

A Vision For Stratford-upon-Avon Consultation Results

217 responses were received from 15th October to Friday 21st November.

1. Introduction for Respondents

The Stratford-upon-Avon Town Centre Strategic Partnership was formed after the adoption of the Town's Neighbourhood Plan to oversee its delivery. It brings together key public, private and third sector organisations to shape the town's future, protecting what is valued while responding to changing needs.

The Partnership identifies major issues where collective action can improve Stratford's environment and vitality. While it does not deliver projects itself, it influences and supports the organisations that do, encouraging a thriving, relevant town centre for residents, visitors and businesses.

Meeting regularly, the Partnership ensures initiatives are informed, collaborative and joined up from the outset, maximising their chance of success. Its goal is a town where quality of life is high—environmentally, economically and socially.

Following workshops, we set out a draft vision for Stratford and defined the Partnership's mission.

This is not the finished article – it is the start of a wider conversation. We now want to hear from you. Do these priorities reflect what matters most to our community? Are there ideas missing? Your views will help shape the final strategy and guide how Stratford develops in the years ahead.

2. Summary of Results

The Vision

- Respondents were given the five statements that will achieve the Vision. Asked how much they agreed or disagreed with them, exactly nine in ten felt it should deliver for locals as well as tourists.
- 88% agreed that providing a great experience was a key thing to achieve and eight in ten wanted strong visionary leadership.

Themes to Deliver the Vision

- Respondents were given a list of ideas in terms of town centre evolution. Asked to pick three out of six, 71% were keen to see the dilapidated shop fronts improved. 62% wanted town centre living encouraged and 48% wished to see a town centre Masterplan developed. 36% wanted more trees planted and 34% indicated the provision of an indoor market area would be a good idea.
- In terms of ideas for a great vibe and fun place, almost three-quarters (73%) wished to see an improved retail experience. Six in ten (59%) in ten wanted to make the best use of the town's outdoor space and exactly half wished to make best use of underused retail spaces with 'pop up' schemes. 47% wished to see the development of a new youth hub and 46% wished to see the facilitation of a strong night-time economy.
- Asked to rate the ideas most important to them in respect of ease of movement, 64% wanted a new bridge built, 53% liked the prospect of a Bridge Street/High Street pedestrianisation scheme and 45% wanted the implementation of an Integrated Transport Strategy and Action Plan.

Profile

- 63% of those completing the questionnaire were residents of Stratford Town Council area, 48% were aged 60 to 74 years old, 54% were male and 21% had a long-standing illness, disability or infirmity.

3. Results in Detail

Vision

We believe that Stratford should be a town which:

1. Punches above its weight

We want Stratford-upon-Avon to retain its unique appeal and position in Warwickshire, acting like a 'small city' as a centre for work, life, and entertainment. Our future Stratford will be able to hold its own against the best in the country.



2. Delivers a fantastic experience

We want visitors to Stratford-upon-Avon to have an outstanding experience that makes wonderful memories. Trips to our town will excite, entertain and leave visitors eager to return.



3. Feels like a single community

Stratford-upon-Avon should work for everyone, regardless of age or ability. Our community will be inclusive and our town accessible, offering a great quality of life for all.



Please comment here on our Vision in the box below.

172 responses were received. These were analysed, with the main themes drawn out summarised in the table below.

Of the 172 comments, 82 expressed an overall agreement with the Vision, 24 expressed a negative reaction to the Vision in some way, and a further 59 commented on issues they felt related to the Vision without outwardly stating a positive or negative opinion of the Vision statements. There were also a handful of comments which specifically mentioned the three separate Vision statements, with the third statement about community receiving mainly positive responses while numbers 1 and 2 getting a mixed reception, particularly Vision 1, where the idea of thinking of Stratford as a '**small city**' as opposed to a town was divisive: while a handful of respondents liked the idea, the majority felt that Stratford's atmosphere and offer was definitely that of a market town.

The most common issue within the Vision brought up in the comments was the competing needs of **tourists versus residents**. Of the 23 comments which mentioned this, the majority felt that the Vision did not put enough emphasis on residents, with a number pointing out that residents were just as vital to the town as visitors were. Developing **community**, and the aspirations of Vision 3, were felt to be positive aims overall, and those comments which referenced community largely felt that Stratford had lost some of its sense of community over the years, and hoped that this Vision would bring it back.

The state of **retail** within Stratford-upon Avon was the next most common theme, appearing in just under 10% of all comments. Most of these comments wanted to see more independent shops in the town centre which they felt would enhance Stratford's appeal and identity. A handful of comments pointed out how high rent and rates prevented independent shops from succeeding, and mentioned some examples of towns where high streets were thriving as models to look towards.

The easy availability of **parking** was mentioned by 9% of comments as a way to ensure the town centre could attract the number of visitors it needed to be successful. Some of these comments suggested a combined focus on edge of town Park and Ride car parks alongside pedestrianisation of the town centre would enhance the high street experience.

Traffic was brought up by 8% of comments as a particular problem which residents faced and needed addressing, particularly with the scale of house building facing Stratford. A number of comments felt that pedestrianisation/traffic-free zones were a way forward.

8% of comments felt that the **empty shops** in Stratford's town centre, including the old BHS building and the shops on Greenhill Street, really brought the overall attractiveness of the town down, with terms such as 'slum' and 'shabby' being used. This possibly exacerbated perceptions that safety was a worry, with a further handful of comments (4%) highlighting how criminality and **anti-social behaviour** were a blight on the town centre. These comments were closely connected with those which talked about the 'grubby' or 'decaying' **state of the town** centre, which was felt by 6% respondents to need tidying up, both in terms of the streets covered in litter and the fabric of the buildings which lay vacant.

For a number of respondents (7% of comments), while agreeing in principle with the Vision, the **delivery** of it was thought to be an entirely different matter: many expressed reservations that anything would actually happen, with some wanting to know what funding was there to enable the Vision to come to fruition.

Table 1: Main themes - Vision (>3 comments)

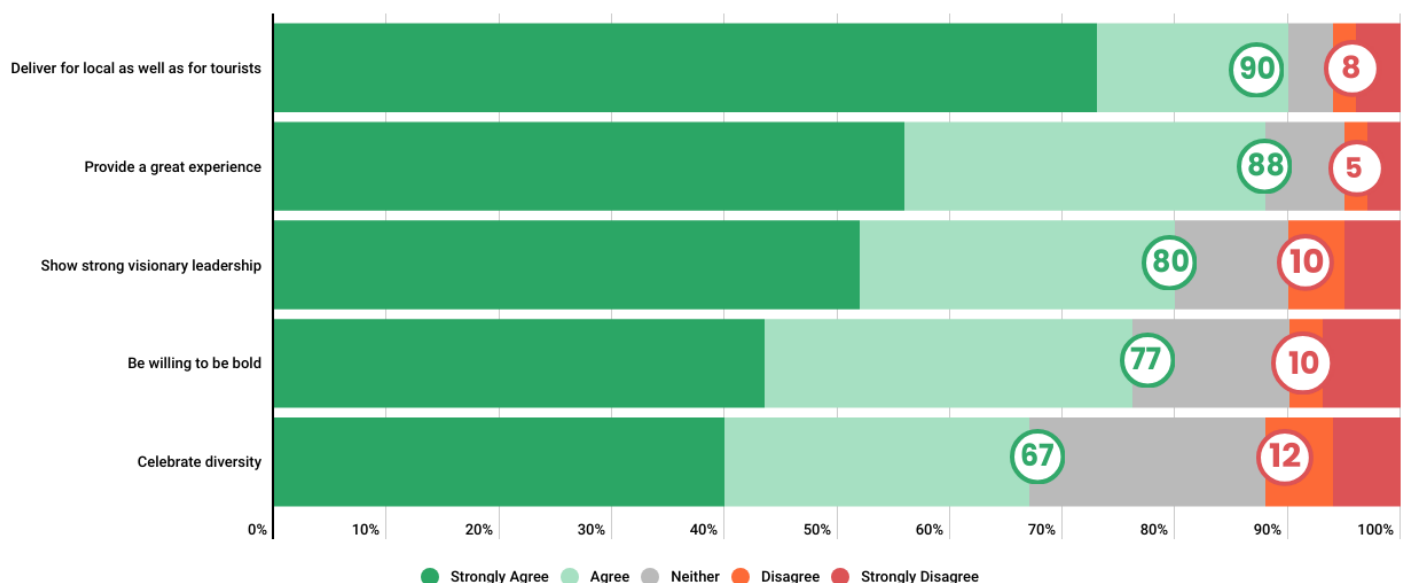
Theme	No. comments	%
Positive/agreement	82	48
General comment with no agreement/disagreement	59	34
Negative/disagreement	24	14
Vision specific agreement/disagreement	11	6
Tourists versus residents	23	13
Retail	16	9
Parking	15	9
Traffic = too bad	14	8
Empty shops	14	8
Delivery of the Vision – will be hard	12	7
Community = important	11	6
State of the town = poor	11	6
History and heritage - focus on this	11	6
City versus town	10	6
Leisure facilities – need more	10	6
Young people – not enough for them	9	5
Transport	9	5
Anti-social behaviour/safety issues	7	4
Pedestrianisation of town centre	7	4
Accessibility	6	3
Development related issues	6	3
Culture/arts/events	4	2
Markets	3	2
<i>Base: (All Respondents)</i>	<i>(172)</i>	

Our Mission as a Partnership

Table 2: How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements to achieve this Vision?

<i>In order of mean score, the lower the better.</i>	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean Score
Deliver for locals as well as for tourists - making Stratford-upon-Avon a great place for residents to live, work and study.	154 (73%)	37 (17%)	8 (4%)	4 (2%)	9 (4%)	1.48
Provide a great experience - capitalising on our heritage and history, the wonderful natural environment that surrounds us and our rich artistic and cultural offerings.	119 (56%)	67 (32%)	15 (7%)	4 (2%)	6 (3%)	1.63
Show strong visionary leadership – ensuring that our organisations act in a joined-up way to bring about meaningful change.	110 (52%)	59 (28%)	22 (10%)	10 (5%)	10 (5%)	1.82
Be willing to be bold - taking risks and saying “yes” to opportunities. By looking forward and focusing on the big picture, accomplishing great things.	93 (44%)	69 (33%)	30 (14%)	6 (3%)	14 (7%)	1.96
Celebrate diversity - demonstrating a focus on inclusion and accessibility for all.	85 (40%)	56 (27%)	44 (21%)	12 (6%)	13 (6%)	2.10

Figure 1: How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements to achieve this Vision?



Four Themes to Deliver the Vision

We also identified four priority themes that provide the focus for our ideas. Each theme was explored in further workshops, bringing in voices from across the town. These sessions generated a wide range of ideas, which were refined and prioritised through discussion and review.

Theme 1 Town Centre Evolution

This theme looks at how we can develop the town centre in a sustainable way, whilst respecting its history and beautiful natural surroundings.

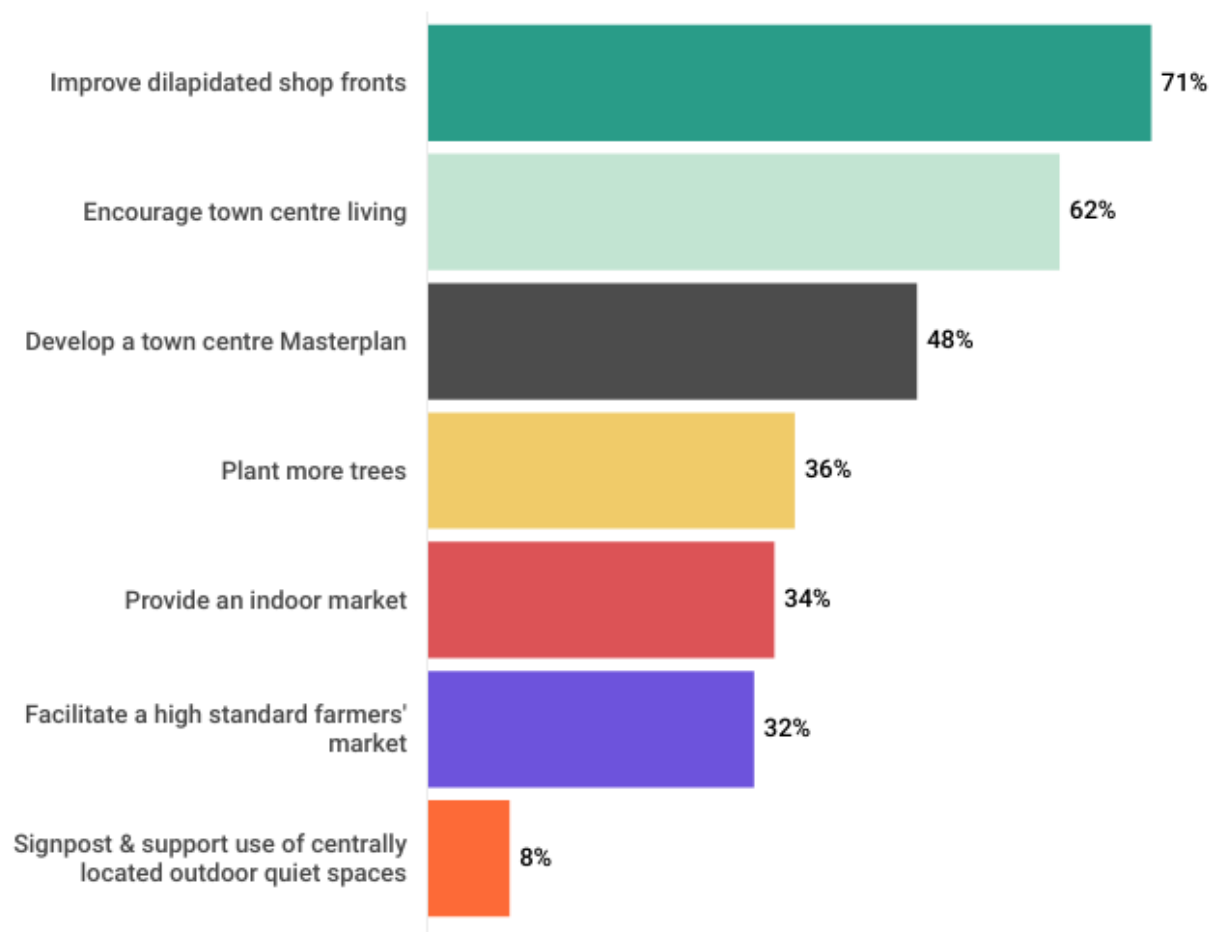
We want to bring life back into the town by facilitating living above shops and offices, and exploring the use of interconnected community zones, each with their own identity, to encourage shopping, leisure, eating, meeting and recreation.

We hope to improve the appearance of our streets, transforming run-down shop fronts and increasing green spaces, with more trees, green walls and roofs. Central quiet spaces will offer scope for peaceful reflection, and time out from bustling shops and cafés.

Our aim is for a vibrant atmosphere which reflects our amazing heritage, whilst providing for modern living and a healthy economy.

Table 3: Looking at our ideas for town centre evolution, which <u>three</u> are the most important to you? Tick <u>three boxes</u> only.		
	150 (71%)	Improve the dilapidated shop fronts – improving the look of shops that have no current occupants, prioritising those at the main entrances to the town.
	130 (62%)	Encourage town centre living - bring life into the town by facilitating living above shops and town centre offices.
	100 (48%)	Develop a town centre Masterplan - based on a series of interconnected community zones within the town, each with their own discrete identity.
	76 (36%)	Plant more trees - with more greenery generally, including green walls and roofs.
	72 (34%)	Provide an indoor market area – providing offerings that are different to what is provided as standard on the high street.
	68 (32%)	Facilitate a high standard farmers’ market - holding a traditional market day selling affordable local produce.
	16 (8%)	Signpost and support the use of centrally located outdoor ‘quiet spaces’ – offer areas for peaceful reflection.

Figure 2: Looking at our ideas for town centre evolution, which three are the most important to you? Tick three boxes only.



Theme 2

Creativity & the Arts

This theme seeks to enhance what we already offer as the internationally recognised home of Shakespeare, with creativity and the arts at the centre of the town's identity.

Fundamental to this aim is the creation of an arts and culture strategy, led by the needs of the community and visitors, which can support and promote arts and culture in the town. We are justly proud of our strong, Shakespeare-inspired theatrical heritage, and we want to see Stratford-upon-Avon as a home for art of all disciplines, with creativity at our heart and accessible to all.

We seek to encourage art everywhere, in all open spaces and open to all ages and abilities. This could take the form of creative play areas, visual art on buildings, community festivals and live music, with everyone encouraged to take part.

Through fostering community arts and supporting a thriving freelance artistic scene, we hope to make Stratford-upon-Avon a centre of creativity for the region.

The Arts & Culture Strategy consultation was completed in December 2024. Over 1,000 people engaged with in-person workshops and an online survey. The strategy will launch in April 2026. Therefore, this was not consulted on.

Theme 3

Great Vibe, Fun Place

This theme explores what we can do to give Stratford-upon-Avon a more inclusive and playful community feel, multicultural and multigenerational, where all can afford to live and enjoy themselves.

Stratford-upon-Avon benefits from outstanding outdoor spaces and we should capitalise on this through the promotion of more outdoor activities, such as markets and street entertainment, as well as increasing opportunities to make the most of the river – both on the water and beside it.

Temporary 'parklets', pop-up schemes and an increase in independent food shops could boost the vibrant, exciting feel of the town, simultaneously making use of vacant retail spaces.

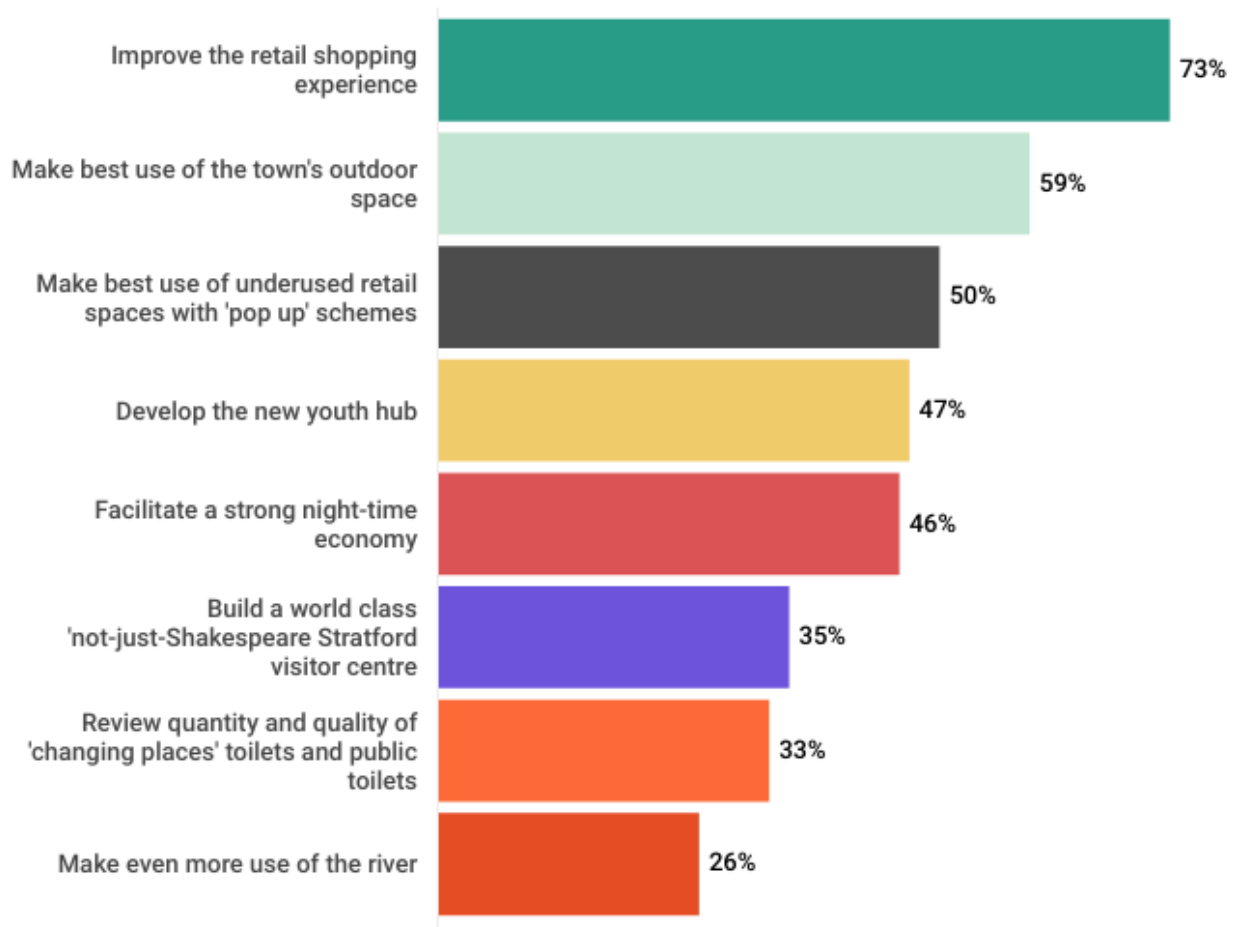
Places to sit and meet would encourage people to stop and watch the world go by, whilst late-night shopping, a tapas-style café culture, and after-hours activities and events will support the creation of a night-time economy.

To support our inclusivity aims, we need to ensure that spaces are accessible to all, with sufficient facilities to enable everyone to enjoy the atmosphere.

Table 4: Looking at our ideas for a great vibe and fun place, which four are the most important to you? Tick four boxes only.

	153 (73%)	Improve the retail shopping experience - including encouraging more independent food shops, for example delicatessens, bakeries and fresh fish, meat and vegetable retailers.
	124 (59%)	Make best use of the town's outdoor space - with a wide variety of activities - outdoor theatre and events; street music and entertainment; temporary 'parklets'; places to sit and meet; farmers' markets or artisan crafts markets; festivals; specific features within the Bridge Street / High Street pedestrianisation scheme.
	106 (50%)	Make best use of underused retail spaces with 'pop up' schemes - acting creatively and providing a variety of original and changing offers.
	99 (47%)	Develop the new youth hub - providing greater facilities for the young people in the town, created and led by them
	97 (46%)	Facilitate a strong night-time economy - with a range of after-hours activities, including a tapas style café culture, late night shopping and late-night entertainment.
	73 (35%)	Build a world class 'not-just-Shakespeare' Stratford visitor centre - featuring the town's social history, making it experiential and learning from other similar offerings elsewhere.
	70 (33%)	Review the quantity and quality of 'changing places' toilets and public toilets - and develop a plan to ensure an adequate number are provided.
	55 (26%)	Make even more use of the river - using its whole length, with increased on-water and by-water activities.

Figure 3: Looking at our ideas for a great vibe and fun place, which four are the most important to you? Tick four boxes only.



Theme 4

Ease of Movement

This theme focuses on how to make Stratford-upon-Avon a town that is easy to get to and get through, maximising active and sustainable travel through increasing walking, cycling and the use of public transport.

Whilst protecting access for those who need it, we wish to create more shared spaces, removing vehicles from busy streets where possible, and improving walking and cycling routes.

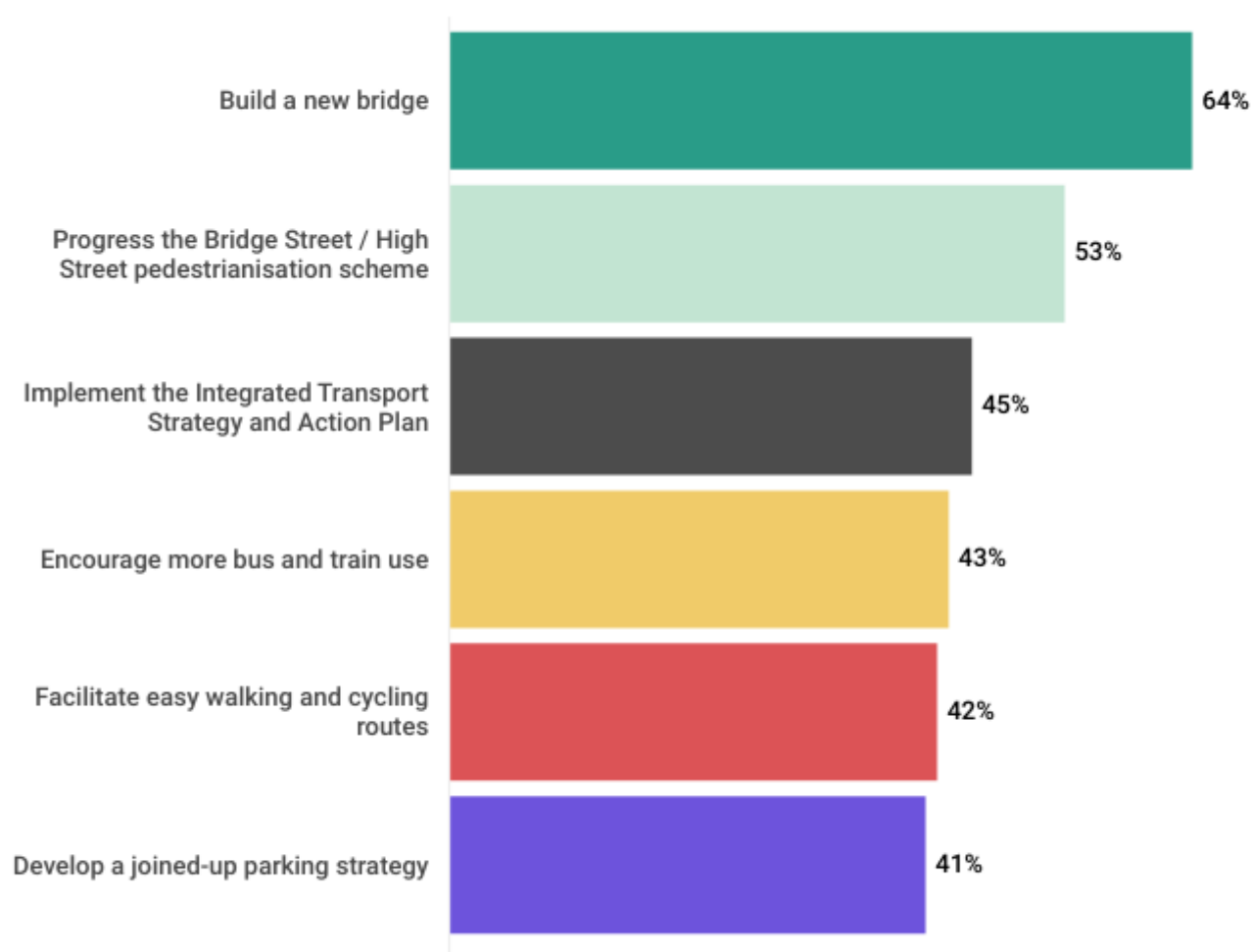
With a focus on sustainability, we look to provide more public Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points and better public transport options, encouraging visitors to use Park and Ride facilities in order to decrease pressure on parking and vital routes for residents.

Learning from successes in neighbouring towns, our vision for the future of transport in Stratford-upon-Avon is one where people can get to where they want to be easily, reliably and sustainably.

Table 5: Looking at our ideas for ease of movement, which three are the most important to you? Tick three boxes only.

132 (64%)	Build a new bridge – at the same time, put a weight limit on Clopton Bridge to remove HGVs from the town centre.
110 (53%)	Progress the Bridge Street / High Street pedestrianisation scheme – breathe new life into this critical, focal area of the town.
93 (45%)	Implement the Integrated Transport Strategy and Action Plan - ensuring joined up thinking with building planning. Create 'shared spaces' and remove vehicles where possible, whilst providing viable alternatives to car travel. Ensure provision in the centre of town for blue badge users.
88 (43%)	Encourage more bus and train use – support regular, reliable services and easily accessible, live transport information
86 (42%)	Facilitate easy walking and cycling routes - from key point to key point, for example from housing facilities to the town centre, to schools, the train station and the leisure centre. Create a pedestrianised core and provide more joined-up cycling infrastructure.
85 (41%)	Develop a joined-up parking strategy - 'outer' parking designed for long stays and day trips, whilst 'inner' parking is used for short stays. Increase the use of the northern Park & Ride facility and build a new southern Park & Ride.

Figure 4: Looking at our ideas for ease of movement, which three are the most important to you? Tick three boxes only.



Please comment here if you would like to add anything about our ideas from the three themes we are consulting on.

108 responses were received. These responses were analysed as to which theme they related to, and then specifically what issues they raised, the results of which analysis is summarised in Tables 6, 7, 8 & 9 below. Many comments referred to multiple themes and issues; therefore the percentages do not add up to 100%.

Theme 4 was discussed in far more comments than any of the other themes: 87% comments mentioned Theme 4, while 15% comments mentioned Theme 1 and 9% comments mentioned Theme 3.

The key feature of the majority of the responses discussing Theme 4 was that it needed to be addressed as a system: many felt that each of the different aspects of Theme 4, including parking, the road network, pedestrianisation of the town centre, active transport and public transport, cannot be addressed in isolation but rather need a holistic approach in order for any meaningful change to be enacted. Thus pedestrianisation for example would not be successful, it was felt, without also moving cars out of the town centre through either encouraging take-up of park and ride schemes or enabling through traffic to bypass the centre via a completed ring road. The most popular aspects to look to change or improve were rail links, active transport opportunities (walking and cycling) and bus services.

Table 6: Vision 'Themes' mentioned in comments

Theme	Nos. comments	%
Theme 1: Town Centre Evolution	16	15
Theme 3: Great Vibe, Great Fun	10	9
Theme 4: Ease of Movement	93	87
<i>Base: (All Respondents)</i>	<i>(108)</i>	

Table 7: Issues relating to Theme 1

Theme 1	Nos. comments	%
Empty shops need addressing	11	10
Markets/events (positives and negatives)	6	6
Physical state of the town (litter etc)	4	4
Homes in town centre	4	4
Miscellaneous	3	3
<i>Base: (All Respondents)</i>	<i>(108)</i>	

Table 8: Issues relating to Theme 3

Theme 3	Nos. comments	%
Young people	6	6
Retail offer	3	3
Leisure offer	3	3
Shakespeare, heritage	2	2
Riverside	2	2
Night-time economy	1	1
Toilets	1	1
<i>Base: (All Respondents)</i>	<i>(108)</i>	

Table 9: Issues relating to Theme 4

Theme 4	Nos. comments	%
Train services need improvement	21	19
Walking/cycling needs improvement	15	14
Buses generally need improvement	14	13
Yes to pedestrianisation of centre/ it improves town centres	13	12
Improve/encourage park & ride/discourage town centre parking	12	11
Bus services to villages are very poor	9	8
Ban vehicles from the town centre	9	8
Need a bypass/ring road/new bridge to keep traffic out of centre	9	8
The transport network is poor	8	7
Provide disabled parking	7	6
Keep centre parking as it encourages visitors/changing centre parking would discourage visitors	6	6
Improve public transport/increase usage	5	5
Don't pedestrianise town centre	5	5
Can't ban cars as public transport is too poor/will lead to fewer visitors	5	5
Need to improve road network before pedestrianising	4	4
Improve parking/make it cheaper	4	4
Improve public transport before banning cars	4	4
Make parking difficult in town centre	3	3
There is no bus station in Stratford	3	3
Reduce prices of public transport	2	2
Miscellaneous	7	6
Base: (All Respondents)	(108)	

Table 10: General Issues

General Issues	No. comments	%
General comment	6	6
Development creates an infrastructure problem	6	6
Jobs/employment	3	3
Homes in town centre	4	4
Miscellaneous	2	2
Base: (All Respondents)	(108)	

4. Respondent Profile

What is your Postcode (first 5 letters/numbers only, i.e. CV37 6)

167 postcodes were received and are shown in Appendix A.

Table 11: Are you completing this questionnaire...? (Tick all that apply)

111 (63%)	As a resident of Stratford Town Council area
56 (32%)	As a resident living outside Stratford Town Council area, but in Stratford District
4 (2%)	As a resident living outside Stratford District Council area
26 (15%)	Work or study in Stratford Town
13 (7%)	On behalf of a business in Stratford Town
12 (7%)	On behalf of a voluntary or community group
5 (3%)	Other
If other, please specify	
7 responses	

If completing the questionnaire as an individual and not on behalf of an organisation/business, please complete the following questions.

Table 12: What age group do you belong to?

5 (2%)	Up to 29 years old
15 (7%)	30-44
46 (22%)	45-59
100 (48%)	60-74
35 (17%)	75 plus
6 (3%)	Prefer not to say

Table 13: What is your gender?

113 (54%)	Male
91 (44%)	Female
0 (0%)	Non-binary/agender/gender-fluid
0 (0%)	Prefer to self-declare
5 (2%)	Prefer not to say
If you prefer to self-declare, please write in below	
1 response	

Table 14: Ethnicity - To which of these groups do you consider you belong to?

187 (89%)	White British
4 (2%)	Mixed or multiple ethnic groups
2 (1%)	Asian or Asian British
0 (0%)	Black, African, Caribbean or Black British
6 (3%)	Any other ethnic group
10 (5%)	Prefer not to say

Table 15: Do you have a long-standing illness, disability or infirmity?

44 (21%)	Yes
155 (75%)	No
9 (4%)	Prefer not to say

Appendix A - What is your Postcode (first 5 letters/numbers only, i.e. CV37 6)

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