

Old River Lane

Masterplan consultation summary

July 2025



Cityheart

Consultation in numbers



73 surveys completed and **208** comments placed on boards at events



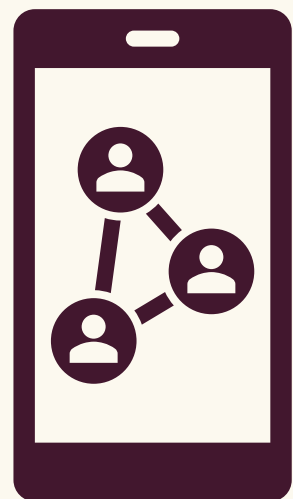
173 attendees across **2** public events
1 meeting of the Old River Lane Steering group



10 emails and phone calls received throughout the consultation period with **163** people signed up to join our mailing list



43 local groups and individuals written to and **1,461** local addresses received a flyer promoting the launch of the consultation and events

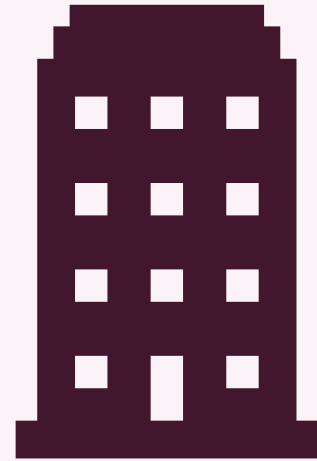


257,207 impressions on social media leading to **519** link clicks to the project website through paid social media advertising



783 visitors to project website with **85** downloads of the information brochure

Feedback at a glance



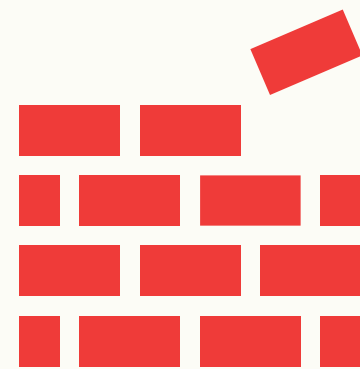
The most common feedback theme was **height and massing**. While some people felt 4-5 storeys would be appropriate for the area, others said they would like the scheme to be no more than 3 storeys.



The most popular ideas for the public square were **markets**, an **outdoor cinema** and **performance space**.



There was strong support for a **healthcare facility** to be provided as part of the proposals.



While people were comfortable with modern buildings, they felt it was important the new buildings reflected the character of the area..



There were mixed views about the need for **shops, cafés or restaurants**, with some people feeling there are enough of these in Bishop's Stortford. Others mentioned that they would like to see them run by independent retailers.



Some concerns around the impact the scheme will have on local **traffic** were raised. There was mixed feedback on the proposed **Waitrose access** with some feeling this would improve traffic flow, while others questioned how effective this would be.

Consultation approach

Promoting the consultation

To reach as many people as possible across the local community, a range of print and digital methods were used to promote the consultation. This included advertising the exhibition events, online survey and encouraging people to subscribe for updates via a project mailing list.

Consultation website

The launch of a dedicated project **www.olderiverlanedevlopment.co.uk** which hosted details of the events, digital survey and a copy of all the latest information about the proposals. It also included the contact details for the project team and a form to sign-up to the project mailing list.

Masterplan proposal

Located only a short walk from the high-street and train station, the Old River Lane site currently offers very little benefit to the local area. Our vision is to create a place that better reflects the unique historic character of the town centre and further bolster its offer to the community by delivering:



New homes including affordable homes



Investing in local cycle and walking routes to make it easier to travel more sustainably



A new public square which could host local markets and events



Space for new activities and uses such as a cafe or shop



Easing congestion on local roads by relocating the Waitrose access road

Timeline

July 2024 – November 2024

Public Square consultation to hear how the community would like to use the space. We will build on this feedback moving forward

June 2025

Consultation events on Old River Lane masterplan

Masterplan Consultation Exhibition Brochure

Early autumn 2025

Further consultation events on proposals for Old River Lane


Masterplan Consultation Exhibition Brochure

Autumn 2025

Submission of planning application to East Hertfordshire District Council

Flyers & Posters

Flyers sent to **1,461** local addresses advertising the consultation and exhibitions as well as providing a summary of the key principles of the masterplan. Posters were also on display at **Thorley Sainsbury's, Town Centre Sainsbury's, Bishop's Stortford Town Council** and the **tourist information centre**.



June 2025

Old River

East Hertfordshire District Council, in partnership with Cityheart, has a vision to transform Old River Lane into a place that will serve both existing and future generations of Bishop's Stortford.

Located only a short walk from the high-street and train station, the Old River Lane site currently offers very little benefit to the local area. Our vision is to create a place that better reflects the unique historic character of the town centre and further bolster its offer to the community by delivering:

Masterplan proposal

- New homes including affordable homes
- A new public square which could host local markets and events
- Space for new activities and uses such as a cafe or shop
- Investing in local cycle and walking routes to make it easier to travel more sustainably
- Easing congestion on local roads by relocating the Waitrose access road

Have your say!

We will be holding public exhibitions over the next few weeks where we will share more information about our masterplan proposals. We will also update our website **olderiverlanedevlopment.co.uk** with more information alongside a digital survey where you will be able to share your feedback. Learn more and subscribe to our mailing list at **olderiverlanedevlopment.co.uk** which will be kept updated with the latest information.

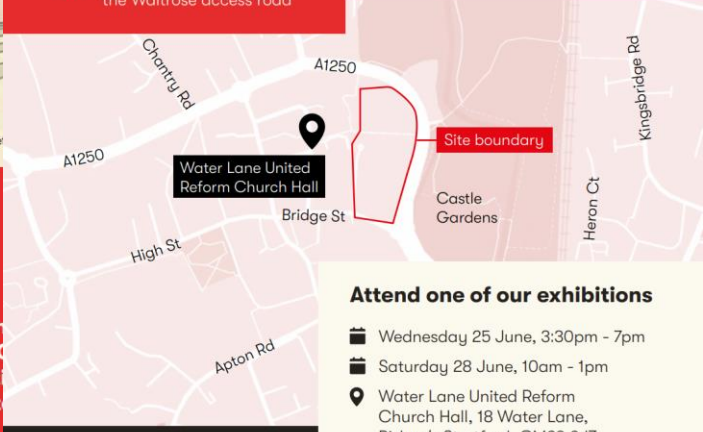
Attend one of our exhibitions

- Wednesday 25 June, 3:30pm - 7pm
- Saturday 28 June, 10am - 1pm
- Water Lane United Reform Church Hall, 18 Water Lane, Bishop's Stortford, CM23 2JZ

Get in touch

olderiverlanedevlopment.co.uk
olderiverlane@thisislca.com
0800 096 7217





Letters

Sent to **43** local groups and individuals encouraging them to take part in the consultation with details of the events.



Old River Lane: Invitation to upcoming public consultation events



Attend an event

Date: Wednesday 25 June 2025

Time: 3:30pm - 7pm

Date: Saturday 28 June 2025

Time: 10am - 1pm

Location: Water Lane United Reformed Church Hall, 18 Water Lane, Bishop's Stortford, CM23 2JZ

Paid advertising

Both through paid geo-targeted social media advertising, reaching **185,799** accounts across Facebook and Instagram within a 5km radius of the Old River Lane site, as well as print and digital home page takeover of the **Bishop's Stortford Independent**.



Old River Lane

East Hertfordshire District Council, in partnership with Cityheart, has a vision to transform Old River Lane into a place that will serve both existing residents and future generations of Bishop's Stortford.

We want to create a place that better reflects the unique historic character of the town centre and further bolster its offer to the community. Learn more at our upcoming events.

Wednesday 25 June, 3:30pm - 7pm

Saturday 28 June, 10am - 1pm

Water Lane United Reform Church Hall, 18 Water Lane, Bishop's Stortford, CM23 2JZ

Get in touch

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0800 096 7217



Scan here

Collecting feedback

To ensure everyone who wanted to leave feedback was able to do so, there were a number of ways residents could share their views to the project team including at in-person at events, completing the survey by hand or online, interacting with the boards and by email or freephone.

Public survey

Available to fill out digitally between **25 June 2025** and **13 July 2025** on the consultation webpage and available as hard copy to fill out at events.

events.

4. What types of activities would you like to see in the public square and spaces?




<input type="checkbox"/> Table tennis	<input type="checkbox"/> Performance space
<input type="checkbox"/> Giant chess	<input type="checkbox"/> Outdoor cinema
<input type="checkbox"/> Outdoor markets	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)

5. What types of uses would you like to see in the ground floor commercial spaces?



<input type="checkbox"/> Cafe / restaurant	<input type="checkbox"/> Exhibition / gallery
<input type="checkbox"/> Shops	<input type="checkbox"/> Flexible co-working spaces
<input type="checkbox"/> Library	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)
<input type="checkbox"/> Healthcare / community	

6. What elements of local buildings (e.g. materiality, colour, feature) do you think best capture the character of Bishop's Stortford and would like to see incorporated into the design of the masterplan?

<input type="checkbox"/> Undercroft spaces	<input type="checkbox"/> Collection of buildings	<input type="checkbox"/> Interesting corners
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<input type="checkbox"/> Varied roof form and scale	<input type="checkbox"/> Different materiality / colours and tone	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)
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7. Do you have any other comments?

Have your say

Name*


Postcode

oldriverlanddevelopment.co.uk

oldriverlane@thisislco.com

[0800 096 7217](tel:0800 096 7217)

Scan here to complete the online survey



Stay up to date

☐ Tick here to sign up to the mailing list for Old River Lane

☐ Please tick to confirm that you are happy for your feedback to be captured for the purpose of the consultation.*

Consultation email, freephone & mailing list

Advertised on all consultation materials for people to get in touch with the project team.

Sign up to our mailing list

Name*

Phone

Postcode

Email*

☐ Please tick this box if you consent to your data being collected and stored to keep you informed about this consultation.

Your data will be shared with London Communications Agency (LCA) and will only be used in line with the terms of its Privacy Policy, available to view here: <https://thisisLCA.co.uk/consultation-privacy-policy/>

SIGN UP

Events

Where information about the masterplan was shared and people were invited to share their feedback with the project team

2 in person consultation events

1 Steering Group meeting



Interactive boards

Available at both consultation events inviting attendees to select their preferences for the public square, ground floor uses and materiality – aligned with the digital survey.

What types of activities would you like to see in the public square and spaces?

Use the stickers to indicate what you would like to see

What types of uses would you like to see in the ground floor commercial spaces?

Use the stickers to indicate what you would like to see

Other common use types to share your ideas

Verbal feedback

(conversations, email and phone)

Summary of engagement

- **173** total attendees across two in-person exhibitions held on **Wednesday 25 June (3:30pm – 7pm)** and **Saturday 28 June (10am – 1pm)**
- **6** emails received to the project inbox
- **4** calls to the project freephone



Old River Lane Masterplan Consultation

June 2025



Our current masterplan

New homes

Between 145 and 180 new homes, including affordable homes. These will be high-quality by design and energy-efficient, ranging from 1-3 bedrooms in size.



Public square

A new south-facing public square that could host markets and seasonal events, as well as provide a place for people to relax and spend time in. This part of the proposals is being brought forward by EHO and we want to hear how we can make this a place for everyone to enjoy.



Ground-floor retail & community uses

There will be new ground-floor spaces that face on to the public square that could be used for new shops, cafes or other commercial uses. We want to hear what local people would like to see here.



Reflecting the history of Bishop's Stortford

We want Old River Lane to be an extension of the market town, with a design that reflects the area's historic character. This includes a mix of building types with heights between 4-5 storeys, with varied roof profiles, materials, and colours. We would love to hear what aspects of local buildings (materials, colour etc.) you like and don't like, to help inform our thinking.



Improved cycle and walking routes

Investment in cycle and walking routes through and around the site to encourage active travel and improve connectivity to the town centre.



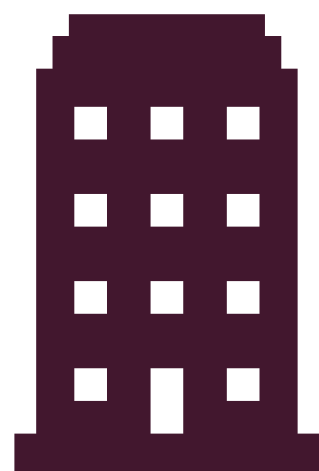
A new Waitrose access road

A new road through the site that will direct traffic away from Old River Lane and Bridge Street to help improve the connection between the town centre and Castle Gardens. The need for a new access road has been confirmed by transport assessments.



Summary of key feedback themes

The below is a summary of the key themes fed back to the project team from conversations at events, email and freephone.



Height and massing

Some concerns over height and massing, with residents feeling the proposed heights are not in keeping with Bishop's Stortford.



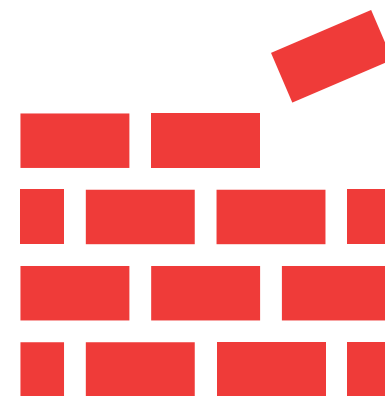
Public spaces

People liked the proposals for the new public spaces, particularly cinema screenings. Some people mentioned wanting to see more ambitious ideas.



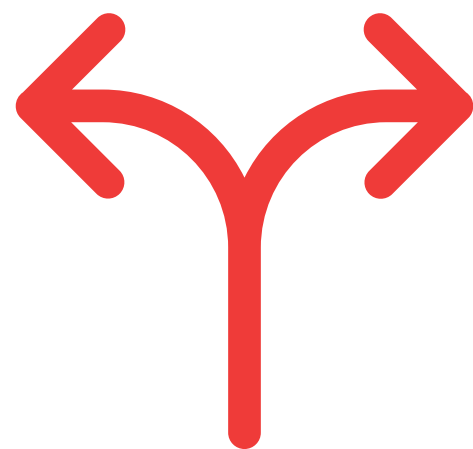
Ground floor uses

There was strong support for a new NHS facility. Some people said they do not feel that the town centre needs more retail units.



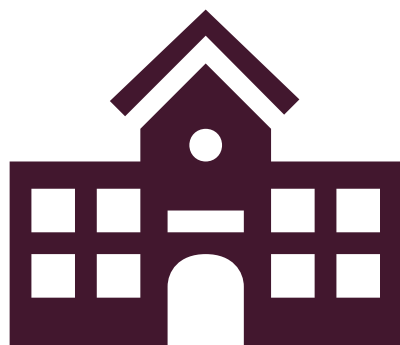
Materiality

People mentioned not wanting the new buildings to look too generic. Suggestions to use a mix of brick colours or brindled bricks. There was positive feedback on incorporating gable-ends to the front of some buildings.



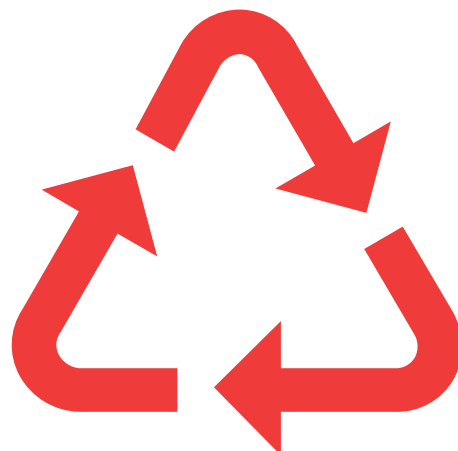
New access road

While people were supportive of alleviating traffic to Waitrose there were some comments that the proposed new access road will not work as there are already too many traffic lights and roundabouts causing congestion locally.



URC Hall

There were some questions around the future of the URC Hall and how the Old River Lane development will complement plans to upgrade the Hall.



Sustainability

People supported incorporating solar panels onto the top of buildings. Some people asked if the materials of Charringtons House could be reused.

Event feedback

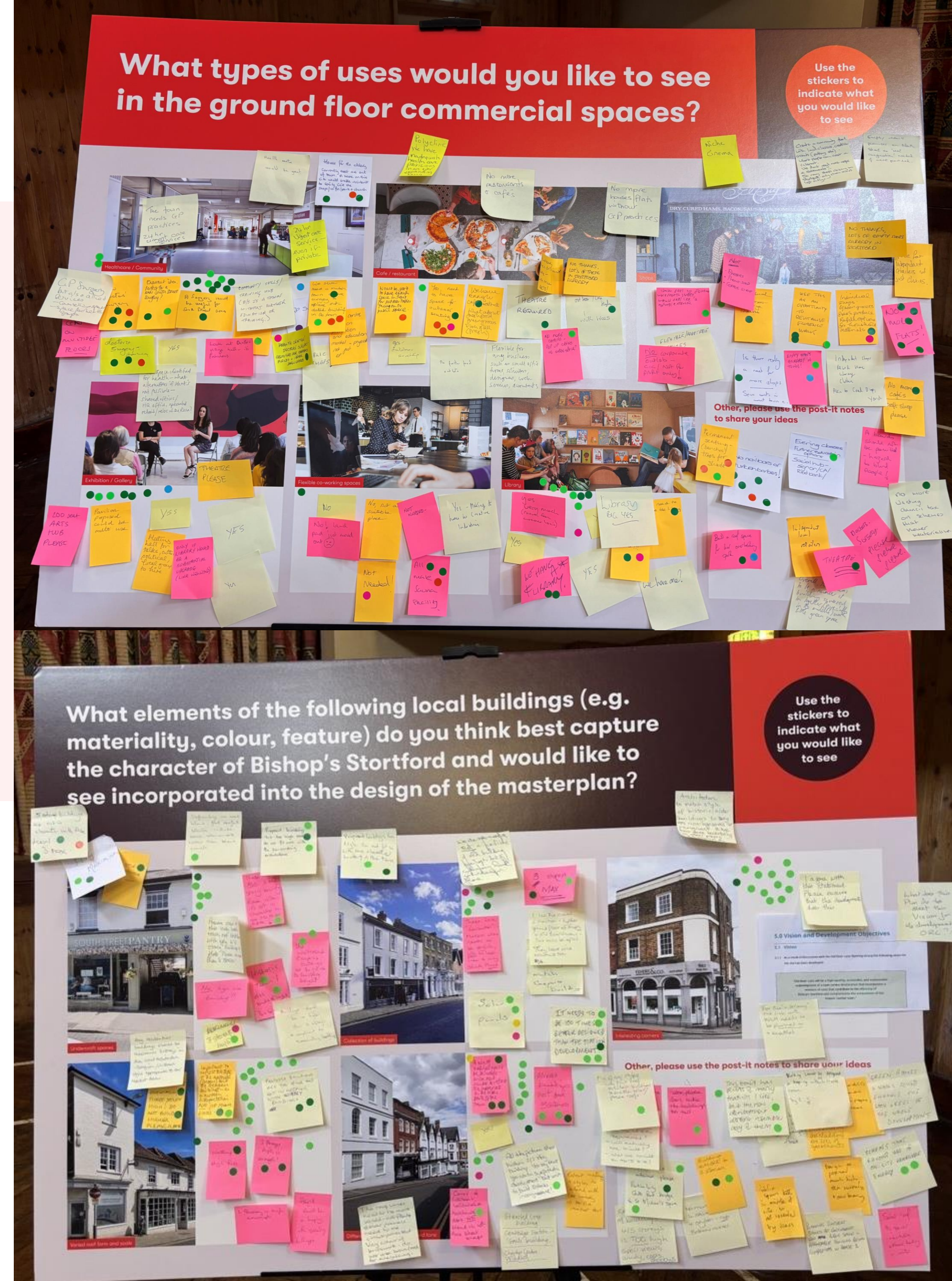
(interactive boards)

Interactive boards

At the public exhibition events, **5** boards were on display with **3** of these asking attendees what they would like to see incorporated into the Old River Lane development. The questions related to three areas of the scheme:

- **Public square and spaces**
- **Ground floor commercial spaces**
- **Materiality and character of Bishop's Stortford**

Each board had suggestions for potential uses or elements that could be incorporated into the development, and attendees were asked to place stickers on options they liked. They could also leave comments/feedback by placing post-it notes on the boards.



What types of activities would you like to see in the public square and spaces?

- **64** comments and **60** stickers expressing support for activities in the public square and spaces were placed on this board.
- **34** stickers were placed on other attendees' comments to indicate support/agreement.
- The most popular option was market/food stalls with **19** stickers and the least popular option was table tennis with **7** stickers.
- A breakdown of the number of stickers and comments for each option with sample quotes has been provided on the next page.



What types of activities would you like to see in the public square and spaces?

Market / food stalls



- “Covered indoor/outdoor food market and eating/drinking destination both day and evening”
- “Street food evenings”
- “Needs to be considered with existing market. Maybe this space for periodic markets”

Outdoor cinema screenings



- “Live broadcasts all types e.g. sport, arts entertainment
- “Need more space for community activities which seem to take a backseat in this part of Hertfordshire.”
- “We had a cinema it closed”

Performance space



- “Staging with power for live music”
- “Yes please for comedy/arts”
- Comedy, music, shows in the summer”

Giant chess



- “Like the look of table tennis, chess etc but there needs to be a regular security presence to avoid vandalism”

Table tennis



- “Yes”
- “Table tennis looks good”
- “Yes please”

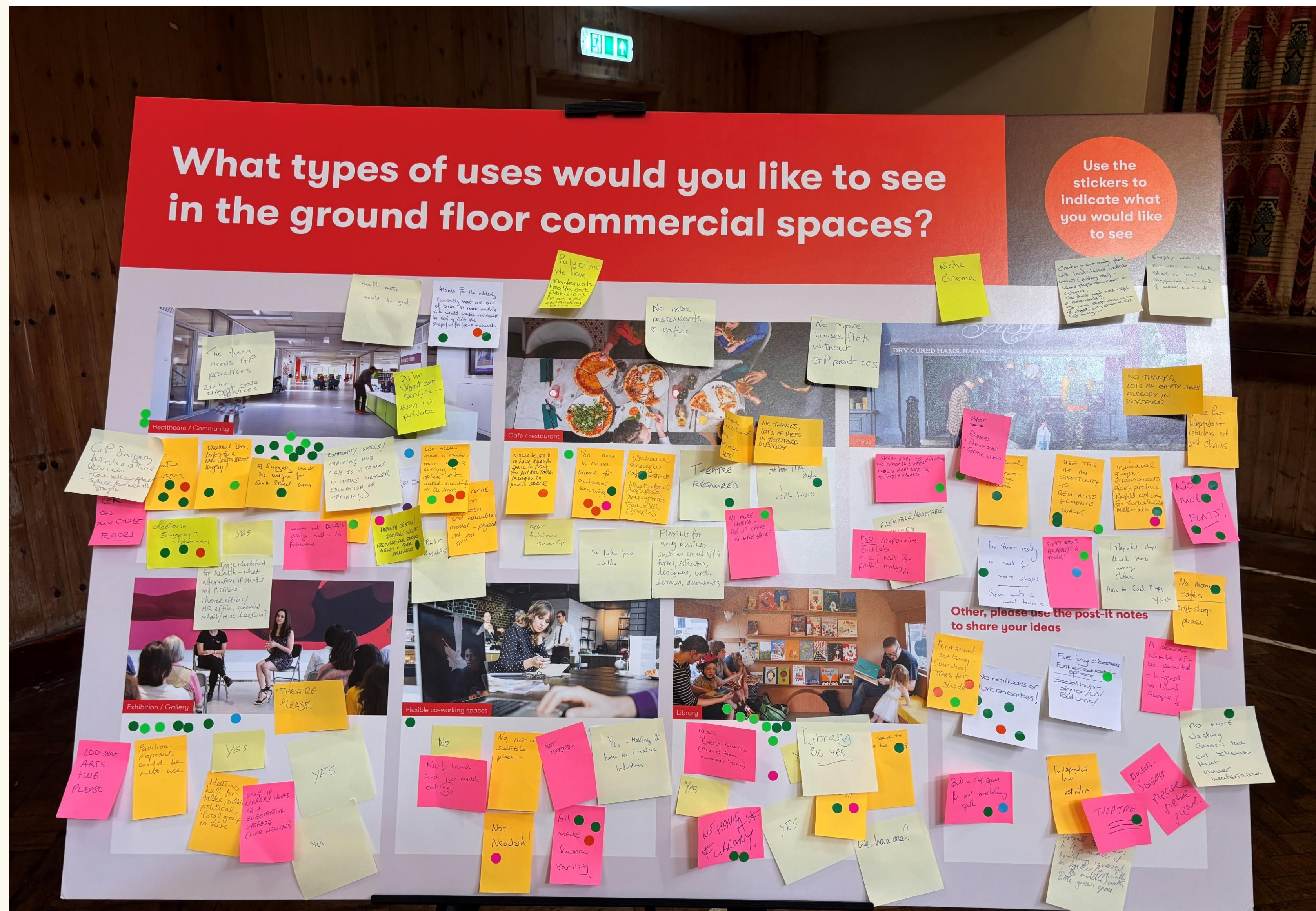
Other



- “Native trees and insect friendly native planting”
- “Litter bins”
- “Splash zone”

What types of uses would you like to see in the ground floor commercial spaces?

- **85** comments and **31** stickers were placed on this board expressing support for ground floor commercial uses.
- **68** stickers were placed on other attendees' comments to indicate support/agreement.
- The most popular option was healthcare/community with **14** stickers. Café/restaurant, shops and co-working spaces all received only **1** sticker.
- A breakdown of the number of stickers and comments for each option with sample quotes has been provided on the next two pages.



What types of uses would you like to see in the ground floor commercial spaces?

Healthcare/community



- “Excellent idea. Perfect for a new South Street surgery?”
- “We still need a modern town centre surgery to replace out-dated buildings in the town”
- “Health centre would be great”

Exhibition / gallery



- “Yes”
- “Theatre please”
- “Meeting hall for talks, cultural, political, local group to hire”

Library



- “Library big yes”
- “Yes”
- “We have a library”

Café / restaurant



- “You need to have space for outdoor seating”
- “We gave enough cafes/restaurants. What about fresh food greengrocers, fish stall”
- 15• “No thanks, lots of these in Stortford already”

Flexible co-working spaces



- “Not needed!”
- “Yes – making it home to creative industries”
- “No, not a suitable place”

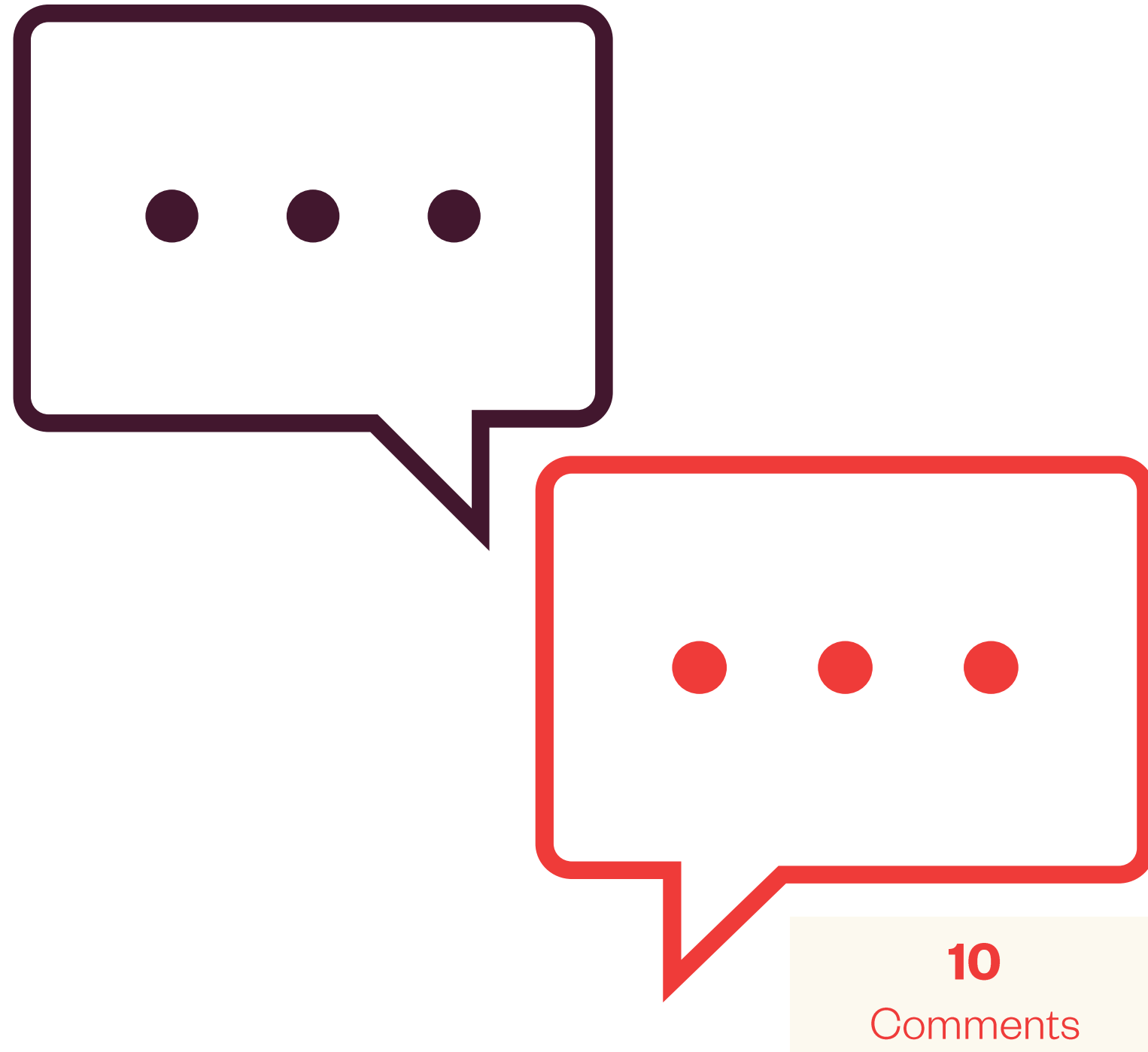
Shops



- “Use this as an opportunity to revitalise Florence Walk”
- “Empty shops already in town!”
- “Space for independent retailers, not just chains”
- “Is there really a need for more shops”

What types of uses would you like to see in the ground floor commercial spaces?

Other



- “Evening classes further education options”
- “Build a roof space for bar overlooking park”
- “Doctor’s surgery please please please”
- “No nail bars or barbers”
- “What about fresh food, greengrocers, fish stall”
- “Meeting hall for talks, cultural and political, local groups can hire”
- “Public toilets perhaps”

What elements of the following local buildings (e.g. materiality, colour, feature) do you think best capture the character of Bishop's Stortford and would like to see incorporated into the design of the masterplan?

- **59** comments and **48** stickers were placed on this board regarding elements in local buildings.
- **60** stickers were placed in support of other attendees' comments.
- The most popular options were interesting corners with **13** stickers. Collection of buildings and undercroft spaces were the least popular options with **6** stickers.
- Most of the comments on this board were expressing views against height/massing, rather than focusing on the elements in the photos.
- A breakdown of the number of stickers and comments for each option with sample quotes has been provided on the next two pages.



What elements of the following local buildings (e.g. materiality, colour, feature) do you think best capture the character of Bishop's Stortford and would like to see incorporated into the design of the masterplan?

Interesting corners



13

Stickers

4

Comments

- “What does this plan do to meet this (Steering Group) vision for the development of Old River Lane?”
- “I agree with this statement. Please ensure that the development does this”

Varied roof form and scale



12

Stickers

7

Comments

- “Nothing high rise”
- “3 storeys high is enough!”
- “Important to reflect the style of Coopers and the Georgian buildings – as a modern interpretation. Not just square blocks”

Different materiality / colour and tone



11

Stickers

8

Comments

- “Restrict materials and styles to blend with the variety of the old market town”
- “Yes”
- “Cover of Cityheart consultation brochure does not blend in with this street scape”

What elements of the following local buildings (e.g. materiality, colour, feature) do you think best capture the character of Bishop's Stortford and would like to see incorporated into the design of the masterplan?

Undercroft spaces



- “Buildings should be no higher than 3 storeys to compliment the surrounding buildings”
- “Historic town” All buildings in keeping”

Collection of buildings



- “These have characters. Modern also needs to be stylish, not to look like a city suburb thank you”
- “Proposed buildings are too high and do not fit well with the surrounding architecture”
- “Solar panels”

Other

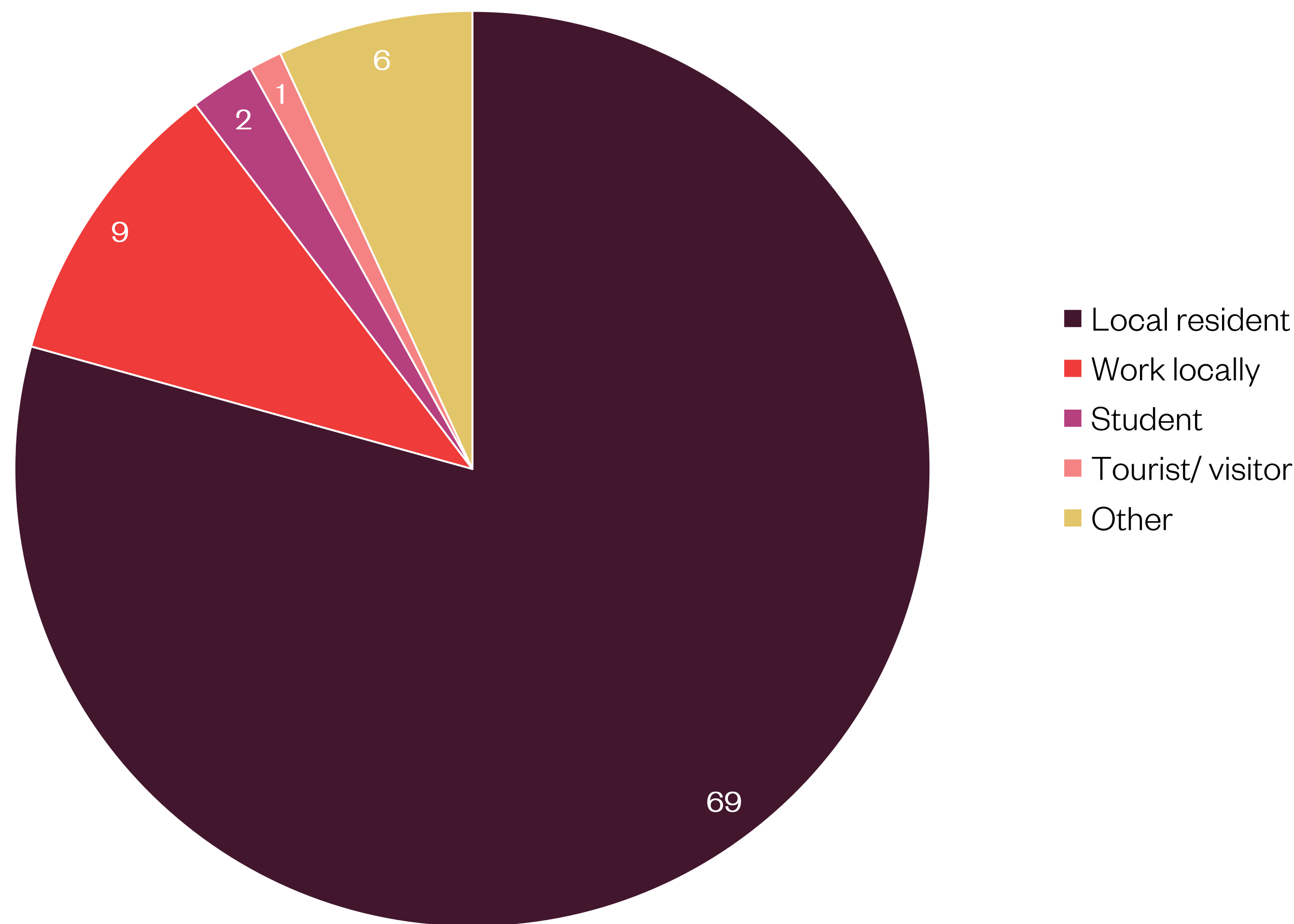


- “Mix of roof styles with flat roof on the tallest buildings to enable solar / green roofs”
- “Green roofs and walls could enhance the look and feel of the whole development”

Survey results

1. How would you describe your connection to the area?

This question received 73 responses (some people ticked more than one option). 79% of respondents identified as local residents and 10% identified as working locally. Only 2% identified as students and 1% identified as a tourist/visitor. 7% identified as 'other'. This includes a councillor and East Herts resident.



Other

“I live in a nearby community”

“Councillor”

“Landlord”

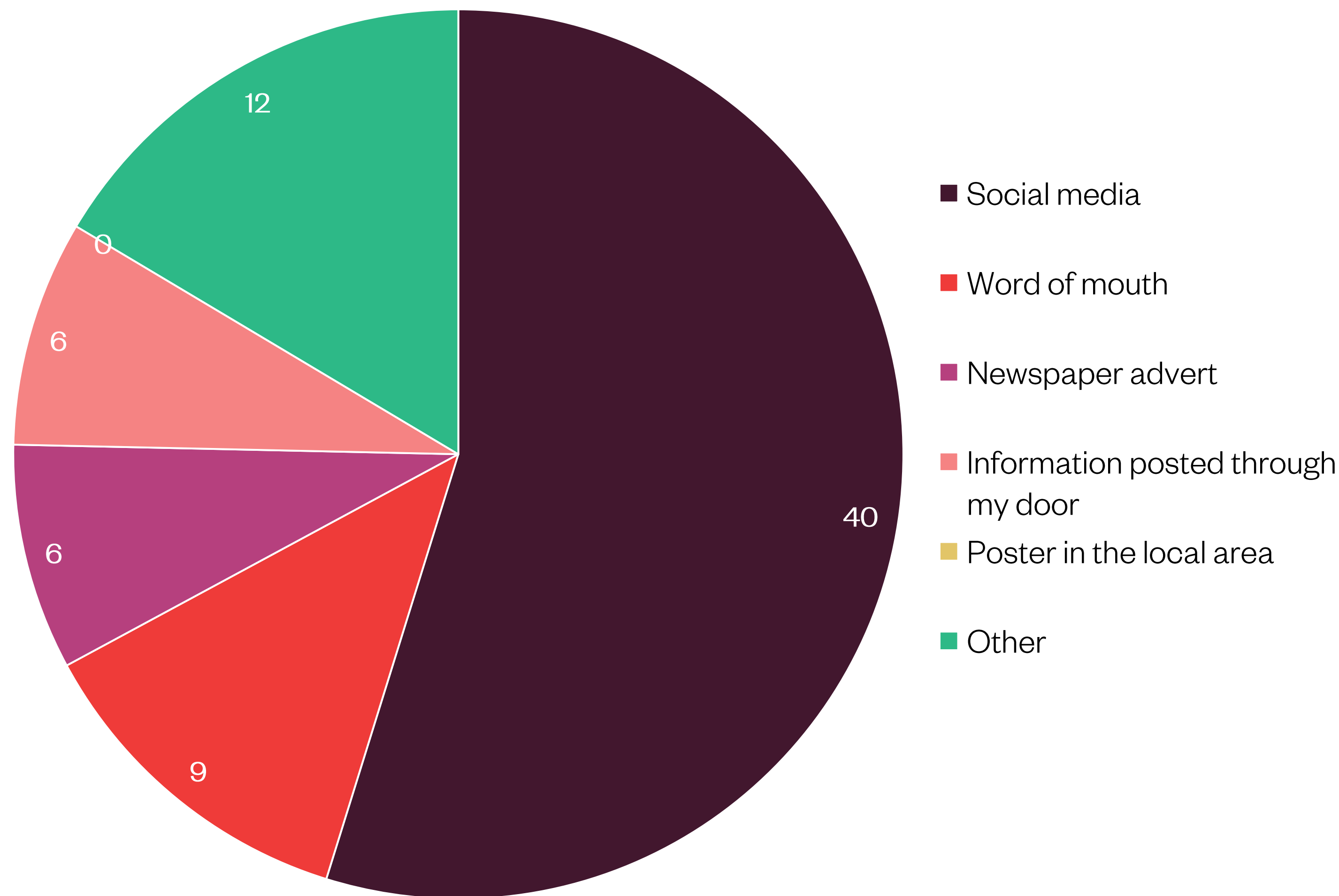
“Shopper”

“East Herts resident”

“I live in a nearby community”

2. How did you hear about this consultation?

This question received 73 responses. 55% of respondents heard about the consultation via social media, 12% heard via word of mouth, 8% heard via newspaper advert or information posted through the door and 16% heard via other methods including email and the East Herts newsletter. 0% heard about the consultation via posters placed in the local area.



Other

“Email”

“East Herts newsletter”

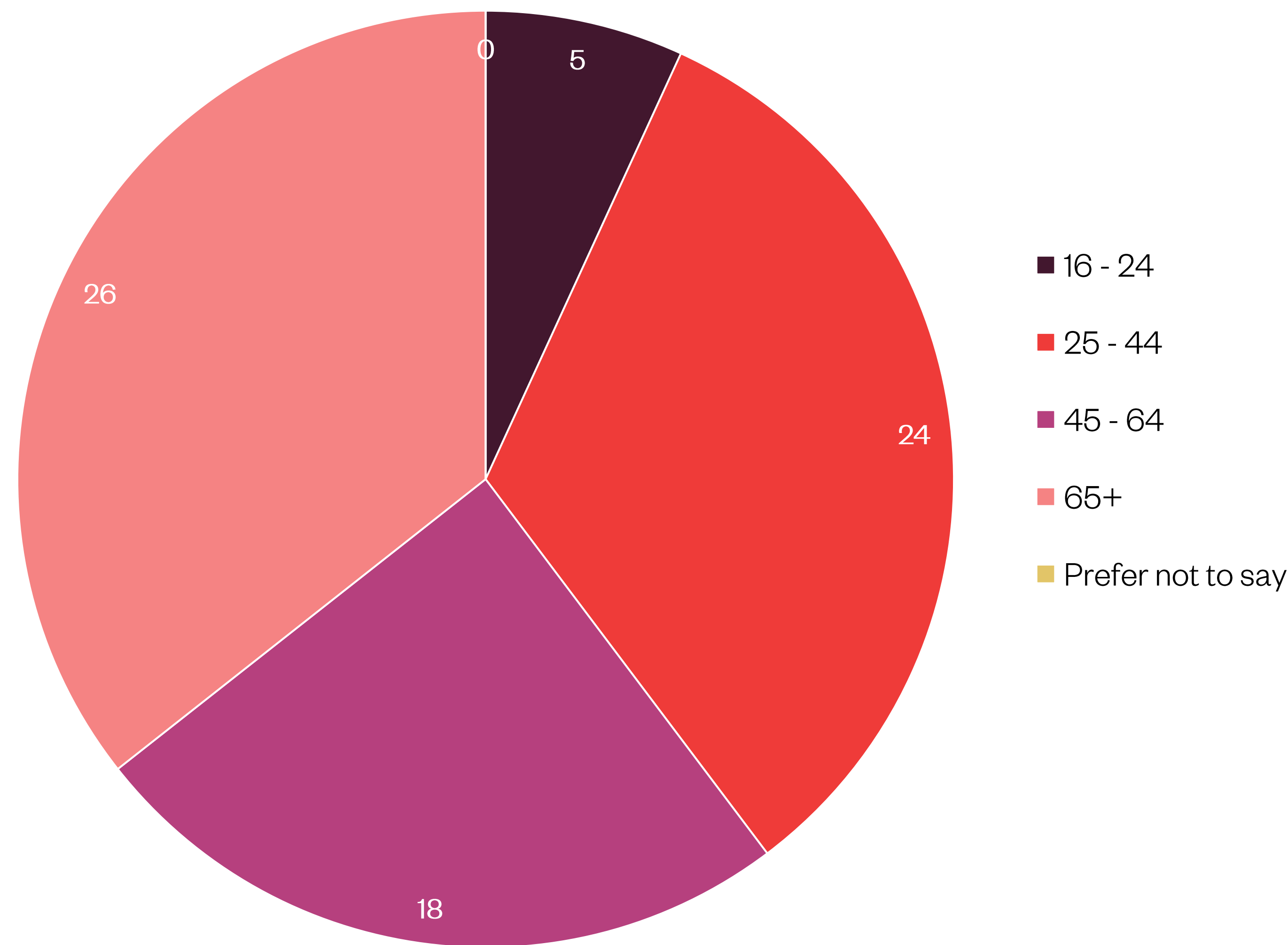
“Comedy club”

“An article in Bishop’s
Stortford Independent”

“Website”

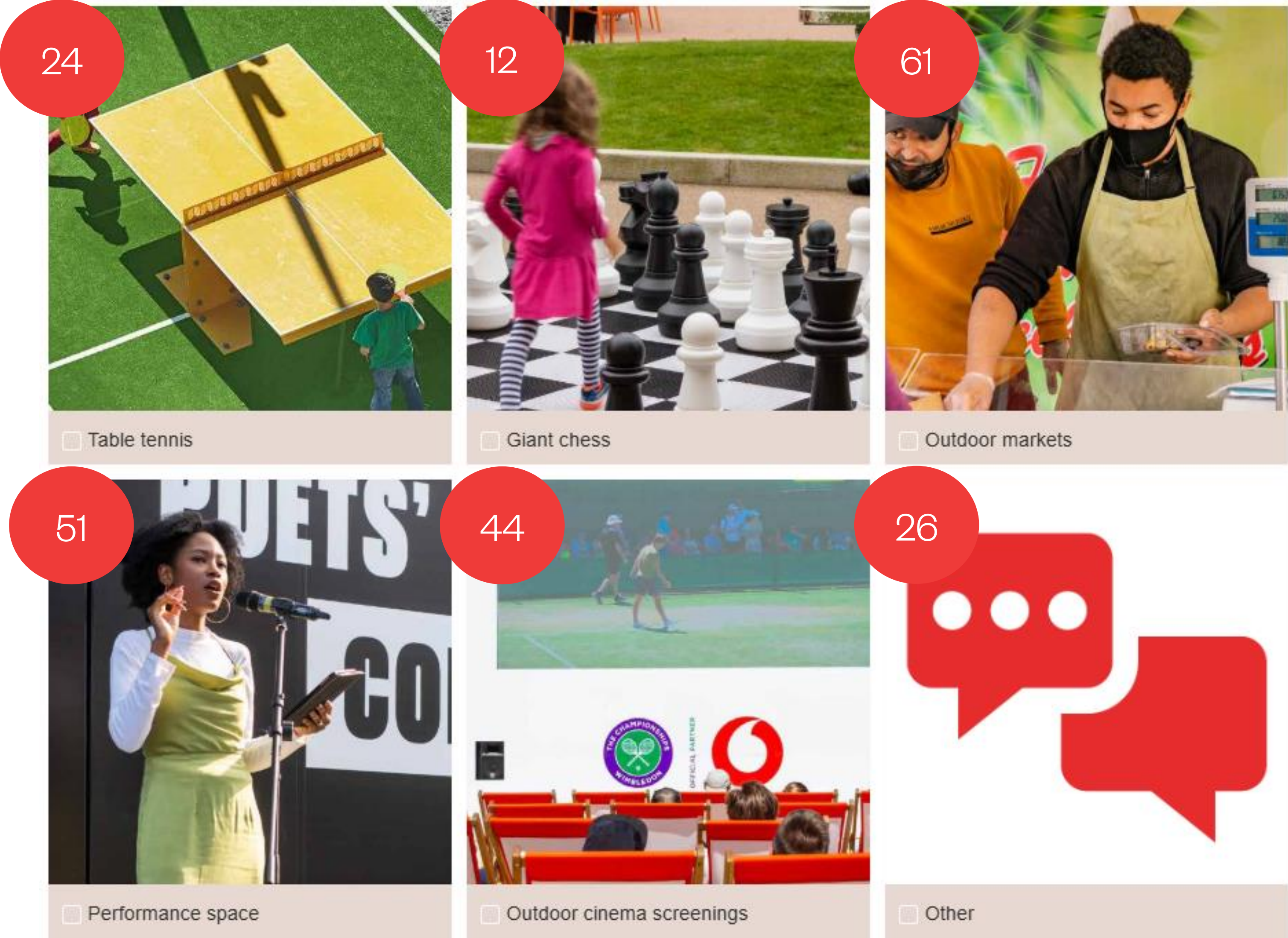
3. What is your age?

This question received 73 responses. Most respondents (36%) were from the 65+ age group, closely followed by 25 – 44-year-olds (33%). A quarter of respondents were from the 45 – 64 age group (25%) and some respondents were also from the 16 – 24 age group (6%). All respondents provided their age, with none opting for ‘prefer not to say’.



4. What types of activities would you like to see in the public square and spaces?

This question received 73 responses. Respondents were able to select as many options as they wished, with ‘Yes’ being selected 194 times overall. The most popular option was outdoor markets with 61 expressions of support, closely followed by performance space which was selected 51 times. The least popular option was giant chess, selected only 12 times.



Other

“Hired out space for activities”

“Covered area for sitting, picnic benches to give shade in hot sun, and rain cover in wet and winter weather”

“Gym”

“Pub/pub garden”

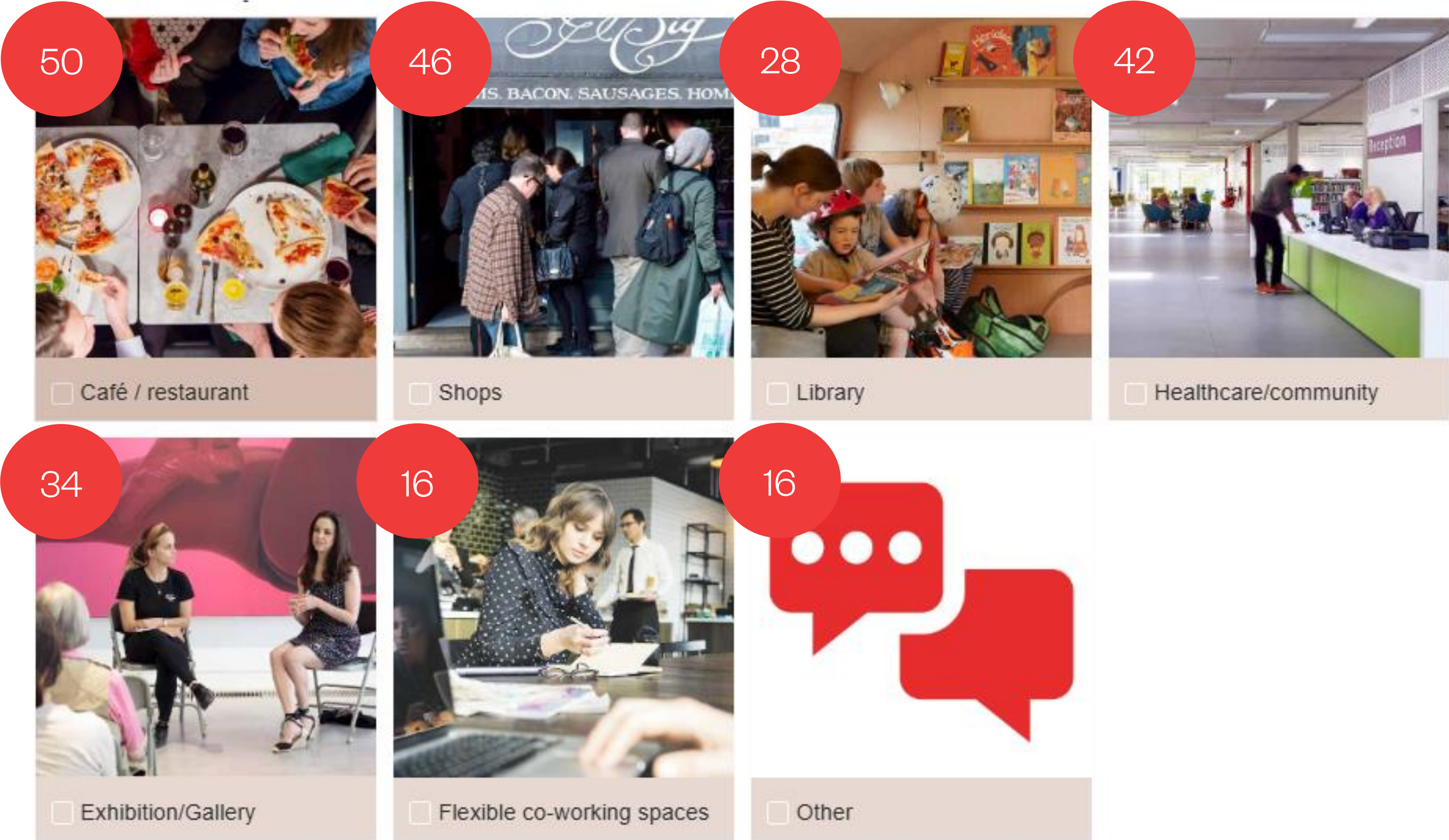
“Soft play for small children”

“More sport activities that can take place small area”

“Be able sit and look at historical castle mound”

5. What types of uses would you like to see in the ground floor commercial spaces?

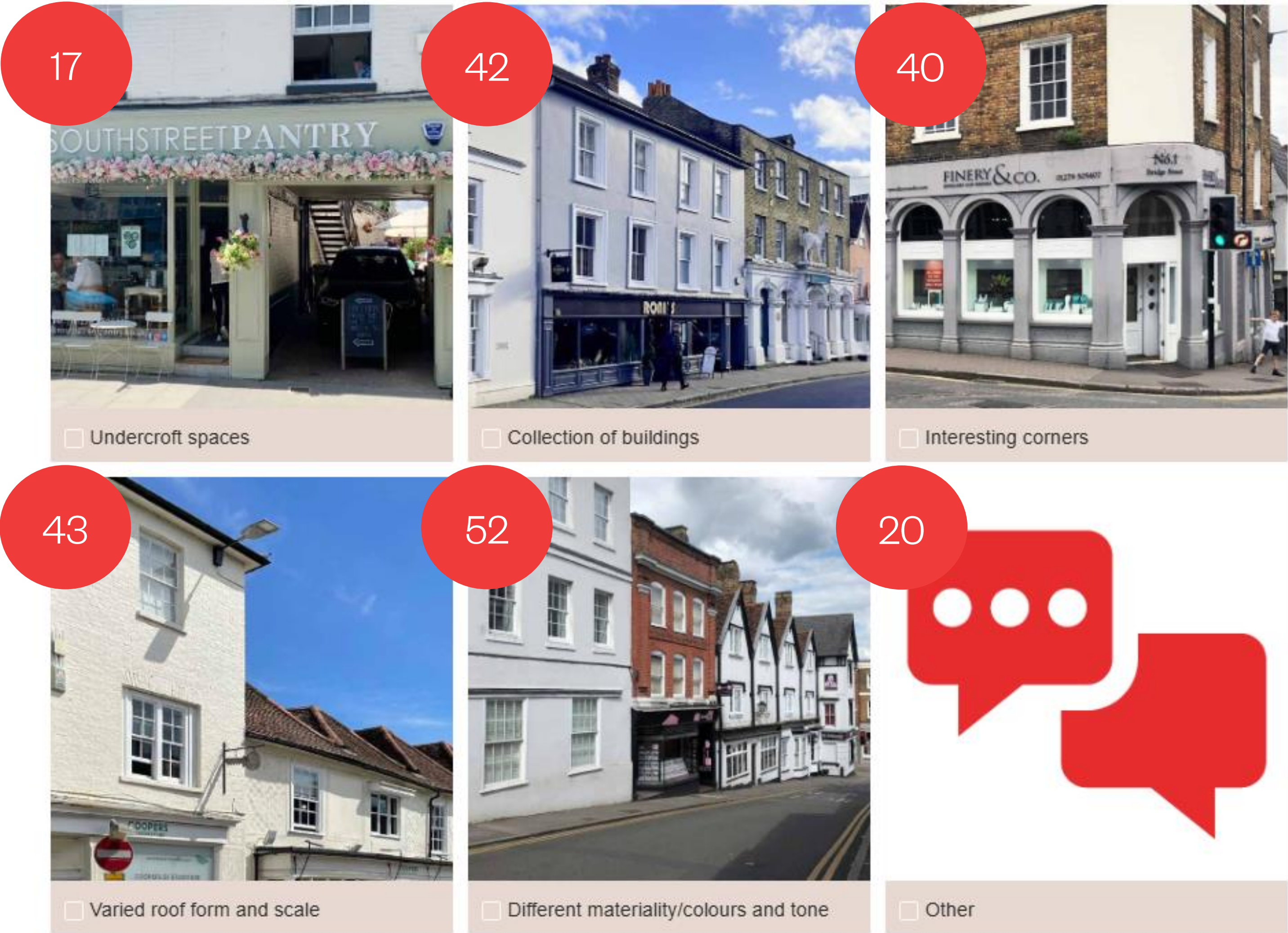
This question received 73 responses. Respondents were able to select as many options as they wished, with ‘Yes’ being selected 235 times overall. The most popular options were Café/restaurant with 50 expressions of support, closely followed by shops (46) and healthcare/community (42). The least popular option was flexible co-working spaces, selected only 6 times.



- Other
- “Independent retailers”
 - “NHS hub is good, moving library to site is vital, connection to repurposed Water Lane Hall”
 - “Cinema, restaurants that can make use of open space outside”
 - “Useful to have council office and place for those signing on so they don’t have to travel to Hertford as at present”
 - “Any shops to enhance and encourage the retail sector”
 - “Sports bar”

6. What elements of local buildings do you think best capture the character of Bishop's Stortford and would like incorporated into the design of the masterplan?

This question received 73 responses. Respondents were able to select as many options as they wished, with 'Yes;' being selected 214 times. The most popular option was different materiality/colours and tone (52) and the least was undercroft spaces (17).



Other

- “Timeless design”
- “Medieval rooflines”
- “Nothing over 3 storeys high to fit in with the area”
- “Green roofs, fine grained facias, varied facades – to complement North Street”
- “Curves, gable ends, pitched roofs, solar panels, Juliet balconies or similar”
- “Natural, traditional materials but used in high-quality sustainable modern design”

7. Do you have any other comments?

46 respondents left additional comments. Some comments mentioned more than one theme – each mention of a theme has been counted and is included in the tally below. A total of 6 recurring themes were mentioned, with transport being the most common with 16 mentions. Amenities (14) and height/massing (11) were also commonly referred to.

Theme	Number of mentions	Sample of comments
Transport	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none">“Create a cycle access to the Old River Lane site direct from the Northgate End car park junction with Link Road.”“Need to ensure that local bus services are changed so that they service the bus stops adjacent to the site.”“Strongly support the new Waitrose access...would love to see a pedestrian crossing to the north of the roundabout to connect north of the square with the community space/café and park to the east!”“The main concern with this proposed development is the impact it will have with closing off the current road access to Waitrose car park and having it off the link road.”
Amenities	14	<ul style="list-style-type: none">“BS has more than enough shops, cafes and restaurants.. Community facilities and activities are the way forward.”“There should be a large community space with guaranteed area for the future theatre as originally intended.”“More spaces for people to hang out/gather for leisure or work that are free.”
Height and massing	11	<ul style="list-style-type: none">“Preference for no more than 4 storeys.”“One of the main things to preserve is the view to the castle mound from other locations in the town.”“We do not need more flats or high-rise buildings.”
Materiality	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none">“Respect the character of North Street and Windhill.”“The aesthetic appeal of these buildings is key and a must for such a central position.”“Something modern to make the beautiful old parts of Stortford stand out.”
Infrastructure	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">“Infrastructure not adequate, particularly healthcare services. We do need more GP practices.”“We need a hospital that works for the local community. An ED is massively needed due to the community expanding massively.”
Sustainability	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">“I would like to see a commitment to renewable energy generation and green roofs on the site, as well as swift boxes.”
Other	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">“Buildings must have real and effective sound proofing and attenuation of external noise from cinema and performances together with suitable ventilation.”“Would have been useful to share the materials at the in person events.”

Next steps

Next steps

- Project team to reflect on feedback received and use this to inform development of masterplan.
- Further consultation and engagement to take place in Autumn 2025.

