



# BISHOP'S STORTFORD DRAFT CONSULTATION REPORT

**Allies and Morrison  
Urban Practitioners**

March 2017







Photos taken during the pop-up consultation events in Jackson Square



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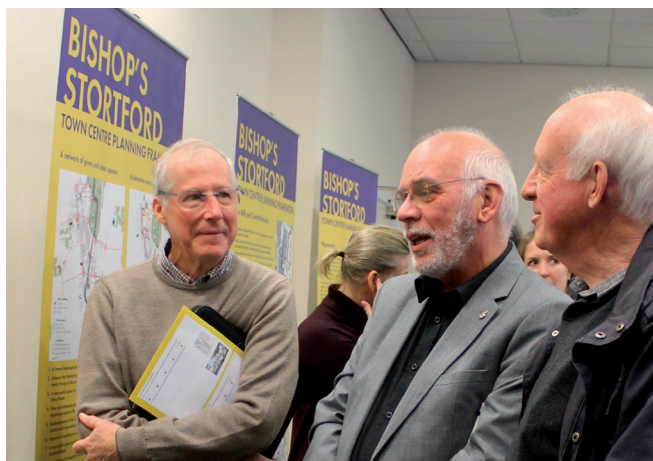
# 1. INTRODUCTION

Allies and Morrison Urban Practitioners was commissioned in March 2016 to prepare the Bishop's Stortford Town Centre Planning Framework on behalf of East Herts Council. The team for the project includes Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners, providing specialist retail and commercial property and delivery advice, and Phil Jones Associates, specialists in movement and transport.

The purpose of the planning framework is to help set a vision and strategy for the development of Bishop's Stortford. The study will take account of the town's current and future economic role, and set out proposals for movement and design projects that will improve the town centre. It will support the preparation of the emerging East Herts District Plan and co-ordinate with the Neighbourhood Plans.

This report provides a summary of the responses which were submitted during the consultation period which took place for six weeks commencing on 26 October 2016. Members of the consultant and council team regularly staffed the pop-up exhibition which was on display in Jackson Square, the Rhodes Centre and the Council offices throughout the consultation period. The document was also formally launched at an event for key local stakeholders and residents who had contributed at consultation events during the preparation of the plan. The document and questionnaire were available online to view and respond to on the Council's website. Hundreds of people viewed and engaged with the exhibition while it was on display in Jackson Square and around 70 people submitted detailed comments on the plans. Officers also visited local schools to speak to young people about their ideas for the town centre.

The following section provides a detailed report of the responses received.




Photos taken during the launch of the Bishop's Stortford Town Centre Framework at the Rhodes Arts Centre



## 2. CONSULTATION QUESTIONNAIRE

The following section provides a detailed report of the responses received to each of the questions in the consultation questionnaire, together with recommendations for updates to the document to respond to the issues raised.


### BISHOP'S STORTFORD TOWN CENTRE PLANNING FRAMEWORK



East Herts Council has been working with Allies and Morrison, an urban design and planning practice, to help set a vision and strategy for the development of Bishop's Stortford. The study takes account of the town's current and future economic role, and sets out proposals for movement and design projects that will improve the town centre. It will support the preparation of the emerging East Herts District Plan and co-ordinate with the Neighbourhood Plans to shape the direction of travel for the town centre.

Thank you very much for taking the time to tell us what you think about the proposals in the document. The following questions follow the structure of the planning framework document which can be viewed online.

To have your say please complete this feedback form by hand and send it to Lauren Knight, Corporate Support, East Herts Council, Wallfields, Pegs Lane, Hertford, SG13 8EQ or fill in the form online at <http://www.eastherts.gov.uk/ORLAutumnConsultation>



**THEME 3 - RATIONALISING VEHICULAR MOVEMENT IN THE TOWN CENTRE**

a) Do you agree with the timed closure of South Street/Potter Street? Yes / No

b) Do you agree with a new road for all vehicles through the Goods Yards? Yes / No

c) Do you agree with the removal of some one way streets? Yes / No

Do you have any other ideas?

**THEME 4 - PROTECTING AND ENHANCING BISHOP'S STORTFORD HISTORIC CHARACTER**

What is your star rating for the ideas for enhancing historic character?

Poor ★ ★ ★ ★ Excellent

Are there other important views or landmarks? Do you have any other ideas?

**THEME 5 - A NETWORK OF GREEN AND URBAN SPACES**

What is your star rating for the ideas for new or improved public spaces?

Poor ★ ★ ★ ★ Excellent

Are there other places where a new public space could be created? Do you have any other ideas?

**THEME 6 - A DISTINCTIVE AND QUALITY RETAIL OFFER**

What is your star rating for the ideas for improving the retail offer in the town centre?

Poor ★ ★ ★ ★ Excellent

Do you have any other ideas?

**THEME 7 - A NEW CULTURE AND LEISURE OFFER**

What is your star rating for the ideas for improving the culture and leisure offer?

Poor ★ ★ ★ ★ Excellent

Do you think the Rhodes centre should stay in its existing location? Which of the alternative locations do you think is best?

**THEME 8 - THE TOWN CENTRE AS A PLACE FOR BUSINESS**

What is your star rating for the ideas for improving the town centre as a place for business?

Poor ★ ★ ★ ★ Excellent

Do you have any other ideas?

**OLD RIVER LANE AREA**

What is your star rating for the ideas for the Old River Lane area?

Poor ★ ★ ★ ★ Excellent

Are there other uses you would like to see here? Do you have any other ideas?






**MILL AND CENTRAL RIVERSIDE**

What is your star rating for the ideas for the Mill area and the central riverside?

Poor ★ ★ ★ ★ Excellent

Are there other uses you would like to see here? Do you have any other ideas?






**STATION AND SOUTHERN RIVERSIDE**

What is your star rating for the ideas for the Station and southern riverside area?

Poor ★ ★ ★ ★ Excellent

Are there other uses you would like to see here? Do you have any other ideas?

## IMPROVING THE RIVER STORT

### What is your star rating for the ideas for improving the River Stort?

Around 70% of respondees rated the ideas for the improving the River Stort as excellent or good.

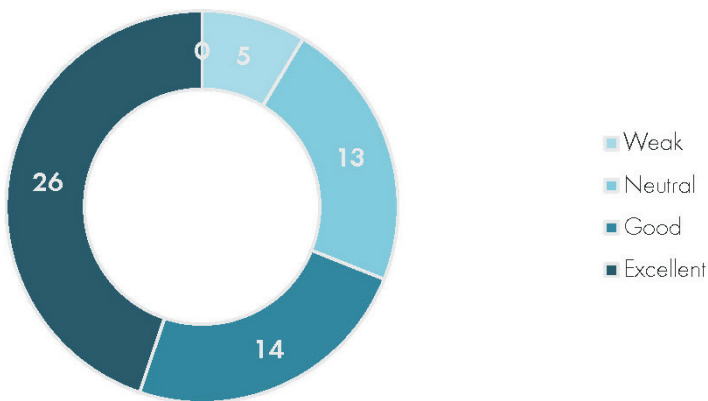
### Which new or improved bridge should be the priority? Do you have any other ideas?

There was strong support for improvements to the existing bridge or a new bridge at Station Road with 25 people commenting that this bridge should be the priority given that it is currently considered to be dangerous for pedestrians given the very narrow pavements. Another six respondents added support for a new bridge at Adderley Road connecting to Dane Street given that the bridge would open up 'a difficult area of the town' and provide a new connection to the train station.

Other ideas included widening the towpath along the riverside wherever possible and increasing reference within the document to kiosks and other non-retail uses providing activity along the riverside.

#### Key changes to the document:

- Strengthen the reference to a widened towpath along the length of the Stort within commuting distance of the town centre.
- Add reference to kiosks/pop-up activity along the riverside. Add reference that other uses beyond retail would be supported.
- Strengthen the reference to connecting the towpath into Sworder's Field.

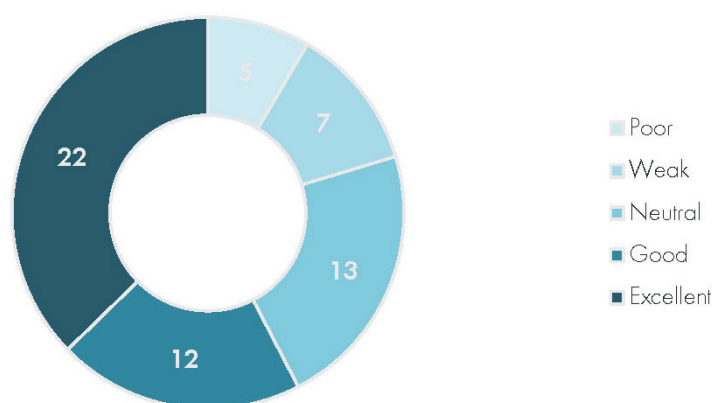


**"Station Road is the first priority. Widen the bridge to provide a better walking and cycling link between the station and town."**

**"It would be great to have an easier route onto the towpath for cyclists."**



## IMPROVING PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS



**"There is a need to improve the whole towpath from Bishop's Stortford to Sawbridgeworth in order that it can be used all year round for cycles and walkers. Ideally it would be a hard path as opposed to the current grass and mud"**

**"Pedestrian bridges are needed across the railway by Aldi and at the junction of Hallingbury Road and London Road"**

**"Anyone arriving in the town by train is greeted with a confusing and unattractive layout which is not presenting the town at its best"**

### What is your star rating for the ideas for improving pedestrian connections?

Around 60% of respondees rated the ideas for the improving pedestrian connections as excellent or good.

### Which new or improved routes are the most important? Do you have any other ideas?

Many respondents supported the ideas for the timed pedestrianisation of South Street and Potters Street. Most comments related to improving the bridge crossings over the railway line for pedestrians and comments in support of improved cycle infrastructure in the town centre.

A number of comments referenced the need to bring the riverside into the structure of walking routes in the town centre and making this more usable for cyclists, particularly travelling beyond the town centre. The transport modelling now underway in the town centre will allow the testing of many of these ideas.

#### Key changes to the document:

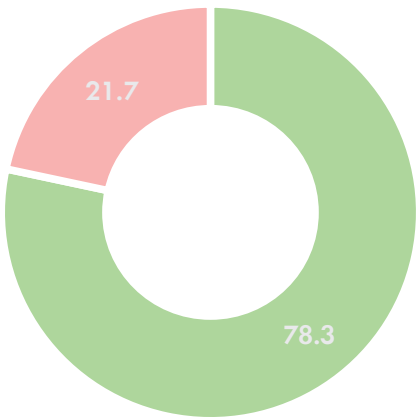
- Strengthen the reference to an improved towpath connection to Sawbridgeworth and Standsted.
- Review the wording about cycle lanes in order to reference narrow roads.
- Add new east/west cycle connections to p51. This should take into consideration the Town Council's recent work with Sustrans.
- Add reference to new locations for bike parking in the town centre including at the station.
- Strengthen the reference to safe pedestrian routes across the rail line at London Road and Station Road.
- Add the riverside as part of the key routes in the town centre to the plan on p49.
- Add reference to improved walking and cycling routes from existing and new residential neighbourhoods including reference to travel plans and Smarter Choices.
- Add clarification to explain how contra-flow cycling might work on South Street.
- Amend the document to be more explicit about improved walking and cycling routes to schools.

# RATIONALISING VEHICULAR MOVEMENT

## Do you agree with the timed closure of South Street/Potter Street?

78% of responses agreed with the timed closure of South Street/Potter Street.

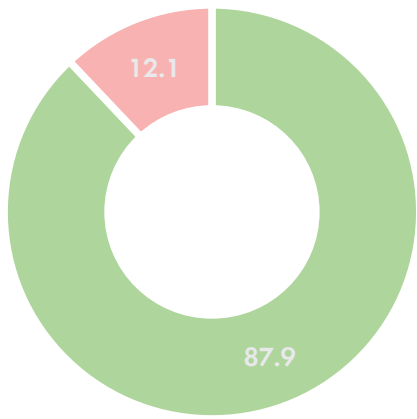
- Yes
- No



## Do you agree with a new road for all vehicles through the Goods Yard?

88% of responses agreed with the idea for a new road for all vehicles through the Goods Yards.

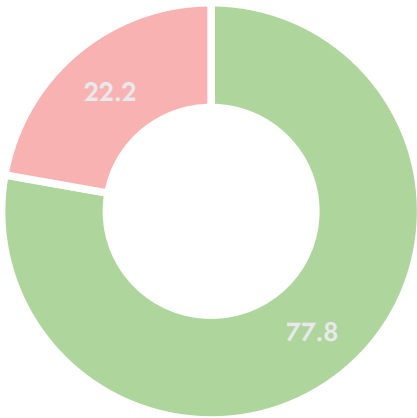
- Yes
- No



## Do you agree with the removal of some one way streets?

78% of responses agreed with the removal of some one way streets in the town centre.

- Yes
- No



### Key changes to the document:

- No change - this data provides strong support for the key transport proposals set out in the Bishop's Stortford Town Centre Planning Framework.



## Do you have any other ideas relating to movement and transport?

There were a significant number of comments made about the need for additional car parking in the town centre. More detail will be added to the document about the location of proposed car parks and the current short fall.

Other comments reiterated the concerns about traffic congestion in the town centre. A number of respondents suggested a better bus service from new and existing residential areas would have a positive impact on traffic in the town centre.

A number of junctions including the Hockerill junction were highlighted as problem areas which will be explored through the traffic modelling that is now underway.

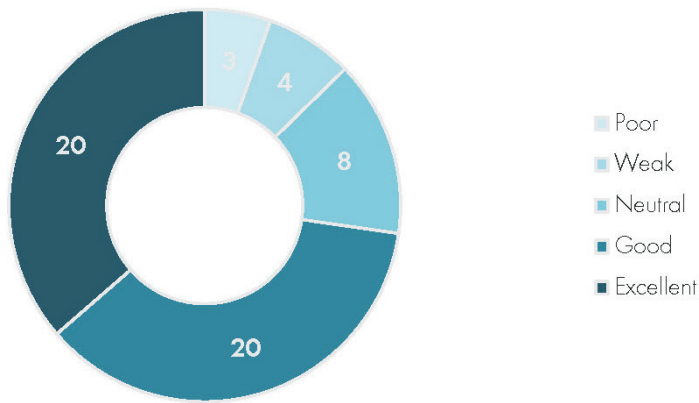
Other detailed comments were made in support of improvements to the station area including a better arrival experience and redevelopment of key sites surrounding the area. A number of respondents highlighted the need for any new link road through the Goods Yard to be carefully designed so that traffic would not have a negative impact on the station forecourt.

**"I'm not opposed to growing the town (i.e. more houses) but the town centre is already at gridlock at peak periods due to the volume of traffic"**

### Key changes to the document:

- Strengthen the reference to improvements to the Hockerill junction on p52.
- Add further detail on additional town centre car parking requirements on p52.
- Add reference to the design of any proposed link road at the station to be carefully planned to mitigate the effect of any traffic on a new station forecourt.
- Add reference to an improved bus service from new and existing residential areas, including new services from Bishop's Stortford North.
- Strengthen the reference in the text on p48 in relation to better connections between the station and Rhodes centre.
- Amend the document to be more explicit about the location of car parks at the Goods Yard.
- Add references into the document about new technologies contributing to easing congestion and managing parking issues including car clubs, pay-on-exit car parking and driverless vehicles.
- Amend the document to be explicit that transport modelling is now underway to test proposals put forward in the framework and by consultees in more detail.

**"The foot/cycle path from Grange Paddocks is great but its really poorly lit and suddenly stops - this should extend through Sworder's Field towards the station"**



## HISTORIC CHARACTER

### What is your star rating for the ideas for enhancing historic character?

Over 70% of respondents rated the ideas for enhancing the historic character of Bishop's Stortford as excellent or good.

### Are there other important views or landmarks? Do you have any other ideas?

The most cited views to maintain were towards St Michaels Church from Castle Gardens, the Station and Hockerill junction. Many people also referenced the views from the town centre to the Castle mound and gardens. Other important views included the long views of the town from the Meads, the view down Windhill and the views along the riverside. A number of respondents referenced the negative effect of the flour mill on the riverside.

Many of the comments were in support of new development coming forward that is in keeping with the market town character. Concern was raised about the impact of new development at Jackson Square and recent development on the riverside in the town centre. A small number of respondents were concerned about the impact of a new multi-storey car park on the locally listed Northgate Youth Centre.

#### Key changes to the document:

- Review the plan and add wording to be explicit that the relationship between the locally listed Northgate Youth Centre and any new multi-storey car park must be carefully designed so any impact is mitigated. Amend the plans and text to describe two options for where a Multi-storey car park could be accommodated - north of the site where it is currently shown, and within the Old River Lane area.
- Strengthen the reference to preserving and enhancing the setting of the listed buildings on Dane Street
- Add 'key views to enhance' on the plan on p55. For example along Dane Street and from Castle Gardens.
- Add to p48 reference to improving the public realm quality of existing lanes in the town centre.
- Add reference to the historic buildings at Hockerill junction which should be protected and enhanced

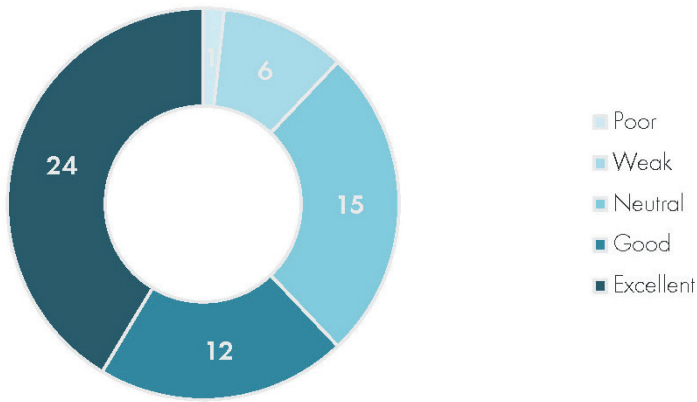
**"There is a need to ensure that all new buildings (or those renovated) are in line with the architectural values of a market town"**

**"The views approaching the town from across the Meads and from the leisure centre are important. The improved towpath has made this an attractive approach to the town "**

**"I completely agree with the principle of protecting and enhancing views across the town to focal points such as the church"**



## IMPROVED PUBLIC SPACES



"I would hope that the development of the Goods Yard does include public space and makes use of the river frontage and is not just an assembly of the densest possible hideous identikit blocks and car parks"

"There is a little copse near Waitrose that could be enhanced."

"Opening up the river is a key requirement. It is potentially a huge asset"

### What is your star rating for the ideas for new or improved public spaces?

62% of consultees rated the ideas for new or improved public spaces as excellent or good.

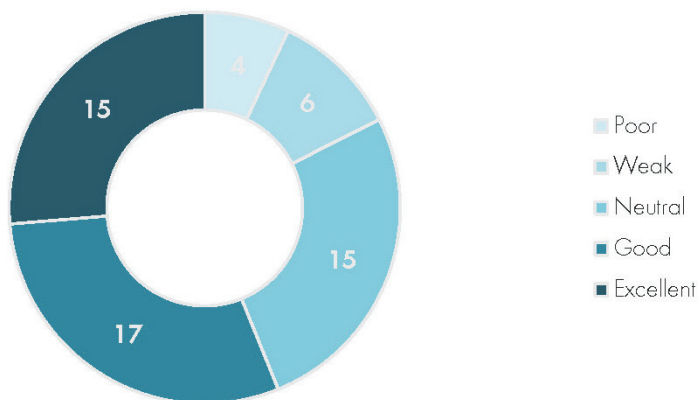
### Are there other places where a new public space could be created? Do you have any other ideas?

The most regularly made comment related to enhancing a variety of spaces along the riverside - preserving the natural environment leading to the leisure centre and creating new spaces in the town centre, particularly focused on improving the area around Wetherspoons and the road environment.

An almost equal number of comments related to the importance of a new space at the station and other spaces within the Goods Yard. There was also support for improvements to Castle Gardens and spaces created within development at Old River Lane. Two respondents suggested that improvements to North Street were required, with the potential to pedestrianise this street.

#### Key changes to the document:

- Strengthen the reference to the importance of the redesign of Riverside/Adderley Road to improve the connection to the riverside.
- Expand the description of a new public space at the Poundland site connecting to the riverside (p56).
- Strengthen references to the importance of landscaping and greening in public realm proposals.



**"Bishop's Stortford is a prosperous town and could attract more retail business. "**

**"There are many empty units in the town at present. I would prefer to see specialist independent shops encouraged to the town rather than large multiples"**

**"I agree that there may be a case for some more larger retail units but I do not think this should be in the form of a new mall style development in Old River Lane and therefore I welcome the more mixed proposal in this Framework"**

## IMPROVING THE RETAIL OFFER

### What is your star rating for the ideas for improving the retail offer?

56% of consultees rated the ideas for improving the retail offer as excellent or good, compared to 17% who felt they were poor or weak.

### Do you have any other ideas?

There was support for more retail development in the town centre, however as many respondents were not sure that more detail development was needed. A significant number of comments requested a department store in the town centre or a higher quality range of shops. Equally, many respondents were concerned that there were already empty shops in the town centre and that Bishop's Stortford had significant competition from both London and Cambridge in retail terms and could not support such a significant scale of development on Old River Lane.

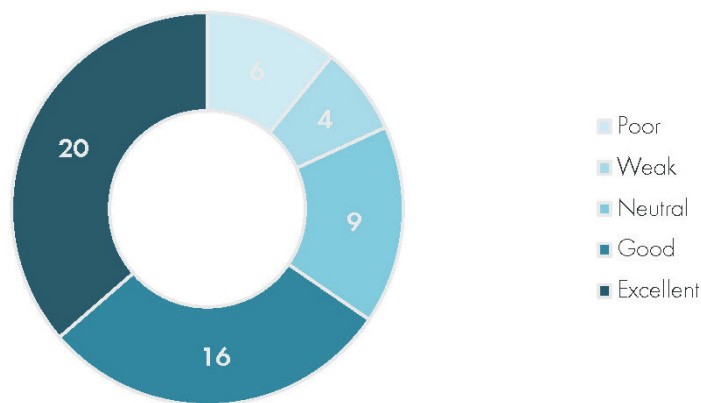
Many people were keen to see a greater range of independent businesses to help build a unique attraction for the town and make it a different experience from other local towns. This could include a better street market. Others were concerned about the effect of business rates on independent businesses and felt a higher quality town centre environment was an important part of experiencing the town centre.

#### Key changes to the document:

- Emphasise the importance of defining the independent offer/what makes Stortford different, and its niche including the market
- Strengthen the explanation of the retail capacity assessment - how has the figure been calculated and what is considered in order to help justify this.
- Add reference that the size and configuration of the retail units is important for modern retailers



# IMPROVING THE CULTURE AND LEISURE OFFER



## What is your star rating for the ideas for improving the culture and leisure offer?

65% of responses rated the ideas for improving the culture and leisure offer as excellent or good.

## Do you think the Rhodes Arts Centre should stay in its existing location?

Around 65% of respondents felt that the Rhodes arts centre should stay in its existing location but with better car parking and further investment to accommodate larger audiences. Many comments highlighted the importance of the centre as a community facility. A number of respondees suggested that this should be the centre of a new cultural quarter in the town centre with a new focus of activity in the current location.

However, others felt that the location was too far out of town and that there was insufficient parking to support the facility. It was suggested that a new purpose built facility near the restaurants in the centre of town would support activity and vitality in Bishop's Stortford. A number of respondents suggested that the town lacks a good music venue.

## Which of the alternative locations do you think is best?

One third of respondents felt that none of the alternative options constituted a suitable location and they did not want to see any change. One third of respondents liked the site adjacent to the cinema as a location to form a cluster of evening uses. The final third were equally split between Old River Lane as an alternative adjacent to the existing restaurants in the town centre and Link Road car park. A number of respondents were excited by the potential of the Old River Lane site to encourage people to use the gardens and a development that also created an outdoor venue.

### Key changes to the document:

- Rhodes Arts Centre: The document should explain that facilities at the Rhodes Arts Centre need improving and that there is a desire for a more flexible theatre space in the town centre. The existing site should be improved in the context of improvements to the wider area but further work on Old River Lane will continue to test if a new arts centre could be accommodated within this site.
- Review wording and be more explicit about the Rhodes museum staying in the existing location, where he was born.
- Strengthen the requirement for car parking to serve the existing facility and the Maltings. This will be delivered by an improved connection to the station.

## A PLACE FOR BUSINESS

### What is your star rating for the ideas for improving the town centre as a place for business?

48% of respondents rated the ideas for improving business as excellent or good with a further 33% responding that they felt neutral about the ideas.

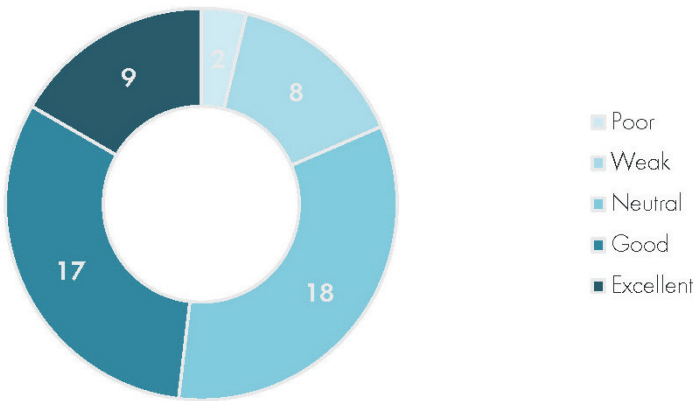
### Do you have any other ideas?

There was significant support among respondents for a cluster of office space near the station in the Goods Yard site. Comments included suggestions for space for smaller businesses in the town centre and cited local precedents including The Maltings in Sawbridgeworth or Pardon Mill in Harlow. The market was also felt to be an important visitor attraction and platform for small businesses.

A number of respondents suggested that there needed to be better parking for local workers in the town centre or on the edge of the centre to prevent parking in residential areas and congestion in the town centre.

#### Key changes to the document:

- Add precedents for workspaces for smaller businesses.
- Consider TC workers' travel and parking needs in parking and transport planning studies
- Strengthen the reference to support for the street market within the document.



**"Think bigger. Create a state of the art shopping precinct at the centre and you will create a demand situation across a range of businesses."**

**"What we need is support for smaller creative businesses run by local people, see The Maltings in Sawbridgeworth which supports a variety of small business, or Pardon Mill in Harlow used by architects, media firms and artists."**

# OLD RIVER LANE

## What is your star rating for the ideas for the Old River Lane area?

52% of respondents rated the ideas for Old River Lane as excellent or good compared to 31% who felt they were poor or weak.

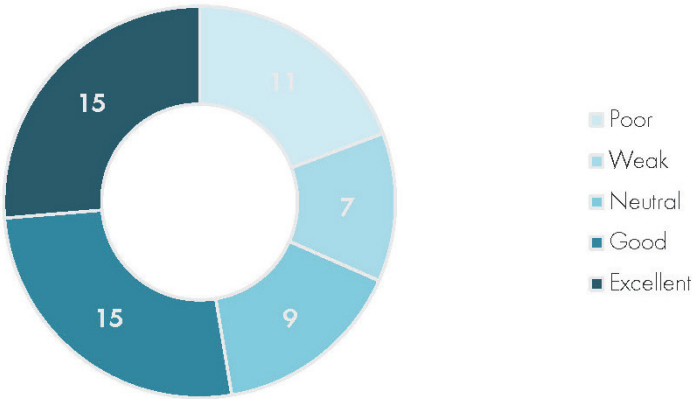
## Are there other uses you would like to see here? Do you have any other ideas?

- The three most regular comments related to;
- Ensuring a better connection from the Old River Lane area to the Castle Gardens and the river;
  - Concerns about car parking - not sufficient quantity, the loss of surface car parking or concern about the location of the proposed multi-storey;
  - A suggestion that there is a need for more community facilities within the scheme - a GP surgery, a community hall, youth facilities, adult education and a suggestion that the library could be accommodated within this central location.

- Other regularly made comments focused on;
- A concern that there were too many flats affecting the scale of the proposals;
  - Support for a bigger Waitrose and more shops;
  - Support for new public spaces within the scheme;
  - That the design of the scheme must be in keeping with the market character of the town and be of the highest quality

### Key changes to the document:

- Strengthen references within the document and on the plan to connections to Castle Gardens and the creation of new public spaces through lottery funding.
- More detail on car parking to be included on p52.
- Include more explicit suggestions about community uses.
- Review the plan and add wording to be explicit that the relationship between the locally listed Northgate Youth Centre and any new Multi-storey car park must be carefully designed so any impact is mitigated. Amend the plans and text to describe two options for the location of a Multi-storey car park: north of the site where it is currently shown, and within the Old River Lane area.
- Strengthen references to design, massing and key views.



**"What is important is to keep a good small town character in this area - so I support the proposed mixed use of the site"**

**"The library needs to connect to the town better than at present. Moving it to Old River Lane would help this"**

**"Adequate car parking, adequate car parking!"**

**"Bishop's Stortford has a distinct lack of entertainment for teenagers. I'd like to see something to that end rather than housing."**

**"The highest architectural quality will be essential if this is to succeed and the views to/from Castle Gardens and St Michaels Church should be maintained from key points."**



## THE MILL AREA



**"Stortford must make more of a key asset - the river. When the old Sainsbury's car park was built over we lost an opportunity to exploit the river asset. I hope the same mistakes are not made again."**

**"The Mill should stay! Otherwise Bishop's Stortford becomes another dull commuter town unconnected from any real work. The ideas for opening up the site and improving Dane Street are much needed."**

**"Encourage new/innovative businesses to move into the area through a revised business offering. It would be good to secure a micro-brewery, gin-distillery or similar, as this would promote the town on a regional/national scale and encourage tourism."**

### What is your star rating for the ideas for the Mill area and the central riverside?

60% of respondents rated the ideas for the Mill area as excellent or good compared to 13% who felt they were poor or weak.

### Are there other uses you would like to see here? Do you have any other ideas?

Many consultees were in support of the proposals, particularly the ideas to open up the river with a new bridge, better towpath and more activity. A number of respondents were in support of the Mill staying in the town centre as an important local employer and were keen to see the area as a hub for interesting food related businesses. Others noted that the Mill had a negative impact on the riverside and were keen to see it relocated out of the town centre.

A number of comments related to the need for a detailed review of traffic movements in this area, the impact of two-way street proposals on the Hockerill junction and the undervalued heritage assets in the area.

#### Key changes to the document:

- Strengthen wording about heritage assets on Dane Street.
- Review wording about Hockerill junction and the impact of two-way traffic movements.
- Include support for innovative business/tourism opportunities as suggested

## THE STATION AND SOUTHERN RIVERSIDE



**"Need to ensure that there is adequate parking for commuters at the station. This includes additional spaces for bikes. "**

**"The legibility between the station and high street areas needs to improve"**

**"I fully support a through-route here to take pressure off Hockerill. It is essential this road is included."**

**"Development here must be sensitive to the town's heritage"**

### What is your star rating for the ideas for the Station and southern riverside area?

58% of respondents rated the ideas for the Station and southern riverside as excellent or good compared to 17% who felt they were poor or weak.

### Are there other uses you would like to see here? Do you have any other ideas?

The most regularly made comments included concern that there needed to be enough car parking for commuters, new office workers and to serve the town centre. Other commonly made comments expressed concern that there were too many flats being developed and that development should be in keeping with the prevailing height and character in the town centre.

Another regularly made comment was about the importance of a new public space and rationalised layout at the station to improve the arrival experience in the town centre. Many respondents highlighted the need for a clear pedestrian route into the town centre, areas for pick/up and drop/off and a clear bus and taxi area.

#### Key changes to the document:

- Add labels to be explicit about the location of commuter car parking and short stay parking to the plan on p103.
- Add further explanation about taxi, bus and drop-off locations.
- Expand the explanation within the document about proposals on South Street, including public realm ideas and redevelopment of other sites including the Post Office site. Add reference that the post office use should be retained in the town centre.

### 3. SCHOOLS RESPONSE

East Herts planning officers visited local schools to discuss the Draft Local Plan and Bishop's Stortford Town Centre Planning Framework with local children and teenagers. Officers had very useful discussions which can be summarised as follows:

Item Of Change	Number of comments
A better leisure centre/ more leisure facilities (gym, cinema, bowling alley)	218
Additional shops in Jackson Square/ the town centre	170
More restaurants	167
Wider and improved footpaths	24
Improvement to public transport	17
A better night life	16
Additional housing	14
Additional or improved open space/ greenery	14
Better parks	14
Additional elements to existing leisure facilities (e.g. slides in Grange Paddock)	8
Healthcare	6
Toilets	6
Jobs	3

**Key changes to the document:**

- Support for leisure and retail space in the town centre - strengthen references to leisure activities for younger people in the town centre referencing youth markets, music events, etc



## 4. FORMAL REPRESENTATIONS AND EMAILS

### Allinsons Flour Mill

- The emerging District Plan states that the Framework will be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document. Allinsons consider that the purpose of the Framework should be made clearer, that this is a non-statutory supplementary planning document.
- Allinsons aspiration is to ensure ongoing operation of the Mill and contributions to the local economy and therefore support the phased approach to the site. However, the existing operational areas and future operational needs of the business which might arise, must not be undermined by redevelopment around the operational areas.
- In addition to the site numbered 2, the southern end of the upper section of site 1 containing a car park/ storage building to immediately to the north of site 2 is used by Allinsons for its operation.
- Allinsons consider that placing residential use adjacent to the operational factory is not appropriate as it is not compatible with Class B2 operations and would have prejudicial impacts on Allinsons operation.
- Widening of the towpath and new bridge from Adderley Road are supported as aspirations but need to be considered in feasibility and deliverability terms.
- Allinsons are supportive of a two-way street proposals - these would be safer, more efficient and more attractive streets

### Waitrose Ltd

- Waitrose is broadly supportive of the Council's plans outlined in the Framework to regenerate this site.
- They have a concern about the redevelopment of the adjacent Council owned surface car park being replaced with a multi-storey car park north of Link Road.
- Waitrose would prefer to see a multi-storey car park developed within the Old River Lane area - adjacent to their store.
- Waitrose would also like to see more detail included about the exact level of replacement parking. It is important to their trading levels that the number of spaces is equivalent or greater.
- Waitrose is not clear how their existing surface car

park is accessed and are concerned about the loss of surface level car parking spaces to allow for a junction to the north of their store.

### Liberal Democrats

- Strong support for the creation of a new foot/cycle bridge on Station Bridge, the creation of a new through road at the goods yard, the creation of a new entrance into Waitrose and the Causeway and slowing traffic here, the building of a new short stay car park at the goods yard and a new multi-storey car park at Northgate end.
- They were interested in the concept, but could see disadvantages as well as benefits to the restoration of two-way traffic in Dane Street. They suggested this should be tested through traffic modelling.
- They were interested in the concept, but could see disadvantages as well as benefits of closing the eastern end of Station Road (as it crosses the railway bridge) to traffic. Again, this should be tested through traffic modelling.

### Bishop's Stortford Civic Federation

- Supportive of the commissioning of the study, new bridges over the river and a focus on the riverside.
- Concern that proposals rely on private land holdings such as the flour mill.
- Concern that the examples of comparator towns used on p33 are not helpful (larger or tourist destinations).
- Concern that there is too much retail space proposed given online shopping behaviour. It was suggested that retail space should instead be provided within new residential development on the edge of the centre.
- Support for timed-entry of South Street but careful consideration is needed for residential access in the Newton area, Portland Road and Church Street and a better diversion of traffic through to Riverside.
- Concern that it would not be possible to implement two way working on Dane Street given the turning space needed for HGVs.
- The Civic Federation would be pleased to see modelling of the Goods Yard Link and wider town centre and believe that a southern access point into the site is vital.

- Concern that the proposal for a roundel junction at Dane Street/Hockerill Street and two way working on Dane Street would be incompatible given the increase in traffic that could be expected at this junction.
- Suggestions to re-evaluate how the Jackson Square car park functions and to reverse the entry and exit points to help reduce congestion.
- Old River Lane: Concern about extra development and more pedestrian crossings having a negative impact on traffic; support for the redevelopment of Charrington House and 1 The Causeway but not the redevelopment of the surface car parking; concern about cost of development; concern about the impact of proposed multi-storey car park on the former Northgate End primary school and green space; concern about too much retail development and the heart of the town being dragged north.
- Support for the proposals within the planning framework for the station area and are keen to see EHDC work with the developer on a scheme in line with these ideas.
- Do not support the relocation of the Rhodes Centre - improve it's existing location instead.

## Other emails

A number of emails were sent directly to the client team. The key messages from these can be summarised as;

- Support for a large scale concert venue in the town centre.
- Concern about the location of the proposed multi-storey car park for town centre users adjacent to existing residential buildings at the Goods Yard.
- Support for new green spaces along the riverside within the Goods Yard application.
- Support for car clubs within town centre residential development sites.
- Review the Town Council's work with Sustrans for a cycleway network in Bishop's Stortford.
- Retain views from the station entrance to St Michaels Church.
- Concern about the air quality at Hockerill
- Concern that the design for access to the riverside should be wheelchair friendly - amend visualisation of Cinema area to show a ramp
- Concern about the hills in the town centre preventing cycling becoming popular. Contra-flow cycling should only be permitted where they are properly segregated.
- Suggestion of greater explanation as to how Potter Street could be closed part of the time.
- The cost of buses is too expensive which does not incentivise their use compared to the cost of car parking
- Further thought required about how car parking at Jackson Square would function in a two-way system.
- Traffic calming and better pedestrian crossing facilities are required on London Road and concern about the closure of the part of Dane Street that crosses the railway.
- Support for new GP facilities in the town centre.

## Key changes to the document:

- Update the introduction to the document to be explicit and in line with the description of the planning framework included in the Draft Local Plan. It is intended that the Framework will be amended and adopted by East Herts Council as a Supplementary Planning Document in due course.
- Allinsons have requested that the 'operational' land which is currently used for storage and car parking is removed from phase 1 proposals. Not developing this part of the site would mean that the pedestrian footbridge and connection to the train station could not be delivered. Given these strategic priorities, this part of the site should be retained in phase 1 of the proposals as an aspiration. No change should be made to the drawing but new text will be added to explain that alternative staff car parking and storage would need to be identified for Allinsons in order to release this part of the site while maintaining operational efficiency for the business.
- Review the plan and add wording to be explicit that the relationship between the locally listed Northgate Youth Centre and any new Multi-storey car park must be carefully designed so any impact is mitigated. Amend the plans and text to describe two options for where a Multi-storey car park could be accommodated - north of the site where it is currently

shown, and within the Old River Lane area.

- Review drawings and show more explicitly the new access road into the Waitrose surface car park from Link Road.
- Expand the detail included within the document on the existing and future provision of car parking in the town centre.
- Add reference within the document that a concert venue is an aspiration for the town and could be provided within the existing Rhodes theatre or at a new location in the town centre, or within one of the new schools.
- Review the location of the Multi-storey car park within the Goods Yard area and distances to existing homes
- Review the transport section of the planning framework and add reference to car clubs and the proposed Sustrans cycleway.
- Review viewing corridors across the town centre to St Michaels Church - consider the addition of a view from the train station.
- Be explicit that transport testing has now taken place to test proposals put forward by the framework in more detail.
- Add clarification as to how the retail comparitors were chosen and how they are being used
- Add reference to online shopping habits and explain the impact this is having on the high street. Strengthen the explanation on p58 as to why further retail floor space is required.
- Amend the visualisation of the Cinema area to show a ramp for disabled access.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The consultation provided useful feedback on the Bishop's Stortford Town Centre Framework and the document has been amended to reflect the views and comments received. The above report sets out the detailed changes to each section of the framework.

A summary of the more significant amendments are as follows:

- **The status of the document**

Update the introduction to the document to be explicit and in line with the description of the planning framework included in the Draft Local Plan. It is intended that the Framework will be amended and adopted by East Herts Council as a Supplementary Planning Document in due course.

- **Old River Lane**

Review the plans for the Old River Lane area and add wording to be explicit that the relationship between the locally listed Northgate Youth Centre and any new multi-storey car park must be carefully designed so any impact is mitigated.

Amend the plans and text to describe two options for where a multi-storey car park could be accommodated - north of the site where it is currently shown, and within the Old River Lane area. The drawings should also show more explicitly the new access road into the Waitrose surface car park from Link Road.

- **Transport, car parking and cycling**

Expand the detail included within the document on the existing and future provision of car parking required in the town centre. Add the location of short and long term car parking at the station and show options for the location of car parking at Old River Lane. Be explicit that transport testing has now taken place to test proposals put forward by the framework in more detail.

Add more detail to the section on cycling with a strengthened reference to an improved towpath connection to Sawbridgeworth and a new east/west

cycle connection across the town centre. This should take into consideration the Town Council's recent work with Sustrans.

- **Heritage and character**

Add a set of 'key views to enhance' to strengthen the support for improving areas of the town centre and enhancing heritage assets such as the view along Dane Street and the view from Castle Gardens towards Old River Lane. Add further views to be protected to the plan on page 55 including to St Michaels Church from both Castle Gardens and the train station.

- **Retail and town centre uses**

There was support for new retail space in the town centre but more detail is needed on defining the 'USP' or niche. More detail should be added to be explicit about support for independent shops and the desire for a variety of new shops that serve younger and older people. Strengthen the explanation within the document as to why further retail floor space is required and add a reference to online shopping habits and explain the impact this is having on the high street.

- **Rhodes arts centre**

The document should explain that facilities at the Rhodes Arts centre need improving, including access to car parking, and that there is a desire for a more flexible theatre space in the town centre. The existing site should be improved but further work on Old River Lane will continue to test if a new arts centre could be accommodated within this site. The wording in the document should be amended to be more explicit about Rhodes museum staying in the existing location.





## APPENDIX

Consultation banners

Flyer

# BISHOP'S STORTFORD

## TOWN CENTRE PLANNING FRAMEWORK



**Town centre framework study area**

- Area allocated to East Herts Draft District Plan
- Study area boundary - surrounding area
- Old Stort town and Castle Boreham
- Old Stort and surrounding area
- Stort town centre
- Stort area
- Stort area

### INTRODUCTION

Working with East Herts Council and the local community, Allies and Morrison has taken a fresh look at Bishop's Stortford town centre and has produced a draft vision and planning framework for the town centre. The framework provides a plan and ideas for improving the town for the next 20 years.

The study takes account of the town's current and future economic role and sets out proposals for movement and design projects. It supports the preparation of the emerging East Herts District Plan and coordinates with the Neighbourhood Plans for the town centre.







1884      1996      1960      2016      2036

Bishop's Stortford historic evolution

### FIND OUT MORE AND SEND US YOUR COMMENTS

View the document and leave comments online:  
<http://www.eastherts.gov.uk/ORLAutumnConsultation>

have your  
say!



Colours



Textures



Details



# BISHOP'S STORTFORD

## TOWN CENTRE PLANNING FRAMEWORK

### THEMES

We have identified eight themes for the Bishop's Stortford Planning Framework to help deliver the vision for the town centre. Under each theme sits a series of key projects which relate to ideas suggested during the public consultation. These are numbered on each plan. Please refer to the draft document for more detail about each project.

#### Revealing And Celebrating The River Stort



1. A new pedestrian bridge from Adderley Road to the Mill site
2. A widened bridge for pedestrians at Station Road
3. Opportunities for new links to enhance the connection between the main shopping streets and riverside
4. New uses that bring activity to the riverside at the cinema, the Allison Mill site and Southmill Road
5. Widen the tow-path on the eastern bank as a shared route for pedestrians and cycles
6. Explore opportunities to create connections to the riverside on the western bank

#### Rationalising vehicular movement in the town centre



1. Remove the one way system on Dane Street, Station Road and Riverside to reduce circulating traffic
2. Test the benefits of a new link road for all vehicles through the Goods Yard to relieve pressure on the town centre road network
3. Consider a new multi-storey car park at the station to serve the town centre
4. A new multi-storey car park to serve Old River Lane
5. Explore the potential for timed closure of South Street/Potter Street to improve the pedestrian environment

#### Establishing a clear pedestrian network in the town centre



1. A new structure of pedestrian routes at Old River Lane connecting North Street and Castle Gardens
2. A new station square and improved pedestrian routes into the town centre and to the riverside
3. Potential timed-closure of South Street/Potter Street
4. Strengthen connections from South Street to the riverside and through the Mill site to Dane Street

#### Protecting and enhancing Bishop's Stortford's historic character



1. Maintain local and townwide views to key landmarks including St Michael's Church
2. Enhance the setting of Water Lane United Reformed Church and the Corn Exchange
3. Define a riverside/industrial heritage townscape guidance area to protect and enhance this distinct character
- 3b. Define a historic market town townscape guidance area to further protect key historic streets

# BISHOP'S STORTFORD

## TOWN CENTRE PLANNING FRAMEWORK

#### A network of green and urban spaces



1. A formal landscape space at United Reformed Church
2. Enhance the Market Square and South Street through the potential timed closure of the road
3. A new public space on the riverside between Adderley Road and Dane Street
4. New and enhanced public spaces on the riverside at the cinema, improving access to the towpath
5. Redevelopment of the Goods Yard providing clear links to the town centre and a new station square
6. Improved riverside green spaces at the Goods Yard
7. A new public space by the riverside at the Wharf buildings on Southmill Road
8. Investment in the towpath to include a shared cycle route
9. Ongoing investment in Castle Gardens

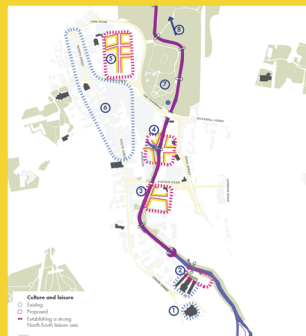
#### A distinctive and quality retail offer



The town centre is an attractive place to shop but there is the potential to diversify and improve the retail offer given its affluent catchment area and demand from retailers for medium to large retail units. Studies have found that there is demand for 6,500 sq.m of new retail space by 2026 – and possibly up to 20,000 sq.m by 2036.

1. New high quality retail space at Old River Lane
2. New development connecting South Street to the riverside with new shops and cafe space
3. Enhanced restaurant and retail space at the cinema and train station
4. An enhanced cluster of activity on the riverside at Southmill wharfs
5. Investment in the existing high street including public realm and shop front improvements

#### A new culture and leisure offer for Bishop's Stortford



1. Testing of possible alternative locations for a redeveloped Rhodes Arts Centre with a larger auditorium
2. A new evening quarter of Southmill Wharf with new bars and restaurants by the river
3. Remodel the Cinema to address the riverside
4. Enhance the existing cluster of evening activity at the riverside at Adderley Road
5. Redevelopment of Old River Lane for new leisure space
6. Continued curation of events in the town centre including street markets and festivals
7. Investment in Castle Gardens to enhance facilities
8. Planned redevelopment of Grange Paddocks Leisure Centre

#### The town centre as a place for business



The focus of the town's existing employment is small to medium sized local businesses operating from older buildings. A demand for modern premises in Bishop's Stortford has been identified with 5,000 to 10,000 sq.m of new space required.

1. A new cluster of Grade A, modern office buildings at the train station with proximity to transport links and town centre services
2. New small business space along Southmill Road
3. Public realm enhancements to the main shopping streets to support existing businesses



## Placemaking

The strategy for Bishop's Stortford balances the need to promote change in certain areas of the town centre, where large development sites have been identified, while protecting the fine grain historic centre in others. Under-utilised areas can be better connected into the core town centre and provide new areas for uses to strengthen the viability and vitality of the town centre. The relationship between these areas will need to be carefully managed in order to strengthen and promote the existing character of the town.

Guidance is proposed for the following geographical areas, focused around key sites allocated in the Draft District Plan:

- Old River Lane
- Allinson Mill area and the central riverside
- The area around the train station (Goods Yard) and southern riverside



The town wide framework plan illustrating new development blocks and key routes

The adjacent diagram illustrates a set of key opportunities for Old River Lane:

- Extend the retail heart of the town centre and connect the site to North Street via a series of links that reflect the historic character of the existing lanes
- Centre new development along a pedestrian-focused north/south route from Bridge Street to a new multi-storey car park to the north of Waitrose
- Promote a design that respects and enhances the historic grain of the town centre and key assets such as the United Reformed Church, Coopers building and views to St Michael's Church
- Strengthen pedestrian connections from the town centre to Castle Gardens
- Reduce vehicular movement through the site while increasing car parking in the area



The roof plan shows the redeveloped Old River Lane area with three new development blocks along the edge of Castle Garden with new homes, shops and offices. These new buildings provide activity to a new north/south shopping street fronted by retail units and community uses, with a new multi-storey car park north of Watfrose.

The carriageway space has been reduced in order to widen pavements for pedestrians. Only a small service route is proposed into the River Lane from Bridge Street, with vehicles accessing the site from the north.

The space outside Coopers is made more attractive, integrating it into the street scene with the potential for seating or cafe space.

New retail, leisure or community spaces on the ground floors of new buildings with new houses above

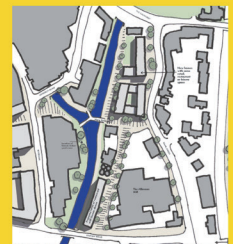
New development replacing the existing office buildings reflecting the style and grain of older buildings



## The Mill and Central Riverside

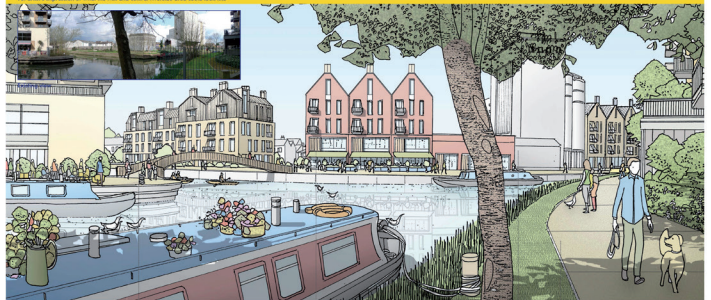
The adjacent diagram illustrates a set of key opportunities for the Mill and central riverside:

- Open up the riverside and promote development that reflects the riverside character, including maltings and warehouse buildings
- A new pedestrian bridge river crossing and connection to Dane Street
- A widened foot-path with the potential to be used as a cycle route
- Support the mill in the town centre while exploring opportunities for a more active town centre facing element such as a flour shop or baking school. Redevelopment of non-active mill buildings will be supported.
- Delivering enhanced mooring provision and boating facilities.
- Improving the setting of historic buildings such as the Registry Office and cottages along Dane Street.



This sketch shows the Mill retained as a working employment site in the town centre. In the longer term, the mill itself could be redeveloped for residential use.

an artist's impression of what the Mill and central riverside area could look like



A new pedestrian bridge links

New development along the riverside with retail or leisure uses at ground floor, adding to the existing cluster of bars and cafes on the west bank of the River Street.

The mill is retained but public-facing uses should be

Seek opportunities to open

The adjacent diagram illustrates a set of key opportunities for the station area and southern riverside:

The adjacent diagram illustrates a set of key opportunities for the station area and southern riverside:

- Improve the arrival experience and create a clear pedestrian route into the town centre
- Remodel the Anchor Street Leisure Park and improve the riverside frontage and connection to the station
- Reduce congestion issues in the wider town centre with a new road link through the site connecting to London Road
- Strengthen pedestrian connections across the river with new and better crossing points
- Create a cluster of employment uses at the northern end of the site
- New car parking is needed to serve the town centre as well the train station



The sketch shows the redevelopment of the Goods Yards area for mixed use development. The Rhodes Centre is redeveloped for residential use and a new theatre space is delivered elsewhere in the town centre.

New development along the riverside with restaurants at ground floor, with leisure and

...widened area for pedestrian  
along Bridge Street that also  
provides direct access to the

The riverside is easily accessed via a cascade of steps leading down to a wide towpath of

The front of the cinema is remodelled to form a new entrance on the riverside

The sketch shows the redevelopment of the Goods Yards area for mixed use development. The Rhodes Centre is redeveloped for residential use and a new theatre space is delivered elsewhere in the town centre.





## BISHOP'S STORTFORD TOWN CENTRE PLANNING FRAMEWORK



### **An exciting opportunity to help shape your town centre**

East Herts Council's purchase of Old River Lane, a key site in the heart of town, has opened up lots of new opportunities. The planning framework sets out proposals for movement and design projects to improve the whole of the town centre as well as its key development sites.

The document focuses on three key areas in the town centre including proposals for Old River Lane, the Allinson Mill and the train station and river corridor.

The document identifies eight themes to help improve the town centre:

- Revealing and celebrating the River Stort,
- Establishing a clear pedestrian network in the town centre,
- Rationalising vehicular movement in the town centre,
- Protecting and enhancing Bishop's Stortford's historic character,
- Improving the network of green and urban spaces,
- Creating a distinctive and quality retail offer,
- Delivering a new culture and leisure offer for Bishop's Stortford, and
- Promoting the town centre as a place for business.



## BISHOP'S STORTFORD TOWN CENTRE PLANNING FRAMEWORK



### **FIND OUT MORE AND SEND US YOUR COMMENTS**

#### **Visit us and meet the team:**

10am - 3pm on Saturday 12th November 2016  
in Jackson Square Shopping Centre

#### **View the exhibition:**

31st October - 13th November in Jackson Square Shopping Centre  
14th November - 18th November in Charringtons House  
21st November - 23rd November in Charringtons House  
24th November - 4th December in the Rhodes Arts Centre  
5th December - 8th December in Jackson Square Shopping Centre

Or view the document and leave comments online:

**Website:** <http://www.eastherts.gov.uk/ORLAutumnConsultation>





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