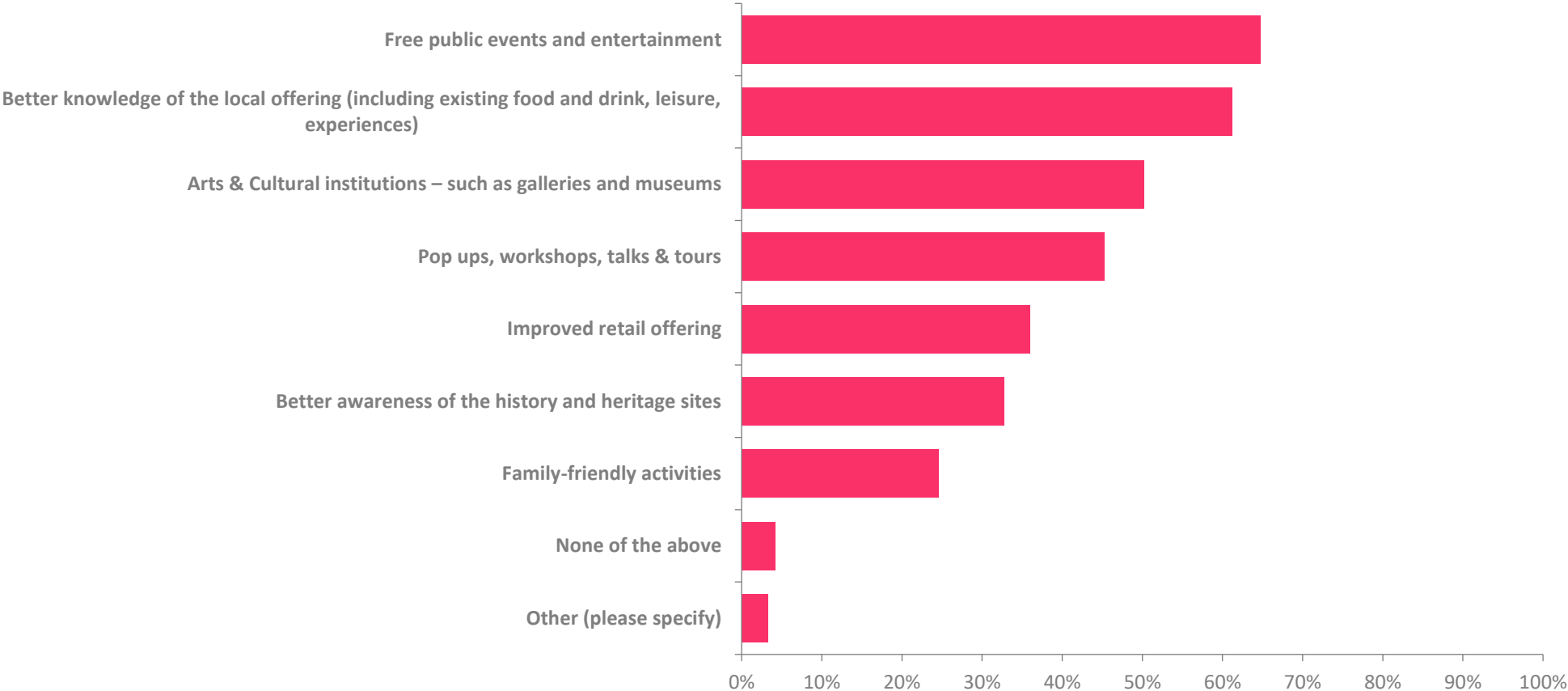
Welcoming People in

Our final strategic theme looks at promoting Aldgate as a world-class destination, with effective marketing and promotion of the area being a key priority for our team. When asked what destination activities they would like to see over the next 5 years, 46% of respondents highlighted on-street events as their top priority, scoring an average of 6.73 out of 8. Visitor welcoming & information services was second with a score of 5.95/8, with digital promotion (5.54/8) and partner promotion (4.17/8) in third and fourth.



Welcoming People in

Participants were then asked to highlight what would encourage them to spend more time in Aldgate. With on-street events highlighted as a top priority, it is no surprise to see that free public events & entertainment was selected by 65% of respondents. Interestingly, 61% of respondents stated that they would spend more time in Aldgate if they had better knowledge of the area and its existing offering. Arts & Cultural institutions (50%) and more pop-ups, talks, and tours (46%) made up the third and fourth spots.



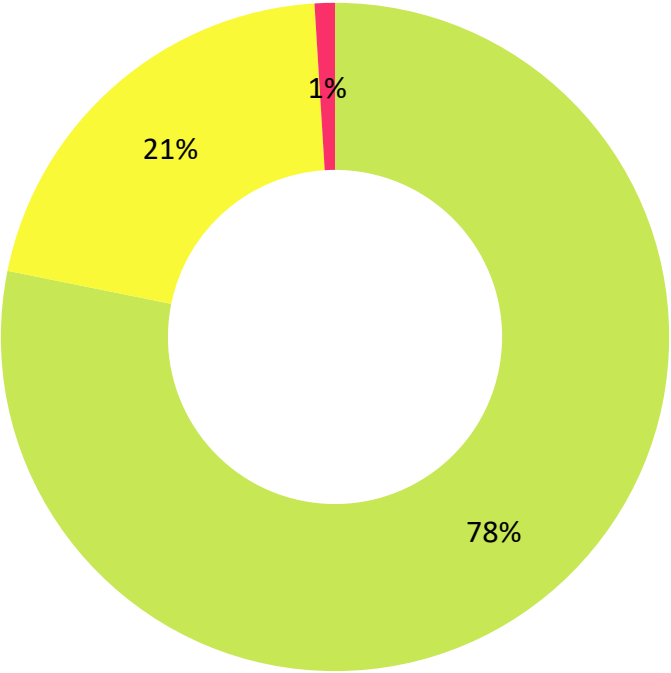
Welcoming People in

To better understand the reasons behind the answer choices, the respondents were asked why marketing and promotion of Aldgate as a destination matter to them and their businesses, most common answers included:



BID Renewal

With the BID nearing the end of its first 5-year term, we asked participants if they would be in favour of Aldgate Connect BID continuing for a second 5-year term. Encouragingly, 78% of respondents were in favour of the BID continuing for a second term. A further 21% said they would need more information to make a decision, whilst only 1% said they would not be in favour of the BID continuing. This showcases a positive level of support from the local business community.



■ Yes ■ Need more info ■ No

Conclusion

The Perception Analysis highlighted a range of business priorities and areas of opportunity.

1. Our **'Protected' and 'Appealing' themes** were recognised as the **most important** to the business community over the next 5 years.
2. There is a strong appetite from local businesses and workers for more enjoyment of **public and green spaces**.
3. There is an acknowledgement of a **better standard of public realm promotes less crime**.
4. Businesses looked to the BID to enhance **staff wellbeing and improve work-culture**.
5. All BID Programmes **support ESG or Corporate objectives** of businesses in the area.
6. Street **cleansing and litter removal** remains a key focus area for the business community leading to a better economic and social environment.
7. **Support for** those facing **homelessness and/or food poverty** is an area that local businesses feel needs addressing and supporting further.
8. Local stakeholders would like to see the BID continue to **deliver on-street events and activations** to drive footfall to the area and create a sense of wellbeing and happiness.
9. The Aldgate **business community is in favour of Aldgate Connect BID** continuing for a second 5-year term.

Next Steps

Next Steps

Building on from the findings of the Perception Analysis, we are now working to develop the next 5-year Business Plan for the BID.

This Business Plan will lay out programmes and projects that have been successful in the previous 5 years under our themes and objectives and incorporate the feedback and respond to any alteration in focuses from the business community feedback.

This Plan and boundary will then be submitted for approval in September 2024 by the City of London Corporation and London Borough of Tower Hamlets and their feedback incorporated.

In its second term, the BID is looking forward to being more ambitious with projects that will take the Aldgate Public Realm Vision and Strategy forward, building on our values, our community and project delivery that have been set up in this term.

The eligible businesses will then be invited to vote in the BID Ballot in early 2025, and the BID, pending a successful outcome, will start our second term in April 2025.

