

# Hastings Town Centre Public Realm and Green Connections

## Consultation Report May 2024



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We would like to extend our appreciation to those who have taken the time to engage and provide feedback on these proposals during this formative stage. Your comments and suggestions are appreciated and will help to shape the final designs.

# Executive Summary

East Sussex County Council and Hastings Borough Council conducted a six-week consultation from January 22 to March 1, 2024, to gather insights and feedback on proposed designs for the Hastings Town Centre Public Realm and Green Connections project. Feedback was collected through a survey and in-person events, alongside statutory feedback from interviews with key representatives. A total of 972 responses were received from individuals who live, work, and enjoy Hastings.

## Key Findings

### General Sentiment:

- There is an overwhelmingly negative sentiment towards the existing town centre, indicating a strong case for change.
- Proposed overall designs were well received, with 50% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with plans to enhance greenery and connectivity in the town centre.

### Bus Route Changes:

- Proposals for bus route changes, particularly the one-way route on Queens Road, were not well received due to concerns about accessibility and business impact.
- Respondents felt there was insufficient information to assess the impact of these changes.

### Harold Place:

- Just under half (49%) of the respondents responded positively to the pedestrianised link to the seafront proposed for Harold Place.

### Cycle Lane:

- While proposals for a segregated cycle lane were well received, there were concerns about the suggested route's desirability and the risk of improper separation between cyclists and pedestrians, which could create safety issues.

### Central Space:

- Proposals for the central space were well received, with 55% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with the concept of a central area that connects and creates a new destination in the town centre.

### Wellington Place:

- Proposals for Wellington Place received the least negative feedback. 52% agreed with the proposed designs. Respondents appreciated the idea of making Wellington Place more pedestrian-friendly, provided current issues with delivery vehicles and traffic restrictions are addressed.

This feedback will inform the approach to the next stage of design, ahead of submitting a planning application.

# Introduction

The Hastings Town Centre Public Realm and Green Connections project is one of seven projects within the Hastings Town Investment Plan. The project sets out early ideas to improve public spaces in our town centre and make the area more green, attractive, healthy and fun.

This document has been prepared by Arup on behalf of East Sussex County Council (ESCC) and Hastings Borough Council (HBC), to illustrate the various survey and stakeholder workshop feedback collected throughout the concept design RIBA<sup>1</sup> (Royal Institute of British Architects) stage 2 consultation phase. The consultation phase was undertaken across a five-stage process for the Hastings Public Realm and Green Connections Project (the project).

In 2021 Hastings was one of 101 UK towns to receive a share of the Government's Towns Fund to kickstart the regeneration of the town and Hastings Borough Council received funding of £24.3m. The Town Centre Public Realm and Green Connections project is one of the projects being funded through the Hastings Town Deal Fund programme.

In early 2022, HBC and ESCC commissioned Arup to develop a concept design (RIBA Stage 2) for parts of the Town Centre. During this stage, Arup engaged with a range of stakeholder groups to ensure there was a good understanding of the project's context and drivers, whilst providing a platform for discussion and comment on emerging proposals. Arup used this insight to inform design concepts and an overall vision and strategy for creating a green and well-connected Town Centre. This initial concept was used as a base for ESCC and HBC to gain the New Town Deal Funding.

The project ensures wider public and stakeholder consultation. The public consultation seeks to gather feedback from local people and businesses to understand their perspectives on the proposed changes and use their feedback to inform design decisions. The stakeholder and statutory consultation ran in parallel to gain professional knowledge of the area and local policy to inform the future RIBA Stage 3 design development. As part of the consultation, Arup developed a two-month public and statutory Engagement Plan to obtain feedback on RIBA Stage 2 proposals and to inform approach to RIBA Stage 3. This report illustrates those results.



Figure 1 Image of Hastings town deal website

<sup>1</sup> The RIBA Plan of Work is the definitive model for the design and construction process of buildings.

## 1.1 The project

The project is located within the heart of Hastings Town Centre and sets to transform the area by improving and enhancing the public realm and green connections. The new green network's ambition is to create an environment for people and nature, with safe walking and cycling routes, linking the public realm, green spaces, and important community sites across the town.

The site boundary includes Havelock Road, Harold Place, Queens Road and Wellington Place. The red line boundary only includes the public realm and does not include the surrounding buildings.

By relocating the bus routes north bound through Queens Road and Havelock Road and removing general traffic from Harold Place, there is potential opportunity of increasing a pedestrianised area at the heart of the town centre. These re-designed spaces are to connect the train station to the sea through a series of rain gardens and planters, complemented with seating, art, incidental play and lighting that will create a safe and accessible space for families, the elderly, the youth and other Hastings town centre users to come and shop.

The design aims to deliver on the following key aims; increase climate and ecological resilience, footfall as well as dwell time and expenditure in town centre, provide opportunities to increase local jobs, promote active travel and improve the area's character.



Figure 2 Plan of RIBA stage 2 Design used for consultation, not to scale

## 1.2 Project objectives



Put people first, creating healthy places that promote wellbeing and improve social connectivity, air quality and active travel



Build identity, highlighting and preserving heritage, character and charm of the town



Optimise function of the town centre through intuitive wayfinding and improved connections



Facilitate community led design through local coproduction and staged project implementation



Enhance sense of place by creating distinctive destinations for activity at the heart of the town



Design with nature for ecological and help to protect against a changing climate

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### In summary the proposals aim to

- Improve the pedestrian areas of the town centre
- Incorporate a cycle lane
- Provide additional street trees
- Incorporate Sustainable urban Drainage Systems (SuDS)
- Improve the accessibility of crossings
- Provide extensive planting and greening around the central area
- Promote public art
- Incorporate further seating areas
- Play spaces

### How was the area decided?

When the bid was submitted in 2019, Hastings Borough Council issued an open call for proposals. There were two key proposals including the Garden Town, focusing on greening the town, and another aimed at improving the town centre. Following the reallocation of some Town Fund monies, the project budget increased from £3 million to £10 million. The project boundary was defined by ESCC and HBC in conclusion with the Garden Town Team, connecting the station to the seafront, and was later extended to Wellington Place.

An Independent Technical Evaluator reviewed and assessed the business cases for the project funding.

# Consultation Process

This section outlines the process of gathering statutory and public feedback to develop the concept design. It captures the extent of conversations had in 2022 in the lead up to the public consultation in early 2024, as well as the methodology to engage with residents, businesses, and users of the town centre.

Key stakeholders were identified across the variety of perspectives needed to inform the consultation, from local business, health care groups and community groups. As part of this list the relevant statutory consultants that would provide feedback during planning were also identified and contacted to discuss the project and proposals.

In all workshops, meetings, and public events the same format was used, to discuss the Stage 2 design and proposal, delve into the project objectives, describe key changes to the public realm and why they were design in that way, discussion of key challenges, opportunities and what the future of Hastings town centre should look like. All results and feedback are gathered in section 3.

## 2.1 Initial 2022 consultation

The consultation process for the scheme has been ongoing since 2022 during the design development of stage 2 Concept Design, which was submitted for the Town Fund. Conversations with key stakeholders were held which enabled the concept designs to be completed. Due to the tight timescales involved in completing the baseline review and concept design, it was not possible to engage with the public on the proposals during this period of the study.

The following groups were consulted:

- *Hastings Borough Council / ESCC 28.04.22*
- *Hastings BID & Priory Meadow 28.04.22*
- *NewRiver REIT 03.05.22*
- *ESCC Highways 06.05.22*
- *Southeastern Rail & East Sussex College. 17.05.22*
- *Southern Water 18.05.22*
- *Biodiversity 18.05.22*
- *Stagecoach 30.05.22*

From 2023 into early 2024 the design team engaged:

- Councillors through briefings – these online briefings informed the designs before they were distributed publicly. It was at these meetings where an extension of the red boundary to Wellington Place was agreed.
- Love Hastings/ Business Improvement District
- The Hastings Garden Town Team

Once funding was approved, the next step of design development was to undertake public consultation in early 2024.

## 2.2 Consultation; What we did

The purpose of this consultation was to;

- Understand peoples use of the space as well as the existing challenges of the Town Centre environment.
- Build understanding and support for the scheme and minimise objections during the statutory planning stage.
- Create the conditions to nurture a sense of collective ownership and stewardship and inform the on-going delivery of Hastings Garden Town from the perspective of local people.

This report outlines activities undertaken between January to March 2024 to gather public and statutory feedback on early-stage design concepts. Through these engagements, the design team will be able to understand what positive and negative impacts the planned changes may have on local people, local businesses, and visitors to Hastings. As a result, this feedback will be incorporated and inform in the further detail design stage ahead of submitting a planning application in early autumn 2024.

The consultation involved three key approaches.

- Meetings/ Engagement with key stakeholders and statutory consultees.
- Workshops with key stakeholders including local businesses and taxi drivers.
- Public consultation.

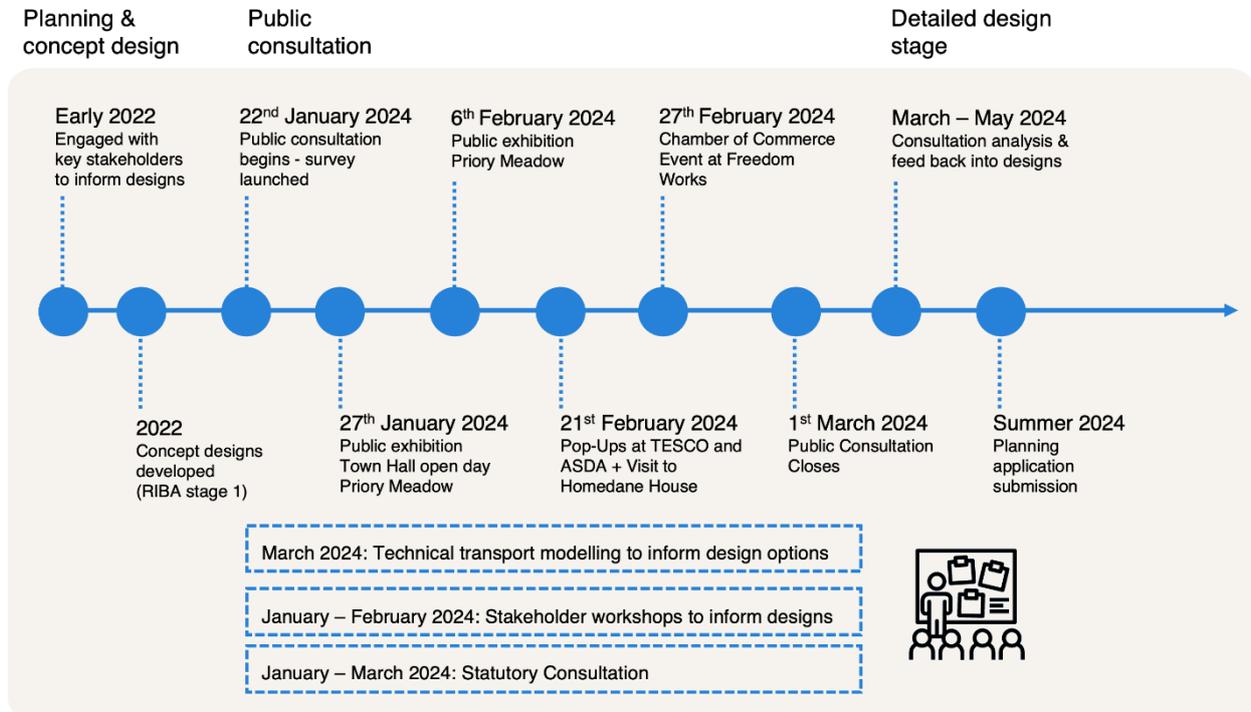


Figure 3 project timeline overview

## 2.3 Statutory consultees and key stakeholders meetings

In early 2024 a round of engagement with all Statutory Consultees (stakeholders to be formally consulted with as part of the planning process) and other key stakeholders were held. This engagement took place alongside the public consultation.

All relevant stakeholders were contacted with the offer of one-on-one sessions to discuss the project and outline design. Via on-line meetings, the initial concept was presented to;

- Obtain their views on the designs,
- Understand if there were any policies, regulations or requirements that needed to be factored into the final design.
- Understand scheme strengths and issues with the design from different stakeholders' perspectives

The feedback from these meetings alongside the results of the public consultation will inform the next stages of design. Stakeholders that met with us or provided a written response are listed below. The high-level summary of the themes discussed with stakeholders can be found in section 3.1.

<b>Hastings Borough Council</b>	<b>East Sussex County Council</b>	<b>National Bodies</b>	<b>Other Key Stakeholders</b>
Conservation	Planning	National Highways	Southern Water
Licensing	Transport Development Control	Natural England	Stagecoach
Community Safety	Rights of Way	Historic England	Taxis and Private Hire Vehicle drivers
Regulatory Services	Flood Risk		Sussex Police
Environment and Operations	Landscape		Market operator
Planning	Ecologist		
Parks & Open Spaces	Archaeology		
Operations	Public Transport		
Arboriculture	Highways Land Information		

Figure 4 Statutory stakeholders

## 2.4 Stakeholder workshops

Three facilitated stakeholder workshops were held to gather the feedback and dialogue from local businesses, local taxis, local greening groups and accessibility groups directly. The recruitment for the event was facilitated through postcard drop and targeted outreach through Love Hastings, the Hastings Chamber of Commerce, and HBC licensing office. The workshops were invite only, to help focus the workshop to the attendees.

The workshops were facilitated to enable participants to reflect openly about their ideas. Attendees were invited to sit on a table with a project team member who facilitated the discussions, following an introduction and presentation from the design team. Each table discussed the design aspirations and challenges in detail. Feedback from each table was collated and discussed to wrap up each session. An example can be found in Appendix 1.

The Hastings Chamber of Commerce requested a third in-person workshop to gather further information from their members and local business.

A high-level summary of the themes discussed with stakeholders can be found in section 3.2.

Workshop	Date and Time	Location	Number of attendants
<b>Stakeholder workshop 1</b> Local businesses	Wednesday January 24 <sup>th</sup> - 10:00am – 12:00pm	Muriel Matters House, Breeds Place, TN34 3UY.	14
<b>Stakeholder workshop 2</b> Local businesses	Thursday February 1st - 14:00pm - 16:00pm	Muriel Matters House, Breeds Place, TN34 3UY.	12
<b>Stakeholder workshop 3</b> Hastings Chamber of Commerce	Tuesday 27 <sup>th</sup> February 17:30pm – 19:30pm on	The Palace Workspace, Freedom Works	32
<b>Stakeholder workshop 4</b> Taxi and Deliveroo drivers	Wednesday 28 <sup>th</sup> February 2024	Muriel Matters House, Breeds Place, TN34 3UY.	30

Figure 5 - Workshop dates and number of attendees

## 2.5 Public consultation

The public consultation was undertaken during a six-week period between the 22<sup>nd</sup> of January to the 1<sup>st</sup> March 2024. The public consultation was designed to reach a large range of the community. To make the consultation accessible to as many people as possible a series of events were held. In total seven in person public events were held;

### Two public exhibitions

- Priory Meadow Town Deal Open Day Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> January 2024
- Priory Meadow Public Exhibition 6<sup>th</sup> February 2024

### Two supermarket pop-ups

- ASDA 21<sup>st</sup> February 2024
- Tesco 21<sup>st</sup> February 2024

### Additional events included

- Visit to Homedane House. 21<sup>st</sup> February 2024
- One business event with Hastings Chamber of Commerce, held at Freedom Works 27<sup>th</sup> February 2024. 20 businesses attended.
- Workshop with local taxi and Deliveroo drivers 28<sup>th</sup> February 2024.

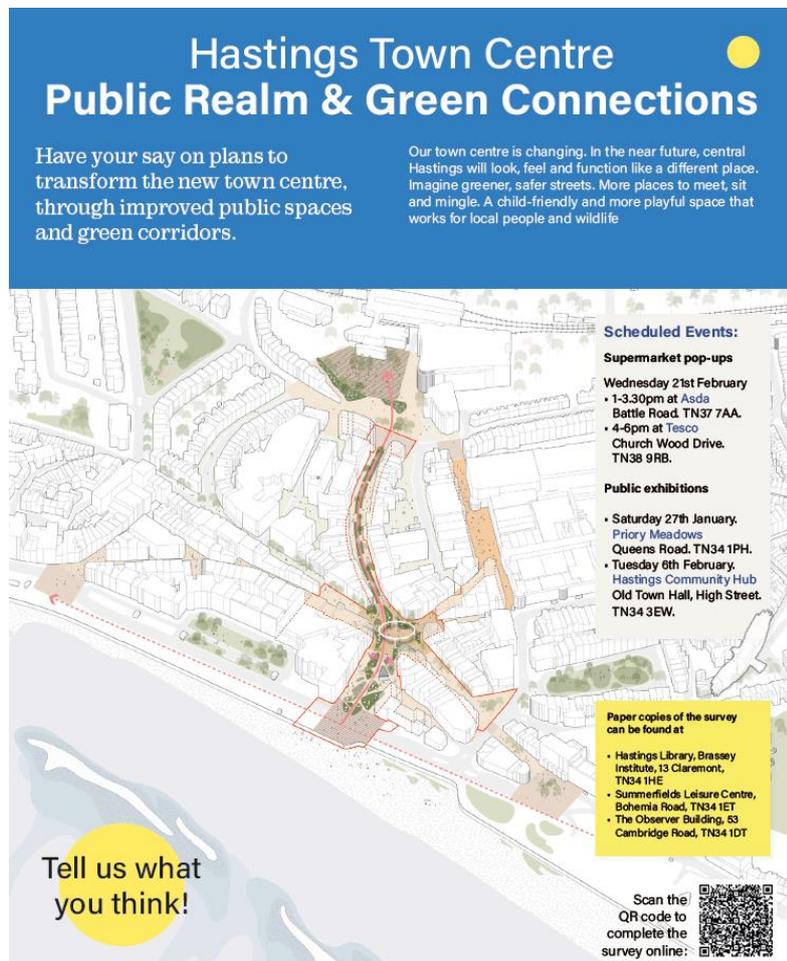


Figure 6 – Image of consultation poster

## 2.6 Public consultation (continued)

To ensure this consultation reached as many people, community groups and businesses as possible, various methods of communication (appendix 1) were used for public engagement, this included;

1. Posters: on display at Lacuna House, Muriel Matters House, Priory Meadow, and other locations across the town.
2. Consultation guides: Paper copies of the brochure and surveys at: Hastings Library, Brassey Institute, 13 Claremont, TN34 1HE, Summerfields Leisure Centre, Bohemia Rd, TN34 1ET, Muriel Matters House, Breeds Place, TN34 3UY
3. Online survey: hosted by ESCC <https://consultation.eastsussex.gov.uk/economy-transport-environment/hastingsgreenconnections/> There was also a supporting phone number and email address in case the community were unable to respond via an online survey.
4. Postcards: were designed and delivered through letter boxes to all businesses and residents in the boundary area by Arup, ESCC, HBC and GTT. 2300 postcards were printed and distributed in total.
5. A small run of personal deliveries of postcards to local businesses was facilitated. Around 30 postcards were handed to local business within the red boundary area.
6. Online social media: content to encourage participation and attendance at events was curated and shared through HBC and ESCC social medial streams.

# Consultation Results

This section outlines the results from the statutory consultation feedback, workshops, and online public consultation.

Through all the workshops and meetings, participants were guided to fill in the online survey. Except for meetings held with the statutory consultees and key stakeholders, the results from the online survey were the main method for gathering feedback on the proposals. Responses received as hard copies or via email have also been collected and added to the results.

There were a total of 972 responses, the online questionnaire was undertaken by respondents on a self-selecting basis, and therefore a non-scientific or selected sample. However, when looking at the overall 2011 census data collection and comparison of people living in Hastings with respondents, the sample size was very similar, except for the younger group (refer to Appendix 3). By undertaking bilateral statutory meetings, the responses provide a wide range well informed variety of views as detailed in this section.

The results have been collected in the following format.

1. Meetings/ Engagement with key stakeholders and statutory consultees were collected through note taking. A summary of the results by theme are outlined in section 3.1.
2. Workshops with key stakeholders including local businesses and taxi drivers. Responses by theme were collected with key notes being highlighted in section 3.2.
3. Public consultation results have been gathered in section 3.3-3.5. The first section, 3.3 is quantitative data, 3.4 shows how respondents feel about the current town centre and 3.5 their sentiments on the proposals. Sentiments to the proposal also include analysis by Natural Language Processing of most common responses to open ended questions, followed by quotes illustrating positive, neutral, and negative sentiments.

Section 3.6 highlights the survey respondents' profile, responses to these questions were not mandatory but allow ESCC and HBC understand the profile of participants, compare this to the wider Hastings community, ensuring the response was suitable and representative and identify future groups that may need consulting.

## 3.1 Statutory Consultee and Key Stakeholder Feedback

The following are high-level summaries of the themes discussed with stakeholders during the statutory consultation (refer to section 2.4 for teams consulted). The information has been collected by themes to illustrate combined responses from all consultees. Note that the themes of discussion are in no particular order.

### Flooding

- Supportive of Sustainable Urban Drainage concept for the scheme. Recognition that the project will help with rather than solve surface water flooding issues.
- Noted current town centre flooding issues due to issues with Southern Water infrastructure.
- Southern Water drawing up hydraulic model of town centre and assessing strategic options to reduce flood risk. Confirmed Hastings PRGC should not be impacted by this work.

### Ecology, Landscape and Planting

- Supportive of ecology concept (bringing surrounding habitats into the town).
- Supportive of landscape concept and bringing incidental play into design.
- Raised need to balance safety with ecology impact when considering lighting strategy.
- Discussed need to consider native and climate resilient, non-invasive non-native species in planting.
- Discussed need to consider use of swift bricks, bee bricks, bird/bat boxes and green roofs.
- Discussed challenge of planting trees in coastal locations.
- Discussed significant amounts of below ground cabling that needs to be considered as part of design.
- Suggested consideration of examples: walkways, planting and interpretation in Worthing, Bexhill seafront planting and shingle gardens at Seaford.

### Historic Environment

- Confirmed works are within a conservation area and in the setting of listed buildings.
- Confirmed design should respect historic formal character of town centre.
- Area currently suffers from a lack of design co-ordination.
- Confirmed importance of carrying out a tree audit, using appropriate surface materials and providing good wayfinding
- Discussed preference to see heritage brought out more strongly in the designs and that linkages between local historic character and new public realm designs are made clear.
- Discussed need to protect key townscape views.
- Discussed integration artists into the design process.
- Confirmed underground car park and underpass are listed.
- Confirmed need to consider how 1901 subterranean toilet block and culverted river could impact design and construction.
- Discussed considering use of traditional materials, such as York stone, timber block flooring and historic granite kerbs.

## 3.1 Statutory Consultee and Key Stakeholder Feedback (continued)

### Public Realm

- Widely recognised need for improvements to the town centre.
- Discussed need to consider legibility and connection between the scheme and the station, Wellington Square and underpasses.
- Discussed need to consider how materials are used to identify and delineate spaces, improve legibility and safety.
- Discussed need to consider focal points, desire lines and how to integrate public art throughout the scheme.
- Discussed considering how to connect town centre, seafront and Old Town more closely.
- Discussed need for consideration to be given to use of existing subways.

### Crime and Antisocial Behaviour

- Confirmed designing out crime considerations relating to permeability, planting, lighting and street furniture.
- Confirmed need to consider street community and anti-social behaviour by younger people as part of design.
- Confirmed need for public realm design to be resilient to high levels of anti-social behaviour.
- Confirmed need for design to respond to particular challenges in Wellington Place.
- Confirmed need to re-provide police bays in town centre.
- Discussed potential locations for the Sussex Police Community Hut as part of the scheme design.
- Confirmed need to consider impact of furniture and materials on anti-social behaviour and accessibility.
- Confirmed need to consider impact of design on CCTV coverage.
- Confirmed need to consider hostile vehicle mitigation as part of design.

### Operations and Maintenance

- Confirmed need to ensure clarity about maintenance responsibilities.
- Discussed need for furniture and materials to be designed for coastal environment.
- Concerns raised around constrained maintenance budgets.
- Discussed need for materials and furniture to be maintainable using existing equipment and processes.
- Discussed need for design to respond to seasonality of environment and operations – higher waste levels produced in summer.
- Consider opportunities to create on street or underground waste containment for Havelock Road residential and commercial waste (balanced with increased risk of fly-tipping).

## 3.1 Statutory Consultee and Key Stakeholder Feedback (continued)

The following are high-level summaries of the transport related themes discussed with stakeholders during the statutory consultation.

### Land Ownership and Rights of Way

- Provided confirmation of ESCC and HBC land ownership.
- Confirmed no public rights of way within the red line boundary.
- Noted King Charles III England Coast Path will run along Hastings promenade (to be signposted in 2025).

### Taxis, Private Hire Vehicle Drivers (PHV), Food Delivery Drivers, Markets and Servicing

- Preference for re-provision of the taxi rank capacity in one place close to the town centre.
- Preference expressed by some for retaining taxi rank in current location and direction.
- Potential extension to rank on Queens Road, rank on Robertson Street and/or rank on Harold Place discussed.
- Clear preference for a rank not to be located on Middle Street.
- Confirmed need to consider driver safety overnight as part of the design.
- Need for designated pick up and drop off points for PHVs identified.
- Need for designated location for food delivery drivers identified.
- Confirmed operation of market stalls and food trading should not be impacted significantly by concept design.

### Traffic and Public Transport

- Raised need to consider impact of scheme on traffic along sea front.
- Discussed potential merits and demerits of changes to traffic movements.
- Concern raised over impact of bus movements on Queens Road on pedestrian safety.
- Confirmed ESCC does not currently have any traffic restriction enforcement zones
- Confirmed majority of bus operations in Hastings are on a commercial basis, with routes and frequencies decided by the operator.
- Discussed challenging commercial environment for bus operators.
- Raised concerns about potential increase in journey times and impact on frequency of services. Noted potential for journey time mitigations outside the project's red line boundary.
- Preference expressed to maintain bus stops close to trip attractors (town centre, Priory Meadow, station) as well as maintain routes and frequencies as close as possible to current operation.
- Identified need for significant improvement to South Devonshire Terrace to support relocation of bus stops to this location

## 3.2 Workshop Feedback

The following are high-level summaries highlighting key themes, opportunities and constraints discussed at the workshops and to be considered during RIBA stage 3.

### Stakeholder Workshop 1: January 24<sup>th</sup> 2024

#### Key themes

- **East – West focus** - More focus on east to west planning for local community benefit.
- **Local conditions** - Concerns about wind tunnels, planting choices, and enhancing local ecology.
- **Materials & resilience** - Consideration of materials for resilience and longevity.
- **Infrastructure and Maintenance** - Ensuring proper maintenance of public spaces. Operational models and costs discussed. Concerns about tables and street furniture maintenance.
- **Transport considerations** - Traffic controls and restrictions, including vehicle access and parking. Challenges with current barriers operation and misuse. Bus routes, stops relocation, and engagement with transport authorities. Addressing conflicts and challenges with bus routes and taxi ranks.
- **Behaviour change & public realm** - Consideration of how nicer spaces impact behaviour. Addressing antisocial behaviour. Suggestions for enhancing the aesthetic and functional aspects of the town's design.

### Stakeholder Workshop 2: February 1<sup>st</sup> 2024

#### Key themes

- **Daytime and Night-time Planning** - Project needs to consider night time not only day time
- Future generation thinking - Importance of creating a resilient town centre for future generations.
- **Biodiversity and Environment**- Attention to biodiversity and green spaces in the town centre. Opportunities to create a green, lush, and beautiful town.
- **Community Engagement and Wellbeing**- Potential for improving wellbeing. Concerns and ideas related to public safety, antisocial behaviour, and community involvement.
- **Economic Development and Business Impact** - Potential to attract better shops and businesses. Concerns about the impact on businesses, delivery logistics, and the current taxi rank location.
- **Infrastructure and Urban Design** - Considerations for amenities like toilets and waste facilities. Ideas for street lighting, wayfinding, historical integration, and public art.
- **Transportation and Accessibility**- Concerns and ideas regarding taxi and bus operations, one-way systems, and traffic safety.
- **Social Inclusion and Youth Engagement** - Considerations for the impact on young people, encouraging positive congregation, and community involvement in maintenance and design.
- **Integration with other schemes in the town** - Consideration of future developments like the Premier Inn and station gateway.

## 3.2 Workshop Feedback (Continued)

### Stakeholder Workshop 3: February 27<sup>th</sup> 2024

This session was facilitated as a question-and-answer format. The discussion covered various aspects, focusing on funding maintenance, dialogue with stakeholders like Stagecoach, and the scheme's impact on traffic and businesses.

#### Key themes:

- **Maintenance and Funding:** Examples were provided where maintenance of similar schemes reduced costs. Dialogue touched on engaging volunteers and community maintenance to manage long-term costs.
- **Traffic and Pedestrianisation:** Concerns about traffic management, delivery access, and balancing pedestrian areas with business needs were raised. Consideration was given to potential impacts on the night-time economy.
- **Space Utilisation and Activation:** Strategies for encouraging community use of the space, addressing antisocial behaviour, and activating areas for events were discussed. Emphasis was placed on flexibility and supporting local events and traditions.
- **Transportation:** Challenges regarding traffic patterns, public transport, and cycling infrastructure. Consideration to managing traffic restrictions, accommodating delivery services and promoting more sustainable transport.
- **Boundary Identification and Enforcement:** Questions were raised about identifying the area boundary, managing emergency access, and enforcing restrictions, including the possibility of using cameras for fines.

### 3.3 Survey Responses

The following provides a summary of the survey response. Overall, there were 972 responses with most responses being digital. Most respondents were Hastings residents (90%), and some responded to more than one type of interest in Hastings, for example they could both live and work in Hastings.

#### How was survey data analysed?

Consultation survey data was analysed in three ways:

1. Pivot tables in excel provided quantitative data in the form of numbers and percentages of respondents. Data tables can be found in the appendix.
2. Natural Language Processing (NLP) was used to identify themes for the open-ended questions. Raw data from the survey was analysed according to themes. A large language model was applied to prioritise the themes and feedback which were further refined.
3. Quotes and perspectives were copied from the survey questions directly and analysed using the 'keyword' function in Miro that organises information in order to find patterns.

**972**  
people  
completed  
the survey



890 Digital responses



82 Paper responses

#### Who responded to the survey?

- 874 residents
- 234 people who work in Hastings
- 128 visitors
- 49 businesses

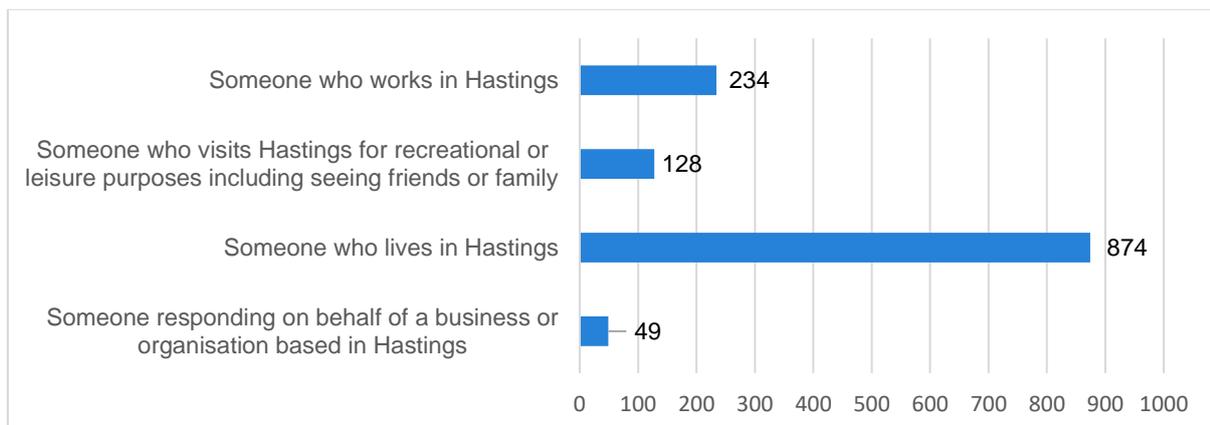


Figure 7 Graph showing who responded to the survey

### 3.3 Survey Responses (Continued)

#### How did people find out about the consultation?

Most people were made aware of the consultation through digital tools, 356 people found out via social media, 210 via email and 191 via word of mouth. The least common ways people found out about the consultation were via the ESCC website, and the postcard. Understanding the best method of communicating with the community to obtain more consultation responses and gather responses, will help develop the next consultation stages.

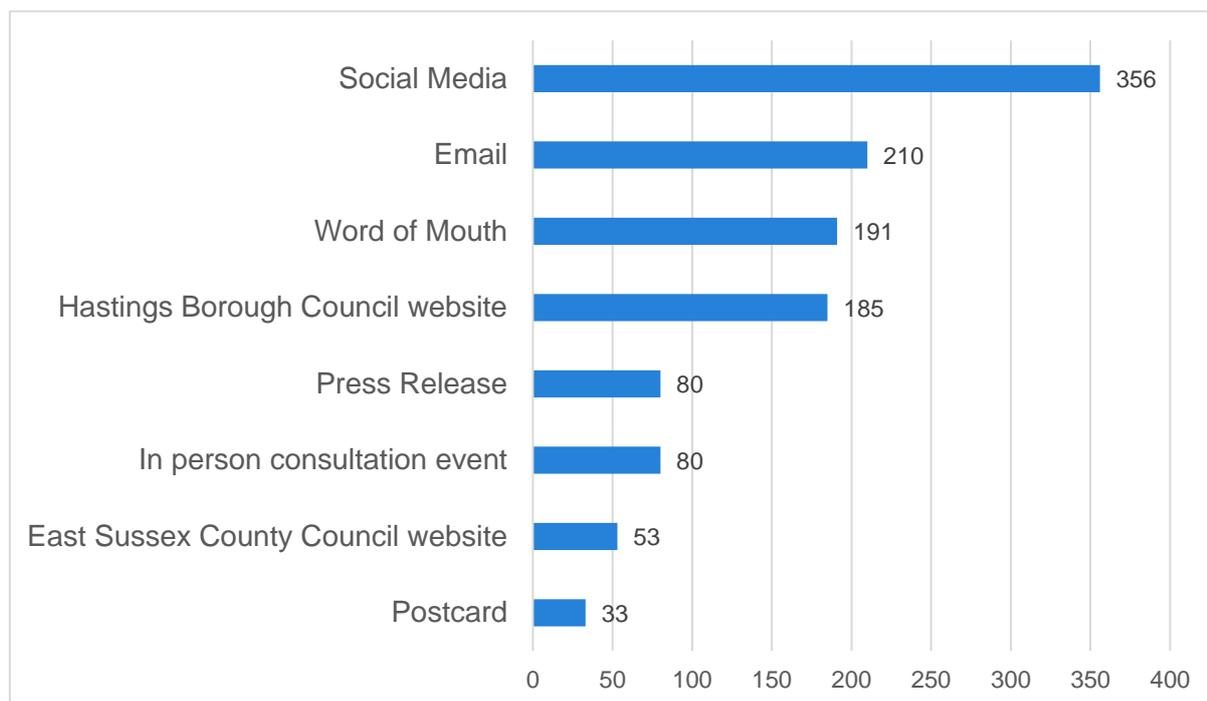


Figure 8 Graph showing how people found out about the consultation



### 3.4 Current town centre perception (continued)

#### How does our town centre currently make people feel?

The overall sentiment is that the majority of respondents were negative about the town centre, with 37% of people being unhappy and 27% being very unhappy, these quantitative results have been supported with people stating that they are unhappy due to anti-social behaviour and the town centre feeling run down. Nearly a quarter of respondents felt indifferent to the current town centre, with sentiments still being negative predominantly due to lack of commercial diversity. Only 11% of people were happy, with 2% of these being very happy due to the artistic, seaside location and shops.

The next page illustrates a series of quotes and sentiments on the current perception of the town centre. The summaries delve into more detail behind why people answered positively, neutrally, or negatively. There is also a selection of representative quotes typical of this question, which demonstrate nuance and context behind people’s perspectives. The quotes selected provide the wider overview on people who responded with that sentiment.



Either happy or very happy

Either indifferent or don't know

Somewhat unhappy or very unhappy

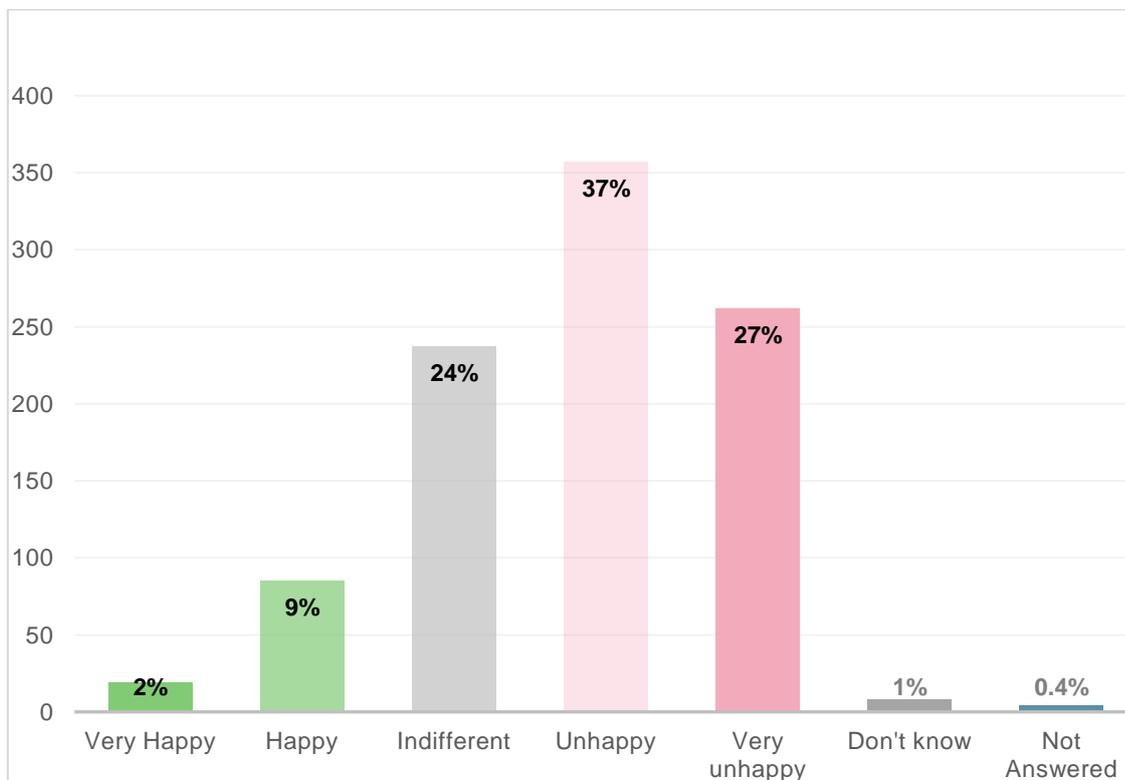


Figure 10 Graph showing how the town centre makes people feel currently

## 3.4 Current town centre perception (continued)

### Sentiment on how Hastings town centre currently makes people feel

#### Positive

**Hastings has a strong heritage and local identity that people feel a connection to.**

*"I like it. I've lived here all my life and have seen many changes as the economy has fluctuated. I grew up above a shop in Robertson St."*

*"I love Hastings for its seaside location, but also for its vivid artistic life and for the general atmosphere of the town."*

*"It is so much better since they pedestrianised it!"*

*"I like the layout of the town centre, plus access by foot or bus to the railway station & bus interchange"*

*"Thriving centre with lots of people and shops. Gets better in summer especially"*

#### Neutral

**The current state of the town is rundown with a lack of diversity in businesses, a prevalence of low-quality shops, and an increase in antisocial behaviour. The town also lacks some major chain outlets that could attract more visitors.**

*"I only use it for shopping, so happiness doesn't come into it"*

*"It's OK. It's functional but not great. And it's completely dead in the midweek evenings."*

*"It could have been a marina but now floods. It used to have independent shops and now many of have left"*

*"It's so in need of a big up-date - traffic, pedestrianisation, empty shops and buildings, poor state of repair, the old toilets etc, and unorganised mixture of traffic, bikes and pedestrians"*

*"Not enough greenery, flowers, seating."*

#### Negative

**The town centre's infrastructure is in a poor state, with issues such as broken pavements, closed public toilets, and inappropriate use of pedestrianised areas by cars. This is further complicated by an increase in antisocial behaviour and a lack of diversity in shop offerings.**

*"It's a very depressing and often unsafe place to be. It's completely dilapidated and unloved, the pavements and paving are not fit for purpose, it's terribly lit, unclean, the shops are hanging on by a thread. The majority of trade are eateries...most pedestrianised areas are full of "Just Eat" and "Deliveroo" services collecting for delivery."*

*"It is all a bit run down and grim and lacks any kind of focus to bring people together or to feel welcome and safe."*

*"I love living in Hastings and think there are so many positives about what it has to offer, but I also see how much improvement it needs, and how much better designed public spaces could be."*

### 3.4 Current town centre perception (continued)

#### How safe do people feel in the area?

The responses on whether people feel safe in the town centre illustrate that more people feel safe, or neither safe nor unsafe, than they feel unsafe. For those who did answer somewhat unsafe/ very unsafe, the main concerns about safety in various areas of the town centre, particularly in the evenings and at night, were due to;

- Lack of visible police or security presence.
- Areas prone to antisocial behaviour and loitering, such as outside McDonald's, pharmacies and especially in Wellington Place and Havelock Road
- Poor lighting, uneven pavements, and traffic congestion in what should be pedestrian areas.
- Feelings of vulnerability, especially for women and children, when walking alone or in less populated areas.

Specific locations where people felt unsafe included:

- Wellington Place, outside the fast-food shops especially and extending through to York Gardens
- Robertson Street and Havelock after dark
- Underpasses, particularly the one at the bottom of Harold Place.
- Market Square and pedestrian areas.
- Queens Road, including areas around businesses
- Streets near fast food restaurants, pubs, and bars.



Either very safe or safe

Neither safe nor unsafe

Somewhat unsafe or very unsafe

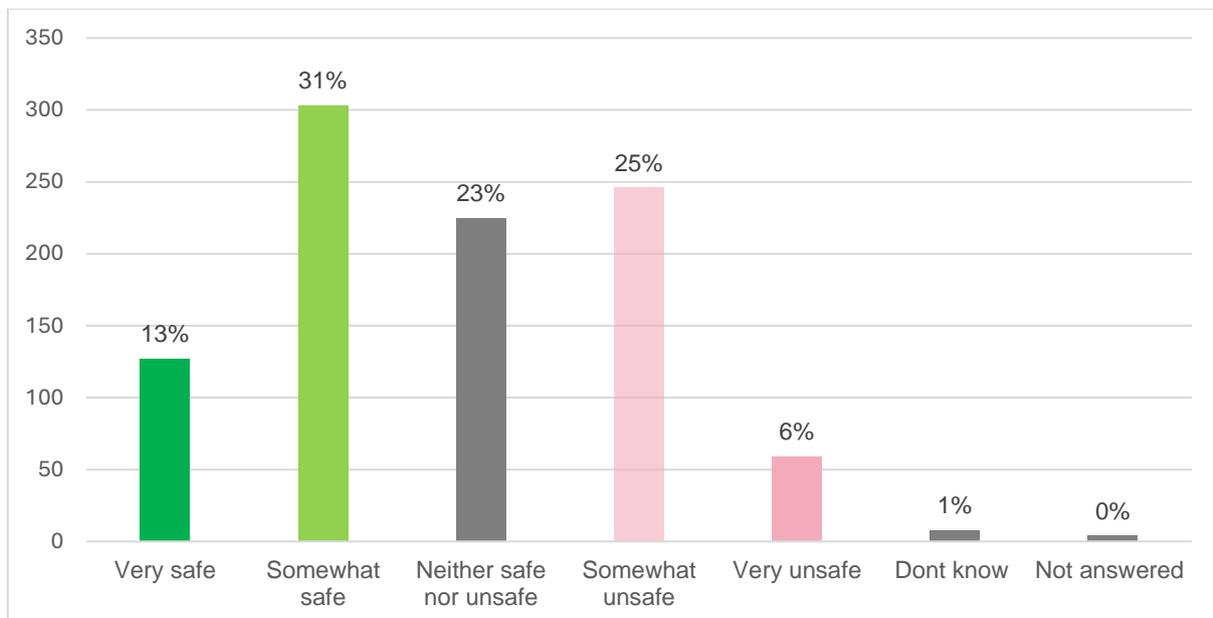


Figure 11 Graph showing how safe people feel in the area

## 3.4 Current town centre perception (continued)

### Sentiment on how safe Hastings town centre feels

#### Positive

**Safety is considered in terms of antisocial behaviour as well as competing needs of cars, mopeds, cycles and pedestrians. Lighting is also an issue as are pavements.**

*"I am a woman and I have to be wary of where I walk alone. But in general I don't find Hastings town centre to be unsafe."*

*"I feel comfortable walking along Queens Rd to Priory Meadow. At night I may not feel as safe."*

*"I feel safe from people but not from cars."*

*"I have never felt unsafe in the town centre. If there is anything untoward, I just walk past."*

*"Just on weekend nights, it can feel a bit lairy later on. As a queer person I would only go to certain bars and nights there, rather than going for a casual drink wherever."*

#### Neutral

Respondents suggested they might feel safe during the day but not at night and less so on the weekends versus weekdays. People also feel less safe during the winter.

*"Only feel somewhat unsafe on Friday, Saturday nights when lots of young people frequent in town centre especially near McDonalds."*

*"I feel relatively safe during the daytime, sometimes uncomfortable at night"*

*"Feel intimidated using the subway near Sports Direct and also the subway linking the town to the seafront."*

*"The paving is terrible and dangerous. Mopeds ignore the traffic restrictions."*

*"I am elderly and just feel insecure in town."*

*"It's sort of dark and unfriendly and empty"*

#### Negative

**The safety of women, girls and children was highlighted. The lack of police presence was often cited as a reason why many feel unsafe.**

*"I wouldn't walk through the town centre on my own ever in the winter, I'm happier to do so in the summer as there are more people around."*

*"Usually, a lot of drunks lingering around or having shouting arguments, not a place I want to hang around with our young children"*

*"I am always worried about being hit by a delivery driver. The street drinkers can be extremely aggressive. The pedestrian area from Millets to the underpass."*

*"Walking through any pedestrian area in the town especially at night is awful... Can't hail down a car to help if anything happens as you are in a pedestrianised area."*

### 3.4 Current town centre perception (continued)

#### How often do people visit Hastings town centre?

Most respondents answered that they use the town centre area between 1-2 times a week. Fewer people use the area daily (14.9%). In summary, the vast majority (92%) use the area at least once per month, with 31% using the area 1-2 times per week.

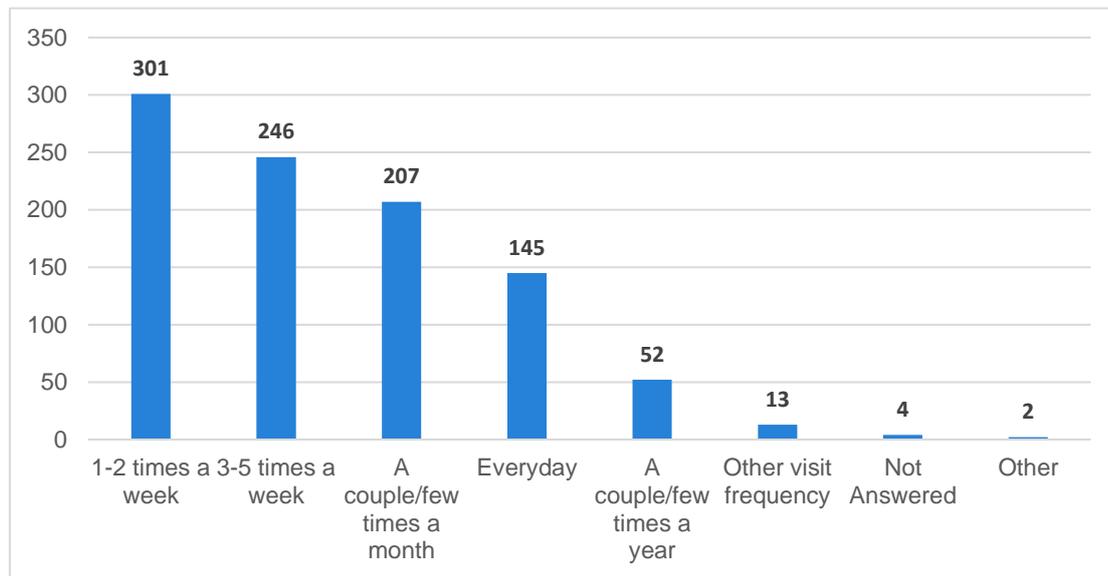


Figure 12 Graph showing how often people visit Hastings town centre

### 3.4 Current town centre perception (continued)

#### When do people visit Hastings town centre?

Most respondents said that they visit the town centre during the daytime during the weekdays or weekends. Significantly less people visit the town centre on evenings during the week.

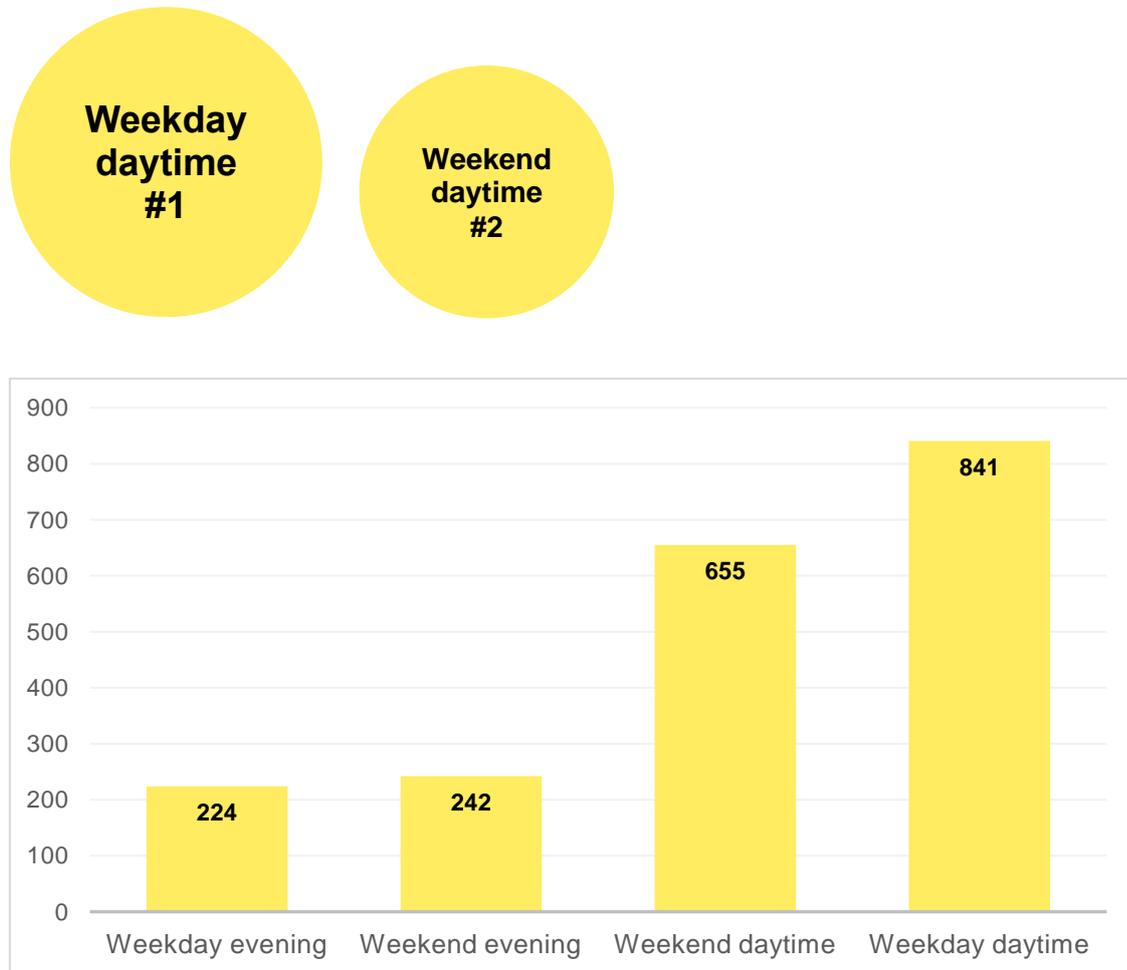


Figure 13 Graph showing when people visit Hastings town centre

### 3.4 Current town centre perception (continued)

#### What are people using the town centre to do?

Multiple answers to this section, illustrating that the town centre is used for several purposes, with shopping, passing through or meeting friends and family being the most popular activities. Other uses include banking, attending meetings, dog grooming, leisure cycling, attending courses, baby groups, library use, medical appointments, errands, walking, volunteering, attending community meetings, and more.



Figure 14 Graph showing what people are using the town centre to do

### 3.4 Current town centre perception (continued)

#### Which parts of the town centre are people using most?

The answers to this question illustrate that most areas of the town centre are used widely, with Priory Meadow, Queens Road and Robertson Street being the most visited destinations. This aligns with the most common activity being shopping. York Gardens, Station Road and Cambridge Road are the places respondents visit the least.

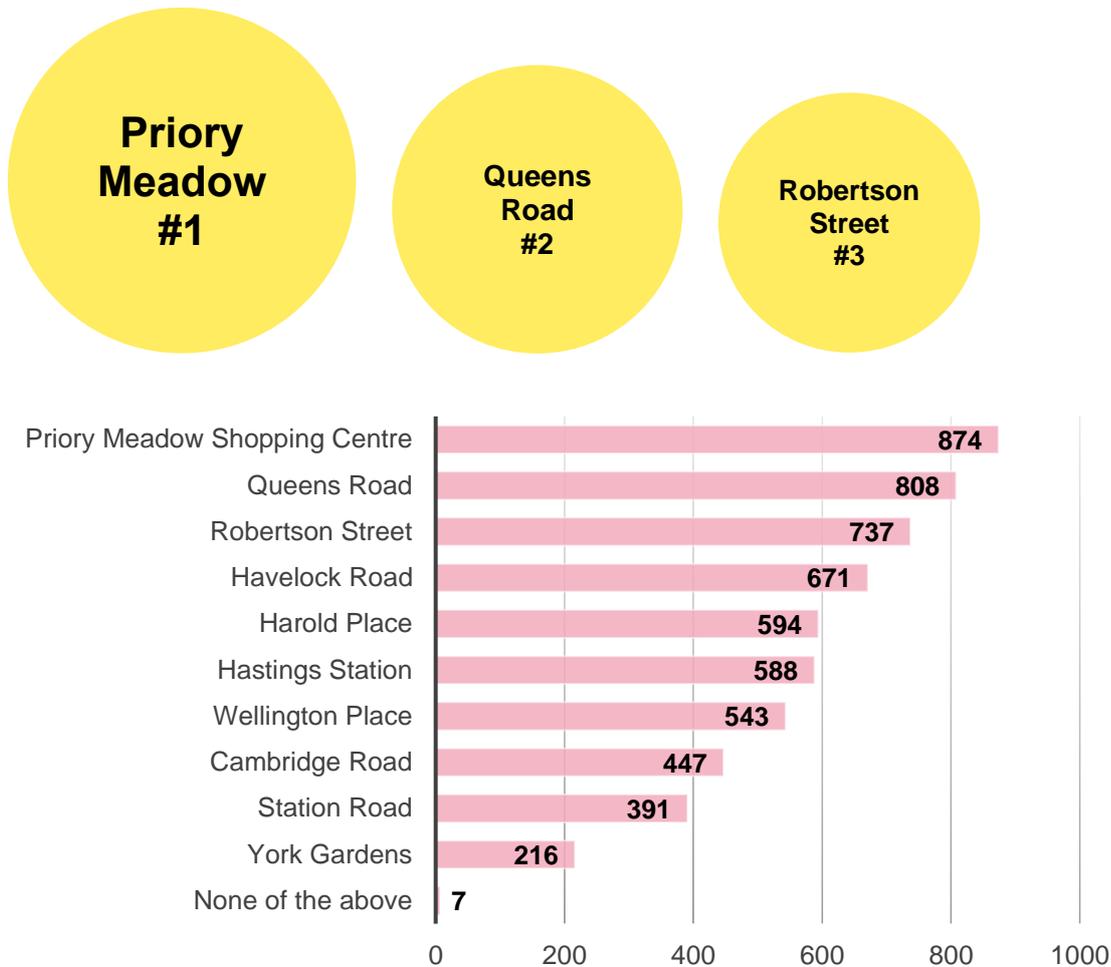


Figure 15 Graph showing which parts of the town centre people are using most

### 3.4 Current town centre perception (continued)

#### What stops people from using the town centre currently?

The primary barrier to using the area was that shops don't meet people's needs, however many stated that nothing stops them from using the town centre currently.

Other reasons included;

- Nothing stops me from using the town centre
- No public toilets
- Prefer Old Town/ Trinity Triangle/ St Leonards
- Not as much going on as other local towns e.g. Eastbourne
- Unattractive
- Parking costs too high
- Buses are unreliable/ infrequent
- Mobility issues. Broken pavements are inaccessible
- Put off by cyclists and drivers
- Antisocial behaviour
- Lack of cycling routes and cycle parking
- Not a pleasant experience
- Inadequate shops and retail provision for a range of resident needs.
- Limited options to sit with food or drink
- Dirty, polluted, too much litter

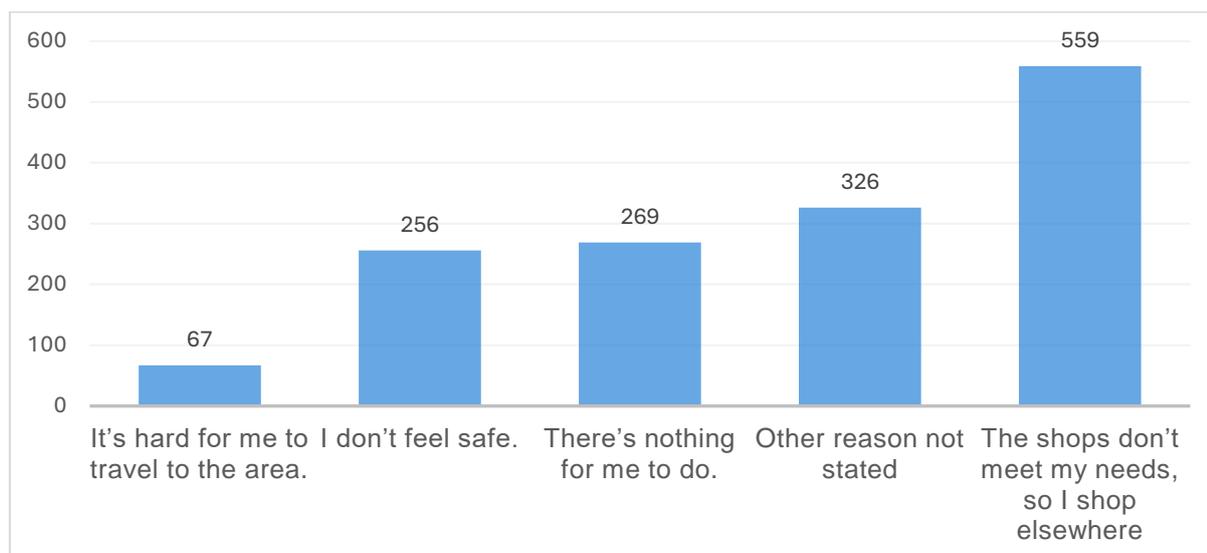
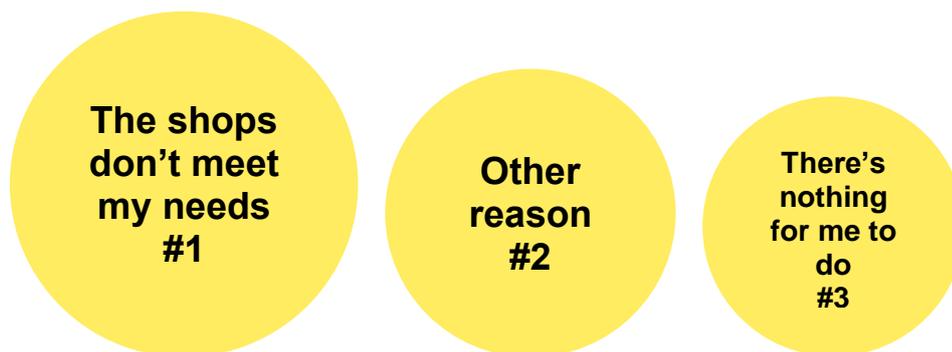


Figure 16 Graph showing what stops people from using the town centre currently

### 3.4 Current town centre perception (continued)

#### How do people travel to and around the town centre?

Multiple answers were provided by respondents in this section, illustrating that the multi-modal ways of visiting the town depending on time of day, purpose of visit or the weather. Most of all respondents walked into Hastings, however, many of these also used the car and buses. The results are limited to type of transport mode used and do not show preferred day to day use of transport.

Other means of travel included

- By van (market trader)
- Work vehicle
- E-bike
- Running
- Walker/ Zimmer frame
- Park out of town and walk in
- Lift and drop off
- Private hire vehicle
- People said they would use buses if they were more reliable and affordable

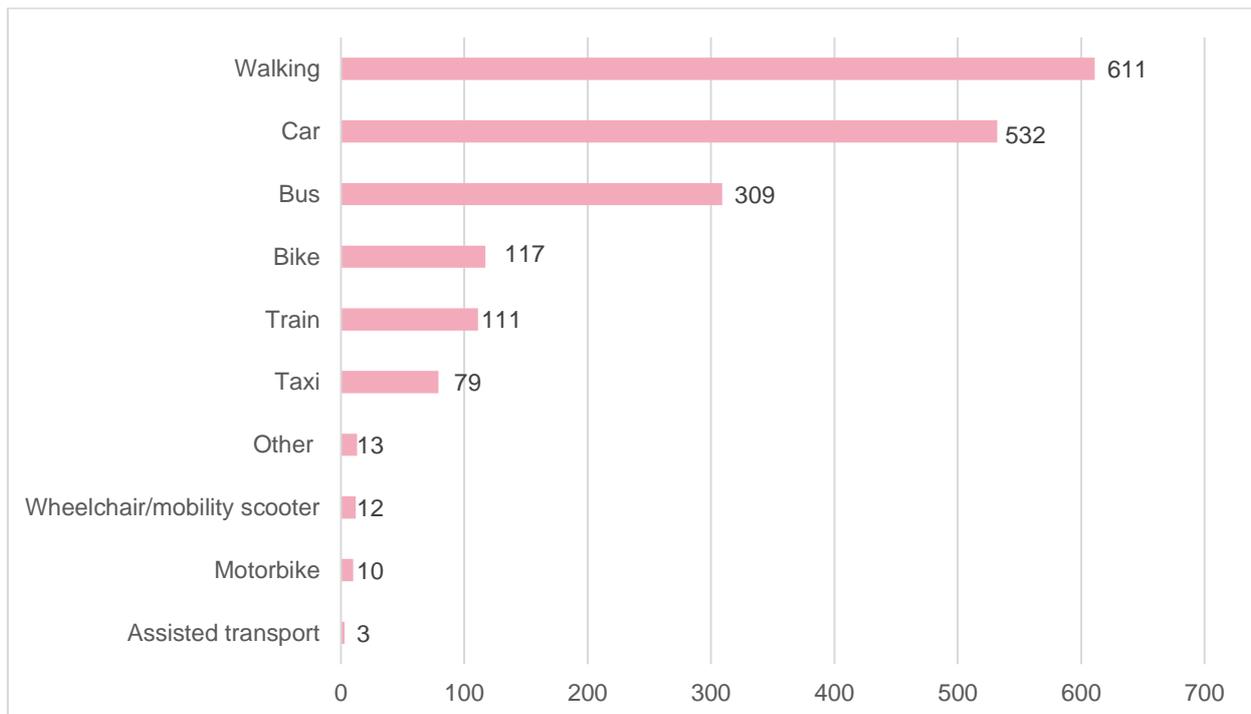
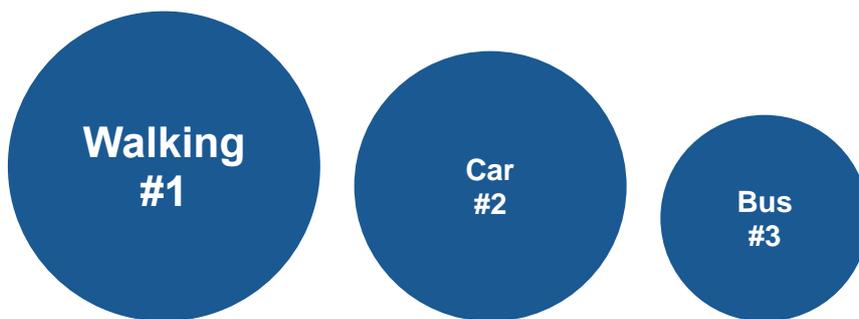


Figure 17 Graph showing how people travel to and around the town centre

### 3.4 Current town centre perception (continued)

#### How easy do people find the area to navigate?

Nearly half of the respondents found it very easy to navigate through the town centre, with a third finding it very easy. This shows that the measures already in place (for example signage) and the scale and layout of the town centre are easy to navigate currently. Only 8% of people found it either hard or very hard to navigate through the project area. Respondents who answered very hard or somewhat hard to navigate were all residents of Hastings.

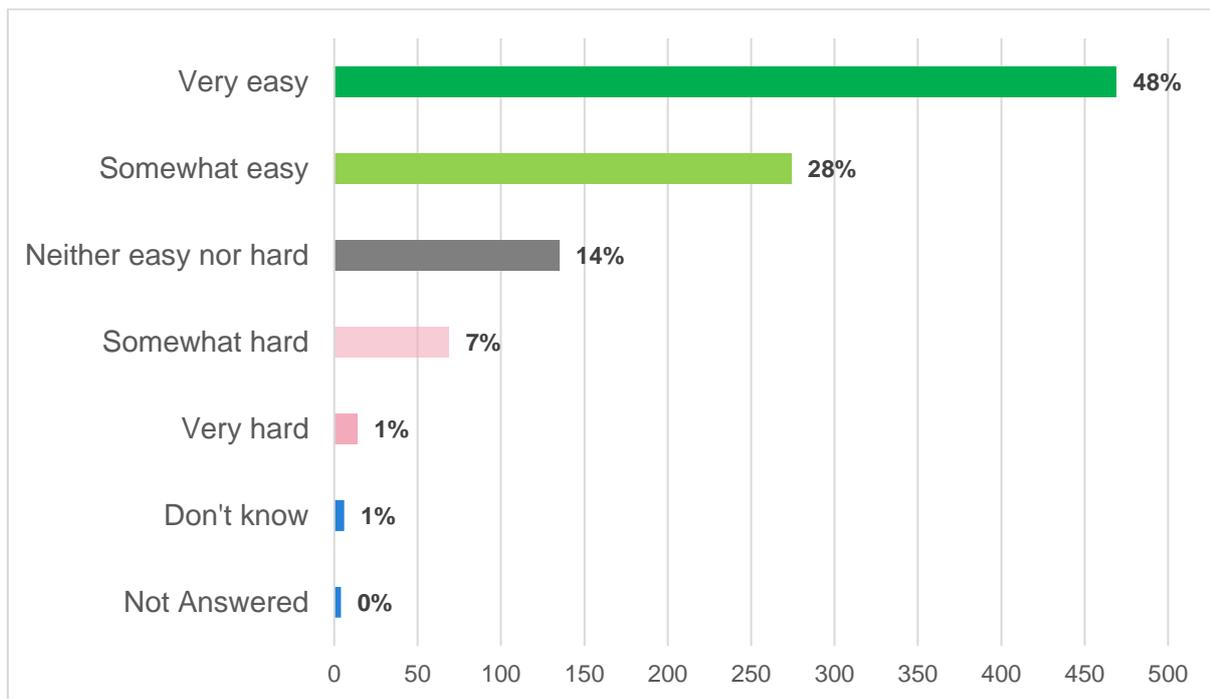
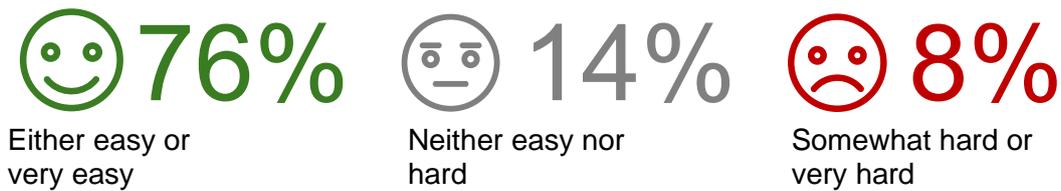


Figure 18 Graph showing how easy people find the area to navigate

### 3.5 Feedback on proposals

This section explores people’s feedback to the proposed designs for Hastings town centre, from the overall proposal to specific areas and suggested transport changes.

The feedback proposal was based on the RIBA (Royal Association of British Architects) Stage 2 design, which was the proposal submitted for the New Town Deal Funding. The questions were structured to provide both quantitative and qualitative data. The results are presented as:

- Summary of the results
- Graphic illustration of the results
- High level statistics on the response
- Image used during RIBA stage 2 consultation for the area
- Natural Language Processing analysed open ended questions and identified common themes across written responses, informing the “You said” comments. They highlight common themes and what people said the most often.
- Summaries that delve into more detail on why people answered positively, neutrally, or negatively. There is also a selection of representative quotes typical of this question, which demonstrate nuance and context behind people’s perspectives.

1. Summary of the results

2. Graphic

3. High level statistics

4. Image from RIBA

5. You said comments

6. Summaries

How to guide for reading the next pages of the public consultation responses

Figure 19 How to guide for reading the next pages of the public consultation responses

### 3.5 Feedback on proposals (continued)

#### How do people feel about the overall proposed ideas for the town centre area?

Proposals for the overall town centre were well received with 25% of respondents agreeing and 25% strongly agreeing with plans to green and provide better connections in the town centre. The main reasons people answered 'neither agree nor disagree' was that the consultation did not provide enough information or detail to give an informed opinion.

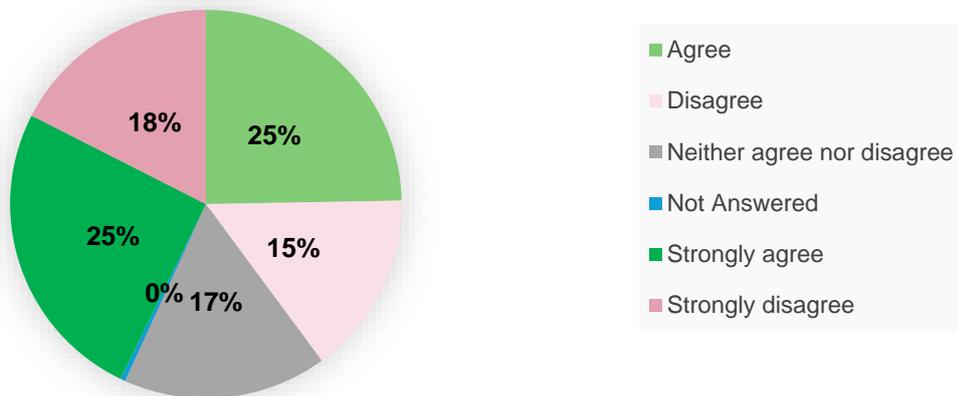


Figure 20

#### 'You Said' Summary

1. The proposed changes to bus routes are unclear and may impact pedestrian spaces and existing businesses. The relocation of the taxi rank also seems to have not been properly considered.
2. That there is a lack of clarity regarding the maintenance of the scheme and the implications of the design to amplify the already noticeable anti-social behaviour. Concerns about the potential for high maintenance costs and the impact on the changes on businesses.
3. You're sceptical about the proposed planting plans and its upkeep. You have doubts about its suitability for a low maintenance scheme.
4. You're concerned about the impact of the proposed changes on the town's character and on local businesses. You've stressed the need for infrastructure improvements before aesthetic changes and are worried the plans will discourage community activities such as market stalls due to the introduction of planters and other obstacles.

### 3.5 Feedback on proposals (continued)

#### What are people’s thoughts on the proposed changes to bus routes?

Proposals for bus route changes were less well received, with the most common answer being ‘neither agree nor disagree’. People were concerned about the impact of changes on accessibility and businesses, and again did not feel there was enough information provided to know what the impact of bus routes changing would be.



Figure 21 Plan of RIBA stage 2 bus movement, not to scale

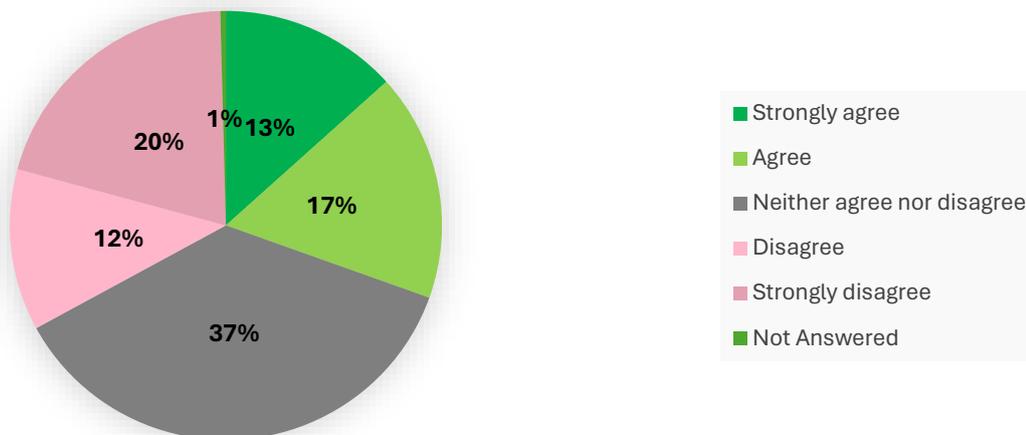


Figure 22

#### ‘You Said’ Summary

1. There is a lack of detail about the southbound services which raises concerns about the impact of rerouting and the impact of the proposed changes to pedestrian corridors.
2. The proposal might lead to traffic congestion on Queens Road which will impact local businesses. The proposal might also reduce parking and drop-off options which many rely on.
3. You have little trust in the ideas about automated barriers, given recent experiences and returning back to a manual system.
4. You're concerned about how changes to transport plans might increase council costs.
5. You're concerned about pedestrian safety on Queens Road should bus lanes and a cycle lane be introduced. There is already high traffic and concerns about increased congestion.

## 3.5 Feedback on proposals (continued)

### Bus route changes: Summaries and sample quotes

#### Positive

**Most think change is required. There was a general positivity towards better bus and cycle routes, but routes for buses, taxis, pedestrians and bikes need to be clearly separated.**

*"More pedestrian space will hopefully encourage flow of walking around town and draw people out into other spaces and shops."*

*"I feel that the town centre is too noisy & fummy from the buses and taxis, Hastings needs to encourage sustainable travel and also improve access for those using wheelchairs or buggies. The proposed plans cover all aspects of this and will hopefully mean people will be happy to come into town using sustainable travel and enjoy being in the quieter, greener and cleaner space."*

#### Neutral

**Most neutral respondents suggested that they don't use buses, or they don't understand the plans enough to comment on them. They suggested that any proposed changes to bus routes need to service the town that people use mainly to shop.**

*"The proposed relocations aren't significantly removed from their current location so hopefully will have minimal real impact. Although consideration of those with disabilities must be at the forefront of this."*

*"I often walk into town if the weather is fine, but after visiting six or seven shops, I am usually laden with heavy shopping and want a bus stop as close as possible, so I can get home easily."*

#### Negative

**Majority negative responses to de-pedestrianisation of Queens Road, with the sentiment that it would be removing the one key widely used pedestrian space in the town centre.**

*"Buses should not be rerouted, especially along Queens Road. This area is currently pedestrianised, after a long battle to have the bollards reinstated. The last thing we need is noisy, polluting buses going along this stretch of road, past 2 cafes where people sit out."*

*"The Queens Road pedestrian section is very busy with people on foot. To turn this back into a road, as it was when I was a child, is a backward step."*

### 3.5 Feedback on proposals (continued)

#### What are people’s thoughts on the proposed changes to Harold Place?

Proposals for bus route changes were less well received, with the most common answer being ‘neither agree nor disagree’. People were concerned about the impact of changes on accessibility and businesses, and again did not feel there was enough information provided to know what the impact of bus routes changing would be.



Figure 23 Schematic of Harold Place for RIBA stage 2

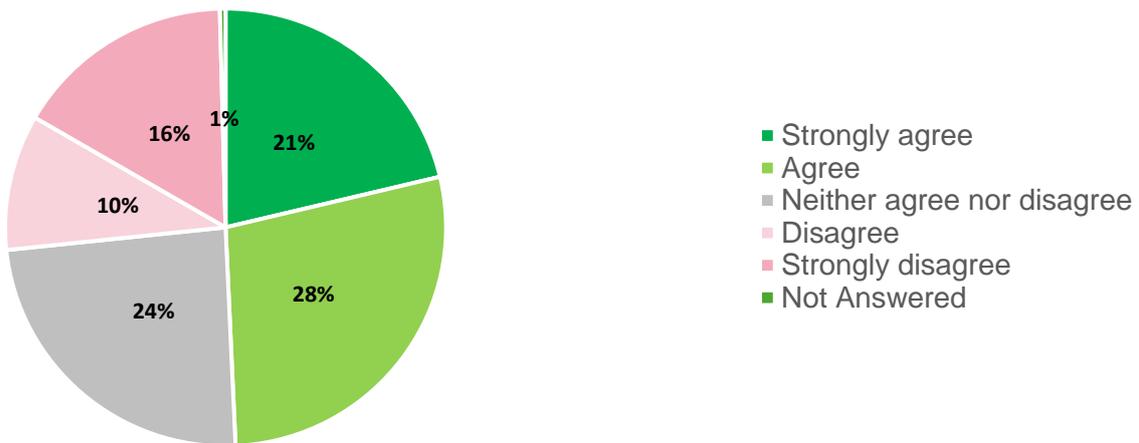


Figure 24

#### ‘You Said’ Summary

1. You're worried about how the proposed changes will encourage antisocial behaviour which is already a concern in the area.
2. You think that the public space would only work if there was permission for more shops, bars, restaurants etc. to open in this area. You're concerned that it might become a 'dead space'.
3. If we're encouraging people to use the town centre, public toilets in the area would be greatly welcomed.
4. The idea of a level crossing from Harold Place to the beach, avoiding the use of the underpass, is welcomed.
5. You're concerned about the potential removal of disabled parking and the possible increase in congestion due to more pedestrian zones.
6. You're concerned about pedestrian safety on Queens Road should bus lanes and a cycle lane be introduced. There is already high traffic and concerns about increased congestion.

## 3.5 Feedback on proposals (continued)

### Harold Place: Summaries and sample quotes

#### Positive

**Harold Place is a dull, underutilised space. The proposal provides the best way to get to the beach and could be improved.**

*“More green areas where town visitors can walk around with good access and places to sit is a positive. There is a distinct lack of greenery in the town centre which affects it negatively.”*

*“Nice idea. I agree with a link to the seafront, my concerns are rough sleepers, street drinkers, lone female safety, future maintenance.”*

*“The overall plan is a real chance to make the centre welcoming for visitors and residents and hopefully enable more small local businesses. Hopefully the changes would enable other independent businesses to open.”*

*“A large community space in this area for live music and food fairs would be great.”*

#### Neutral

The public space would only work if there was provision for more shops, bars, restaurants to open in this area. There's also concern about the removal of disabled parking.

*“Some additional seating would be helpful, but other than that greenery won't improve our town. It needs much much more than a few trees. It needs safe walkways, it needs utilities.”*

*“This area should still have bus stop and taxi ranks. What should be dealt with is the area where the toilets are. There is still enough scope for greening.”*

*“The availability of disabled parking bays in the centre of town is very important and must be given serious consideration. Disabled parking bays are what will ultimately make the town centre accessible - or not.”*

#### Negative

**There is concern about how the plans will encourage anti-social behaviour. Bus access needs to be maintained on Harold Place.**

*“It will remove the main way that people get to and from station plaza. Which will affect people getting to and from the railway station, the college and the doctors surgery.”*

*“It will disrupt transport in the town centre, cause traffic to go through pedestrian areas and probably lead to the end of the market. Keep the road open, they will create a psychological barrier, more so than the road, to footfall onto Robertson Street. Bring back the toilets.”*

*“If you are disabled you wouldn't be able to access this area, thereby discriminating against disabled people. The plan is good but needs to be more disability friendly.”*

*“Poor use of money when the money is needed elsewhere.”*

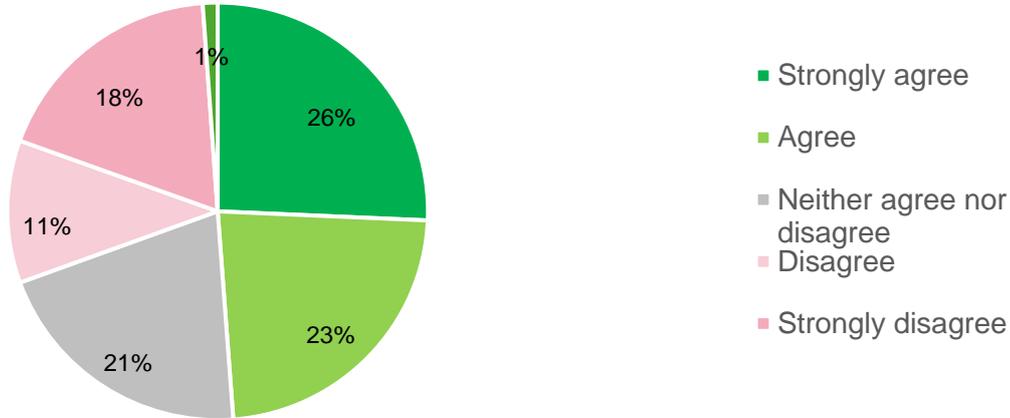
### 3.5 Feedback on proposals (continued)

#### What are people’s thoughts on the proposed addition of a segregated cycle route from Hastings train station to the seafront?

Proposals for a segregated cycle lane were well received, with 26% strongly agreeing and 23% agreeing. The main concerns were that this was not a desirable or well used cycle route, and many people voiced concerns about the risk of improper separation between cyclists and pedestrians, creating safety risks.



Figure 25 Schematic of Havelock Road for RIBA stage 2



#### ‘You Said’ Summary

1. You're not sure about the necessity of a cycle lane from the station to the seafront. Some think its introduction will promote safer and greener transport, but you also think it won't be used by cyclists as that it's not a route they would need to use.
2. If designed well, it could encourage less car usage and contribute to improved health and wellbeing. You also think more bike racks are needed.
3. You're concerned about the safety of pedestrians and the potential for conflict between cyclists, pedestrians, and other road users. You said there's a need for proper segregation and enforcement because cyclists disregard traffic rules.
4. Some think the cycle lane might not be used as much due to the hilly nature of the town.
5. You think the money could be better spent on other projects like improving the seafront cycle path or addressing other pressing issues in the town.

## 3.5 Feedback on proposals (continued)

### Havelock Road: Summaries and sample quotes

#### Positive

**Anything to improve cycling is a good thing but there's a need to keep cyclists away from pedestrians. Many noted how dangerous it feels to cycle in Hastings**

*"This a much needed and very good and direct safe cycle route but an East- West cycle route - probably as a shared route, is also needed."*

*"We cannot miss any opportunity to improve cycling infrastructure."*

*"Feels too dangerous to cycle in Hastings. (Potholes don't help either). Additional problem is that bikes are easily stolen. Needs safe places to lock them up."*

#### Neutral

**Focus on connection of station to seafront raised and issues with how many people cycle in town to warrant the plan. Concerns raised of the proposed cycle lane disrupting the flow of traffic.**

*"Cycling is an absolute scourge for pedestrians, so this MUST be well policed with effective barriers, CCTV surveillance and the will to prosecute offenders. I absolutely support promotion of cycling for health and other benefits, but it does not mix with pedestrianisation and is a clear and present danger to vulnerable people, including disabled, elderly and small children."*

*"Secure cycle parking needed."*

*"To have one is a good idea, the proposed route is not."*

#### Negative

**Most negative responses were from people who weren't cyclists themselves or those who raised the challenges proposed by Hastings to cycling (i.e. it's hilly, bad weather)**

*"I am a cyclist and I don't feel that a dedicated cycle lane for that short distance is warranted- havelock road is plenty wide enough."*

*"But not at the cost of pedestrians. I hate bike lanes in central London. They don't slow down."*

*"IF it WAS completely safely segregated from pedestrians AND cyclists kept to it (was policed), then that MIGHT be an improvement, but I rarely see any cyclists cycling this route - and I am in this area nearly every day."*

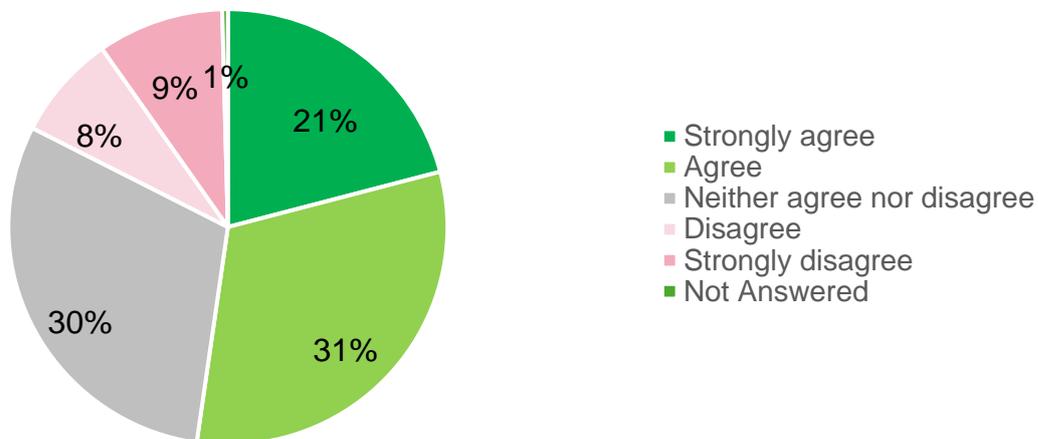
### 3.5 Feedback on proposals (continued)

#### What do people think about the ideas to better connect the central area and Wellington Place?

Proposals for Wellington Place were well received, with 21% strongly agreeing and 31% agreeing. 30% also selected Neither agree nor disagree. Out of all the areas, Wellington Place’s proposals had the least negative feedback. Respondents liked the idea of Wellington Place becoming more pedestrian friendly if the current issues with delivery vehicles and traffic restrictions are addressed.



Figure 26 Schematic of Wellington Place for RIBA stage 2



#### ‘You Said’ Summary

1. You think that Wellington Place should be made more pedestrian-friendly with improved pavements, wheelchair access and seating.
2. You see this area as a traffic free space that is suitable for the ageing population who need to get to shops, cafes & toilets.
3. You think parking needs to be limited but we need to consider the access needs of delivery drivers and also the experience of tourists.
4. You think there is a need for better lighting and cleanliness in the area to make it more appealing and safer.
5. You think the area should be better connected to other parts of town and help promote footfall across Hastings and St Leonards.

## 3.5 Feedback on proposals (continued)

### Wellington Place: Summaries and sample quotes

#### Positive

**This area is one of the least loved parts of the town and would improve integration between new town and Castle/Old Town. The area should be made more pedestrian-friendly with improved pavements, wheelchair access and seating.**

*"I think this design will improve the feeling of being safe."*

*"The town should flow through to make it more attractive. The centre should go back to being foot only and stop delivery drivers from accessing town."*

*"It's an area which is defined by the needs of cars. Everywhere needs more nature."*

*"Something needs to be done as this street is just a horrible place to be in."*

*"This will turn it from a scruffy, hard place into a welcoming soft place!"*

#### Neutral

**Many feel the area already provides a suitable throughway point and doesn't need improving. There is a need for better lighting and cleanliness in the area to make it more appealing and safer.**

*"This will only work if cars are stopped from driving/ parking there."*

*"Improving disability access needs to be better planned for along with accessible toilet."*

*"I love the idea of a playground, but you need to resolve where the current users of this space go - it's not okay to just move them away somewhere else."*

*"Where is the money coming from to maintain this for future years with restricted funding?"*

*"I can already walk or cycle that way so why a problem? Just get rid of the uber and delivery drivers."*

#### Negative

**There's concern about the dominance of cars in the area and the behaviour around the fast-food joints and a belief that the plans as laid out won't fix the underlying problems but potentially perpetuate them.**

*"I agree it needs to be improved but not as presented. It's already accessible, but it needs to be made much nicer in a sustainable way, taking into account the wind. Above all the unsightly Sports Direct facade redesigned."*

*"I am concerned that this plan would encourage and build on a problem with congregation of loitering and inappropriate behaviour. If some sort of feature could be added, e.g. Water feature like on Bexhill seafront or play area/small skate park or outdoor gym area or something that would encourage a wider usage for all ages as opposed to loitering Street drinkers and drug users."*

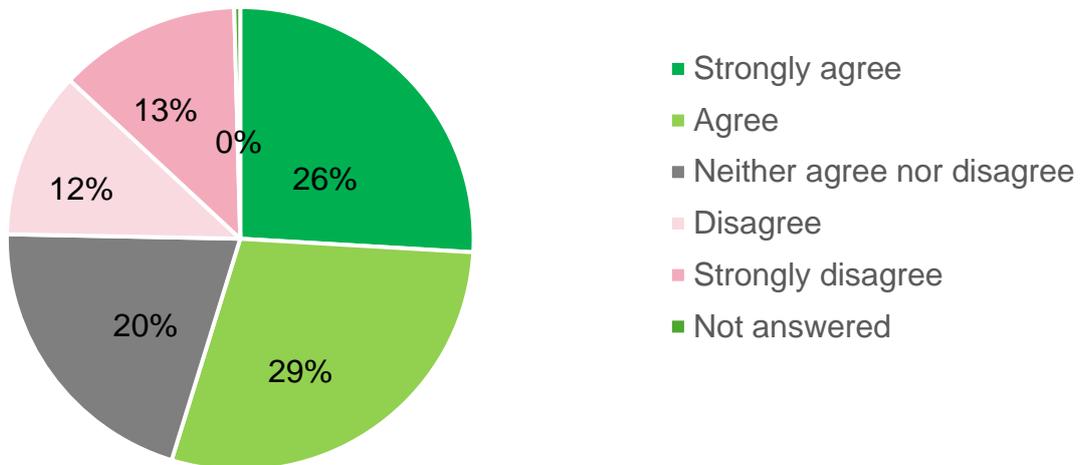
### 3.5 Feedback on proposals (continued)

**What do people think about the proposed changes to the central area?**

Proposals for the central space were well received with 29% of respondents agreeing and 26% strongly agreeing with the concept of a central area that connects and creates a new destination in the town centre. This space is to continue as a flexible functional and programmable space, which currently accommodates the town market on Thursdays.



Figure 27 Schematic of Central Area for RIBA stage 2



**‘You Said’ Summary**

1. There are several outdoor event spaces nearby that do not operate at full capacity. Why is another one needed?
2. You think that the town centre is increasingly residential and is next to a large retirement home and a private apartment block therefore the area shouldn’t be designed to facilitate large events.
3. You’re not clear who would fund and operate activity in this area. Instead, the market could be extended or an open area for town events.
4. You felt the general maintenance and upkeep of the area is poor. There are businesses that do not maintain their properties well, and the flats above are unattractive.
5. There is a need for proper public toilet facilities if there are to be festivals and mass events. You also have concerns about the area becoming overcrowded and unenjoyable for residents.

## 3.5 Feedback on proposals (continued)

### Central Area: Summaries and sample quotes

#### Positive

**Any central space needs to be left decluttered making it easy to produce events. While positive, people would like to see more thought into programming of how these spaces are used and activated. There's also a need for fixed power supplies to support people and make it viable for markets and small events to set up.**

*"The arts, public entertainment, community events, pop ups, and festivals will draw more visitors and tourists to the town centre, benefitting well-being, local businesses, and the local economy."*

*"I think open green space with growing things and play space is wonderful. Please don't use loads of the money on public art."*

*"In principle I agree with more trees, planting and friendly comfortable, easy clean seating etc - difficult to envisage with the drawings proposed - local artists/creative involvement would be desirable."*

#### Neutral

**There are several outdoor event spaces nearby that do not operate at full capacity. A large amount of planting is proposed, but it's unclear how it will be maintained.**

*"Who is going to be putting on and going to these pop-ups and festivals? Are they what the town wants and needs? We could run the risk of creating empty stages and bandstands that have been seen in other towns and cities."*

*"I'm not convinced it will really make the town centre more attractive or alluring. And I'm not sure it will really contribute to environmental wellbeing,"*

*"We need to have affordable places for people to enjoy, not some 'state of the art' events and festivals that people can 'look at but not touch'."*

#### Negative

**The town centre is increasingly residential. The focus of the area should not be large public events. There is a need for proper public toilet facilities if there are to be festivals. There are also concerns about the area becoming overcrowded and unenjoyable for residents.**

*"Can the local community afford these spaces, unless they are going to be free?? Why do you want to encourage people to sit in the town?"*

*"Unless this proposal includes a budget and a plan for maintaining, cleaning and supervising the area I believe it is destined to become another littered patch of mud with some dead trees and a few filthy benches."*

*"How long would it be before it is vandalised, look what happened to the clock tower."*

*"You cannot create a new destination. People come to Hastings to go to the seafront and the Old Town. Locals go to town to go to the shops. More seating will just encourage on street drinking and anti-social behaviour."*

## 3.5 Feedback on proposals (continued)

### What should the central area be called?

The central area and the heart of the scheme is currently a junction between roads and has lost its name. There was no unanimous consensus on what the area should be called. Below are the most mentioned suggestions, while on the left they have been split into key themes, for naming the central area. It is likely further workshops with younger people to develop the name will be facilitated in the future.

These key themes represent the diverse range of ideas and perspectives regarding the naming of the central area, reflecting both the historical significance and future aspirations of the community.

#### Historical References:

1. Many suggestions draw from the area's history, including references to the Battle of Hastings, Harold II, William the Conqueror, and the Norman Conquest.
2. Suggestions related to historical figures like Sydney Little, Elizabeth Blackwell, and Thomas Ross.

#### Memorial and Clock Tower:

1. Strong sentiment towards reinstating the memorial aspect, with suggestions like "The Memorial Square" or "Memorial Plaza."
2. Ideas to restore or replicate the original clock tower as part of the renaming process.

#### Local Identity:

1. Preference for names already familiar to locals, such as "Harold Place" or "The Memorial," emphasizing the importance of retaining local identity.
2. Suggestions honouring notable local figures.

#### Natural and Environmental Themes:

1. Suggestions related to nature, including "Urban Forest," and "Meadow Place."
2. Emphasis on sustainability and eco-friendly aspects

#### Community and Creativity:

1. Ideas focusing on community involvement, like "The People's Space".
2. Proposals to involve local artists and arts groups in the renaming process, highlighting creativity and cultural significance, or host a competition.
3. Calls for community engagement and public input in the renaming process, ensuring inclusivity and transparency.

#### Most mentioned ideas included:

- The Memorial
- Albert Place/Square/Circus/Memorial
- Harold Place/Square
- The Hub
- Battle Square/Plaza
- Memorial Square/Plaza
- Hastings Coast/Marina
- Seven Dial Square
- Wellington Memorial Gardens
- Prioory Square/Place
- Sea View/Square
- Hastings Marina
- Memorial Gardens
- Castle View/Castle Place
- Sea Parade
- The Boulevard
- Plant Meadows / Meadow Place
- The people's place

## 3.5 Feedback on proposals (continued)

### Future greening areas – where else needs more green space?

In the future we may look to extend this approach with the introduction of more green corridors and spaces to the rest of the town. Where else in Hastings and St Leonards is suitable?

This question forms part of the wider Garden Town Team strategy, to use this project in the town centre as a catalyst to deliver and extent as sustainable resilient design in other areas of Hastings. By designing at catchment wide scale and extending the greening into surrounding areas, there will be multiple cumulative benefits associated including improved health and wellbeing, reduced flooding, carbon sequestration, improved temperatures, connecting ecological corridors and habitats, improving the sense of place and in turn investment into the town and its surroundings.

### Most mentioned ideas included

1. **Seafront:** Numerous respondents emphasized the need for greening initiatives along the seafront, including planting trees, creating green corridors, and enhancing landscaping to improve aesthetics and attract visitors.
2. **Town Centre:** Many suggestions focused on greening efforts in the town centre, particularly along main streets like Queens Road and Alexandra Park, as well as around shopping areas and public spaces to create a more inviting environment.
3. **St Leonards:** Several respondents mentioned St Leonards as an area needing greening, with specific mentions of places like Norman Road, London Road, and Kings Road, highlighting the potential for street planting, pedestrianization, and overall improvement of the commercial centre.
4. **Parks and Gardens:** There were calls for improving existing parks and gardens, such as Alexandra Park, Warrior Square Gardens, and Summerfields grounds, indicating a desire to enhance green spaces for recreational use and community enjoyment.
5. **Connectivity Corridors:** Respondents also highlighted the importance of creating green corridors to connect different parts of the town, including areas like Trinity Triangle, Claremont, and pathways linking old and new town areas, aiming to promote pedestrian-friendly environments and enhance connectivity between neighbourhoods.

Please note that there is currently no further budget allocated to future greening initiatives.



# Appendix 1: Consultation material

This section contains the range of consultation materials produced for the public consultation.

Materials included;

- Consultation brochure
- Social media assets
- Workshop materials
- Postcards
- Posters



Figure 28 Social Media post on Hastings town deal Instagram page

# Appendix 1: Consultation material

Materials produced for public consultation, including survey, postcard, brochure and poster.

**Hastings Town Centre Public Realm and Green Connections**

**Public Consultation**  
22 January - 01 March 2024

**Have your say**

We want your views on the proposed plans as part of the Hastings Town Centre Public Realm and Green Connections Project. Your views are important to us, and this public consultation is an opportunity to provide feedback and comments on the latest plans to help shape the detailed design stage.

**Share your views**

The consultation is open from **22nd January 2024 to 1st March 2024**. You will have until **11:59pm on 1st March** to respond to the survey.

To access the survey, use this link or scan the QR code  
<https://consultation.eastsussex.gov.uk/economy-transport-environment/hastingsgreconnections/>

**East Sussex Facebook:**  
<https://www.facebook.com/EastSussexCC/>  
**East Sussex @:** <https://twitter.com/EastSussexCC>  
**Email:** [HastingsGreenConnections@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:HastingsGreenConnections@eastsussex.gov.uk)  
**Phone:** 01323 423127  
**Hastings Town Deal Facebook:**  
<https://www.facebook.com/HastingsDeal>  
**Hastings Town Deal @:** <https://twitter.com/HastingsDeal>

You can stay informed about the Hastings Town Centre Public Realm and Green Connections project by visiting:  
<https://www.hastingstowndeal.co.uk/town-centre-public-realm-green-connections>

**In-person consultation sessions**

We are hosting a number of in-person drop in consultation events during the consultation period. The project team will be able to answer your questions and provide you with more information about the proposed schemes

Public Exhibition 1	Saturday 27th January 10:00-16:00	Public exhibition in Priory Meadow Queens Rd, Hastings TN24 1PH
Public Exhibition 2	Tuesday 6th February 13:00-16:00	Public exhibition in Hastings Community Hub at The Old Town Hall, High Street, TN24 3EW
Pop-ups	27th February 13:00-16:30 16:00-18:00	Pop-ups at local supermarkets Asda - Battle Road, TN27 5AA Tesco - Church Wood Drive, TN24 9RB

Paper copies of the brochure and surveys can be found at:  
 • Hastings Library, Bressay Institute, 13 Claremont, TN24 1HE  
 • Hastings Town Hall, Station Rd, TN24 1NG  
 • The Common Room, Eagle House, 27 - 29 Cambridge Road, TN24 1DJ  
 • Summerfields Leisure Centre, Bohemia Rd, TN24 1ET

Funded by UK Government Hastings Borough Council East Sussex County Council

Home Find Activities We Asked, You Said, We Did Mailing List Signup About People Bank

Funded by UK Government Hastings Borough Council East Sussex County Council

**Hastings Green Connections Public Consultation - 22nd January to 1st March 2024**

**Overview**

**About**

The Hastings Green Connections project is one of seven projects within the Hastings Town Investment Plan. The Hastings Green Connections project outlines early ideas to improve public spaces in our town centre and make the area more green, attractive and fun. We're outlining plans we think will improve movement, the use of and pride in the town centre and make it a place for people to mingle, meet, play and shop.

The Hastings Green Connection project aims to:

1. Develop safe, vibrant and inclusive public spaces whilst promoting active and sustainable travel
2. Encourage better use of public spaces with more seating and more room for public art.
3. Promote biodiversity and greening to contribute to the health and wellbeing

**Closes 1 Mar 2024**  
**Opened 22 Jan 2024**

**Contact**  
 The HCC Team  
 07514 721387  
[HastingsGreenConnections@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:HastingsGreenConnections@eastsussex.gov.uk)

**Hastings Town Centre Public Realm & Green Connections**

Have your say on plans to transform the new town centre, through improved public spaces and green corridors.

Our town centre is changing. In the near future, central Hastings will look, feel and function like a different place. Imagine greener, safer streets. More space to meet, sit and simply, a little differently and more joyful spaces that work for local people and wildlife.

**Scheduled Events:**

**Supermarket pop-up**  
 Wednesday 27th February  
 13:30pm at Asda - Battle Road, TN27 5AA  
 4:45pm at Tesco - Church Wood Drive, TN24 9RB

**Public exhibitions**  
 • Saturday 27th January  
 Priory Meadow, Queens Road, TN24 1PH  
 • Tuesday 6th February  
 Hastings Community Hub, Old Town Hall, High Street, TN24 3EW

Paper copies of the survey can be found at:  
 • Hastings Library, Bressay Institute, 13 Claremont, TN24 1HE  
 • Hastings Town Hall, Station Rd, TN24 1NG  
 • The Common Room, Eagle House, 27 - 29 Cambridge Road, TN24 1DJ  
 • Summerfields Leisure Centre, Bohemia Rd, TN24 1ET

Scan the QR code to complete the survey online!

Tell us what you think!

Scan QR code to access survey, or visit <https://consultation.eastsussex.gov.uk/economy-transport-environment/hastingsgreconnections/>

Funded by UK Government Hastings Borough Council East Sussex County Council

**North to South connection**

**Havelock Road**

All Havelock Road are prioritising active travel (walking and cycling) and connecting the station to the seafront.

**Proposals:**

1. More tree planting
2. Surface road infrastructure / Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS)
3. Better pavements
4. Safer crossings for pedestrians
5. Improved cycle lanes
6. More street lighting to promote safety

**North to South connection**

**Harold Place, Lost River Park & the Coastal Link**

All Harold Place, we want to create the Lost River Park, an interpretation of the historic rivers which used to exist in the town centre, a pedestrian space with play areas and more seating. We want to better connect the town to the seafront with safer crossings and more integrated spaces.

**Proposals for Coastal Link:**

1. New pavements
2. New cycle lanes
3. Strong links to the sea
4. Play spaces
5. Coastal planting

**Proposals for Lost River Park:**

1. New pavements
2. Rock features for play
3. New seafront bank
4. River play area
5. Surface water drainage (SUDS)
6. Sustainable drainage
7. Community park
8. Places to meet

Figure 29 Materials produced for consultation

Materials produced for stakeholder workshops in January – February 2024

# Hastings Town Centre Public Realm and Green Connections

## Stakeholder workshops pack 24th January & 1st February




This pack includes a selection of pages from the consultation brochure which we'd particularly like your feedback on. As you read through the booklet, please consider the following questions. Throughout the booklet, there are spaces for you to write your thoughts.

1. What excites you about this plan?
2. What are your specific concerns?
3. How might these concerns be mitigated?

Notes

**Project Background**

### Overall concept design

Here are some features and possible design concepts which form the vision for the town centre:



1. Extension of footway
2. Revised crossing, prioritising pedestrians and cycle movement
3. New segregated 2-way cycle lane
4. Additional street trees
5. Removal of car parking and integration of SuDS, a sustainable drainage system
6. Retention of northbound bus movement
7. Improve accessibility for pedestrian crossing via Havelock Road
8. Maximize planting around roundabout
9. New public space
10. New public art
11. Realignment of Queens Road
12. Pedestrian promenade
13. Existing street improved in planting
14. Placed to meet
15. River park and play space
16. Coastal link and play space
17. Single banks
18. Realignment of Nathan Street
19. Reopening of underpass
20. Signal controlled pedestrian and cycle crossing to/from the western promenade

Hastings Town Centre Public Realm and Green Connections - Public Consultation Brochure Page 7

1. What excites you about this plan?
2. What are your specific concerns?
3. How might these concerns be mitigated?

Figure 30

# Appendix 2: Quantitative data from the public consultation

This section contains the public consultation results from the 972 respondents (the majority respondents online except for 82 respondents who submitted their feedback by post or email).

The survey questions were not “forced responses” and respondents could choose if they did or did not want to provide an answer.

The information is displayed in order of questions set out on the public survey. The data has been processed using a pivot table to simplify the results. This is the raw data from the consultation survey that has fed into the consultation report.

It is evident that the majority (93%) of responses came from the age group 30-79, with very little representation from younger age groups. The majority of respondents were from the 50-69 age bracket (48%). At the same time 82% of the respondents consider themselves white British, this percentage as well as overall percentage of other ethnicities are similar to the Census population of 2011 (Appendix 2).

The following pivot tables only show closed questions and not open-ended text input questions

## Respondent demographics

### Age breakdown

15 and under	0	0.0%
16-19	8	1.0%
20-29	29	3.6%
30-39	99	12.5%
40-49	146	18.4%
50-59	172	21.6%
60-69	207	26.0%
70-79	120	15.1%
80-89	14	1.8%
Over 90	0	0.0%
Prefer not to say	50	6.3%
TOTAL	845	

### Gender breakdown

Female	507	52.4%
Male	375	38.8%
Prefer not to say	51	5.3%
Not Answered	24	2.5%
Prefer to self-describe	6	1%
Non-binary	4	0.4%
TOTAL	967	

### Age breakdown

White English/Welsh/Scottish /Northern Irish/British	792	82.1%
Prefer not to say	57	5.9%
Not Answered	37	3.8%
Any other White background	33	3.4%
Mixed White & Asian	11	1.1%
White Irish	12	1.2%
Mixed White & Black Caribbean	5	0.5%
Any other Mixed or Multiple background	4	0.4%
Asian or Asian British Indian	3	0.3%
White Gypsy / Irish Traveller	3	0.3%
Any other ethnic group (Please add detail below)	2	0.2%
White Roma	2	0.2%
African background	1	0.1%
Any other Asian background	1	0.1%
Caribbean	1	0.1%
Mixed White & Black African	1	0.1%
TOTAL	965	

## Appendix 2: Quantitative data from public consultation

### Sexual orientation

'Straight' / Heterosexual	712	74.0%
Prefer not to say	130	13.5%
Not Answered	48	5.0%
Gay or Lesbian	43	4.5%
Bisexual	23	2.4%
Prefer to self-describe (Please add detail below)	6	0.6%
TOTAL	962	

### Physical and mental health conditions

No (Please go to question 31)	607	62.8%
Yes (Please go to question 30)	223	23.1%
Prefer not to say (Please go to question 31)	103	10.7%
Not Answered	33	3.4%
TOTAL	966	

If you answered yes to the previous question, do any of your conditions reduce day to day activity?

Not Answered	409	43.9%
Not at all	262	28.1%
Yes, a little	139	14.9%
Prefer not to say	61	6.6%
Yes, a lot	60	6.4%
TOTAL	931	

### Religion or belief

No religion	508	52.7%
Christian (including Church of England, Catholic, Protestant and all other Christian denominations)	272	28.2%
Prefer not to say	92	9.5%
Not Answered	46	4.8%
Philosophical belief (Please add detail below)	16	1.7%
Any other religion (Please add detail below)	14	1.5%
Buddhist	10	1.0%
Jewish	3	0.3%
Muslim	1	0.1%
Pagan	1	0.1%
Sikh	1	0.1%
TOTAL	964	

## Appendix 2: Quantitative data from public consultation

### Q1 – Who are you?

Someone responding on behalf of a business or organisation based in Hastings	49
Someone who lives in Hastings	874
Someone who visits Hastings for recreational or leisure purposes including seeing friends or family	128
Someone who works in Hastings	234
TOTAL (multiple responses allowed)	1285

### Q2 – How often do you visit?

1-2 times a week	301	31.0%
3-5 times a week	246	25.4%
A couple/few times a month	207	21.3%
Everyday	145	14.9%
A couple/few times a year	52	5.4%
Other visit frequency	13	1.3%
Not Answered	4	0.4%
Other	2	0.2%
TOTAL	970	

### Q3 – How did you find out about the consultation?

Postcard	33
East Sussex County Council website	53
In person consultation event	80
Press Release	80
Hastings Borough Council website	185
Word of Mouth	191
Email	210
Social Media	356
TOTAL (multiple responses allowed)	1188

## Appendix 2: Quantitative data from public consultation

Q4 – How does our town centre currently make you feel?

Very Happy	19
Happy	85
Indifferent	237
Unhappy	357
Very unhappy	262
Don't know	8
Not Answered	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>972</b>

Q5 – Which parts of the town centre do you pass through regularly?

None of the above	7
York Gardens	216
Station Road	391
Cambridge Road	447
Wellington Place	543
Hastings Station	588
Harold Place	594
Havelock Road	671
Robertson Street	737
Queens Road	808
Priory Meadow Shopping Centre	874
<b>TOTAL (multiple responses allowed)</b>	<b>5876</b>

Q6– What are the common reasons for you to visit the town centre?

Other	133
To go to work	178
Entertainment	315
Meeting friends and family	419
To pass through on your way to somewhere else	672
Shopping	781
<b>TOTAL (multiple responses allowed)</b>	<b>2498</b>

## Appendix 2: Quantitative data from public consultation

### Q7 – When do you typically come to the town centre?

Weekday evening	224
Weekend evening	242
Weekend daytime	655
Weekday daytime	841
<b>TOTAL (multiple responses allowed)</b>	<b>1962</b>

### Q8 –How do you typically travel to / from the town centre?

Assisted transport	3
Motorbike	10
Wheelchair/mobility scooter	12
Other (Please specify below)	13
Taxi	79
Train	111
Bike	117
Bus	309
Car	532
Walking	611
<b>TOTAL (multiple responses allowed)</b>	<b>1797</b>

### Q10 – Does anything stop you from using the town centre?

It's hard for me to travel to the area.	67
I don't feel safe.	256
There's nothing for me to do.	269
Other reason not stated	326
The shops don't meet my needs, so I shop elsewhere	559
<b>TOTAL (multiple responses allowed)</b>	<b>1477</b>

### Q11 – How safe do you feel in the area?

Somewhat safe	303	31.2%
Somewhat unsafe	246	25.3%
Neither safe nor unsafe	225	23.1%
Very safe	127	13.1%
Very unsafe	59	6.1%
Don't know	8	0.8%
Not Answered	4	0.4%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>972</b>	

## Appendix 2: Quantitative data from public consultation

### Q12 – How easy do you find the area to navigate?

Very easy	469	48.3%
Somewhat easy	274	28.2%
Neither easy nor hard	135	13.9%
Somewhat hard	69	7.1%
Very hard	14	1.4%
Don't know	6	0.6%
Not Answered	4	0.4%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>971</b>	

### Q13 – How do you feel about the proposed ideas for the overall town centre?

Strongly agree	245	25.3%
Agree	239	24.7%
Strongly disagree	169	17.5%
Neither agree nor disagree	163	16.9%
Disagree	147	15.2%
Not Answered	4	0.4%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>967</b>	

### Q15 – What are your thoughts on the proposed changes to bus routes?

Neither agree nor disagree	354	36.6%
Strongly disagree	197	20.4%
Agree	166	17.1%
Strongly agree	129	13.3%
Disagree	118	12.2%
Not Answered	4	0.4%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>968</b>	

### Q16 – What are your thoughts on the public realm improvements to Harold Place?

Agree	271	28.0%
Neither agree nor disagree	233	24.1%
Strongly agree	206	21.3%
Strongly disagree	157	16.2%
Disagree	97	10.0%
Not Answered	4	0.4%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>968</b>	

## Appendix 2: Quantitative data from public consultation

Q17 – What are your thoughts on the proposed addition of a segregated cycle route from Hastings train station to the seafront?

Strongly agree	249	25.7%
Agree	224	23.1%
Neither agree nor disagree	200	20.6%
Strongly disagree	178	18.4%
Disagree	107	11.0%
Not Answered	11	1.1%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>969</b>	

Q18 – What do you think about the proposed changes to the central area?

Agree	279	28.8%
Strongly agree	251	25.9%
Neither agree nor disagree	199	20.6%
Strongly disagree	122	12.6%
Disagree	113	11.7%
Not Answered	4	0.4%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>968</b>	

Q19 – What do you think about the proposed changes to Wellington Place?

Agree	303	31.4%
Neither agree nor disagree	292	30.2%
Strongly agree	202	20.9%
Strongly disagree	90	9.3%
Disagree	75	7.8%
Not Answered	4	0.4%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>966</b>	

# Appendix 3: Comparison with census data

Appendix 2 contains the 2021 Census information for Hastings town centre. This information is compared to the consultation survey responses collected (excluding ‘not answered’ and ‘prefer not to say’) to provide a comparison between the two data sources

Although the 2021 data is 3 years older than the survey, it illustrates that the respondent’s demographics were very similar to the census, except for the age groups. The results show that in the future stages the younger age groups need to be fed into the RIBA Stage 3 designs.

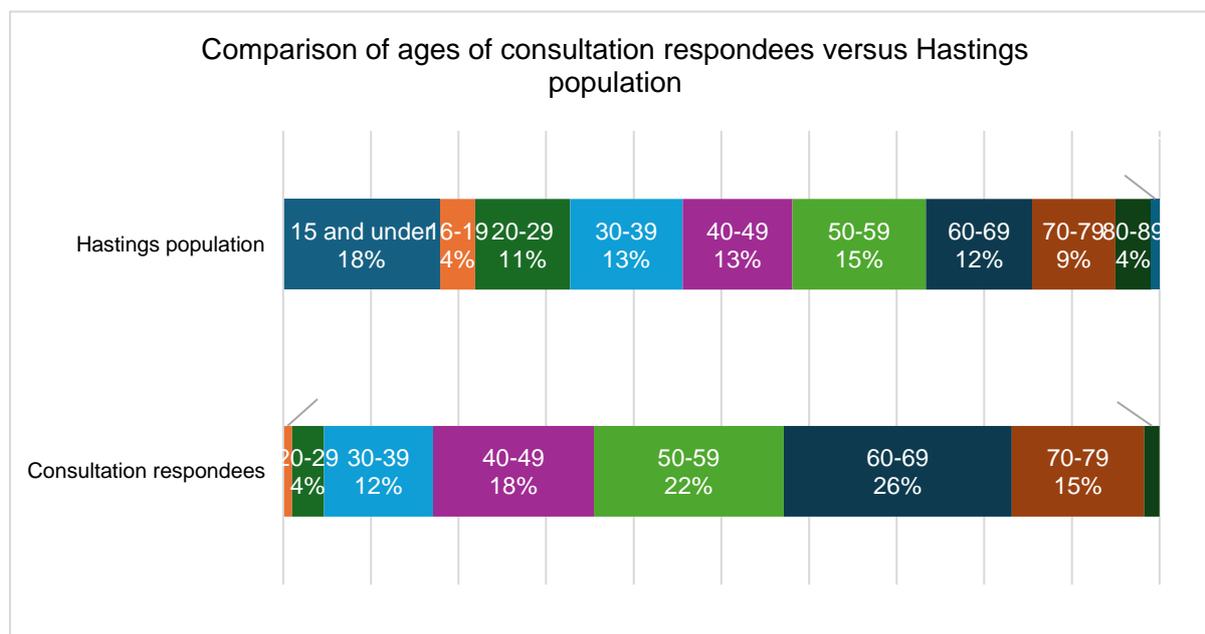


Figure 31 comparison with census data

**Comparison with data from the 2021 Census for Hastings, excluding not answered and prefer not to say.**

Ethnicity	Consultation	Census
White English/Welsh/Scottish /Northern Irish/British	90.9%	85.4%
White Irish	1.4%	0.9%
White Gypsy / Irish Traveller	0.3%	0.1%
White Roma	0.2%	0.2%
Any other White background	3.8%	5.2%
Asian or Asian British (Indian, Bangladeshi, Pakistani, Chinese)	0.3%	1.2%
Any other Asian background	0.1%	1.2%
African background	0.1%	0.9%
Caribbean	0.1%	0.3%
Other Black	0.0%	0.2%
Mixed White & Asian	1.3%	0.8%
Mixed White & Black African	0.1%	0.4%
Mixed White & Black Caribbean	0.6%	0.8%
Any other Mixed or Multiple background	0.5%	0.8%
Arab	0.0%	0.4%
Any other ethnic group	0.2%	1.1%

Age	Consultation	Census
15 and under	0.0%	17.9%
16-19	1.0%	4.0%
20-29	3.6%	10.8%
30-39	12.5%	12.8%
40-49	18.4%	12.5%
50-59	21.6%	15.2%
60-69	26.0%	12.1%
70-79	15.1%	9.5%
80-89	1.8%	4.1%
Over 90	0.0%	1.0%

### Appendix 3: Comparison with census data

Religion	Consultation	Census
Christian	32.9%	40.5%
Buddhist	1.2%	0.7%
Hindu	0.0%	0.6%
Jewish	0.4%	0.2%
Muslim	0.1%	2.1%
Sikh	0.1%	0.0%
Other religion / belief	3.8%	1.0%
No religion	61.5%	55.0%

Sexuality	Consultation	Census
Straight or Heterosexual	90.8%	94.9%
Bisexual	2.9%	2.0%
Gay or Lesbian	5.5%	2.5%
All other sexualities	0.8%	0.5%

Gender	Consultation	Census
Female	56.8%	51.5%
Male	42.0%	48.5%
Non-binary and prefer to self-describe	1.1%	No comparable data

Gender same as at birth	Consultation	Census
Gender identity the same as sex registered at birth	99.4%	99.5%
Gender identity different from sex registered at birth	0.6%	0.5%

## Appendix 4: Social media feedback

The Hastings Town Centre Public Realm and Green Connections project has been very popular on social media, with many conflicting views. This has led to both the uncontrolled promotion of the project through various social media platforms and feedback. Not all social media platforms had links to the online survey or provided information of where postcards or leaflets could be obtained.

The number of post and social media outlets where the information was shared could also not be controlled. As such, we have collated the information and feedback posted - these are often reflected in the survey responses but have been more negative than those responses in the public consultation survey.

This section gathers some of the online information for reference, but this has not been taken into further consideration as it has been hard to quantify and verify posts. Wherever the team has been aware of any posts, we have tried to share the link to the online survey to collect a wide range of responses. Here is a highlights summary of some of the feedback gathered through social media.

### **Social media summaries**

#### **Positive sentiment**

Some expressed enthusiasm for the proposals, believing they will enhance the area with more green spaces and fewer cars, transforming it into a more desirable destination and pleasant space to be in.

Others appreciate the concept but seek more details and express concerns about the current state of infrastructure and lack of retail offerings.

There's support for designs that address issues like delivery drivers obstructing pedestrian zones. However, there are also worries about potential vandalism and the need for ongoing maintenance.

Overall, there's a sense of hope that improvements will increase pride in the town centre and inspire community involvement in upkeep.

## Transport

- Various concerns about proposed changes to traffic flow and pedestrian zones in the town centre.
- Questions arise regarding specific roads like Devonshire Rd and Pelham Street, with worries about access for emergency vehicles, taxis, and disabled parking.
- Residents express frustration over potential disruptions to traffic flow for private cars, particularly impacting those with disabilities or limited mobility.
- Concerns are also voiced about the impact on businesses reliant on deliveries and the potential for increased pollution near outdoor seating areas.
- Suggestions are made for designated parking areas for takeaway drivers and measures to reduce car fumes in the town centre, such as creating car-free zones and promoting alternative transportation options like buses or cycling.
- Planning needs to balance pedestrian needs with practical considerations for businesses and traffic flow.

**Negative sentiment** – People expressed concerns about the upcoming changes in their area, focusing on several key themes.

- Impact on outer areas due to developments in the centre, including concerns about transportation infrastructure like bus routes and traffic management.
- Issues such as the need for pavement repairs, potential reversal of pedestrianisation efforts, and the suitability of cycling infrastructure given the town's hilly terrain.
- Scepticism about the practicality and long-term maintenance of proposed changes, with some advocating for more creative and locally focused solutions to revitalise the high street.
- People emphasised prioritizing maintenance over cosmetic changes, advocating for repairing existing paths and street furniture rather than investing in new projects.
- Concerns about deteriorating roads, antisocial behaviour, and job opportunities.
- Accessibility concerns are raised, particularly for those with mobility issues who may struggle with extended walking distances in pedestrianised areas.
- Scepticism about allocating funds to new projects when existing infrastructure lacks maintenance.
- There are concerns about the long-term sustainability of proposed green initiatives without proper upkeep.
- Residents highlight the need for prioritising basic repairs, such as fixing uneven pavements in the town centre, over ambitious new developments.
- There is doubt about the council's ability to maintain new green spaces given their track record with existing parks like Alexandra Park.
- Overall, there's a sentiment that money could be better spent addressing current issues rather than investing in new projects with uncertain upkeep.
- People question the overall necessity of the proposed changes.
- There's frustration over rising rents and taxes, with a call for government funding to focus on supporting existing businesses and residents rather than attracting new ones.
- Accessibility concerns are raised, particularly for those with mobility issues who may struggle with extended walking distances in pedestrianised areas. Overall, there's a desire for practical solutions that address current infrastructure issues and support the needs of the local community.

# End of report