



# Biggleswade Strategy and Masterplan Town Centre SPD

Overview and Scrutiny Committee  
21<sup>st</sup> June 2011

# Biggleswade Town Centre Strategy and Masterplan SPD

- Preparation Process
- The Strategy and Masterplan
- Consultation responses & proposed amendments to the Town Centre Strategy & Masterplan

# Biggleswade Strategy and Masterplan Town Centre SPD

- Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) forming part of the Local Development Framework for Central Bedfordshire North
- Will assist in bringing forward and guiding change, promoting redevelopment and improvement
- There has been extensive public engagement throughout the preparation process

# Preparation process

- Growth Area Funding secured to fund the project in 2008
- Biggleswade Town Centre Partnership set up to inform and support project (included ward members, Town Council, Chamber of Trade and Town Plan Steering Group)
- Consultants Savills procured to deliver a Town Centre Strategy & Masterplan SPD in April 2009
- First community and stakeholder consultation July/August 2009
- Preparation of draft evidence baseline August 2009

# Preparation process

- Options consultation – July/August 2010
- Preparation of Draft Town Centre Strategy & Masterplan – Autumn 2010
- Development Strategy Task Force - 15<sup>th</sup> December
- Statutory Consultation on Draft Strategy and Masterplan – February to March 2011
- Proposed adoption Executive 12 July 2011

# Primary objectives of the strategy and masterplan

- Ensure the town centre continues to meet the needs of the wider population and catchment area of Biggleswade.
- Take advantage and realise benefits that can be derived from the growth of the town
- Provide a long term framework for improving the town centre and its facilities.
- Realise a joint long term vision for the town centre shared with key partners such as Biggleswade Town Council
- Act as supplementary planning guidance including local development principles to guide planning proposals and assist with decision making on them.

# Vision and Strategic Objectives

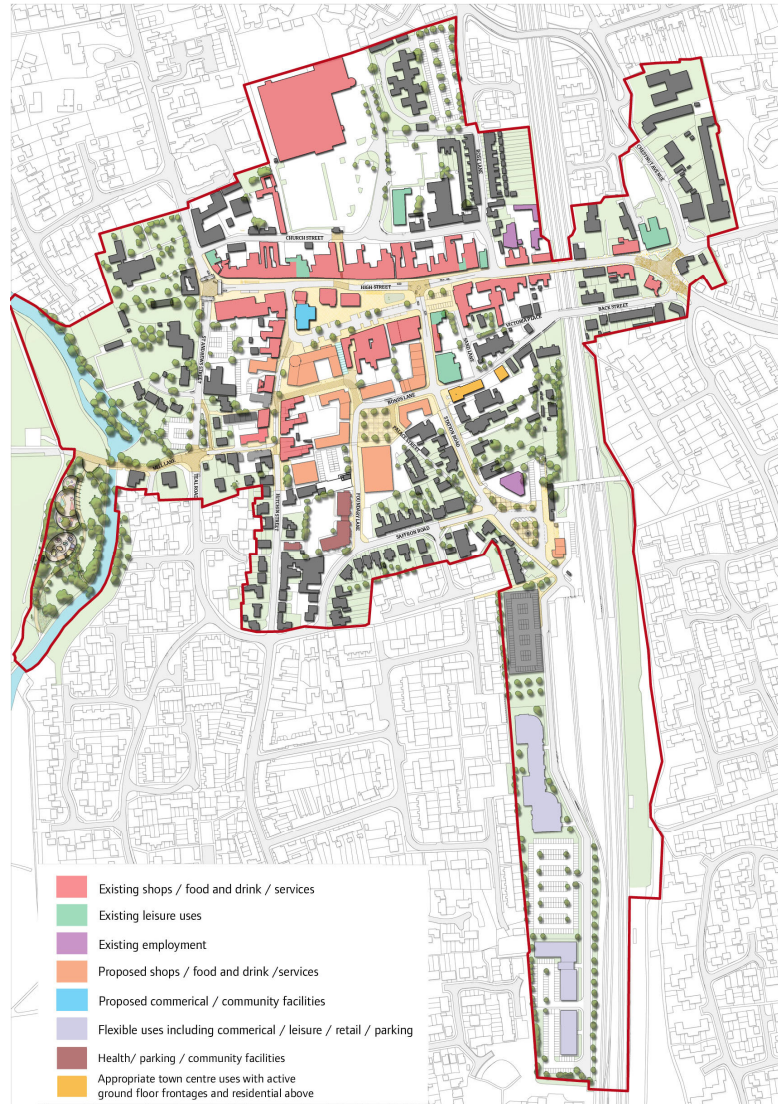
Vision: Biggleswade Town Centre will be a confident, distinctive and sustainable destination

Strategic objectives are grouped into 4 themes:

- Living and working
- Playing
- Environment
- Moving

Includes Transport Strategy covering walking, cycling, public transport and car parking. This links with the Biggleswade Local Area Transport Plan prepared as part of LTP3

# The Illustrative Masterplan



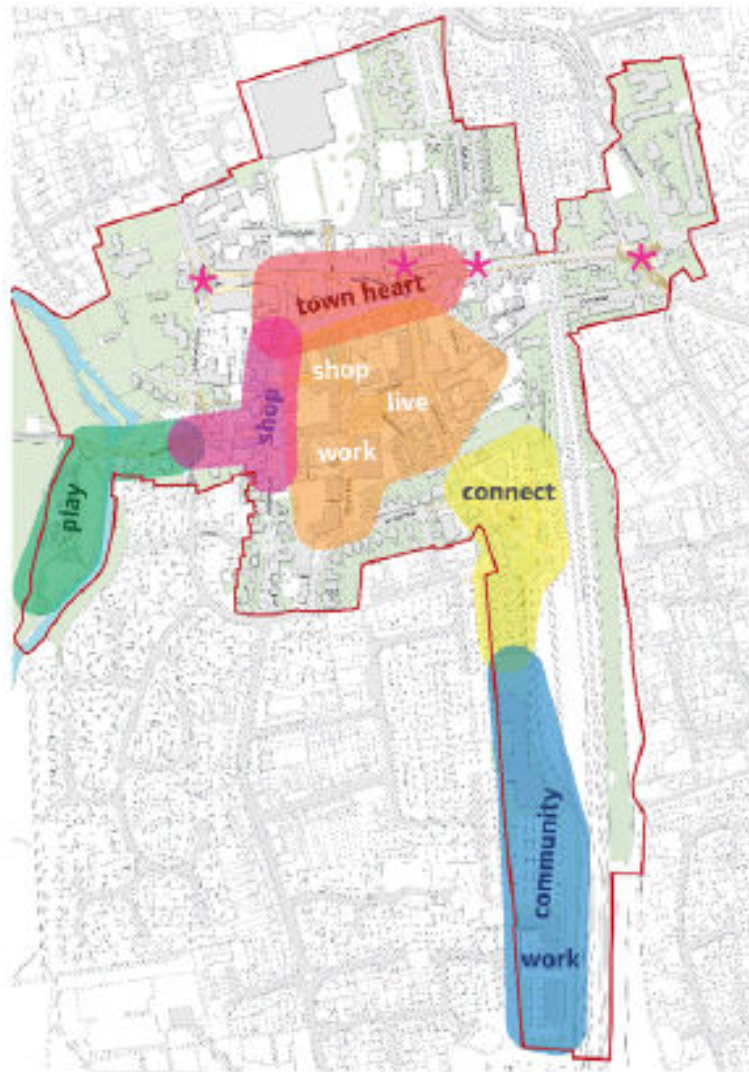
The Masterplan is a vehicle to guide and promote renewal, redevelopment and improvement of the town centre.

It is not a blueprint. It aims to guide developers and public sector organisations as to what the Council would like to see happen in the town centre.

It sets out important guiding principles, with flexibility to enable market led solutions to come forward and be considered



Figure 09/ Key development areas



**Key area 1:**  
Market Square

**Key area 2:**  
High Street Junctions

**Key area 3:**  
Hitchin Street

**Key area 4:**  
Bonds Lane & Foundry Lane areas

**Key area 5:**  
Franklins Recreation Ground

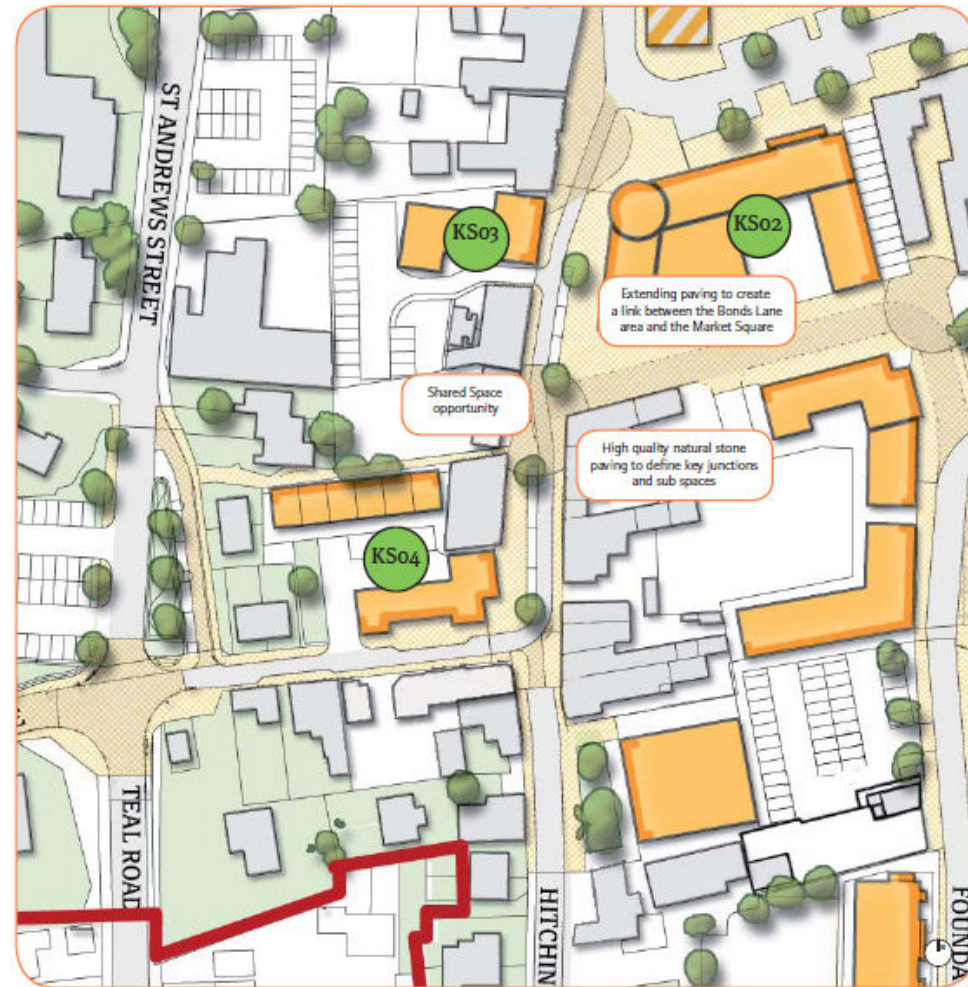
**Key area 6:**  
Transport Interchange

**Key area 7:**  
Land South of Biggleswade Rail Station

# Opportunities & proposals

Regeneration of Hitchin Street

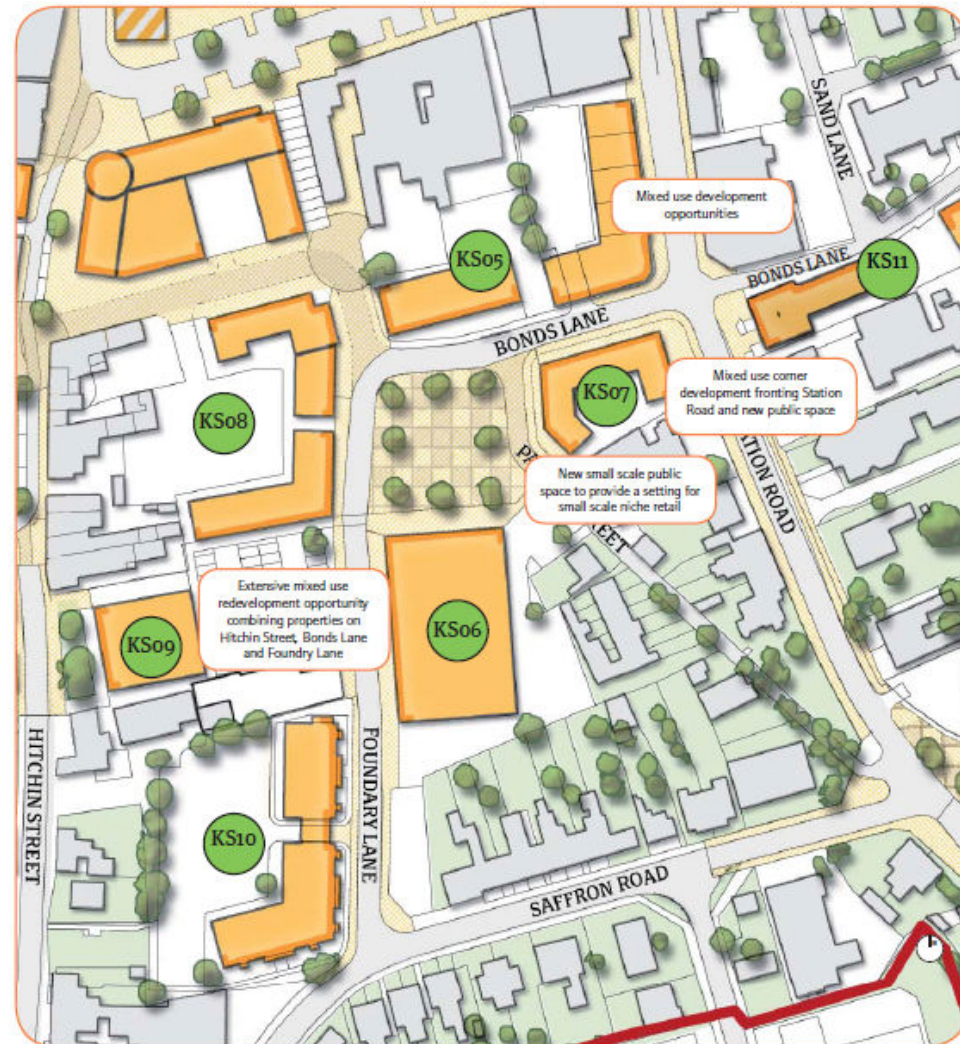
Public realm improvements (shared space pilot) and new development



# Opportunities & proposals

Regeneration of Bonds Lane and Foundry Lane areas

Primary opportunity for comprehensive commercial led mixed use redevelopment plus car parking

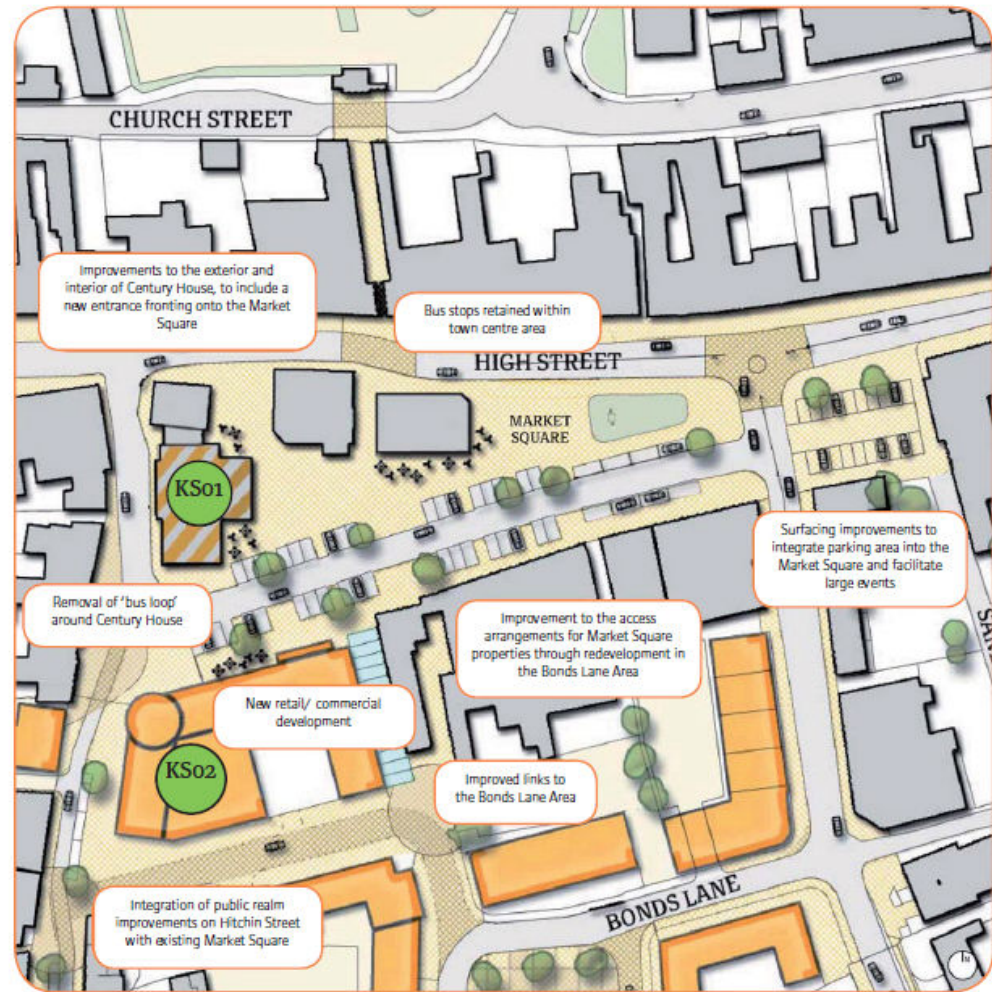


# Opportunities & proposals

Reinforcement of historic heart of town centre focused on

Market Square and High Street (public realm and removal of bus loop)

New development linking to Bonds Lane/Foundry Lane  
Improvements/commercial reuse of Century House



# Opportunities & proposals

New transport interchange and town centre gateway at the train station and decked commuter car park



# Opportunities & proposals

General public realm  
enhancements  
including:

Piloting of the shared  
space principle

High St Junction  
improvements

Improved wayfinding



# Consultation responses

# Consultation responses

## Questionnaire Responses

A total of 155 respondents completed the questionnaire. The vast majority of respondents (133) were local residents. One hundred and five responses were from Biggleswade. The majority of respondents were 45 years of age or more, although substantial elements were 30-44 year olds. Limited responses were made from the under 30s.

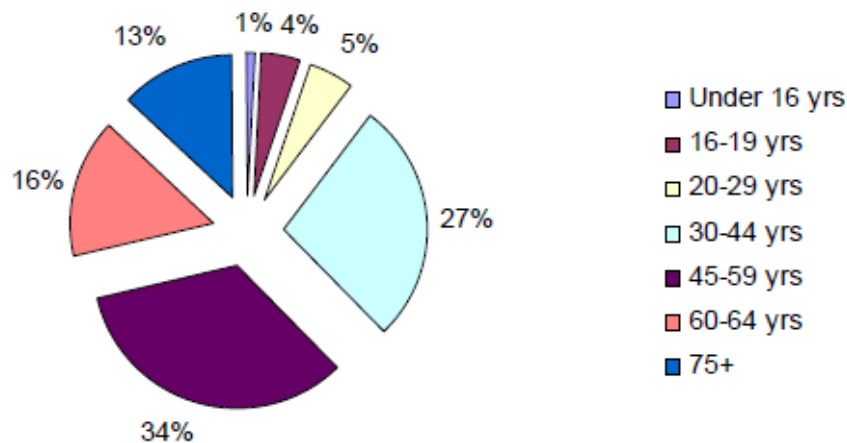


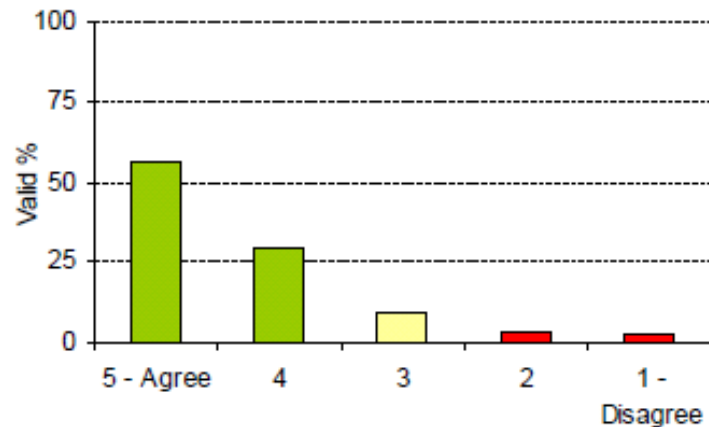
Figure 1. Pie chart profile of respondents to the statutory consultation questionnaire



# Consultation responses

The following general answers were received to each of the eight questions asked. The value 5 represented 'strongly agree' and the value 1 'strongly disagree'.

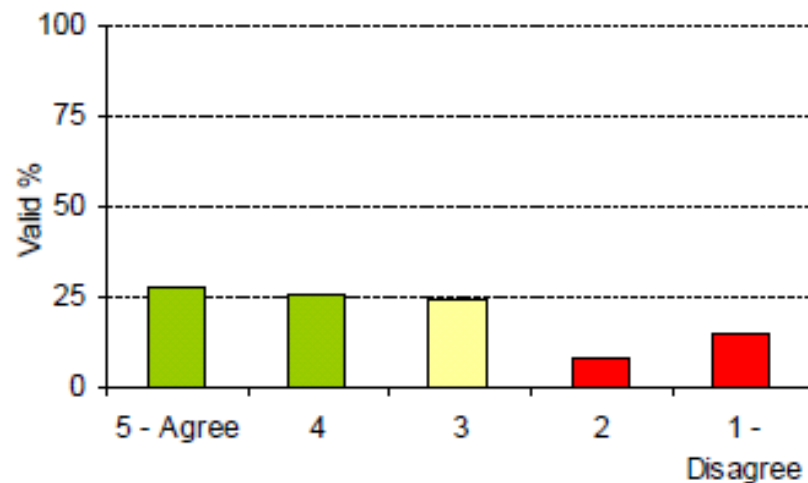
Q1.a. (VISION) Biggleswade town centre should become a confident, distinctive and sustainable town centre, which should be the destination of choice for everyday shopping and local services for its residents and those of the surrounding villages.



There was strong support for the proposed Vision.

# Consultation responses

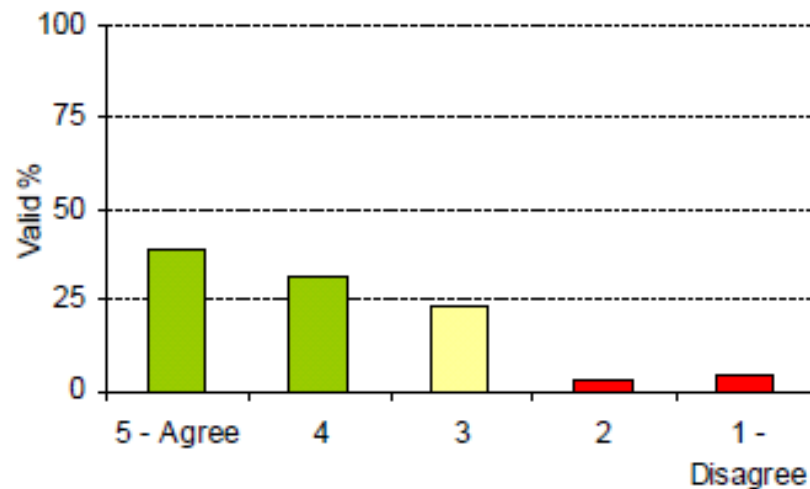
Q2.a. Summary: **(Key Area 1 – Market Square)** A decluttered Market Square with improved retail and leisure offer based on redevelopment of identified sites, alternative uses at Century House and removal of bus loop.



Majority support albeit less than other areas. Concerns around removal of car parking and bus routes/stops

# Consultation responses

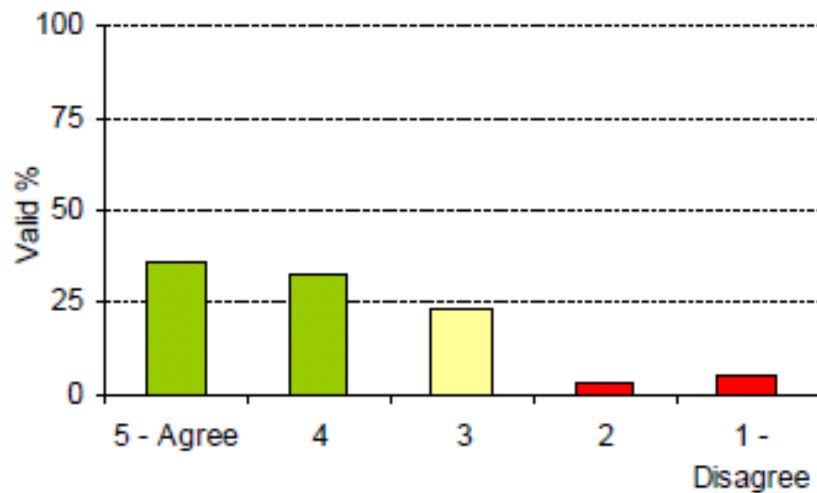
Q3.a. Summary: (Key Area 2 – High Street Junctions) Improvements should be made to make more of the gateway junctions into the town centre as set out in the Strategy and Masterplan.



Many people felt that the identified junction improvements were necessary.

# Consultation responses

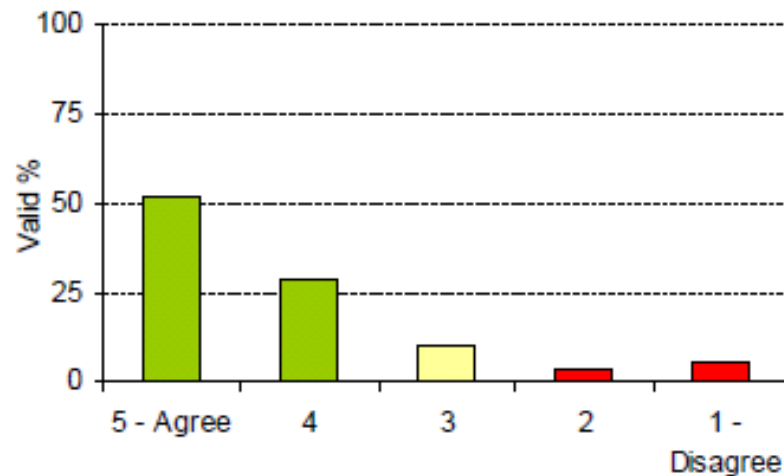
Q4.a. Summary: **(Key Area 3 - Hitchin Street)** The Strategy and Masterplan suggests new mixed use development sites, public realm improvements, and a 'shared space' environment with equal priority for all users.



There was broad support for the Hitchin Street proposals.

# Consultation responses

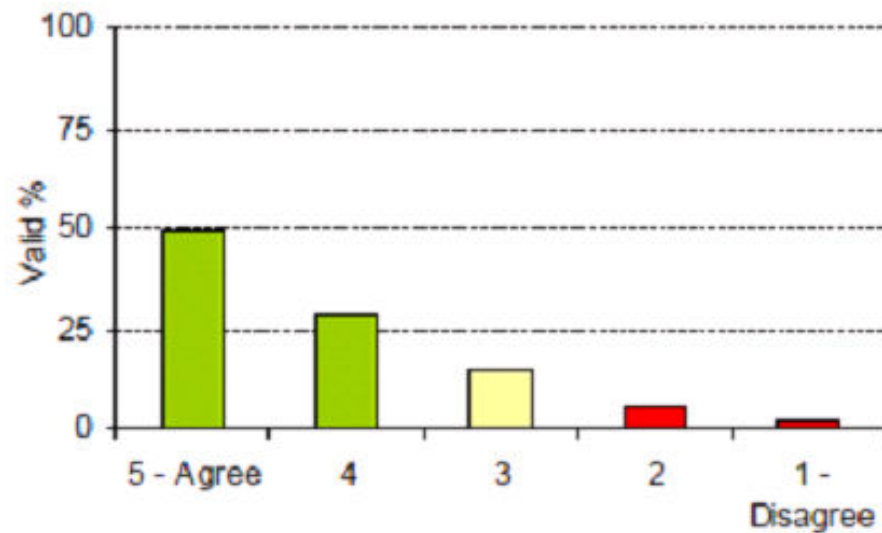
Q5.a. Summary: **(Key Area 4 – Bonds Lane and Foundry Lane)** New development in this area should be co-ordinated in a comprehensive fashion. The new development should be based on mixed uses including retail, leisure, parking and new public spaces.



The regeneration and redevelopment of the Bonds Lane area received the most support of all of the Key Areas; this has been a consistent theme through plan preparation.

# Consultation responses

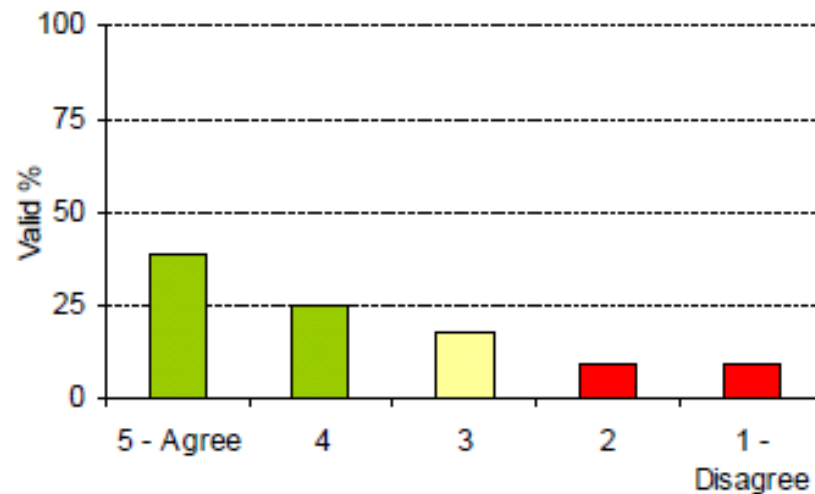
Q6.a. Summary: (Key Area 5 – Franklin's Recreation Ground) Improvements should include better pedestrian links to the town centre including enhanced lighting and signage



Improvements to access to and crime prevention measures at Franklins Recreation Ground widely supported

# Consultation responses

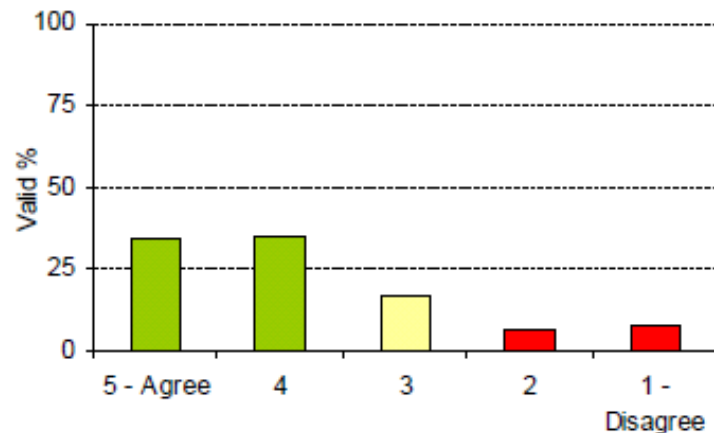
Q7.a. Summary: **(Key Area 6 – Transport Interchange)** should become the Transport Interchange for the town by combining both facilities and access to public transport provision. It should also provide good quality car parking at levels appropriate to demand.



Support for accessibility improvements at station and for wider public transport, and support for interchange

# Consultation responses

Q8.a. Summary: **(Key Area 7 - Land South of Biggleswade Railway Station)** Where opportunities exist to attract new uses to the town centre which require large footprint buildings, this provision should be directed towards the land south of Biggleswade Rail Station site. The type of uses preferred for this site includes bulky goods, retail, leisure and commercial uses.



Support for redevelopment within the Key Area south of the station was not as strong as other Key Areas but nevertheless supportive, possibly reflecting the peripheral location in the town centre and owing to wider priorities.



# In Summary, the masterplan approach has been well supported, in particular:

- The overall vision
- General public realm enhancements, notably the principle of 'shared space' and better pedestrian links via signage and lighting
- Focus on bringing forward key development sites particularly in the Bonds Lane and Foundry Lane areas
- Transport hub at train station with bus stop provision retained in town centre
- Large footprint buildings on land south of train station

# Written representations made – key points

- 41 specific comments provided
- Overall support for masterplan approach
- A few areas of clarification requested (English Heritage, Anglian Water and Environment Agency)
- Additional development site identified (Royal Mail Sorting Office)

# Key proposed amendments to the Town Centre Strategy & Masterplan

- One additional site incorporated in the indicative Masterplan (Royal Mail Sorting Office)
- Further clarification provided in response to issues raised by English Heritage, Anglian Water and Environment Agency
- Clearer alignment of delivery principles to overall strategy themes

**Thank you**

**Question or comments?**