

# Sutton Coldfield Town Centre Masterplan

Consultation summary (August 2020)



# Contents

<b>1.0 Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2.0 Response to Objectives and Big Moves</b>	<b>4</b>
2.1 Common themes	4
2.2 Frequently asked questions	9
<b>3.0 Conclusion</b>	<b>11</b>

Prepared on behalf of the TCRP by:



# 1.0 Introduction

Public consultation on the Sutton Coldfield Town Centre Masterplan lasted for four weeks during the period of 13th February 2020 to 9th March 2020. Public consultation was completed prior to national lockdown measures taken to address the coronavirus Covid-19 pandemic.

Consultation material consisted of: an explanation of the purpose of the masterplan, what the masterplan focuses on, initial ideas for 'Big Moves' on three themes – transport, economy & community, heritage & environment - including a brief summary of existing conditions, and the key themes and objectives for the future of Sutton Coldfield. The consultation material was informed by thorough baseline research and initial consultation which included meetings and workshops with the Sutton Coldfield Town Centre Regeneration Partnership, stakeholder groups including FOLIO and EcoSutton, and several key landowners including M&G (Gracechurch Centre) and Birmingham City Council (Red Rose Centre). An independent consumer survey of around 500 visitors was also undertaken within the town centre by The Retail Group (refer Baseline Report).

Public consultation material was published and shared via a variety of means including:

- Online in a storyboard format (<http://tiny.cc/suttonmasterplan>) and promoted by Town Centre Regeneration Partnership member communication channels;
- Two invited community workshops (held on Thursday 13th February);
- An invited local business drop-in session (held on Wednesday 26th February);
- Two public exhibitions - one in the Gracechurch Centre and the other in the foyer of Sutton Coldfield Library in the Red Rose Centre - where four roller-banners displaying the consultation information were located (held on Saturday 22nd February). Members of the consultant team were available to answer questions between 10am and 4pm;
- Four separate lunchtime drop-in sessions on Friday 27th February at nearby local centres including Walmley, Wyle Green, Boldmere and Mere Green;

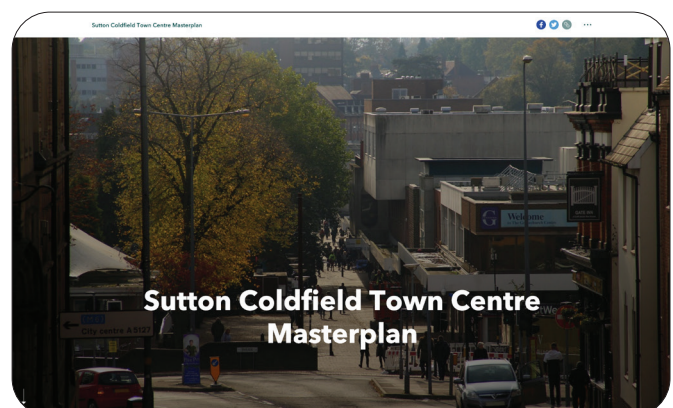
- Via A4 leaflets which were available for people to take away from all public drop-in events; and,
- A dedicated email address ([suttoncoldfield@tibbalds.co.uk](mailto:suttoncoldfield@tibbalds.co.uk)) was created and monitored by Tibbalds for members of the public to contact the consultant team with questions or comments throughout the consultation period.

At each event, people were actively encouraged to look at the maps and leaflets provided. At least one member of the consultant team was present at each of the events to facilitate discussion and record feedback. Response forms were provided which included the following questions:

- *What do you think of the proposed Big Moves?*
- *What else could be done to deliver a great town centre?*
- *What can be done to improve the overall environment of the town centre?*
- *What would attract you to visit the town centre more often?*
- *Any other thoughts or feedback*

In addition, people were invited to e-mail the dedicated Tibbalds e-mail address with feedback.

The emerging masterplan and public consultation material and events were advertised via media publications including a front-page story in the Sutton Coldfield Observer, Birmingham Live, Twitter, and Facebook. This activity prompted further articles and coverage.



The landing page for the storyboard format website which received over 1,900 views

# Sutton Coldfield Town Centre Masterplan

## Welcome

### Have your say

Sutton Coldfield Town Centre Regeneration Partnership is planning an exciting future for Sutton Coldfield, and we'd like your feedback on what you'd like the town centre to look like. The 'Sutton Coldfield Town Centre Masterplan' is in development, but when completed it will set out an outline plan that will create a more vibrant, valued and attractive centre for residents, workers and visitors.

The masterplan will bring together many different projects and initiatives across the town centre area within a single document and help to build a case for future investment in the town. So please, have your say and let us know what your ideas are for evolving your town centre into a great place to live, visit and work.

### Purpose of the masterplan

The masterplan will provide a bold vision for the town centre, one that meets the needs of communities and provides a focal point for Sutton Coldfield. It will propose a town centre that is appealing to private sector developers and the business community as a place they can continue to invest in.

We propose to reinvigorate the town centre so it becomes a vibrant, sustainable and welcoming place for residents, visitors and business by:

- providing a distinctive identity with a true heart for the town's communities;
- capitalising on Sutton Coldfield's attractive green and historic assets and its strong transport links;
- diversifying the uses of the town centre and increasing its accessibility for users in a way that is safe, convenient and pleasurable.

### Questions to think about

Your feedback will help us refine our ideas to create the best possible strategy for the way forward and to ensure we can make positive changes to the town centre. It is important to us that we can deliver a robust and viable strategy for Sutton Coldfield's future.

- What do you think of the proposed Big Moves?
- What else could be done to deliver a great town centre?
- What can be done to improve the environment of the town centre?
- What would attract you to visit the town centre more often?

Our consultant team are on hand to discuss and record your views. If you'd like to send any further feedback after the event, please e-mail [suttoncoldfield@tibtalds.co.uk](mailto:suttoncoldfield@tibtalds.co.uk) before 09/03/2020.

### What's the focus?

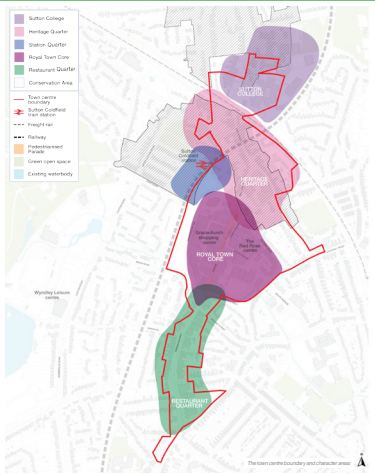
The masterplan focuses on the main commercial and retail areas of the town centre, including:

- the three shopping centres within the existing ring road;
- the railway station;
- the heritage quarter around High Street and Mill Street; and
- the shops, services and restaurants along Birmingham Road.

Whilst there is a 'red line' around this area, it is also important to look at the town centre in a wider context, particularly its connections to surrounding places, including Sutton Park - one of Europe's largest urban parks.

### The Big Moves

We have identified a series of 'Big Moves' - opportunities for Sutton Coldfield to respond to our vision for the town. These have emerged through discussion with those responsible for the success of the town centre now and in the future, through new research and analysis and by scrutinising past and current plans to understand the extent to which they can deliver the change we are looking for. The Big Moves cover many aspects of the town centres health, including transport, economy, community and heritage.



# Sutton Coldfield Town Centre Masterplan

## Big Moves: Transport

### The need to address transport

Sutton Coldfield is a vibrant and growing town, but it is also facing a number of transport challenges. The town centre is a key focus for future investment, and it is important to ensure that the transport infrastructure can support the growth and development of the town. The Big Moves: Transport plan aims to address these challenges and create a more sustainable and accessible town centre.

- The railway station is disconnected from the town centre - the main entrance - Mill Street - is the main access point.
- Parking is a challenge for the town centre, particularly in the morning.
- Much of the ring road brings a dominance of traffic, as well as noise and vibration.
- The High Street is a key route for the town centre, but it is also a major barrier to the town centre.
- There are many parking spaces in the town centre, but they are often used for long-term parking.
- There are many parking spaces in the town centre, but they are often used for long-term parking.
- There are many parking spaces in the town centre, but they are often used for long-term parking.



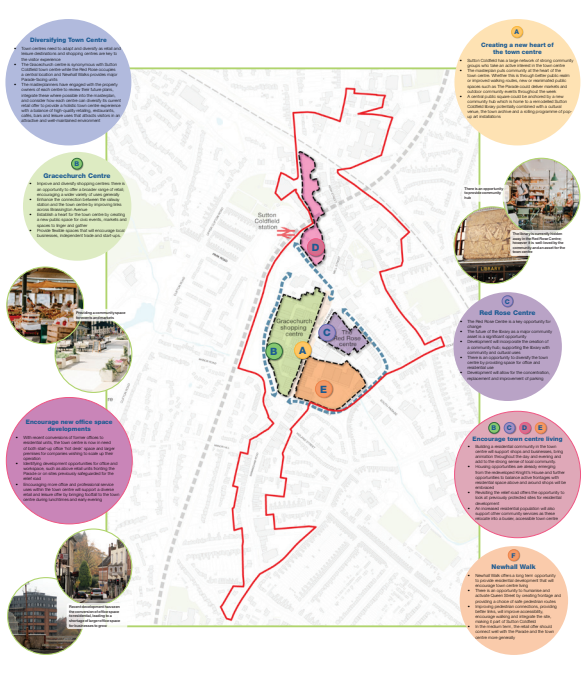
# Sutton Coldfield Town Centre Masterplan

## Big Moves: Economy & Community

### The need to address economy & community

Sutton Coldfield is a vibrant and growing town, but it is also facing a number of economic and community challenges. The town centre is a key focus for future investment, and it is important to ensure that the economic and community infrastructure can support the growth and development of the town. The Big Moves: Economy & Community plan aims to address these challenges and create a more sustainable and accessible town centre.

- High street (the main street) is a key route for the town centre, but it is also a major barrier to the town centre.
- The town centre is a key focus for future investment, and it is important to ensure that the economic and community infrastructure can support the growth and development of the town.
- The town centre is a key focus for future investment, and it is important to ensure that the economic and community infrastructure can support the growth and development of the town.



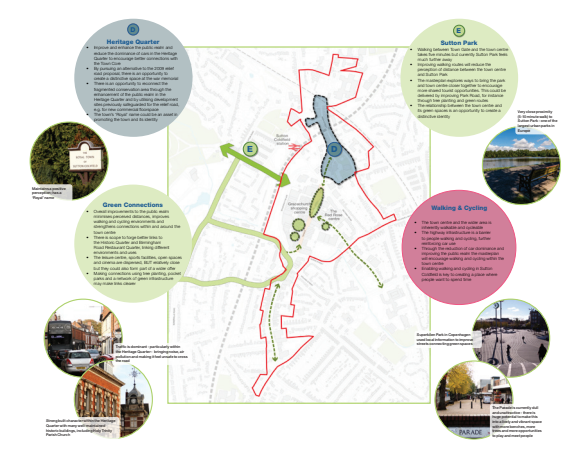
# Sutton Coldfield Town Centre Masterplan

## Big Moves: Heritage & Environment

### The need to address heritage & environment.

Sutton Coldfield is a vibrant and growing town, but it is also facing a number of heritage and environmental challenges. The town centre is a key focus for future investment, and it is important to ensure that the heritage and environmental infrastructure can support the growth and development of the town. The Big Moves: Heritage & Environment plan aims to address these challenges and create a more sustainable and accessible town centre.

- The High Street is a key route for the town centre, but it is also a major barrier to the town centre.
- The town centre is a key focus for future investment, and it is important to ensure that the heritage and environmental infrastructure can support the growth and development of the town.
- The town centre is a key focus for future investment, and it is important to ensure that the heritage and environmental infrastructure can support the growth and development of the town.



### Key Themes & Objectives

Through the baseline work, engagement with landowners and businesses and through surveys and analysis, the masterplan will be able to establish a set of primary aims for the future of Sutton Coldfield.

<h4>Complementing</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the regeneration of the town centre.</li> <li>• Support the regeneration of the town centre.</li> <li>• Support the regeneration of the town centre.</li> </ul>	<h4>Communicating</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publishing and promoting Sutton Coldfield's masterplan.</li> <li>• Publishing and promoting Sutton Coldfield's masterplan.</li> <li>• Publishing and promoting Sutton Coldfield's masterplan.</li> </ul>	<h4>Celebrating</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Celebrate the town centre's history and heritage.</li> <li>• Celebrate the town centre's history and heritage.</li> <li>• Celebrate the town centre's history and heritage.</li> </ul>	<h4>Connecting</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connect the town centre to the surrounding areas.</li> <li>• Connect the town centre to the surrounding areas.</li> <li>• Connect the town centre to the surrounding areas.</li> </ul>	<h4>Changing</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change the town centre's appearance and character.</li> <li>• Change the town centre's appearance and character.</li> <li>• Change the town centre's appearance and character.</li> </ul>
<h4>Community</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a sense of community and belonging.</li> <li>• Create a sense of community and belonging.</li> <li>• Create a sense of community and belonging.</li> </ul>	<h4>Connecting</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connect the town centre to the surrounding areas.</li> <li>• Connect the town centre to the surrounding areas.</li> <li>• Connect the town centre to the surrounding areas.</li> </ul>	<h4>Celebrating</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Celebrate the town centre's history and heritage.</li> <li>• Celebrate the town centre's history and heritage.</li> <li>• Celebrate the town centre's history and heritage.</li> </ul>	<h4>Changing</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change the town centre's appearance and character.</li> <li>• Change the town centre's appearance and character.</li> <li>• Change the town centre's appearance and character.</li> </ul>	<h4>Community</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a sense of community and belonging.</li> <li>• Create a sense of community and belonging.</li> <li>• Create a sense of community and belonging.</li> </ul>

## Level of feedback and engagement

Over the four-week consultation period:

- Around 200 people participated in and/or visited the nine organised workshops and drop-in events;
- 97 people (including representatives of the Sutton Coldfield United Reformed Church and EcoSutton) sent a formal response to the dedicated e-mail address;
- 32 people submitted fully or partially filled-out response forms; and,
- 1,940 views of the dedicated storyboard website (1,714 of which came from different IP addresses) were recorded.

Comments in response to online media coverage and social media were also noted but these have not been counted in the formal engagement numbers.

In combining the figures above, we understand that around 2,000 people engaged with the Sutton Coldfield Town Centre Masterplan consultation material.

Of the 129 formal written responses received from residents, 43% expressed clear support for the Big Moves, while 13% said they did not agree with these. The remaining 44% provided feedback on issues relevant to their experience of Sutton Coldfield Town Centre and neither agreed nor disagreed with the Big Moves as set out in the consultation.

The comments received across these three groups have been used to update the Big Moves and the amendments are set out within this consultation summary report. Consultees also expressed genuine appreciation for the efforts taken to engage and consult with the local community.

Overall, the eagerness and enthusiasm to see implemented change to improve the town centre was clear. This consultation report provides a recorded summary of the common feedback themes, how the masterplan has been updated to reflect comments and concerns, and frequently asked questions.

(facing page) Consultation information was displayed on roller banners, A4 leaflets, and a Storyboard format website.

---

“I completely agree with the proposed Big Moves. They are exactly what Sutton needs to become the heart of north Birmingham.”

---

“Cycle lanes, roads improved considerably, a 21st century shopping experience that’s warm in winter and dry, cool in summer, more high end entertainment, bars and restaurants.”

Response to “What would attract you to visit the town centre more often?”

---

“I like the proposals in the main especially opening up the railway station and prioritising pedestrians to walk from there to the Town Gate park entrance and into the Town shopping centres. Make this gateway as attractive as possible and a great link to the HS2 hubs in the future.”

---

“Thanks for asking for residents feedback on the masterplan. As a local resident I wanted to feed back to make some suggestions about what would be useful.”

---

“My concerns however are with regards to the reconfiguration of the ring road. Currently two lanes of traffic on Victoria road are not enough to sustain the current flow of traffic.”

Many shared concerns about proposals suggested for the ring road

---

“I was born and raised in Sutton Coldfield and I’m excited about the changes you are proposing.”

---

## 2.0 Response to Objectives and Big Moves

Following the assessment of the public consultation responses, a number of reoccurring themes and questions were identified. These are split into ‘Common themes’ and ‘Frequently asked questions’, as follows. A brief summary of how feedback has influenced the final masterplan Objectives and Big Moves has been included to explain this process.

*Note: Big Move heading ‘Heritage and Environment’ was amended to ‘Built Environment and Identity’ to emphasise the changes proposed to the built environment – as opposed to the natural ‘environment’. Following feedback, the term ‘heritage’ also felt too specific to historic elements, whereas ‘identity’ can more readily acknowledge both history and more contemporary aspects of what makes up Sutton Coldfield Town Centre.*

### 2.1 Common themes

Many respondents agreed and supported the masterplan’s ‘Big Moves’ and ideas, particularly regarding the diversification of uses, increasing residential, and greening the town centre alongside the provision of more public open space.

The proposals received both support, questions and concern. Some questions were more specific (e.g. access to the United Reformed Church), while others were broader (e.g. implications of changing Victoria Road and Queen Street to two-way traffic). These areas of concern, as with all proposals included within the masterplan, will be subject to further detailed design, analysis and testing following the approval of the masterplan to arrive at a resolved design and/or solution. This has been noted throughout the masterplan.

#### Diversification of uses

Comments received responded positively to the proposals to diversify town centre uses. Many people expressed a desire for a wider range of shops including independents, more choice in convenience outlets, and more high street and traditional shops. There was also support for leisure, community, and residential uses.

- “I agree with making it more integrated use, commercial, residential, retail and community”
- “people also need good value shops like Aldi, Lidl, Iceland, Farmfoods, Home Bargains, Poundland, Poundstretcher and B&M”
- “better entertainment offerings and novel, modern mix of retail”
- “there is nothing for family entertainment”
- “In principle I agree with the proposals but it lacks suggestions on how retail sectors will be rejuvenated”

**What has been done:** Big Moves promoting diversification of uses are broadly unchanged as the masterplan continues to propose a wide range of uses within the town centre. Minor amendments to wording to Economy and Community Big Move EC3 recognises that certain uses can support each other and encourage shared trips.

## Introducing residential uses

Respondents commented on the potential benefits of introducing town centre living, particularly in order to help support town centre renewal. Some highlighted the need to provide a mix of housing types, whilst also ensuring high quality design.

- “providing more residential units in the centre will improve the dead zone after shops close and improve shopping footfall”
- “we do need to attract the ‘young professionals’ from Birmingham city centre and with an excellent transport hub we can do this and if we get it right, I think it would be quite appealing to them. Retirement type accommodation would also be a good part of this mix of housing”
- “similarly, the housing developments should be required to have high quality insulation, solar panels and other provisions for sustainable living”
- “multigenerational living; scope for senior, starter, low or no-car ownership supported by a revitalised transport hub. Housing needs to consider the supporting community provision; creches, communal ‘great hall’, pooled EVs, mixed tenures, shared equity”
- “the issue of the town centre is linked to a lack of affordable housing for young people and families”

**What has been done:** Supporting text for Economy and Community Big Move EC2 addresses the need to provide a range of homes to accommodate a variety of residents. It also emphasises design quality, particularly with regard to learning from lessons experienced during life under lockdown.

## Greening the town centre

The overall feedback to the Big Move proposing introducing more greenery in the town centre was positive. Many people agreed on the need for a greener environment and for better links to be provided to surrounding green spaces, particularly Sutton Park. This also included making more of Plants Brook.

- “improving access between the Town Gate park gate and the town centre makes great sense - many visitors will want to visit both if access is better”

- “Sutton Park is our major attraction but in truth it is a separate destination for many... much more could be done to attract visitors to the park”
- “agree we need more greenery - more trees must be planted, plus more other planting... Planting could be designed to create green corridors or ‘stepping stones’ or ‘pollinator highways’ to reduce habitat fragmentation in Sutton. Green walls & roofs should be encouraged”
- “Plants Brook should be re-naturalised - could be beautiful asset and great for wildlife”
- “big emphasis on tree planting; green walls, integrated street furniture, litter bins; make SC ‘distinctively green’”

**What has been done:** Built Environment and Identity Big Move BEI3 boldly asserts “mak[ing] Sutton Park part of the town centre” and specifically references Plants Brook as an opportunity. BEI4 emphasises the importance of connections to surrounding green spaces including a specific reference to Langley SUE (e.g. via Newhall Valley Country Park).

## Public open space

The idea of creating a public square in the heart of the town centre was well-received, with many suggesting that a flexible design would be beneficial in allowing for multiple uses and functions.

- “a central public square is a good idea. For people to sit and enjoy it there needs to be something going on”
- “I would also like to see it have some sort of stage area that could easily be used for music, including (licensed?) buskers, and other performances”
- “a square to host cultural events, markets, and community events... More spaces to bring people together”

**What has been done:** Economy and Community Big Move EC1 has been amended to emphasise the need for a central “heart” which brings residents and visitors together at a destination for community events. The combined Parade/Lower Parade space has been highlighted as the focus for the new “heart” as it is within public open space (e.g. not within private land ownership), however other areas of high quality open space are also encouraged.

## Parking

A number of respondents highlighted that current parking provision within the town centre was inadequate, poorly placed, unsafe and/or too highly priced. Many suggested that town centre parking should be free or reduced in cost during certain periods. Comments also reiterated known issues with parking on Birmingham Road, with many expressing difficulties in finding parking and concerns with safety surrounding existing forecourt parking arrangements. A frequently asked question was about the provision for disabled parking spaces (currently on Brassington Avenue) which is addressed in the following section.

- “parking is a key issue in Sutton, I would try and offer free parking to attract people into the centre”
- “at the moment it is difficult to find parking spaces to go in the restaurant area, and Royal Town Core, especially for evenings outing...”
- “informal parking is prevalent along this section [of Birmingham Road] and impacts negatively on an area that could be made more attractive for peds/ cycles”
- “please do not reduce parking”
- “overall, much better car parking facilities must be provided”
- “We need more parking, refurbished Rose Centre car park, section of Leisure Centre used for Town, Free 2 hours to attract people in”
- “making it easier to get into [the town centre], whether by public transport or private car in which case parking at a sensible cost and convenience of location is of course a major issue”

**What has been done:** An additional Movement and Transport Big Move was introduced to address parking as a whole within the town centre. Big Move MT6 proposes “consolidat[ing] parking and promot[ing] flexible solutions” which serves to address both public concerns with parking as well as the drive by Birmingham City Council to promote zero-carbon initiatives.

## Reconfiguration of the Ring Road

The Big Move introducing two-way traffic on the eastern side on the ring road prompted a number of comments and questions. Whilst some respondents “fully support” the proposed changes to the ring road, others were concerned the proposals would lead to “chaos”. Others voiced concern about the potential impact on the residents of Queen Street and Victoria Road, including possible use of surrounding residential roads as ‘rat-runs’, causing congestion on smaller, unsuitable roads.

Further detail is provided in the FAQ section of the document on page 9.

- “fully support changes to ring road - has been an awful blight on Sutton Coldfield”
- “currently two lanes of traffic on Victoria Road are not enough to sustain the current flow”
- “two-way traffic along Victoria Road and Queen Street will cause road congestion and lowering road speeds will cause grid-lock”
- “I live on Lower Queen Street and the noise and pollution cause a lot of upset for us... I am worried that impatient car drivers will be shortcutting through Lower Queen Street... I am concerned for my primary school child... I worry about his safety on the road”
- “I support the ambition to give less room to cars, slow down traffic and make the centre more attractive to pedestrians. I agree with the proposals regarding the relief road, Victoria Road, Lower Parade [and] Brassington Avenue”

**What has been done:** The masterplan clearly notes that all proposals to reconfigure the ring road will be subject to further detailed testing and analysis prior to delivery. Wording within the Movement and Transport Big Moves emphasises the need for all town centre streets to be improved for the safe and convenient use of pedestrians and cyclists. Masterplan proposals also include closing Lower Queen Street off from ring-road traffic.



## Bus interchange

Many comments were raised regarding different aspects of the bus network. Respondents raised concern over the relocation of the buses from Lower Parade due to the perceived distance and level change of a new location by the station being detached and 'outside' the town centre, making it difficult to access for those with mobility impairments. Respondents highlighted the need for a well-placed, and well-run service to encourage the use of buses.

- “a safe Bus Station would be great idea”
- “at present the buses deliver passengers right by the shopping street. Although the proposed new bus station, which would serve the rail station is a good idea; and removes air pollution from the shopping area, this must not gravely disadvantage people with limited mobility”
- “relocating the buses from Lower Parade to a bus depot by the train station would create a long uphill walk back from Aldi for the elderly/infirm with a burden of shopping. It is these people who mainly use the buses”
- “I think [Brassington Avenue] could be used as a linear bus station, as it would be closer to shops and step-free access could be offered via the Gracechurch centre, making it easier for disabled people to use buses”
- “The buses need to be closer not further away from the shopping areas. If people are going to be encouraged to use a bus and purchase goods they don't want to walk far to catch transport home”

**What has been done:** Movement and Transport Big Move MT5 has been amended to indicate the preferred location for the proposed bus interchange is at the northern end of Brassington Avenue (subject to further studies and engagement with operators). The new proposed location offers an at-level bus interchange that is closer to the Royal Town Core and The Parade compared to the Station Street carpark site. Improvements proposed for Brassington Avenue and the Interchange Piazza (the public realm surrounding the United Reform Church) will also help to integrate the bus interchange with the rest of the town centre.

## Access

Queries were raised regarding the proposals for Brassington Avenue, the ring road and Lower Parade in respect to access for emergency vehicles, market traders, and access to the Gracechurch car park and the United Reform Church (URC). Further detail is provided in the FAQ section of the document on page 9.

- “please note; emergency vehicles need access to inner/outer ring roads.”
- “what provisions will be made for emergency vehicles gaining access?”
- “how will cars access the Gracechurch car park if you close Brassington Ave as well?”
- “the restriction of traffic in Brassington Avenue to buses & users of the multi-storey car park must be lifted to allow access & egress to our Church [URC] the service road between ourselves and Knights Tower is part owned by ourselves and access must be maintained (& possibly improved) for funerals, weddings, disabled persons & food deliveries for our 5 day cafe facilities.”
- “the United Reformed Church is an important meeting point for many groups including disabled clubs so vehicular access via the existing slip road must be maintained.”

**What has been done:** Movement and Transport Big Move MT4 outlines that changes to the streets will still allow essential vehicle movement, including for emergency vehicles. In addition, MT2 has been amended to ensure that access to the URC and the Gracechurch Centre carpark, from Brassington Avenue will be retained. Maintaining appropriate access to URC will be part of the outputs for future detail design work on proposed highway changes.

## Deliverability

Queries were raised regarding general deliverability of proposals, referring to landowner commitment, engagement, and funds available. Respondents reiterated the importance of communication between the Councils, landowners, and relevant partners to ensure a comprehensive approach. Further detail is provided in the FAQ section of the document on page 9.

- “it is unclear what the next step is for the plan, and what status it would have in planning. Will there be an SPD, or delivery plan? Is there a funding strategy?”
- “I agree wholeheartedly with the masterplan, but I have doubts over whether it can be achieved due to competing priorities of landowners”
- “Communication between all the relevant partners – eg Gracechurch, Red Rose etc is important but also with the relevant shop management so that a coherent outcome is achieved”
- “suggestions as to how this plan (when agreed) could actually be put into practice would also be appreciated”

**What has been done:** The masterplan sets out an implementation strategy in Chapter 5 which identifies key delivery partners for each project, as well as potential sources of funding. The next detailed phase of the town centre regeneration work will be to explore viability of all projects.

## Cycle infrastructure provision

Many of the respondents welcomed the idea of improving the town centre’s cycle infrastructure, requesting that the masterplan commits to providing dedicated cycle routes, stands and storage. A key element for local cyclists within the town centre was that the current roads are unsafe and do not consider cyclists.

- “segregated cycle paths not shared with pedestrians... with cyclists having priority over motorised transport”
- “cycling is becoming more and more popular and cyclists are most likely to travel between the park and town. Why not setup a proper green trail

through the town to the park, and offer electric bikes and charging facilities?”

- “dedicated cycle lanes that are separate from traffic and therefore would encourage parents to cycle with their children”
- “please ensure any cycle routes are not just additional sections of the road network (i.e. between the pavement and the road). I currently find it quite scary cycling along the roads around Sutton”

**What has been done:** Movement and Transport Big Move MT3 has been amended to place greater emphasis on the need for cycle infrastructure. It highlights the need for dedicated cycleways, well-located cycle parking and complimentary infrastructure to ensure it is seen as a convenient and attractive travel mode.

## Level of detail provided

It was highlighted in some of the responses that the consultation material did not go into enough detail around certain subjects and the inclusion of a narrative would have been helpful.

- “in principle I agree with the proposals, but it lacks suggestions on how retail sectors will be rejuvenated”
- “I live in Lower Queen Street and my main concern is two-way traffic along Victoria Road and Queen Street. How will this affect Lower Queen Street? The reason I am asking is because I would like a bit more detail”
- “overall seems good, way too short on detail though”
- “more detail on alternative to relief road”

**What has been done:** The masterplan notes that all proposals are high level and will be subject to further detailed testing and analysis. Further public consultation will likely be undertaken for various projects proposed within the masterplan as these progress, and more detail can be expected at those future stages.

## 2.2 Frequently asked questions

The answers to frequently asked questions within this consultation summary provides explanations where it is not appropriate to provide such detail within the masterplan as a high-level framework strategy.

### Will disabled parking on Brassington Avenue still be available?

The masterplan does not go into specific details about where exactly disabled parking will be accommodated. At the current time, no decrease in disabled parking is anticipated, and if it needs to be relocated or replaced, care will be taken to provide a location that meets the needs of disabled drivers in consultation with users.

### Will parking be accessible for people with reduced mobility?

The masterplan does not go into specific details about how and where parking will be accommodated. Currently, between 60-70% of all parking spaces in Sutton Coldfield are in the Gracechurch Centre, Red Rose Centre and Newhall Walk, and it is expected that the majority of parking would remain in this central area, close to the services people need.

### How will market traders access streets that are no longer accessible to vehicles?

A range of means are available to service shops, services and markets in streets that are generally closed to traffic including, for instance time / loading restrictions. The masterplan does not define the details of this, but proposals will draw on practical examples and experience from elsewhere.

### Will emergency vehicles maintain their access?

The emergency services will be consulted on any proposed changes to the street network to ensure that they can maintain the access they need.

### How will proposals be delivered; where is the money coming from?

Specific resources have not been formally identified and/or secured to deliver the proposed town centre projects and this is not unusual at this stage of a masterplan. The masterplan document sets out an implementation strategy which identifies key stakeholders, opportunities for private/public partnership, a proposed timeframe, and potential sources for funding. This will help initiate and formulate action moving forward and build on the progress made to-date by the Town Centre Regeneration Partnership.

The implementation strategy will help to ensure that the masterplan can progress as a comprehensive joined-up vision for Sutton Coldfield Town Centre, led by the key organisations with a stake in the town, to help attract the required resources and start conversations with private developers and public sector organisations, who will more likely back investment where a plan is clear and has broad support.

The masterplan has also engaged with several key private sector landowners. They are unlikely to commit to changes philanthropically, or without some benefit to their own situation. However, with a clear and supported masterplan, the potential for their investment into the future of Sutton Coldfield is much greater, as it provides confidence and certainty. The implementation strategy identifies where private sector interests can deliver changes according to the Vision and objectives, with additional detail within the Town Centre Projects chapter.

Market research shows that there is a strong demand for town centre living and residential values in Sutton Coldfield are high relative to many other parts of the West Midlands. By including a good proportion of residential space within the masterplan proposals, schemes are more likely to be financially viable and delivered.

The masterplan also proposes other means by which ideas could be implemented or tested prior to long-term commitment, including various short-term interventions.

## **Changing Victoria Road and Queen Street to a two-way system will increase congestion**

The aim of the proposals is to reduce segregation caused by the ring road. Currently, the ring road is designed to allow traffic to flow quickly and easily around the town centre with little impediment.

This has created a traffic-dominated environment which makes it difficult, unsafe and unattractive for pedestrians and cyclists, and all those not travelling by car, to access the town centre and move between its different character areas.

Reconfiguring Victoria Road and Queen Street to a two-way system could enable traffic to move at much more appropriate speeds for a town centre environment, leading to the re-prioritisation of local roads for local movements at local speeds. Proposals are not intended to limit private vehicle access, but rather balance the space available to make alternative modes of transport viable and safe choices alongside private cars.

Whilst some additional congestion may be caused initially by changes to make streets safer, balancing the available space between public transport, active travel options and private vehicles may lead to more people choosing to access the town centre through a range of viable modes most convenient to them. In addition, other masterplan Big Moves, including diversifying the town centre offer and improving the public transport interchange, will ensure that a regenerated Sutton Coldfield Town Centre will better serve residents' needs and therefore reduce the need to travel to other places.

Further technical and detailed studies will need to be undertaken to understand the impact of changing Victoria Road and Queen Street to a two-way system prior to detailed design and implementation. This will include understanding where traffic is likely and naturally to be diverted and how broader improvements to the road network could prevent any dramatically negative knock-on effects. Proposals to close off Lower Queen Street to direct vehicle access to/from Queen Street, as well as to improve pedestrian connectivity, is one such intervention that will be tested through traffic modelling.

No major changes to the current road network will be implemented without thorough analysis and testing. Temporary road closures and interventions are encouraged within the masterplan as a practical means of testing ideas, and any design proposals will be subject to further detailed review and consultation.

## **Closing Brassington Avenue to traffic (except buses) will increase congestion; how will we access the Gracechurch Centre carpark or United Reformed Church?**

As with proposals to change Victoria Road and Queen Street to a two-way system (see above), proposed changes to how Brassington Avenue operates as part of the town centre street network will need to be tested fully to understand the balance of positive and negative impacts.

Brassington Avenue is not proposed to be closed. Buses, pedestrians and cyclists will have full access to the length of the road and access is intended to be retained for the Gracechurch Centre car park, any future development on the Brassington Avenue site, and the United Reformed Church. No vehicles will have access to Park Road from Brassington Avenue (subject to further technical studies) in order to improve this as a dedicated pedestrian and cycle connection between Sutton Park, residential areas to the west, and the town centre.

Proposals to upgrade Brassington Avenue are a key part of changing the emphasis of the town's infrastructure and balancing available space between private vehicles, public transport and other modes of active travel to support the viability of these options. Reinstating it as a pleasant tree-lined avenue, designed for people, will also help to make development on the Brassington Avenue site more attractive to prospective developers, and encourage the Gracechurch Centre to open up and create direct connections between Brassington Avenue and the Parade.

Temporary road closures and interventions are encouraged within the masterplan as a practical means of testing ideas and any design proposals will be subject to further detailed review and consultation.

## 3.0 Conclusion

Following successful and well-attended engagement with a wide range of stakeholders, including the public, community groups, landowners and the TCRP, it is clear to see how both Objectives and Big Moves have evolved from the consultation material to the final masterplan based on feedback received. In order to provide a bold, aspirational and achievable masterplan, the Big Moves have been amended to reflect the results of the consultation and indicate what needs to be done to successfully regenerate Sutton Coldfield Town Centre.

Within the masterplan, each Big Move is explained through further summary text to indicate how they individually support the regeneration of the town centre and a summary diagram has been produced to illustrate the extent of the potential effects. Precedent images also provide inspiration for residents, landowners, developers, and both the City Council and Town Council with ideas for how the Objectives and Big Moves can be achieved.

While the masterplan represents only the first steps towards regenerating the town centre, the level of engagement reflects strongly on a highly engaged community wanting to see positive change.

