



Macclesfield Town Centre

Strategic Regeneration Framework: Report of Consultation

Prepared for:



June 2019

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In light of the recent Referendum concerning the UK's membership of the EU, we are now in a period of uncertainty in relation to many factors that impact the property investment and letting markets. At this time organisations involved in the industry are reflecting on the potential implications of the UK leaving the EU. Since the Referendum date it has not been possible to gauge the effect of the impact on rental and capital values, along with other elements affecting property appraisal. Cushman & Wakefield continues to closely monitor market developments and trends in order that we can provide clients with the most up to date advice. The views contained in this document are provided in the context of this market uncertainty and as such our estimates and opinions are susceptible to change. Development appraisal results are particularly sensitive to changes in key variables such as cost and values. Accordingly we advise that clients have regard to this risk and may need to commission further advice before acting on the opinions expressed.

1.0 Introduction

Purpose of Consultation

- 1.1 Between 13th February and 13th March 2019 Cheshire East Council, supported by the consultancy team led by Cushman & Wakefield, OPEN and WSP, formally consulted on its newly drafted “Strategic Regeneration Framework” (SRF) for Macclesfield Town Centre.
- 1.2 The purpose of the SRF is to set out a clear vision, principles, key objectives and recommended actions for the future regeneration of the town centre, and to provide the confidence needed to bring forward investment, jobs and economic growth.
- 1.3 The consultation gathered feedback on this draft SRF, to see whether consultees felt it was fit for purpose, and to identify how it could be refined and improved. The comments and responses received have led to direct changes and modifications to the SRF in its final form.

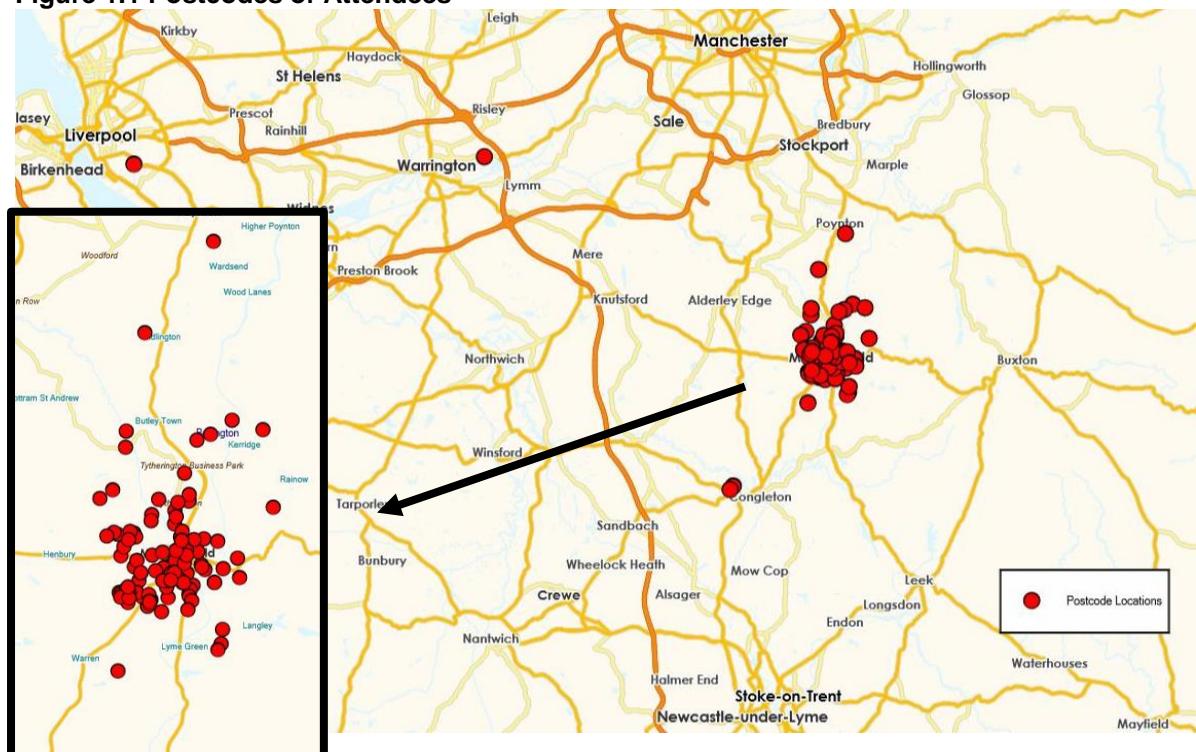
Consultation Methodology

- 1.4 Responses to the draft SRF were requested via an on-line consultation questionnaire, which asked structured quantitative and qualitative responses to each element of the document including Vision, objectives, character areas, illustrative framework and actions, together with views on the overall document as a whole (see Appendix B).
- 1.5 As set out in the Statement of Consultation (Appendix A) the consultation was widely promoted as follows:
 - Press Notice in the Macclesfield Express on 13 February 2019;
 - Media release resulting in coverage in outlets such as Place North West, Cheshire Live, Macclesfield Express, I Love Macc website, Cheshire East Council Team Voice newsletter, Cheshire Independent, and various Twitter feeds;
 - Posters erected at sites around the town centre including: Macclesfield Library, Macclesfield Customer Centre, Grosvenor Centre, Macclesfield Visitor Information Centre, Macclesfield Leisure Centre and on lampposts in key streets within the town centre;
 - Information banners erected in Macclesfield Grosvenor Centre;
 - Local organisations sent media release, copy of SRF, posters and images and link to consultation on website and asked to raise awareness via their communication channels e.g. websites, social media, notice boards etc;
 - Email to 1,100 Cheshire East residents as members of the Cheshire East Digital Influence Panel in surrounding wards;
 - CEC media team raising awareness via social media;
 - Council officer visits to Macclesfield College (26.2.19), Kings School and East Cheshire Eye Society (27.2.19);
 - In the “In Focus” section on the Council’s website homepage; and
 - On the Council’s consultation webpages.

Drop In Event

- 1.6 The consultation was supported by a drop-in consultation event at the Grosvenor Shopping Centre on Saturday 16th February 2019 attended by the Council and its consultants. The event raised awareness of the Draft SRF, summarised its content via engaging consultation boards, and promoted the opportunity for stakeholders to complete the consultation questionnaire online. It also facilitated the opportunity for people to ask questions and raise concerns directly with the SRF team.
- 1.7 The event was attended by around 130 people¹. Figure 1.1 shows the postcodes of people who attended. Whilst there are a couple of outliers from Liverpool, Warrington and Congleton, there is clearly a local focus with the vast majority of attendees coming from Macclesfield.

Figure 1.1 Postcodes of Attendees



- 1.8 In total, 264 consultation responses were received on the draft SRF, including:
 - 238 online survey responses
 - 2 paper survey responses
 - 24 additional formal written responses
- 1.9 Overall, the feedback on the draft SRF through the consultation questionnaire was positive with the large majority of respondents (199-208 responses) agreeing that the draft SRF was good (79%), clear (70%), ambitious (66%) and comprehensive (65%).

¹ Signed in

Purpose of this Paper

- 1.10 This Report of Consultation provides a summary of all consultation survey responses received and identifies the ways in which it is proposed to refine the SRF document in response.
- 1.11 A revised full draft SRF for the Town Centre will be prepared which, where appropriate, incorporates these suggested amends, ensuring that local views have been taken into account and had a material consideration and impact on the final document.

2.0 The Draft SRF Vision

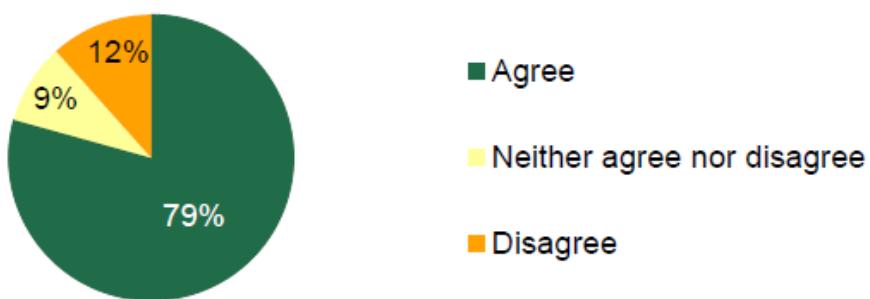
- 2.1 The draft SRF set out a draft vision for Macclesfield Town Centre as follows:

Macclesfield - a town that celebrates its quirkiness.
Green, creative and connected. A home to innovators, entrepreneurs and independents.
Thriving, diverse, distinctive and inclusive. Rich in heritage and culture, with outstanding employment opportunities and nestled in stunning countryside.

Quantitative Questionnaire Response

- 2.2 The consultation questionnaire asked respondents “**how strongly do you agree or disagree that this is a good vision for Macclesfield Town Centre?**” (**Question 1**)
- 2.3 A large proportion (79%) ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘tended to agree’ that this is a good vision for the Town Centre, with just 12% in disagreement.

How strongly do you agree or disagree that this is a good vision for Macclesfield Town Centre?



Number of responses = 198

Qualitative Response and Changes to the SRF

- 2.4 The questionnaire provided the opportunity for respondents to expand upon “**How do you think this vision could be improved?**” (**Question 2**)
- 2.5 142 people commented via the questionnaire, however only 66 of the responses received related directly to the question regarding the overall vision or specific elements within it:

Overall Vision	
Comments	Response and Change to SRF
Many agreed with or were positive about the draft SRF vision indication that it does not need improving (14 comments)	Positive response supported by the 79% stated to be in agreement that this is a good vision for Macclesfield. No change - vision broadly supported
The main concern surrounds the ability to deliver the vision (12 comments) with issues around funding, clear actions and previous disappointment raised	Understandable concerns, which will be picked up within the SRF actions and delivery plan. The Vision is intended to be aspirational and not focussed on delivery. This is covered in the Delivery Plan. No change to vision but ensure delivery is covered in actions and delivery plan.

Overall Vision	
Some felt the vision was too generic or vague, or should be bolder (5 comments)	Numerous stakeholder consultations have sought to identify a vision that is distinctive to Macclesfield. No change to vision
Others questioned the value of having a vision at all (3 comments)	A vision is an appropriate means to guide future strategy and ensure all stakeholders are focused on the same aspirations for the town centre No change to vision
A small number found the vision hard to relate to or difficult to understand (3 comments)	Provide greater introduction to the Vision
The vision must be flexible in order to respond to future structural change (2 comments)	The draft vision for Macclesfield provides an aspiration for the future of the town centre regardless of structural changes in the market or wider economy. This issue is covered in the other aspects of the SRF. No change to vision
The vision could be replaced with a Neighbourhood Plan (1 comment)	The SRF and its vision does not form part of the Local Development Plan nor does it in any way preclude the preparation of a separate Neighbourhood Plan. No change to vision

2.6 Comments related to more specific elements of the draft SRF vision were as follows:

Specific Elements of the Vision	
Comments	Response and Change to SRF
A notable number of respondents did not like the adjective “quirkiness” (13 comments). Some were unsure what it means, considered it to be a subjective word or considered it to have negative connotations of being peculiar, odd, ad hoc, unintentional, bloody minded, backward looking or reluctant to move with the times. Suggestions for an alternative included “unique”, “originality”, “individuality”, “progressive”, “radical” or “singularity”.	“Quirky” was an adjective that was frequently used as a positive reference to Macclesfield throughout the previous stakeholder engagements. Quirky is defined in the Cambridge Dictionary as “unusual in an attractive and interesting way”. However, it is clear from the consultation that it divides opinion and may not be interpreted as intended. Given the scale of response to this single word within the SRF vision, the case for a more agreeable alternative was considered, but suggestions including ‘individuality’ and ‘original’ were deemed too bland and go against the aspiration for Macclesfield to be distinctive. No change to vision but definition of ‘quirky’ added as footnote

Specific Elements of the Vision	
Comments	Response and Change to SRF
“Connected” was the second most commented upon element of the draft vision (9 comments). It was suggested that Macclesfield is too focused on rail connectivity and there is a need to strengthen connectivity by road, public transport, walking and cycling. One felt that ‘connected’ was too ambiguous - does relate to transport links or many stakeholders and networks? Along this theme there was also calls to improve connectivity for local communities and surrounding countryside.	The word “connected” is intended to encompass all of these elements. The vision aspires for Macclesfield to be well connected by all transport modes and to all users and surrounding destinations. It is recognised that aspects of connectivity do need to be improved but this is dealt with in other aspects of the SRF. No change to vision
The theme of “green” (7 comments) was considered ambiguous by some, or to have been included out of expectation. A few mentioned the need for stronger emphasis around ‘sustainability’ or the ‘green economy’ particularly when considering future development.	The word “green” is intended to incorporate not just the theme of sustainability but the recognition that Macclesfield is surrounded by beautiful countryside and green spaces within the Town Centre. No change to vision but mention of sustainability picked up in next point.
A number considered that the vision could be improved through greater emphasis of the “traditional and modern” theme (7 comments). Comments centred around “complementing the traditional but inspired by the new”, “modernisation without losing heritage feel”, “celebrate past while moving to a sustainable future” and “inspired by the past but connected to the future.”	These are valid and constructive comments. Revise vision to include an additional line ‘Cherishing its past, striving for a sustainable future’
Some commented that the vision should be more people focused (4 comments), both recognising the strong community and social capital of Macclesfield and that it must appeal to all groups.	These are valid and constructive comments. People are at the heart of the vision and drawn out explicitly within the objectives. Add ‘social’ to the vision – ‘green, creative, connected and social’

3.0 The Draft SRF Objectives

3.1 The starting point must be that the basics are done well in Macclesfield and that it must be clean and safe for all users. We must however go beyond these basics if the centre is to thrive. The Draft SRF sets out 8 objectives for the town centre which together ultimately seek to ensure that the retail heart of Macclesfield thrives:

- **Grow our town centre population** - building the right residential accommodation to attract and sustain a diverse community
- **Grow and diversify our leisure and evening economy** - to balance the existing retail dominated central offer and attract a wider audience and support new resident desires. Encouraging people to spend more time and money in the town. Building upon our existing impressive events calendar
- **Make more of our connectivity** - to attract residents, workers and visitors who want a base from which to access our local world class businesses as well as those who want access to the Peak District, London and Manchester. Capitalise on strategic opportunities such as HS2 to unlock and accelerate growth
- **Support economic growth aspirations** - our strategic location makes Macclesfield a great base for small and medium sized businesses to co-locate and collaborate with each other and the world class businesses in our hinterland
- **Harness our distinctiveness** - make better use of our assets - such as town and country, rivers and canals, Georgian architecture. Provide reasons, services and experiences that can only be found in Macclesfield
- **Cherish our historic buildings and repurpose our underutilised assets** - to diversify our offer and attract a wider range of occupiers to the town
- **Enhance the town centre environment** - making it greener, more distinctive and a celebration of local creativity
- **Raise aspirations and change perceptions** - get better at promoting all that the town has to offer and encourage new entrants to invest

Quantitative Questionnaire Response

- 3.2 Respondents were asked “*thinking about how important these objectives are for the regeneration of Macclesfield Town Centre, how do you rank each of the objectives in order of priority from 1 (most important) to 8 (Least important)?*” (Question 3)
- 3.3 “Enhance the town centre environment” was ranked as the most important objective by the 199 consultees that responded with an average rank of 2.3 out of 8 (where 1 is the most important). Thereafter, respondents ranked “cherish our historic buildings and repurpose our underutilised assets” as second most important with a rank of 3.0 out of 8.
- 3.4 “Make more of our connectivity” and “grow our town centre population” ranked 4.7 and 4.4 out of 8 respectively, placing them as the lowest priority objectives of the respondents.

Average rank of each of the draft SRF objectives in order of priority from 1 (most important) to 8 (least important)?



Number of responses = 199

Qualitative Response and Changes to the SRF

3.5 Consultees were asked "*how do you think these objectives could be improved?*" (**Question 4**) and "*is there anything you feel is missing from these objectives?*" (**Question 5**). A total of 119 and 121 responses respectively were received to these questions. However, the responses received generally overlapped in their commentary and so they have been combined in order to glean a more coherent analysis and response:

Improving Objectives - Overall	
Comments	Response and Change to SRF
Responses confirming agreement with draft objectives (9 comments) including recognition of challenges in respect of limited budgets.	Positive response No change to SRF objectives
A further 20 comments stated that nothing was missing from the objectives, or that the comments had been noted within the previous question.	Positive response No change to SRF objectives
A number of responses felt that the objectives could be improved by making them more specific and identifying how they can be achieved (14 comments) including adding clear measures; setting out the capital, skills and resources required; focusing on specific areas; delivery strategy and considering how the objectives are interlinked.	Understandable concerns, which will be picked up within the SRF actions and delivery plan. The Vision and Objectives are intended to be aspirational and not focussed on delivery. No change to objectives but ensure delivery plan is clear in respect of actions, resources and measures of success

Improving Objectives - Overall	
Comments	Response and Change to SRF
Some considered the objectives difficult to understand (5 comments) owing to the use of jargon or a belief that they are meaningless. Simplifying the objectives was suggested.	Objectives to be revisited to consider if any 'jargon' can be removed without losing the essence of the message.
A total of 6 comments referenced greater consultation or local democracy to enhance the objectives.	Both the draft SRF and the previous 5 year vision and strategy for Macclesfield have been consulted upon with all comments taken on board through the SRF process. No change to SRF objectives
2 comments challenged the overarching statement that 'all the objectives ultimately seek to ensure that the retail heart of Macclesfield thrives' on the basis that modern town centres require social, cultural and leisure experiences to be as important as retail, not just in respect of footfall but in creating identity and character.	The vision and objectives seek to be flexible to future market trends and promote the success of the town centre as a whole. The detail within the 8 identified objectives expand upon this but this is a constructive point on which to be clarified. Update SRF to read "Recognising that whilst retail needs to continue to play a key role in the town centre, fundamental changes to the sector means less retail floor space is needed in going forward. The purpose of this SRF is to create a town centre where social, cultural, leisure, business and other uses and experiences not only support the retail function but are seen as equally important."

3.6 Comments deemed to relate to specific draft SRF objectives are considered as follows:

Improving Objectives - Specific Objectives	
Comments	Response and Change to SRF
Despite being the lowest ranking in terms of priority, the objective to ' make more of our connectivity ' received the most comments (59) in specific reference to: Public transport (20 comments) - The need to link Macclesfield to surrounding local villages and in the evening via extended and more frequent bus and rail services was considered vital to attracting people to the town centre and supporting the local and evening economy. This could also reduce congestion and parking needs. One respondent recognised that there is currently no incentive for bus or rail operators to extend the service and so intervention will be required. A couple also suggested park and ride facilities. A few respondents did not agree with the HS2 reference, fearing that it could marginalise Macclesfield at the expense of Crewe.	The number of comments received in respect of improving public transport, road connectivity and parking suggests that this is of greater importance to local stakeholders than the ranking of objectives has suggested. The challenges in respect of local public transport provision has been well documented within the SRF and local providers have been engaged. Transport experts WSP are tasked with reviewing connectivity and movement across the town centre as part of the SRF. They will be identifying actions to improve road accessibility within the delivery strategy. The importance of local bus and rail connectivity will also be covered within the delivery strategy together with that of more pedestrian and cycling friendly routes and facilities.

Improving Objectives - Specific Objectives	
Comments	Response and Change to SRF
<p>Parking (16 comments) - Parking responses sought to encourage town centre footfall through adequate cheap or free parking in convenient locations. The importance of providing/retaining disabled parking was also raised and the need for a clear parking strategy was identified by one.</p> <p>Road accessibility (14 comments) - Comments included the need to improve connectivity to Greater Manchester, enhance signage and reduce traffic and congestion within the town centre, particularly for large vehicles and during the day.</p> <p>Cycling and walking (9 comments) - The need to give greater priority of movement to pedestrian and cyclist was raised by some including safer road crossings, cycle lanes and more pedestrian areas making this the first choice for short journeys.</p>	<p>The need for a town centre wide parking strategy has been identified within the delivery plan of the SRF. This will consider and try to address those concerns raised.</p> <p>The objectives are seeking to consider connectivity at the strategic level and are not intended to identify how they will be delivered at this stage – no change to objectives</p> <p>Ensure delivery plan adequately considers road, public transport, walking and cycling, and the requirement for a parking strategy which considers location, price, quality, type and usage including resident and disabled parking, charging points and car pools.</p>
<p>The 'grow and diversify our leisure and evening economy' objective attracted many comments (40) despite ranking third in order of priority.</p> <p>Almost all comments (32) were to identify the type of leisure facility sought by the respondent including cinema; youth facilities; food and drink; more events; sport facilities; theatre; museum; 5* hotel; public toilets; and community space.</p> <p>Further comments (8) sought to raise awareness of the wider leisure and tourism offer including making the most of the Peak District (including views), National Trust properties and Macclesfield Forest.</p>	<p>The comments and ideas in respect of the leisure and evening economy are welcomed and it is clear that there is broad support for the objective of growing and enhancing this sector in Macclesfield. Whilst, the objectives are not intended to provide a list of specific uses, those suggested will inform future thinking.</p> <p>Revise object to 'grow and diversify our leisure, cultural and evening economy'</p> <p>Events are already specifically mentioned within the objectives, but could include mention of leisure facilities - "Encouraging people to spend more time and money in the town through new leisure uses including food and drink"</p> <p>The SRF is focused on the town centre rather than wider attractions, but the importance of proximity and views to the Peak District is not underestimated - "Build upon our impressive events calendar and proximity and views to the Peak District"</p> <p>The Delivery Plan will advise on steps required to support the delivery of more leisure investment in the town.</p>

Improving Objectives - Specific Objectives

Comments	Response and Change to SRF
<p>Comments in respect of the objective to 'enhance the town centre environment', which was the highest ranking priority objective, totalled 34 comments and covered three broad themes:</p> <p>Green space and public realm (15 comments) - Considered important to enhancing the town centre environment. Suggestions focused on more trees, planting and green spaces in which to sit and meet. This could also serve to attract visitors, improve wellbeing and air quality. Green space and public realm must keep pace with proposed development and be high quality. 'Make it greener' was not considered specific enough objective which should also reference 'green/blue infrastructure'.</p> <p>Providing a safe environment (10 comments) - Some felt unsafe within the town centre, especially in the evening with key concerns being anti-social behaviour, homelessness and drinking.</p> <p>Cleanliness (9 comments) - Street cleaning, litter and weeds were mentioned as contributing to dirty streets and poor impressions, particularly around Silk Street. Car parks and shop fronts were also considered to require greater cleaning and maintenance.</p>	<p>Many of these comments in respect of providing a safe and clean environment are about 'getting the basics' right in Macclesfield Town Centre. The draft SRF is clear that the "<i>starting point must be that the basics are done well... that it must be clean and safe for all users</i>". However, the draft objectives seek to go beyond these basics, and must do so if the centre is to thrive. Notwithstanding this, the comments are a reflection of the current perceptions of the town and the importance of attaining and maintaining a clean and safe environment should not be taken for granted. The actions to support this will be addressed within the delivery strategy.</p> <p>The creation of new and enhanced green spaces and public realm are considered by OPEN throughout the emerging SRF but could be expanded upon within the objectives.</p> <p>Expand upon this objective - 'making it greener, more distinctive and a celebration of local creativity through our high quality blue and green infrastructure, green spaces and public realm'</p> <p>The delivery strategy will set out where this is to be targeted and how this is to be implemented and could include the recommendation of a Green Streets Plan but must also acknowledge the on-going cost and delivery of maintenance of any new public realm or green infrastructure.</p>
<p>'Grow our town centre population' attracted 15 comments. A couple stated it was essential for Macclesfield's future but another that new housing was irrelevant without the facilities to support it. Requests were made for the consideration of housing needs of overlooked groups including older people, singles, working couples and young families. Social housing and live-work accommodation was also mentioned. Some raised the need for housing to be affordable and suggested the conversion of retail voids. Ensuring energy efficiency was also suggested. One highlighted the contribution South West Macclesfield could play and another the importance of considering the existing population as well as the new.</p>	<p>The responses indicate that the principle of growing the town centre population is generally supported. The objective seeks to respond to the comments identifying the need to diversify the local housing offer through "building the right residential accommodation to attract and sustain a diverse community." Different housing types, tenures and target markets are implicit in this statement and the product delivered will largely be determined by the market, financial viability and practicalities of individual site/premises, but must be of good quality and appropriate design.</p> <p>Update objective to "building the right mix of high quality residential accommodation of appropriate design to attract and sustain a diverse community"</p>

Improving Objectives - Specific Objectives	
Comments	Response and Change to SRF
Despite the objective to ' cherish our historic buildings and repurpose our underutilised assets ' ranking second highest in order of priority, relatively few comments (16) were received in response. Comments made sought to ensure good quality new and refurbished buildings, or compelled action in response to derelict buildings through repurposing, demolition or CPO. Planning policy should be adhered to when protecting Macclesfield's unique historic environment and decision making timescales reduced to allow sites to be cleared quickly.	The relative lack of comments in respect of improving or missing elements of this objective imply stakeholder support. Further, comments received seek to strengthen the aspirations established and will be picked up within the delivery strategy. The reference to unique assets could strengthen this objective – “to diversify our offer, celebrate our distinctiveness and attract a wider range of occupiers to the town”
Comments (8) in respect of the objective to ' support economic growth aspirations ' were focused on supporting local businesses through the creation of new jobs and an attractive business environment, provision of office space and support to start up and independents, including within the creative and digital sectors.	Broad support for this objective with comments seeking to strengthen or deliver its aspirations, although there is potential to simplify the wording of this objective: Simplify objective to “Support businesses, create jobs and develop skills – Maximise Macclesfield’s strategic location and create the right business environment for small and medium sized businesses to co-locate and collaborate with each other and the world class organisations in our hinterland” The way in which economic growth can be supported will be considered within the delivery strategy.
No direct comments were made in respect of the objective to ' raise aspirations and change perceptions '. However, it's purpose to 'get better at promoting all that the town has to offer and encourage new entrants to invest' did receive a small number of comments (6). More specifically, identifying the need for funding and investment to deliver the SRF and for investment to be of the 'right kind'.	Whilst this objective ranked mid table in terms of stakeholder priorities, there were a lack of comments. This is likely to be because those who responded and engaged with the consultation exercise are already passionate about the town. Action is needed to focus on those who are not yet engaged in the town centre. No change to this objective
No direct comments were made in reference to the objective to ' harness our distinctiveness ', although elements of its aspiration to make better use of our assets and to be distinctive were picked up in comments to the other cross-cutting objectives.	No change to this objective

- 3.7 In addition to the comments considered above, a series of comments were received that do not directly relate to one of the existing objectives, but provide an indication of some of the themes that stakeholders would like to see considered:

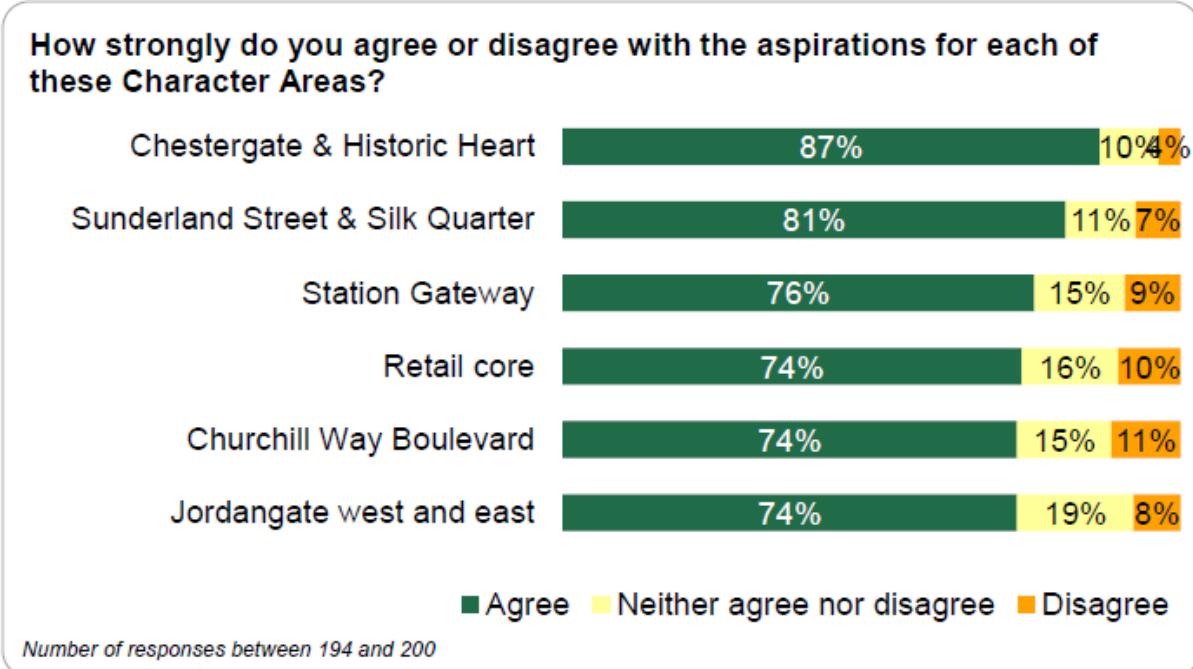
Improving Objectives - Other Comments	
Comments	Response and Change to SRF
12 comments were made in respect sustainability . Some stated that sustainability should be 'at the heart of' or 'the central theme' of all of the objectives. Other comments were more specific including energy efficient development; maximising renewable energy; reducing carbon footprint; improving air quality; waste management schemes; electric vehicle charging points; SUDS, retention ponds , green walls and roofs; waste management schemes and celebrating local produce.	<p>Sustainability is of increasing importance and awareness. Whilst the objectives are not designed to identify specific sustainability actions, which will be picked up within the delivery plan, they should reflect upon the theme of sustainability if they are to be relevant both now and in the future.</p> <p>Sustainability is at the heart of the strategy and this aspiration is now picked up within the overarching vision "striving for a sustainable future."</p> <p>Sustainability added to the overarching vision to woven through the wording of the objectives</p>
Reducing retail rental levels and/or Business Rates for small businesses or all received 10 comments.	<p>Whilst the impact of high rates and rents is recognised, particularly within the challenged retail sector, the setting of rates and rents is beyond the control of the Council or the SRF. There have been some changes to small business rate relief recently, but the focus will be on lobbying Government to support access to funding to deliver change and support businesses.</p> <p>No change to SRF objectives</p>
A number of respondents (10 comments) suggested that the objectives should 'put people first' and recognise the importance and value of Macclesfield's strong local community and voluntary groups. This could include local stakeholders working together or encouraging diversity to enhance the social and community profile.	<p>This consultation process has sought to engage Macclesfield's many and varied stakeholders to ensure views are considered and there is local buy-in to the delivery of the vision and objectives. The principle of being involved/engaged will come out further within the Delivery Plan.</p> <p>The word 'social' has been added to the vision to reflect the importance of local people.</p>

4.0 Character Areas for Regeneration

- 4.1 The draft SRF identifies 6 character areas within or adjacent to the town centre with unique characteristics, and sets out brief aspirations for each.

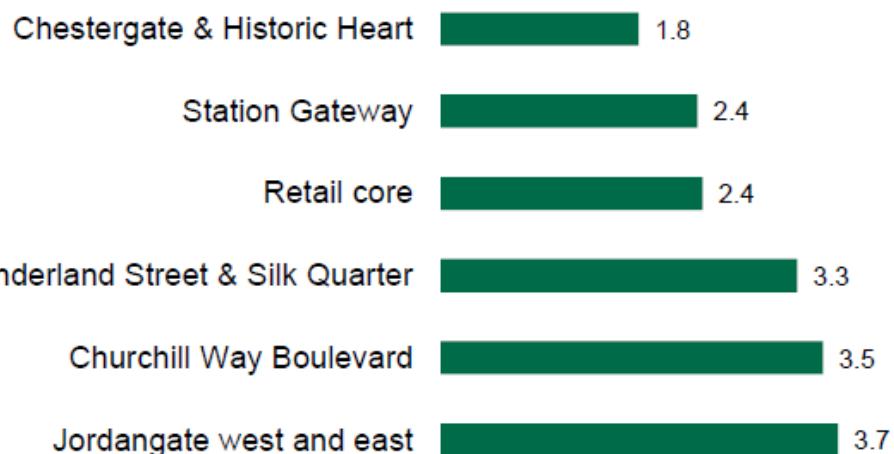
Questionnaire Response

- 4.2 The questionnaire asked respondents "*how strongly do you agree or disagree with the aspirations for each of these character areas?*" (Question 6).
- 4.3 Overall, the majority (74%-87%) of the 194-200 respondents to this question 'strongly agreed' or 'tend to agree' with the aspirations for all of the identified character areas. The aspirations for 'Chestergate and Historic Heart' received the greatest proportion of positive responses (87%) and least in disagreement (4%), followed by 'Sunderland Street and Silk Quarter' with 81% in agreement and just 7% disagreeing.
- 4.4 Whilst still largely supported, the 'Retail Core' and 'Churchill Way Boulevard' character areas received the lowest proportion of responses in agreement with the aspirations (74% each) and the highest in disagreement (11% and 10% respectively).



- 4.5 Respondents were also asked "*thinking about how much of a priority each of these character areas is for regeneration, how do you rank each area from 1 (top priority for regeneration) to 6 (bottom priority for regeneration)?*" (Question 7)
- 4.6 Aligned with the responses above, 'Chestergate and Historic Heart' was ranked the most important character area for regeneration by the 193 respondents, with an average rank of 1.8 out of 6 (where 1 is the top priority). Thereafter, respondents ranked 'Station Gateway' and 'Retail Core' as the second most important priority character area for regeneration, with an average rank of 2.4 out of 6 in both cases.

Average rank of each of the character areas for regeneration in order of priority from 1 (most important) to 8 (least important)?



Number of responses = 193

Qualitative Response and Changes to the SRF

- 4.7 Finally, respondents were asked “**how do you think these plans for the character areas could be improved?**” (**Question 8**), providing an opportunity for a more descriptive response.
- 4.8 A total of 114 responses were received to this qualitative question. Positively, 18 responses (16%) were supportive of the aspirations for the identified character areas. Such comments included “there are some very strong, well considered ideas here”; “they are well articulated, thoughtful, hang together well and are coherent”; “All great ideas”; “they are fine...let's hope some of them get done”. These comments suggest no further changes to the character areas are required.
- 4.9 However, 2 negative comments were received suggesting to “scrap them and start again” and “the areas should focus much more on how and why they will be used by residents and visitors”. The purpose of the character areas is to support the preparation of the illustrative framework. Actions will focus on how residents and visitors will interact in different parts of the town.
- 4.10 6 comments raised concerns that the character areas cover too broad an area of the town centre and that there should be greater focus on a single core or ‘flagship’ area that has the greatest potential to attract and retain businesses and footfall. Once this is achieved, attention can be turned to more peripheral areas in order to prevent focus and initiatives being spread too thinly. In response, we would argue that the character areas help to identify and define the different roles each area of the town centre performs, both now and as the focus in the future. They are not intended to dilute the aspirations for the town centre as a whole and the importance of the central ‘core’ areas are appreciated. It also supports the thinking on the actions which will be prioritised in terms of key areas.
- 4.11 Comments in respect of each individual character area are summarised below. The Station Gateway and Retail Core character areas attracted the greatest level of response, indicative of their importance to stakeholders as also identified in the prioritisation question.
- 4.12 A number of more general comments were also received which do not relate specifically to any of the individually identified character areas. These are therefore picked separately and incorporated in to the responses to Question 14.

Improvements to Character Areas	
Comments	Response and Change to SRF
<p>Station Gateway</p> <p>18 comments were received in respect of the station gateway around the following themes:</p> <p>Multi-storey parking (7 comments) - This proposal was not popular with respondents owing to concerns that it would “attract even more cars and look hideous”; be “potentially out of character”; “at odds with improving the station environment”; “would spoil the initial view looking up to the town”; and would spoil the “iconic view”. Some also commented that multi-storey car parks are generally unpopular, particularly with older people.</p> <p>Waters Green (7 comments) - Comments were generally supportive of the proposals for public space at Waters Green with some commenting that it is “a vital gateway for the town” where unattractive car parking currently dominates. It could form a “natural amphitheatre” with views of St Michaels Church and the hills, encouraging people to “linger”. A couple highlighted that the space should be “green” but one wished to retain the area as parking and another stated that traffic must still be able to traverse the Green to access the Surgery and bus station.</p> <p>Station improvements (4 comments) - Some sought improvements to the station including an eastern access, a high level pedestrian route to the retail core and enhancing the Victorian style.</p>	<p>Amend SRF to make clear that any proposal for multi-storey car parking will be sensitive to the views and character of the area and consider options for screening such as green walls.</p> <p>Comments are generally supportive of the proposal to “re-instate a public space at Waters Green” within the SRF.</p> <p>Update SRF to add public ‘green’ space and reference importance of continued access in response to comments.</p> <p>The aspirations for the Station Gateway include ‘improving the environment outside the station and sense of arrival’. However, these comments concern improvements to the station itself. Whilst this is an aspiration, it is reliant upon the very limited funds of Network Rail and cannot be implemented by the Council itself. The change in operator of the West Coast Main Line may present an opportunity to lobby for some spend and improvements. The Delivery Strategy will include this action.</p>
<p>Retail Core</p> <p>This character area received 13 comments:</p> <p>Residential (5 comments) - A number sought to encourage more residential within the retail core through use of upper floors and conversion of existing buildings, with a couple even suggesting it should take priority over retail.</p> <p>Retail (4 comments) - There was a keenness to “retain and encourage new national retailers” within the retail core and ensure that “there are no empty shops” with suggestions including lowering business rates, removing retail voids, improving shop fronts and attracting small independent retail outlets.</p> <p>Physical environment (4 comments) - The need to renew, regenerate and modernise the retail core was raised by some as important in order to attract occupiers and appeal to visitors. This may require re-</p>	<p>The SRF recognises ‘some alternative uses such as food and drink and residential/office space on the periphery’. The comments received suggest the potential to strengthen the messaging around housing within the retail core - replace ‘on the periphery’ with ‘on upper floors and through conversion of existing buildings on the periphery’</p> <p>Comments support the aspiration for the retail core to continue to ‘function as the shopping area of the town’ - no change to SRF</p> <p>The importance of the physical environment to this area of the town centre is noted. Update the SRF, drawing out the need to enhance the town centre environment within the Retail Core through attractive public</p>

Improvements to Character Areas	
Comments	Response and Change to SRF
configuration. Making best use of the town's heritage will also support.	realm, greening and shop front improvements.
<p>Sunderland Street and Silk Quarter</p> <p>10 comments were received in respect of this character area:</p> <p>Traffic reduction (7 comments) - Proposals to reduce traffic on Sunderland Street via redirection to Silk Street were unpopular with some. Concerns related to access to the train and bus station, Aldi and Waters Green Medical Centre; increased traffic on London Road/Mill Lane/Park Green; the narrowness of the road; and impact on attracting interest.</p> <p>Identity (3 comments) – One commented that they would like to see a greater sense of identity in this area linked to the 'Silk Quarter'. The conversion of existing mills to residential or other uses and utilising the area around the War Memorial.</p>	<p>This element of the SRF appears to have been misinterpreted by some. The proposal is to divert unnecessary traffic via signage etc. rather than all traffic on Sunderland Street - change to 'reduce volume of unnecessary traffic on Sunderland Street' and reference importance of retained access.</p> <p>The character of this area is indeed reliant upon its history and heritage assets. More could be made of this identity within the SRF – update to include reference to the silk trade and use of heritage assets.</p>
<p>Churchill Way Boulevard</p> <p>A total of 6 comments were received covering:</p> <p>Green Boulevard (5 comments) - This aspiration provoked a mixed response with some liking the idea but others questioning its deliverability.</p> <p>Remaining comments included "the area west of Churchill Way should be deleted from the SRF" and "no new infill development".</p>	<p>The challenge of deliverability will be covered within the Delivery Strategy but the indication from the comments received is that of general support for all initiatives that support the 'greening' of the town centre – no change to SRF.</p> <p>The area west of Churchill Way is an important part of the boundary to the town centre and infill development will contribute to reinvigorating this area. As such, both should remain within the SRF – no change to SRF.</p>
<p>Chestergate and Historic Heart</p> <p>Despite this being the most highly prioritised character area, it only received 6 comments:</p> <p>Part of the Core (2 comments) - Some suggested that this area should form the true 'retail core' or be extended to include the southern part of Jordangate East, behind the Town Hall and Sparrow Park.</p> <p>Use of the Area (2 comments) - A couple raised the aspiration to make better use of the Butter Market, Market Place, the Town Hall and market area in the Chestergate Precinct.</p> <p>Pedestrianisation (2 comments) - Pedestrianisation of this area was an aspiration for a couple.</p>	<p>Parts of this area are different in characteristic to the traditional retail core but there is scope to extend this area – extend Chestergate and Historic Heart character area east on Character Area map.</p> <p>The SRF meets this aspiration through its "focus on the evening and cultural economy and the expansion of cultural and event activities" and the "refurbishment of existing historic buildings" - no change to SRF</p> <p>The SRF seeks to support the prioritisation of walking and cycling throughout the Town Centre. An action within the Delivery Strategy will be a review of the Town Centre TRO and</p>

Improvements to Character Areas	
Comments	Response and Change to SRF
	circulation across the town to support this aspiration – no change to SRF.
<p><u>Jordangate West and East</u></p> <p>4 comments were received in respect of the future use this area with respondents keen to witness the removal of the “large, ugly modern buildings” and a residential focus. However, the area should also develop naturally and therefore dependent on cessation of employment uses.</p> <p><u>Christ Church</u></p> <p>Whilst not included within the identified character areas, 4 comments were made to consider the inclusion of Christ Church and its Conservation Area based on heritage and housing uses and need for further investment.</p>	<p>These comments are broadly aligned with the existing aspirations for this character area as set out within the draft SRF - no change to SRF.</p> <p>Christ Church is an important heritage asset but outside of the physical focus of the town centre SRF and emerging Local Plan Site Allocations document. Further, many comments have been received throughout the consultation seeking even greater focus on the core area of the town centre. The wider area is highlighted in the illustrative framework component plan - No change to SRF</p>

5.0 Draft Strategic Actions

- 5.1 Draft strategic actions have been suggested and designed to support each of the draft SRF objectives. These have been tested through the consultation process.

Questionnaire Responses and Changes to SRF

- 5.2 Respondents were asked "***if you disagree with any of the draft strategic actions please explain why***" (***Question 9***).
- 5.3 A total of 62 responses were received in respect of this question, around a third of which (20 responses) did not disagree with any of the identified actions. A summary of the responses and any proposed changes to the SRF are as follows:

Disagreement with Draft Strategic Actions	
Comments	Response and Change to SRF
A total of 20 people stated that they did not disagree with the identified actions. Some added further positive messages including "all positive ideas"; each action "is well defined, realistic, sufficiently flexible and interdependent"; and "covers all aspects". However, a small number who agreed with the actions raised concerns around deliverability, funding and felt that they do not optimise the vision for Macclesfield.	Positive response to the identified draft actions. The actions seek to overcome issues of deliverability. No change to actions.
<u>Objective: Enhance the town centre environment</u> Action: Rationalisation of surface car parking which currently creates visual blight 7 comments responded directly to this action with key concerns being the need to retain existing surface car parks in order to aid accessibility and enable many of the other objectives in the SRF to succeed, at least until provisions are made for public non-polluting transport. One stated that existing surface car parking is often very busy and therefore justified, whilst another suggested that the appearance could be improved through planting, selective fencing and trees. Some felt that the alternative of multi-storey or decked car parking could cause visual blight of equal or greater measure to that of surface parking. Others indicated that many 'do not like' multi-storeys; people feel safer at night on a surface car park; and that they do not suit those wanting a quick 'nip into town'. Action: Ensure all development proposals conform to high quality design principles Two comments did not disagree with this action but felt that it is too vague and requires a definition of high quality e.g. a design guide and energy efficiency standards.	The SRF includes an additional action to 'consider a car parking strategy'. This needs to be strengthened to a requirement and should include consideration of utilisation, location, quality, cost, movement and public transport links across the town centre as a whole. The car parking strategy will identify the opportunities for different types of parking including resident and disabled provision. Multi-storey and decked car parks play an important role in some locations e.g. commuter parking. There are ways in which to reduce the visual impact of such facilities and the SRF states must 'conform to high quality design principles – no change to action ' The SRF is not intended to be prescriptive in respect of design – no change to action

Disagreement with Draft Strategic Actions	
Comments	Response and Change to SRF
<p><u>Objective: Grow the town centre population</u></p> <p>Action: Ensure town centre meets ‘everyday’ needs of a resident population including local services, health care and education provision</p> <p>Several comments (4) were received questioning if the town centre could cope with an influx of population in terms of parking, public transport, waste collection, amenities, hospitality and retail, schools and health.</p> <p>Action: Improve housing choice in terms of type and tenure to attract and sustain a more diverse community of occupiers attracted to town centre living</p> <p>One commented that any housing which is built must include affordable homes.</p> <p>Action: Consider the delivery of specialist housing for older people given accessible and well served location</p> <p>One respondent mentioned that well designed housing can be suitable for a diverse market and doesn't have to be 'specialist'</p> <p>Action: Exploit the opportunities presented by an enlarged catchment through large scale housing and population growth at SMDA by ensuring Macclesfield becomes their local shopping destination of choice</p> <p>Reference must be included to the use of 'safeguarded land' SW of the town.</p>	<p>This action seeks to ensure that the town is prepared to support a growing town centre population and picks up on these concerns - add ‘local amenities’ to action.</p> <p>Valid comment in respect of affordable homes which will be dictated by planning policy rather than the SRF. Add action - ‘Ensure appropriate provision of affordable homes within the town centre’</p> <p>Older person housing is a diverse and fragmented market incorporating numerous sub-sectors dependent upon scale of care required, some of which require ‘specialist’ facilities that are well suited to town centre locations - no change to action</p> <p>The SMDA area is already picked up within this action but could be made clearer through its full name - change to ‘safeguarded land at South Macclesfield Development Area (SMDA)’.</p> <p>In response to previous comments regarding over-reliance on retail - amend to ‘local centre of choice’</p>
<p><u>Objective: Grow and diversify our leisure and evening economy</u></p> <p>Action: Consider the potential for a new and accessible events space around the station gateway</p> <p>The comments received in respect of this action (4 comments) disagreed with the location of the proposed event space near the station. It was suggested that any events should take place in the town centre in/around the Town Hall so as to draw people into the town; increase the frequency of use of Market Place; raise the impact of events; and avoid bottlenecks around the station. There was also concern that an accessible event space around the station would clash with the need for more parking in response to HS2. One commented on liking the fair in its current location.</p>	<p>The aim is to identify a range of spaces in the town that could be made available for events, in addition to Market Place. The station gateway is an important area to ‘attract’ visitors due to its high visibility but could continue to be used at other times as green open space with some parking for example – add ‘multi-functional events space which complements Market Place’</p> <p>The focus of encouraging a café</p>

Disagreement with Draft Strategic Actions	
Comments	Response and Change to SRF
<p>Action: Grow the food and drink offer to support existing retail and create a café culture/evening economy</p> <p>One respondent was concerned if this meant 'cheap bars' and 'pavement drinking'</p>	culture/evening economy is on quality food and drink establishments in the early evening rather than the 'night time' economy that is the focus of concern here - no change to action
<p><u>Objective: Cherish our historic buildings and repurpose underutilised assets</u></p> <p>Action: Protect and maintain distinctive heritage buildings including but not limited to Town Hall, Police Station and Buttermarket and poor quality buildings such as the former Three Pigeons Public House</p> <p>5 comments were received in respect of this action. There was some disagreement with the element of this action which seeks to protect and maintain poor quality buildings with respondents stating that they should be knocked down to make way for new buildings which enhance rather than detract from the town centre (2 comments).</p> <p>In terms of implementation, one felt enforcement or CPO is required and another mentioned the need to work with all owners of heritage buildings to ensure they are all maintained and protected.</p> <p>Two commented that Christ Church should be included in the list of distinctive heritage buildings. Another felt that this action was too wide and needs to focus on a couple of individual assets that are in the key Churchgate and Market Place core areas.</p>	<p>There is merit to considering an alternative approach to heritage buildings in a poor state of repair - reword action to 'consider future potential of poor quality buildings such as the former Three Pigeons Public House on a case by case basis'</p> <p>Methods of implementation for challenging sites and premises are picked up in other actions including enforcement of Listed Building and Conservation Area status requirements, engagement with land/property owners and CPO - no change to actions</p> <p>Add Christ Church to list of historic cherished buildings</p>
<p><u>Objective: Make more of our connectivity</u></p> <p>Action: Maximize opportunities presented by HS2 proposals to drive future growth and regeneration</p> <p>Two respondents disagreed with this action considering it to be too long a time coming, if at all, to benefit Macclesfield within this SRF.</p> <p>Action: Redevelopment of station gateway to enhance first perceptions of arrival and provide clear routes into the town centre</p> <p>One stakeholder commented that deck or multi-storey car parking would actually negatively impact upon both the view from the station up to the town centre and wayfinding.</p> <p>Action: Lobby public transport operators to expand scope of destinations and timetable for bus and rail users</p>	<p>Delivery of HS2 is beyond the control of the Council. However the opportunity it presents should be harnessed.</p> <p>As stated, any redevelopment of the Station Gateway will seek to enhance perceptions and routes into the town centre. As such, care will be taken to ensure any proposals, for parking or otherwise, will not detract from the current position. Alternative parking locations may be considered - no change to action.</p>

Disagreement with Draft Strategic Actions	
Comments	Response and Change to SRF
<p>Whilst in agreement with this action, two commented that it requires funding commitment in order to implement, with one suggesting that this should come from the Council as part of a strategy to ensure good public transport links for all and an integrated time-table for rail and bus services.</p> <p>Action: Encourage greater pedestrian and cycle movement through enhanced routes</p> <p>3 comments in respect of this action included that this should not be at the expense of parking provision; that the action is too vague and should reference the need to increase funding to implement; and that cars should be removed from Churchill Way.</p>	<p>As commercially operated the greatest scope to lobby for improved public transport will come from the increased footfall and spend generated through the implementation of the other actions. Council subsidies do not often represent good value for money – no change to SRF</p> <p>Churchill Way is a primary route through the town centre from which it will not be possible to remove traffic, however the SRF does propose ways in which car dominance can be reduced - no change to actions</p>
<p>Objective: Harness our distinctiveness</p> <p>Action: Support independent retail and leisure businesses to set up and thrive</p> <p>Concerns remain regarding the over reliance on retail (3 comments) which some felt is no longer viable in light of changing trends as evidenced by empty shopping arcades and precincts. The suggestion is to do ‘something new’ or include a mix of uses including businesses.</p>	<p>Whilst retail trends have indeed changed, and the sector is likely to continue to face challenges, it remains an important contributor to our town centres. As such the action to support retail, alongside other uses as identified in other actions, remains valid – refine action to “support a wide range of independent, distinctive businesses”</p>
<p>Objective: Raise aspirations and change perceptions</p> <p>Action: Continue to engage and work collaboratively with key local stakeholder groups to support delivery of actions</p> <p>One respondent felt that there is ‘no collaborative working with any of the cultural and community stakeholders, and no forums where the mix is brought together to see who varied actors can support and build partnerships’.</p>	<p>This SRF consultation exercise has sought to engage local stakeholders and the aspiration identified within this action is to continue to do so - no change to action</p> <p>The delivery plan will identify new opportunities for collaboration</p>

- 5.4 Following on the questions around the actions, respondents were asked “**Which of the draft strategic actions do you think should be prioritised?” (Question 10).**
- 5.5 A total of 90 responses were received for this question, 13 (or 14%) of which were unable to prioritise any actions with 3 stating that it depends on which is easiest to implement, would have the most immediate impact or had funds available; and a further 3 stating that they are all equally important.

- 5.6 Many respondents chose to rank the objectives rather than the actions which sit below them. Of the 64 comments prioritising objectives, over a third (34% or 22 comments) prioritised 'enhance the town centre environment', followed by 'grow our town centre population' (15 comments), and 'cherish our historic buildings and reutilise underutilised assets' (11 comments). 'Raise aspirations and change perceptions' (1 comment) and 'harness our distinctiveness' (2 comments) were the least prioritised objectives. Interestingly, this represents a slight shift in the prioritisation of objectives established in Question 3, but given the more limited volume of responses and indirect interpretation of this question, it is not proposed to consider this to represent a change in the overall priority of the objectives.
- 5.7 Within the objectives, specific actions have been prioritised through the consultation process. Those that have attracted the greatest number of responses by far are in respect of 'supporting independent retail and leisure' (14 prioritised or 18%) and 'redevelopment of the Station Gateway' (13 prioritised or 17%). This indicates some alignment with the priority character areas being the more central retail focused areas of 'Chestergate and the Historic Heart' and the 'Station Gateway'.

Objective	Action	Responses to Prioritise
Enhance the town centre environment	Rationalisation of surface car parking which currently creates visual blight	7
	Support the 'greening' of the town centre through increased planting	3
	Ensure basics are delivered well - streets are clean and tidy	1
	Prioritise the physical enhancement of key gateways and corridors including the station and major car parks	1
Grow town centre population	Engaging with the private sector and social housing providers to deliver new high quality homes within the town centre through new build, infill development and refurbishment of underutilised and vacant buildings	3
	Following the recent announcement for a food hall in the former Picturedrome, grow the food and drink offer to support existing retail and create a café culture/evening economy that encourages increased spend and dwell time and appeals to the town's affluent catchment population	2
	Ensure town centre meets 'everyday' needs of a resident population including local services, health care and education provision	1
	Improve housing choice in terms of type and tenure to attract and sustain a more diverse community of occupiers attracted to town centre living - employees (particularly young professionals) from the highly skilled businesses in the local catchment (e.g. Alderley Park) first homes, singles, young families, downsizers, retired and older people etc.	1
Grow and diversify our leisure and evening economy	Explore scope to provide new leisure destination within the town centre but with flexibility to adapt to future changing trends	3
	An extended events strategy that builds upon existing success and the Town's distinctive and cultural assets	2
Support economic growth aspirations	Target SMEs in sectors of strength including science, finance, creative and digital and promote opportunities for collaboration	2
	Provide refurbished quality workspaces with appeal to smaller local occupiers across a mix of sectors within existing buildings recognising the viability challenges associated with new build	2

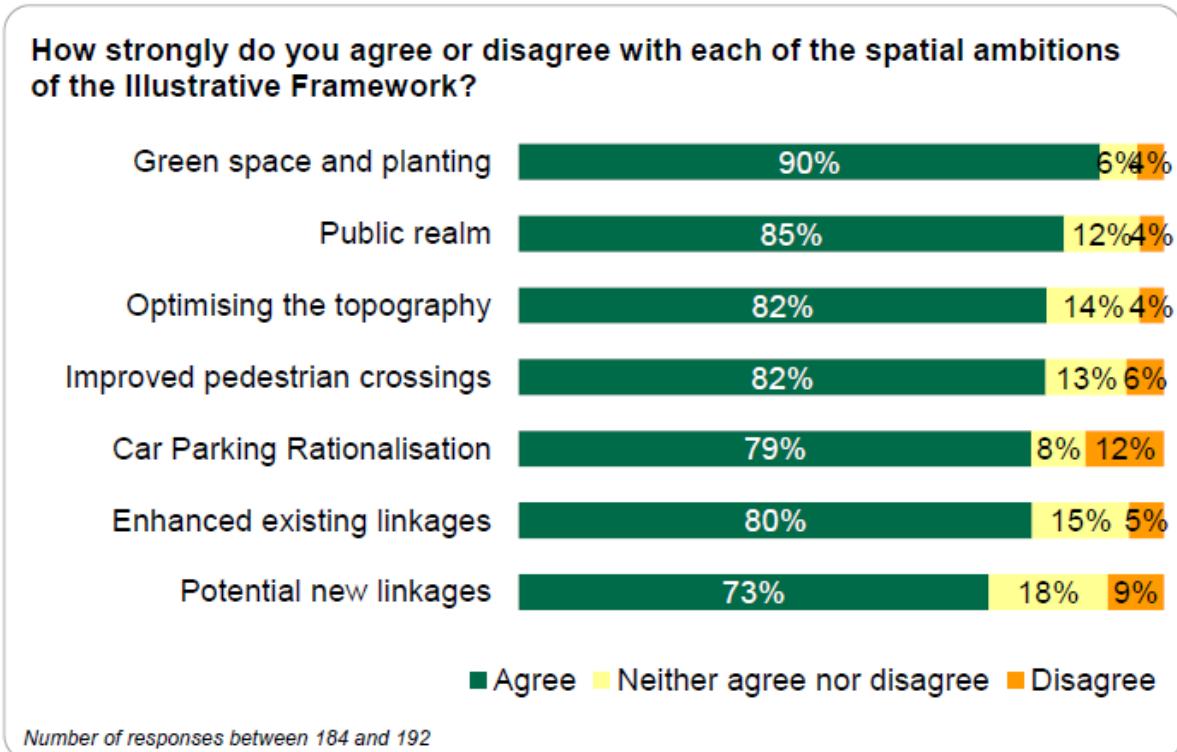
Objective	Action	Responses to Prioritise
	Work with existing major occupiers to understand their requirements and role they could play in supporting new investment	1
	Promote the excellent skills and labour market credentials of Macclesfield to inward investors	1
	Support establishment of creative and digital start up - potentially by supporting reuse of heritage buildings potentially on a temporary basis	1
Harness our distinctiveness	Support independent retail and leisure businesses to set up and thrive	14
	Build on and promote cultural, arts and heritage assets to encourage local tourism including the Silk Museum, Heritage Centre and the proposed Picturedrome	1
Raise aspirations and change perceptions	Continue to engage and work collaboratively with key local stakeholder groups to support delivery of actions	2
	Utilise key gateways to change perceptions for those who usually 'pass through' Macclesfield, for example through enhanced signage and physical environment at station and along key road corridors	1
Cherish our historic buildings and repurpose underutilised assets	Engage with land/property owners to encourage underutilised buildings and sites to be repurposed to attract new investment and occupiers into the town including residential, employment and cultural uses	2
	Protect and maintain distinctive heritage buildings including but not limited to Town Hall, Police Station and Buttermarket and poor quality buildings such as the former Three Pigeons Public House	1
Make more of our connectivity	Redevelopment of station gateway to enhance first perceptions of arrival and provide clear routes into the town centre	13
	Lobby public transport operators to expand scope of destinations and timetable for bus and rail users	6
	Encourage greater pedestrian and cycle movement through enhanced routes	5
	Consider a parking strategy which includes pay on exit and clear signage to guide visitors to the best place to park relative to their arrival point and purpose of visit	1
	Ensure good legibility into and around the town centre through improved signage and wayfinding both on foot and by road from the motorway	1
Total:		78

6.0 Draft Illustrative Framework

- 6.1 A draft Illustrative Framework is set out within the draft SRF which seeks to demonstrate how the proposed objectives and actions would manifest physically within the town centre. A summary of the 7 key spatial ambitions was also set out within the illustrative framework.

Questionnaire Responses

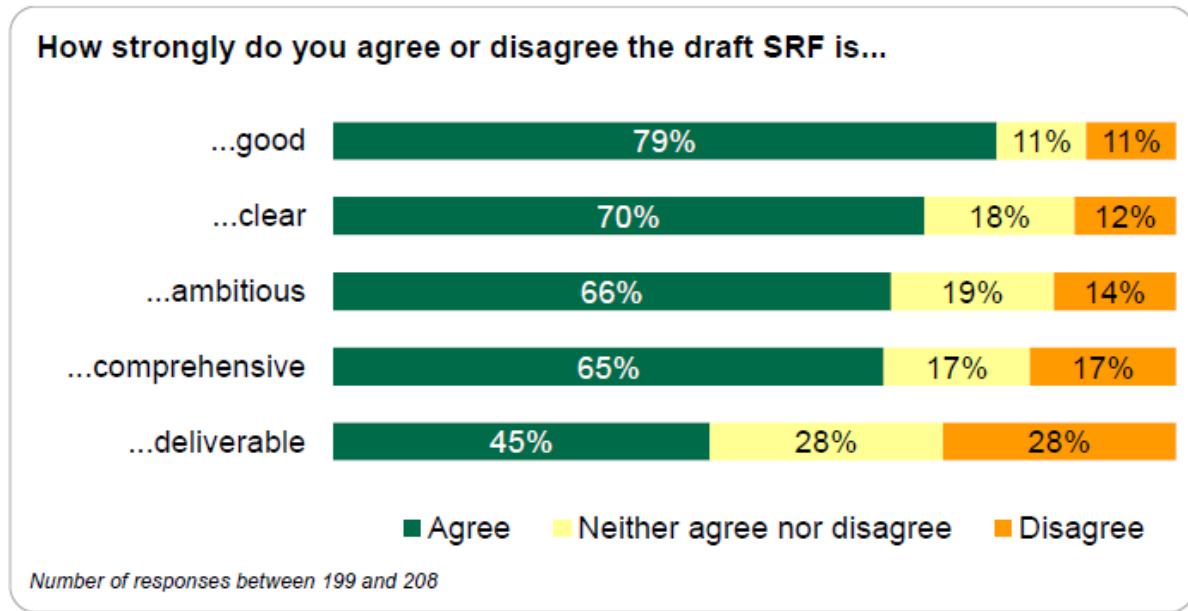
- 6.2 Respondents were asked "*how strongly do you agree or disagree with each of the spatial ambitions of the Illustrative Framework?*" (Question 11).
- 6.3 The response was broadly supportive for all of the spatial ambitions of the Illustrive Framework with 73% to 90% of the 184-192 respondents being 'strongly agreed' or 'tend to agree' with each. Enhancements to 'green space and planting' was most strongly agreed (90%), followed by 'public realm' (85%) and 'optimising the topography' (82%), each of which only received 4% of responses in disagreement.
- 6.4 'Car parking rationalisation' was largely supported (79% in agreement), but also received the largest proportion of those in disagreement (12%), although this is still a relatively small proportion.



7.0 Views on the Overall Draft SRF

Questionnaire Responses

- 7.1 Respondents to the consultation were asked “*generally speaking, how strongly do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about the draft Strategic Regeneration Framework? The draft Strategic Regeneration Framework is good; clear; ambitious; comprehensive; and deliverable*” (Question 12).
- 7.2 Overall, the feedback on the draft SRF through the consultation questionnaire was positive with the large majority of respondents to this question (199-208 responses) agreeing that it was good (79%), clear (70%), ambitious (66%) and comprehensive (65%).
- 7.3 However, there was clear concern as to the deliverability of the SRF, with less than half (45%) agreeing that it was deliverable and 28% responding that it was not deliverable. This clear but understandable concern will be responded to within the delivery strategy of the SRF at the next stage of its preparation.



Questionnaire Responses and Changes to SRF

- 7.4 The consultation questionnaire asked respondents “*should any aspect of the proposed SRF be altered, and if so in what way?*” (Question 13)
- 7.5 96 responses were received to this question. However, just 40 comments (42%) responded to the questions with comments specifically related to the overall structure or content of the SRF. The remainder raised or reiterated individual points picked up elsewhere within the consultation e.g. need a cinema or improve cycling routes. Those comments that do relate to the SRF as a whole are considered below:

Alterations to the SRF	
Comments	Response and Change to SRF
16 comments were received stating that no alterations to the SRF are required with some expanding that 'it represents a well thought through, well informed analysis of the issues, with some intelligent, ambitious but realistic solutions' and that it is 'making the most of what we have given budgetary constraints'. However, another reported that there is 'no point in commenting, no one ever listens'.	Positive response - no change to SRF
<p>The greatest number of responses (10 comments) concerned deliverability and the need for the SRF to identify and provide more detail as to how and when its vision, objectives and actions will be delivered. The lack of delivery mechanism is currently considered 'a weakness in the document'.</p> <p>Whilst a number determined the intentions of the SRF to be good, some commented that without securing funding support, it will not be deliverable. The availability and commitment of funding needs to be considered within the objectives and their prioritisation for delivery.</p> <p>Another delivery constraint mentioned is the need for the SRF to better articulate the strategy for who and how stakeholders (owners, landlords, tenants, Council, Government and local groups) will be engaged and incentivised to action.</p>	<p>Whilst these concerns are valid, the Consultation Draft SRF makes clear that "once these emerging actions have been consulting upon, they will be worked up in more detail to set out who needs to drive specific actions forward, how and when (immediately or in the short, medium or long term)". This should address these comments.</p> <p>Update delivery strategy in revised SRF</p>
Some commented (4 responses) that the SRF is currently too 'vague' or 'wide ranging'. Suggestions included making 'clearer what is proposed and how will be delivered' and focusing on achieving aspirations 'solely on the core areas' first before considering and consulting upon wider strategy. Stronger links to the Vision are required to make the SRF 'more bold and specific' but also recognise the importance of existing assets which are not then referred to throughout the remainder of the document e.g. getting the basics right, heritage and supporting events.	<p>Ensure actions and delivery strategy all relate back to the Vision and are clearly informed by the priorities emerging from the consultation process. The delivery strategy will also start to identify the specifics of implementation, making the SRF less 'vague' and more focused</p> <p>Revised Delivery Strategy</p>
4 comments reported that the SRF process should be informed by greater consultation. Comments included the need for the document to be 'inclusive and community led' and 'less disingenuous'. It should help local people 'achieve new things for the good of their town' for example through 'imaginative leadership' and a 'stakeholder forum for collaboration, partnership and delivery' without which the 'best plans will flounder.'	<p>Extensive consultation has taken place in respect of the SRF (as demonstrated by this document) and the previous Draft 5 year vision and strategy which has also been taken into account.</p> <p>Ensure consultation and engagement is a clear action within Delivery Strategy</p>
A few questioned the spatial extent of the current SRF (3 comments), more specifically - 'the boundary to the East of Sunderland Street does not make sense... would make	The spatial focus of the Macclesfield Town Centre SRF was agreed at the onset of the

Alterations to the SRF	
Comments	Response and Change to SRF
sense for it follow the natural boundary of the river'; the SRF 'should include the Christ Church conservation area' given that no agreement has been reached to redraw the town centre boundaries'; and that the SRF should 'consider wider population of Macclesfield beyond the town centre'.	project and has been informed by existing legislative and planning boundaries. Additionally, the suggestion of expanding the boundary to the east contradicts the more numerous other views suggesting the geographical focus of the SRF should be narrower - no change to SRF
A small number of comments (3) suggested that work on the SRF should cease to avoid 'any more money being wasted' on another attempt at regeneration; to replace with a 'Neighbourhood Development Plan that is truly inclusive'; or to 'start again with Macclesfield in mind, not history but future'.	The SRF is a holistic framework to guide future development and support investment in the centre. Indeed, it has already been used to support a bid to the Future High Street Fund.
One comment was received requesting the SRF to simplify its use of language	The SRF is intended to be a public document that is easy to read and understand. In finalising the SRF consideration should be made to ensure terminology is as accessible as possible

- 7.6 Respondents were also asked "***what, if any, additions to the document should be considered?***" (***Question 14***)
- 7.7 A total of 97 consultees responded to this question. The comments received to this question, more than any other, covered a wide range of topics and enabled the respondee to elaborate on their thoughts and ideas.
- 7.8 Throughout the consultation questionnaire, respondents fed back comments on what they would like to see in Macclesfield and other areas of consideration for the SRF. In some cases, these comments did not directly relate to the question being asked, and as such these have been combined here to provide a more comprehensive overview of additional comments received. This approach seeks to ensure that all comments are reviewed but not double counted and allows emerging 'themes' to be identified.
- 7.9 Together with the direct responses to question 14, these were 222 responses analysed here, often with multiple comments on varying themes. These have been reviewed and sorted into 'themes' with the number of comments in respect of each theme identified below, allowing the topics of greatest importance of those consulted to be identified.
- 7.10 Suggestions for town centre uses received a significant number of comments (31), which when combined with those received in respect of residential (22) and retail (22), makes a strong case for the future of Macclesfield Town Centre to be repositioned and diversified to create a mixed use destination that caters for a wide variety of needs. This is subject to ensuring that there is an appropriate car parking strategy for the town in place, which a recommendation of the SRF, with this emotive topic attracting a high number of comments (31).

- 7.11 Numerous comments were concerned about deliverability of the SRF (23). The consultation document made clear that a Delivery Plan will be put in place at the next stage to support implementation of the vision, objectives and actions set out within the SRF. Linked to deliverability, 12 comments concerned consultation, with most seeking more engagement and openness, but some illustrating ‘consultation fatigue’ and a desire for more ‘action’.
- 7.12 Improving walking and cycling and the creation of green spaces (both 21 comments) were of equal interest to consultees, closely followed by ensuring a safe, clean and tidy environment (19). These comments all seek to create a town centre that is welcoming, people focused and encourages increased dwell time.

Theme	No. of Responses
Town Centre Uses – cinema, cafes, restaurants, sports, theatre, town hall, retail, youth, events, markets, community groups and space	31
Improve Car Parking – cost, location, volume, type, quality, disabled, charging points	31
Delivery – ability, speed, actions, funding, delivery strategy, BID, Neighbourhood Plan, planning, resources, partnership	23
Residential – for and against, brownfield sites, conversion, above retail, affordable housing, social housing, older people, supporting amenities	22
Retail – fill voids, quality, multiples Vs independents, experience, rents and rates, hours, market challenges, indoor and outdoor markets	22
Walking and cycling – access, routes, signage, bike storage, crossing points, pedestrianisation, bikes on buses	21
Green – green spaces, new and existing, outdoor seating, planting and trees, landscape plan, covered areas, SUDS, air quality, biodiversity, public art	21
Safe, clean and tidy – general appearance, litter, dog fouling, wardens, lighting, security and CCTV, homelessness	19
Consultation – too much Vs too little, young people, communication, openness, experience from elsewhere, community led, forum	12
Business – encourage investment, local businesses, start ups, employment, incentives, modern workspace, offices, rents and rates	10
Peak District – branding, Cheshire Peak Town, Gateway to the Peaks, utilising views, promotion	9
Heritage Buildings – Restore Vs demolish, heritage signs, limit time vacant	7
Public Transport – bus times, destinations, links to villages, park & ride	6
Highways – traffic, safety, to support development, created by development, connectivity, links to communities	6
Promotion – raise image and profile, destinations, tourism, signage, SRF launch	6
Culture – performing arts, local history, heritage, events	5
Sustainability – environmental focus, all aspects, carbon footprint	3
Evening Economy – not night time/drinking, extend opening hours	2

- 7.13 Finally, respondents were given the opportunity to identify if “***any of the proposals in the document would adversely affect you directly, if so please explain in what way?***” (Question 15).
- 7.14 66 people responded to this question, however a large proportion of these were to state “no impact” (29 responses or 44%). An additional 2 were unsure at this stage owing to the SRF being ‘too vague’.
- 7.15 6 respondents stated that the SRF would impact upon almost all town centre users in some way, be that positively or negatively. Others noted positive impacts including spending more time in the town; easier commute; and supporting local businesses more.
- 7.16 However, very few of the comments received related to direct adverse impacts of implementing the SRF. The only ones that did related to movement and parking:
- **Disabled parking and access** - blue badge parking is currently inadequate and removal of car parks will further restrict my access to the town centre (4 responses)
 - **Parking** - lack of accessible, reasonably priced parking will continue to discourage me to visit (4 responses)
 - **Congestion** - new housing and other development will make town centre congestion worse for me (3 responses)
- 7.17 Given the scale of responses to the consultation, very few state that the proposals within the SRF would adversely affect them. Those that do, include concerns that cannot be directly evidenced to the SRF which ultimately seeks to ensure that Macclesfield town centre works better for everyone in the future. As such, no changes to the SRF are proposed in response to this question.

8.0 Additional Responses

- 8.1 In addition to the consultation questionnaire responses, a further 26 formal written responses to the Macclesfield Town Centre Draft SRF were received within the consultation timeframe. However, some were multiple submissions, reducing the number of unique representations to 20.
- 8.2 Given that these responses do not all ‘fit’ with the requested consultation questionnaire response making direct comparison challenging, and also to avoid any double counting from those that also completed the questionnaire, these responses have been considered separately.
- 8.3 These additional responses were predominantly from established organisations and groups representing a number of stakeholders (14 responses). The majority welcomed the opportunity to comment on the draft SRF and were supportive of the emerging framework.
- 8.4 Many of the comments received have already been picked up within Sections 1-7 above, but the additional responses and any resulting in changes to the SRF can be summarised as follows:

Theme	Responses	Response and Change to SRF
Vision and Objectives	Almost all additional responses were supportive of the draft vision and objectives established within the draft SRF with comments including “clear vision and bold and ambitious objectives”; “welcomed and... commended”; and “founded on a thorough understanding of the history and character of the town, whilst aiming to capitalise on its merits”. However, one was “disappointed” and another unsure what ‘quirky’ means.	Broadly positive response to the draft vision – no change to the SRF vision but definition of quirky added as footnote
Character Areas	Comments in respect of the identified character areas included: Jordangate – need to recognise the presence of valued and valuable housing of various types on Cumberland Street which should be retained. A hotel would form a better use of the views in the eastern area than residential. Retail Core – this area should be the priority and a town centre first approach is required (including no mention of Barracks Mill impacts). The conversion of retail voids should be encouraged and investment made in the indoor market and Grosvenor Centre car park. Events should be placed on an equal footing to retail in this area Chestergate – need to invest in the public realm and consider this area in respect of any retail related actions. Sunderland Street – the only character area to explicitly mention residential Station Gateway – leisure, food or drink uses	Importance of existing residential within the Jordangate area added to SRF. Text expanded to reference town centre first approach to new retail uses in retail core and suggested investment in indoor market and Grosvenor Centre Car Park. Reference to public realm improvements in Chestergate area added to SRF. Other Character Areas now reference residential. Focus for Station Gateway

Theme	Responses	Response and Change to SRF
	in this location would detract from the retail core. Residential and employment considered more appropriate.	realigned within the SRF to residential and employment development.
Enhance the town centre environment	<p>6 commented on this objective with a focus on new and enhanced green spaces including more planting, trees, biodiversity plus water fountains and public toilets to support, but being aware of the maintenance of such spaces required. Park Green, Waters Green and Castle Street were identified as areas of focus for improvement. Some of these 'pocket parks' are not identified in the SRF but create important green links.</p> <p>The suggestion of a Business Improvement District (BID) was also made.</p>	<p>Creation of new and enhanced green spaces are considered throughout the SRF but objective expanded upon and Delivery Strategy will set out how this will be targeted. Reference to green links now made within Illustrative Framework.</p> <p>Investigate support for creating a BID added to Strategic Actions and Delivery Plan.</p>
Grow town centre population	<p>Most welcomed this objective (13 comments) and the benefits provided to town centre footfall, supporting staff retention, reuse of brownfield and underutilised assets, and satisfying housing need. The new offer should support diverse communities including first time buyers, young families and older people by providing a mix of tenures including affordable housing. However, thought should be given to impact on traffic, conflicting uses with retail and evening economy and ensuring high quality and sustainable design. The exclusion of the Christ Church area and other large allocations to SMDA as an important contributors to residential growth was also noted.</p>	<p>Caution of residential impacts on existing businesses added to relevant Character Areas and Strategic Actions.</p> <p>Reference to other housing allocations made.</p>
Grow and diversify our leisure and evening economy	<p>Numerous comments (17) suggested ways in which the leisure and evening economy could be diversified including a good sized event space and full programme of events including activity based experiences that are of high quality and distinctive to Macclesfield, although reference to 'event space' within the SRF was considered vague by one. A few (3) were keen to open up the Town Hall as a heritage, cultural and emotional asset. New leisure, sporting, cinema and food and beverage uses were also proposed, particularly where they can be closely linked to the retail core and utilise views. Developing the evening economy raised concerns by one in respect of resourcing the increased demands for CCTV, street cleaning etc. and units being 'shuttered' during the day creating 'dead spots'.</p>	<p>Importance of linking new uses with retail core; exploring options for opening up the Town Hall to community; and creation of events information pack added to Strategic Actions.</p>
Support	5 comments received supporting this aspiration, particularly the nurturing of SMEs and creative	Importance of promoting a mix of workspace types of

Theme	Responses	Response and Change to SRF
economic growth aspirations	<p>and digital businesses. This could be supported through business support and the provision of appropriate workspaces with suggestions including innovation incubator, business centre in library and high quality repurposing of underutilised assets. In turn, increased skill levels will act as an incentive to inward investment and further business growth.</p>	<p>high quality expanded upon within SRF.</p>
Harness our distinctiveness	<p>2 comments were received in support of this aspiration with suggestions including maximising Macclesfield's position as the 'gateway to the Peaks' and the western end of the Silk Road. Investment in the Silk Museum and Christ Church were also mentioned.</p>	<p>Promote Macclesfield's positioning at the 'Gateway to the Peaks' and the western end of The Silk Road added as a Strategic Action.</p>
Cherish our historic buildings and repurpose underutilised assets	<p>12 comments received. The focus included intervention in problem sites and buildings including the Three Pigeons and Kings Head sites through enforcement or CPO for example. Redevelopment of Craven House was considered preferable to conversion by a couple. Other sites suggested for redevelopment included Sutton Castings Car Park and the former Halle Models site. Retention of Butter Market given its links to Market Place events was also raised. Other points included suggestion of a 'town trail' highlighting buildings of interest; encouraging schools to use educational visits of heritage/cultural sites and recognising the cost of sustaining heritage assets which also act as community spaces.</p>	<p>Enforcement and CPO already referenced in Strategic Actions – no change to SRF.</p>
Make more of our connectivity	<p>23 comments responded to the theme of movement and connectivity:</p> <p>Parking – a strategy is required to identify the quantum, quality and location needed to inform development, but preference to retain in central locations including Exchange Street. Duke Street and Grosvenor multi-storey were considered to have redevelopment potential but Churchill Way divided opinion. Consideration should also be given to retaining views (if decked); disabled spaces; shoppers with trolleys; resurfacing and remarking, and 'sprucing up'. In contrast to the questionnaire, only one response sought cheaper car parking.</p> <p>Public Transport – bus and rail stations on periphery of town with large gradients, further the SRF does not mention the bus station. There is a need to invest in the bus network particularly links to surrounding villages and in the evening. Reference to HS2 needs elaboration given uncertainties.</p>	<p>Expanded upon content of Parking Strategy within Strategic Actions. The Delivery Plan will provide more detail.</p> <p>SRF amended to retain and enhance Exchange Street Car Park.</p> <p>The importance of local bus and rail connectivity will be covered in Delivery Strategy. Bus station now referenced within Transport and Movement section of SRF.</p>

Theme	Responses	Response and Change to SRF
	<p>Traffic flow – into and around Macclesfield is extremely poor at peak times. Congestion and routes need to be considered before significant investment in new development is implemented. New link road to south and west could provide a solution. The current objectives and actions do not address traffic congestion or parking capacity.</p> <p>Walking and cycling – Silk Road and Churchill Way act as barriers to the town centre, particularly the residential areas to the west. Safe crossings, priority of movement, resurfacing and cycle routes will help to make walking and cycling the natural choice. Route from the station and River Bollin needs improving. The TRO should be reviewed to enhance the pedestrian environment.</p> <p>One suggested “improved connectivity to surrounding villages” should be an identified outcome of the SRF.</p>	<p>The need for a comprehensive movement strategy identified.</p> <p>An action within the Delivery Strategy will be a review of the Town Centre TRO.</p> <p>Prioritisation of pedestrian and cycle movement already raised within SRF including enhanced crossing points – no change to SRF.</p> <p>Improved connectivity to surrounding villages will be covered in proposed Movement Strategy.</p>
Other Objectives	<p>Sustainability – 5 respondents considered there to be greater consideration of sustainability required within the SRF including energy efficiency, low carbon, air quality, low carbon, public transport, local energy schemes, and smart technologies such as EV points.</p> <p>Retail – one suggested the need for a retail focused objective such as “supporting and enhancing the retail offering – to support existing retailers and encourage new retail proposals within MTC while resisting edge and out of centre retail schemes”</p>	<p>Sustainability added to the overarching vision and the wording of the objectives.</p> <p>New strategic action to ensure proposals future-proofed for emerging connectivity trends.</p> <p>‘Enhance the retail offer’ added as a new objective within the SRF.</p>
Illustrative Framework	<p>2 comments related directly to the Illustrative Framework and noted the need to action the physical enhancements identified, particularly some early action sites that could give confidence.</p>	<p>The Delivery Plan will guide the implementation of the Illustrative Framework.</p>
Consultation	<p>7 raised the desire for greater or more comprehensive consultation both through the SRF and in respect of the town centre generally. A couple felt that the existing stakeholder workshop groups were not open or inclusive and felt greater community, business, voluntary and faith sector engagement is required to implement the SRF. A collaborative forum could be an appropriate approach.</p>	<p>The SRF consultation undertaken has met formal statutory requirements and been held at a stage allowing genuine change and influence as a result of comments received. This can be evidenced through this Report of Consultation.</p> <p>The SRF is a strategic level document and there will be opportunities for wider engagement with a range of</p>

Theme	Responses	Response and Change to SRF
		stakeholders as specific projects and initiatives are progressed.
Delivery and Funding	<p>Whilst there was broad support for the draft SRF, 15 raised comments with regard to delivery and funding. Specifically, asking what tactical measures can be devised to action the SRF within a reasonable timescale. There is a clear need to ensure adequate funding to deliver the SRF. It is not clear what the Council's commitment is in terms of capital investment and resources but considered to be a lack of parity with Crewe. Opportunities include HSF and use of CIC to bid for funds the Council cannot. The need for a dedicated town centre resource/nominated officer to deal with minor town centre planning applications, act as town centre manager and promote Macclesfield was also raised.</p>	<p>The Delivery Plan will pick up on funding and implementation including the identification of a 'go-to person' for developers and investors.</p>

Appendix A - Statement of Consultation

Appendix B - Questionnaire

Appendix C - Respondent Profile

The below tables show number of responses to the consultation questionnaire, by gender and age of respondent.

What is your gender identity?	Count	Percentage
Male	113	47%
Female	92	39%
Prefer not to say	7	3%
Not answered	26	11%
Total	238	100%

What age group do you belong to?	Count	Percentage
16-24	2	1%
25-34	11	5%
35-44	28	12%
45-54	41	17%
55-64	46	19%
65-74	58	24%
75-84	16	7%
85 and over	1	0%
Prefer not to say	8	3%
Not answered	27	11%
Total	238	100%