

Conservation Area Appraisal for Chelmsford Avenue Almshouses - Consultation

Analysis of representations received

Summary

A total of 666 people accessed the campaign which ran from February to March 2023. Of this 381, were informed, which indicates they had visited the project page and viewed the survey and documents, 42 responded online, and six hardcopy responses were received via email, five from statutory stakeholders Historic England, Natural England, Port of London Authority, National Highways and Anglian Water were received, together with a response from The Victorian Society (non-statutory consultee), these are available at the end of the report.

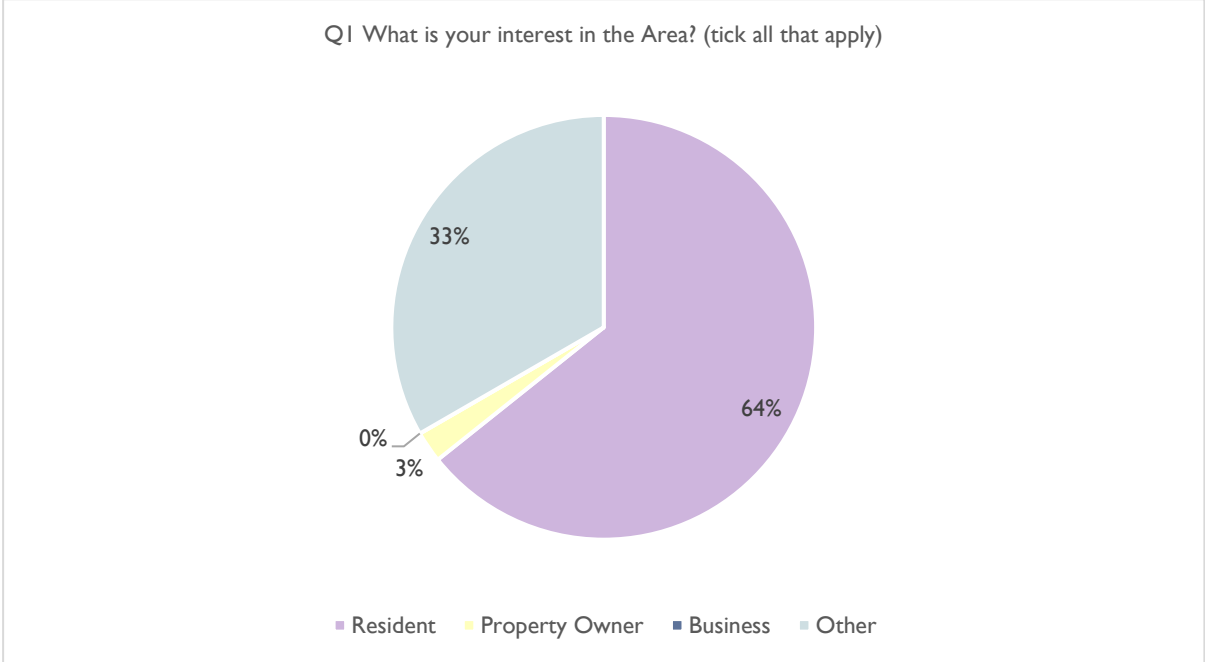
The consultation included a survey with questions and a 'free text' box for further comments requesting feedback on certain elements of the whole project.

The consultation was promoted across all social media platforms and was available on the Councils interactive consultation portal <https://yoursay.southend.gov.uk/> it was also made available in a hardcopy format if requested. Letters were delivered to every property affected to notify them of the proposal and the consultation.

The overall consensus from those responding was that they supported and understood what the Council is trying to achieve in producing a Conservation Area Appraisal for Chelmsford Avenue Almshouses.

Full Breakdown of questions (online responses)

1. What is your interest in the Area? (tick all that apply)

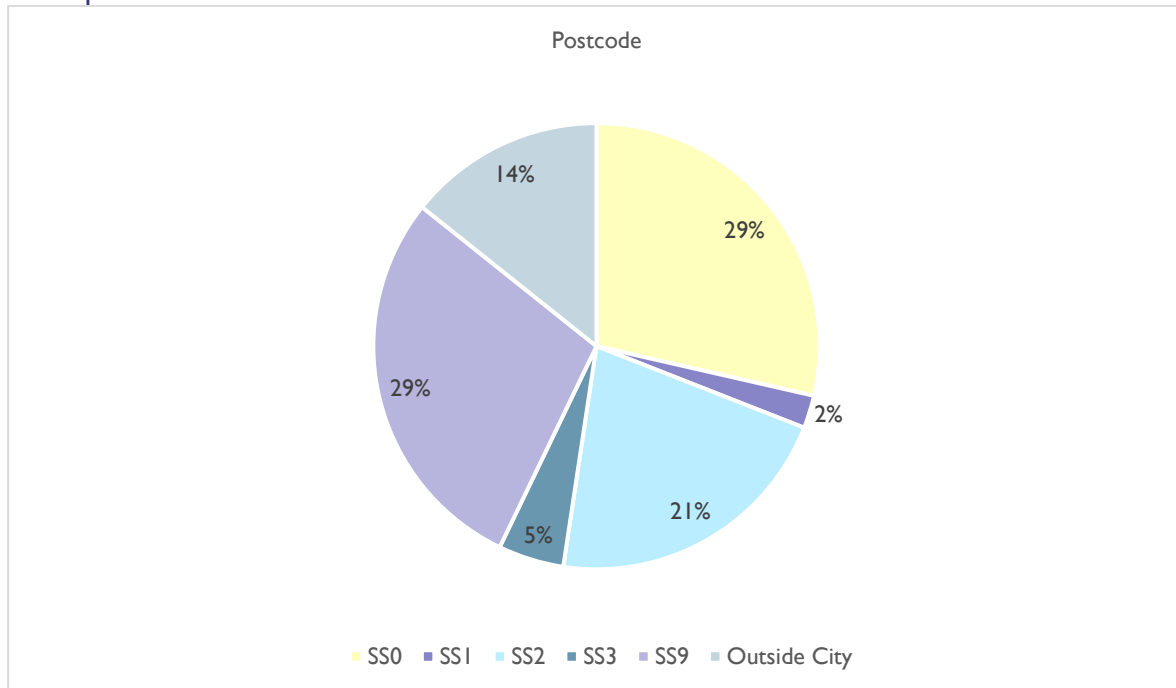


Of those responding 33% identified 'other' reason of interest and these were

- Residents in Westcliff. Interested in keeping the history of the area alive.

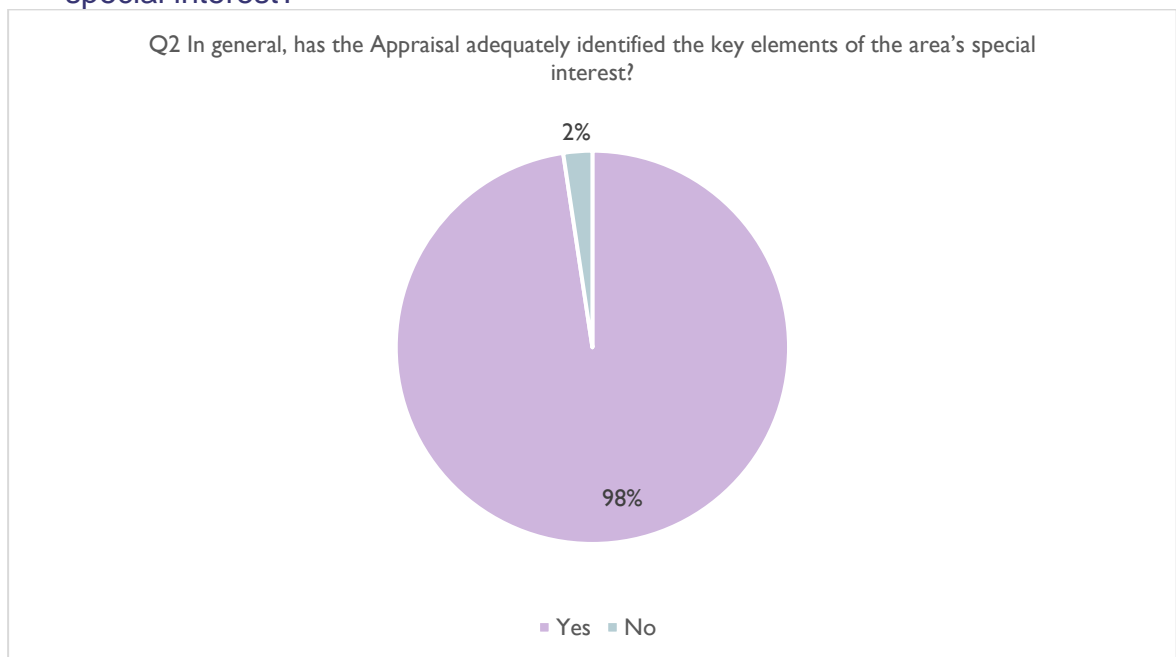
- Interest in Leisure and local history.
- Local conservationist.
- Someone who enjoys local history and architecture; and
- 4 people answered that they live in Southend, but not in the area of the Almshouses.

Your postcode



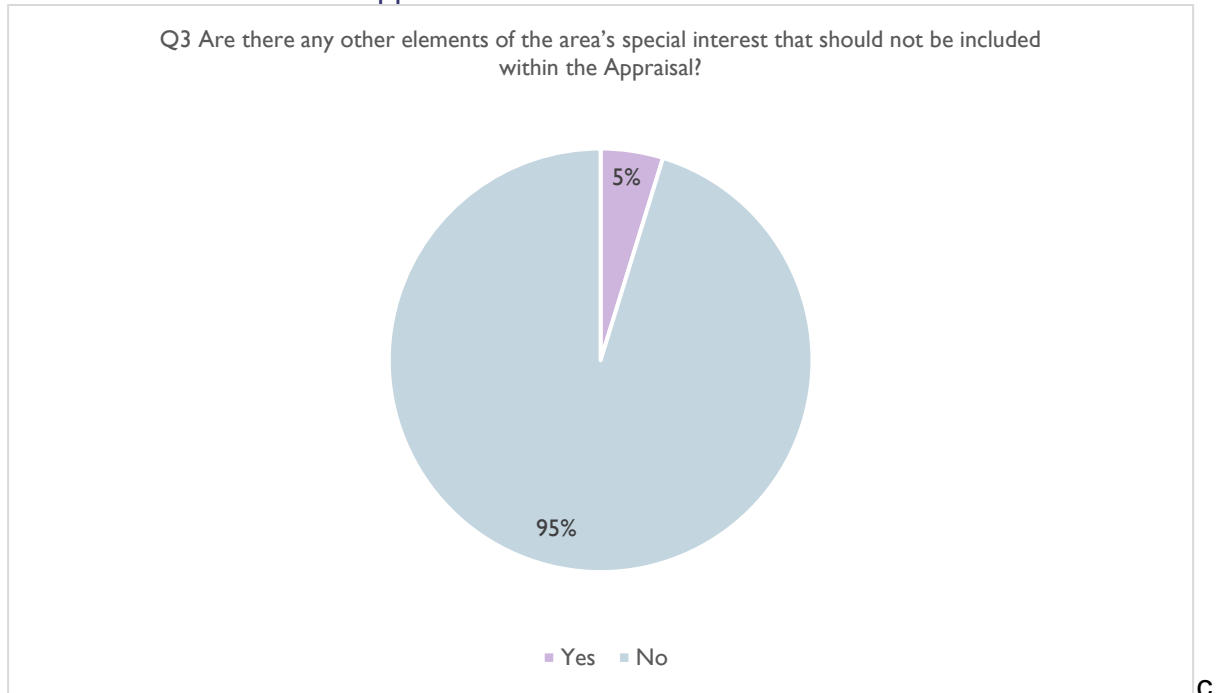
Please see the breakdown of those responding by the first part of postcode, six people responded who did not live in Southend.

2. In general, has the Appraisal adequately identified the key elements of the area's special interest?



98% of those responding to this question as part of the survey were in agreement that the initial report had identified the key elements of the area's special architectural interest/ history.

3. Are there any other elements of the area's special interest that should not be included within the Appraisal?

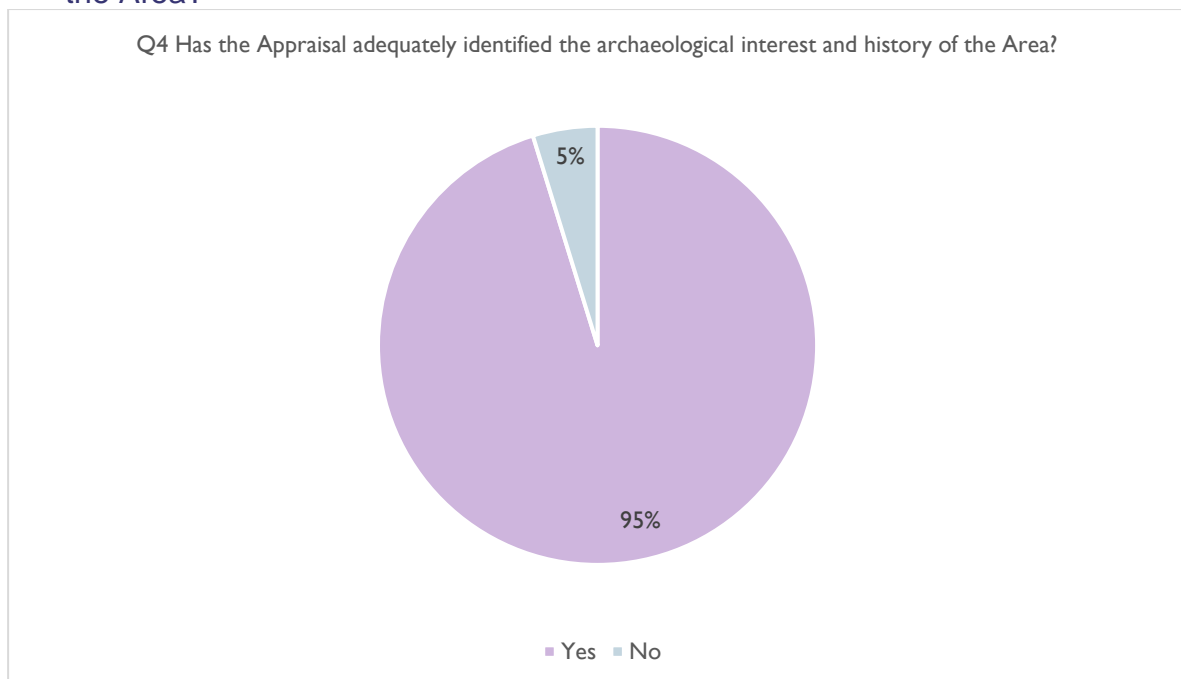


3.1 If you answered yes, please provide further information?

This was a free text box with only 1 person providing further comment:

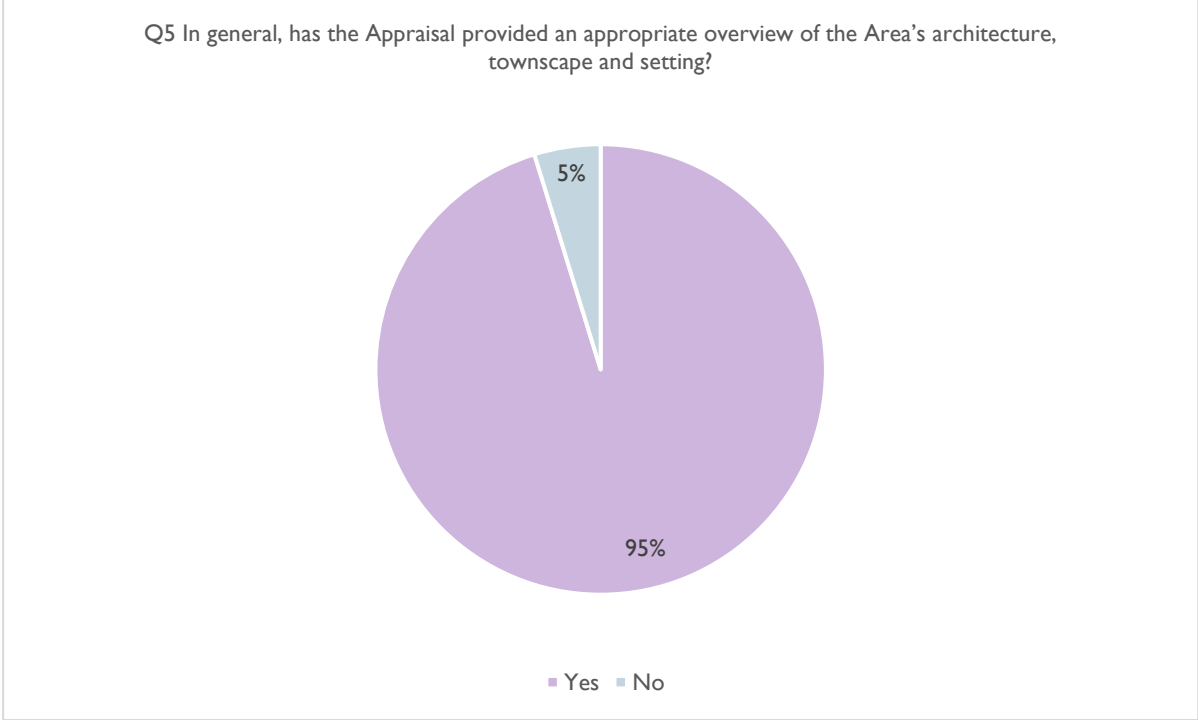
Comment	
1	I believe the two semi-detached houses either side should be included to stop any further alteration from the original design for these two buildings.

4. Has the Appraisal adequately identified the archaeological interest and history of the Area?



95% of those responding agreed that the Appraisal adequately identified the archaeological and history of the area.

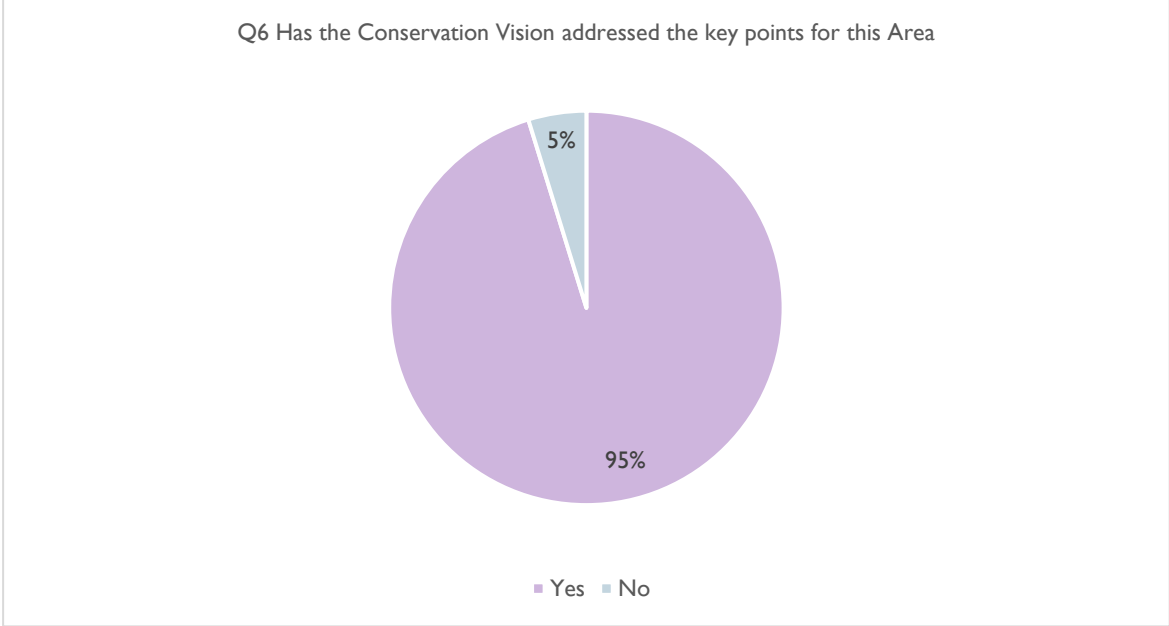
5. In general, has the Appraisal provided an appropriate overview of the Area's architecture, townscape and setting?



This was a single response question with the majority of respondents, 95%, agreeing with the overview, only 5% did not agree with this view but did not wish to comment further.

If no, please provide further information and let us know what is missing?
No comments provided.

6. Has the Conservation Vision addressed the key points for this Area?

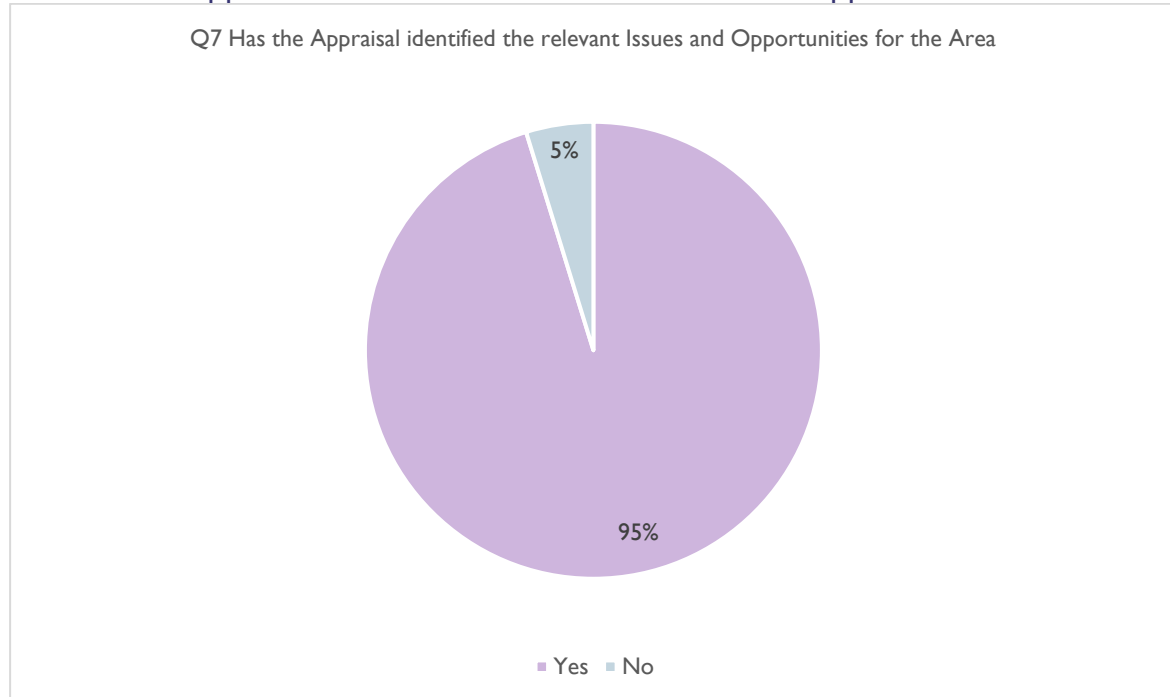


This was a single response question with the majority, 95%, agreeing with the vision, 5% did not agree with this view but did not elaborate on why they did not agree with the question.

If no, please let us know what you think should be included?

No responses provided.

7. Has the Appraisal identified the relevant Issues and Opportunities for the Area?



Of those responding to this single response question the majority, 95%, agreed the appraisal identified the relevant issues.

If no, please let us know what you think should be included:

No responses provided.

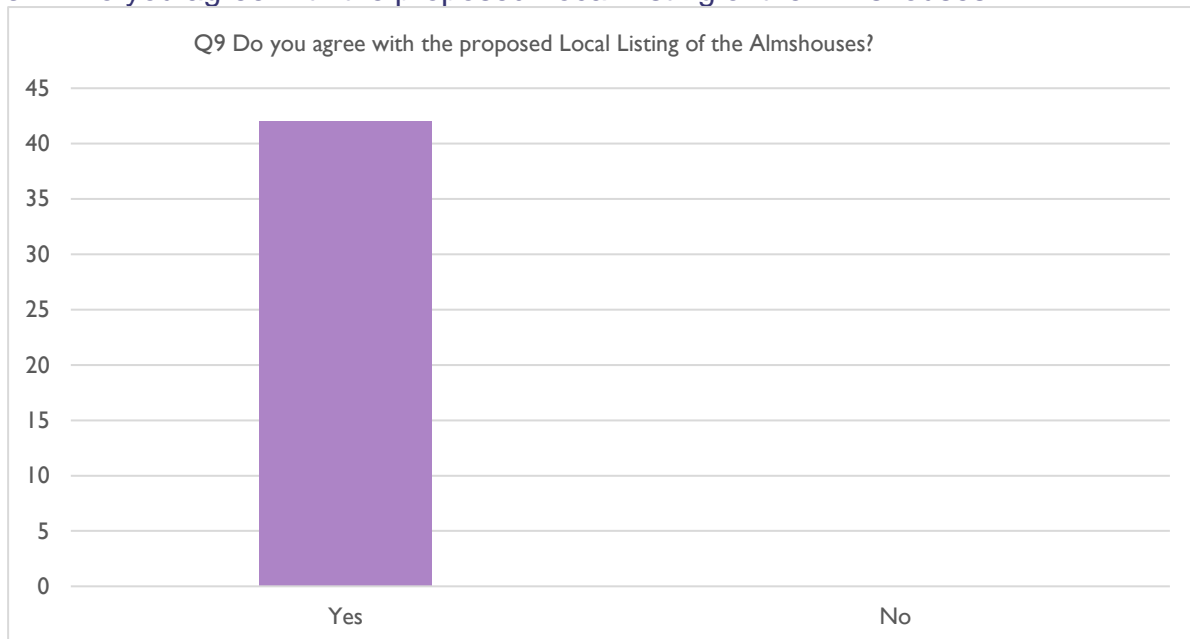
8. Do you have any comments regarding the neighbouring semi-detached properties, as per the orange line on the accompanying plan? Should these properties be included within a Conservation Area?

Of those responding to this survey 81% considered that the two houses could be included within the Conservation Area, with 19% disagreeing, two people further commented – agreeing that just the almshouses should be included.

8.1 If no, please let us know what you think should be included:

Comment	
1	Just the almshouses and the ground they are on.
2	Just the almshouses.

9. Do you agree with the proposed Local Listing of the Almshouses?



All those that responded agree with the proposed local listing of the Almshouses.

9.1 Please provide further information:

Open text response with 9 individuals making a comment.

Comment	
1	The properties should be a conservation area
2	I think it's really important that the Council protects buildings that give the city it's identity. If this doesn't happen, the city will lose its heritage and character.
3	I believe these should be included to ensure no further alterations are made to these buildings which would further distract from the Almshouses and also protect them from any future possible demolition.
4	It's important to preserve these unique dwellings.
5	Southend has removed many historic features from the area. Please do not continue this trend!
6	These are a significant and beautiful part of Southend's history and as such should be preserved and protected.
7	To much of Southend old buildings have been destroyed.
8	Enough of our local heritage has gone, time to safeguard what remains.
9	I am an advocate for the preservation of historic homes within our area. At an alarming rate many old buildings are being torn down, or any old buildings that are retained, are modified and modernised to the extent where the character is ruined. Having lived in [REDACTED], which saw its own historic almshouses torn down like it's nothing, i, along with many many residents would like to not see this happen in Southend. Also, I believe that since the buildings retain a healthy wealth of original features, and the preservation of the elaborate front gardens, from the time of construction, I go as far as to say the buildings themselves should be listed. If the building remains in its current, non listed condition, and not in the conservation area, then it's only a matter of time before the almshouses fall victim to another scheme of unsympathetic renovations, including the replacement of centuries old, healthy timber windows, with limited life UPVC ones, as well as concreting over the front gardens, taking away the aesthetic bestiary, and the natural benefits. As well

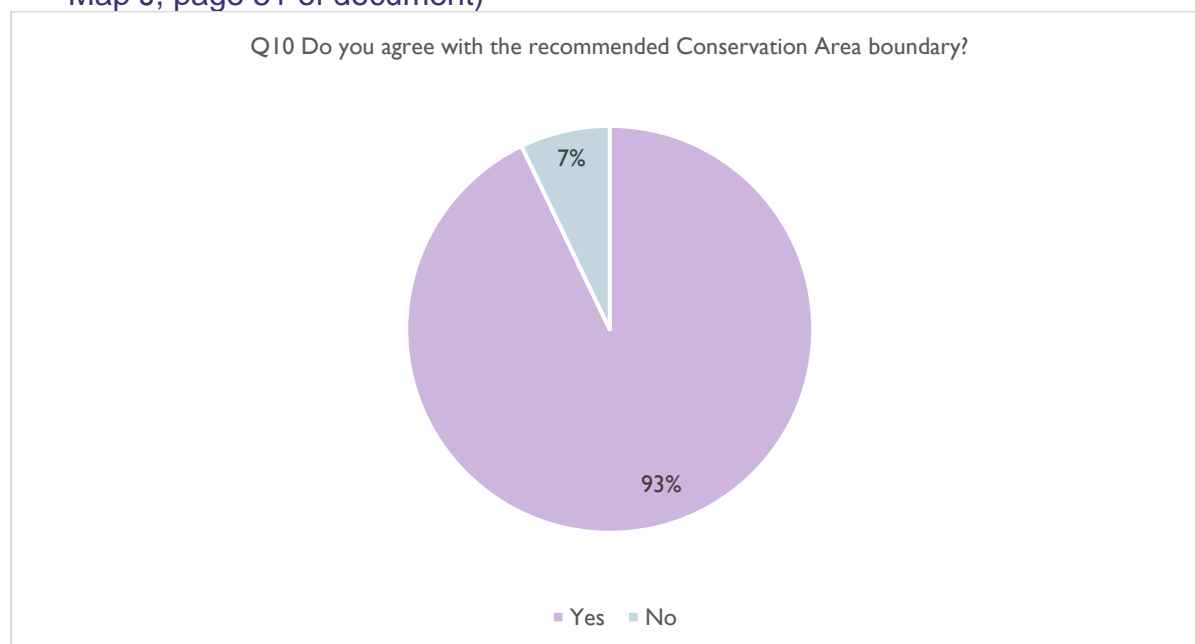
as ageing the elaborate brickwork rendered over. All of this would waste a building that is not only a credit to an area that in terms of its original features, but the value and significance it provides of its past as almshouse, previously serving elderly women who were penniless. Please, it is an urgent matter that you, as the council immediately take action to designate the almshouses and the surrounding areas as a conservation area listing the building.

9.2 Please provide further information

This was an open text response with 3 responses provided.

Comment	
1	As above
2	Any future changes/alterations to the semi detached houses should reflect their original design and the opportunity taken to eventually return them to original.
3	Just look at what happened in the 1960s. So much of Victorian Southend lost

10. Do you agree with the recommended boundary for the Conservation Area? (see Map J, page 51 of document)

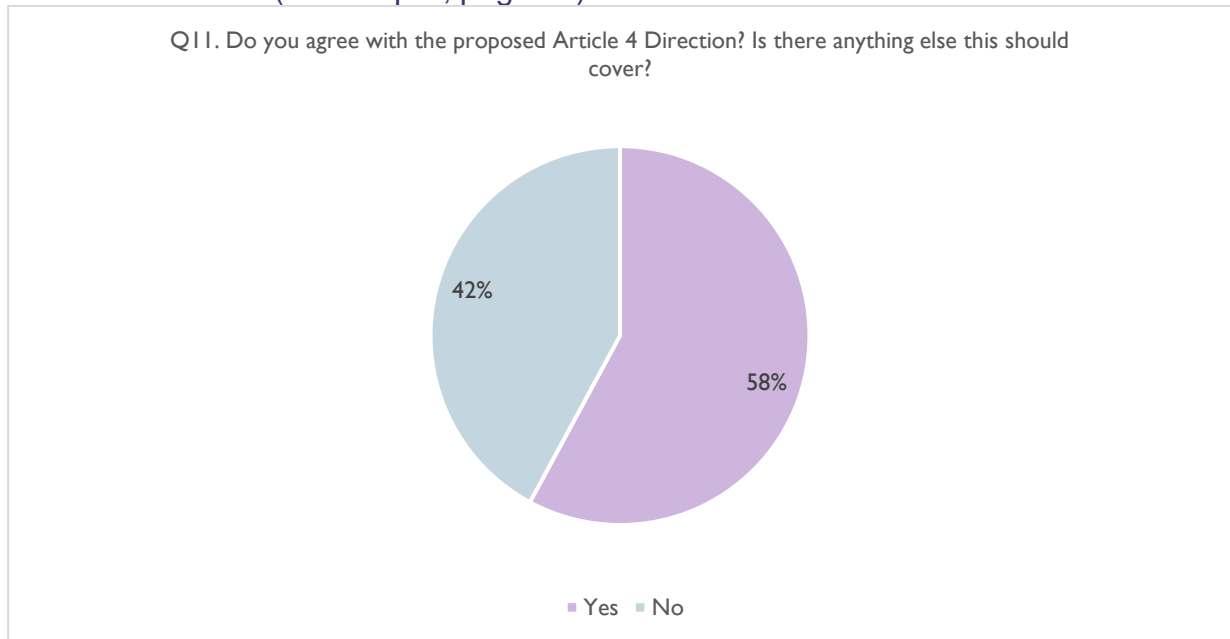


Of those responded to this single response question the majority, 93%, agree with the recommended boundary, 7% responded that they did not agree and some provided further comment in 10.1 below (these comments did not directly relate to the question/response).

10.1 Please provide further information

Comment	
1	Don't understand the question.
2	I hope this happens soon.
3	Enough of our local heritage has gone, time to safeguard what remains.
4	I agree with it.

11. Do you agree with the proposed Article 4 Direction? Is there anything else this should cover? (See Map K, page 53)



The majority, 58%, of those responding agreed with the Councils approach to the Article 4 Direction, with 42% disagreeing although no further comments were provided to this regard.

11.1 Please explain your answer

Comment	
1	I agree with it.
2	n/a.

12. Any other comments you wish to make on the Conservation Area Appraisal?

Comment	
1	No further comments.
2	As well as Historic England I would suggest the Council consult the guidelines set out by Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings especially in relation to damp.
3	These buildings need to be preserved and saved as part of our local historic heritage.
4	No.
5	If anything, I believe as many buildings from a similar period should be included. Southend is heavily built up and should conserve/protect as many heritage features as possible from developers who will gladly ruin a building or area/push inappropriate planning applications if it means profit. I also believe it's important to protect the garden, as green space in urban environments offer a number of substantiated benefits (not to mention in an ecologically precarious time). These almshouses are beautiful and important reminders of local history and deserve to be cherished.
6	No.
7	really just took part to say how lovely they are and how positive it is that this is being recognised, as their loss would be a loss to the City.

8	Would be great for the fruit tree to be replaced on this site as the original one has sadly been killed by over enthusiastic pruning.
9	I am an advocate for the preservation of historic homes within our area. At an alarming rate many old buildings are being torn down, or any old buildings that are retained, are modified and modernised to the extent where the character is ruined. Having lived in Dagenham, which saw its own historic almshouses torn down like it's nothing, i, along with many many residents would like to not see this happen in Southend. Also, I believe that since the buildings retain a healthy wealth of original features, and the preservation of the elaborate front gardens, from the time of construction, I go as far as to say the buildings themselves should be listed. If the building remains in its current, non listed condition, and not in the conservation area, then it's only a matter of time before the almshouses fall victim to another scheme of unsympathetic renovations, including the replacement of centuries old, healthy timber windows, with limited life UPVC ones, as well as concreting over the front gardens,, taking away the aesthetic bestiary, and the natural benefits. As well as ageing the elaborate brickwork rendered over. All of this would waste a building that is not only a credit to an area that in terms of its original features, but the value and significance it provides of its past as almshouse, previously serving elderly women who were penniless. Please, it is an urgent matter that you, as the council immediately take action to designate the almshouses and the surrounding areas as a conservation area and consider listing the building.
10	I may be wrong but I recall that Chelmsford Avenue Almshouses were supposed to be considered for Listing at the same time as those in West Road when [REDACTED] attempted to have those demolished and I pushed through that they needed to be saved. I know that this was quite a few years ago but surely records are kept?

Responses from Statutory Consultees

Responses were also received from a number of stator consultees, Historic England, Port of London Authority and Natural England, National Highways and Anglian Water as set out below:

Comment	
1	<p>Historic England</p> <p>Draft Conservation Area Appraisal and Proposed Conservation Area at Chelmsford Road.</p> <p>Thank you for notifying Historic England about the above consultation. As the Government's adviser on the historic environment, Historic England is keen to ensure that the protection of the historic environment is fully taken into account at all stages and levels of the local planning process.</p> <p>We welcome the production of this appraisal for the proposed Chelmsford Road Almshouses Conservation Area, and concur with its conclusions. We consider that the appraisal is clearly laid out and nicely illustrated, with the reproduction of the original plans and elevations for the Almshouses being a welcome inclusion.</p> <p>We note the justification for not including the contemporary houses also designed by Dowsett. There is some associated historic interest, but upon consideration of the evidence presented we agree that their subtly different purpose and the changes that have subsequently happened to them, as well as their lesser interest, means their inclusion may be unjustified.</p>

	<p>We support the proposed management proposals as set out in the management plan. We normally encourage the use of Article 4 Directions to help manage inappropriate change, such as the insertion of UPVC windows, in Conservation Areas, so we support their use here.</p> <p>To avoid any doubt, this does not reflect our obligation to provide further advice on or, potentially, object to specific proposals which may subsequently arise as a result of the proposed conservation area appraisal, where we consider these would have an adverse effect on the historic environment.</p> <p>If you have any queries about this matter or would like to discuss anything further, please do not hesitate to contact me.</p>
2.	<p>Natural England</p> <p>Southend City Council - Conservation Area Appraisal for Chelmsford Avenue Almshouses.</p> <p>Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.</p> <p>Natural England has no comments to make on the Conservation Area Appraisal for Chelmsford Avenue Almshouses.</p> <p>The lack of comment from Natural England should not be interpreted as a statement that there are no impacts on the natural environment. Other bodies and individuals may wish to make comments that might help the Local Planning Authority (LPA) to fully take account of any environmental risks and opportunities relating to this document.</p> <p>Should the proposal be amended in a way which significantly affects its impact on the natural environment, then in accordance with Section 4 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, please consult Natural England again.</p>
3	<p>National Highways</p> <p>National Highways welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Conservation Area Appraisal consultation document for the Chelmsford Avenue Almshouses which is in line with the emerging Local Plan for Southend City Council (proposed to be adopted by the end of 2023). National Highways has been appointed by the Secretary of State for Transport as strategic highway company under the provisions of the Infrastructure Act 2015 and is the highway authority, traffic authority and street authority for the Strategic Road Network (SRN). It is our role to maintain the safe and efficient operation of the SRN whilst acting as a delivery partner to national economic growth. In relation to this document, our principal interest is in safeguarding the operation of the SRN routes within the Essex area, these includes the A12 and A13, which are considered to be the nearest SRN routes to the conservation area. However, as both of these routes are located approximately 20km from the conservation area, we consider that this document is not expected to have any significant impacts on the operation of the SRN in the area due to the type of document this is, it is considered that the plans set out within the document are unlikely to cause a severe impact on the operation or capacity of the SRN as the main purpose of this document is to promote conservation and the vision for the future. Page 2 of 2 Henceforth, we have no further comments to provide and trust that the above is useful in the progression of the Conservation Area Appraisal for Chelmsford Avenue Almshouses document.</p>
4	<p>Port of London Authority</p>

	Thank you for consulting the Port of London Authority (PLA) on the above mentioned consultation, for the consideration of Chelmsford Avenue Almshouses for Conservation Area designation. I have now had the opportunity to review the consultation documents and can confirm given the location of the area in question the PLA have no comments to make.
5	Anglian Water Thank you for notifying us of this consultation. I can confirm that we have no comments regarding the designation of this Conservation Area.

Responses from Non-Statutory Consultees

An additional hardcopy response was sent in via email, from The Victorian Society (a non-statutory consultee), as set out below:

Comment	
1.	<p>The Victorian Society RE: Conservation Area Appraisal for Chelmsford Avenue Almshouses – Consultation</p> <p>Thank you for consulting the Victorian Society on this Conservation Area Appraisal. The Victorian Society welcomes your authority's intention to designate these buildings a Conservation Area and the recognition of their significance.</p> <p>Overall, the draft appraisal is well written and we wish to make no comment its detailed information. However, in line with our previous consultation response it is unfortunate that the two pairs of semi-detached houses built with the almshouses are not included within the prospective Conservation Area. While these buildings have been altered more than the almshouses, their inclusion within the Conservation Area could ensure their gradual enhancement, which in turn would benefit the setting and significance of the almshouses.</p>