

## Union Street, Aldershot Consultation Summary

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This document provides a summary of feedback received during the two public exhibitions and the online consultation for the proposals to redevelopment of 38-62 Union Street, Aldershot.



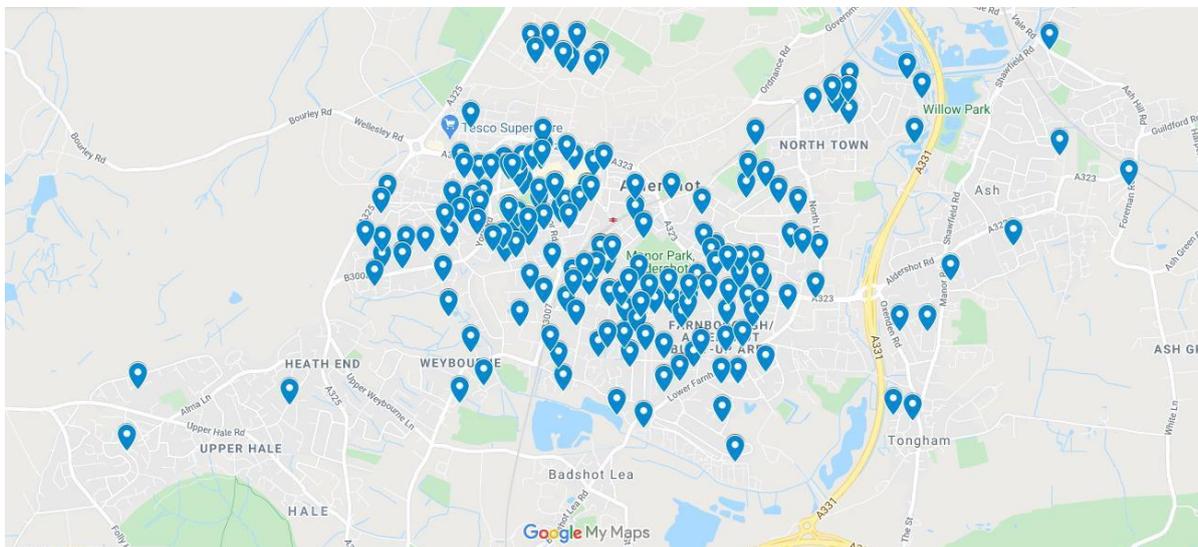
### Executive Summary

- The public consultation sessions were attended by approximately **1220** people:
  - Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2020 (4pm-8pm) – **160** attendees
  - Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2020 (10am-2pm) – **1060** attendees
- Of those attending, **162** people filled in comment forms at the events, with a further **136** completing the same comment form on the project website (<https://rushmoordevelopmentpartnership.com/union-street/>) as part of the online engagement open until the 9<sup>th</sup> February 2020. **6 people** also emailed the project team separately on the dedicated email address; [information@rdpllp.co.uk](mailto:information@rdpllp.co.uk).
- The feedback forms asked questions about the need for regeneration of the town, opinions on a variety of uses that could be found on the site and overall whether responders were supportive of the plans proposed, as well as providing an additional section allocated to general comments on the proposals.

- Respondents made a variety of comments about the proposals, but an overwhelming majority (98%) of those who took part in the consultation agreed that Aldershot town centre was in need of regeneration.
- 80% of those who took part in the engagement at the events, as part of the online consultation or got in touch via email supported the proposals for the redevelopment of 38-62 Union Street.
- The main issues raised in the feedback were primarily related to parking, the mix of shops available in the town, the requirement for affordable business rates; and the need for development to be in keeping with the Victorian heritage of the town. Concerns raised during the online consultation also included the impact on existing services in the town such as GPs and schools.
- The overall response to the proposals was positive. Many attendees to the events and those who took part online expressed the desire to see the site provide a new retail experience to bring new life to the town centre. A number of residents were enthusiastic for the creative aspect of the scheme and enquired as to the availability of these units.

## Respondent Analysis

Local spread of responses:



The above map shows the addresses given by those that participated in the engagement and demonstrates a good spread of responses from those that live and likely work and/ or spend leisure time in the area.

## Responses

The comment forms provided gave the opportunity for respondents to answer five questions on the proposals. In total, 304 comment cards were returned, however the below figures reflect the number of completed questions on each comment card, as some respondents did not complete all questions.

1. Do you think that Aldershot town centre is in need of regeneration?

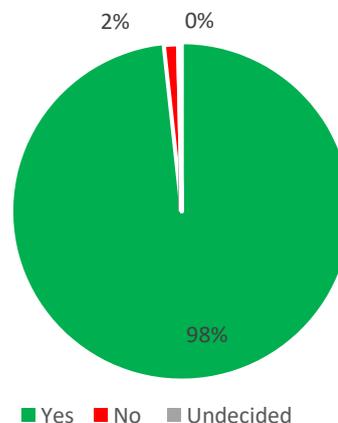
No. of responses - 294

Yes – 289

No – 4

Undecided – 1

1. Do you think that Aldershot Town Centre is in need of regeneration?



2. Would you support delivery of creative spaces for local independent craftspeople and businesses?

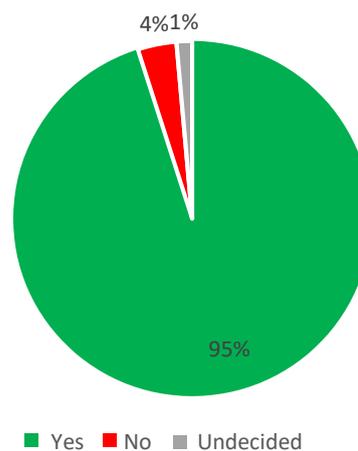
No. of responses - 285

Yes - 271

No – 10

Undecided – 4

2. Would you support delivery of creative spaces for local independent craftspeople and businesses?



3. Would you like to see new public spaces created in the town centre?

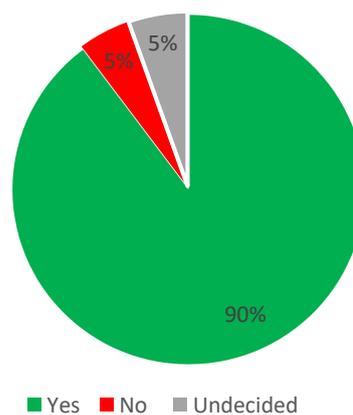
No. of responses – 293

Yes – 263

No – 14

Undecided – 16

3. Would you like to see new public spaces created in the Town Centre?



4. Do you support the delivery of new and affordable homes here?

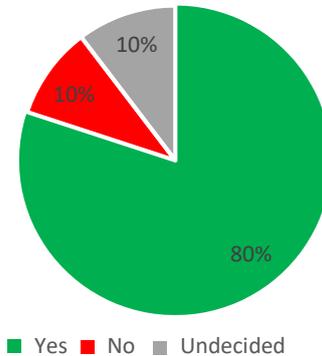
No. of responses - 291

Yes – 233

No – 28

Undecided – 30

4. Do you support the delivery of new and affordable homes here?



5. Do you support the proposals to redevelop 38-62 Union Street?

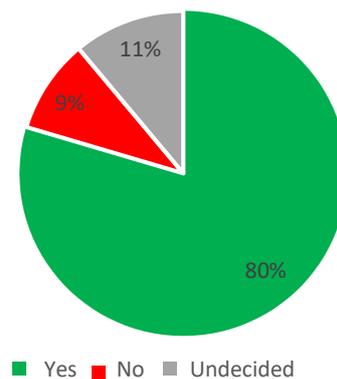
No. of responses – 294

Yes – 238

No – 23

Undecided – 33

5. Do you support the proposals to redevelop 38-62 Union Street?



### **Additional written feedback**

Below is a sample of the comments received, broken down into positive, neutral and negative responses for question number 6: 'Do you have any further comments on the proposals?'

#### Positive comments

- “Plans look good as long as long term needs and a viable mix of retail, residential and recreation/entertainment are maintained and quality is seen as central. More green space would also be a benefit.”
- “Hopefully the town could become a vibrant place to live in. Something needs to be done.”
- “Keep the students – I like the vibrancy - I imagine this as colourful and diverse and interesting – like Brixton but better. I really think a permanent market would help Aldershot stand out.”

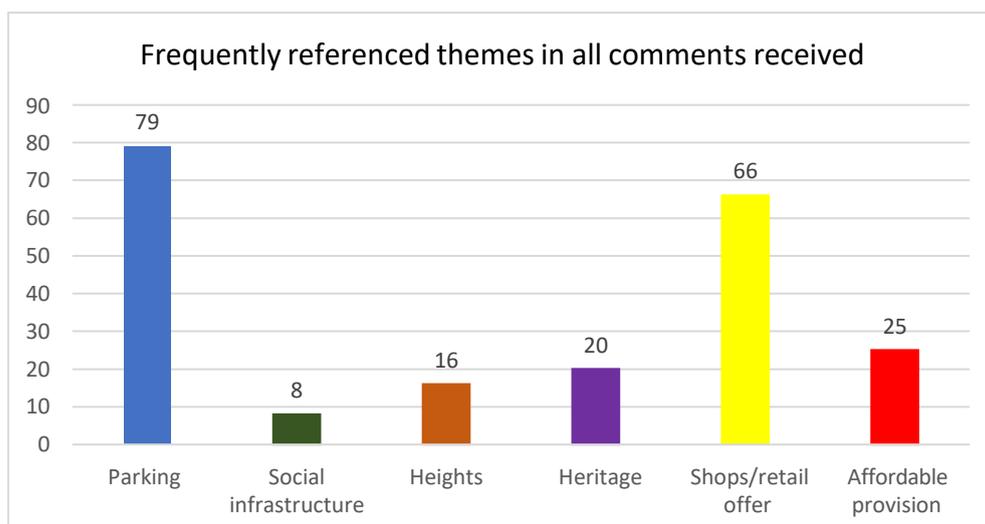
- “Very encouraging proposals, support the whole concept, especially the idea of public space and the link to the university to change the demographics of the town. Much needed. Good Luck!”

Neutral comments

- “Please ensure construction and usage phases take account of good sustainability practice and mitigate / adopt for future climate change issues (e.g. flooding).”
- “Affordable housing for people who work and don't rely on benefits. And look after our ex military.”
- “No information as to how it is being paid for, council tax. First need to address state of roads, sufficient parking and enforcement officers.”
- “Rents and rates for shops have been too high which is why they closed at the end of the lease.
- “Need for parking. Shops.”
- “How do you apply to live in one of the low income homes?”

Negative comments

- “I hope the heritage of the buildings will be retained. It's shown that the housing amounts to 225 residences but only 65 parking spaces. Even if residents have less than average cars what about their visitors”
- “The proposed buildings are too large and out of scale for the surrounding buildings. The designs are poor, one too plain (dull) and flat and do not reflect the Victorian heritage or character of the town centre. I am appalled at the apparent lack of the two former Barton shops which are not only fine examples of Art Deco but the only architecture of this type in the town centre - and also one is a locally listed building, so if this is lost one has to question Rushmoor's commitment to heritage.”
- “Not enough areas for parking for general public to encourage to come into Aldershot in the first place. Seating areas for older people?? Disabled car parking spaces in accessible spaces.”
- “There are not enough car parking spaces. There should be more social housing. There is not enough provision for indoor meeting space. I like the idea of the creative space. Unfortunately I'm not convinced that it will generate the pull to bring more people to the town centre.”



### Additional Facebook advertising

Following the two consultation sessions held on the 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> January, three separate Facebook advertisements were posted to drive traffic towards the project website, and encourage people to participate in the consultation online. The three Facebook advertisements targeted those who may not necessarily participate in public consultation activities, including parents, shoppers and students around Aldershot to gain a wide spread of engagement with the plans.

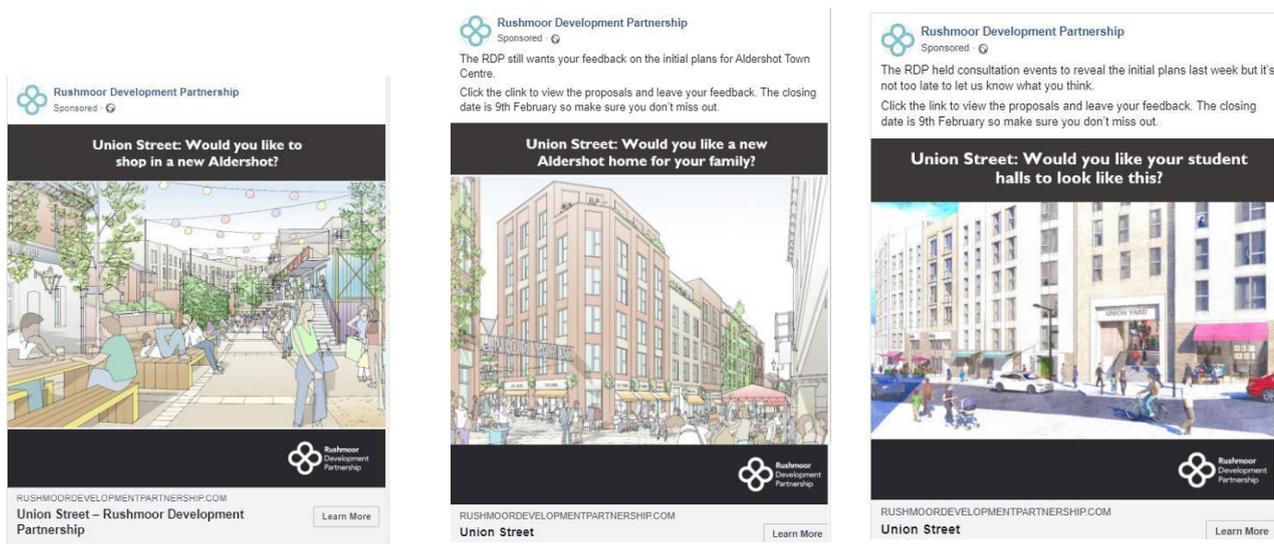
The results of the advertisements were as follows:

- The three adverts reached a total of 16,224 people gained 27,972 impressions and attracted 518 link clicks.
  - Targeting town users/shoppers – reached 6,492 people, gaining 9,284 impressions
  - Targeting parents – reached 3,517 people, gaining 6,881 impressions
  - Targeting students – reached 6,918 people, gaining 11,807 impressions.

As part of this engagement, comments were left on the Facebook advertisements, and the the theme raised were similar to those left at the exhibitions and on the website, including:

- Parking
- Building design and impact of the heritage of the area
- Impact on existing retailers

Overall, the comments left on social media were more negative than the ones received at the events and on the website. We would expect this as people tend to be more pessimistic online, particularly where they don't have the benefit of the project team answering questions. However, the adverts served their purpose of driving considerable traffic towards the website whilst also allowing further conversation on the plans.



As a consequence of hosting further engagement online, 87.65% more feedback was provided, with 46.71% of the overall responses being given via the project website, or dedicated email address.

## **Summary**

Based on the feedback received throughout the consultation period, the responses were largely positive, with most of those attending supportive of the principle of redevelopment on the site, including the provision of new homes, new shops, public realm and the wider regeneration of the town centre.

When answering the question 'do you support the proposals to redevelop 38-62 Union Street', 80% answered 'yes'. There were common concerns about parking, heritage, the provision of social infrastructure, and business rates but many raised these issues whilst still being in support of the development overall.