

Wednesbury Town Centre Masterplan Consultation

We Asked: Between Monday 7 May 2024 and 11 June 2024 feedback was sought from individuals, businesses and local organisations on the proposed Wednesbury Town Centre Masterplan. Thank you to all respondents who took the time to provide us with feedback either through completing a survey or talking to us at the in-person event or workshops.

The consultation received 42 responses online as well as 8 submitted paper copies in addition to a range of comments from the in-person events and workshops with 7 community groups and Wood Green Sixth Form students. Further information was circulated informing residents, businesses and organisations about the consultation, such as through:

- Printed leaflets
- Paper copies of the questionnaire
- Council social media posts
- The Sandwell Consultation Hub online survey
- One in-person event in the town centre on 14th May at Wednesbury Library
- Existing stakeholder/community contacts and networks

You said: 62% of respondents to the online consultation agreed with the vision for the masterplan compared to 26% who disagreed. 66% agreed with the aims for Wednesbury town centre. 14% disagreed.

Creating a welcoming and inclusive town centre was considered the most important of the stated aims of the masterplan, followed by creating a consolidated and strengthened retail offer, and creating a well-connected place.

Comments typically referred to the need to support local shops and businesses and that new residents would increase footfall in the town. A number of respondents recognised the positive impact more residents would have on safety and high street viability as well as potentially providing the opportunity for increased opening hours for businesses and a more diverse nighttime economy.

74% of respondents supported improved pedestrian crossings at Holyhead Road, High Bullen and Dudley Street compared to 12% who did not.

64% of respondents support reducing traffic congestion in the town centre compared to 12% who do not. 20% of respondents said they were unsure whether they supported reducing traffic congestion.

Regarding the proposed development sites, generally (64%) respondents were supportive of new homes in the town centre compared with 10% being unsupportive. Commenters stressed the need for a variety of different types of homes and there were responses that raised concerns about both insufficient parking as well as over provision contributing to wasted spaces in highly accessible and sustainable locations.

Union Yard and Upper High Street were considered by respondents to be the highest priority development sites for delivery followed by High Bullen and Victoria Street with a number of comments suggesting that the indicative development on a number of sites did not provide enough homes in those locations.

52% of respondents support the key development principles of the High Bullen site compared to 12% who do not.

56% of respondents support the key development principles of the Union Yard site compared to 10% who do not.

We did: 72% of respondents support the promotion of building enhancements to improve energy efficiency compared to 10% who do not. There was also considerable support for promoting high standards of sustainability in new buildings where SMBC and partners have additional influence (76%).

A number of respondents were unclear as to what the proposed Net Zero Neighbourhood entails and would like to see additional detail. The proposals and the wording of the section has subsequently been made more accessible with clear examples included.

Options to increase the potential number of homes on the indicative development sites will be explored with partners at delivery stage.

Options are being explored to utilise funding to improve the appearance of shop fronts in the town centre reflecting the general feeling that many are in states of disrepair or considered unappealing.

Detailed design work and engagement with Sandwell Council Highways will be undertaken before any decisions on changes to traffic movements are made.

New CCTV has been installed on Union Street and proposals have been revised ensure its full visibility. As part of the public realm improvements to Union Street, lighting lanterns are being installed that both better respect the town's heritage and will improve the sense of safety on the street in the evening.

Concerns were raised on the availability and cost of parking and public toilets in in the town centre. Newly installed wayfinding signage will

provide directions to town centre car parks and the public toilet adjacent to Wednesbury Bus Station.

Concerns were raised regarding the moving of the outdoor market back to Market Place. The Council will continue to advertise the market stalls for commercial and community use. Improvements in the town will help to attract more events and traders.