Leigh Civic Square Engagement Summary

Prepared by PLACED
January 2025





Engagement Summary

Engagement Opportunities

2 POP-UPS

2 DROP-IN EVENTS

5 WORKSHOPS

2 ONLINE SURVEYS

573
People engaged

= Pop-up (119)

= Drop-in (27)

= Youth Workshops (119)

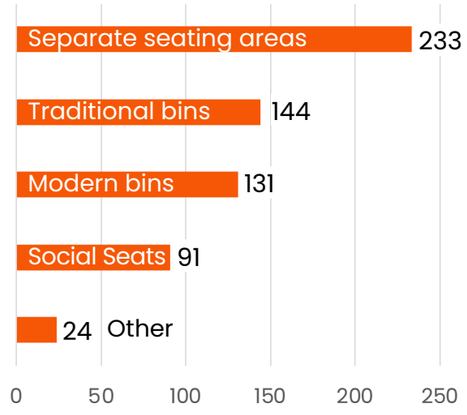
= Online (308)

Key Themes from

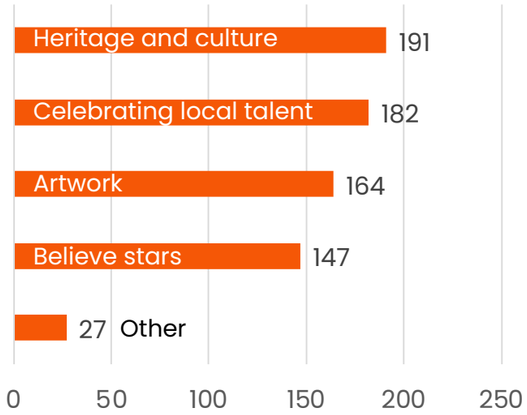
- Current perception and issues
- Celebration of local identity
- Future use and functionality
- Environmental enhancements
- Youth and community engagement
- Safety and maintenance
- Design and aesthetics
- Economic opportunities

Key Findings

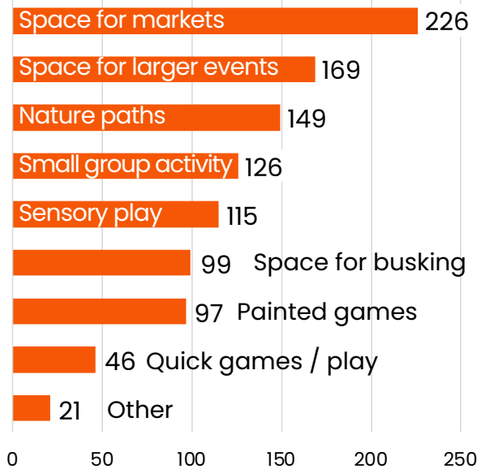
SEATING AND STREET FURNITURE



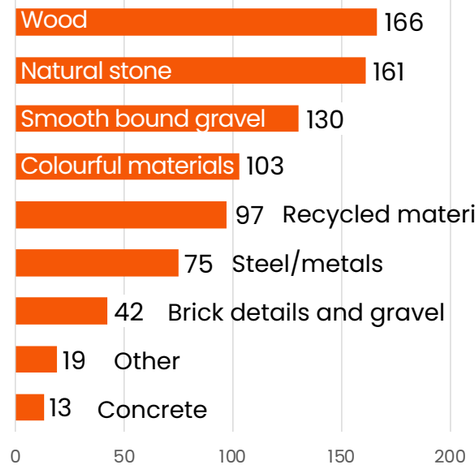
MAKE IT LEIGH



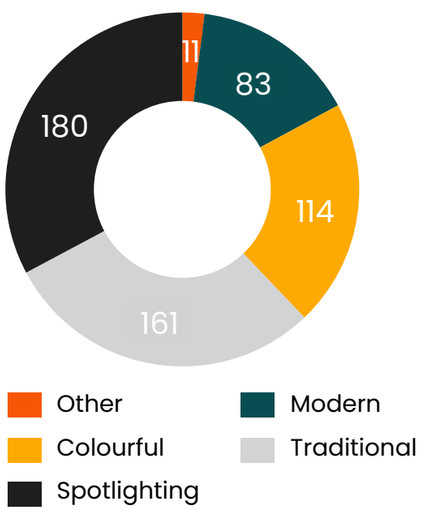
PLAY, FUN AND EVENTS



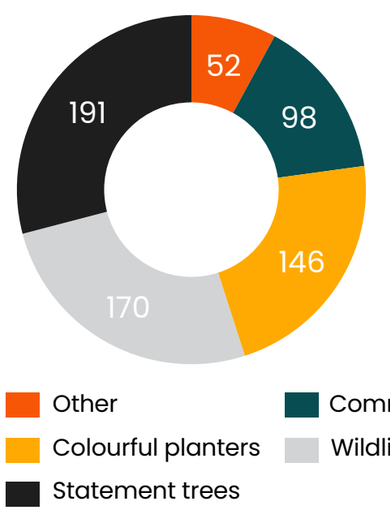
MATERIALS



LIGHTING



LANDSCAPING



Wigan Council commissioned SLR consulting, with support from WSP and PLACED for the regeneration of Leigh Civic Square. PLACED's role was to facilitate community engagement throughout the design process.

The engagement process combined online and in-person engagement opportunities to ensure broad community participation. This included online surveys, pop-up events, drop-in events, and youth workshops. Engagement took place throughout the design process to ensure it was influential, with events and surveys running between 7 September and 15 December 2024.

Engagement activities were held in accessible locations across Leigh, including Leigh Civic Square, Leigh Library, and local schools. These settings were chosen to encourage input from a wide range of community members, including young people, families, local business owners, and under-represented groups.

Around 573 participants contributed their views during the engagement, representing a diverse cross-section of the Leigh community. Feedback gathered through this process has informed the next stages of the Civic Square's design, ensuring the redevelopment reflects the community's aspirations and priorities.

Key themes from community engagement

Current perception and issues
Participants frequently commented on the Civic Square's current state, describing it as "bland" and "uninspiring". Many felt the space lacked vibrancy and purpose, appearing underused and disconnected from the wider town. Concerns were also raised about safety, with reports of antisocial behaviour and poor lighting deterring use. Maintenance issues, such as litter and overgrown vegetation, were also highlighted.

Celebration of local identity
People suggested the square could reflect Leigh's heritage and culture more prominently, with some recommending features celebrating the town's industrial past, sporting achievements, and famous figures. Participants expressed a preference for public art, sculptures, and designs that balance historical elements with modern touches to celebrate Leigh's unique identity.

Future use and functionality
Attendees suggested the square should be developed into a multifunctional space, accommodating events, markets, and activities for all ages. Many felt it should include spaces for play, relaxation, and social gatherings. Accessibility was frequently mentioned, with calls for level surfaces, seating for disabled people, and features catering to families and young people.

Environmental enhancements
There was strong support for integrating green spaces into the design, with many showing a desire for trees, flowerbeds, and wildlife-friendly planting. People commented that the square could include sustainable and low-maintenance materials to ensure durability. Suggestions for sensory planting and water features were also made to enhance the square's appeal.

Youth and community engagement
Young people emphasised the importance of play areas, recreational activities, and informal gathering spaces. Some participants proposed opportunities for showcasing local talent through performances or exhibitions.

Safety and maintenance
It was suggested that safety improvements could enhance the square's atmosphere, with participants noting that enhanced lighting, increased CCTV coverage and more visible security presence could help create a more welcoming environment. Maintenance of facilities and cleanliness was also emphasised, with proposals for more frequent litter collection and durable installations.

Design and aesthetics
Attendees felt the design should include varied seating arrangements, accessible pathways, and open spaces that allow for flexibility. Suggestions for colourful, welcoming features and public art were common. The square's integration with surrounding streets and facilities was also mentioned as a priority.

Economic opportunities
Several participants commented that the square could be a catalyst for economic regeneration in Leigh, proposing regular artisan markets and spaces to support local businesses. Improved connections with the surrounding town centre and transport options were also recommended.

These findings reflect the community's aspirations for a safe, inclusive, and engaging public space that highlights Leigh's heritage while supporting diverse uses and needs.

Next steps

This report provides a record of the community views shared during this stage of the design process. Following this, more detailed designs will be produced to complete the design process drawing on community views where possible. As the final design progresses, it will be essential to continue to integrate community views and insights into the design and implementation stages.

LISTENING TO LESS HEARD VOICES AND DELIVERING MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT

www.placed.org.uk
info@placed.org.uk

FACEBOOK: place.org
INSTAGRAM: placed_ed
X: placeded

PLACED wsp SLR