



# **Barrow Town Centre Regeneration Scheme**

## **Levelling Up Fund Investment**

### **Feedback Summary – December 2022 Consultation**



UK Government

**LEVELLING  
— UP —**



BOROUGH OF  
BARROW IN  
FURNESS

**#brilliant  
BARROW**

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## Project background and summary of the feedback received

In 2021, Barrow Borough Council developed an ambitious business case to inject vitality back into the heart of Barrow's town centre with proposals to create a major indoor attraction and gateway destination through significant transformation to existing buildings, streets, and spaces.

In Autumn 2021, Barrow Borough Council was awarded a once-in-a-generation £16 million from the Government's Levelling Up Fund. With match funding of £1.5 million from Barrow Borough Council itself, the scheme will benefit from a £17.5 million overall investment.

The business case put forward to Government consisted of three key elements;

- Improvements to the outdoor spaces (public realm) and accessibility in Duke Street and the creation of a high-quality entrance connecting The Forum and Barrow Market Hall.
- Revitalising Barrow Market with a vibrant food hall to offer more food and drink experiences, more family leisure facilities, and a high-quality shopping area to showcase local traders, makers, and producers at the heart of the scheme while also establishing a new town centre community hub within The Forum.
- The creation of a pocket park and event space at the Portland Walk entrance to Barrow Market Hall and improved pedestrian connectivity to Dalton Road.

Further background information about the scheme and access to the public consultation document can be found at [barrowbc.gov.uk/regen](https://barrowbc.gov.uk/regen)

We wanted to hear views on the proposals and therefore Barrow Borough Council held a consultation period between Friday December 2 and Friday December 23, 2022. This was the first consultation on the Barrow Town Centre Regeneration Scheme. This included public events at Barrow Market, The Dock Museum and Tesco Extra in Barrow.

The consultation asked the public's opinions on:

- Our project objectives
- Whether they support the scheme
- How often they use Barrow Market and the reasons for their visits
- Their views on the different elements of the scheme.

Respondents were largely positive towards the project with 81% of respondents supporting the objectives and 74% supporting Barrow Town Centre Regeneration Scheme.

The respondents were particularly supportive of transforming Barrow Market, introducing a food hall and creating a modern, light, attractive and more organised space with high-quality shopping and leisure experiences.

Several respondents commented on the need to diversify Barrow Town Centre and liked the gateway from Duke Street concept.

Respondents want us to explore ideas, including making sure the food hall can be reached at different points of the day, including in the evening from The Forum and having dedicated performance space and a stage in Barrow Market and free Wi-Fi. These aspects are already being considered in the plans.

The comments raised by respondents are being taken into consideration during the further design development. We will be holding our next public consultation in late February 2023.

## Our Approach to consultation

The project team at the Council prepared a communications plan which outlined the proposed communications and consultation approach. The Council is seeking to co-design the facility working with existing market traders, local businesses, the third sector and residents in the town.

The communications plan for the project identified a range of internal and external stakeholders. All these groups were invited to engage with the consultation.

## Timeline

Date	Event
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> December 2022</b>	Public Consultation starts
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> December - 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2022</b>	Barrow Market – exhibition of public consultation document displayed on the walls of Barrow Market
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> December 2022</b>	Public Consultation drop-in event at Barrow Market
<b>5<sup>th</sup> December 2022</b>	Public Consultation drop-in event at Tesco Extra
<b>7<sup>th</sup> December 2022</b>	Consultation event for community stakeholders from groups who work with residents with disabilities held at The Forum
<b>10<sup>th</sup> December 2022</b>	Public Consultation drop-in event at The Dock Museum
<b>12<sup>th</sup> December 2022</b>	Consultation event for Market Traders held at The Forum
<b>13<sup>th</sup> December 2022</b>	Community stakeholder consultation with partner organisations held at Barrow Town Hall
<b>14<sup>th</sup> December 2022</b>	Public Consultation drop-in event at Barrow Market
<b>15<sup>th</sup> December 2022</b>	Public Consultation drop-in event at Love Barrow Families
<b>23<sup>rd</sup> December 2022</b>	Public Consultation ended

## Promotion

We launched the consultation with the issuing of a press release and social media posts on the Barrow Borough Council Facebook and Twitter pages, which all linked to our dedicated Regeneration webpage on the Barrow Borough Council website ([barrowbc.gov.uk/regen](http://barrowbc.gov.uk/regen)). The webpage features the consultation overview and images, consultation document and online survey. The Barrow Borough Council social media posts alone had a reach of circa 16,000 people. The press release content and social media posts were also shared in the local press, with coverage featuring in print, online and radio.

We also shared the consultation details with our community partner organisations via email and the information was shared via their social platforms.

We held two consultation events on Saturdays and tied these in with the Christmas events to benefit from good footfall. We also held a consultation event in a local supermarket during a busy lunchtime period. Approximately 300 people attended our consultation events.

We created a flyer with a QR code to take people to the regeneration webpage and survey for convenience and for those who didn't have time to stop at the consultation stand. Printed copies of the survey were available at events and Barrow Town Hall.

We also had an exhibition of the scheme designs on display on the walls of Barrow Market.

## **The Consultation**

The public consultation was held between 2<sup>nd</sup> December and 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2022.

A consultation document was created to provide information on the proposals for the Barrow Town Centre Regeneration Scheme. This is featured on the consultation webpage ([barrowbc.gov.uk/regen](http://barrowbc.gov.uk/regen)) and we printed out the consultation document in A4, with larger versions in A3 for the public to read or take away at consultation events.

We also had an A1 sized wall exhibition of the full 15-page consultation document in Barrow Market featuring sketch designs of the scheme.

The primary method of consultation was through a questionnaire. The questionnaire was a separate document to the consultation document. Respondents could fill out the survey online, or via paper copies available at the consultation events or from Barrow Town Hall.

We also had a consultation leaflet that was distributed at events and featured a QR code so the public could scan the code to access the survey and webpage at any point if they could not stop for long at the consultation events.

Opportunities to clarify information about the consultation were provided at the consultation events and available via email or at Barrow Town Hall.

Public consultation drop-in events were held at Barrow Market on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> of December, Tesco Extra on December 5<sup>th</sup>, The Dock Museum on December 10<sup>th</sup> and we held a drop-in event at Love Barrow Families alongside the group's activities on 15<sup>th</sup> December.

Two events were held on Saturdays to tie in with busy Christmas community events, including school choir performances in Barrow Market and the little Christmas train tours of Barrow Town Centre.

The events were staffed by Barrow Borough Council officers who could provide further information.

An event for community stakeholders was held at Barrow Town Hall on 13<sup>th</sup> December. This event involved partners from industry, education, including students, arts groups and community support organisations. A specific event for feedback from organisations that work with people with disabilities was held on 7<sup>th</sup> December. We have since held an open and closed tour of Barrow Market for these groups. Officers also held a consultation event for Love Barrow Families on 15<sup>th</sup> December.

Consultation responses have been summarised on the following pages. These summaries do not capture all the comments received; however they do give a general representation of the comments raised.

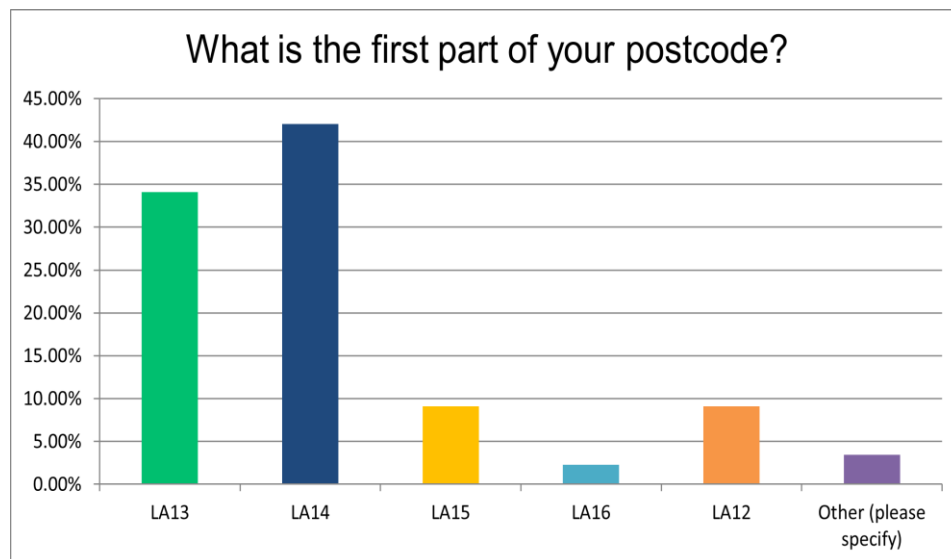


## Consultation Feedback

### Demographic Split of respondents

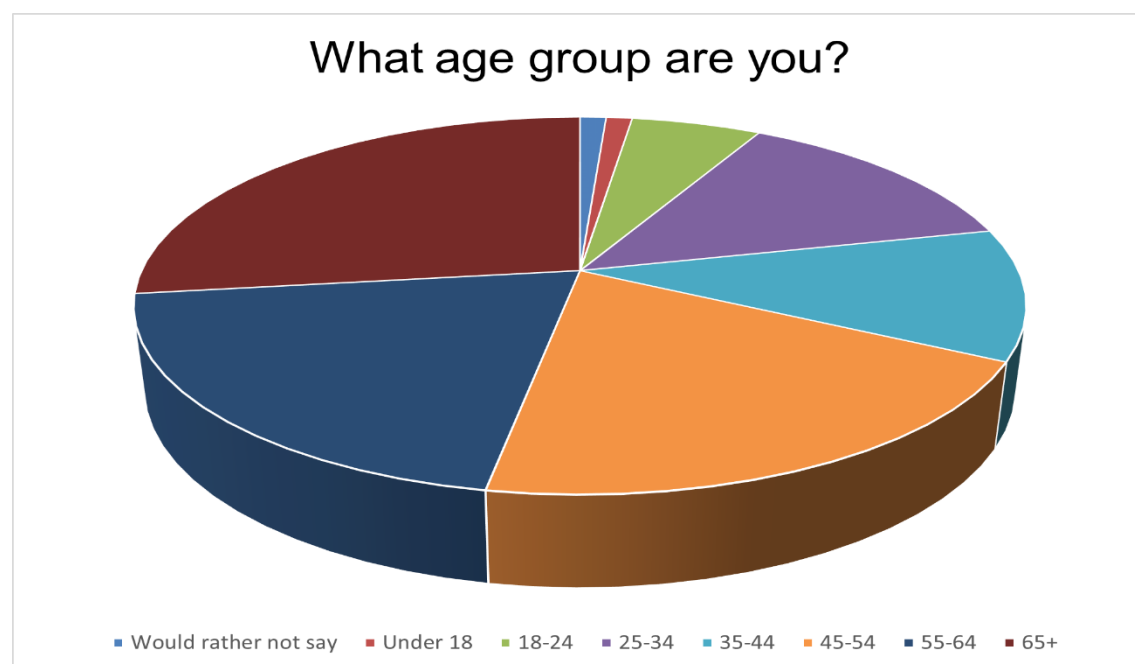
In total, 116 questionnaire responses were received. Figure 1 shows the respondents were primarily from the Barrow Borough postcode areas of LA14 and LA13.

**Figure 1 Postcode areas**



**Figure 2 Age Group**

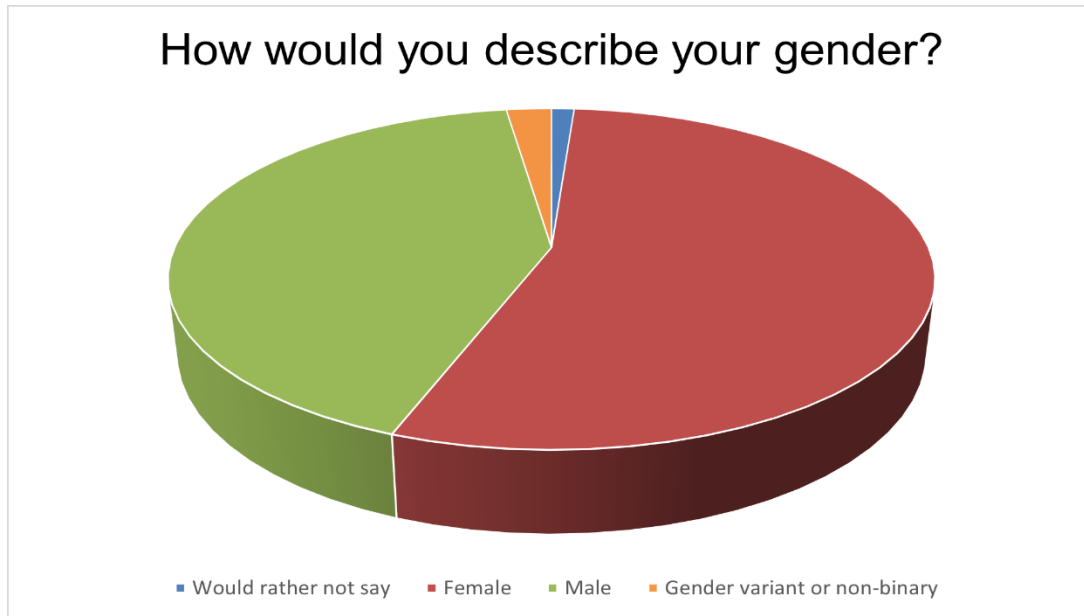
Figure 2 shows that the majority of respondents were in the 65 plus age range bracket (27%). This was followed by 45-54 years (20 %) and 55-64 years (20%), 25-34 years (14%), 35-44 years (11 per cent), 18-24 years (6%), under 18 years (1%) and would rather not say (1%). For future consultations we will explore more ways to engage with a younger demographic.





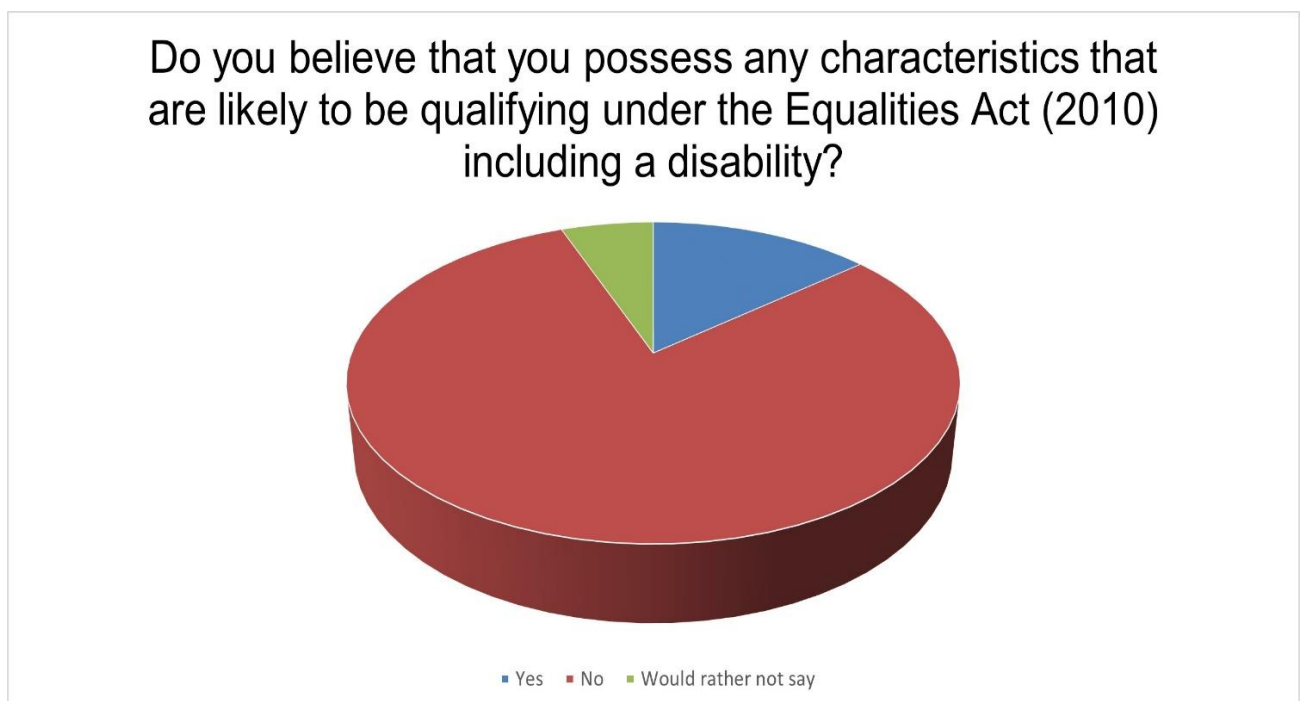
### Figure 3 Gender

Figure 3 shows that 55 % of respondents were female, followed by male (42%). There were 2% of respondents identifying as gender variant or non-binary and 1% preferred not to say.



### Figure 4 Equality

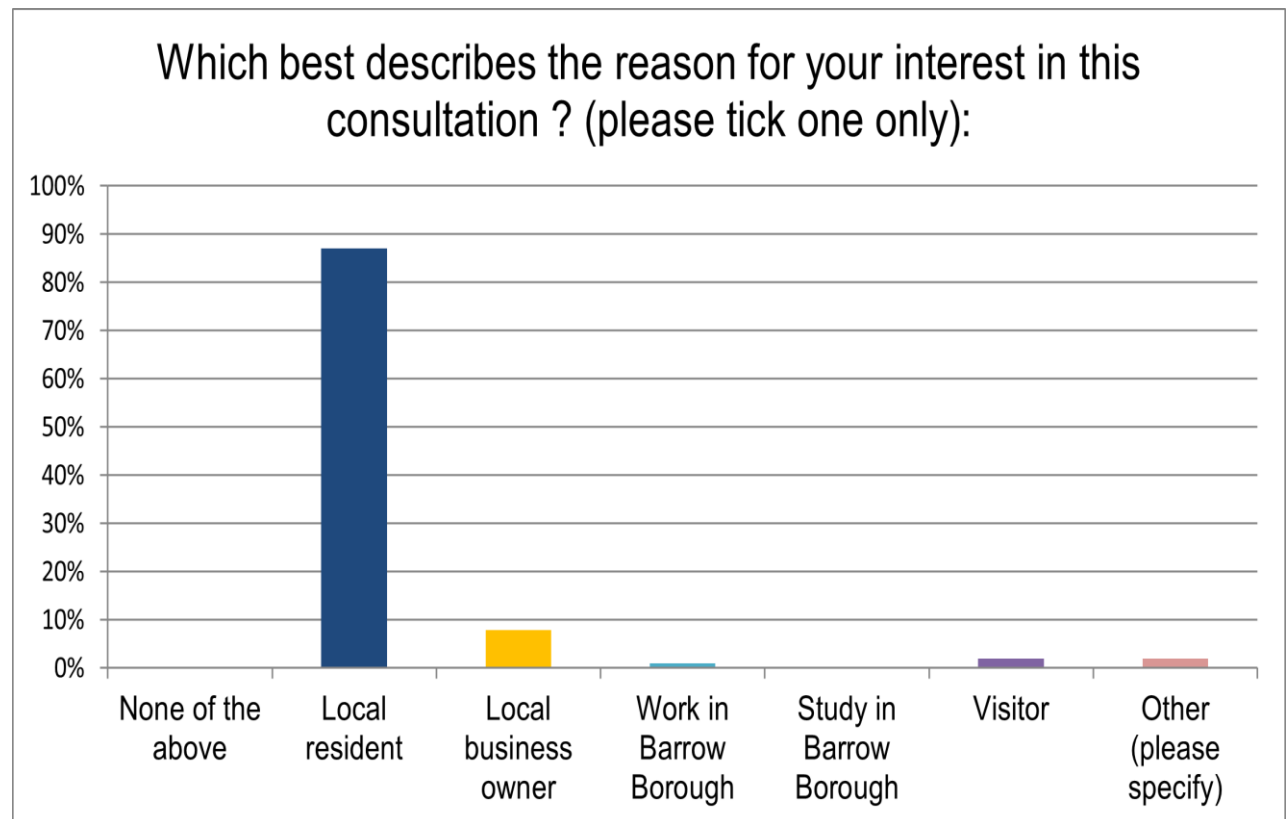
Figure 4 shows of the respondents, 14% answered that they believe they possessed a characteristic that is likely to qualify under the Equalities Act (2010), including a disability. Of those who wanted to specify the reason, 83% said that characteristic was disability, while 17% said the characteristic was race.



## Reason for interest in the Consultation

Figure 5 shows that most respondents identified their reason for interest in the Barrow Town Centre Regeneration consultation as the result of being a local resident (87%). While 8% said their reason of interest was being a local business owner, 2% said being a visitor, 2% said other and 1% said working in Barrow Borough.

**Figure 5 Reason for interest in the consultation**



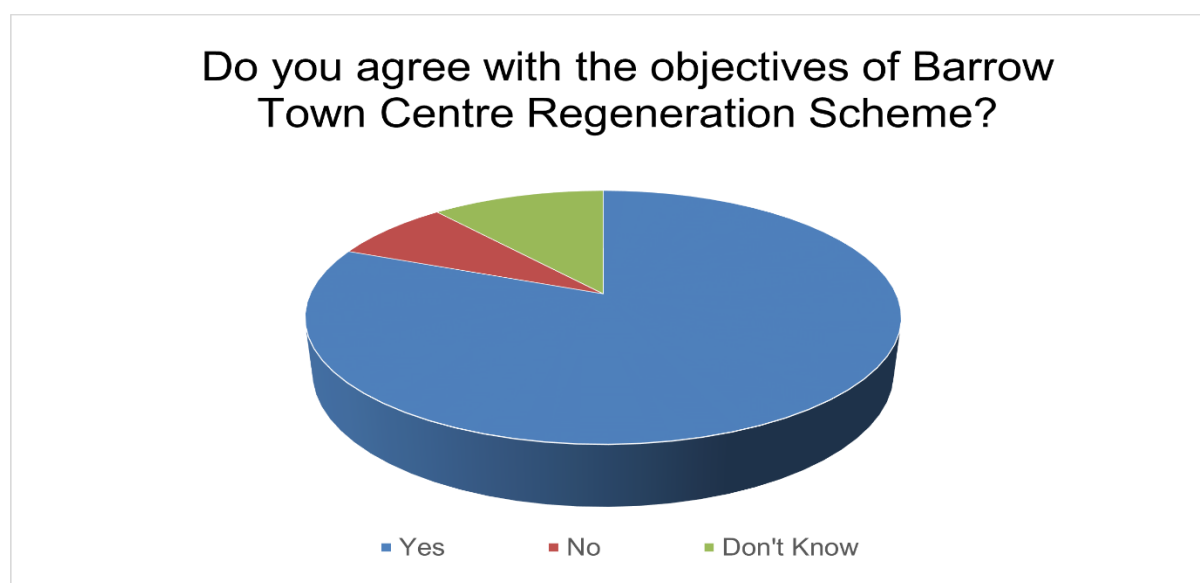
## Barrow Town Centre Regeneration Scheme Objectives

We developed a set of objectives for Barrow Town Centre Regeneration Scheme and asked the public if they agreed with the objectives.



The consultation responses identified wide support for our objectives. Figure 6 illustrates that 81% of respondents felt that we had correctly identified the project objectives of the scheme. The feedback showed that 11% said they did not know if they agreed with the objectives and 8% disagreed with the objectives.

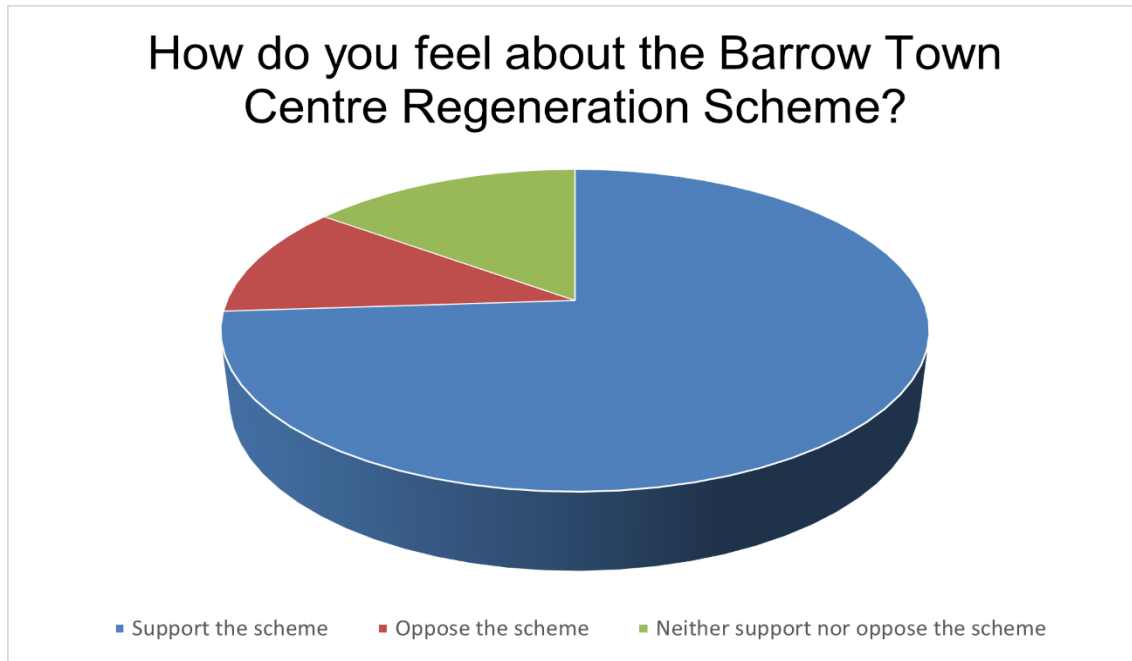
**Figure 6 Objectives**



## Project Support

The feedback received identifies that the majority of respondents support the idea of the Barrow Town Centre Regeneration Scheme. Figure 7 shows that 74% of respondents Support the project. There was 15% of respondents that neither support nor oppose the scheme, while only 11% oppose the scheme.

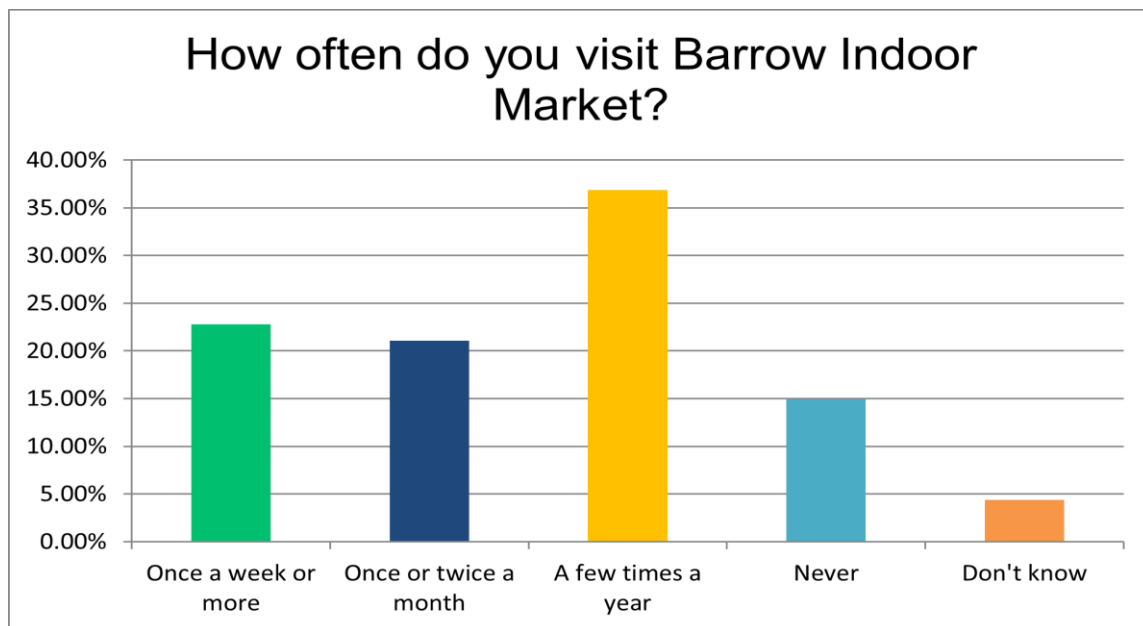
**Figure 7 Support for the Scheme**



## Visiting habits at Barrow Indoor Market

The majority of respondents said they visit Barrow Indoor Market a few times a year (37 %), while 23% of respondents said they visit once a week or more and 21% visit once or twice a month. The feedback shows 15% of respondents said they never visit and 4% didn't know. The scheme will bring exciting changes to the facility and is a great opportunity to draw more people to Barrow Market.

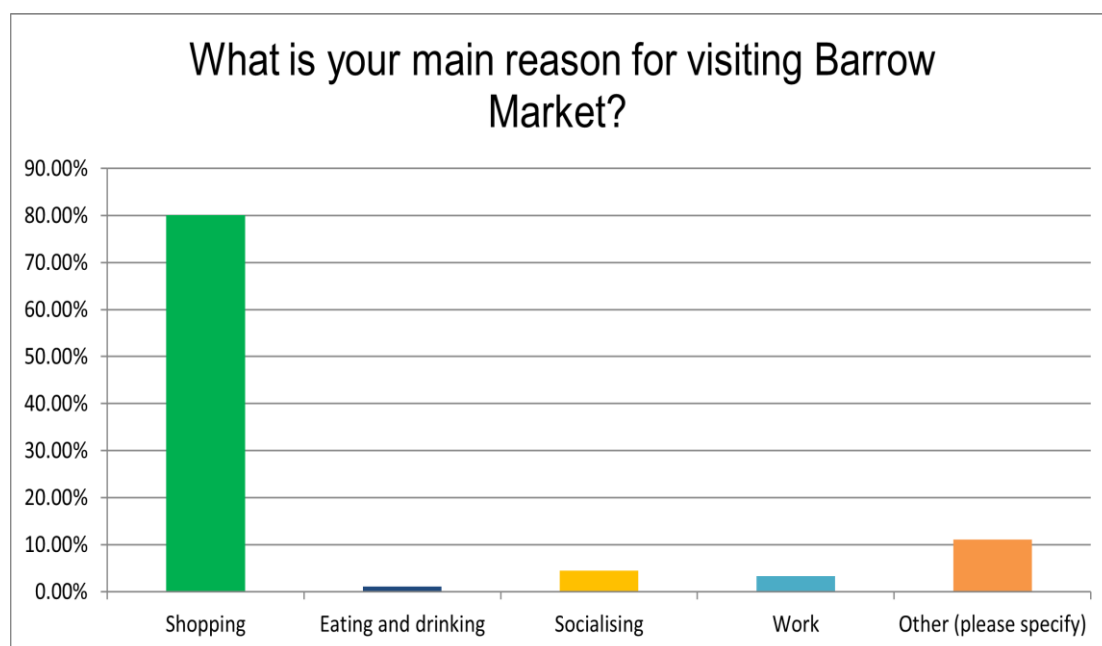
**Figure 8 How often do you visit Barrow Indoor Market ?**



## Main reason for visiting Barrow Indoor Market

The feedback within Figure 9 shows 80% of respondents visit Barrow Indoor Market for shopping, while 11% said other reasons, including watching performances of live music and choirs, or providing a short cut between Portland Walk and Duke Street. There were 5% who said the main reason to visit Barrow market is for socialising, 3% said work and 1% said eating and drinking. The scheme will enhance the leisure and food and drink offer, creating more reasons for people to visit Barrow Market.

**Figure 9 What is your main reason for visiting Barrow Market?**



## What is the most important aspect of the scheme for you?

We asked respondents to rank what the most important features of the scheme are for them. The feedback supported all aspects of the planned changes fairly equally, while the most popular aspect of the scheme is having a high-quality shopping and leisure experience (point score 7.44), followed by having a vibrant food hall or food and drinks areas (point score 6.86), then boosting local economy and supporting independent businesses (point score 6.33) The feedback affirms the remit of the project.

This feedback will enable the design team to prioritise where the funding is spent as the design progresses.

**Figure 10 Which of the proposed changes are most important to you ?**

Which aspect of Barrow Town Centre Regeneration Scheme are most important to you? (Please tell us which are the top 5 aspects of the scheme in order of importance to you, with 1 being most important):



## **Feedback Considerations**

### **What features within the regeneration scheme proposals do you like or dislike?**

Overall respondents told us they like the idea of having a modernised, lighter and more organised Market. They commented that they want to support local Traders and want to encourage more local start-up businesses.

Having a food hall and food and drink experiences featured highly in what respondents wanted to see in the final scheme. They also told us they like the idea of having a bar area overlooking Barrow Town Hall, having a leisure destination, green spaces and a performance space in Barrow Market.

#### **The Duke Street Entrance and Public Realm**

Respondents highlighted the importance of high quality a gateway to the town centre. The comments received included that they hoped it can encourage new business, and that it can bring the community together by creating a meeting place within the town centre.

They also told us that diversifying the town centre to make it more of a destination in addition to shopping is a good idea and that it will hopefully draw in more residents and visitors.

#### **Interior – Market Hall and The Forum**

Respondents told us making Barrow Market more attractive, bright and vibrant is important. They feel a lighter and modernised space will encourage the public to venture into the market, support local businesses and bring people back into the town centre.

The feedback included respondents saying they really like the idea of a food hall, more food stalls, attractive displays and transforming the market into a popular destination.

Some respondents told us they would like more entertainment and a stage in the market, while others wanted a children's area and activities for young people and young adults. The comments included respondents liking the idea of a community hub within The Forum.

#### **Portland Walk Market Entrance**

Respondents told us they like the idea of having green spaces to relax in the town centre.



**Across the feedback received we were asked to consider several points, some of which are already part of the plans going forward. These included;**

YOU SAID	OUR RESPONSE
Don't make Barrow Market too small or close The Mall.	The number of stalls in the transformed Barrow Market is yet to be determined and will be based around factors such as demand for stall space and ensuring we have a diverse offer. The Mall is to be mothballed, but not removed at this stage, so it remains for future potential redevelopment. The units at the entrances of The Mall are to be retained and enhanced.
Put a performance space and stage in Barrow Market.	Performance space for the new Barrow Market is being considered as part of our plans. The public have told us they want this and that many enjoy listening to and watching performances in the market.
Shame the ginnel shop are being knocked down.	As part of the plans to create a Pocket Park the ginnel shops will be demolished to allow for development of an attractive town centre park and community space, which will be a gateway to Portland Walk. We have liaised with the shops tenants and offered all tenants the opportunity to move into Barrow Market and to assist with relocation.
Have more activities for young adults.	Barrow Borough Council and its partners will explore ideas that will help to attract for young adults into the town centre.
What is happening to the car park above Barrow Market?	Proposals for the car park are to be included as part of the wider redevelopment.
Hold an event for local businesses to inform them of the supply chain opportunities.	We will look to use local suppliers where possible and seek to hold an event with local suppliers ahead of the work being procured.

<p>Look at day and night use of the food hall.</p> <p>Use partitioning so the food hall can be linked to The Forum for evening shows.</p> <p>Have more food stalls and attractive displays</p> <p>Bring a fishmonger back to Barrow Market.</p> <p>Support the food hall, but don't drastically cuts the number of market stalls.</p> <p>Integrate the food idea into Portland Walk.</p>	<p>The public were very supportive of the idea of having a food hall in Barrow Market and we have been previously told that people want more eating and drinking opportunities in the town centre. We have been exploring the use of partitioning to separate the food hall from the goods stalls for some time, and in addition to this the way the food hall would open into The Forum. Having a facility that can be used during the day and evening is very much at the heart of the considerations. We also want to see a variety of food stalls, attractive displays and would like to see the return of a fishmonger in the new Barrow market. We want to have the right balance of goods stalls and food stalls. We are exploring the opportunity for a seating area for eating and drinking in Portland Walk as well as the potential for outdoor food vendors to utilise the space.</p>
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**Within the feedback there were points of concern raised about the wider town Centre overall. For example;**

YOU SAID	OUR RESPONSE
<p>There needs to be a scheme to support the reuse of empty premises in other parts of the town centre.</p> <p>The scheme is concentrated on Barrow Market. Make the whole town centre great for independent traders.</p>	<p>Securing regeneration funding is a complex process. The Barrow Town Centre Regeneration Scheme was successful in securing a large sum because it was judged to meet local priorities following public engagement in 2020 as well as Government Criteria for the Levelling Up Fund.</p> <p>The transformation of Barrow Market and The Forum, to create a Duke Street gateway destination, is also just one of a range of exciting developments for Barrow Town Centre.</p> <p>With a high vacancy rate in Barrow Town Centre there is an urgent need to diversify the offer. Barrow Borough Council continues to work with landlords and partners to reactivate the town centre overall and to explore funding opportunities. The town centre has, and is, benefiting from funding including; Reopening High Streets Safely, Welcome Back Fund, the High Streets Heritage Action Zone improvement scheme in Duke Street and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, which includes a new Portland Walk public realm improvement scheme.</p> <p>The Barrow Town Centre Regeneration Scheme also incorporates elements of the £25 million #BrilliantBarrow Town Deal with the establishment of a new community hub within The Forum. BAE Systems has confirmed a £200,000 contribution to the Town Centre community hub.</p> <p>BAE Systems has also recently announced the news that it has bought vacant Portland Walk buildings, including the former Debenhams and WH Smith stores, to create a multi-use facility in the town centre. This brings the exciting prospect of part of the company's workforce being based in town, next to the new Barrow Market and The Forum gateway destination.</p>

## **What wider improvements would you suggest to draw people into and improve Barrow Town Centre?**

This consultation took place ahead of the exciting announcements of BAE Systems purchasing several Portland Walk shops and making a £200,000 contribution to the new town centre Community Hub which will be created within The Forum.

The feedback about wider improvements included respondents wanting the reimagining of Portland Walk and quality shops, to condense shops, and have more bars and restaurants.

The public also asked that Barrow taps into Lake District tourism to showcase our bold heritage to visitors, to make more use of Barrow Town Hall, to have regular arts weekends and have Fairtrade shops and events. Heritage tours of Barrow Town Hall have returned with great success following the lifting of Covid restrictions and there have been several High Street Heritage Action Zone projects and activities in Duke Street.

The feedback also said there could be free parking, parking offers and better rail links. There are several free parking offers in place, including the Barrow Business Improvement District (BID) Free after 3pm scheme and free parking for Shop Barrow Day in December. Barrow Borough Council also has an offer to redeem a two-hour parking fee when customers spend £5 in Barrow Market.

Improvements to security in the town centre was mentioned. Barrow Borough Council is working with Cumbria Constabulary to enhance CCTV provision.

## **What additional features would you like to see in Barrow Market as part of the regeneration scheme ?**

Several respondents said Barrow Market needs better toilet facilities. This is already part of the plans as well as a Changing Places facility within Barrow Market.

Free Wi-Fi, charging points, screens, performance space, a stage and designated musicians' area were all suggested in the feedback and are being worked into the plans. The feedback also tells us that the public want there to be more community events at the new destination for all age groups. The community street party celebration in Town Square and The Forum for the Platinum Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II was highlighted as a successful example.

Areas for crafts demonstrations, makers' spaces, socialising and heritage featured in the feedback and are being explored in the plans, as are weather protection for open space, pop up stalls, and outdoor stalls. Business incubator spaces and office hot desks are being looked at for Barrow Market alongside the community hub.

## Conclusion

Overall, the results of the public consultation demonstrated agreement that the Barrow Town Centre Regeneration Scheme objectives are correct and that respondents support the project overall. The responses gathered showed that 81% of respondents support objectives of the scheme and 74% support the scheme.

The areas respondents felt most strongly about was creating a high-quality shopping and leisure experience and a vibrant food hall and food and drink areas.

There was positive feedback about creating a vibrant gateway destination for Barrow, Barrow Market being transformation, supporting existing local businesses, helping start-up businesses and bringing people back into the town centre.

There were suggestions for enhancing the scheme, some of which are being considered already in the forming of the plans and the new suggestions that are being considered by the design team.

## Next Steps

The comments that include suggestions for improvements for the project have been recorded. These will be considered and incorporated where practical and possible in the future scheme plans. There will be another consultation on the scheme in late February 2023 where more detailed layout plans will be shown

The results of the consultation will be published on the Barrow Borough Council website, [barrowbc.gov.uk/regen](https://barrowbc.gov.uk/regen) .