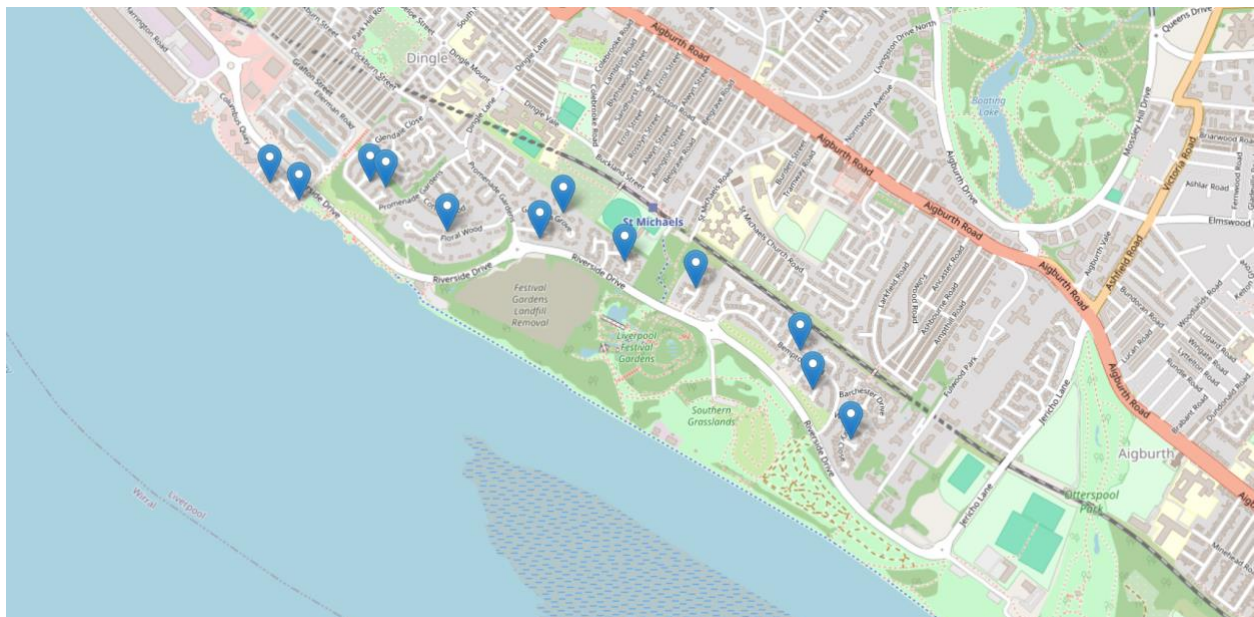




## Festival Gardens Listening Event Thursday 28th January 2026

### Meeting Attendance

30 local residents attended the meeting from a range of addresses within the surrounding area of the festival site.



^ Map shows approximate locations (street-level only) of some attendees.

### Key Motivations for Attending

Residents told us they attended primarily to **understand current and future development plans for Festival Gardens** and **how these may impact the local area**. Many were **local or adjacent residents**, including long-term residents, with specific **concerns around environmental, traffic, risk and cost implications**. Others attended to **stay informed, hear other residents' views, and feel involved in shaping the future of the site**, including volunteers with an existing connection to Festival Gardens.

### Summary of Attendee Feedback

Overall feedback on the Listening Event was **strongly positive**. Attendees described the session as **useful, informative and well organised**, valuing the quality of discussion,

facilitation and presentations. Many welcomed the opportunity to **have a voice**, hear the views of other residents, and take part in open debate. There was a clear appetite for **ongoing engagement**, with requests for future events and continued updates, including sessions involving the developer ahead of any final planning submission.

## Some Attendee Quotes

- “Great event, hope there will be more to come.”
- “It was excellent.”
- “Excellent, some good points of discussion.”
- “Very useful and interesting. Good to have a voice.”
- “Well organised and excellent presentation. Interesting to hear comments and passion from residents.”
- “Well facilitated – a similar event would be great with the developer before next planning submission.”
- “Thank you for organising it, very useful!”
- “I remain positive even though some at the meeting did not want change.”

## Summary of Discussions

### CONNECTION AND MEMORIES

The discussion focused on how people **experience the site now and in the past**, and what it represents in their personal and collective memory. Contributions were grounded in everyday use, long-standing associations, and emotional attachment rather than proposals for change.



**Green space and gardens** were repeatedly described as the “*lungs*” of the area and city - places to pause, restore and connect with nature. People associated the site with gardens, planting, foraging and informal contact with greenery, as well as its role within a wider **green corridor** linking the waterside and surrounding parks.

The site was strongly linked to **community presence**, including memories and experiences of volunteers and “**friends of the gardens**”-type activity (which is still active), creating a sense of shared care and local ownership.

Many contributions related to **family life**, particularly walking with children, playground use for generations and spending informal time outdoors. These everyday experiences were seen as important to building memories over time.

People also associated the site with **shared cultural moments**, including the **International garden festival**, temporary exhibitions, music and drama, some of which were remembered as becoming lasting features. Many people saw this as an area that **showcased the best of Liverpool**.

The site was connected to **Liverpool’s identity and heritage**, including its relationship to the waterfront and the Festival ferry terminal, and its role in showing a positive, welcoming side of the city.

Concerns reflected previous experiences rather than future proposals included, Traffic, road expansion and the impact on walking and cycling, Safety, lighting, antisocial behaviour and long-term maintenance and environmental resilience (e.g. sea levels)

## LIVING HERE NOW

Discussion focused on what it is like to **live in and move through the area day to day**, reflecting how people experience the site and its surroundings now.



People described the area as a **tranquil, beautiful place**, particularly valued for **sunsets, views and its position at the edge of the city centre**. Despite being close to urban activity, it is experienced as a place to slow down, walk, relax and find silence, especially along the promenade and green edges.

The site is strongly associated with **nature**, including wildlife such as birds, habitats and hedgehogs. Some contributors noted how unusual it is to have such biodiversity alongside developed areas and residential buildings, left to mature for many years. The area is experienced as a place where nature and city life sit side by side.

Walking and cycling is a core part of everyday use. People experience the space as suitable for walking alone or in groups, but noted limited **pavements** on (one side only in places, dual use not separated) and limited crossings affect how easily they move around. Traffic, including bikes, e-bikes, scooters and motorbikes, was highlighted as a daily issue, alongside concerns about dock haulage routes transiting Riverside Drive.

People described mixed experiences of **connection and access**. The area feels connected by train, bus and cycling routes. Some noted a lack of clear or consistent transport connections despite proximity to major routes.

Lots of contributors did not consider the currently developed side of the road as necessarily in the **same neighbourhood as the development site** and but expressed a desire that the new development might change perceptions of belonging.

## THE DEVELOPMENT SITE

Discussion explored **ideas, possibilities and questions** about what the site could include in the future, reflecting a mix of ambitions, practical considerations and uncertainties.



People discussed the site as having potential to become a **mixed, well-connected neighbourhood**, rather than a single-use development. There was interest in a balance between **green space and development**, including communal green areas, gardens and pop-up amenities or flexible uses alongside housing.

The works that had already started to prepare the site had **contributed to noise and inconvenience** and there were noted concerns that the duration of the planned development may lead to further years of the same. Residents did raise concerns about impact on house prices and queries over how this can be mitigated or compensated - there was a consensus that **improvements to amenities or access in the area during the works** would be beneficial.

The question of **who the site is for** featured strongly. Participants debated whether it should primarily serve residents, visitors, or tourists, and what level and type of housing would be appropriate.

There was recognition that any ambition needs to be **realistic and grounded** in the site's context. Also discussed was the need for **quality and a well-managed development** - whatever the type of housing. Some **historic issues and perceptions of surrounding areas** were raised by some residents, who had concerns about **potential crime** and **future upkeep** which were shared and will need to be managed going into proposals.

A strong theme was the need for **everyday amenities and social infrastructure**. People highlighted shops, a community hub or centre, places to meet, and sport and leisure facilities. Healthcare provision was also mentioned, alongside the needs of an ageing population, young people and families, including play and outdoor spaces were recommended.

Connectivity was a recurring topic. People discussed:

- The need for more than one entrance to the new development
- Clear and safe movement through the site
- Reduced vehicle dominance (e.g. 20mph speed restriction on Riverside Drive)
- Removal of through lorry traffic
- Better links for walking, cycling and public transport

There was interest in the site feeling **open and connected**, rather than enclosed or inward-facing. Better connections from **St Michael's Station and to the river** were important.

Participants raised questions about the **quality and type of development**, including:

- A preference for mixed-use rather than single-use or high-rise, "just flats"
- Concerns about overly affluent or isolated housing, social housing and facilities for specific parts of community - integration was a key consensus
- The importance of integrating social and community uses
- Ensuring development responds to different ages and needs



The idea of the site having a **distinct identity**, without feeling exclusive or disconnected from surrounding neighbourhoods, was noted. A discussion around the heritage and historic designation of the site was suggested as it could be used as inspiration for the zoning of the new development and surrounding areas.

Concerns were raised about antisocial behaviour and the need to avoid “designing out” issues purely through exclusion. People emphasised the importance of **good design, visibility and management** rather than heavy-handed approaches or gentrified housing types.

The impact of development on the **wider site and surrounding area** was also discussed, including access, movement, and how construction and meanwhile uses are managed.

## NEXT STEPS

Discussion focused on **what should happen following the meeting**, including communication, engagement and coordination with relevant stakeholders.



Participants emphasised the importance of **clear follow-up** from the meeting. This included producing a report or article summarising what was discussed and sharing it with attendees and the wider community, as well as the developer.

There was a desire for **transparency and understanding**, particularly around what suggestions/ideas have been considered, what is not possible, and why. Reference was made to understanding **council services/baselines** and constraints, including mention of Section 106 funds - both in the short and longer development term.

People discussed the need to **identify and involve relevant stakeholders**, including council departments, councillors, businesses, and environmental groups, to ensure the right organisations are part of future conversations.

It was noted that comments and concerns raised by residents should be **passed on and responded to**, rather than simply recorded.

Suggestions included:

- Sharing examples of what these developers have delivered elsewhere
- Clarifying meanwhile uses and potential upgrades to facilities
- Holding a further meeting involving the developers
- Advising residents of the timing and format of the next meeting

## **General Summary of Points**

The below are the general points raised in no particular order:

### **Views of the site:**

- Attractive waterside location
- Quiet, tranquil setting
- Strong sense of nature and wildlife
- Valued as a place to walk and relax
- Edge-of-city-centre location
- Feels well connected to wider city
- Important community and social space
- Part of people's memories of Liverpool

### **Ideas for development:**

- Green space and gardens
- Community hub / meeting spaces
- Shops and local services
- Sport and leisure facilities
- Play spaces for children
- Spaces for young people
- Facilities for an ageing population
- Healthcare-related uses
- Cultural uses (music, drama, exhibitions)
- Temporary uses that could become permanent
- Improved walking and cycling routes
- Better connections to transport
- Mixed-use development (not housing only)

**Concerns raised:**

- Traffic levels and road safety
- Pavement quality and accessibility
- Cycle route provision
- Noise and disruption during development
- Anti-social behaviour (ASB)
- Poor lighting and safety after dark
- Litter and poor servicing
- Impact on wildlife and habitats
- Loss of green space
- Height and scale of buildings
- Houses vs apartments balance
- Overdevelopment of the site
- Lack of facilities during construction
- Poor management of events
- Existing access and crossing issues
- Flood risk and sea level rise