



Funded by
UK Government

#OurFutureAshton

Spring 2025

What's included in this edition?

- Introduction
- Design Proposals
- Consultation Results
- Workstream Updates

Welcome

Welcome to the Spring edition of the #OurFutureAshton newsletter, providing updates for residents, businesses and visitors on the exciting plans for our town centre.

Since the last newsletter, we've made progress across all the projects. We have continued to develop plans for the new Ashton Square, public realm improvements on Gerard Street and Garswood Street, and Albert Street car park. In October and November, Ashton residents, businesses and visitors shared their thoughts on these plans; through in-person engagement and an online survey.

To keep up to date with progress on our regeneration proposals and to subscribe to these newsletters, please visit: www.wigan.gov.uk/OurFutureAshton.



Design Proposals

We carried out public consultation on the conceptual designs created by our consultants, Gillespies, during late 2024. The proposals included:

- A new public square in the heart of Ashton alongside, enhancements and pedestrianisation to Garswood Street. The new square will be multi-functional and provide a new market offer, a public space to enjoy and a location for hosting events in the town centre.
- Safety and public realm improvements to Gerard Street. Creating new pedestrian crossing points and enhancing the public realm with trees, planting and seating.
- Improving and better managing car park facilities. Better sign posting to other car parks, upgrading Albert Street car park and improving access to Millingford Grove car park to help manage the reduced parking capacity on Garswood Street.

Supported
by



Wigan Council

Consultation, what we've done so far:

The current proposals have been shaped by over three years of consultation with residents and businesses in Ashton, to ensure that we achieve the best possible outcomes. This has included workshops, drop-in sessions, surveys and the establishment of an Ashton Innovation Board.

In early 2024, we ran three questionnaires, supported by two drop-in sessions, to enable us to understand how residents, shoppers, visitors, workers, business owners and young people feel about different aspects of Ashton town centre. In total, we had 1508 responses to all the surveys and spoke to lots of people at the drop-in sessions too. We're grateful to everyone who responded and have used the responses and feedback to help shape the development of the proposals.

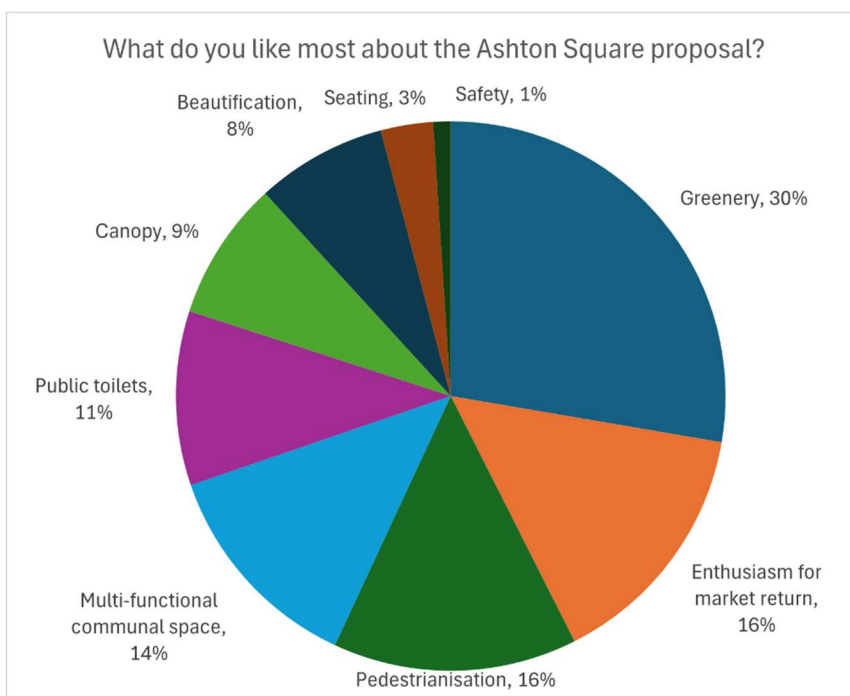
We have also been gathering data from traffic modelling and parking surveys, to look at how all the car parks in the town centre were used, and where there is capacity. This will help to ensure we are making evidence-based decisions that will be of most benefit to the town centre and the people who shop, work and live there.

Consultation Feedback on Designs

In October last year, we carried out an online survey to get people's views on the proposals for Ashton Square and Gerard Street, as well as holding two in person drop-in sessions in the Gerard Centre where we spoke to hundreds of residents and businesses.

A big thank you to everyone who took part! Your feedback has been taken on board and has helped to shape the final designs.

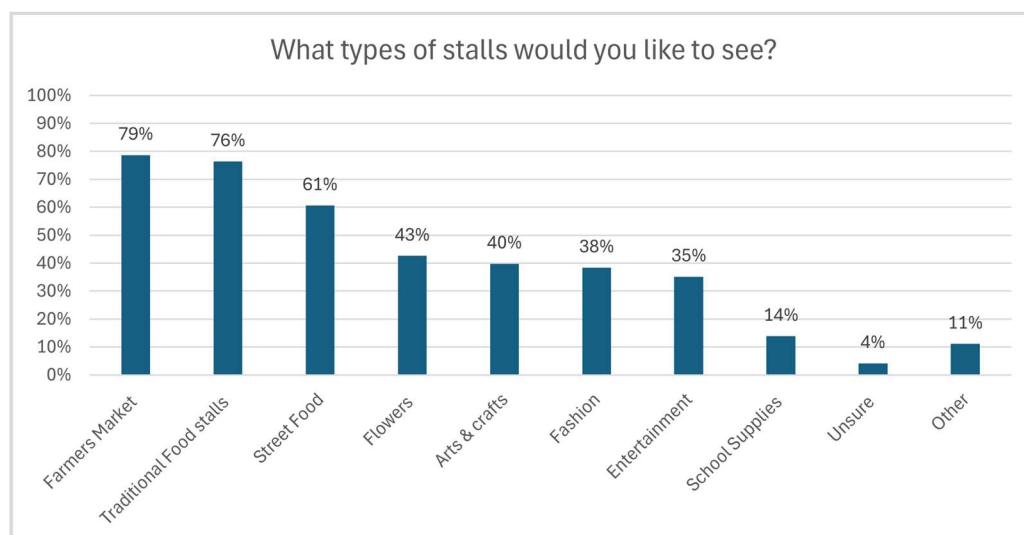
Results from the survey indicated lots of enthusiasm for the market and its potential to support businesses in Ashton town centre.



Most respondents indicated that they would link a trip to the new market with a trip to other Ashton businesses, which is great news for the wider town centre. We also asked respondents what they like most about the Market Square proposal, see the pie chart above for responses.

Consultation results continued...

We also asked what kind of market stalls and events you'd like to see in the new square. Creating a food offer in the form of a farmers market and traditional / street food stalls received the most interest. For events there was lots of positivity for hosting Christmas activities as well as events showcasing local art and music.



Concerns

We also heard about your concerns and feedback about the proposals.

The most common concerns for the Ashton Square/Market site proposal related to parking availability and traffic flow. And for the Gerard Street proposal the biggest concerns were; traffic issues and pedestrian safety.

We have reviewed all the comments provided during consultation and have been carrying out further traffic modelling work to test the proposals, before we finalise the plans.

Parking

We know that parking availability is a big concern for many residents and businesses, particularly with plans to create a new public square on part of the Garswood Street car park. We have listened and have undertaken lots of work to gather data and understand the potential impacts of the proposals. This has included surveys across all the town centre car parks to understand when and how they are used. In response to this feedback, to ensure that customers are able to park in the heart of the town centre, we are proposing to introduce (free) 3-hour parking on Garswood Street car park, once the project completes. In addition, we plan to re-surface and mark out Albert Street car park on Bolton Road to create additional spaces, and to resurface Millingford Grove to allow better access to the car park.





Funded by
UK Government

Building Grant Scheme Update:

We have been working very hard with building and business owners to begin delivery of our Building Grants scheme. The scheme aims to provide support for local businesses and building owners to improve their buildings and the overall appearance of Ashton town centre and the Conservation Area.

We ran our 'Expression of Interest' phase last summer and received 20 applications. We shortlisted the properties against our strict criteria and are pleased to announce we will be offering grant funding to 16 properties on the high street. Since then, our project managers, Creative Heritage, have worked closely with the applicants and several applicants have already submitted their planning applications. Schemes will start on site over the coming months.



Local company, Orb Rope Access were on-site earlier this year at businesses along Gerard Street carrying out cleaning and survey works. This was made possible through match-funding provided by the Our Future Ashton project, working with businesses to invest. This is just the start of a range of repair and conservation works with £500,000 to be invested over the next year.

We'll soon be launching a bi-monthly blog post that delves into the history and heritage of the buildings in the scheme. Keep an eye out for more information coming soon!

Find out more at: www.wigan.gov.uk/OurFutureAshton

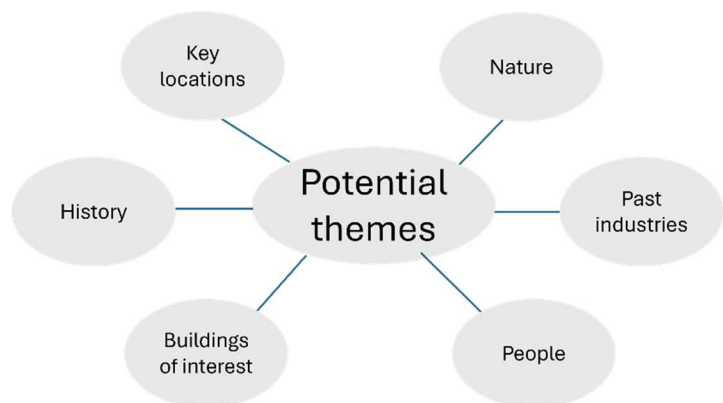
Public Art Scheme Update:

Consultation was undertaken by Minerva Heritage between July and November 2024, to support the public art project. This aimed to:

- Explore what types of public art local stakeholders would like to see;
- Identify potential locations, themes and stories that could be communicated;
- Understand the appetite for further involvement and/or co-creation in the public art production process, including working with artists;
- Gather information to help develop a brief for artists.

The consultation included: meetings with local businesses; public drop-in sessions and surveys; and workshops with local secondary schools and Ashton Innovation Board.

Analysis of the consultation feedback has identified recommendations to take forward and inform an artists' brief. A range of common themes identified, can be seen in the diagram above. Our next steps will be to attract high calibre artists to co-create public artworks with local businesses and schools that will be located around the new market square and on the high street.



Supported
by



Wigan
Council