

An architectural sketch of a large, vaulted market hall. The ceiling is high and features a complex network of wooden beams and trusses. Large windows are integrated into the structure, some with blue-tinted glass. The ground floor is filled with wooden stalls and counters, where several stylized human figures are engaged in various activities like shopping and talking. The overall style is a loose, expressive line drawing with some color washes in blue, red, and yellow.

# NEWTON ABBOT MARKETS QUARTER INITIAL ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES

PRESENTED BY QUARTERBRIDGE

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

Teignbridge District Council have successfully secured Future High Street Funding to invest in Newton Abbot Market. As part of the submission, an initial concept was put forward which included retail, fresh food retail, pop-up shopping, street food, communal seating and entertainment.

The design team has now been appointed and works are commencing on designing the scheme for the Market Hall and Alexandra Cinema to deliver strategic aspirations for the project.

As the design phase of the project commences, the project team have been actively engaging with a wide range of stakeholders to understand how the development can support existing and new ventures.

Initial design principles include:

- Create a mixed-use space where people can shop, eat and drink and enjoy entertainment and activities.
- Create modern trading facilities to support a range of businesses.
- Create an offer that appeals to a wide range of customer demographics, including younger customers.
- Create an attractive and inviting space where people want to spend time.
- Create flexible spaces which can react quickly to shifting consumer trends.

These principles were presented to stakeholders to understand emerging opinions and ideas, and develop a deeper understanding of how the design of the scheme can support future viability.

Market Traders and Community and Creative groups were identified as key stakeholders for these high level initial discussions.

This report summarises the outcomes of early engagement exercises held throughout January 2022.



Artists impressions from FHSF bid.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

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A variety of methods have been used to gather information on the opinions of identified stakeholders to aid the design process. Market traders, market leaseholders, and a wide range of community and creative groups were identified as key stakeholders for initial conversations, to understand how an emerging scheme could support their needs.

Traders that operate within the market hall building currently, or existing outdoor traders who are interested relocating their business into the market hall were invited to participate in two separate virtual engagement sessions over Microsoft Teams about the future of the market. The sessions were an opportunity to express their opinions on the current market, their businesses within the market and their aspirations for the future.

Although these sessions were initially intended to be held in person, Covid precautions at the time meant that virtual sessions were preferred.

These meetings took place on the afternoon of the 11th and 12th January. Both meetings were well attended providing some insight into how this unique market operates and how best to influence the designs moving forward.

Alongside the virtual meetings, traders had another avenue to take advantage of if they wanted their voices to be heard. One of these was an online survey for both market traders and leaseholders.

The survey consisted of a variety of multiple-choice and long answer questions where opinions could be thought out and justified on paper instead of verbally. Cultural and creative stakeholders were also invited to participate in both a written survey and virtual engagement sessions held on the 18th and 19th January. Much like the trader meetings, both of these were well attended and led to some interesting points being discussed.

Market Trader Engagement Sessions Attendees: 17

Cultural and Creative Engagement Sessions Attendees: 19

Market Trader Survey Respondents: 21

Creative and Cultural Survey Respondents: 18



**Mac Turbo**  
The Hot One  
Three Best Cheff  
Fruity, Jalapeno  
Mustard

GIN & PROSECCO

GIN

nt £10

Recyclable

*Bustin*  
COMPANY

# 3. MARKET TRADER ENGAGEMENT SESSIONS

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A presentation was given showing traders the aims, objectives and strategy for the investment. This was accompanied by images of unit styles from other precedent markets, artist impressions from the FHSF submission and similar styles of venues from elsewhere in the country.

A few key outcomes arose from the sessions:

**Unit Styles:** Traders were keen to understand the style and size of the units available. The existing trader base were keen to have permanent units as opposed to flexible/demountable units due to concerns about packing up, storage and security.

**Unit Sizes:** Traders were concerned about the size of future units, with many saying that their current stall dimensions are too small to sustain their businesses, and they would like the units to be bigger than 3m x 2m.

**Unit Security:** With additional opening hours, traders were concerned about security for their stock, with concerns about theft and vandalism once they had closed their units.

**Display options for stalls:** some of the traders operate on the basis that customers have the ability to walk around the stall instead of serving over tabletop units.

**Street Food Units:** There was broad support for the addition of food options in the market, with interest amongst the existing trader base in taking on street food kitchens as part of the development.

**Space available:** There were some concerns about how the introduction of seating and flexible space would be able to fit within the market without having significant impact on the trading space available. This was addressed through the addition of the Alexandra building into the market footprint.

**Waste disposal:** Traders wanted to ensure that future uses including the provision of street food would create additional waste which would need to be actively cleaned. They commented that there would need to be bins and regular cleansing.

**Toilets:** the existing toilets are situated upstairs near the entrance to the multi-story carpark. It was mentioned that it would be preferable to include toilet provision on the ground floor for easier access.

**Wifi:** In order to operate card readers and till systems, the traders requested a secure wifi connection to ensure their businesses can operate modern trading methods.

**Seating Area:** Generally there was support for the creation of a seating area, as long as it was well maintained. One of the existing cafe operators would prefer to maintain its own seating area as they like to use crockery. Outside seating is popular, and there was a request that it be retained.

**Marketing and Signage:** It was raised that some people didn't know the market was there, and that the market needs improved signage and advertising.

**Car parking:** Traders put forward the idea of having a system whereby people can pay on leaving the car park instead of paying on entry. Traders who trade at other markets say that people are more likely to stay longer at the market if they do not have the worry of checking the time on the ticket.

**Electricity:** the number of electricity points could be increased to allow for a greater variety of offers. Three-phase electrical supply to support street food operators.

**Extraction:** Need to ensure the street food units have adequate extraction to prevent smells from the food units wafting over stock.

**Lighting:** More appealing and decorative lights could be added.

**The Square:** There was support amongst traders to retain units in the Square, with Box Park being used as an example of a market elsewhere that the traders think is a good precedent.

**Decant and Construction Period:** The traders were concerned about the impact of construction on their businesses, and wanted information about timescales and decant trading locations to begin planning for the future.

# 4. MARKET TRADER SURVEY RESULTS

## BENCHMARKING EXISTING OPERATIONS

The trader survey ran from 10th January till 17th January 2022. We received 21 responses that had a variety of answers relating to the market and its future development.

Traders were asked the average age of their customers, with no respondents identifying their primary customers under 30. A few suggested that they had customers below 30 on infrequent occasions, but this indicates a potential new avenue for business. Younger customers are currently not being attracted to the market, a key aim of the development.

Facebook was the most popular platform for marketing, with 69% indicating that they have a Facebook page. If traders were to develop their own business marketing alongside improved central marketing, they would all benefit as they could reach a wider audience with more combined resources.

Traders indicated that over 80% do not take online orders. This is a massive emerging market with the development of Covid 19, being able to order online has kept many businesses afloat throughout the pandemic. Therefore, this is an area that could be explored further in the future with a new, fresh market to operate from.

82% of traders use card machines, supporting the need for secure trader wifi.

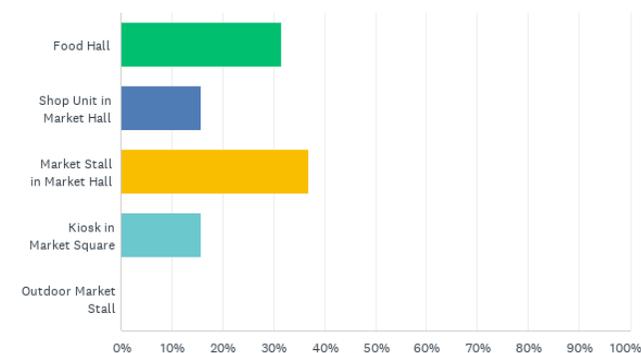
Over 45% of traders showed an interest in ‘expanding their existing stock range’, demonstrating the intention to invest and commit to the market in the long term. Many traditional markets across the UK have an ageing trader base who are looking to retire, although only 11% of respondents said they would look to retire in the next five years.

When asked about the number of employees that businesses have, over 45% are sole traders and do not have employees. The majority of businesses who had employees were leaseholders in the Food Hall or occupying shop units, with only one licensee in the Market Hall employing staff.

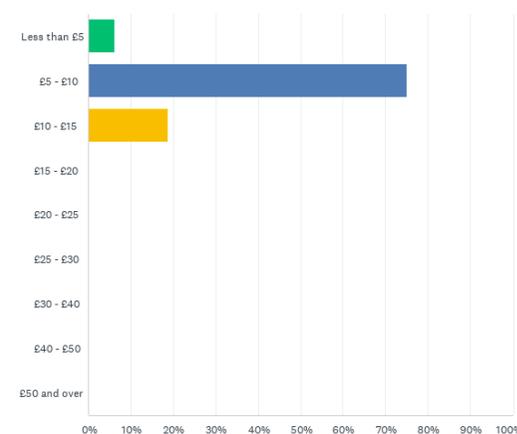
When asked about footfall, 75% said that footfall for the town centre is good or very good, however this declined to 53% who thought footfall to the Food Hall is good, and only 7% who believed that footfall for the market hall is good. This supports anecdotal evidence that the food and cafe offer within the market is attracting more customers than the retail provision.

When we visited, we spoke to shopkeepers nearby who stated that the footfall was terrible and highstreet shops continue to go out of business in Newton Abbot. It should be noted that this feedback is not supported by town centre footfall data.

Q1 What area of the Market do you trade in?

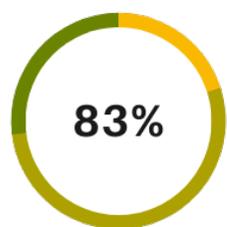


Q5 What is your average spend per transaction?

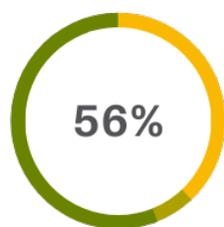


## MARKET TRADER SURVEY

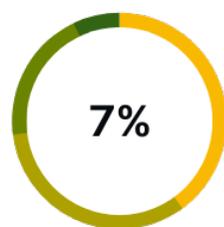
Market Traders who Agreed or Strongly Agreed with the following statements



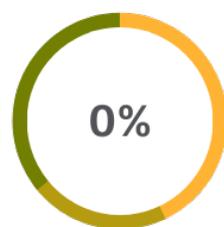
Footfall in the town centre is good



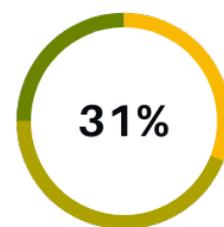
Footfall in the Food Hall is good



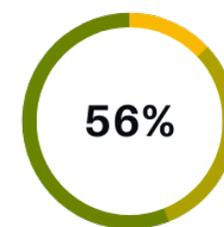
Footfall in the Market Hall is good



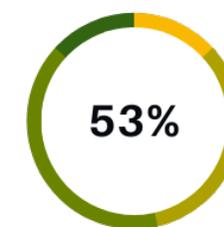
The Market is well promoted



The market is an attractive and welcoming environment for customers



The market is clean



The market is a good place for new businesses to get established

**WHAT DO YOU LIKE ABOUT NEWTON ABBOT MARKET?**

“Fellow traders, helping each other, the camaraderie”

“Friendly people.”

“It’s open 6 days per week to trade.”

“It has a car park and bus station next to the building which is a great for customers and traders.”

“It has a loading/ unloading space which is an asset if you are a trader on the same site as the building.”

“Also a skip/ recycle part as above.”

“Being part of a community with other traders as it’s a market town”

“It’s friendly, good value, nice hub for independant businesses. Good value

for tennants. It’s the people, there’s a good sense of community, which is everything in a market.”

“it in a good position, an ideal place to start my business ,good size units to start with.”

“Local, fresh and independent traders.”

“Very friendly.”

“Born and bred here, I know alot of people that I bring into the market on a regular basis, we as traders get on really well and have a good relationship with our customers, I have them coming as far as Somerset on a regular basis . I have alot of loyal customers of all ages from 5 to 75 and have made some great friends over the years I’ve traded in the market”

“I personally think Newton is a lovely town , much cleaner and busier than

other surrounding towns such had Torquay and Paignton . Newton has history market town to be proud of.”

“Being a market town”

“Friendly staff/traders. Town security, very good staff”

“A fantastic old building in a traditional market town that serves the community.”

“The low entry cost for establishing a business is wonderful. I started my business with 4k and a cheeky smile.“

“not sure at the moment!!”

“Well positioned in a town that attracts a wide catchment area, having a diverse mix of businesses.”

## WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE IMPROVED IN NEWTON ABBOT MARKET?

“Footfall and more stallholders”

“Advertising (with signs, adverts in the press and radio)”

“The existing empty stalls to be camouflaged by, either putting things on them (using local clubs for example who would welcome the chance to advertise themselves) or by asking existing stalls to ‘expand’ and use an extra stall(s) on a temporary basis (free of charge). I am fed up with the visitors bombarding me with ‘Why is the market so empty?’ . A planned scheme of ‘redevelopment’ would make the market look so much more successful without any loss of income for the council.”

“Advertising the building as a market all year round.

Placing traders business who trade on the building or a sign fixed in place on a plaque, which other business have who trade on industrial sites.”

“Currently it is a bit bland and sterile following the last renovation. Markets needs to be more rustic and rough around the edges.”

“Traders need the space to come up with their own set ups. Individual designs, maybe give an area and allow us to do as we wish.”

“Outside traders need to be encouraged back into the square, open spaces do not work, they feel cold and empty.”

“From a personal point of view we would continue in our current set up, ideally we would have a bigger unit. Maybe have more attractive freestanding permanent setups

outside. The kiosks are great at attracting passing trade as little effort is needed to find them.”

“Having an attractive outside, both stalls and kiosks, draw people towards the main building, not block it off as you seem to think. At the moment the main stalls stop in Courtenay Street, it is to far from the main market buildings and some may not walk to it.”

“Better information for potential tenants. It should be easy. The benefit of the market is that it is affordable and easy to setup... this needs to be advertised well and wide not just on the inside on the empty stalls.”

“A more inviting place to shop, which would involve a verity of quality products and a commitment by trades to there opening hours”

“We would like to see improved and more modern looking stalls with good lighting, decent fixtures & display space that would be more suitable for all weather usage with a real focus on stall presentation, standards and display to enhance the market experience.”

“Modernise it”

“Security, I also would prefer a lock up shop within the market if possible as I’ve 5 stalls at present and would also like to expand.”

“Heating music footfall Wi-Fi”

“I would like to see M&S back also shops that would encourage younger people to the town. Courtney Street & Queen Street need to be up dated.”

“Something to tell people we are there, even a well designed banner

above the Square entrance would be a good start. Signage in Courtenay Street is terrible, the majority of footfall is there, but newcomers to town have no idea of the market’s existence, This is feedback from the public. I have raised this enough times, and out of frustration produced a board for display in Market Square.”

“Wi-Fi would benefit everyone strongly. Champion the traditions of a market, rather than compete with supermarkets, offer a more personal traditional retail alternative.”

“More traders”

“Parking for customers made free, like the supermarkets and retail parks (if only for a couple hours).”

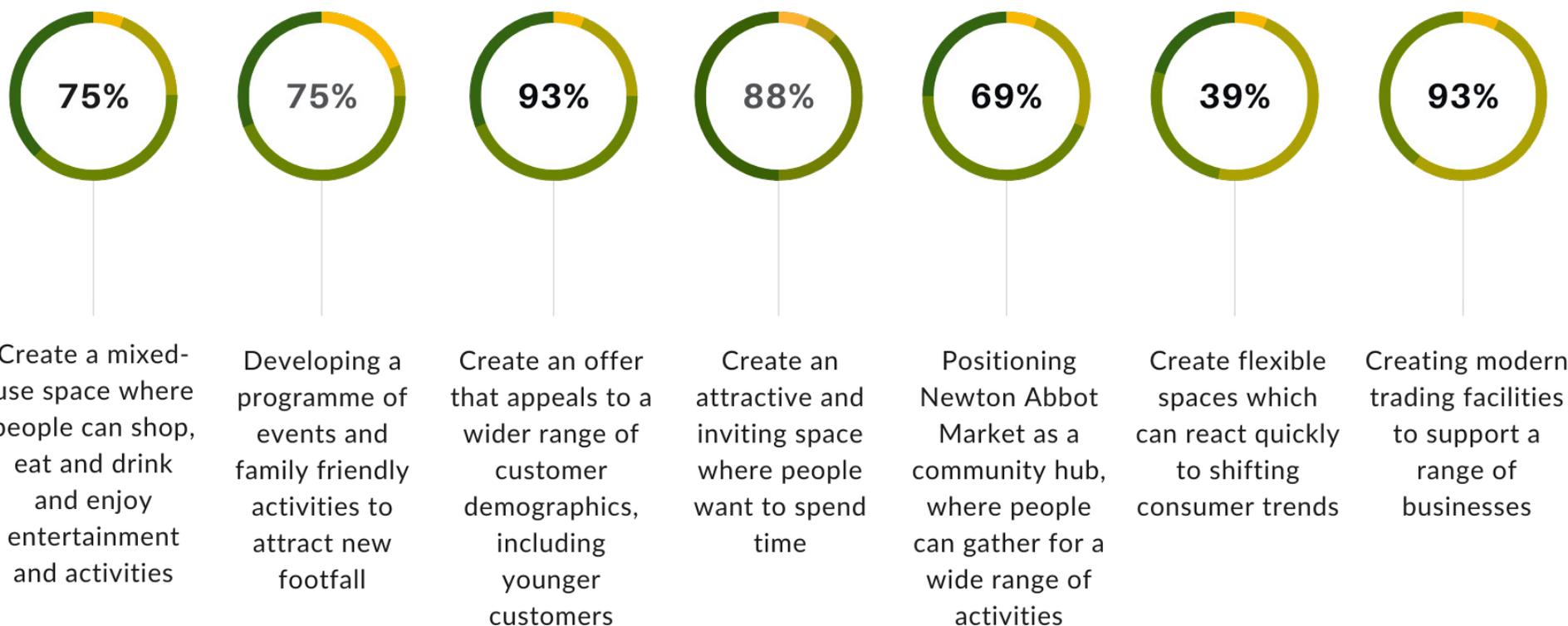
“I would like to see the outside traders back in the square to make the market experience more inclusive.”

“A focus on attracting footfall into the Market area, with a view to redressing the current trend to spread footfall around the town.”

ASPIRATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

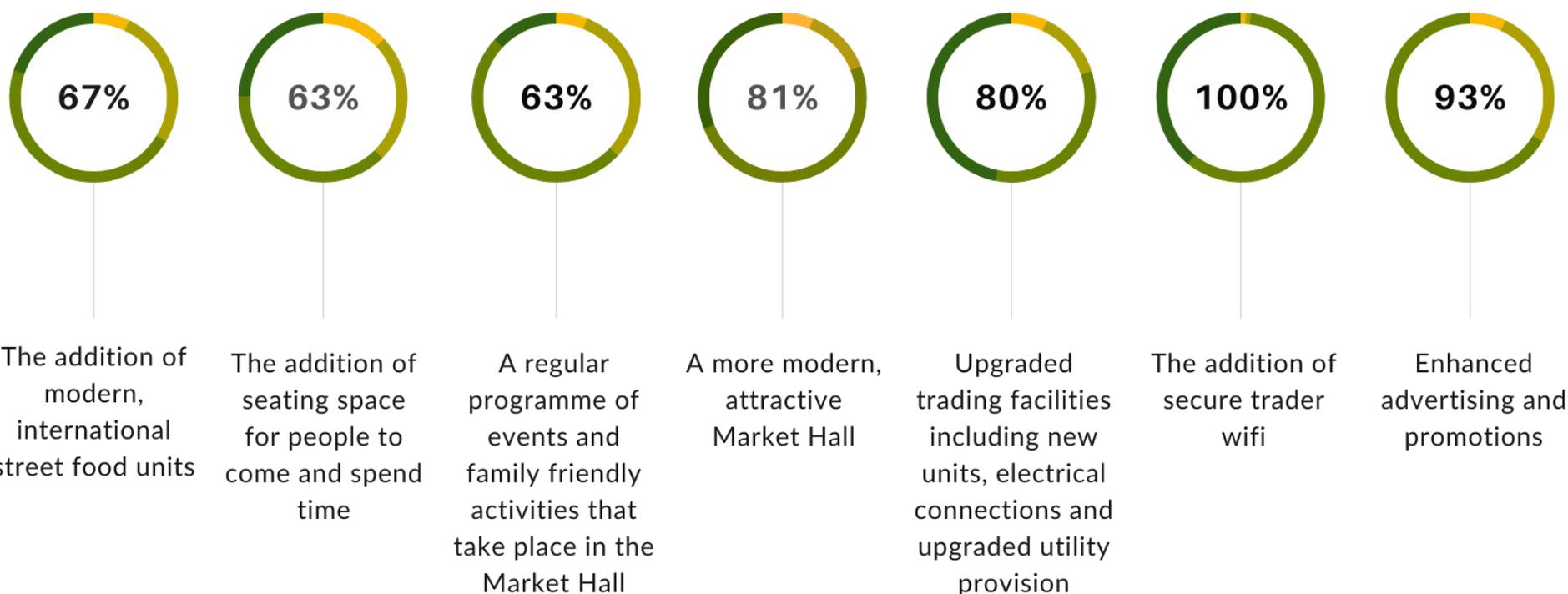
PLEASE INDICATE HOW STRONGLY YOU AGREE/DISAGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING DESIGN PRINCIPLES.

Market Traders who Agreed or Strongly Agreed with the following statements



## WHAT IMPACT DO YOU THINK THE FOLLOWING IDEAS WILL HAVE ON YOUR BUSINESS AND THE MARKET HALL AS A WHOLE?

Market Traders who thought the following ideas would benefit or strongly benefit.



## WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE IN THE MARKET HALL FOLLOWING THE REDEVELOPMENT?

“More Customers”

“I am pleased with what I heard at the zoom meeting.”

“I would like to see a higher foot fall.”

“I would like to see new blood of traders.”

“I would like to see the building pop meaning signage on the building to stand out, at presents its to soft. This is an opportunity to make the building shine that would get people to the door and walk through. We would also need toilets near and the skip as it's very important when you ordering a lot we would need to get rid of packaging etc.. If we can trade for longer hours and bank holidays.

I believe we have to move forward especially in business for it to grow but we need market traders as part of the development to work. I believe if I have the Wright space 2 double units fixed in place the future could be exciting.”

“Increase in footfall.”

“More businesses and a variety of traders.”

“A busy and postive atmosphere.”

“Design should not be too polished and corporate like a shopping mall but rustic, darker and atmopsheric, much like markets seen in London, like Borough or Camden or even Tavistock and Barnstaple, modern but embracing its older characteristics.”

“The centre of Newton Abbot, where everyone like to meet”

“We would like to see an improved looking environment to enhance the customer journey through good fixtures, fittings, light usage and display presentation throughout the market hall with a fresh outlook on standards, presentation and display usage.”

“We welcome the enhancement of the customer journey and experience whilst staying in keeping with Newton Abbots heritage of a historic market town.”

“Full capacity of stalls”

“Light and bright stalls”

“More footfall lots of happy traders”

“Heating music atmosphere Wi-Fi most of all people”

“A variety of stalls, selling quality

goods, no charity stalls selling rubbish  
I feel this lowers the value of new  
goods.”

“Traditional market traders in  
addition to the other proposals,  
ie not squeezed out in favour of  
trendy artisan stalls, we have to exist  
together.”

“More variety of products and exciting  
new businesses.”

“I would like a lock-up restaurant with  
an integral fish counter. I would like to  
provide a food offer of fish purchased  
from the Brixham trawler agency,  
rolling with the season using veg from  
Jim Ashford. Additionally I would  
like to retail and cook the wonderful  
locally farmed bivalves from Elbury  
and the Teign esuary. However, I  
accept that you don't often get exactly  
what you want!”

“modern trading facilities to support a

range of businesses”

“I'm really excited about all the  
suggested plans in this email. I think  
there's a great opportunity here to  
make Newton Abbot Market a huge  
success. As stated I'd be willing to  
help, cooperate and collaborate with  
the council striving toward a bright  
future for Newton Abbot markets.”



# 5. COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL ENGAGEMENT SESSIONS

Various cultural and creative stakeholders were invited to attend two virtual engagement sessions via Microsoft teams. Over the two sessions, discussions took place to understand how the proposed scheme could support creative and community groups in the future, with a focus on facilities, infrastructure and servicing.

Attendees included representatives from choirs, parent/child groups, performers, theatrical groups and craft workshop organisers. Key themes were:

- The acoustic treatment of the space to support performances
- Backstage space / Production space / Storage
- Toilets - baby changing in both male and female
- Flexibility to provide small spaces as well as large spaces for both performance/activities
- The provision of lighting and sound systems
- Community involvement - getting them involved in the buildings' development
- To support the heritage of the building

Although stakeholders in attendance included campaigners for converting the Alexandra Cinema building into a theatre, the sessions were focused on how the proposed scheme could support community and creative groups within the proposed mixed use space, rather than discuss alternative schemes.

Some of the stakeholders included those inside and outside of the Newton Abbot area. There was an extreme amount of interest in a performance area. Many

of the stakeholders struggled to find these kinds of spaces in the local area so saw it as an opportunity to expand their business and reach more customers. Many stated they would be willing to travel for a good location.

Some feedback from specific groups was:

**Entertainingly Different - performer, producer of shows in variety of spaces - street entertainment, small performance spaces, town centres etc.**

Loves the idea of a huge community space to play with. Creates community cohesion - community ownership of a space. Definitely need to think about storage (for assets like chairs, tables etc). Lights are also a major need in space for every kind of event, activity and market.

Creates atmosphere. Loves working on stages of all sizes, space, set up in different shapes and areas. Mixes it up and maximises the use of space. Get the community involved with the creation of the space. Local artists work on the walls, flooring mosaics designed by locals. They take ownership of it then - space becomes theirs and they are invested and that enhances it long term/ footfall etc.

“How exciting a project like this is - community space, community cohesion, list of possibilities is endless. What can you do that's moveable from day to day, amazing staging structures that are demountable and moveable. Venue would become a place that people were excited to perform.”

## The Science Musician

Runs a choir of up to around 30-40 people. From Teignmouth, has performed at many large venues all over SW as well as USA but has never performed in Newton Abbot. Usually works to audiences but liked the idea of working while the market or other events are on to bring their performances to a new audience in the area.

## Seadream Education / Environment

The organisation provides outreach education to schools, colleges, communities - linked to science, engineering, environment and more. They see potential for collaborations with a number of organisations in the space. Events incorporating a number of organisations in the space can make a big impact - presentations/ displays/workshops and activities etc - attracting footfall.

By combining different workshop groups together, a less intimidating experience for customers and organisers could be created on a regular basis.

## Just Sewn Stories

Runs workshops all over Devon in various venues, events and festivals - takes old sewing machines for sewing and crafting activities. Based in Tavistock but would be interested in new venue to bring that to in Newton.

Would require the ability to section off a workshop area.

## Storysense

Storysense holds story sessions across South Devon for Babies/toddlers/families - at various venues as well as events and festivals. They would like a central place to use, but would be looking for small areas with facilities for pram storage while sessions running, baby changing in both male and female toilets and accessible space for prams and buggies. They have found it incredibly hard to find venues to use as many have been booked up or are unsuitable..

## Ratchet Theatre Production Company

Owns a local touring company - Ratchet Theatre and a children's theatre etc.

They have a definite need for rehearsal space for groups and organisations. The groups has worked in everything from large theatres down to one person productions in small intimate spaces in a variety of different venues. The key for the space would be flexibility and versatility. Not all performances need large theatre set up.

### Key points:

- 1) As a local person who loves the arts - Newton Abbot is ugly, outdated and needs a revamp, but to move forward you don't have to rip out the old
- 2) Encourage people to come into the town with the history - history of the theatre/building etc.
- 3) Loves the tradition of theatre - the red velvet seats, corridors backstage, room for orchestra etc and feels that an entertainment space and a theatre space are not the same thing.
- 4) Acoustics in a space have to be right. Electrics/Power has to be right.
- 5) A multi functional space will definitely provide performance benefits

6) If the Alex theatre is to be lost, then there has to be a gain in this project

**DJ/Music lecturer/worked with the Coombeshead academy and other schools/produced events/ran The Hub at Plymouth - ran music events at clock tower with Coombeshead Academy**

This space could be used all the time for a wide range of uses including music and drama.

There is a massive threat to music through public redevelopment and venues being lost constantly so the need for music venues is high. For example, red room yellow room in Seal Hayne has been lost, and UB40 played there in the 70's. There is a need to bring high profile venues back.

A multipurpose space is a positive - it can be used for so much, education - working with students in the daytime in the space then running events with them in evenings for experience.

Any venue is treatable acoustically, it needs the right team, sound engineers and can put on a range of gigs and events.

To have a capacity of 200 upwards will have a massive impact on footfall coming into town.

**Pom stitch tassel - Runs own studio in Bovey Tracey. Runs parties, workshops, sewing classes - takes them to other venues and events/festivals.**

As an emerging business, they do not see much on for families and children. It would be a great hub for everyone to enjoy. Newton Abbot looks a bit sad - would be good to have retail premises, pop up shops,

somewhere for emerging businesses like hers to try space out, take those further steps in expanding her business.

**Community member - arts background and involved in installing aerial rigs in spaces**

Think about the young people - they are our future. Think about opportunities to install right logistics in space - for example for aerial rigs.

This project may not work for everyone but it has to work for the majority

**Services for Tourism Director - stages large events in wide range/size of venues**

Needs 250+ capacity / 300+ for cabaret/performance.

Needs character in building and space / no clutter / good access and parking. Be affordable to hire.

He brings in stages/seats/tables etc himself so sees no need for the venue to have those. Just a flexible space for him to use.

It would be an exciting opportunity to have a space in Newton Abbot that could be suitable for these large scale events.

**Powderham Live Project Manager**

Students of this project need rehearsal space and performance space. Young musicians need opportunities to perform busking style in markets, smaller spaces as well as then as part of larger events.

Being able to be flexible for young performers is vital.

Rehearsal space is invaluable. Potential for a retractable door between theatre and market hall to partition off space.

**JJS music Academy 300 students all ages, Musical director for performance/theatre. Runs music school/ exams.**

The building must be acoustically treated to hold performances. To run large theatre shows across consecutive nights; the sound system has been eq for the space and equipment set up and this practically can't always be done every night depending on the event/performance. That has to be considered to use the space for consecutive nights.

Under 19's need to have their own changing areas so that space must be considered. Some events need to run for more than one night to make them profitable through ticket sales. Sets have to be hired in and fixed for some performances and left for the run. Changing spaces have to be provided as sometimes quick costume changes take place.

Summarise; acoustics / changing spaces for safeguarding / backstage space

**The Helen Foundation - supports young people in the arts. Ex principle at Dawlish college**

Support young people and support any facilities that would help them and encourage them to develop in the arts.

**DJ**

Dj - works different types of events from parties to festivals. Partner works with young children and they

could definitely use the space for toddler/baby groups - soft play areas etc.

**Friends of The Alexandra Theatre**

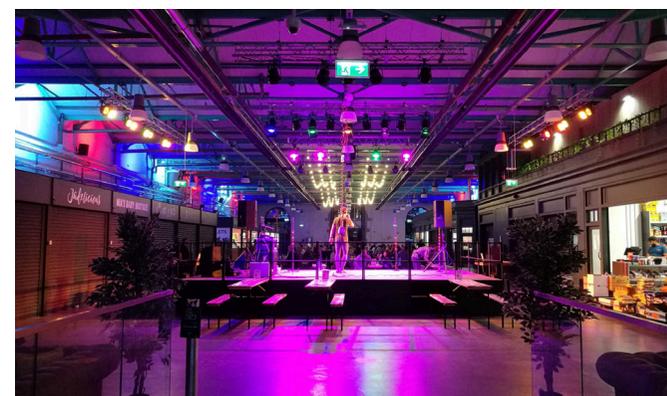
Do not believe the scheme will be suitable for Newton Abbot's needs, and believes that the Cinema should be retained as a community theatre, as proposed in a business plan.

The terms of the Memorandum of Understanding issued by Teignbridge Council were not accepted by the group, who want to revisit proposals.

Believe that a performance space needs to have:

- 1) Large stage
- 2) Orchestra Pit
- 3) Dressing rooms - children need separate boys/girls and have chaperones.
- 4) This project disregards longer than one night shows.
- 5) Need storage for set/props/costumes/orchestra
- 6) Theatre could give links with schools, colleges, work experience opportunities.
- 7) Use adaptable seating to create flexible space in auditorium for art exhibitions for example
- 8) Don't rip out historical theatre - massive risk to rip it out.

The group believes that they cannot do what they do in any space other than a full theatre, and a multi-purpose space would not be suitable.



One comment from the engagement sessions was 'how exciting a project like this is - community space, community cohesion, the list of possibilities is endless. What can you do that's moveable from day to day, amazing staging structures that are demountable and moveable. The venue would become a place where people were excited to perform'.

Another commented on how the market connected to the performing area would 'be a great way of bringing a new audience to the area'.

Questions arose about how storage would work in the plans both for community groups and event infrastructure such as chairs, stage and lighting.

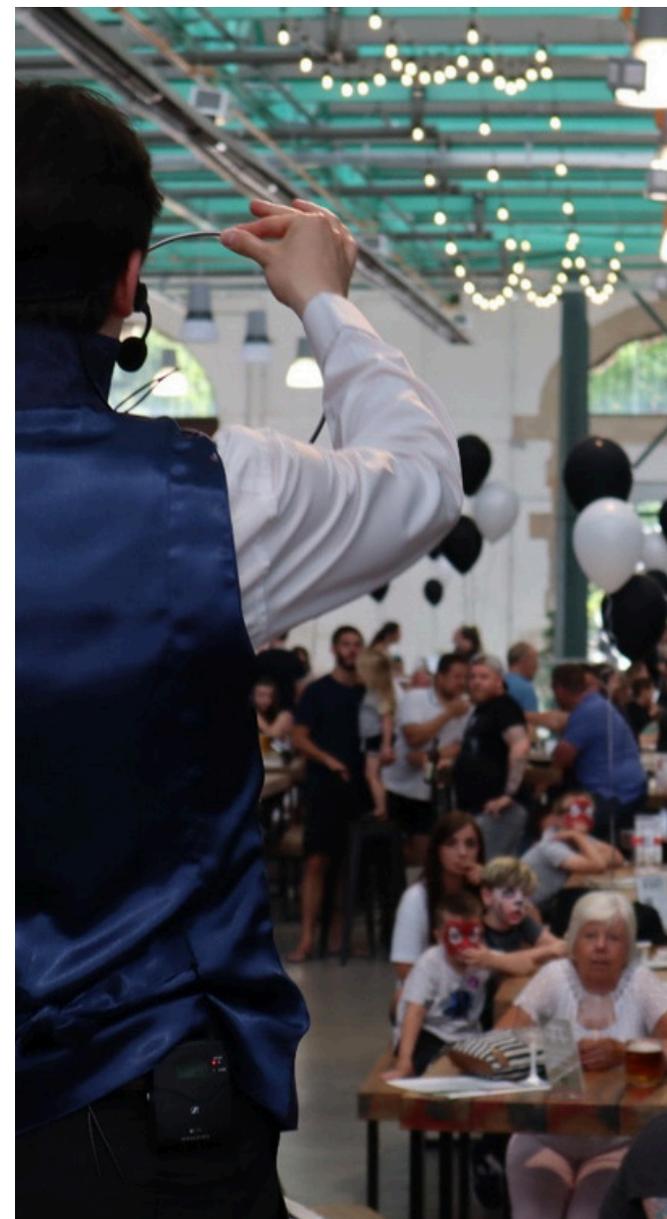
Rotating activities were suggested among the various discussions. For example, bringing six craft groups together on a fortnightly basis so it's not so daunting for small groups. This would also be less intimidating for people wanting to come into the space and take part in the workshops/activities - they can move around and find something they want to do rather than feel they have to stay in the same place doing the same thing for a long time.

Another person stated 'As a group, we can give the community real ownership of a project like this, not just through these consultations, but through the early stages of construction. Sense of ownership is so important to the community'. This sort of vision is vital for the beginning of a new, existing project to succeed.

Having a moveable, adjustable lighting rig would provide huge flexibility for a variety of different groups and societies to operate in the space. One stakeholder referred to this as 'endless possibilities' with regard to the number of groups who will benefit from this.

Stakeholders who run theatre and performance groups were concerned about how they could operate in flexible space, without an auditorium, orchestra pit and fly tower.

A recurring theme was the importance of the acoustics in the new area, as large halls may bounce sound around and impact the sound quality for performers.



# 5. COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL SURVEY RESPONSES

The Cultural and Creative Stakeholder survey ran for a week allowing stakeholders to document their opinions and thoughts in detail regarding the new concept of the market and performance space. We received 18 responses ranging from those within the Newton Abbot area and beyond.

The most popular time of day for activities to take place was the evening. 50% of groups indicated that they would look to operate in the evening. The other 50% is split between the morning and afternoon, demonstrating the demand for space of this type for a wide programme of events and community activity.

The majority of respondents wanted to use the venue on an ad-hoc basis. Others indicated that a regular slot would be ideal, relating to school term time. This can be worked into the weekly operation when the space becomes available.

When asked about travel times to venues, the majority of respondents identified 45 minutes to 1 hour as the greatest travel time they would like to see for a venue that was suitable for them.

On-site storage was seen as desirable by respondents, but the majority said that a lack of storage would not stop them from using the venue. Of those who saw storage as a requirement, their groups consist of performances spanning a number of nights, requiring sets, lighting rigs etc to be left in situ for a defined period of time.

Respondents worked with and performed to a variety of age groups, with a focus on young people.

A question was asked relating to the limitations and what worked well at other venues. An example given was Exeter Phoenix.

The majority of respondents were happy to work from flexible, mixed-use venues, although theatre groups required more fixed space.

Respondent groups are currently working from a wide range of venues, including churches, schools, community halls and cinemas.

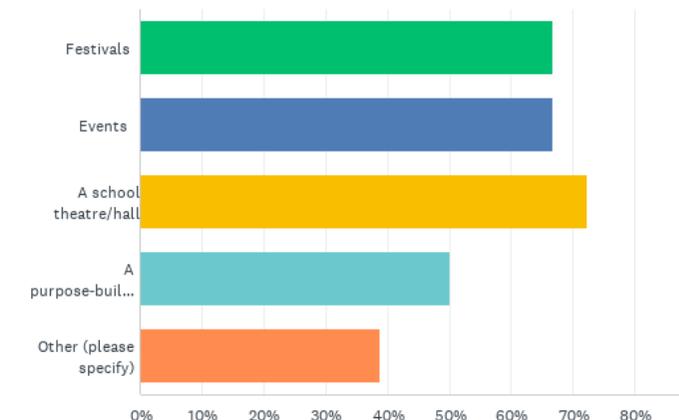
There were a few key themes that arose from the survey;

**Storage:** several groups indicated that they would require permanent onsite storage in order to run performances or events over a series of days, rather than operating singular pop-up events. However, others operating as a smaller set-up, or in more flexible spaces, did not require overnight storage, and the majority said a lack of onsite storage would not put them off using the space.

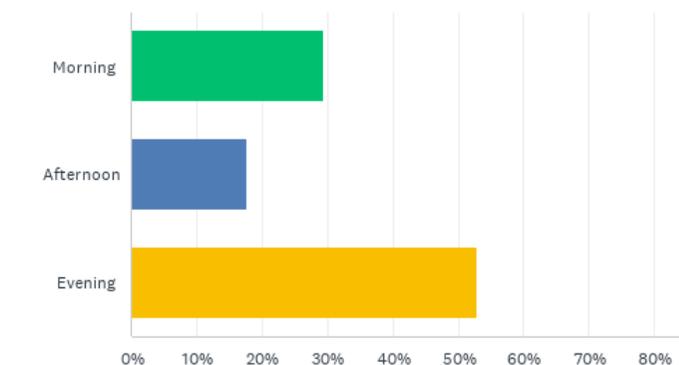
**Facilities:** lighting, acoustic treatment of the space and the ability to partition off private areas.

**Size of the audience;** answers ranged from 10-150 depending on the group operating. They did like the ability of the space to be flexible to accommodate varying numbers.

Have you ever worked or performed in a flexibly designed, multi-use space that allows for a multitude of events, activities or performances to take place in them such as;



When would you be looking to use facilities?



## THINKING ABOUT WHEN YOU ARE LOOKING AT SPACES TO USE FOR YOUR NEEDS, PLEASE LIST YOUR MOST IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS.

“For rehearsal:

- Private space to work in.
- Power supply.
- Toilets - don't have to be private.
- Kitchen area - doesn't have to be private. If not available then near by food stores of some kind.

For performance.

- Private back stage area or room to build one.
- Toilets
- Performance space- doesn't have to be a stage.
- Seating for audience
- Multiple plug sockets
- Lighting rig or space to build our own
- Ability to leave everything safely set up between get in and performance time, then over night if doing more than one show.”

“- Good acoustics

- Separate toilets & changing facilities
- Good source of power for all our equipment
- Staging & lights (if we were to use for performance space)
- Lockable”

“Good access for everyone. Plenty of space to move around, with tables and chairs. Depending on the project, sometimes a quieter venue is important, other times noise doesn't matter so much.

A well defined/demarcated area in which to work - eg if using sewing machines, members of the public shouldn't be able to use them without checking with me first.”

Good Acoustics. Male and female changing rooms. Male and female changing facilities for children with emphasis on Safeguarding. A fixed stage , orchestra area and an auditorium.”

“As per question 7, the needs of a space to be able to produce a full-scale production as significant. The Alexandra Theatre already has these in situ, and is capable of holding many different types of events as it stands. Requirements include a raked stage, lighting rig, fly tower, dressing rooms, secure storage, booking facilities, wings, scenery dock, sound and lighting booth, make-up room, adequate facilities for children to work in the theatre (child protection is paramount).”

Clean/ fresh/ welcoming/ electricity/ wifi/ parking nearby (especially if have lots of resources).

Capacity for 300 or so cabaret style for awards, 200 min theatre style for conference

For performances - good electrical points, chairs, toilet facilities, kitchen facilities, enough space for choir and audience

“High ceiling

Good acoustics and sound for music performances and singing.

Light.

Power supply in good positions around the space.

Space to move around

Access to get equipment in from my car.”

“We would definitely need changing rooms, back stage area, a stage area with proper lighting, sound, side stage area, seating, front of house foyer area. Everything the current Alexandra theatre has already!!!”

“- Baby changing facilities

- easy access
- access to a sink/kitchen area
- good plug socket locations to be able to plug in projectors and speakers.
- flooring which is suitable for messy play activities.
- ability to make the space dark for our sensory lights to have impact (high quality curtains or black out blinds)
- free parking for parents. “

“It must be easily-accessible and warm, especially if baby massage is involved. Clean, relaxing and welcoming environment - non-negotiable.”

“- good lighting

- accessibility for those with reduced mobility nearby
- inexpensive parking facilities (though lift-sharing is always encouraged)
- flexible layout of seating etc“

“Power & light, Safety, Toilets Nearby“

“Exhibition board/ display space / lighting”

“Disability access so ideally be on ground floor level. Toilet facility and also kitchen if it was for a party. Table & chairs furniture and good lighting. “

“Not carpeted. At least 9 foot high. Daylight. A non-precious, dirty space.”

**PLEASE SUMMARISE WHAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE FROM THE DEVELOPMENT? WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE IMPROVED/CHANGED IN THE UPCOMING DEVELOPMENT?**

"I would love to see a thriving, multi arts based performance space that can be utilised all day with rehearsal, workshops, classes etc. The space would need great electrical set up, lighting rig and acoustically treating.

I would love the space to become a hive of activity. A place where people can do pre dinner drinks, dinner and a show/ gig all under one roof.

I really believe this space could be that. But attention needs to be paid to the privacy needed at times by many of the groups looking to use it. Also the vast array of requirements from bands, touring theatre etc with regards to electrical, lighting, storage space etc.

One thing I would like to add is that I am over the moon to see Emma Twamley involved. She will be an incredible asset to your team and lives and breaths for the arts,

so I am certain the development is in safe hands."

"I love the idea of the development - the idea of more space for music & arts in Newton Abbot is incredible!"

"I am not too sure about the practicalities to include a market hall which can also be used as a performance space. I think a flexible space is brilliant, but you can't be everything to everyone or you'll just end up being a half-hearted area for everyone. Exeter Phoenix do flexible space really well to accommodate all kinds of performance & arts, but there are still limitations on what it can be. For example, I've never seen it used for a market hall. But then they have a built in cafe/bar.

Selfishly, it would be great for the space to be designed for music performance, although music can be used in a similar area to theatre, workshops and rehearsals."

"I can't locate the plans unfortunately but I'd say open air space as well as undercover space is important. Don't let it become enclosed and private - there needs to be

open space, for public use at all times, with plenty of seating, planted/natural areas (eg trees to provide shade instead of metal structures), encourage people to stop and be a community by talking to each other not just by consuming (Plymouth Drake's Circus has no seating areas unless you're buying food - it is intimidating and all about keeping people moving from one shop to the next, not about community)."

"If a new 4 screen cinema is considered a vital requirement for Newton Abbot, then so be it. However it would be a disaster to destroy the only fully working theatre in the process. The Alexandra has been a theatre and cinema for 140 years and is Grade 2 listed to protect it from gross alteration. The theatre could be improved with minimal alteration to form a community hub with bar/cafe and seating with space for exhibitions ( please see our drawings of these plans)"

"Retain The Alexandra Theatre as a theatre, developing it as a community arts hub. Ditch this ridiculous notion of a flexible space with a temporary stage which will only fit individual/small acts on it for one night. If

you want quality entertainment and space to expand into clubs, workshops, exhibitions, comedy nights, and much much more, plus an opportunity for the youth of the town to be involved in learning valuable skills then keep the theatre, redevelop the market itself as it is and create the very best outcomes for everyone involved. This is a once in a lifetime opportunity and if the theatre goes you will never be able to get it, and its history, back.”

“Opportunities to collaborate and be part of larger multi organisation events.”

“Large space, hotel nearby, high ceiling, no restrictions on choice of caterers and drink, low cost”

“Be great to have a decent local arts venue that can be used by the community”

“We would like to see a flexible/multi use space that could be used for rehearsals and workshops but is also an effective performance space for concerts and gigs. It would be fantastic if it was kitted out with lighting and sound. Easy access to local community groups that is affordable to

differing budgets.”

“We would love to see the Alexandra theatre stay as it is but improved on using the wonderful plans FoTAT have tried to put forward to the council. A multi functional space will just not work for any groups wanting to use the space to perform, it’s not practical at all and I can’t understand why you would want to get rid of such a wonderful theatre!”

“It would be fantastic to see a vibrant community arts hub for all to use with a proper stage, back stage, dressing rooms, sound, lighting etc etc“

“A space which has the ability to support baby and toddler classes and workshops aimed at parents. A safe space where families feel they can come and be listened to and where businesses can network and support each other. The best venues I have used are those where businesses have joined forces to run events based around families etc. This hasn’t just supported the businesses individually but also shown the venue as a whole to be working together.”

“A space which is welcoming, easily accessible and flexible to allow multiple uses for the community.”

“Hire charges are always an issue for us. As mentioned, we are a bit of a minority interest. Audiences that come generally have a great time, but it’s hard to attract new people if you’re not performing Abba or Robbie Williams arrangements, but singing about Photons or Cosmology! We work on a small budget and can’t afford places like the Pavilions unless someone else is paying (as for 5th February - though the choir will make no income at all from this event!).“

“Something for young people and the community that is safe and central and has amenities for their comfort. Affordable spacing for small businesses that haven’t got large capital. Pop up shop availability for people to trial and test brands with an audience. Good marketing and promotion for those that work with the development so it works for both.”

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