



Westhoughton Masterplan consultation analysis

Report by Consultation & Research Team

April 2020

Introduction & methodology

BDP development agency were appointed by Bolton Council to produce three Masterplans for three towns in Bolton Borough, Westhoughton, Little Lever and Horwich. This report concerns the Westhoughton Masterplan.

BDP produced a draft Masterplan which was amended following a series of stakeholder meetings with representatives from the town, including local business leaders, community groups and Councillors. The revised Masterplan draft proposals were put out for consultation by the wider community of Westhoughton. Two drop-in roadshows were held in Westhoughton Library, on a Wednesday afternoon / early evening, and a Saturday. The draft proposals were also made available online. A questionnaire [appendix a] was produced to capture responses, and the results are included in this report. The roadshow boards are included in Appendix b.

Consultation responses

Analysis notes

- Comments have been categorised where feasible, primarily by the team working on masterplan development. Unless otherwise stated, categories with 10 or more responses are shown. Categories may overlap and a comment from one respondent included in multiple categories. A sample of comments [verbatim] are included in the report. Comments may be abbreviated so that only the relevant extract is included. One comment may be coded into multiple categories, and each category may only cover a certain aspect of the comment, for example a respondent may have made both positive and negative comments about the same aspect.
- Percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number. Base: unless otherwise stated, percentages are based on respondents to a particular question.

Responses

159 questionnaires were completed. The graphs and coded comments are based on responses to the questionnaires.

Around 160 people attended the drop-in roadshows, and they were encouraged to complete a questionnaire, however their comments were also captured informally. Further comments were received from a variety of sources, including email and via members of the stakeholder group. Any such comments that were not included in submitted questionnaire have been incorporated into this report, but have not been categorised, both to avoid double counting and because many are anecdotal.

Demographics summary

- 87% of respondents were Westhoughton residents, 4% had a business in the town [Q14]
- 60% were under 60 years of age [Q16].
- 55% were female and 44% male [Q17].
- 98% were White British [Q18].
- 86% had no life-limiting health issues [Q19]
- 81% had no caring responsibilities [Q20].

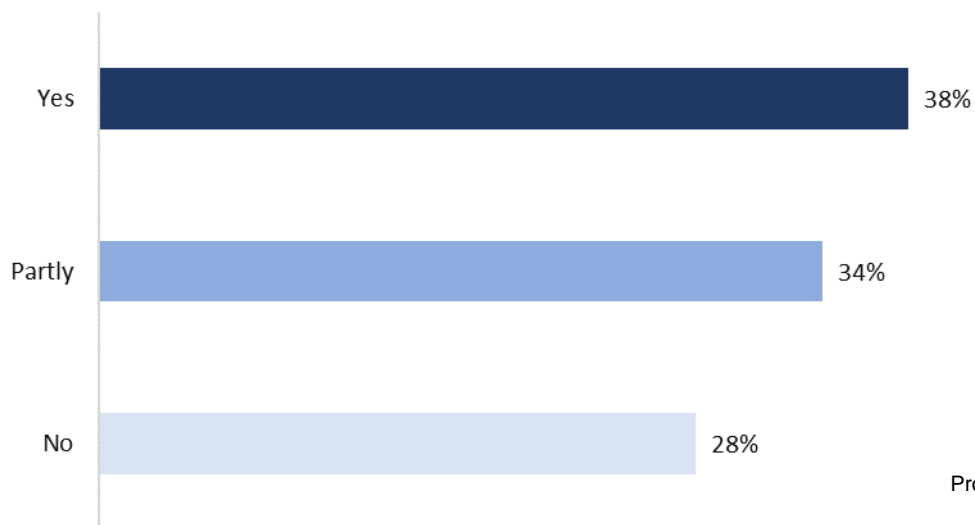
Detailed demographics are included in appendix c.

The Proposals

Proposal One: Street remodelling along Market Street

This proposal would retain two-way traffic along Market Street but include selective road narrowing to create larger areas of public realm (pedestrian areas) particularly on town hall / market side which would enable businesses to take advantage of the sunny aspect and spill onto the street.

Do you agree with this proposal?



Proposal One: base158

There was a mixed response to this proposal; some were in favour of increased leisure use; some suggested full pedestrianisation while others preferred partial pedestrianisation at certain times of day or access for buses etc. Some felt that restricting traffic would be detrimental to passing trade and had concerns around parking and deliveries, while others felt that the proposals allowed for necessary access.

There were also concerns about environmental issues [such as greening, pollution and rubbish] anti-social behaviour, and lack of support for traders, some of whom felt excluded from the stakeholder group. Some respondents agreed that the pavement should be widened as this would make Market Street more 'social'.

Categorised comments – Proposal one	Number of respondents
In favour of increased leisure use	26
Partially pedestrianise	21
Fully pedestrianise	20
Road already narrow / pavement wide enough	20
Concerns about traffic/congestion	13
Make one way	11
Concerns about parking	11
Traders don't want tables / don't need more traders	10

Sample comments - Verbatim extracts

In favour of increased leisure use

This primarily covers the setting of table and chairs on the pavement, but also those in favour of road narrowing. They felt that this would improve the pedestrian experience and encourage people to spend more time on Market Street.

- *Seating areas outside and cafes etc in the summertime*
- *Would be nice to sit outside cafe's, safer for shoppers.*
- *Will create a more social aspect , cafe culture*
- *Market Street needs to be utilised more like a European city style set up; would bring more custom to local businesses I feel*
- *Road narrowing a good idea*
- *Nice to let people sit out in the street in the sunshine*
- *Pleasanter/ easier walking for pedestrian*
- *Would enhance Market Street and improve the environment for shoppers and residents*
- *Some street seating will encourage people to come to the centre and spend more there*
- *Our main shopping centre should be attractive and add to its vintage theme. Thus attracting more visitors to the town.*

Partially pedestrianise

This category included those who thought there should be access only, that part of the street should be pedestrian only, that only certain types of vehicles should have access, or that Market Street should be closed to traffic between certain times.

- *Access only, thereby removing the majority of traffic using it as a short cut or rat run. The bus route could be maintained, but I'd also suggest re-routing buses and giving as much of the street as possible to pedestrians and cyclists without them having to worry about large vehicles using the street.*
- *Would be better to have designated delivery time for the businesses there and have the rest of the time 'vehicle free'.*
- *Pedestrians 9-5 Monday to Saturday. Redirect the busses make delivers before 9am*
- *1) Market Street should be closed for traffic, pedestrians only from the Town Hall (Library St) to the Church. 2) Cut/close King Street, design road narrowing both sides and centre at certain points along Market Street and divert all busses along Cricketers Way - provide bus only layby stops on Cricketers Way. 3) Close street on certain days and after 5pm all week.*
- *Part of Market Street could be pedestrianised say from Provenance down to Ditchfield Gardens. This would leave car free access to the market and down to GTs etc.*
- *Pedestrianise ...or at least make it a restricted access/no through road, recognising that some of the housing with access only from Market Street would need vehicular access, as well as the disabled, and business support. Buses may be diverted along Cricketer's Way, or allowed access due to those users with limited mobility.*
- *People are fearful of crossing the road. Is there a need for traffic through put restrict only to business and pulic transport.*
- *Close the road 2-3 days a week?*
- *Disagree need for 2 way general traffic. Deliveries, buses, taxis would be fine. Then greater advantage could be made re: pedestrianisation*

Fully pedestrianise

Respondents suggested that Market Street should be made pedestrian only. They felt that this would make it easier to use the shops and businesses and encourage people to sit outside.

- *Either you pedestrianise it or you don't. The proposal is a fudge that won't work. Pedestrianise Market Street.*
- *Develop market street into a pedestrianised shopping centre, eatery space and enhanced marketplace*
- *To fully utilise the 'extra space' to encourage people to sit outside, Market St needs to be pedestrianised*

- *If you want people to stroll/sit down during the Summer months. Needs to be pedestrianised!*
- *Lots of surrounding access eg. Cricketers Way, Wigan Rd, Church St, King St, Bolton Rd - make fully pedestrianised.*

Road already narrow / pavement wide enough

Respondents felt that the pavement along Market Street was wide anyway, and the road shouldn't be narrowed any more. Further restrictions could exacerbate the traffic problems and cause problems for pedestrians and businesses.

- *Narrow and slow enough already. Particularly when disabled people park up on the yellow lines creating a road block. The pavement is already quite wide along most of that section. Stalls are often set up outside the market.*
- *No need to do this the road is narrow enough already and when deliveries are being made the road is blocked. With traffic at a standstill at peak times anyway, why make it worse.*
- *Should NOT be narrowed the traffic flow should not be slowed down. If it is slowed down then crossing Market street becomes problematical and pollution increases.*
- *Main bus route and when two are stopped traffic can't get round. Pavement is wide in sections anyway*
- *Footpaths in front of the Town Hall and Market are wide enough... Narrowing the road would be more dangerous to pedestrian.*
- *Market Street is barely wide enough already for two way traffic.*
- *1. As a main road this thoroughfare is already narrow. So restrict if further will restrict the flow of traffic. 2. The pavements are already of a generous width.*

Concerns about traffic / congestion

Respondents felt that the proposals would exacerbate the current situation with traffic build up around the town centre.

- *Residential areas on market street itself would involve more traffic, not less so predestination of certain areas wouldn't make any difference if traffic is built up*
- *Traffic at a standstill at peak times anyway, why make it worse.*
- *Not to sure narrowing Market Street is a good idea. It may cause some problems*
- *Westhoughton is gridlocked and this would cause more congestion*
- *This would enhance Market Street and improve the environment for shoppers and residents and I am happy to support it. However it will put more pressure on the surrounding roads which are already gridlocked and might create more rat runs through surrounding residential areas*
- *People already block the road, despite the double yellow lines, just so they can use the cash machines at the banks. Buses would never get through if the road was even narrower*

Make one-way

Respondents suggested that Market Street could be made into a one-way street. This could improve the situation for pedestrians whilst still allowing access for buses, businesses and shoppers.

- *Can traffic not be diverted to Cricketers Way and make Market Street a one way street*
- *One way system allowing more pedestrian access. Buses heading in Wigan direction could be routed via Cricketers Way using the space adjacent to Sainsbury's as a large lay by bus stop.*
- *To allow for the road narrowing you need to make Market Street "One Way".*
- *One-way traffic would discourage traffic even more.*
- *Would be better as a one-way street from east to west, thus alleviating traffic issues at the traffic lights by the cenotaph, but I appreciate that bus routes could have issues with this.*

Concerns about parking

Concerns were expressed about the current lack of parking in the town centre, and how this would be exacerbated if Market Street was narrowed.

- *Additional car parking should be considered. Ie Silcocks land on Mill Street.*
- *Parking would be a main issue , it is already especially king street, no where near enough parking for residents let alone visitors*

- *Would the widening of the pavements in certain areas affect the couple of Short Time Parking Bays we already have on Market St?*
- *All traffic running is essential as lots of elderly residents rely on being able to park on the street with blue badges.*

Traders don't want tables / don't need more traders

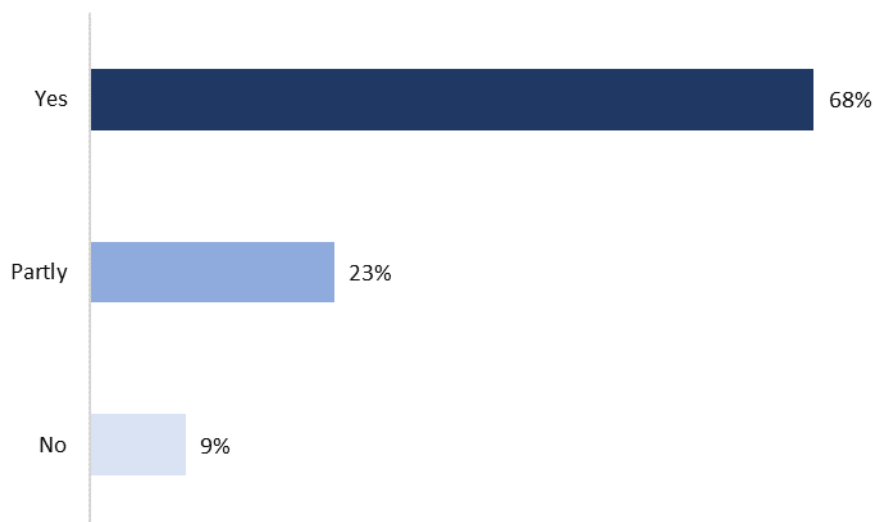
Respondents felt that proposal to allow traders to utilize the pavement was unnecessary, as few businesses on that side of the street would wish to take advantage, and further cafes were not needed.

- *Most of the businesses on that side of the street won't really care and the only ones that would like this are probably Beer School and Provenance/Statement*
- *How many cafes do we need?*
- *Unfortunately the area that has greatest scope for widening (outside the town hall) doesn't really have the types of uses that would spill out onto the street.*
- *Other than the Market there is no other business on the the "sunnier" side that could take advantage.*
- *The highest number of the snackbars/coffee shops etc, who might use the pavements are all on the non-sunny side of the road so wouldn't be likely to be used.*

Proposal Two: Upgrading key pedestrian links

The proposal would involve improving the public realm (pedestrian areas) of Library Street, Marsden Street and the pedestrian link to the town centre market car park from Market Street and from Library Street to Central Park. These routes would be made pedestrian friendly, through pavement improvements, lighting and shop frontage improvements.

Do you agree with this proposal?



Proposal two: base156

There was strong agreement with this proposal, many felt that safer pedestrian routes and enhanced lighting were much needed. Respondents felt that the suggestions would make the town centre more attractive and increase footfall. Those disagreeing were mainly concerned about safety, or parking / traffic issues, however some felt that the proposals were unnecessary as access was not a problem. While some were in favour of improving the shop fronts, others pointed out that the rear of the properties were actually worse, and there was concern about the cost.

While many welcomed opening up access to Central park a number made the point that the park needed investment. More seats, better drainage, flower beds and outdoor gym equipment were amongst suggestions received.

Market Street could be made more attractive by additional planters, perhaps sponsored by local business.

Categorised comments – proposal two	Number of respondents
In favour of improving general access links	44
Improve safety / asb / lighting / make more attractive	21
Concerns over parking / traffic	11

Sample comments - Verbatim extracts

In favour of improving general access links

This category covers all those who made comments supporting the improvement of all or some of the proposed links.

- *Opening up areas for pedestrian shopping and leisure. Joins up the centre*
- *Any opportunity to remove private vehicle or parking should be removed to prioritise pedestrians, cyclists and then bus users*
- *Increase opportunity for walking and exercise / wellbeing improved*

- *Pedestrian access improvements would be most welcome.*
- *Looking at improving Health and safety for pedestrians is always beneficial.*
- *This would also compensate for this end of Market Street not being pedestrianised.*
- *In places the pavements are very uneven.*

7 respondents commented specifically in favour improvements to a link from the car park to Market Street proposal

- *The ginnel to the car park from Market street is very unattractive at present.*
- *Yes to the link between the town centre market car park and Market St. No to the others.*
- *The footpath from the old public car park through to Market Street from the south is particularly grim!.*

4 respondents commented specifically in favour of a new link from Library Street to Central Park; however some felt that investment was needed in the park

- *Central park is an asset to Westhoughton and needs investment before it falls away. No point investing money into pedestrian links to an asset that has nothing there. The park requires a cafe, toilets, lighting and new park facilities. To take advantage of the investment.*
- *Safer access for walking to Central Park is a priority.*
- *I walk into Westhoughton with my children frequently and a better path between the town and the park would be good for us*

4 respondents commented specifically in favour of improvements to Marsden Street

- *Might also stop cars going the wrong way up marsden street which is a big issue*
- *Yes, especially between Pavillion Square and Market Street which are major pedestrian routes with narrow pavements not friendly to pushchairs and wheelchairs.*

Improve safety / asb / lighting / make more attractive

Respondents agreed that more lighting was needed and that the pathways needed to be improved. They also suggested that safety issues and anti-social behaviour needed addressing, for example by more policing / cctv.

- *Need to be tidy. The structure of these areas is fine just shabby. Lighting needs improving.*
- *Lighting is very important and should be a priority so as to avoid these areas becoming dimly lit alleyways for n'er do wells*
- *The ginnels from these car parks are currently not safe. (or feel unsafe).*
- *Recognise the need for more lighting, but beyond that, is it necessary.*
- *Safer access for walking to Central Park is a priority.*
- *1) current delays in correcting street lighting issues indicate that future development could be similarly problematic. 2) All for more pedestrian friendly routes.*

Concerns over parking / traffic

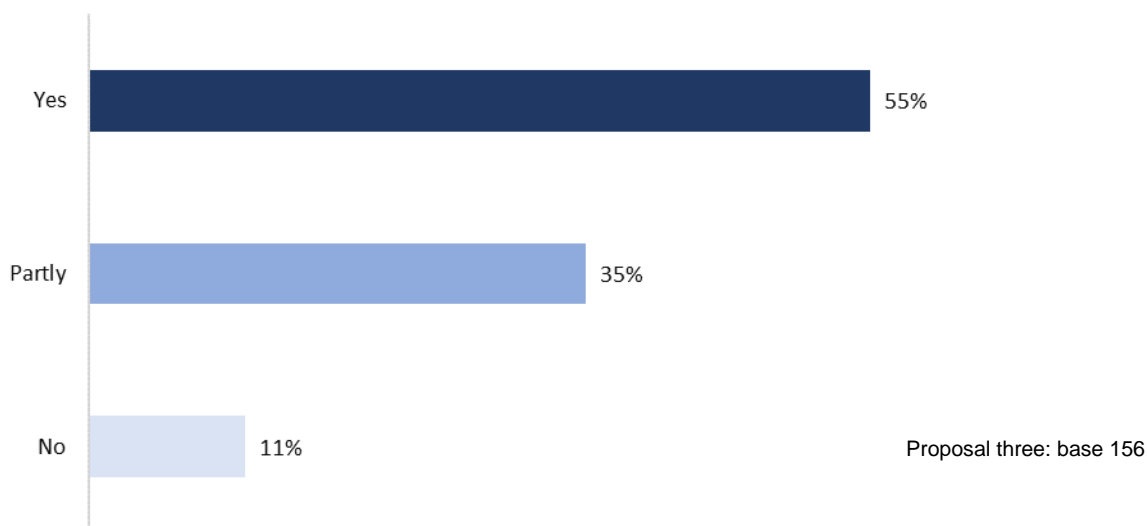
Respondents suggested that some of the issues that the proposal sought to address were caused or exacerbated by parking problems, either because people parked inconsiderately or because there was a general lack of parking in the town centre.

- *Proposed link to Central Park appears to be through a public car park, which is far from ideal. Significant reallocation of parking space to pedestrians is essential to make this link attractive.*
- *While this is in essence is a good idea, unfortunately it will just frustrate people with the lack of parking.*
- *Might also stop cars going the wrong way up marsden street which is a big issue*
- *The issues on Library Street are caused by people parking illegally and a general lack of town centre parking. I've never had an issue on Marsden Street*

Proposal Three: Redevelopment of the Town Hall

This proposal would involve the conversion of surplus space within the town hall into a managed workspace development – providing space for small business and ‘start-up’ space for new businesses. A ground floor commercial café would serve the business and would also be open to the public.

Do you agree with this proposal?



Just over half the respondents thought this proposal was a good idea. Many were keen to encourage start-up businesses, although some felt that the space could be used for the community, such as meeting places for groups, arts / culture or youth activities. Those who answered ‘partly’ or ‘no’ felt that there were enough café’s in Westhoughton already or were concerned about parking and increased congestion. Respondents felt that it was important to maintain and utilize the town hall. Other suggestions included using the space for health, council or police services, and looking at other towns for ideas. Some suggested that the rents could be a useful source of income, to be balanced against conversion cost or spent within the town.

Categorised comments – proposal three	Number of respondents
Enough cafes already	47
Office space good / encourage start-ups	33
Maintain building interior / exterior	18
Use for community - groups / arts & culture / youth	18
Café good idea	16

Sample comments - Verbatim extracts

Enough cafes already

Respondents pointed out that there were a large number of cafes on Market Street already, and expressed concerns that an additional eatery would affect existing businesses.

- *Plenty of cafes in the town centre, at least 6.*
- *Enough cafes and food shops fighting for customers ... If you want to send them shops into struggling times then yes go ahead... Why open another cafe to possibly cause on them to shut and leave yet another empty space.*

- *Another Cafe would affect the Footfall of the numerous cafes we already have on Market Street*
- *No to another Cafe on the street. You are taking away from existing businesses - be more creative with your ideas. Do not copy what is already working at the risk of either not surviving or closing other businesses.*
- *An abundance of food outlets/pubs.*
- *A cafe is not necessary - let any extra business for cafes benefit current high street providers.*
- *Already have several cafes on the high street ... A cafe would detract from a business environment and look unprofessional and may detract businesses.*
- *Another cafe!! really?*

Office space good / encourage start-ups

Respondents liked the idea of utilising the town hall for businesses, particularly for start-ups that might not be able to rent other premises,

- *Great way for smaller businesses to start up in Westhoughton.*
- *Should be encouraged especially for young entrepreneurs, help should also be given for next steps into local premises*
- *A co-working space would be a forward thinking and modern idea for the town*
- *Encouraging new businesses to the area and making use of existing surplus building space can only be a good thing.*
- *Westhoughton could do with a coworking type space for small businesses and even people who work away from the office....might solve some of the issues with terrible commute into Manchester if we bring the business here!!*
- *Small businesses as in community based.*
- *Businesses that are very small are accommodated - the ability to rent...desks in a shared office as well as 'whole' offices would be an excellent opportunity for eg. web developers or software engineers, with bookable rooms for meetings.*
- *Excellent idea as there are limited areas for new business to set up keeping people in the town instead of travelling out.*

Maintain building interior / exterior

Respondents felt that it was important to utilise the town hall, while retaining historical and architectural aspects.

- *Building is focal and symbol, keep but use it*
- *Why have an asset like this and not use it? Get it used!*
- *No council owned buildings should be under used*
- *The town hall is magnificent and a great focal point*
- *Essential to protect the Carnegie heritage and in particular, the murals in the council chamber. This must not be given over to a business who may damage the room.*
- *Town Hall is iconic and needs to be used*
- *Modernisation should not in any way compromise the history of the building or interior.*
- *I'm all for updating uses of attractive old buildings to keep them in use.*
- *Town Hall is in need of urgent upgrade and improvements. Little has changed since the building opened. It need redcoration and opening up in some areas of it.*

Use for community - groups / arts & culture / youth

Some respondents suggested that all or part of the town hall should be given over to community and leisure use; such as a meeting space for local groups, activities for young people or arts and culture.

- *New groups setting up to help the community such as sewing & crafts*
- *Converting the surplus space should include a learning centre.*
- *What surplus space does the Town Hall have (we have a beautiful ballroom which should be put to better use (entertainment, concerts & dancing) and also more in the museum & archives section to promote Westhoughton's unique history.*
- *Provide a flexible venue for arts, music and social gatherings*

- *The space should be used more to help the community such as Youth facilities, ability for local groups to hire*
- *Some space could be for community use?*
- *Shouldn't some of the Town Hall be given over to youth activities ... and perhaps provide space for 'senior' activities - though this might detract from 'the Hub' activities. However 'the Hub' is remote from the town centre.*
- *Art and craft spaces*

Café is good idea

Respondents liked the idea of a café in the town hall, although some suggested that this needed to a different offer than existing businesses, to appeal to a different market and attract people to Westhoughton.

- *Town needs a good quality cafe and having it in an iconic building will be a major pull for the punters.*
- *A cafe would also be a good additional asset.*
- *Why not have some sort of artisan barista training school which also works as a coffee shop.*
- *A cafe sounds like an interesting idea as it would generate more activity there.*
- *Any cafe serving good coffee would be good.*
- *Could include pop up eateries which are up and coming*

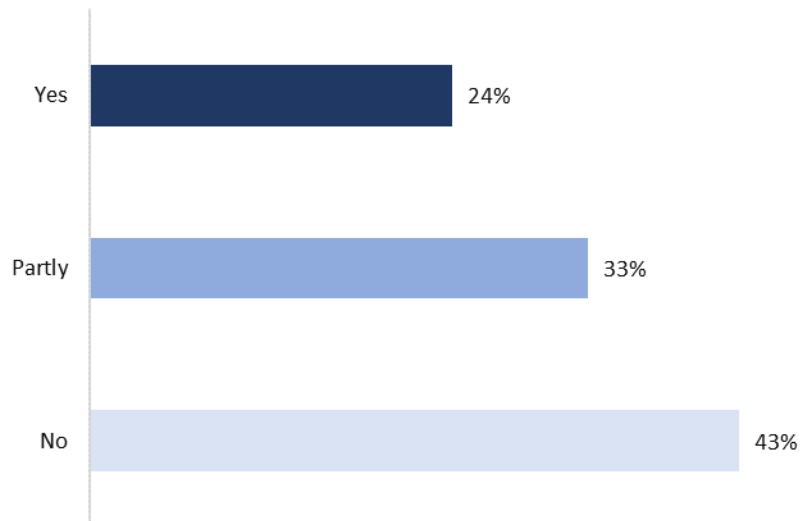
Proposal Four: Promotion of new homes on council and privately owned land

Three potential housing sites for consideration include:

- 1] vacant land in-between the Wheatsheaf car park and the Beer School (known as the Gaiety site)
- 2] land east of Mill Street and
- 3] land west of Sainsbury's car park.

New homes would meet demand for housing types and tenures not readily available in the local market [e.g. for older people and apartments for young professionals] and would help improve the vibrancy of the town centre, especially in the evenings.

Do you agree with this proposal?



Proposal four: base 159

Some felt that homes for elderly people were needed and agreed that any development should be affordable or on brownfield eyesores. However, the majority were concerned about the increased traffic and parking requirements that come with more housing and the general lack of infrastructure to support the number of new homes built in Westthoughton over the last few decades.

Respondents suggested that the sites, particularly the Gaiety / Mill Street sites could be used for car parking. Alternatively, all or some of the sites could be for leisure, events or left as a green space in the case of the land by Sainsbury's.

Some respondents felt that older people would prefer somewhere quieter, and that young professionals had no desire to live in the town centre – it was suggested that family accommodation might be better. Respondents pointed out that there were plenty of people living in the centre now so it would not increase vibrancy, if that were actually desirable. A few questioned how private landowners could be made to develop or tidy up sites that they had left fallow for years.

There was also concern about building on the land by Sainsbury's as this had a pond on. Access onto roads could be difficult for new residents on any of these and create issues for pedestrians.

Categorised comments – proposal four	Number of respondents
Parking / congestion concerns	56
Lack of infrastructure [health /schools / shops / roads etc]	41
Too many houses already	32
Need greenspace / leisure areas	25
No houses on Gaiety	16
Sites are eyesores	13
Support accommodation on Gaiety site	13
No houses on Mill Street	13
Build on brownfield	12
Agree with housing for older people	12
Housing must be affordable	11
Vibrant enough / won't improve vibrancy	10

Sample comments - Verbatim extracts

Parking / congestion

Respondents expressed concern that new developments would exacerbate the issues which were acknowledged elsewhere in the Masterplan. The land should instead be used for parking, particularly the Mill Street and Gaiety sites, quotes for which are mainly given in the specific site comments.

- *Can't move now for cars*
- *Need more parking*
- *Westhoughton is gridlocked most days, more houses mean more gridlock and more parking required*
- *Traffic situation is horrendous. You all need to spend time at rush hour when schools are in and not school holidays.*
- *The wheatsheaf customers rely on the car park and adding house their would only cause more problems for parking!*
- *Traffic in and out of Westhoughton continues to be an issue. More residentil areas will add to this ongoing problem.... There is limited parking facilities also - more cars in the area is also going to add to the major issue of parking.*
- *If additional housing is being provided then access to and through the town from rail stations by active travel modes must be prioritised. The developments must link to the Westhoughton Bee Network scheme cycle routes and active neighbourhoods.*
- *Needs to be somewhere to park as the free car park that many people used when the leisure centre car park was full, for instance, is now the Aldi car park with limited stay.*
- *Have the authors of this plan walked around Westhoughton during rush hour?*

Lack of infrastructure

Respondents felt that more and more housing was being built without supporting infrastructure, such as health centres and services, schools, shops and roads.

- *The town has had significant development over the years and needs amenities to catch up.*
- *If you MUST build more pointless homes then either make them affordable AND compliment them with further doctors surgeries, schools, dentists etc!!!!*
- *Commercial development is key. If you can attract some high street shops and individual/ unique shops then that would be far more beneficial.*
- *You need retail shops on market Street since it is the main high Street. Build some more units! Add a incentive plan to get more shops opening at new location. Houses on a high Street is the last thing the street needs. I do not disagree with the other two locations*
- *We only have 1 high school were do you except all these children to go maybe invest on schools doctors for the residents in westhoughton rather then greed trying build more homes*

- *More housing needs to be supported with appropriate improvements to infrastructure!*
- *A health centre would be better, need more services than housing*

Enough / too many houses already

Respondents felt that Westhoughton had enough accommodation to meet the needs of various kinds of people, with more being built / planned. New residents did not necessarily support local businesses or contribute to the local community.

- *More housing ... won't help local businesses as we have seen from all the recent influx of houses. They don't support local shops.*
- *Westhoughton town centre is not like other larger town centres. It is not blighted with empty properties and so residential is not necessary. We have thousands of homes being built already in the area.*
- *There have already been 2 housing plots built in Westhoughton in the last year and these plots (one on Church Street and one off Park Road) are already close enough to the town centre. Too much housing can be harmful rather than beneficial*
- *Westhoughton has suffered from vast growth in housing. Not sure extra housing is required in the town centre.*
- *Please... no more housing! We hope this plan is about creating a vibrant, improved town and not shoehorning more housing into infill sites.*
- *Totally unacceptable! .. so much residential building already going on within yards of the town this improvement should not include more houses. There are enough properties being built or already built to cater for young professionals... If there has to be residential areas built it should not be on all 3 locations... I am concerned that these plans are opening areas of the centre of our town to residential developers as well as all the surrounding greenbelt they are gobbling up! This a red flag to me, just NO.*
- *Enough new building activity as it is*
- *Already houses being built on every possible square metre of Westhoughton.... Housing seems to be the only solution for every empty area. Where are these people coming from?*

Need greenspace / leisure areas

Respondents suggested that the sites be retained / developed into greenspace or used for leisure, ranging from built centres to sports or play use, or for events.

- *Should be used for facilities for young people, like a skatepark or Laser quest, not more housing.*
- *Consider development of the Gaiety site into a leisure site - 2 screen cinema, bowling alley with discounts for use at local food and drink businesses.*
- *Gaiety site could (should?) be used for community centrepiece similar to Brindley complex in Runcorn*
- *Some green space would be nice between the wheat sheaf and beer school*
- *Need some GREEN open space on the sunny side of Market St. e.g. the Gaiety site turned into a large, partially green, sunny area, set out with flora & other, & seating etc, where all could meet & gather, for possible summer shows/events. THIS would attract & bring people from all over to the town & therefore promote shopping etc., etc. ...Land next to Sainsburys should be made into a possible skateboard or other park for youngsters or families.*
- *The area at Mill Street should be developed into a small park/seating area with trees, gardens to mirror Ditchfield Gardens at the other end of Market Street and it makes a nice entrance onto Market Street and Westhoughton. Also a nice meeting/gathering spot for people. We also need more trees for the environment.*
- *Gaiety site again used for entertainment eg a concert & leisure venue & let the Mill Street site be landscaped also ... eg sports facilities.*
- *Feel totally sickened by the loss of sop much greren space already, especially from land land adjacent to Bolton Road. OR could encourage leisure facility for land w. of Sainsburys eg. bowling alley, roller park.*
- *Why not a play area on the west of sainsbury car park?*

No houses on Gaiety site

Respondents were concerned that building houses on this site would exacerbate congestion issues. Many suggested alternate uses, such as car parking or leisure and felt that Market Street should be for business use rather than residential.

- *Could create major vehicular problems (exiting) on a narrow Market Street.*
- *Shop units or A public area would be more suitable*
- *Would increase traffic on an already busy Market Street that will with other plans become narrower.*
- *Of more use as a car park. Right now people come into Westhoughton to shop, but leave when they can't find a place to park.*
- *A safe car park that is monitored with short stay options and takes registration plates.*
- *A boutique or bar or restaurant.*
- *The wheatsheaf customers rely on the car park and adding house their would only cause more problems for parking! You need retail shops on market Street since it is the main high Street. Build some more units! Add a incentive plan to get more shops opening at new location. Houses on a high Street is the last thing the street needs.*
- *Market street should be for shopping areas and building between 2 pubs would only mean sanctions for them and less chance of their development, the social aspect of westhoughton is growing and with new ideas for spaces to become pubs and bars we should be encouraging this not adding houses to make it harder*

Sites are eyesores

Comments in this category agreed that the sites needed attention.

- *All 3 sites need fixing*
- *Anything to improve the Gaiety site, be it houses or shops. Mill Street site would be too costly to purchase and owner is unwilling to develop. It is currently used as overspill car parking and should remain thus - but needs tidying up. This is a historic site and careful planning would be required.*
- *Residential building on sites within the town centre that are existing eye sores can only be a good proposal*
- *The site on Mill Street definitely need to be redeveloped, however perhaps commercial business might suit the land more. However, if there is suitable parking, the site will ultimately look better and function better than it is at the moment*
- *Something does need to be done with these areas*
- *These parcels of land are a eyesore in Westhoughton and need immediate action/investment. Gaiety and Mill Street sites problem for years.*

Support accommodation on Gaiety site

Comments in this category agreed with developing the Gaiety site for housing, though not necessarily the type suggested in the Masterplan. Suggestions included affordable homes, or mixed use ie business at ground level with residential above.

- *Commercial on ground floor, and residential flats above*
- *Affordable homes.*
- *Good site for residential.*
- *A village for older on the main street would be good*
- *Apartments next to wheatsheaf*
- *Some sites there is little option other than housing, the gaiety site needs developing for businesses a good anchor restaurant with a few are, maybe apartments above*

No houses on Mill Street

Comments in this category disagreed with accommodation on the Mill Street, preferring leisure use or as a car park as detailed in other sections..

- *Should be extra car parking.*

- *Definitely need to be redeveloped, however perhaps commercial business might suit the land more.*
- *Mill Street area should be car parking. In 10 years time, the town will need more car parking, but once it's housing, it's gone for good*
- *Ideal for parking. We noticed an increase in people parking in our road when that site closed.*
- *Long term parking for all the new workers that you are trying to attract to Westhoughton. Short time parking is already at a premium due to the number of people who travel into Westhoughton for work. No need for new houses on this piece of land.*

Build on brownfield

Respondents agreed with the principal of building on brownfield sites, and preferred this to building on green belt or other green sites [including the land next to Sainsbury's.]. However not all respondents agreed that the Gaiety and Silcock's site should be used for housing, as covered elsewhere.

- *Agree to building on brownfeild sites but these are on or near the high street and should be used to maximise the high street through more retail space or short/long stay car parking where demand will only increase*
- *Would mostly work ok for new housing - personally I think on the periphery of the town centre is best (i.e. ii & iii). I appreciate the positives of mixed use but I still have doubts about having resi on the gaiety site with it being between a number of pubs / bars. But for all of these sites, it would certainly be good to see them developed, making use of the brownfield sites that have been sitting vacant for long enough now.*
- *This is preferable to using up fields.*
- *If they are brownfield sites build on them. Stop building on greenbelt.*
- *Town centre development is a better option than greenfield development*
- *Provided facilities extra doctors schools come with new houses and that no more houses on green sites*

Agree with housing for older people

Comments were received that supported housing for older people. This felt to be needed in the centre and might not require as much car parking space as other types of housing.

- *Although opposed to residential, if necessity is decided upon, then we feel the elderly should be catered for as a priority*
- *If there has to be residential areas built it should not be on all 3 locations and for the elderly as I think there is insufficient sheltered schemes.*
- *LAND WEST OF SAINSBURY'S CAR PARK. This would be suitable for older people, potentially in an environment with a warden and care facilities. It is near similar accommodation and is a bit away from Market Street with potential hustle and bustle in the evening*
- *Housing for older people, either managed supervision, or council/housing association with controlled rents might be suitable.*
- *I don't believe "young professionals" need special housing, but older people and handicapped young people do.*
- *Retirememt villages may be useful.*
- *We have Thurstons for older people and similar sites are very much needed for senior citizen*

Housing must be affordable

Respondents suggested that any housing on the proposed sites should be affordable, or at least include an affordable / rental element.

- *Affordable housing would be good addition. The prices of the latest developments are not affordable to younger people.*
- *Affordable private town housing combined with smart modern apartments that would attract younger professionals.*
- *Housing on the site adjacent to Sainsburys and the Gaity site should be affordable homes.*
- *Affordable housing for the youngsters to buy. we have enough larger homes in westhoughton, the younger people have to move out to get onto the property ladder.*

- *Any new homes should be at an affordable rent, as a lot of people in Westhoughton cannot afford to buy the new houses being built.*
- *If you MUST build more pointless homes then ...make them affordable*

Vibrant enough / won't improve vibrancy

Some respondents felt that the town was already vibrant enough, or didn't feel that more housing would add vibrancy, as there were already a number of residents living in the town centre.

- *Vibrancy important for our community but not sure residents properties within the town centre would be the answer.*
- *The town is vibrant in the evenings.*
- *Further vibrancy in the town centre in the evenings is UNNECESSARY.*
- *Don't think the vibrancy of the town centre would be that greatly improved by this*
- *Building an extra care facility for older people is not going to improve the vibrancy of the town centre.*
- *Has the town centre ever been vibrant, many people live in Westhoughton it should be a bustling town.*
- *Older residents would not take advantage of so called improved facilities and " young professionals would still commute to Manchester*

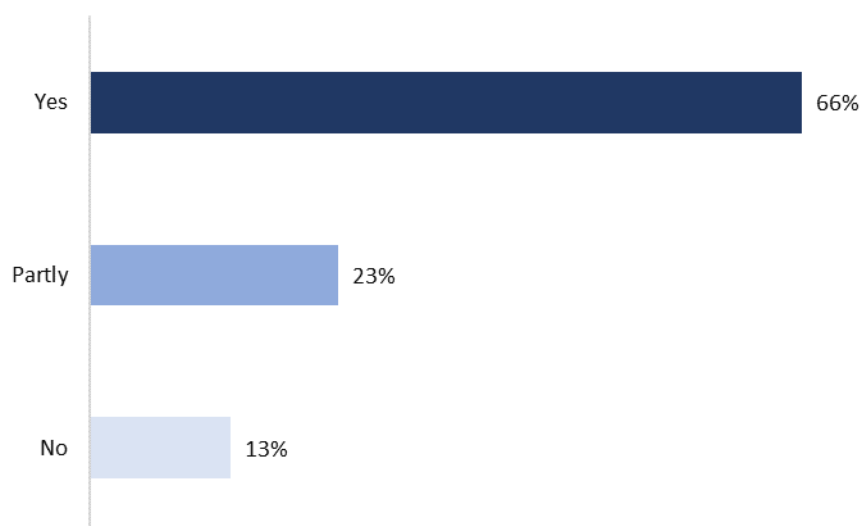
Proposal Five: Improving access to the library and Carnegie Hall

Current access to Carnegie Hall is shared with the library.

Under this proposal separate access to the upstairs of the library would be created to improve safety, security and visitor experience.

Improvements to access arrangements at both the library and Carnegie Hall, together with simpler booking arrangements, will increase the use of the hall.

Do you agree with this proposal?



Proposal five: base 155

The majority of respondents felt that proposal five made sense and that it would be good to use the building more. Some felt that a new entrance would improve library use too, whilst other felt that it would be better to keep a common entrance, and that this could encourage people to use the library. Respondents suggested that the new entrance would increase safety for users of both the Carnegie and the library, though some were concerned that access for those with reduced mobility would be lost.

Respondents agreed that the current costs were too high, and that booking arrangements were convoluted; some were not sure how this would change. Suggestions were made about improving marketing of the Carnegie [with some respondents being unaware that it existed], updating and modernising the venue, particularly the toilets, although there were concerns that the historic and architectural features should be maintained.

Some felt that the work was unnecessary and not a priority, and that the available money should be used for other things. There was some concern that increased usage would exacerbate parking problems.

It also suggested that the Carnegie should be managed from Westhoughton, perhaps with key code entry or run by a local pub.

Categorised comments – proposal five	Number of respondents
Increased use will be good	41
Waste of money / not needed / spend on other things	23
Library	12

Sample comments - Verbatim extracts

Increased use will be good

Respondents felt that the Carnegie was a beautiful space that should be better used. Not all thought that a new entrance was necessary [see next section], but others felt that a separate entrance would benefit library users too.

- *Beautiful room & should be put to better use*
- *Improved use and access to the Carnegie hall could encourage more groups to use the hall and a streamlined booking process will make it even more attractive*
- *About time something was done. Make more use of vastly underused space.*
- *Better access to Carnegie Hall is always welcome, especially if it's safer.*
- *It's a large building and if more activities put in it would increase the footfall along the main street*
- *Feel this is a really good idea as Carnegie Hall used to be a "Go To" venue for Weddings etc and sadly this lovely room has been underused for too many years*
- *I can't see why this would not be a good thing?*
- *Do it. It's an underutilised space that needs modernisation.*
- *Great - whatever would help keep the historic buildings in use.*
- *Good idea but I think the Carnegie Hall should be utilised more for community events not just private parties etc.*

Waste of money / not needed / spend on other things

Concern was expressed about the cost of this work, which was not seen as a priority, or not necessary as respondents didn't think there was a problem with the current arrangements, or that the Carnegie was not used enough to justify the expense.

- *Any monies spent on a separate access point would misguided, wasteful and not cost effective.*
- *Need money spending on childrens park rather than town hall*
- *Why do we need a new entrance?*
- *Could this money not be better spent elsewhere, why change something which is not broken*
- *Apart from the outer door, access to these areas is seperate. Yes the decor could be improved but donot understand the thinking of this.*

Library

A number of respondents commented about the library

9 respondents felt that it would be good to split the access from the Carnegie

- *Persons going to the craft session in the upstairs part of the library walk right through the Tai Chi class on Mondays. I'm sure this happens on other occasions at the momemt too.*
- *The History Group have used the upper floor of the Library but the area is too small. The Carnegie would be better and there would be no sound to and from the Library*
- *Create a new entrance to the Library on the side nearest Aldi and use the existing entrance for Carnegie Hall. Return this entrance and Carnegie Hall to how it was when it was first built and you have created a fantastic entertaining / events space.*
- *Carnegie Hall currently has a reputation for being old and stuffy. Move entrance to library to Aldi side then improve Carnegie Entrance and stairwell and use that for cultural events.*

7 respondents felt that splitting access could be detrimental to the library.

- *Not sure about splitting access to Hall and Library, as they can cross-promote.*
- *This sounds like prioritising business use over community. Our library is well used*
- *If the upstairs was to be used out of the library opening hours then a separate access makes sense but during opening hours it may encourage visitors to use the library and its services if they actually see it.*

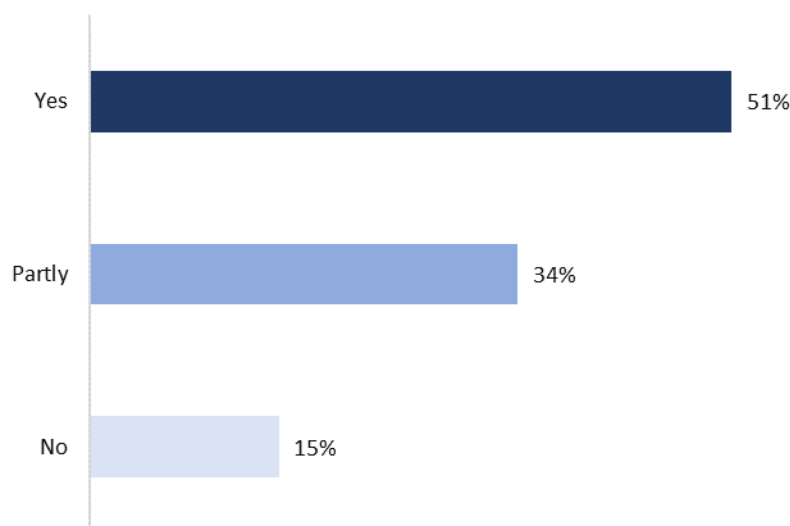
5 respondents would like money to be spent on the library.

- *Toilets in the library are a big issues*
- *Spending some of the funds on making the library a more attractive location would be good*

Proposal Six: Developing a car parking strategy

This proposal could include improvements to the quality of the car parks as well as increasing the number of short-stay car parking spaces by limiting the number of long stay car parking thus encouraging visitors to the town centre. Library Street and Market Car Parks are possible sites for improvement.

Do you agree with this proposal?



Proposal six: base 154

Most people agreed that car parking needed addressing, however many felt that the masterplan did address the fundamental issue of a lack of spaces.

New car parks were suggested on various pieces of land; primarily Silcock's land on Mill Street or the Gaiety site, but also the land by Sainsbury's, parts of Central park or by creating bays / on-street parking on Market Street. These could help businesses whose delivery drivers were often booked, including the post van emptying the post box on Market Street.

There was concern about how new or existing regulations would be enforced, and that limiting parking would simply push more cars onto nearby residential streets, which were already congested.

While some people supported the introduction of short-stay parking, concern was also expressed about the effect on businesses, both as to where staff would park, and how this would affect customers.

Some felt that charges should be introduced, but most people who commented on this aspect were against it. Respondents also suggested that more electric charging points / blue badge spaces were required.

Categorised comments – proposal six	Number of respondents
More parking spaces required	59
Against short stay - issues for business / residents	25
Suggested sites for car parks	24
Short stay – good, should be for shoppers	15
People do / should walk, cycle or use public transport	15
Comments about how short / long periods should be	10

Sample comments - Verbatim extracts

More parking spaces required

Respondents felt that there were insufficient parking spaces in the town centre, and that this was not addressed in the masterplan. Existing car parks could be improved.

- *Car parking was mentioned in the initial meeting and has been ignored completely in this proposal. We all stated categorically that extra car parking is needed and there is absolutely nothing in this proposal to reflect this. It's really disappointing but expected!*
- *An improvement in the quality of the parking areas in Westhoughton could well help people visit our town*
- *If visitors are going to be encouraged, through developing businesses/promoting the town, car parks will be a necessary evil.*
- *Shortage of parking in the town, both short and long stay. The library car park is too small and is very often full.*
- *Ensure future demand for car parking is anticipated and provided for. Not everyone can cycle or walk, plus it will attract custom from further afield.*
- *Proposal needs a total rethink as current car parking in Westhoughton is already oversubscribed and that's before the completion of housing developments... The town needs more car parking spaces.*
- *Insufficient parking in Westhoughton now and with all the extra houses/flats already being built a masterplan for Westhoughton town has got to include extra parking not just tweaking what we have that won't work and is very short sighted.*
- *Mixing up what we already have will not resolve the problem. We need more spaces.*

Against short stay - issues for business / residents

Respondents suggested that introducing short-stay only spaces would cause problems for businesses as staff still needed to park, and could deter customers. Town centre residents were concerned that this would cause further parking problems in residential streets.

- *If parking is time limited where will workers in Westhoughton park*
- *Where are the employees of the businesses meant to park? It is already a struggle on certain days.*
- *Staff who work need to be able to park otherwise they will block resident parking*
- *Long stay spaces are needed by workers and business owners but if they struggle to access their place of work in the future due to restrictions on long stay parking then that would also potentially put businesses of locating here....so a balance is needed*
- *We have little or no long stay car parks*
- *Where would traders and residents park if it was restricted. More parking is required in general.*

Suggested sites for car parks

A number of sites were suggested, primarily Silcock's land on Mill Street and the Gaiety site. Other suggestions included the land by Sainsbury's or within Central park, bays on Market Street and coming to an agreement with the current supermarkets so that their car parks could be used.

- *Vacant lands earmarked for residential use should be used for carparking purposes*
- *Could some money be used to put diagonal parking bays on the Leigh Road cul-de-sac where everyone parks? They did this in Leigh years ago and you can fit in a lot more cars.*
- *New car parks need to be built, ideally at the Gaiety area and on Mill Street. However the current car parks are "improved" they are not sufficient for shoppers and workers.*
- *More on street parking bays would be more helpful to the town centre. In areas where streets are widened for seating etc, it would be a good idea to add as much short term parking bays as possible.*
- *A new Market Hall with ground floor or upper parking could be the answer.*
- *Larger car parks that are not central for longer stay/visit.*
- *Expand the Wheatsheaf's car park.*

Short-stay – good, should be for shoppers

Respondents felt that introducing short-stay parking would encourage people who came to shop, since it would free up spaces for visitors.

- *Discouraging long stay would be a step in the right direction.*
- *It is a free for all, with every car park often filled with long stay users, creating difficulties for those who wish to make a short visit to the town centre.*
- *Has become increasing difficult to park so short term spaces would be good*
- *Short term is good for retail visits*
- *Perfect for popping onto Market St.*

People do / should walk, cycle or use public transport

Respondents currently walked into the town centre, or felt that this should be encouraged, along with cycling and the use of public transport.

- *Please encourage a healthy walking initiative ...to promote young people to walk instead of using their cars.*
- *I'm not bothered either way. I walk from Sandalwood in usually.*
- *What about park and ride or park and walk from the train stations?*
- *Public transport links need to be developed.*
- *Large number of residents could access town by walking*
- *Better to encourage people to walk/cycle/use public transport.*

Comments about how short / long periods should be

Respondents queried how long the periods would be, or made suggestions.

- *Limiting parking time to 60 or 90 minutes could prove beneficial.*
- *As long as the time limit is not too short.*
- *You need to allow enough time for visitors to shop etc.*
- *Anything under 2 hours would not enable people to move around the town and the shops as you envisage. 1 hour or 30 minute limits would definitely put me off!*
- *Long stay parking - up to 3 hours is also a must.*

Do you have any other comments / suggestions for Westhoughton Town Centre?

Comments were received around improving the appearance of the town centre, such as the condition of buildings, pavements, roads and drainage, along with the need for soft landscaping like planters, trees and hanging baskets. Any new proposals should factor in long-term maintenance, which was not happening currently.

Junctions needed to be looked at, particularly traffic light sequences and the lack of filters, especially around Cricketer's Way. Improvements were also suggested to the type and quality of shops and other businesses.

Most people were against further housing, although small-scale developments on brownfield sites was acceptable to some. It was important to keep the area clean, provide litter bins and remove graffiti if people were to be encouraged to use the town centre more. Safety was an important factor too, with people asking for better policing / cctv.

The lack of car parking and toilets were raised again, as was better provision in terms of health services and schools etc.

It was important to offer events, spaces and activities for the community, and to capitalise on the unique history of Westhoughton. A 200+ capacity entertainment / civic venue was proposed.

Improvements were suggested for Central Park, Westhoughton Leisure centre [parking, access paths and opening hours] and Central Drive [enforcement of speed limit and improvements to the Hub]

Comments were also received about the boundary of the masterplan, which some felt should be expanded to other areas of the town, including Victoria Street, which resident felt had particular parking and other issues that could be rectified by adoption, and King Street and Leigh Road / Park Road, again primarily parking issues.

Some contributors felt that they should have been consulted earlier in the process and that decisions had already been made by Bolton Council, rather than the people of Westhoughton. There was a feeling that there had been little publicity about the Masterplan and consultation process. Local business owners would have welcomed an opportunity to join the stakeholder group.

Categorised comments – other suggestions / comments	Number of respondents
Hard / soft landscape improvements	27
Improvements to shops / businesses	24
Car parking issues	19
Improvements for pedestrians / cycling / public transport	19
Encourage community - pride, events, activities, space	19
Improve policing / safety / traffic enforcements	17
Comments on masterplan / consultation	13
Cleaning / litter / graffiti	12
Housing - no more / needs to be limited	12
Central Park improvements	10

Sample comments - Verbatim extracts

Hard / soft landscape improvements

Respondents suggested improvements to the physical environment and more flora and green space.

- *Hanging baskets throughout the town would be nice in Summer.*
- *Consideration should be given to planting "special" trees along Market Street*
- *Ensure the conservation area of Market Street and surrounding areas by the church are kept in good condition*
- *Very excited by the opportunities this plan presents. Improvements are long overdue. We wonder whether there might be an opportunity to also enhance the appearance of Market street by upgrading the shop fronts?*
- *A general tidy up of shop fronts, especially the first floors would create a better first impression.*
- *Green space is now virtually zero in the town.*
- *During the Aldi construction HGVs completely destroyed the cobbled street outside Hayes Travel and Greenhalgh's.*
- *Several roads need resurfacing. Some drains are blocked.*

Improvements to shops / businesses

Respondents wanted a better retail offer, primarily a variety of quality independents, although discount stores were also suggested. More café / restaurants were suggested too, particularly for the evening.

- *Select businesses, do not just fill shops because they are vacant. Offer incentives for businesses to start up. It is extremely offputting when there are so many hairdressers, beauticians, barbers and charity shops. There needs to be a greater variety*
- *We need a couple more pubs and restaurants/cafes to make Westhoughton thrive.*
- *Market needs re vamp to make it boutique style rather than market stall It feels 70's*
- *Affordable retail shops instead of hairdressers, takeaways and bars.*
- *Independent shops - there isn't enough variety currently, would be great to emulate somewhere like Hebden Bridge.*
- *Shops on Market Street are unattractive and boring. The town needs a variety of shops selling high quality/artisan products that will attract visitors. The town is overrun with charity shops, hairdressers and take-away food shops, Not attractive to visitors.*
- *More restaurants that are available in the evening the kitchen has brought something new but we need to make the street a destination for all ages day and night*
- *Very little reference to the Market. I think there is potential for improving it and making it more attractive, if not a total re-development. I would recommend Radcliffe Market as an example. Radcliffe is a similar-sized town ... The Market has been transformed into a vibrant day and night time venue for retail, food and entertainment.*

- *Far too many beauty shops, hairdressers, nail bars, barbers. What we need to encourage are businesses like shoe shops, book shops/music, a haberdashery - you can't buy a reel of cotton in Westhoughton ... The Market Hall is terrible, the back closed off, there are some good little shops inside, but they are surrounded by tat.*

Car parking issues

Respondents brought up issues around car parking difficulties.

- *Parking is shocking in westhoughton, I purposely go elsewhere as I know I won't be able to park*
- *Need more car parking spaces. I know there are 2 train stations but it's the local people who drive a mile in, that need the car parking. If workers of Westhoughton park in the pavillion car park there's very little space for any customers. The town is such that Market Street businesses don't have car parking at the back. Many a time I have drove round and round struggling to park*
- *Strictly monitored limited parking on Market Street people do it anyway so its needed. Taxi businesses should also not be using public car parks taking up spaces.*
- *Instead of widening pavements make short stay available near cash machines in market street*
- *More parking that doesn't require going round Cricketers way to access Pavilion car park. The queues there are a joke. Introduce a scheme with Sainburys to use part of their car park as long stay for workers / shop owners. I'm sure they won't mind walking if they are getting extra trade by having more spaces free on Library st which should have a 2 hour limit.*

Improvements for pedestrians / cycling / pubic transport

Respondents were looking for the masterplan to deliver an improved experience for pedestrians and cyclists, along with improvements to public transport.

- *Anything that takes traffic away from Market Street and improving pedestrain access is good.*
- *Improve the walking routes from other parts of westhoughton, i.e. dasiy hill, especially through the sainsburys car park*
- *The town centre masterplan must be developed alongside the much more extensive bee Network scheme*
- *Connect areas, by reinstating access to leisure centre from Park Road or Alma Road*
- *Green man should stay on longer at Mill St due to wider road and cars going thro on red.*
- *Safe cycle routes and good cycle parking facilities.*

Encourage community - pride, events, activities, space

To increase residents' pride in their town. More events and activities could be offered, particularly if space was allocated for these.

- *More community use spaces*
- *Encourage activity, socialising and community.*
- *Close market street for the day make it a community events raising money for local charities*
- *Community park, community gardening space*
- *More for teenagers and young adults to do.*
- *Would be brilliant to see a venue on the Gaiety site or the Mill St car park which would bring art and culture to the town and bring people in.*
- *Large groups of young people hanging around Sainsburys and McDonald's can be a problem. I think it would benefit the town greatly for them to have facilities to use eg. A skate park or laser quest or an outdoor gym on some of the land that's available.*

Improve policing / safety / traffic enforcements

People wanted to feel safer within Westhoughton, with more police / cctv and enforcement by traffic wardens.

- *More police presence...anti social behaviour and shoplifting is a problem.*
- *More police walking the streets*
- *A police station! Say no more...*

- *In the wake of increase in criminal activity a more secure street would be nice. Assurance the cameras are operational, some form of police - occasionally would be an improvement to the current none.*
- *Anything to improve security and discourage drug taking around the centre would be welcome*
- *Anything more that can be done to stop people illegally parking on Market St would be much appreciated*
- *It's essential to tackle anti-social behaviour if we really want to improve the town, particularly by groups of youths in the evenings around Ditchfield Gardens, Central Park, McDonalds, Sainsbury's, in the fields off the Fairways and around Aldi*

Comments on masterplan / consultation

Respondents made comments on the Masterplan development and the consultation process.

- *You've let specific shops know about your plans. You are not making your new meetings known so half the street doesn't know about these changes.*
- *It would have been nice to have people on site who knew the town and what its residents needs rather than people whose comments included 'it has improved other towns so it should do the same here'.*
- *Have you included the young people of the town and actively sought their views. Any decisions made will affect their future more than many of the residents represented at the library today. Also have representatives at the library who have up to date and correct information ...the consultation is a done deal.*
- *This event was poorly publicised and attended. a flyer to all houses would have been beneficial*

Cleaning / litter / graffiti

Respondents felt that the town could be cleaner, and that litter and graffiti should be addressed.

- *Council continually leave bags of rubbish in Ditchfield Gardens, 6 there at moment*
- *Litter is a problem ...Lots of plastic pollution.*
- *The alley way in-between Italiano and the Kitchen it full on rubbish overflowing rubbish, in the summer it stinks attracting rats and the like, people use it to vomit and urinate in,*
- *More bins to help with littering. Hose the pavements in a morning to clean up the vomit*
- *Basic item to make the town more attractive is the removal of litter*

Housing - no more / needs to be limited

As in previous sections, residents felt that there was already too much building in Westhoughton, or that limits should be set.

- *Adding even more housing is just unacceptable*
- *In general I am for redevelopment of brown field land in priority of current green land which should be avoided at all costs.*
- *Do not create more housing before observing the impact of the major new developments under construction.*

Central Park improvements

Respondents felt that improvements to Central Park would help to encourage people to use the park more.

- *Nothing in there about the regeneration of the park. This is a beautiful park and more needs to be done with it to encourage people.*
- *Needs attention, there was once decent public conveniences and a cafe... It is our piece of precious open space, its important we look after it for future generations.*
- *Spend the money on improving the park. Better paths are needed and drainage to grassed areas. Central Park is a dump compared with parks in Bolton. How about some landscaping?*
- *The demise of Central Park, from what used to be so delightful a place to spend time, is extremely sad & depressing. A concrete area has replaced what once were well used tennis courts. Flora is now non-existent. Cobbled edging to paths are overgrown with grass & lie*

unseen. No plant, or wildlife can survive beneath rampant rhododendrons. The only flora being in the bowling green, provided by council grants. The carpark, I believe, is used for the supplying of drugs to users. What a place to welcome newcomers to our town. Shameful.

Summary

The strong view coming from the people of Westhoughton was that they didn't want any more housing development in the area and wanted congestion and car parking to be sorted out. They also suggested a greater police presence, enhanced shopping / leisure, facilities for young people and an investment in infrastructure such as health centres, doctors etc.

Bolton Council

Westhoughton Town Centre Masterplan Consultation

Background

A draft masterplan for Westhoughton Town Centre has been developed and we would like to get your views on the initial proposals (detailed below). It is important that residents, visitors and other stakeholders express their views to help guide and shape decisions. **Please read the information in the summary document before completing the questions below.**

Please be aware that the answers you give in this questionnaire will be passed on to a team of town centre development experts (led by BDP) who have been commissioned by Bolton Council to develop a masterplan for Westhoughton in partnership with key stakeholders and in consultation with the public.

Proposal One: Street remodelling along Market Street

This proposal would retain two-way traffic along Market Street but include selective road narrowing to create larger areas of public realm (pedestrian areas) particularly on town hall / market side which would enable businesses to take advantage of the sunny aspect and spill onto the street.

Q1 Do you agree with this proposal?

Yes

Partly

No

Q2 Please explain your answer

Proposal Two: Upgrading key pedestrian links

The proposal would involve improving the public realm (pedestrian areas) of Library Street, Marsden Street and the pedestrian link to the town centre market car park from Market Street and from Library Street to Central Park. These routes would be made pedestrian friendly, through pavement improvements, lighting and shop frontage improvements.

Q3 Do you agree with this proposal?

Yes

Partly

No

Q4 Please explain your answer

Proposal Three: Redevelopment of the Town Hall

This proposal would involve the conversion of surplus space within the town hall into a managed workspace development - providing space for small business and 'start-up' space for new businesses.

A ground floor commercial cafe would serve the businesses and would also be open to the public.

Q5 Do you agree with this proposal?

Yes

Partly

No

Q6 Please explain your answer

Proposal Four: Promotion of new homes on council and privately owned land

Three potential housing sites for consideration include: i) vacant land in-between the Wheatsheaf car park and the Beer School (known as the Gaiety site), ii) land east of Mill Street and iii) land west of Sainsbury's car park. New homes would meet demand for housing types and tenures not readily available in the local market (e.g. for older people and apartments for young professionals) and would help improve the vibrancy of the town centre, especially in the evenings.

Q7 Do you agree with this proposal?

Yes

Partly

No

Q8 Please explain your answer

Proposal Five: Improving access to the library and Carnegie Hall

Current access to Carnegie Hall is shared with the library. Under this proposal separate access to the upstairs of the library would be created to improve safety, security and visitor experience. Improvements to access arrangements at both the library and Carnegie Hall will increase the use of the hall, together with simpler booking arrangements.

Q9 Do you agree with this proposal?

Yes

Partly

No

Q10 Please explain your answer

Proposal Six: Developing a car parking strategy

This proposal could include improvements to the quality of the car parks as well as increasing the number of short-stay car parking spaces by limiting the number of long stay car parking, encouraging visitors to the town centre. Library Street and Market Car Parks are possible sites for improvement.

Q11 Do you agree with this proposal?

Yes

Partly

No

Q12 Please explain your answer

Other comments

Q13 Do you have any other comments / suggestions for Westhoughton Town Centre?

About you

So we can understand how our proposals affect different people, we would be grateful if you could answer the following questions. Any questions you prefer not to answer - please leave them blank.

Q14 Please tick the box that most closely describes your interest in this issue (tick one box)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="radio"/> A resident in Westhoughton | <input type="radio"/> An interested partner organisation (state below) |
| <input type="radio"/> A resident in another part of Bolton | <input type="radio"/> A community or voluntary group (state below) |
| <input type="radio"/> A business in Westhoughton (state below) | <input type="radio"/> Other (state below) |
| <input type="radio"/> A business in another part of Bolton (state below) | |

If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, group or business you do not need to complete the remainder of this section

Q15 What is your postcode?

Q16 What is your age?

Q17 Are you ... ? Male Female Other

Q18 What is your ethnic origin?

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> White British | <input type="radio"/> Mixed / multiple ethnic groups | <input type="radio"/> Black / African / Caribbean / Black British | <input type="radio"/> Other ethnic group |
| <input type="radio"/> Other white | <input type="radio"/> Asian / Asian British | | <input type="radio"/> Prefer not to say |

Q19 Are your day to day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or expected to last, at least 12 months?

- Yes, limited a lot Yes, limited a little No

Q20 Do you look after, or give any help or support to family members, friends, neighbours or others because of either a long term physical or mental ill health / disability or problems due to old age? (do not count anything you do as part of your paid employment)

- No Yes 1-19 hours a week Yes 20-49 hours a week Yes 50 hours or more a week

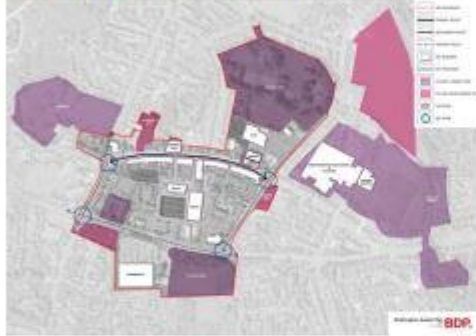
Thank you for completing these questions. Please now either:

- hand your completed form to a member of staff or drop into a council building
- scan it and email it to WesthoughtonTownCentreFunding@bolton.gov.uk
- post it to: Freepost RTTT-YTEL-YSXS, Consultation & Research Team, 2nd Floor Town Hall, Victoria Square, Bolton, BL1 1RU (you do not need a stamp)

To see the proposals in more detail and to complete an online questionnaire please go to www.investinbolton.com/westhoughton

Westhoughton Town Centre Masterplan

What is this consultation about?



A draft masterplan for Westhoughton town centre has been developed and we would like to get your views on the draft development proposals.

The Westhoughton town centre masterplan is a key regeneration project to enhance the economic prospects of Westhoughton by providing a clear strategy for growth, helping to future proof the town by building on its existing qualities and assets and promoting new activities, so that its full potential as a thriving town can be realised.

Boleyn Council is committed to developing a masterplan for Westhoughton town centre that reflects the Bolton Vision 2030 of creating a vibrant place, built on strong cohesive communities, successful business and healthy residents.

Creating it is a welcoming place where people choose to study, work and put down roots, the masterplan will also assist in the delivery of the council's Economic Strategy, focussing on inclusive growth.

To help guide future investment, a team of town centre development experts (BDP supported by BC Group and CBC The experts) were commissioned by the Council in October 2019, to prepare a masterplan for Westhoughton town centre.

The study team has undertaken an analysis of the existing town centre, assessed national town centre trends, looked at local demand and aspirations and consulted with key stakeholders. Based on their findings, the team has prepared a draft masterplan which will provide the spatial framework for the town centre, helping to guide future development. The draft masterplan will be supported by a delivery strategy to help start the regeneration of Westhoughton town centre.

This consultation is part of the masterplan process and seeks to make residents of the Westhoughton town centre masterplan, test opinion on the draft masterplan proposals, and gain feedback from the local community and businesses. Your feedback will help shape the final masterplan and delivery strategy for the town centre.



Westhoughton Town Hall



Market Street, the heart of Westhoughton town centre



Westhoughton Leisure Centre



Parkside Square street



What are the challenges facing Westhoughton town centre?

Town centres are changing...

Town centres are changing, so are the ways in which people use them. Over the course of the last decade, our high streets have faced some of the biggest challenges in their history, from global economic recession to the rise of the internet offering unprecedented choice in on-line shopping. With changes in people's spending and visiting patterns, town centres are now seen as places for more than just shopping, but also as places for leisure, food & drink, as social and community hubs, business spaces, places for culture, health and education and increasingly as a place to live. A bit like they used to be!

It is now commonly agreed that whilst retail is an important element of a thriving town centre, it is not the only one. Other ingredients such as independent traders, town centre homes and the quality of the pedestrian experience are also vital to the creation of attractive and healthy places which people will choose to visit, to work or live in and to spend their time and money. We can see the success of this approach in other Greater Manchester town centres such as Urmston in Trafford or Fritchwick in Bury.

To remain relevant and as important to communities and businesses as they have been in the past, town centres and high streets have to adapt to these changes.



Westhoughton town centre is a well-connected and lively town centre, with a local character appreciated by residents.

Westhoughton town centre already offers a wide range of assets, from a town hall, a library, Carnegie Hall, an indoor market, independent businesses, shops and cafes, a recently refurbished leisure centre, a town park, school, therapy centres, national convenience retail and food & drink brands, office space, banks and building societies. The range and diversity of Westhoughton town centre assets is very good for a town centre of its size.

However, like many town centres across the UK, Westhoughton still faces challenges, and is not making the most of its assets. The challenges facing Westhoughton town centre include:

- Making more of Market Street, including bringing vacant sites back into use and maximising the use of Council-owned buildings like the town hall, library and Carnegie Hall
- Classifying the town centre to generate more activity, for example with managed workspace for small businesses and start-ups and low town centre living
- Developing a stronger 'evening economy', encouraging shops to open later and attracting more cafes and bars
- Creating stronger links between shops along Cricketers Way (like Sainsbury's and McDonald's) and Market Street, including encouraging more active transport (e.g. cafes, shops along Market Street to encourage more people to visit all parts of the town centre)
- Lack of availability of short-stay car parking and some poor quality pedestrian routes to the car parks
- In some areas, shop vacancy and underutilised or empty upper floors
- Unattractive pedestrian links connecting Market Street to Pavilion Square shopping centre and the town centre public car park to its west
- Canal Park does not feel connected to the town centre
- Some areas of poor quality shop and business footpaths and low quality public realm



A draft masterplan has been developed to tackle the challenges and to guide the regeneration of Westhoughton town centre



Westhoughton is a distinctive and much loved town centre, with the gently curving Market Street running from St. Bartholomew's Church to the Town Hall at its heart. The town centre has many great assets and is generally working well. The emphasis of the draft masterplan for the town centre is on bringing forward the development of vacant sites, finding new uses for underutilised buildings and strengthening pedestrian links around the town centre and beyond, for example to the park.

A good range and quality of shops and businesses along Market Street and ensuring that this is an attractive and pleasant street to visit, including during the evenings, is key to the continued success of Westhoughton town centre. Of course ensuring as many people as possible can get to the town centre conveniently, including by car when necessary, will also be very important. The draft masterplan therefore also addresses access by foot, cycle and public transport as well as car parking strategies to maximise the availability of short term parking. We have suggested the following themes which could characterise the future town centre:

1. Market Street - the healthy heart of Westhoughton town centre

- Creating outdoor places for people to sit, meet, have a drink or a meal, particularly focusing on the south facing properties on Market Street
- Minimising the impact of vehicles on Market Street whilst retaining access for all vehicles, though remodelling and discouragement of through traffic
- Healthy streets for active lifestyles including a green pedestrian and cycle routes through the town centre and connecting with the park, school and leisure centre, perhaps as part of the Greater Manchester Bike Network of cycle routes
- Bringing forward new development on the Gately site to address the spaces in the heart of the town centre
- Finding new uses for the Underutilised Town Hall building

2. Shop local - Supporting and promoting local businesses

- Support for local and urban shops that provide goods you need and complement the larger shops - making it possible to do most of your shopping locally
- Developing a car parking strategy to ensure better short-stay car parking availability through short stay parking designations and limiting long stay car parking in the town centre

3. Going out in Westhoughton - The evening economy

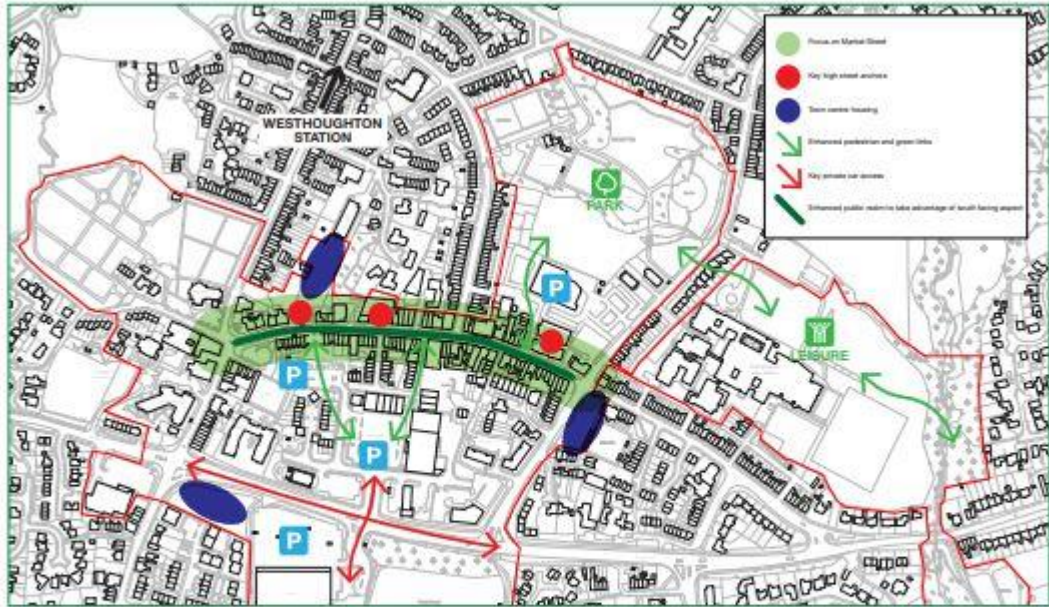
- Improving access to and use of the Carnegie Hall
- Shops that stay open into the evening
- Daytime cafes transforming into evening restaurants
- Seasonal events programme
- Incorporating lighting into public realm design
- Car parking strategy to encourage evening visitors

4. Westhoughton Business

- Promoting Westhoughton as an attractive place for start-up and small businesses with town centre facilities on the doorstep and convenient access across the city region by road and rail
- Creating the Westhoughton 'start' containing everything you need to know, with updates on events, special offers, and the facility to place orders and make reservations

5. A living town centre

- Promoting Westhoughton as an attractive place to live, with a wide range of town centre facilities and excellent access to employment opportunities locally and across Greater Manchester



Westhoughton town centre regeneration strategy



Draft Westhoughton town centre masterplan



Draft Proposals

Six Key Development Proposals (KDPs) have been identified that could transform the town centre

KDP1: Street remodelling along Market Street

Market Street is the heart of Westthroughton and is a focus for the community and visitors to the town centre. This project will retain two-way traffic but include selective road narrowing to create larger areas of public realm (pedestrian areas), particularly on town hall / market side which would enable businesses to take advantage of the sunny aspect and spill out onto the street. Possible locations include in front of the indoor market, between Queen Street and King Street and in front of the shops to the east of the Co-op foodstore.



When thinking about this proposal consider if it's a good idea to introduce a street remodelling scheme along Market Street to create wider areas for pedestrians and whether this would encourage more people to use the town centre. Also think about what other areas of the town centre could benefit more from this work.

KDP2: Upgrading key pedestrian links

The proposed project would involve improving the public realm (pedestrian areas) of Library Street, Market Street and the pedestrian link to the town centre market car park from Market Street and from Library Street to Central Park. These routes would be made pedestrian friendly through pavement improvements, lighting and shop frontage improvements.



When thinking about this proposal consider if you think that Library Street, Market Street and the pedestrian link to the town centre market car park from Market Street should be priority for upgrading pedestrian links and whether these improvements would encourage more people who shop at Pavilion Square to come to Market Street. Also think about whether other parts of the town centre would benefit more from this work and if so, where?

KDP3: Redevelopment of the Town Hall

The Town Hall is a key landmark in the town centre and there is a strong local community association with the combined Town Hall, Library and Carnegie Hall complex. At the same time the Council's usage of the Town Hall is reducing as part of a wider reorganisation of services. This project proposes the conversion of surplus space into a managed workspace development, providing space for small business and start-up spaces for new businesses. A ground floor cafe would serve the businesses and also be open to the public.



When thinking about this proposal have a think about whether the Town Hall should be used for managed work space and whether the new use should include a commercial/cafe offer. Also consider any other ideas for this landmark building that would ensure it will be in the best use possible.

Draft Proposals

Six Key Development Proposals (KDPs) have been identified that could transform the town centre

KDP4: Provision of new homes on council and privately owned land

Sites for consideration include i) vacant land in-between the Westthrought car park and the Beer School (known as the Gallery site), ii) land east of Mill Street and iii) land west of Sainsbury's car park. New homes will help increase the residential population of the town centre and therefore levels of activity particularly in the evenings and meet demand for housing types and tenures not readily available in the local market e.g. for older people and apartments for young professionals.



When thinking about this proposal consider if it's a good idea to build more housing in and around the town centre and if so, what type of new homes do you think are needed to meet local demand as well as attracting new residents to the area?



KDP5: Improving access to the Library and Carnegie Hall

Current access to Carnegie Hall is shared with the library. Under this proposal separate access to the library would be created to improve safety, security and visitor experience. Improvements to access arrangements at both the library and Carnegie Hall will increase the use of the hall, together with angled parking arrangements.



When thinking about this proposal consider whether it's a good idea to create a separate access to the Carnegie Hall and what other arrangements do you think would help better utilise the building.

KDP6: Developing a car parking strategy

This could include improvements to the quality of the car parks, as well as the control over long stay car parking in the area. The council car parks at Library Street and the market car park are the possible locations for some long stay car parking, ensuring a better supply of short stay parking to encourage visitors to the town centre.



When thinking about this proposal consider whether it's a good idea to develop a car parking strategy to limit long stay car parking in the town centre and if so, where should long stay car parking be provided.

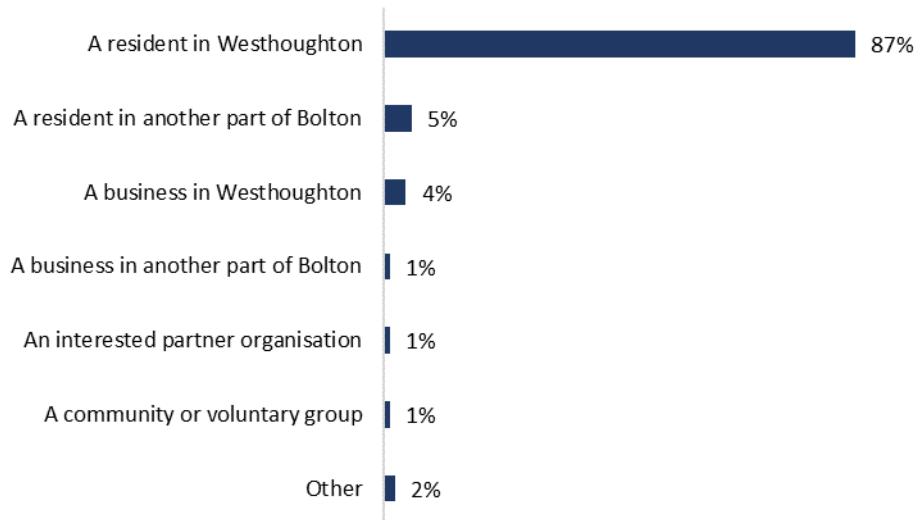
Next Steps

- Please comment and return the questionnaire provided so we can use your feedback and suggestions to further improve the proposals for the town centre.
- Bolton Council and its consultants will review the proposals in the light of your comments.
- The team will look at more detail at the deliverability of the proposals - can funding be identified and how will other landowners be encouraged to invest?
- Once all the comments have been considered, a final masterplan for the town centre will be produced for formal approval by the Council.
- After this we hope to work with our partners to get the masterplan moving.

For more information go to www.investinbolton.com/westthroughton

Detailed demographics About you

Q14 Please tick the box that most closely describes your interest in this issue



Q14 Base: 159

The vast majority of respondents [87%] were answering as a resident of Westhoughton.

- 'Other' consisted of two respondents, one of whom was a visitor to the town.
- Three respondents who were primarily responding as business owners stated that they were also resident in Westhoughton.

Q15 What is your postcode?

This was only asked to those who had ticked 'resident' in Q14.

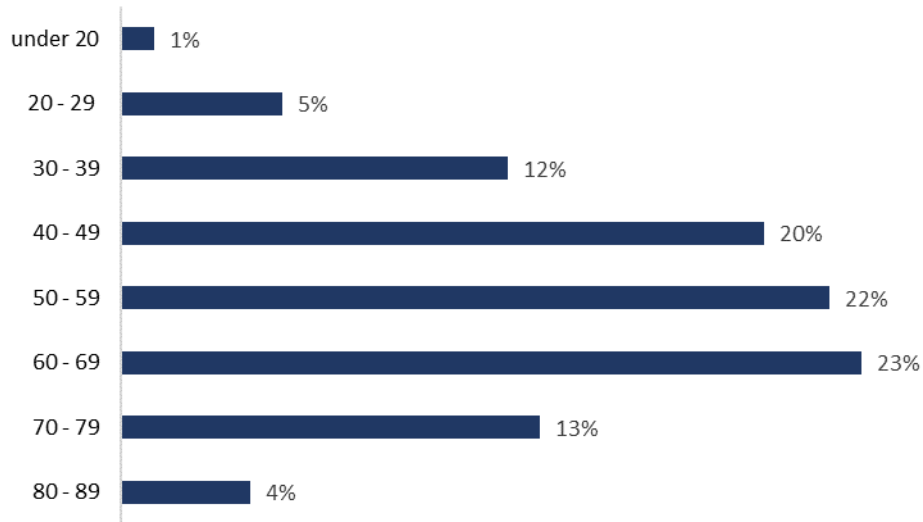


Q15 Base: 159

- 137 respondents gave their postcode; these were all within Bolton Borough, and mainly within Westhoughton.

Q16 What is your age?

This was only asked to those who had ticked 'resident' in Q14.



Q16 Base: 128

- 60% of respondents were under 60.
- The youngest respondent was 17 and the oldest 89.
- A further two respondents gave their age as '60+' and '75+'.

Q17 Are you...?

This was only asked to those who had ticked 'resident' in Q14.



Q17 Base:141

- There were a higher percentage of female respondents compared to male [55% v 44%] with 1 respondent identifying as 'other'.

Q18 What is your ethnic origin?

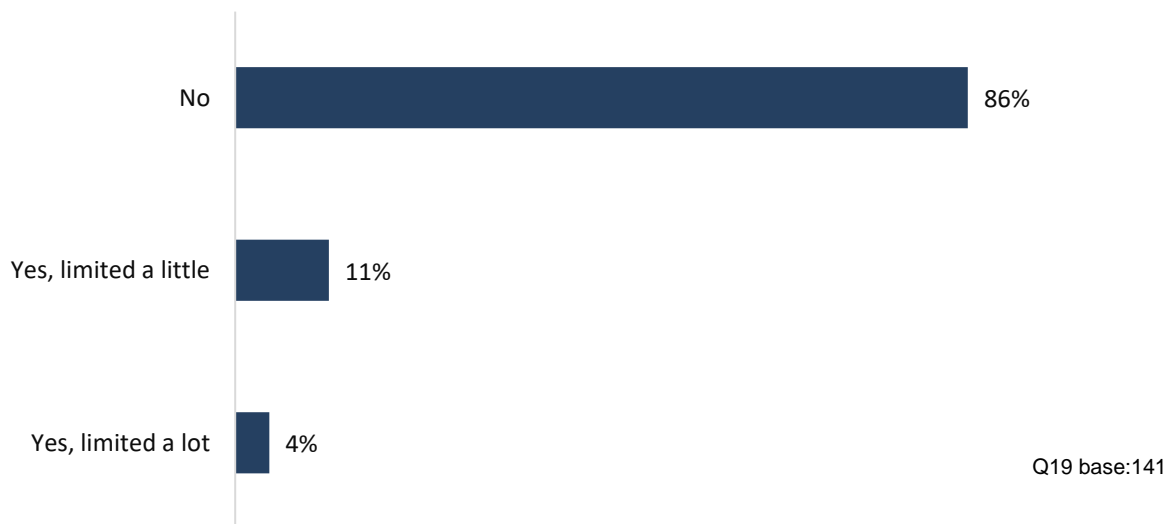
This was only asked to those who had ticked 'resident' in Q14.



- The vast majority [98%] of respondents were 'White British'.
- The only other ethnic groups represented were 'Asian / Asian British', and 'Black / African / Caribbean / Black British', with one respondent in each category.

Q19 Are your day to day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or expected to last, at least 12 months?

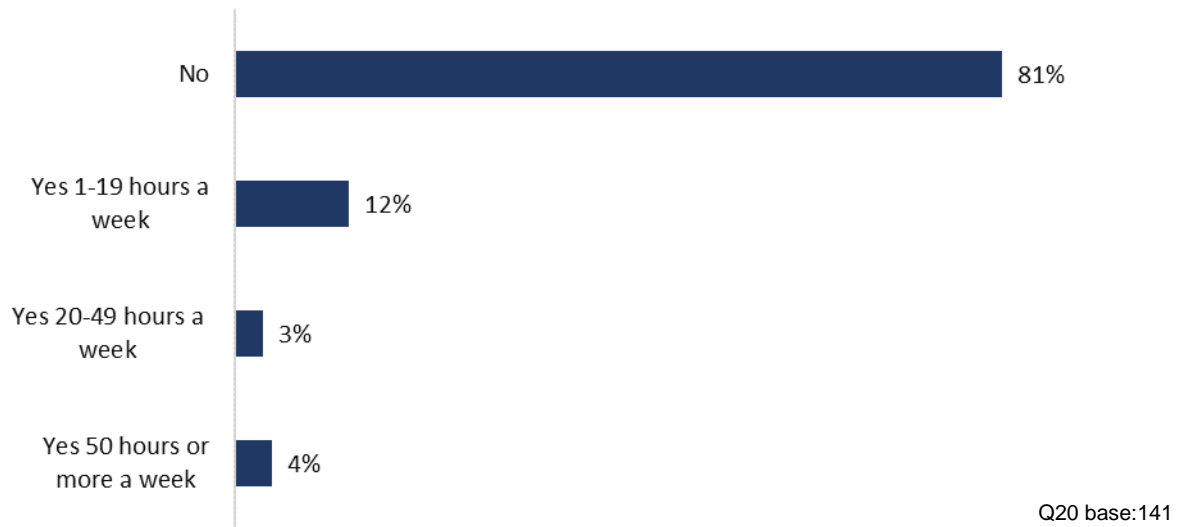
This was only asked to those who had ticked 'resident' in Q14.



- The majority of respondents had no life limiting health issues.

Q20 Do you look after, or give any help or support to family members, friends, neighbours or others because of either a long term physical or mental ill health / disability or problems due to old age?

This was only asked to those who had ticked 'resident' in Q14.



- The majority of respondents [81%] had no caring responsibilities, however 19% had some responsibilities.