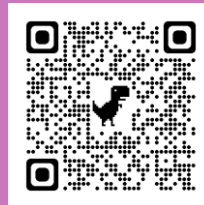


**“Your
voice
matters”**

High Street Rental Auctions

1 September 2025 - 23 November 2025

Consultation Results



Find out more at
www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/consultations

Purpose of consultation

Central Bedfordshire Council is seeking the public's views as part of the process to define the area where High Street Rental Auction (HSRA) powers may be applied. The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 grants local authorities powers to auction leases for commercial properties that have been vacant for more than 365 days within a 24-month period. Before exercising these powers, the council must undertake a public consultation to define the specific high street area(s) where the powers could apply. This consultation should ensure that the approach reflects local circumstances and priorities.

The process

The consultation ran from 1 September 2025 to 23 November 2025. Local residents, town and parish councils and stakeholders were encouraged to comment on the proposed HSRA's by completing a short online survey. Paper response forms were also available on request. The consultation ran for a period of 12 weeks.

Activities included:

- Press release, which was not picked up by any media outlets
- E-bulletin
 - E-mail 1 – public – sent to 22,769, with a 57.79% open rate
 - E-mail 2 – businesses – sent to 642, with a 53.07% open rate
- Social media
 - Facebook – 2 posts with 5,530 impressions and 1.21% engagement rate
 - Twitter/X – 1 post with 398 impressions and 1.26 % engagement rate
 - Instagram – 2 posts with 1,148 impressions and 0.64% engagement rate
 - LinkedIn – 1 post with 602 impressions and 6.15% engagement rate

*engagement is the number of interactions your content received from users - likes, comments, shares, saves, etc.

Ampthill Town Council, Flitwick Town Council, Houghton Regis Town Council responded within the questionnaire. Biggleswade Town Council and Biggleswade Joint Committee submitted written letters, these can be found at the end of the Biggleswade section of this report.

Landlord/Property owners were invited to take part in the consultation, 1 respondent identified as a Landlord/Property owner

Feedback on the proposals

In total, 149 responses were received for this survey.

How they accessed the questionnaire:

- 75 (50%) respondents accessed the questionnaire through the mobile version
- 67 (45%) respondents accessed the questionnaire through a pc/laptop
- 7 (5%) respondents accessed the questionnaire through the tablet version

To make sense of the feedback received, we have employed two types of analysis. We have looked at the headline quantitative measures, followed by coding of the free text comments to help understand the sentiment behind respondents' agreement or disagreement with the proposal. The codes we generated identified frequently mentioned comments and concerns. The findings of the survey are set out in the next section of this report.

When summarising these consultation findings in other reports please ensure that the findings of this report are quoted accurately, and that a link to this report is provided.

Please note, all quotes are shown as received, so may contain spelling mistakes, and percentages shown in the charts may not total 100% due to rounding.

The findings

Summary

Overall the respondents were supportive of the council using High Street Rental Auction powers with 84% saying that they agreed or strongly agreed. With a consultation of this nature each of the areas may have specific local considerations, but some of the common themes can be identified through the responses. These themes are the importance of getting the properties occupied in order to improve the look of the towns and to encourage people to come back to the high street both in a public sense and also in an incentive for businesses to take up the rentals of these properties through the potential increased footfall.

How far respondents agree or disagree with the council using High Street Rental Auction powers broken down by town.

Parish	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Ampt Hill	50% (10)	30% (6)	10% (2)		10% (2)
Biggleswade	48% (13)	30% (8)	15% (4)		7% (2)
Dunstable	61% (37)	25% (15)	8% (5)	2% (1)	5% (3)

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Parish	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Flitwick	47% (8)	29% (5)	12% (2)		12% (2)
Houghton Regis	48% (10)	33% (7)		5% (1)	14% (3)
Leighton-Linslade	50% (25)	32% (16)	12% (6)	2% (1)	4% (2)
Sandy	42% (11)	39% (10)	12% (3)		8% (2)
Potton	42% (5)	33% (4)	8% (1)		17% (2)
Shefford	41% (7)	35% (6)	12% (2)		12% (2)

There was also an understanding that the way some people shop has changed and there is a move to using online retailers. Whilst people are supportive of the implementation of the High Street Rental Auction powers, there was an emphasis that there should be a diversity of retailers and to be selective of the type of shops that would be populating the currently empty properties. Respondents said that there are certain types of retailers that seem to have had a monopoly on the modern high street in lieu of the small independent stores and major chain stores.

Males were more likely to respond to this consultation with 47% (61) versus Female 46% (59). Males and Females were underrepresented versus the population of Central Bedfordshire (49% Male, 51% Female)

The age group 50-64 had the largest response to the consultation, at 33% (43) this was an over representation versus 16% of the Central Bedfordshire population. This was followed by 75+ age group with 21% (27) responses which was also an over representation versus 11% of the Central Bedfordshire population. Ages 65-74 19% (25) responses was again an over representation versus 16% of the Central Bedfordshire population. The 35-49 age group with 18% (23) responses was in line with the Central Bedfordshire population. This was followed by the 25-34 age group with 2% (3) versus 16% of the Central Bedfordshire population.

There were no responses from respondents under 24 years of age.

7% (9) of the overall respondents preferred not to say their age.

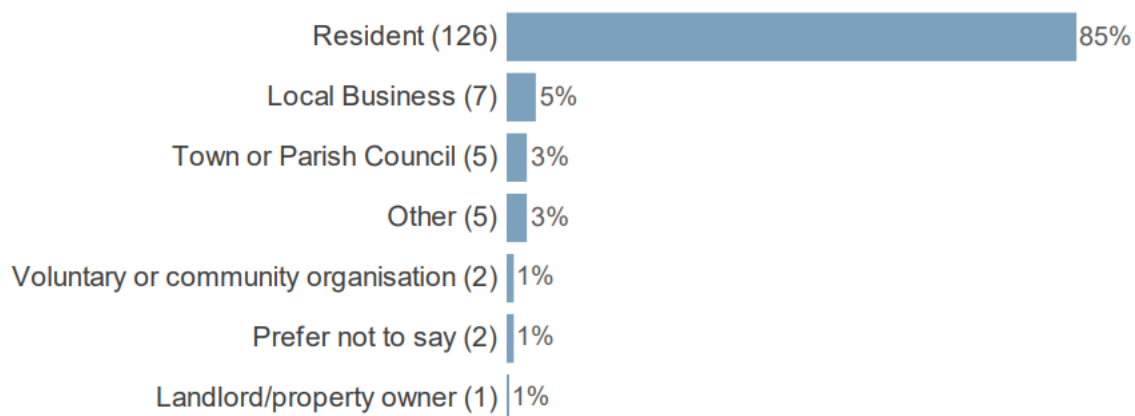
Respondents who considered that they had a disability were 12% (15) which is in line with the population figure for Central Bedfordshire. 8% (10) preferred not to say.

10% of respondents said they were from a minority ethnic background, compared with 17% of the overall population of Central Bedfordshire, suggesting that people from minority ethnic groups were less likely to respond to the consultation.

41% of respondents said they were Christian, 5% another religion, and 44% said they had no religion. This compared to 48%, 4% and 43% respectively, of the overall population of Central Bedfordshire.

Full consultation results

Are you responding as: (please select one)



The above graph shows that respondents to the consultation were Resident 85% (126), Local Business 5% (7), Town or Parish Council 3% (5), Other 3% (5), Voluntary or community organisation 1% (2), Land/property owner 1% (1)

1% (2) Prefer not to say

If other, please specify:

nearby village resident Local to Shefford Surveyor operating within the County A local resident to a couple of the areas (not actually living there) and a visitor to some others)

If Town or Parish Council, please specify:

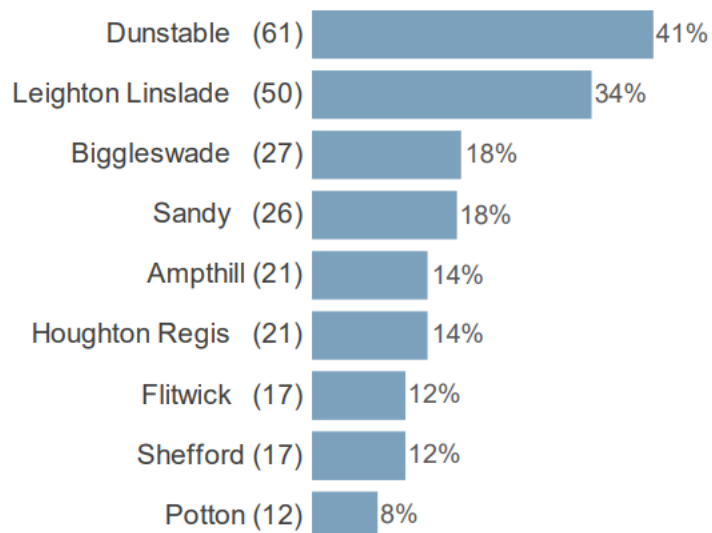
Shefford, Houghton Regis, Flitwick, Ampthill

If Voluntary or community organisation please specify:

Autism Bedfordshire

Which town(s) do you want to comment on? (please select all that apply)

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Overall

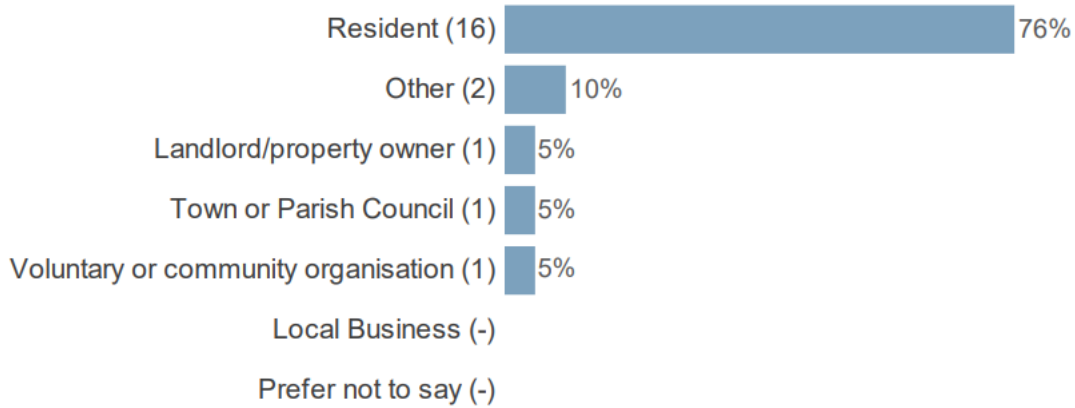
Total responses in alphabetic order (respondents could answer for as many towns as they wanted to)

- 1.Amphill 21 responses
- 2.Biggleswade 27 responses
- 3.Dunstable 61 responses
- 4.Flitwick 17 responses
- 5.Houghton Regis 21 responses
- 6.Leighton-Linslade 50 responses
- 7.Sandy 26 responses
- 8.Potton 12 responses
- 9.Shefford 17 responses

Amphill 21 responses

Are you responding as:

High Street Rental Auctions Consultation Report 2025



The above graph shows that respondents to the consultation were Resident 76% (16), Other 10% (2), Land/property owner 5% (1), Town or Parish Council 5% (1), Voluntary or community organisation 5% (1)

Other: Surveyor operating within the County A local resident to a couple of the areas (not actually living there) and a visitor to some others

If Town or Parish Council, please specify: Ampthill Town Council

If Voluntary or community organisation please specify: Autism Bedfordshire

We propose that all or part of the following Ampthill streets (as shown on the maps in the consultation information) should be the areas around the high street where the powers could apply:

- **Bedford Street**
- **Church Street**
- **Woburn Street**
- **Dunstable Street**
- **Park Street**

Do you agree with the proposed boundary of the high street area?



The above graph shows that when those who responded for the Ampthill High Street Area were asked if they agree with the proposed boundary, that 81% (17) agreed, whilst 19% (4) did not agree with the proposed boundary.

If no, are there any streets or properties you feel should be included or excluded?

Three comments were made in response to this question

"All excluded"

“expand the boundary - ie Dunstable Street & Park Street for instance”

“Boundary on Woburn Street should extend on south side to the Queens Head (public house junction with Claridges Lane). Boundary to south east should extend to include all properties in the Kings Arms Yard and the full set of buildings currently used by The White Hart Public House Boundary to west side of Bedford Street to include The Prince of Wales PH. All the outside spaces associated with the buildings should also be included.”

Impacts - Ampthill

Respondents were asked what impacts they thought that vacant shops have on the Ampthill high street area. 14 comments were received, the main themes have been listed below.

Theme	No. of comments
Looks untidy/run down	6
Loss of footfall	2
Ampthill has high occupancy rate	2
Negative impact	2
Ampthill has high occupancy rate	2
Other	4

Some examples of the themes are included below:

Looks untidy/run down

“litter accumulates around the empty property. Post that has been put through the letter box, still sticks out as it is never collected. The property looks very run down and is not in keeping of the beautiful buildings that surround it.”

“Make the area look run down.”

Loss of footfall

“Feeling of decline and decrease in footfall which could impact other shops and businesses”

Negative impact

“could impact other shops and businesses”

Ampthill has high occupancy rate

“At present there are luckily not a large number of vacant properties in the marked area although this fluctuates - Whilst they are unoccupied it detracts from the appeal of the area and possibly it is only due to the Waitrose presence that keeps people interested and attracts others to rent those spaces.”

Key challenges - Ampthill

Respondents were asked what key challenges were preventing vacant properties from being brought back into use. Are there wider issues in the local area (such as footfall, infrastructure, perception, or demand) that may be contributing to long-term vacancy? 16 comments were received. The main themes have been listed below.

Theme	No. of comments
Lack of parking	6
Amount of online shopping	3
High rentals	3
Other	7

Some examples of the themes are included below:

Lack of parking

“Parking is becoming an issue for non residents.”

“lack of parking in the town centre”

Amount of online shopping

“people buy online so high streets have to have activities and other options as well as shops.”

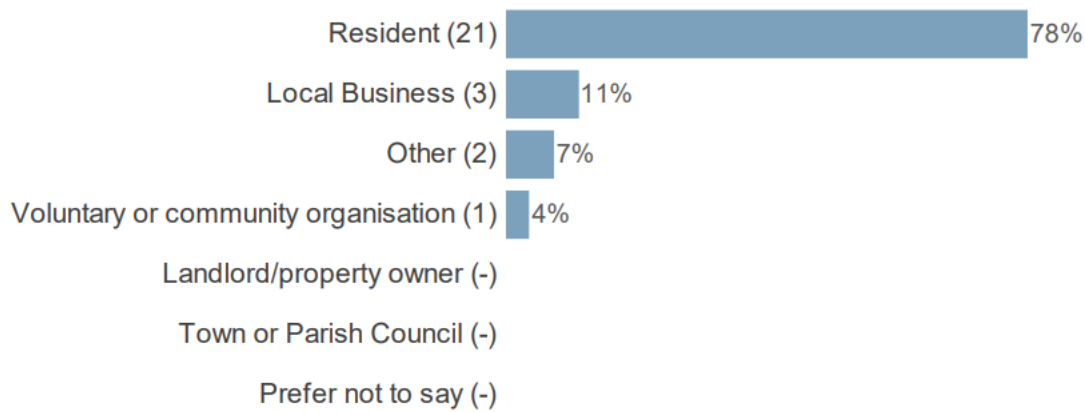
“On line purchase”

High rentals

“Rents too high for businesses”

Biggleswade 27 responses

Are you responding as:



The above graph shows that respondents to the consultation were Resident 78% (21), Local Business 11% (3), Other 7% (2), Voluntary or community organisation 4% (1)

Other: nearby village resident, Surveyor operating within the County

If Voluntary or community organisation please specify: Autism Bedfordshire

Biggleswade Town Council and Biggleswade Joint Committee responded by letter, which can be found at the end of this section on Biggleswade.

We propose that all or part of the following Biggleswade streets (as shown on the maps in the consultation information) should be the areas around the high street where the powers could apply:

- High Street
- Hitchin Street
- Market Square
- Church Street
- Foundry Lane
- Victoria Place
- The Baulk
- Shortmead Street
- Crab lane
- Chapel Fields

Do you agree with the proposed boundary of the high street area?



The above graph shows that when those who responded for the Biggleswade High Street Area were asked if they agree with the proposed boundary, that 85% (22) agreed, whilst 15% (4) did not agree with the proposed boundary.

If no, are there any streets or properties you feel should be included or excluded?

Three comments were made in response to this question:

“All excluded”

“expand the boundary - for instance out towards along church street towards the river”

“Priority should be given to areas within the current Primary Shopping Area (R1).”

Impacts - Biggleswade

Respondents were asked what impacts they thought that vacant shops have on the Biggleswade high street area. 21 comments were received, the main themes have been listed below.

Theme	No. of comments
Spoils the look/ambiance of the town	11
No reason to visit	6
Run down/encourages vandalism	5
Out of town retail parks/free parking	4
Needs better shops	4
Loss of footfall	2
Other	3

Some examples of the themes are included below:

Spoils the look/ambiance of the town

“Vacant shops are a blight to the town of Biggleswade. They make the town look like a ghost town”

“Degrades those which are occupied”

“Empty properties make the town look unappealing”

No reason to visit

“discourages people from shopping locally”

“For the size of the town we have a terrible selection of shops. This puts people off visiting the town.”

“Vacant shops take away vibrancy from the Town Centre making it less attractive as a place to visit.”

Run down/encourages vandalism

“Vandalism”

“As they gradually fall into disrepair, they make the area look run down and more suited to delinquents, increasing crime”

Out of town retail parks/free parking

“means you have to travel out of town to get what you need.”

“Killing the high street. Driving people to retail park”

Needs better shops

“Biggleswade used to be a strong market town - give it a chance to bring in more traders, local and national, so that it can again attract more footfall and generate more revenue - attract on of the banks back into town”

Loss of footfall

“Empty units create “gaps” in the retail experience, discouraging people from strolling the whole length of the high street”

Key challenges - Biggleswade

Respondents were asked what key challenges were preventing vacant properties from being brought back into use. Are there wider issues in the local area (such as footfall, infrastructure, perception, or demand) that may be contributing to long-term vacancy? 19 comments were received. The main themes have been listed below.

Theme	No. of comments
High rentals/business rates	8
Needs better shops	6
Lack of parking	5

Theme	No. of comments
Need to be a destination/no reason to visit	5
Loss of footfall	3
Need better bus routes	2
Lack of demand	2
Spoils the look/ambiance of the town	2
Out of town retail parks/free parking	2
Other	3

Some examples of the themes are included below:

High rentals/business rates

“High business rates, high rents, government decisions have made it more expensive to hire employees so small business would struggle to stay open”

“We’ve lost so many good stores because the rent is too expensive.”

“High business rates/tax”

Needs better shops

“too many charity shops”

“Parking. Not much shopping option”

Lack of parking

“limited & costly parking (for residents and staff)”

“If people have to get into their cars, and struggle to park in Biggleswade, they might as well go to Cambridge, Stevenage or Hitchin.”

Need to be a destination/no reason to visit

“High streets need to be a destination for far more than shopping”

“it used to be a strong shopping area, competing with Bedford and Hitchin - it could again with encouragement, perhaps a revamped station could attract spenders coming in by train, with a reopened cinema”

Loss of footfall

"Biggleswade has a strong retail park offer near the A1, drawing footfall away from the high street with free parking and big-name stores."

Need better bus routes

"better bus routes and timetables"

Lack of demand

"Are there wider issues in the local area (such as footfall, infrastructure, perception, or demand) that may be contributing to long-term vacancy?"

Spoils the look/ambiance of the town

"The town became less attractive."

Out of town retail parks/free parking

"development of the retail park with free parking at the edge of town enticed major businesses away from the town centre"

Letters submitted - Biggleswade

The following written letters were received from Biggleswade Town Council and Biggleswade Joint Committee

Biggleswade Town Council

Response to the Consultation – Defining the High Street Areas for High Street Rental Auctions (HSRAs)

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the consultation regarding the definition of high street areas. Biggleswade Town Council supports initiatives that encourage occupancy and commercial activity within the town. However, Members noted that Station Road, up to the junction with Back Street, has been omitted from the proposed high street areas despite containing several commercial premises.

The Town Council recommends that this section be included in the defined area. Members also expressed concern about certain proposed inclusions, such as The Baulk, which is considered inappropriate. The Council have agreed that the high street area should not extend beyond the library or continue further along London Road. Kind regards

Biggleswade Joint Committee

Following detailed discussion at its meeting on 18 November 2025, the Biggleswade Joint Committee resolved that the High Street Rental Auction (HSRA) powers should only be applied to

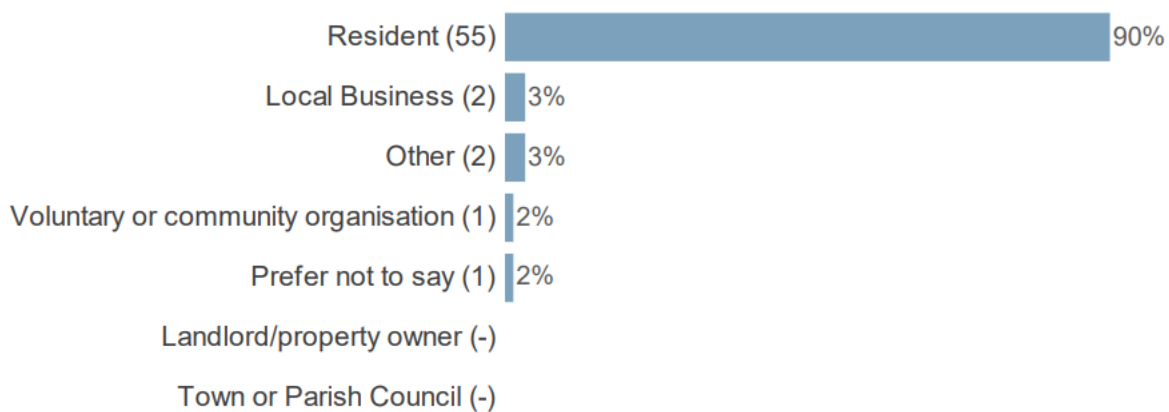
the Primary Shopping Area, as defined in the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan and the Biggleswade Neighbourhood Plan.

This area represents the core retail and commercial zone of the town and contains the highest concentration of vacant units, which have a significant impact on the appearance and economic health of the town centre.

The Committee does not support the inclusion of peripheral streets or areas outside the Primary Shopping Area at this stage, such as Foundry Lane, Victoria Place, Crab Lane, and Chapel fields. The Committee welcomes the intention behind these powers to bring long-term vacant properties back into productive use and to support the vitality of town centres.

Dunstable 61 responses

Are you responding as:



The above graph shows that respondents to the consultation were Resident 90% (55), Local Business 3% (2), Other 3% (2), Voluntary or community organisation 2% (1)

2% (1) prefer not to say

Other: Surveyor operating within the Countyk

If Voluntary or community organisation please specify: Autism Bedfordshire

We propose that all or part of the following Dunstable streets (as shown on the maps in the consultation information) should be the areas around the high street where the powers could apply:

- High Street South
- High Street North

- West Street
- The Square
- St Mary's Gate
- Church Walk
- Vernon Place
- Albion Street
- Matthew Street
- Eleanor's Cross
- Queensway
- Kingsway
- Court Drive
- Manchester Place

Do you agree with the proposed boundary of the high street area?



The above graph shows that when those who responded for the Dunstable High Street Area were asked if they agree with the proposed boundary, that 90% (54) agreed, whilst 10% (6) did not agree with the proposed boundary.

If no, are there any streets or properties you feel should be included or excluded?

Four comments were made in response to this question:

"All excluded"

"stretch the limits out, along all 4 main roads to encourage more trade to a town that has lost its way"

"The zoning needs to stretch further North along High Street North, including just commercial premises with High Street North frontage, all the way to the junction with French's Avenue. In a Southerly direction, using the same premise affecting just commercial properties with frontage on High Street South, the zoning should stretch to the junction of Great Northern Road."

"You should not be including the fully let quadrant centre in Dunstable as this is frankly not your concern as it's privately owned. The owners and centre manager are doing a darn sight better job than the Council are at letting the Ashton Square area!!! You SHOULD cover White Lion retail park as this is just an embarrassment to Dunstable in places."

Impacts - Dunstable

Respondents were asked what impacts they thought that vacant shops have on the Dunstable high street area. 53 comments were received, the main themes have been listed below.

Theme	No. of comments
Spoils the look/ambiance of the town	32
Run down/encourages vandalism	18
Need to be a destination/no reason to visit	11
Loss of footfall	11
Needs better shops	7
Does not encourage more retailers	2
Other	1

Some examples of the themes are included below:

Spoils the look/ambiance of the town

“The impact that vacant shops have on the high street in Dunstable doesn't create a very good impression on the state of the town centre.”

“Detrimental visual effect.”

“The vacant shops make the town centre area less attractive to visitors”

“It is very sad looking”

“It makes the town look shabby.”

Run down/encourages vandalism

“In makes the whole area look tired & run down and unpleasant to be near.”

“Makes area look run down, empty areas create havens for negative behaviours in our society to occur.”

“vacant shops have a hugely negative impact - the high street area looks like nobody cares about it, which in turns makes it more vulnerable to criminal activity”

Need to be a destination/no reason to visit

"Discourages people from shopping in Dunstable."

"No reason to go into town"

"Makes it look run down & does not encourage people to use the other shops"

Loss of footfall

"Less footfall in the town"

"It's self fulfilling- empty shops lowers footfall, which means more shops close"

Needs better shops

"Lack of visitors to the town. Lack of interest by bigger brands, poor footfall"

"Dunstable is no longer a preferred local shopping destination. in the 1990s/2000s supermarkets moved out of town, or at least beyond the centre of town. The market has been decimated. Once, vacant shops became estate agents and charity shops, now many of those are closing. The only "bank" left now is Nationwide Building Society."

Does not encourage more retailers

"Having empty shops that fall into disrepair do nothing to bring new retailers to the area"

Key challenges - Dunstable

Respondents were asked what key challenges were preventing vacant properties from being brought back into use. Are there wider issues in the local area (such as footfall, infrastructure, perception, or demand) that may be contributing to long-term vacancy? 49 comments were received. The main themes have been listed below.

Theme	No. of comments
Wrong sort of shops/lack of diversity	18
Restrictive parking charges	13
High rentals/business rates	12
Loss of footfall	9
Run down/encourages vandalism	6
Spoils the look/ambiance of the town	4
Need to be a destination/no reason to visit	4

Theme	No. of comments
Parking	3
Needs better shops	3
Out of town retail parks/free parking	3
Lack of demand	2
Other	1

Some examples of the themes are included below:

Wrong sort of shops/lack of diversity

“there are too many similar businesses that are unnecessary and which also impact the diversity of shopping experience (i.e. how many nail bars, barbers and charity shops are needed in a small area?).”

“Little choice of types of shops therefore people shop elsewhere. Loads of Turkish barbers, betting shops etc”

“the wrong sort of shops”

“maintaining a mix of attractive offers - charity versus coffee shop versus retail”

Restrictive parking charges

“Charging for parking when there is very little to offer is a concern. If the area can be brought back to life then customers would not object to paying for parking.”

“Parking charges are high.”

“Parking is a disincentive when you can park for free in other centres such as Brent Cross.”

High rentals/business rates

“High rents/ rates”

“There is less of a requirement for physical retail sites and rents are too high.”

“High levels of business rates”

Loss of footfall

“Footfall owing to a lack of decent shops in the area, far too many hairdressers, nail bars and small supermarkets that only target certain clients”

"Over priced, lack of interest as footfall is low."

"Cost of rent, rates"

Run down/encourages vandalism

"They drag down the area and are potential targets for vandalism."

"There is a perception of criminality from the proliferation of vape shops and barbers which never ever have clients"

Spoils the look/ambiance of the town

"There are so many take aways, amusement arcades, barbers, betting shops which do not enhance the look of the street despite the council's efforts with trees and plants"

"the unsightly empty shops and congestion would discourage investment in the town."

Need to be a destination/no reason to visit

"reopening a cinema and a bank to start, possibly more street cafes - with traffic on Watling street vastly reduced an attempt to reawaken the commercial hubs of a lovely town needs to be attempted"

Parking

"Parking is very difficult"

Needs better shops

"lack of availability of range of shops/businesses - mostly hairdressers and barbers, food places and charity shops few bigger, high street chains"

Out of town retail parks/free parking

"why would people want to visit Dunstable and pay a fortune for parking when they can go to the white lion for free."

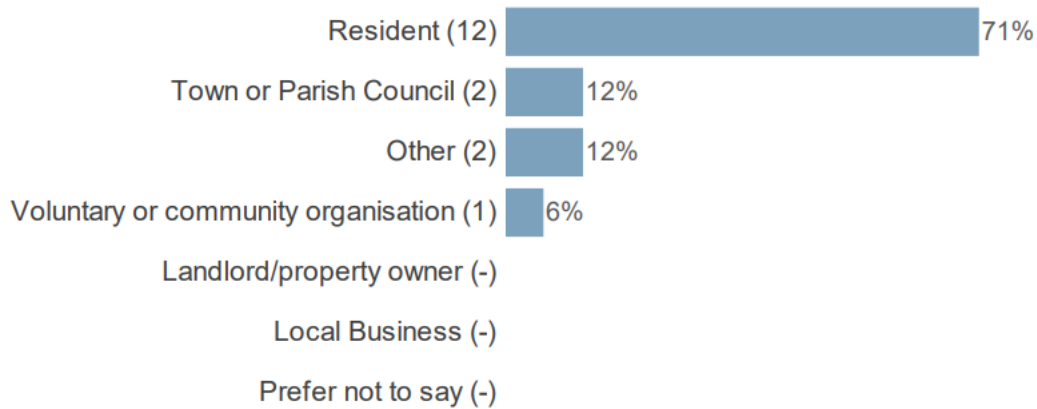
Lack of demand

"High Street council tax rates could be a large factor that is dampening demand."

Flitwick 17 responses

Are you responding as:

High Street Rental Auctions Consultation Report 2025



The above graph shows that respondents to the consultation were Resident 71% (12), Town or Parish Council 12% (2), Other 12% (2), Voluntary or community organisation 6% (1)

Other: Surveyor operating within the County A local resident to a couple of the areas (not actually living there) and a visitor to some others

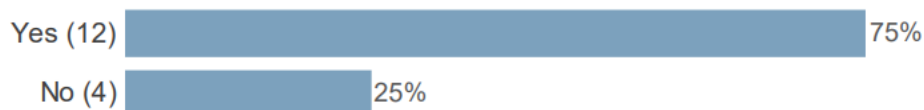
If Town or Parish Council, please specify: Flitwick

If Voluntary or community organisation please specify: Autism Bedfordshire

We propose that all or part of the following Flitwick streets (as shown on the maps in the consultation information) should be the areas around the high street where the powers could apply:

- Steppingley Road
- High Street
- Coniston Road
- The Avenue
- Kings Road

Do you agree with the proposed boundary of the high street area?



The above graph shows that when those who responded for the Flitwick High Street Area were asked if they agree with the proposed boundary, that 75% (12) agreed, whilst 25% (4) did not agree with the proposed boundary.

If no, are there any streets or properties you feel should be included or excluded?

Three comments were made in response to this question:

“All excluded”

“stretch the boundary's- try to bring in more traders, its become 'Tesco centric' to the exclusion of many other retailers, not that there were many to start with - the station needs to exit east as well as west, at street level”

“D & G Shorts, Station Road, Flitwick o Flitwick Motorcycles, Station Road, Flitwick o GP Car & Truck Services, Station Road, Flitwick o Flitwick Tyres Exhausts & Battery Services, Station Road, Flitwick”

Impacts - Flitwick

Respondents were asked what impacts they thought that vacant shops have on the Flitwick high street area. 11 comments were received, the main themes have been listed below.

Theme	No. of comments
spoils the look/ambiance of the town	5
Loss of footfall	4
Run down/encourages vandalism	3
Wrong sort of shops/lack of diversity	2
Other	2

Some examples of the themes are included below:

Spoils the look/ambiance of the town

“Reduce the appeal of the town to its residents”

“It looks scruffy”

Loss of footfall

“a poor presentation that is dismal to see and detracts from inviting shoppers”

Run down/encourages vandalism

“looks untidy - invites vandalism”

Wrong sort of shops/lack of diversity

“What high street? There is no heart and all shops are chicken shops , estate agents or barbers”

Key challenges - Flitwick

Respondents were asked what key challenges were preventing vacant properties from being brought back into use. Are there wider issues in the local area (such as footfall, infrastructure, perception, or demand) that may be contributing to long-term vacancy? 11 comments were received. The main themes have been listed below.

Theme	No. of comments
Wrong sort of shops/lack of diversity	4
Loss of footfall	3
None	3
High rentals/business rates	2
Other	2

Some examples of the themes are included below:

Wrong sort of shops/lack of diversity

“Mix of business types”

“Too many barbers which decrease the footfall due to lack of diversity of shops”

Loss of footfall

“Cars given priority so need design things to increase footfall from Tesco car park over the bridge.”

None

“No”

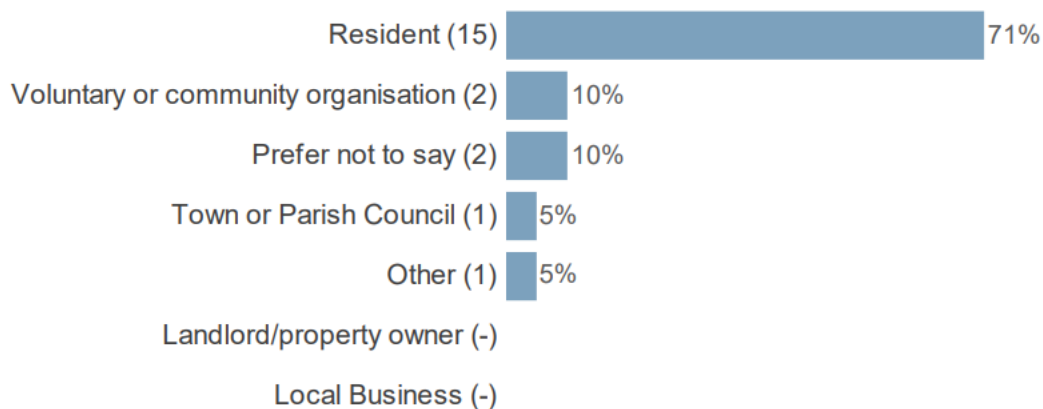
High rentals/business rates

“Type of retail mix for customers high rates for merchants”

Houghton Regis 21 responses

Are you responding as:

High Street Rental Auctions Consultation Report 2025



The above graph shows that respondents to the consultation were Resident 71% (15), Voluntary or community organisation 10% (2), Town or Parish Council 5% (1), Other 5% (1)

Prefer not to say 10% (2)

Other: Surveyor operating within the County

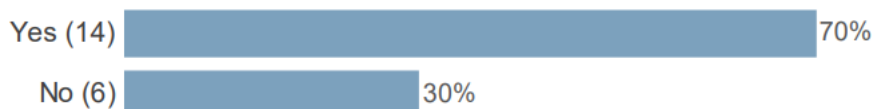
If Town or Parish Council, please specify: Houghton Regis

If Voluntary or community organisation please specify: Autism Bedfordshire

We propose that all or part of the following Houghton Regis streets (as shown on the maps in the consultation information) should be the areas around the high street where the powers could apply:

- High Street
- Bedford Square
- King Street

Do you agree with the proposed boundary of the high street area?



The above graph shows that when those who responded for the Houghton Regis High Street Area were asked if they agree with the proposed boundary, that 70% (14) agreed, whilst 30% (6) did not agree with the proposed boundary.

If no, are there any streets or properties you feel should be included or excluded?

Four comments were made in response to this question:

“All excluded”

“expand the boundary to include other former trading areas, not just the central hub near the Church”

“Properties on the Southern side of High street, up to the junction of Sapphire Place should be included in the zoning.”

“The areas shown in the consultation, High Street, Bedford Square, King Street, are supported but HRTC feels that the boundary should be extended to include: All Saints View development including Park View Room, Redhouse Close (to include The Red House), and the High Street from 22-34 High Street along The Green and East End to The Chequers roundabout.”

Impacts - Houghton Regis

Respondents were asked what impacts they thought that vacant shops have on the Houghton Regis high street area. 15 comments were received, the main themes have been listed below.

Theme	No. of comments
Spoils the look/ambiance of the town	7
Low vacancy/not seen any	3
No incentive to shop there	3
Loss of footfall	3
Other	3

Some examples of the themes are included below:

Spoils the look/ambiance of the town

“Vacant shops give a negative impression”

“Make the area less attractive for shoppers, makes the town look run down”

“Makes the area look rundown and unsavoury”

Low vacancy/not seen any

“Not noticed any unlet properties”

“Houghton Regis is lucky to have consistently low vacancy rates.”

No incentive to shop there

“less inclination to shop there”

"Puts people off shopping there"

Loss of footfall

"Less people visting and shopping."

"Ever decreasing footfall in the area leading to further decline."

Key challenges - Houghton Regis

Respondents were asked what key challenges were preventing vacant properties from being brought back into use. Are there wider issues in the local area (such as footfall, infrastructure, perception, or demand) that may be contributing to long-term vacancy? 14 comments were received. The main themes have been listed below.

Theme	No. of comments
Spoils the look/ambiance of the town	3
High rentals/business rates	2
Lack of demand	2
Other	8

Some examples of the themes are included below:

Spoils the look/ambiance of the town

"Bedford square looks depressing needs flowers and trees to improve the atmosphere"

"I think all these issue (footfall, infrastructure, perception, or demand) contribute."

High rentals/business rates

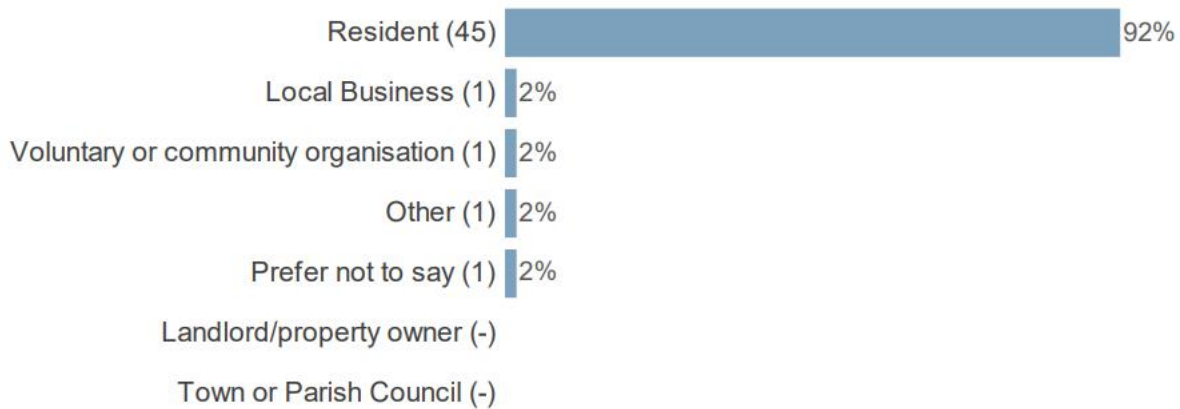
"Convincing businesses to come to Houghton Regis and maybe rents rates are too high. Expensive electricity excetera"

Lack of demand

"Demand"

Leighton-Linslade 50 responses

Are you responding as:



The above graph shows that respondents to the consultation were Resident 92% (45), Local Business 2% (1), Voluntary or community organisation 2% (1), Other 2% (1)

Prefer not to say 2% (1)

Other: Surveyor operating within the County

If Voluntary or community organisation please specify: Autism Bedfordshire

We propose that all or part of the following Leighton-Linslade streets (as shown on the maps in the consultation information) should be the areas around the high street where the powers could apply:

- High Street
- Bridge Street
- Church Square
- Market Square
- Lake Street
- West Street

Do you agree with the proposed boundary of the high street area?



The above graph shows that when those who responded for the Leighton-Linslade High Street Area were asked if they agree with the proposed boundary, that 86% (42) agreed, whilst 14% (7) did not agree with the proposed boundary.

If no, are there any streets or properties you feel should be included or excluded?

Four comments were made in response to this question:

“All excluded”

“1. Include commercial properties from bottom of Lake Street, both sides along the A4012 towards Morrisons. Stopping at Grove Road to the west, but including Morrisons to the east of the A4012. 2. In Church Square, include the Post Office building and the building to the south of that, currently occupied by inter alia Franklins Law.”

“Church Square, West Street and Lake Street”

“again expand the boundary - there are [were!] shops along to/beyond the canal and out on the Wing road also up towards the station, etc.”

“North Street, Hockliffe Street, Peacock Mews, High Street Mews, Bell Alley, Rylands Mews, Leighton Road, Wing Road, New Road, Soulbury Road, Church Street, Waterborne Walk, Duncombe Drive, should be included.”

Impacts - Leighton-Linslade

Respondents were asked what impacts they thought that vacant shops have on the Leighton-Linslade high street area. 44 comments were received, the main themes have been listed below.

Theme	No. of comments
Spoils the look/ambiance of the town	16
No incentive to come into town	15
Loss of footfall for existing businesses	14
Run down/encourages vandalism	12
Wrong sort of shops/lack of diversity	4
Negative impact	3
Needs better shops	2
Does not encourage more retailers	2

Theme	No. of comments
Other	7

Some examples of the themes are included below:

Spoils the look/ambiance of the town

“Town appears run down. Less choice for those who try to shop locally.”

“They give the impression of a dying town.”

“It makes it look shabby and not a vibrant place to shop”

No incentive to come into town

“Vacant shops make town less attractive and limit purchase options meaning residents may be shopping elsewhere.”

“They discourage people from visiting the town centre.”

“Poor impression for visitors”

Loss of footfall for existing businesses

“lack of footfall”

“Less people come into town to use the shops that are there”

“poor footfall and shoppers going out of town.”

Run down/encourages vandalism

“Stagnation, decay, antisocial behaviour, vandalism”

“discourage people to visit and increase vandalism”

“Prone to vandalism/beggars.”

Wrong sort of shops/lack of diversity

“lack of variety to shop”

“Clearly, out of town supermarkets have had their effect but the right speciality shops would attract residents.”

Negative impact

“Negative impact, waste of space which could be used”

Needs better shops

“Greater reluctance and encouragement to visit the high street if the necessary shops for everyday requirements are not available”

Does not encourage more retailers

“lack of confidence for new businesses to open”

Key challenges - Leighton-Linslade

Respondents were asked what key challenges were preventing vacant properties from being brought back into use. Are there wider issues in the local area (such as footfall, infrastructure, perception, or demand) that may be contributing to long-term vacancy? 41 comments were received. The main themes have been listed below.

Theme	No. of comments
High rentals/business rates	14
Wrong sort of shops/lack of diversity	13
Restrictive parking charges	9
Parking	8
Need better bus routes	7
Loss of footfall for existing businesses	7
Needs better shops	5
Amount of online shopping	4
Run down/encourages vandalism	4
Does not encourage more retailers	4
Other	6

Some examples of the themes are included below:

High rentals/business rates

“Rates are too high, possibly the rent and other overheads too”

“Cost of rents and business rates”

“Rent prices”

Wrong sort of shops/lack of diversity

“people have got used to going elsewhere to shop due to lack of choice”

“Not enough variety of businesses or ones the town requires or would benefit from”

“Lack of diversity in the shops and services offered”

Restrictive parking charges

“parking fees”

“Footfall subject to expensive parking”

Parking

“lack of parking have destroyed LB high street.”

“Difficulties parking your car when you visit”

Need better bus routes

“Bus service inadequate”

“Buses need to go down high street and need more buses from station”

Loss of footfall for existing businesses

“Infrastructure and footfall”

“there is a vicious circle of footfall in town and desirable shops to visit”

Needs better shops

“too many ‘low value’ businesses are opening devaluing and down grading the area”

“the larger challenges are ensuring we have high value shops rather than additional betting shops, vape shops or phone repair stores.”

Amount of online shopping

“as shops and banks close it forces online use which increases the problem”

“online shopping.”

Run down/encourages vandalism

“amount of anti social behaviour in the town centre; lack of police presence to ensure a safer environment. Also, too much shoplifting to persuade others to open retail shops.”

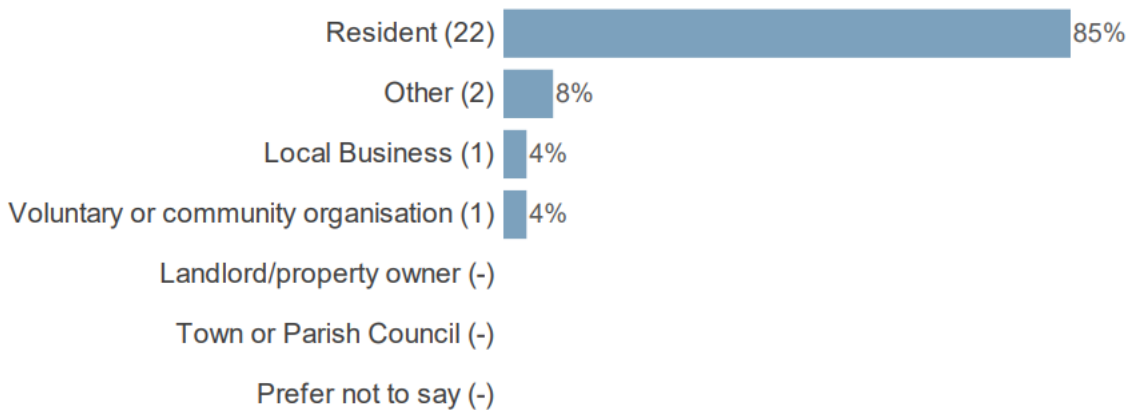
“Vandalism and breaking and entering seems have been a problem of late, causing distress to shop owners in particular.”

Does not encourage more retailers

“lack of confidence by new business in terms if seeing what businesses remain.”

Sandy 26 responses

Are you responding as:



The above graph shows that respondents to the consultation were Resident 85% (22), Other 8% (2), Local Business 4% (1), Voluntary or community organisation 4% (1)

Other: nearby village resident Surveyor operating within the County

If Voluntary or community organisation please specify: Autism Bedfordshire

We propose that all or part of the following Sandy streets (as shown on the maps in the consultation information) should be the areas around the high street where the powers could apply:

- **Market Square**
- **High Street**
- **Park Road**
- **Cambridge Road**

Do you agree with the proposed boundary of the high street area?



The above graph shows that when those who responded for the Sandy High Street Area were asked if they agree with the proposed boundary, that 88% (22) agreed, whilst 12% (3) did not agree with the proposed boundary.

If no, are there any streets or properties you feel should be included or excluded?

One comment was made in response to this question:

“All excluded”

Impacts - Sandy

Respondents were asked what impacts they thought that vacant shops have on the Sandy high street area. 16 comments were received, the main themes have been listed below.

Theme	No. of comments
Spoils the look/ambiance of the town	9
No incentive to shop	7
Loss of footfall for existing businesses	5
Wrong sort of shops/lack of diversity	3
Other	7

Some examples of the themes are included below:

Spoils the look/ambiance of the town

“Makes the town appear scruffy, unused and unfriendly. Limits tourism opportunities”

“they make the town look run down, and certainly not customer friendly.”

No incentive to shop

“they deter people from shopping”

“Look unsightly and discourages people from shopping locally.”

Loss of footfall for existing businesses

“discourages people from shopping locally”

Wrong sort of shops/lack of diversity

“we do not want a plethora of hairdressers, nail bars and tanning saloons to add to the myriad that have already grown up in a small town like Sandy!!”

Key challenges - Sandy

Respondents were asked what key challenges were preventing vacant properties from being brought back into use. Are there wider issues in the local area (such as footfall, infrastructure, perception, or demand) that may be contributing to long-term vacancy? 16 comments were received. The main themes have been listed below.

Theme	No. of comments
High rentals/business rates	6
Wrong sort of shops/lack of diversity	5
Parking	2
Needs better shops	2
Loss of footfall for existing businesses	2
Other	4

Some examples of the themes are included below:

High rentals/business rates

“probably rates too high”

“Cost of the rents too high for small businesses”

Wrong sort of shops/lack of diversity

“Too many shops of the same type. Eg charity shops and hairdressers/barbers”

“Because of the types of shops already in town”

Parking

“there is a need for better carparking facilities”

Needs better shops

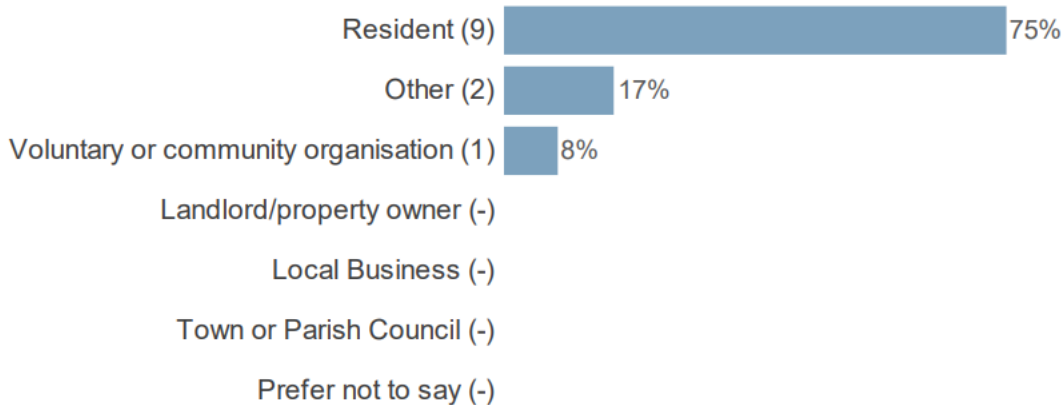
“more local stores could be funded to bring back a buzz around the town”

Loss of footfall for existing businesses

“there is not the footfall”

Potton 12 responses

Are you responding as:



The above graph shows that respondents to the consultation were Resident 75% (9), Other 17% (2), Voluntary or community organisation 8% (1)

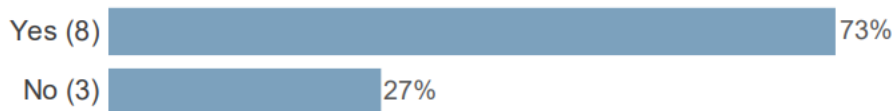
Other: nearby village resident Surveyor operating within the County

If Voluntary or community organisation please specify: Autism Bedfordshire

We propose that all or part of the following Potton streets (as shown on the maps in the consultation information) should be the areas around the high street where the powers could apply:

- **Blackbird Street**
- **Sun Street**
- **Market Square**
- **King Street**

Do you agree with the proposed boundary of the high street area?



The above graph shows that when those who responded for the Potton High Street Area were asked if they agree with the proposed boundary, that 73% (8) agreed, whilst 27% (3) did not agree with the proposed boundary.

If no, are there any streets or properties you feel should be included or excluded?

Two comments were made in response to this question:

“All excluded”

“look a little further along each road and widen the scope”

Impacts - Potton

Respondents were asked what impacts they thought that vacant shops have on the Potton high street area. 6 comments were received, the main themes have been listed below.

Theme	No. of comments
Spoils the look/ambiance of the town	3
Wrong sort of shops/lack of diversity	2
Other	5

Some examples of the themes are included below:

Spoils the look/ambiance of the town

“They are often unsightly and run down which ruins the looks of the area”

“gives a run-down appearance”

Wrong sort of shops/lack of diversity

“Potton needs to have local shops and cafes, try comparing its offerings to Woburn Sands, of [originally] similar size on the other edge of the county [OK so its in MK] or even the smaller Woburn”

Key challenges - Potton

Respondents were asked what key challenges were preventing vacant properties from being brought back into use. Are there wider issues in the local area (such as footfall, infrastructure, perception, or demand) that may be contributing to long-term vacancy? 4 comments were received. The main themes have been listed below.

Theme	No. of comments
Need to be a destination/no reason to visit	1
High rentals/business rates	1
Lack of demand	1
Wrong sort of shops/lack of diversity	1

Some examples of the themes are included below:

Need to be a destination/no reason to visit

“Potton isn't and wont be a major shopping centre, there needs to be good shopping for local trade”

High rentals/business rates

“Cost”

Lack of demand

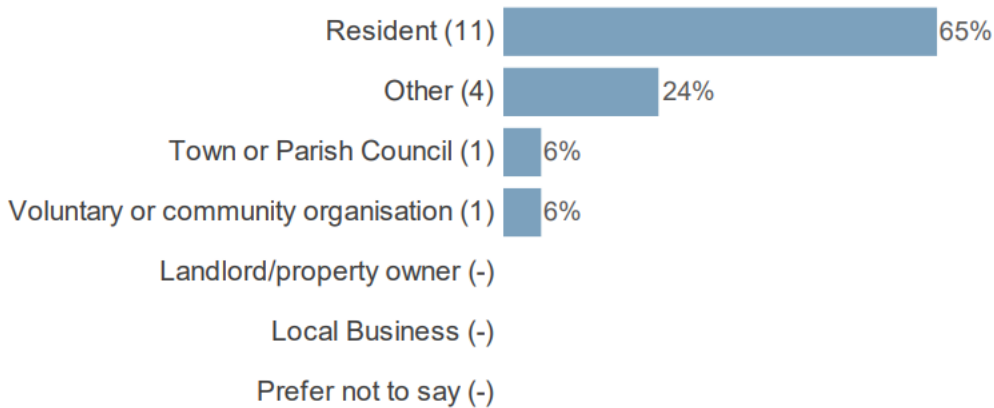
“Demand”

Wrong sort of shops/lack of diversity

a greater facility for 'eating out' and meeting up with friends in the rural town

Shefford 17 responses

Are you responding as:



The above graph shows that respondents to the consultation were Resident 65% (11), Other 24% (4), Town or Parish Council 6% (1), Voluntary or community organisation 6% (1)

Other: nearby village resident Local to Shefford Surveyor operating within the County A local resident to a couple of the areas (not actually living there) and a visitor to some others

If Town or Parish Council, please specify: Shefford

If Voluntary or community organisation please specify: Autism Bedfordshire

We propose that all or part of the following Shefford streets (as shown on the maps in the consultation information) should be the areas around the high street where the powers could apply:

- **High Street**
- **Southbridge Street**
- **Northbridge Street**

Do you agree with the proposed boundary of the high street area?



The above graph shows that when those who responded for the Shefford High Street Area were asked if they agree with the proposed boundary, that 81% (13) agreed, whilst 19% (3) did not agree with the proposed boundary.

If no, are there any streets or properties you feel should be included or excluded?

Two comments were made in response to this question:

“All excluded”

“do they go wide enough out> probably not – defined is probably too limited”

Impacts - Shefford

Respondents were asked what impacts they thought that vacant shops have on the Shefford high street area. 10 comments were received, the main themes have been listed below.

Theme	No. of comments
Run down/encourages vandalism	3
Spoils the look/ambiance of the town	2
Other	3

Some examples of the themes are included below:

Run down/encourages vandalism

“Looks ugly and causes vandalism”

"looks untidy - invites vandalism"

Spoils the look/ambiance of the town

"ruins the looks of the area and discourages people from shopping locally"

Key challenges - Shefford

Respondents were asked what key challenges were preventing vacant properties from being brought back into use. Are there wider issues in the local area (such as footfall, infrastructure, perception, or demand) that may be contributing to long-term vacancy? 10 comments were received. The main themes have been listed below.

Theme	No. of comments
Wrong sort of shops/lack of diversity	3
High rentals/business rates	3
Amount of online shopping	2
Need to be a destination/no reason to visit	2
Other	4

Some examples of the themes are included below:

Wrong sort of shops/lack of diversity

"not enough variety of businesses and too many takeaways."

"The shops do not have a good variety of retailers and several are not really 'shops'"

High rentals/business rates

"Yes. Rents and rates to independents are too high"

Amount of online shopping

"High streets need to reinvent themselves people shop online now"

Need to be a destination/no reason to visit

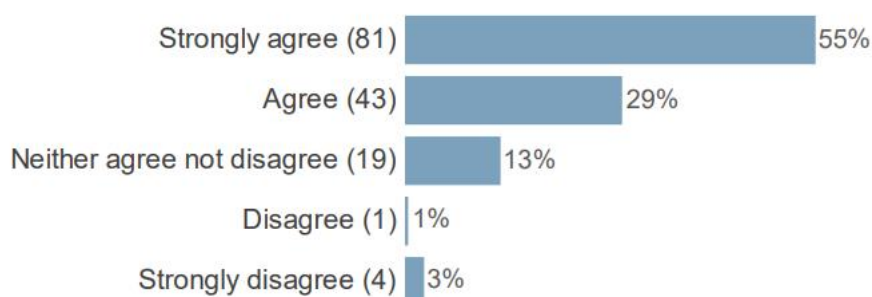
"Solve some of the above by tidying up the whole scene and encouraging a few more local traders - the local bakers has flourished for years, so has the ironmongers - but where are the other 'attractions' to draw folk into Shefford today?"

Overall Consultation Questions

The following questions were asked to all respondents about the High Street Auction powers, they were then invited to comment on these powers and also for any other area of the consultation.

Using High Street Auction powers

All respondents were asked how far they agree or disagree with the council using High Street Rental Auction powers?



The above graph shows that when respondents were asked how far they agree or disagree with the council using High Street Rental Auction powers, that 84% (124) were supportive with 55% (81) strongly agree and 29% (43) agree.

4% (5) either strongly disagreed 3% (4) or disagreed 1% (1).

13% (19) neither agreed nor disagreed.

Why have you responded this way?

Respondents were asked why they had responded this way to the use of High Street Rental powers. 103 comments were received, the main themes have been listed below.

Theme	No. of comments
Agree get shops occupied	67
Need shops occupied for a vibrant town centre	21
Encourages landlords into action/ should use or lose	15
Wrong sort of shops/lack of diversity	13

Theme	No. of comments
Be selective	11
Empty shops an eyesore/ running into disrepair	11
Lower the rents	9
Prioritise local businesses	5
Make it a destination/attract more people to town	5
To attract more retailers into the town	4
Secure for local community	4
No short time rentals	3
More information needed	3
Not sure this will happen	2
Politicians needed to drive change	2
Other	5

Some examples of the themes are included below:

Agree get shops occupied (the most responses were for Dunstable (27) and Leighton-Linslade (23)

"If it helps get shops that are shut and empty open again it would be a very welcome move."

"Gets the properties occupied and tidied."

"Rational and easy to enact"

"The vacant buildings need to be brought back into use."

Need shops occupied for a vibrant town centre (the most responses were for Dunstable (10) and Leighton-Linslade (7)

"The shops need to up and running to bring small towns back to life."

"Empty property damages the historic infrastructure"

"It would help to regenerate the town"

Encourages landlords into action/ should use or lose (the most responses were for Leighton-Linslade (7)

“it will mean that a vacant building cannot remain vacant much beyond 365 days it is likely to mean that landlords will try to put a tenant in as a matter of priority”

“Need to stop owners of properties from purely investing in profit from capital appreciation instead of letting rental income”

“Property owners should be penalised for having town-centre property sitting empty. I think it's right that LAs have the power to force property owners to bring empty buildings into use for commercial or charitable/community purposes”

Wrong sort of shops/lack of diversity

“Empty retail properties do not encourage people to shop locally BUT HSRA must ensure the town doesn't just get " more of the same"”

“Clothing and shoe shops are needed, for all genders and age groups. A bank hub. We don't need any more barbers, or coffee shops”

“please ... no more chicken shops or barbers .”

Be selective

“I'm not sure the right businesses will win the auction and will play into the points I've already made”

“Clearly it would depend on the type of shop/retail outlet that would be occupying”

“Would not want more barbers or nail bars”

Empty shops an eyesore/ running into disrepair

“Something needs to be done about the empty shops they become an eyesore”

“When shops are empty for a long time they get run down and the whole area suffers.”

“Properties are falling into disrepair”

Lower the rents

“I don't know the answer as am unsure how it works. If it would be at "market rent" I can't see the draw, rents are really high! If it works, great!”

“As a general view, retail rents have been unviable in a number of locations for far too long.”

“Need to make it easier to promote local independent business and reduce lease and rent costs”

Prioritise local businesses

"Gives more local people the chance to choose to invest in the town."

"Bringing shops into the community will hopefully mean we can get better quality independent shops, more interesting places to browse and supporting local businesses and communities"

Make it a destination/attract more people to town

"create a reason to come into the centre for us residents"

"We need to revive the high street and make it a destination that people want to visit."

To attract more retailers into the town

"To encourage local enterprise and reduce the need to travel"

"I agree that something needs to be done to bring more businesses into the town."

Secure for local community

"Agree if they are utilised for positive reasons for the town and residents to benefit from."

No short time rentals

"Auction would see lots of short term rentals and not a regeneration of good quality I independent retailers ."

More information needed

"Not fully aware of the powers;"

Not sure this will happen

"Don't see any progress or impact of this"

Politicians needed to drive change

"Traditional market towns and high streets will disappear completely within the next few years without government and local authority intervention."

Other comments

Respondents were asked if there any other comments or suggestions they would like to make regarding the High Street Rental Auction powers. 74 comments were received, the main themes have been listed below.

Theme	No. of comments
Be selective	19
Wrong sort of shops/ lack of diversity	17
Agree get shops occupied	9
No	11
Should be part of a broader vision for high streets	5
Secure for local community	5
Need shops occupied for a vibrant town centre	5
More information needed	5
Encourages landlords into action/ should use or lose	4
Implement it quickly/asap/no deliberating	4
Lower the rents	4
To attract more retailers into the town	3
Prioritise local businesses	3
Ask local residents what shops they want	2
Empty shops an eyesore/ running into disrepair	2
No short time rentals	2
Make it a destination/attract more people to town	2
Sort parking	2
Other	6

Some examples of the themes are included below:

Be selective

“Care must be taken that the rentals are to a wide variety of small businesses”

"All the empty banks in LL, are they going to be returned for civic use? They have a big presence on the High Street, that they stand vacant eventually to be turned into bookmakers is so miserable. Cannot a better use be made of them?"

"Need to make enforcement of type of shops the top priority"

"I believe certain types of business should not be present on the high street. We do not need betting shops, vapes stores or phone repair stores that no one ever uses."

Wrong sort of shops/ lack of diversity

"In order to differentiate from nearby large shopping malls, we need to encourage small independent shops rather than big chains."

"Don't use them to add more businesses that already exist (i.e. no point in adding more nail bars etc previously mentioned)."

"be more flexible with planning rules to encourage investment. The number of barber shops in the town does it no favours and should be restricted."

"Don't need any more barbers or pizza shops"

Agree get shops occupied

"strongly agree"

"I think if used in the right way this could be a really great initiative"

"Great idea, hopefully it will make a big difference to the wasteland that is Dunstable town centre!"

No (respondent replied they have no further comment)

Should be part of a broader vision for high streets

"The High Street Rental Auction powers need to be part of a broader vision for town centres with a more pro high street approach to encourage more small businesses and market traders."

"Could it perhaps include a market with incentives to vendors to come along. I can only see this working if the market is in a prominent place, has artisan stalls, not cheap rubbish (excuse the phrase) and there are sufficient number to make it look enticing."

Secure for local community

"Any unlet properties at the end of the auction should be offered to local community organisations on a peppercorn rent. Landlords should be penalised for allowing properties to remain empty."

"The council should be using this opportunity to secure some of these premises for local community use eg arts centres"

Need shops occupied for a vibrant town centre

High Street Rental Auctions Consultation Report 2025

"Ultimately the town centre should not have a detrimental affect on the people of Dunstable or the surrounding villages"

"You really need to add further help and incentives if any sort of high street retail is to survive."

More information needed

"We would like more information."

"What happens if an auction does not produce high enough, or any, bids?"

Encourages landlords into action/ should use or lose

"Powers to charge, or insist, landlords face building repair and/or maintenance in accordance with the conservation area of the town centre."

"Take over shops where owners have had the property for years but never opened e.g. the old pub on church street, it's been empty for years, does not give a good impression"

Implement it quickly/asap/no deliberating

"Enforced quickly"

"Proceed asap"

Lower the rents

"Keep the rental low to encourage businesses and others to apply"

"Reduce rents"

To attract more retailers into the town

"Encourage retailers into town."

"We are a Market town with fabulous traders that are here once a month or so. Why can't the old wilkinsons become a permanent indoor market? So many traders would appreciate the space and encourage business back to this area."

Prioritise local businesses

"Prioritise local businesses. Ensure increased diversity of offering"

"Yes the council should offer help with start up,"

Ask local residents what shops they want

"Local residents should be invited to suggest the type of new stores they want to see"

Empty shops an eyesore/ running into disrepair

High Street Rental Auctions Consultation Report 2025

“Empty properties lead to a spiral of neglect both in terms of perception and in reality. Perception is equally important as actual reality since empty properties signal economic malaise and lack of investment.”

No short time rentals

“There needs to be fairness for all businesses in the town. Auction might encourage short term poor quality unregulated pop ups . With not consumer protection. We need a sustainable system”

Make it a destination/attract more people to town

“It would be good if these powers could be used to support more community cohesion”

Sort parking

“Use it wisely and attract the right shops. Also improve parking and access.”

Overall landlord question for the consultation

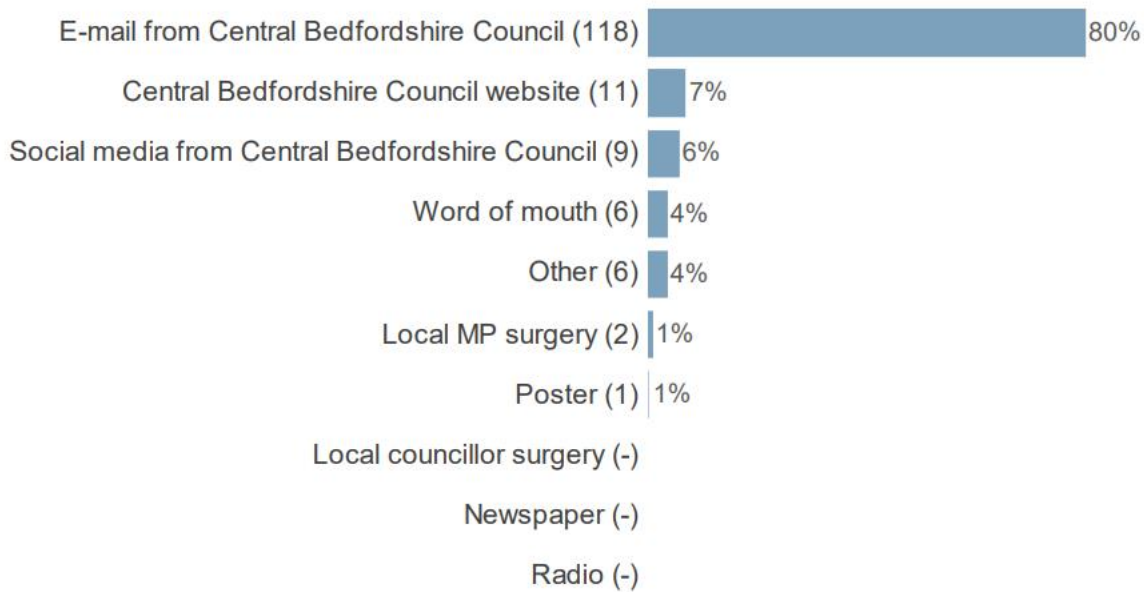
If you are a landlord/property owner of a vacant unit, what are the main challenges in finding tenants for your property?

There were no responses to this question

Demographics

How did you hear about this consultation?

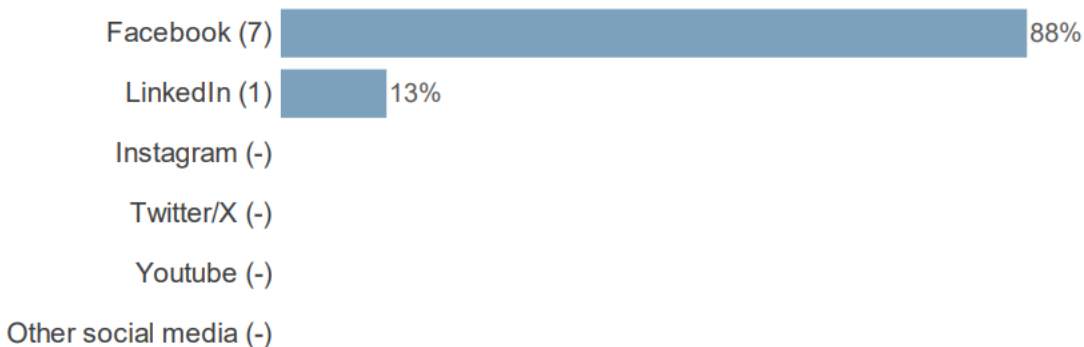
High Street Rental Auctions Consultation Report 2025



E-mail from Central Bedfordshire Council 80% (118), Central Bedfordshire Council website 7% (11), Social media from Central Bedfordshire Council 6% (9), Word of mouth 4% (6), Other 4% (6), Local MP surgery 1% (2), Poster 1% (1)

If other, please tell us: Culture Co (1), Partnership Committee meeting (1), Local councillor facebook page (1), Cllr on social media (1), Town council admin (1) emailed it to (1).

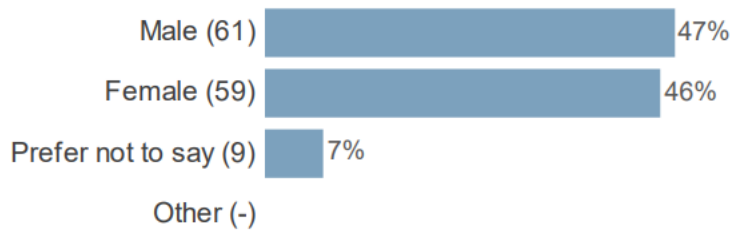
If social media, please tell us which one:



The above graph shows that the social media respondents heard about the consultation through were Facebook 88% (7) and LinkedIn 13% (1)

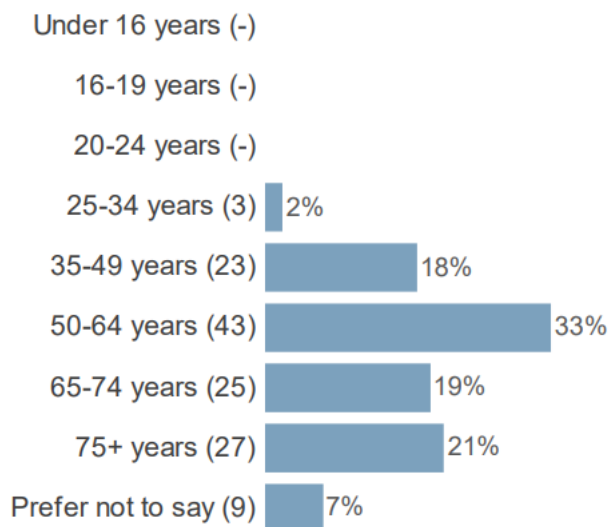
Are you: (please select one)

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The above graph shows that 129 respondents answered this question, they were Male 47% (61), Female 46% (59), 7% (9) Preferred not to say. No respondents said Other. Males and Females were under-represented compared to the Central Bedfordshire population (51% female and 49% male).

What is your age? (please select one)

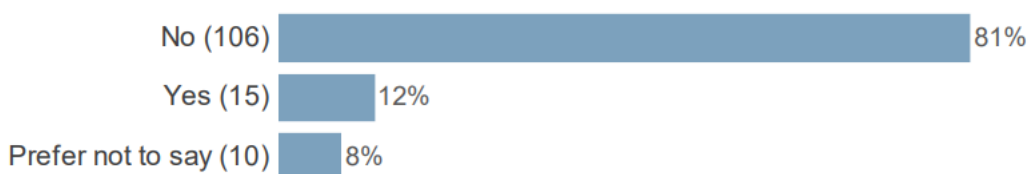


The above graph shows, of the 130 who answered this question, the age of the respondents was Age 50-64 33% (43), 75+ 21% (27), 65-74 19% (25), 35-49 18% (23), 25-34 2% (3)

There were no responses from respondents under 24 years of age.

7% (9) people preferred not to say.

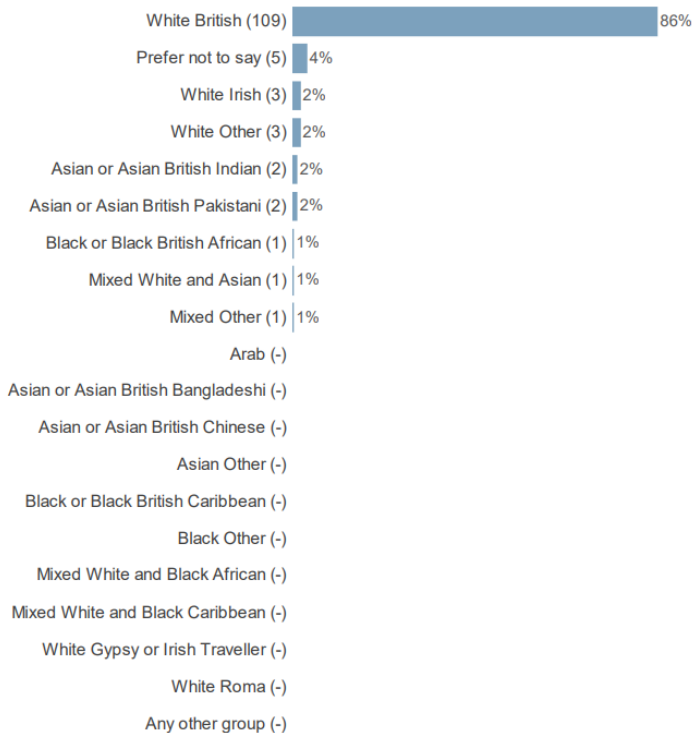
Do you consider yourself disabled? (please select one) Under the Equality Act 2010 a person is considered to have a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a sustained and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities.



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In total 131 respondents chose to answer this question. Of these, 12% (15) said they were disabled under the equality act, compared with 15% of the overall population, suggesting that people with a disability were less likely to respond to this consultation. 8% (10) of respondents chose not to say.

To which of these groups do you consider you belong? (please select one)



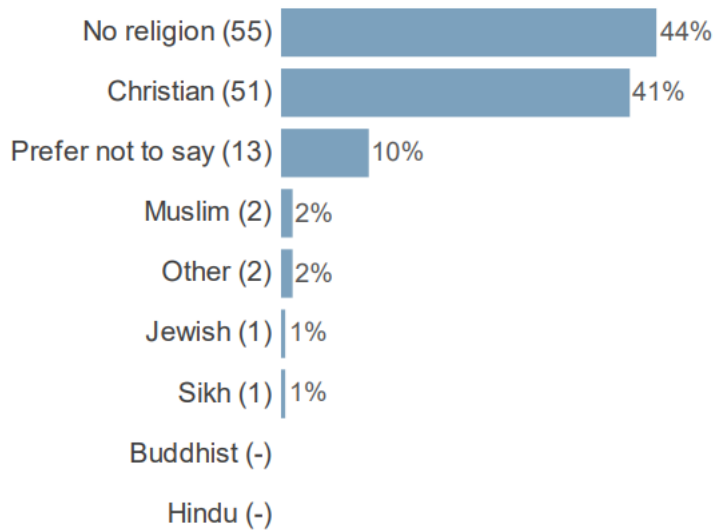
The above graph shows the groups that of the 127 respondents who answered this question, considered that they belonged to, with White British 86% (109), White Irish 2% (3), Asian or Asian British Indian 2% (2), Asian or Asian British Pakistani 2% (2), Black or Black British African 1% (1), Mixed White and Asian 1% (1), Mixed Other 1% (1)

If other, please specify: Mixed European, European, Canadian / British

10% of respondents said they were from a minority ethnic background, compared with 17% of the overall population of Central Bedfordshire, suggesting that people from minority ethnic groups were less likely to respond to the consultation.

What is your religion or belief? (please select one)

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The above chart shows that when respondents were asked their religion or belief, the responses were No religion 44% (55), Christian 41% (51), Muslim 2% (2), Other 2% (2), Jewish 1% (1), Sikh 1% (1)

10% (13) said that they preferred not to say.

If other, please specify: Humanist, Pagan

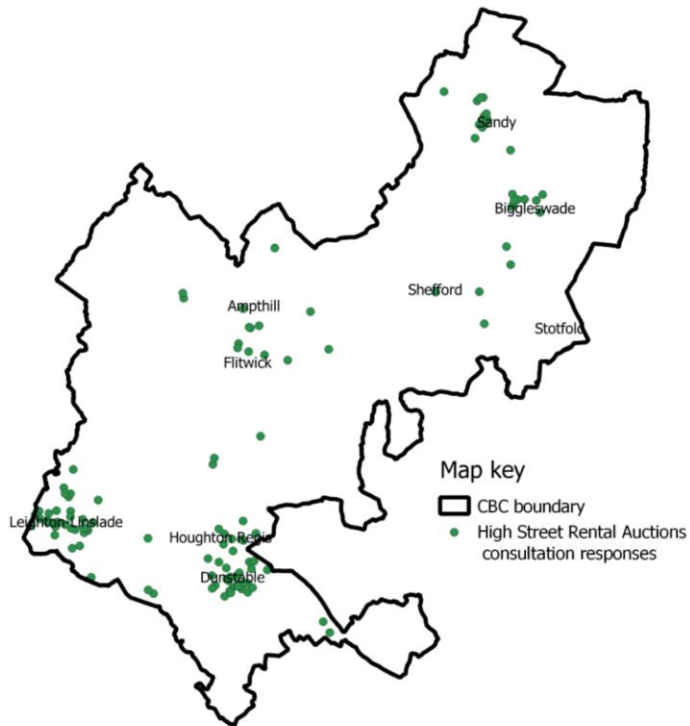
41% of respondents said they were Christian, 5% another religion, and 44% said they had no religion. This compared to 48%, 4% and 43% respectively, of the overall population of Central Bedfordshire.

Postcode and Acorn analysis

Responses were received from all across Central Bedfordshire with clusters of responses around the towns with the proposed High Street Rental Auction powers outlined in the consultation.

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High Street Rental Auctions consultation responses



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Responses were received from a wide range of households. Higher and middle income households responses were similar to their proportions in the overall population, and lower income households were less likely to respond.

Broad divisions (based on groups)	Respondents with usable postcode	% of respondents with usable postcode	% of all CBC households
Higher income	24	20%	19%
Middle income	83	70%	63%
Lower income	12	10%	17%
Total with usable postcode	119	100%	100%

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