



BRISTOL CITY SUPPORTERS TRUST

New Stadium Survey Follow-up

April 2009

New Stadium Survey - Looking back

Introduction - The first survey

When announcing the football club's new stadium plans at the AGM in late 2007, club chairman Steve Lansdown called on the Supporters Trust to gather and coordinate fans' views on the proposal.

The Trust was happy to take on this task and compiled a comprehensive survey that was subsequently made available in hard copy from the football club megastore from April 12th 2008 and e-mailed by the club to over 14,000 fans on April 14th 2008. By the April 30th closing date for online submissions over 2,800 fans had taken the time to complete the 46-question survey. By the 4th May closing date for hard copy replies the total number of completed questionnaires had reached 2,878.

The bare facts

Of 14,200 mails sent out by the club, approximately 34% were opened. Around 64% of recipients who opened the mail also clicked on the link to the survey. Approximately 92% of these went on to complete and submit the survey. After taking into account respondents who were sent the link to the survey, or a PDF copy, via separate mails, around 2,858 fans submitted survey replies in direct response to the e-mail from the club, a response rate of just over 20%.

The breakdown of respondents by age was as follows:

Up to 15	27
15-24	319
25-34	555
35-44	825
45-54	738
55-64	323
65+	91

The breakdown by stand used most regularly was:

Atyeo	754
Dolman	1209
Wedlocks / East End	138
Williams	647
No regular stand	130

The breakdown by sex was 90.4% male, 9.6% female.

Summary of first survey results

- Overwhelming **support** (94%) **for the proposal** to build a new stadium
- Overwhelming support (95%) for a **capacity of at least 30,000** and (88%) for a design that could be expanded in the future
- Overwhelming support (87%) for a **fully enclosed** structure
- Strong preference (63%) for the fronts of the stands to be **straight** rather than curved
- Overwhelming preference (85%) for the stands to be at least as **close to the pitch** as at Ashton Gate
- 5:4 preference for corner elements creating the **look of four stands** rather than continuous rows creating the look of a bowl
- Overwhelming preference (81%) for **steep** stands
- Overwhelming desire (82%) to **avoid a uniform single-tier design**
- Majority support (53%) for provision to be made for a future area of **safe standing**
- Overwhelming agreement (97%) that the stadium acoustics should be designed to create a **cauldron of noise**
- Strong support (73%) for an area with **enhanced acoustics** for the more vocal fans
- Overwhelming desire (84%) from East End respondents **not to have reserved seating** in such an area
- Overwhelming support (86%) for a PA system **at least as loud** as the current one
- Preference for away fans to be located in a **lower corner** of the stadium
- Strong preference (75%) for corporate spectators to be located in an **elevated position**
- 90% in favour of a **digital scoreboard** and **video screen**
- Strong preference (77%) for the players' tunnel to emerge on the **halfway line**
- Overwhelming preference (83%) for the exits within the stands to be **to the rear**

- Strong preference (68%) for seats to be **coloured red with some wording in white**
- General desire for **wider** seats with **more legroom**, expressed most strongly by respondents from the Williams Stand
- Strong support for **licensed bars** (75%), views on restaurants varied by stand
- Overwhelming support (90%) for the inclusion in the external design of an **architectural feature unique to Bristol**
- 80% support for a **statue** outside the ground and 57% support for this to be of **John Atyeo**
- 65% support for fans to be able to immortalise their names via a '**buy a brick** scheme', or similar
- Strong support for a **club shop, museum** and an **arena** integrated into the stadium design, notable opposition to a casino
- 55% of fans likely to switch from car to train if the stadium site incorporated a **railway station**
- 78% keen to be able to get a seat in the new stadium in a **similar position** to that of their current seat at Ashton Gate

Methodology / Integrity of data

We had been keen from the outset that the club should be able to rely on the integrity of the data collected from the survey. A decision was therefore taken early on that the link to the online survey would not be made publicly available on any website, as it was feared that this could lead to the survey being 'sabotaged' by fans of other clubs submitting spurious replies.

To ensure as far as possible that the link to the online survey went only to genuine City fans it was agreed with the club that it would be sent out in an e-mail to fans registered on the club's database who had opted in to receiving promotional mails. This resulted in the link being mailed by the club directly to 14,200 known City fans. The Trust was very grateful for this support from the club, which played a major part in ensuring the integrity of the survey findings.

Printed copies of the survey were made available for collection from the club shop. Approximately 30 individuals requesting the survey link or a PDF copy were also sent these by e-mail. Such requests were turned down if any doubt existed about the authenticity of the enquirer's support.

In order to protect the integrity of the data still further, the online survey system was configured in such a way that only one submission could be sent from any given computer. While this may have caused inconvenience for some families with several fans and just one PC in the house, we felt this was a necessary move to stop any mischievous repeat submissions.

In light of the above precautions, we believed it is reasonable to assume that 99% - if not all - of the survey responses collected came from genuine City fans and that each fan had submitted only one completed survey.

New Stadium Survey - Part II

Introduction - The follow-up

Following the football club's public presentation of the new stadium proposals on February 26th-28th 2009, the Supporters Trust was interested in gauging to what extent fans felt the findings of the earlier survey had been incorporated into the proposed design. Within 3 weeks of these presentations, the Trust volunteers therefore designed a further survey, set up an online response mechanism and gained the football club's much appreciated support in once again agreeing to distribute the link to the online survey by e-mail to the club's database of known fans. The e-mails were sent out on Tuesday 24th March (16 working days after the last of the February presentations).

Results now in

By the closing date for online replies to the survey (31st March 2009) a total of 1,847 fans had responded, i.e. a number equating to well in excess of 10% of the average home crowd at Ashton Gate and c. 33% of those opening the mail from the club.

The breakdown of respondents by age was as follows:

Up to 15	19
15-24	210
25-34	356
35-44	474
45-54	503
55-64	223
65+	62

The breakdown by stand used most regularly was:

Atyeo	476
Dolman	757
Wedlocks / East End	201
Williams	413

The breakdown by sex was 93.8% male, 6.2% female.

1,010 were season ticket holder, 246 were members and 257 were City Foundation members.

Summary of the follow-up survey results

- **Support for the proposed move remains overwhelming:** was 94%, now 95%.
- 89% agree that the stadium design reflects fans' wishes for a **capacity of at least 30,000** with scope for future expansion
- 77% agree that it reflects fans' wishes for the new stadium to be a **fully enclosed** structure
- 82% agree that it reflects fans' wishes for the stand fronts to be **straight** and at least as **close to the pitch** as at Ashton Gate
- 74% agree that it reflects fans' 5:4 preference for a **look of four stands** rather than continuous rows creating the look of a bowl
- 80% agree that it reflects fans preference for **steep** stands
- 76% agree that it reflects fans' desire to **avoid a uniform single-tier design**
- 58% agree that it reflects fans' previous 53% support for provision for a future area of **safe standing**
- 63% agree that it reflects fans' wishes for the stadium acoustics to be designed to create a **cauldron of noise**
- 52% agree that it reflects fans' wishes for an area with **enhanced acoustics** for the more vocal fans
- 61% would like the '**home end**' to have a **more enclosed** design
- 65% do not agree that it reflects fans' wishes for away fans to be located in a **lower corner** of the stadium
- 84% agree that it reflects fans wishes for corporate spectators to be located in an **elevated position**
- 65% do not agree that it reflects fans' previous 90% desire for inclusion of an **architectural feature unique to Bristol**

(Note: Where respondents were asked to state to what extent the stadium design reflected fans' views as demonstrated by the previous survey by indicating this on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 = does not reflect at all and 5 = reflects fully, a score of 4 or 5 is summarised above as agreement, a score of 1 to 3 as disagreement)

Conclusions

The football club and architects are due great credit for having produced a design that the fans clearly feel reflects their views in many areas. The fact that support for the proposed move - already very high at the time of the first survey - has actually risen slightly now that the stadium designs have been unveiled is a very positive sign. That only 59 fans out of 1,847 responding to the survey oppose the move is quite remarkable and speaks volumes for the success of the club's consultation process and efforts at involving fans in the project.

Looking at the areas in which at least 70% of fans gave a top two rating out of five for the extent to which the design reflects the findings of the previous survey, it is evident that there is wide support in terms of the capacity, the enclosed nature of the structure, the alignment and proximity of the stands to the pitch, the rake of the stands, the positioning of corporate spectators and the non-uniform nature of the overall stadium design.

There was less confidence, however, that the proposed stadium structure reflected fans' wishes in respect of the need for particularly good acoustics, with less than 65% of fans giving a top two rating for this aspect of the design. In regards to the need for enhanced acoustics for the more vocal fans, less than 55% felt this had been reflected.

The issues on which fans felt the proposed design least reflected the views previously expressed were a desire for away fans to be positioned in a corner and the inclusion of a unique Bristol architectural feature (in each case 65% felt this had not been reflected).

When asked specifically about the proposed design of the 'home end' only 25.3% felt that it needed no change, while 60.5% felt it should have a more enclosed design.

In light of this very clear evidence of misgivings about the proposed home end design, we examine these findings in more detail below.

Home end design - So is it just an East End concern?

Anyone reading online forums over recent weeks may be forgiven for thinking that the concerns being aired about the home end design have been coming exclusively from a vocal few in the East End. While the views of fans that have done so much to enhance the atmosphere at Ashton Gate over the last couple of seasons should clearly not be taken lightly, we were nevertheless keen to see whether their concerns were also shared by fans who sit in other parts of Ashton Gate, whether these concerns were felt by all ages and whether members of key stakeholder groups, such as season ticket holders, City Foundation members and members of the Supporters Trust and Club, also had reservations about the home end design.

We are therefore very grateful to the club for allowing the inclusion in the survey of the following question:

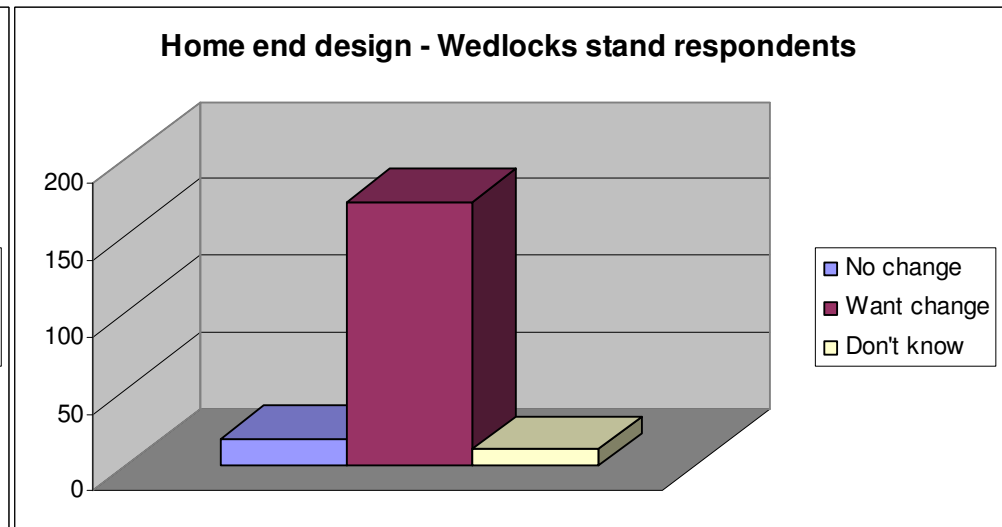
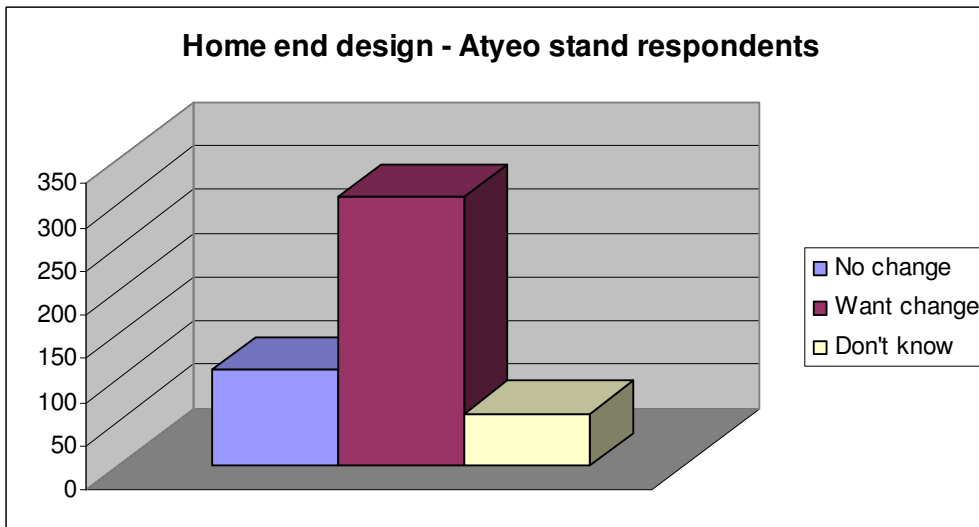
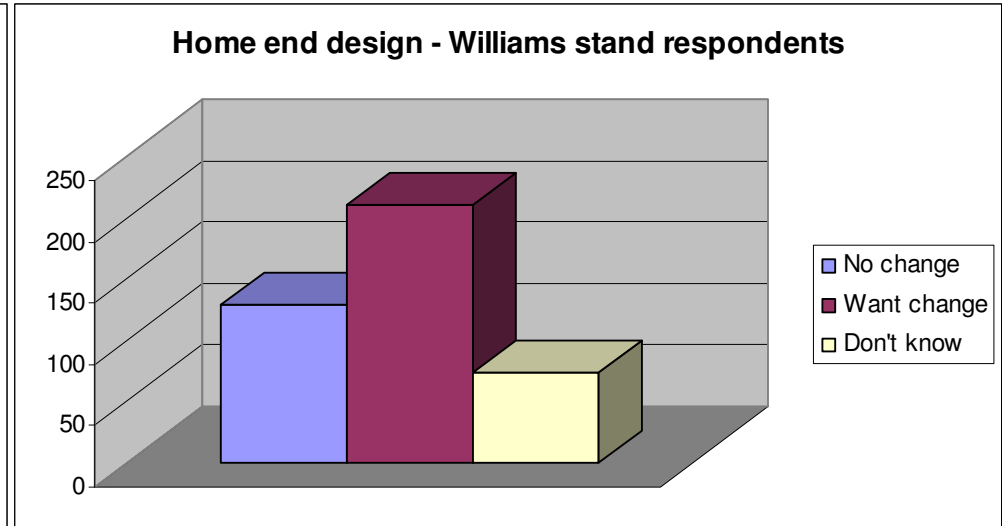
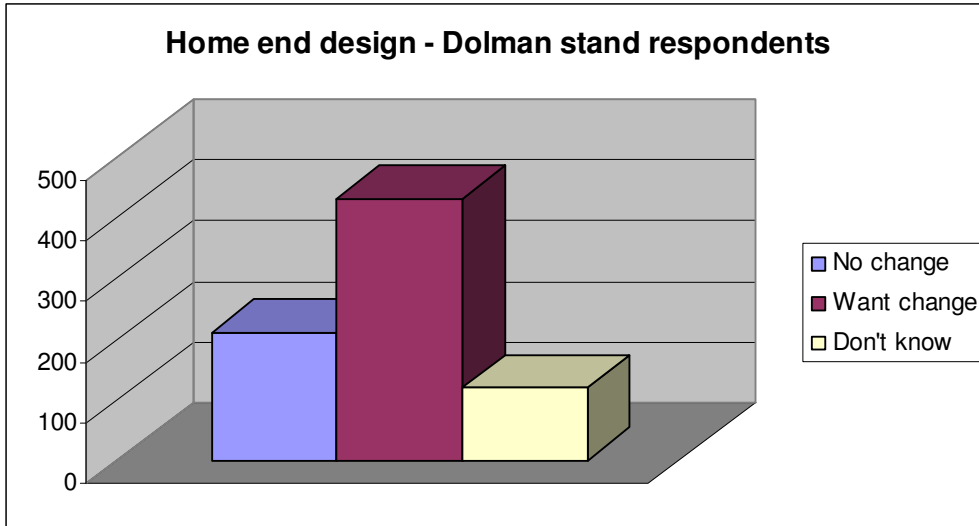
There has been some debate among fans about the design of the new 'home' end.

With regards to this, which of the following statements most closely reflects your own view?

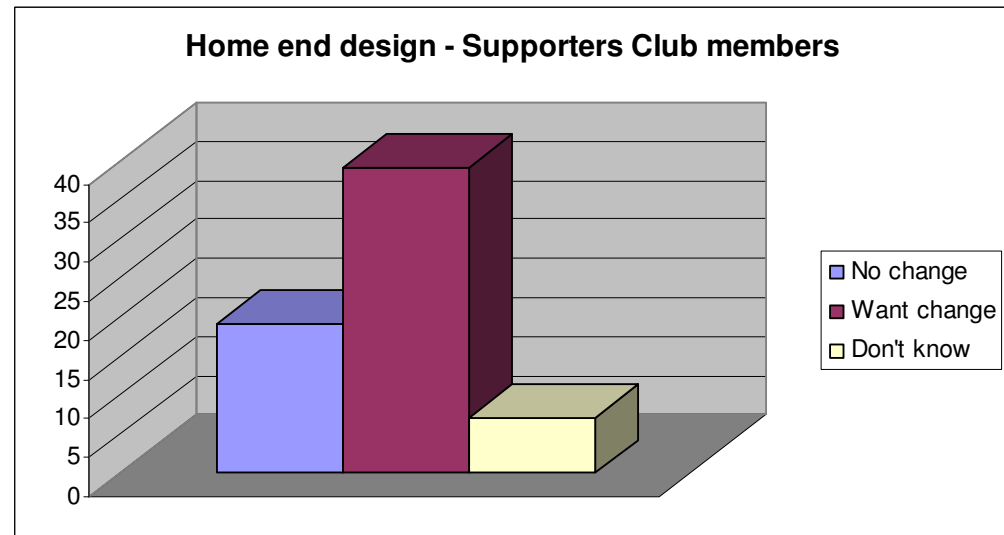
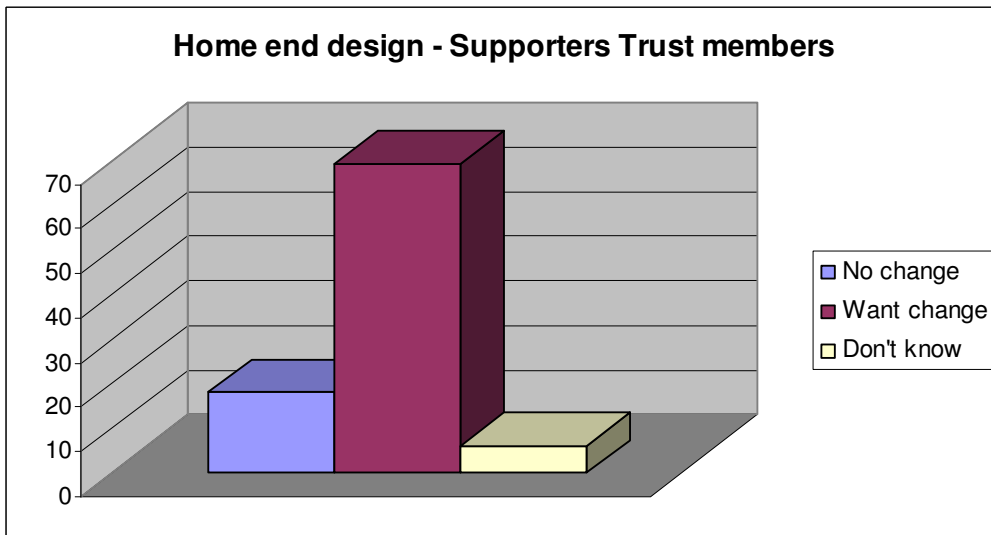
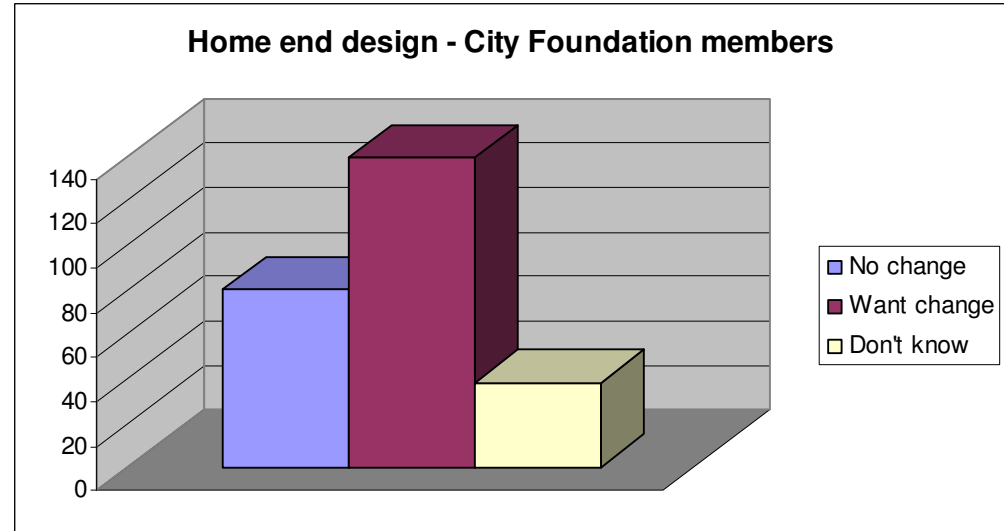
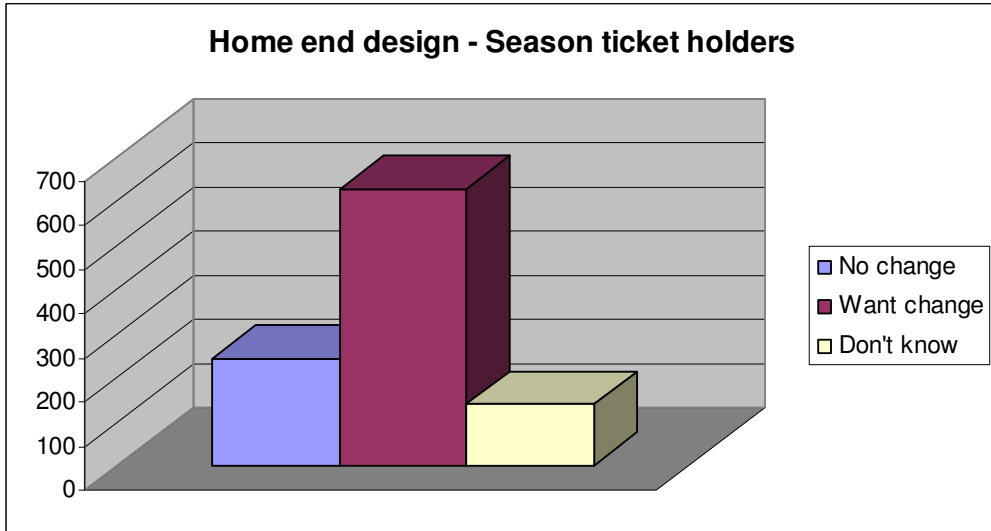
- *Atmosphere is created by the fans assembled in any given area, not by the structure itself. I see no need to change the design of the South Stand.*
- *A stand's structure plays a big part in the atmosphere it generates. I would like the 'home end' to have a more enclosed design.*
- *Don't know / no comment.*

The responses to this question are shown in bar chart form on the following pages - in short it is clearly **NOT** just an East End concern...

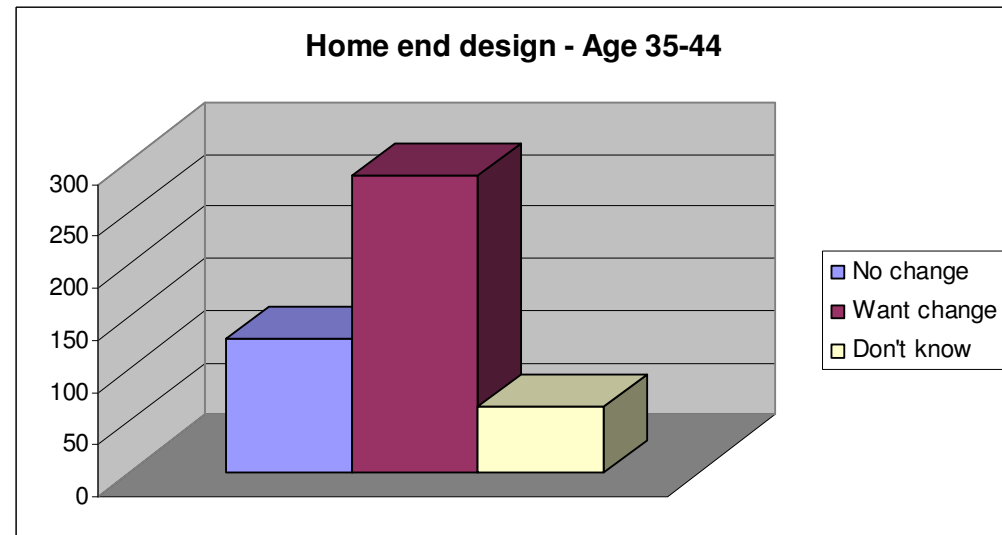
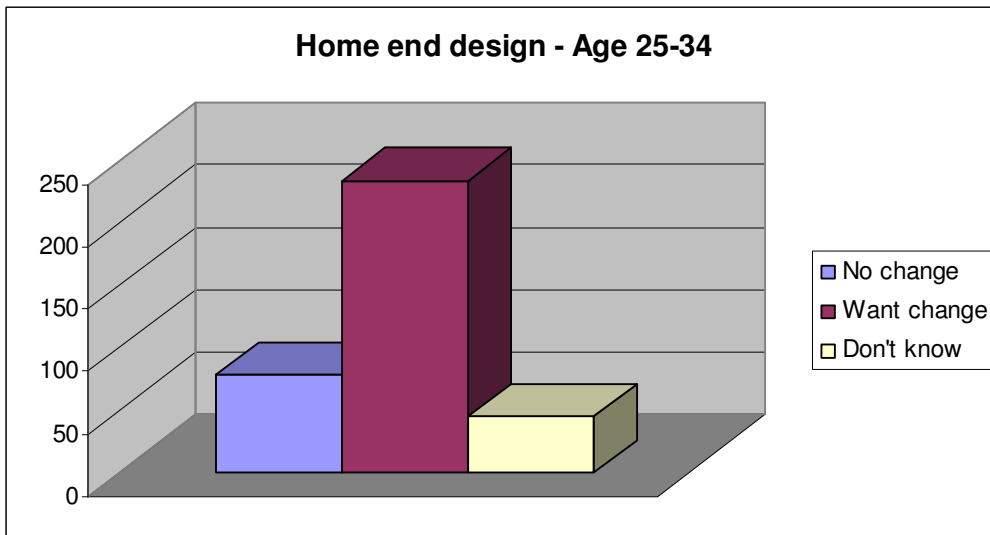
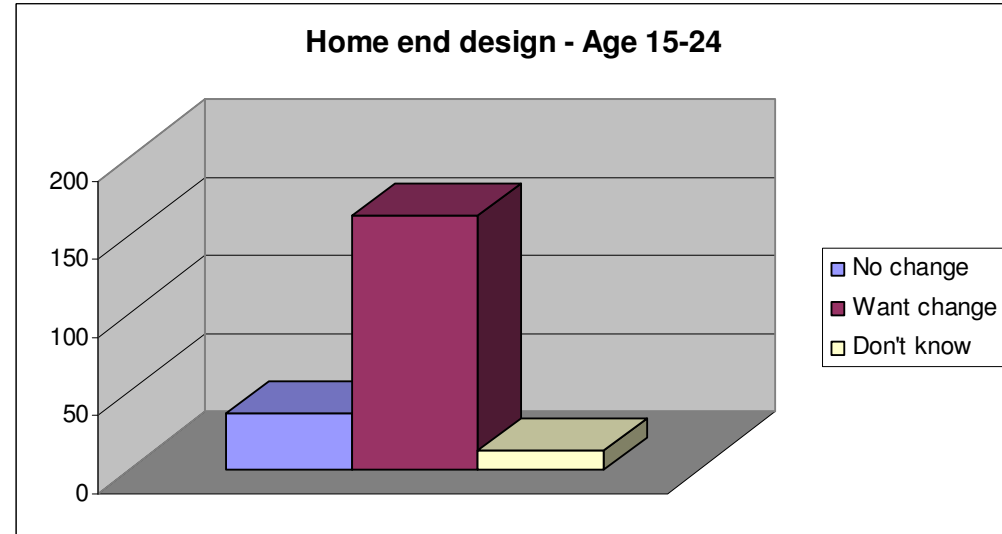
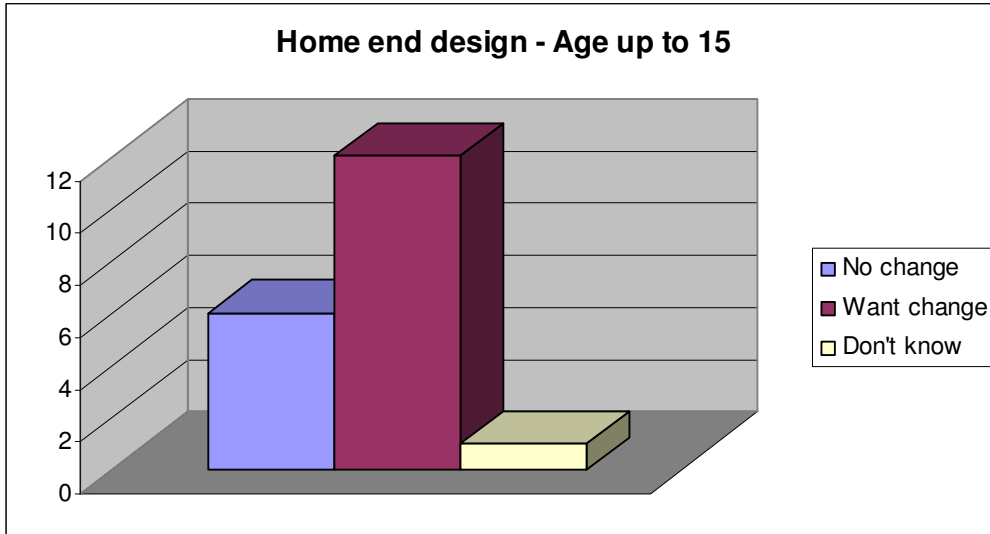
Level of 'home end' design concerns by stand used by respondents at Ashton Gate:



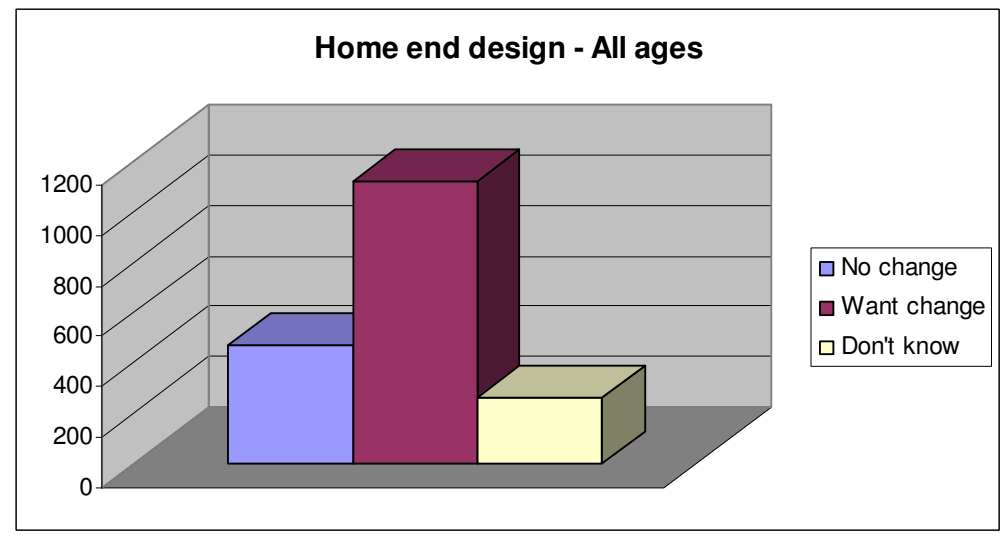
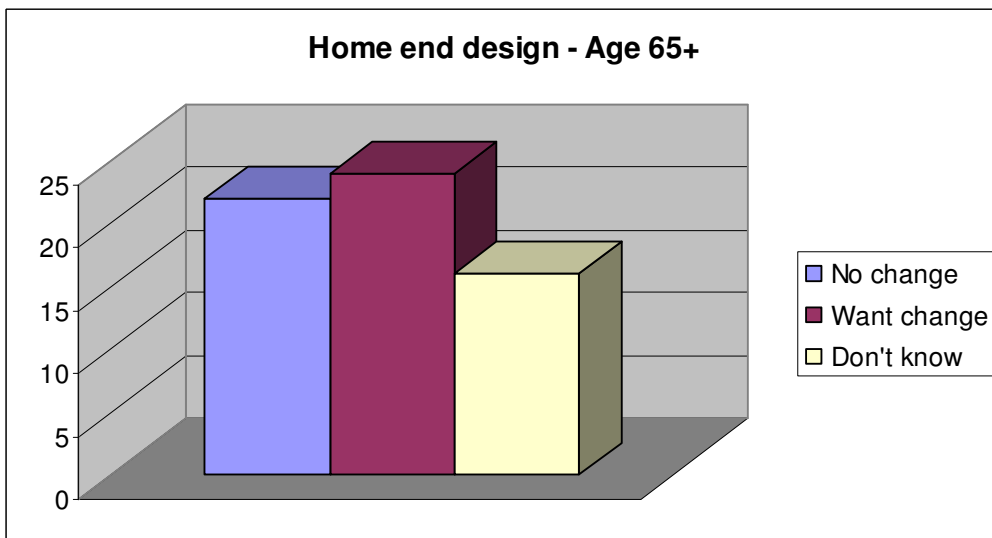
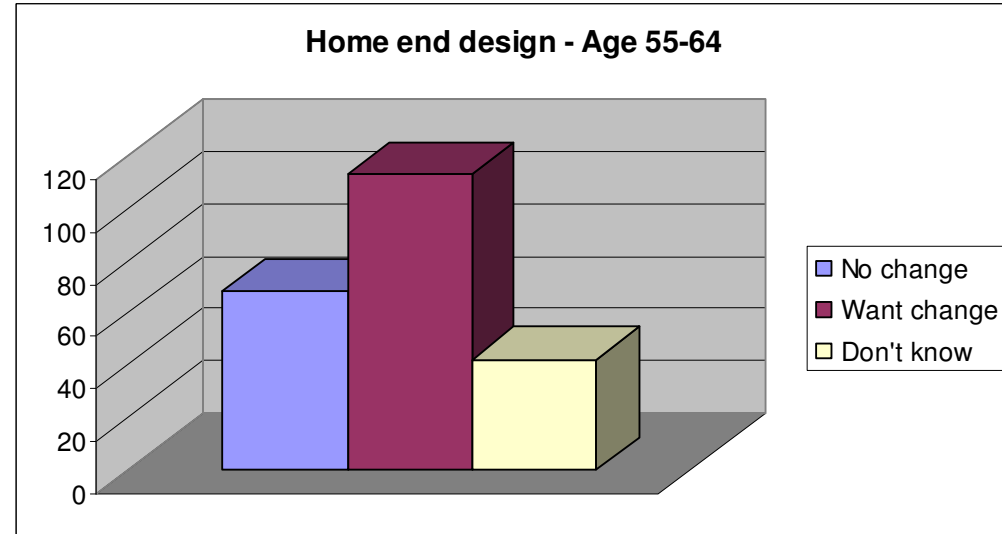
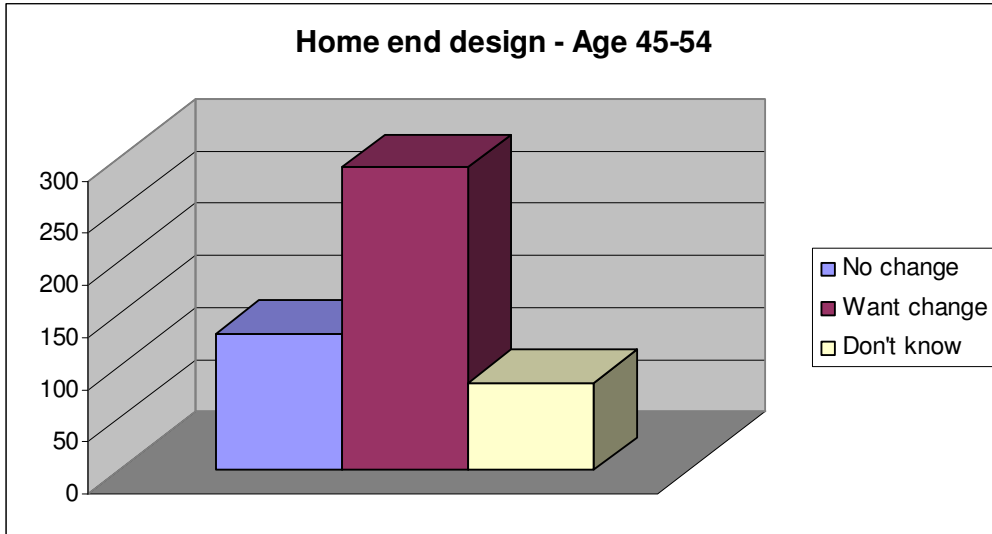
Level of 'home end' design concerns by stakeholder group:



Level of 'home end' design concerns by age:



Level of 'home end' design concerns by age (continued):



It is clear from the bar charts above that fans of all ages - including even those aged 65+ - and from all parts of Ashton Gate have reservations about the home end design. Key stakeholder groups, such as season ticket holders and members of the City Foundation, also show a clear wish for the South Stand to have a more enclosed feel.

While fans from the East End have been particularly vocal about this issue over recent weeks, it is thus clearly one that also concerns a majority of all City fans. Indeed only 25.3% of survey respondents felt the design of the South Stand needed no change and of those indicating that they would prefer a more enclosed design, over 84% were not from the Wedlock Stand.

Post reporting date addenda

Subsequent to the closure of the online survey, a further 20 replies were received in hard copy form by the closing date for such responses of April 4th. None of the findings saw any material change as a result of these additional replies, which represented 1.07% of the total responses. The adjusted figures for the key areas of the survey finished as follows:

- Support for the move: 94.7%
- Would like 'home end' design amended: 61.7%
- The percentage of the above NOT from the East End: 84%

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