

A thorough and ongoing participatory process has significantly informed how Riverside House can best serve the local community. This includes the activities and day to day usage of the place as well as the form and function of the emerging facilities, at least at the early preparatory stages.

This has not occurred through a formal consultation process, typically little more than a regulatory exercise with inevitable consequences of thwarting expectations and, in actuality, limited engagement possibilities, through a narrow window of opportunity and to a somewhat selective audience. Rather, what has occurred over the span of nearly two years is the emergent sharing of a pragmatic vision with a highly inclusive and diverse cross section of the population. This has enabled Riverside House to assimilate feedback and gauge the potential for likely support and engagement into the future. Subsequently, we have a much better appreciation of the type of activities that could be integrated into Riverside House, the demography of users and the practicalities and aesthetics of the supporting infrastructure, ecology and environment, that could best support the needs of future users and activities.

This 'survey' does not preclude the need for further consultations, feasibility studies, options appraisals, market analysis and ongoing conversations. It has, however, been indicative of the unanimous support and enthusiasm for a venture of this type to get the initial 'green light' and approval from a broad consensus of participants. More importantly it has helped the emergent vision of Riverside House continue to develop through the assimilation and incorporation of a plethora of excellent and relevant suggestions and ideas. It is these participatory conversations that has helped Riverside House to develop into a community venture that can potentially ignite the enthusiasm of a wide and inclusive audience. It is through the continuity of this process, that something uniquely special will emerge.

The 'consultation' has occurred through a variety of contexts and mediums which have included casual conversations and meetings as described below. It has also included presentations to audiences, funding applications and pitches, emailed newsletters, social media and press articles.

It has included stakeholders and partners: various departments of Dudley MBC, Canal and River Trust, neighbouring Stourbridge Navigation Trust, Lion Health Medical Centre and Murrays Pharmacy. We have been visited and received feedback from the Dudley Major, the leader of the council and the local MP. We have also attended meetings and received feedback and support from local councillors. Conversations have occurred with the third sector and other organisations, both national and regional, including: Autistica, Dudley Mind, Headway Black Country, Goodlife CIC, Black Country Impact, Dudley Advocacy, Black Country Historic Buildings Trust, Dudley Health Watch, Institute of Fundraising, Ruskin Mill Trust, Black Country Arts Council, PSIAMS, Camphill Village Trust, Nexus Heritage, West Midlands Police, Local Support Team, We Love Carers, Heritage Alliance, Local Enterprise Partnership, Children Young Persons and Families Network, Historic England, People Plus, Social Enterprise West Midland, Summit House and Dudley CCG. Ongoing support from grant funders, mentors, supporters and sponsors including: Dudley Council for Voluntary Service, UnLtd, Paul Hamlyn Foundation, Community Forum, Make It Happen, Active Citizens, Power to Change, School for Social Entrepreneurs, Geoff Hill, Big Lottery Fund, Architectural Heritage Fund, Heritage Lottery Fund, Deutsche Bank, Talbots Solicitors, The Mighty Shed, BHB Architects, Dudley's Ecology Team and the Revelan Group. Ongoing collaboration with the trustees of Riverside House Stourbridge Limited and a plethora of consultants, advisors, trainers and enthusiasts. Last but not least, the numerous and daily conversations with the people who use the canal and the surrounding area on a daily basis and who love it: the fantastic clients and volunteers of Riverside House and the local users of the canal including walkers, boaters, fishermen, cyclists and drinkers.