

# **Arnold Market Place**

## **Consultation Summary Report**

**April 2020**

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**1.0 Background to the consultation**

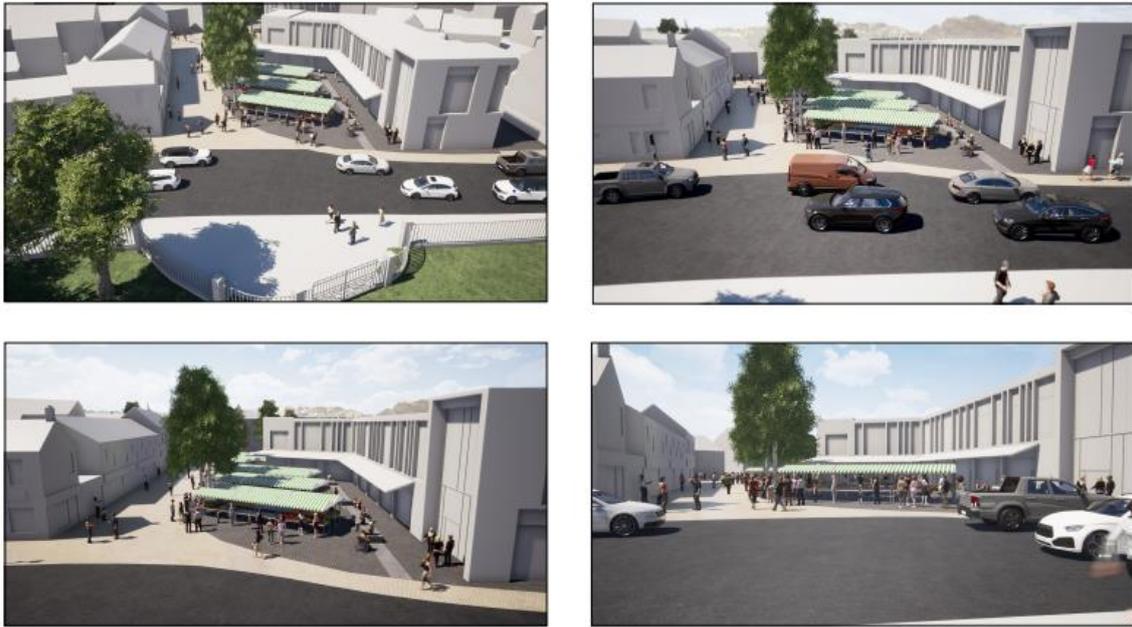
- 1.1 This report presents the findings from the Arnold Market Place consultation programme, mechanisms used and summarises the responses received. This report concerns the programme of events which took place over a 4 week period between 24 February and 23 March 2020. The main purpose of this consultation was to gather feedback from residents, visitors and businesses about the initial plans for the Arnold Market Place. It was noted that this was not the final design proposal and that a further opportunity to comment formally on the final scheme would be available through the planning application process.
  
- 1.2 The consultation material provided included a plan and a series of images showing the outline proposal (an example of which is provided below). Officers sought views on whether people liked the broad concept or not, which parts of the scheme was most important to them, whether there were aspects that should be considered but haven't been, and finally any other comments they had. It was made clear that these were only indicative images and not necessarily the final scheme.



**Arnold Market Square**



*Image 1: Consultation image used*



**Arnold Market Square**



*Image 2: Consultation image used*



**Arnold Market Square**



*Image 3: Consultation image used*

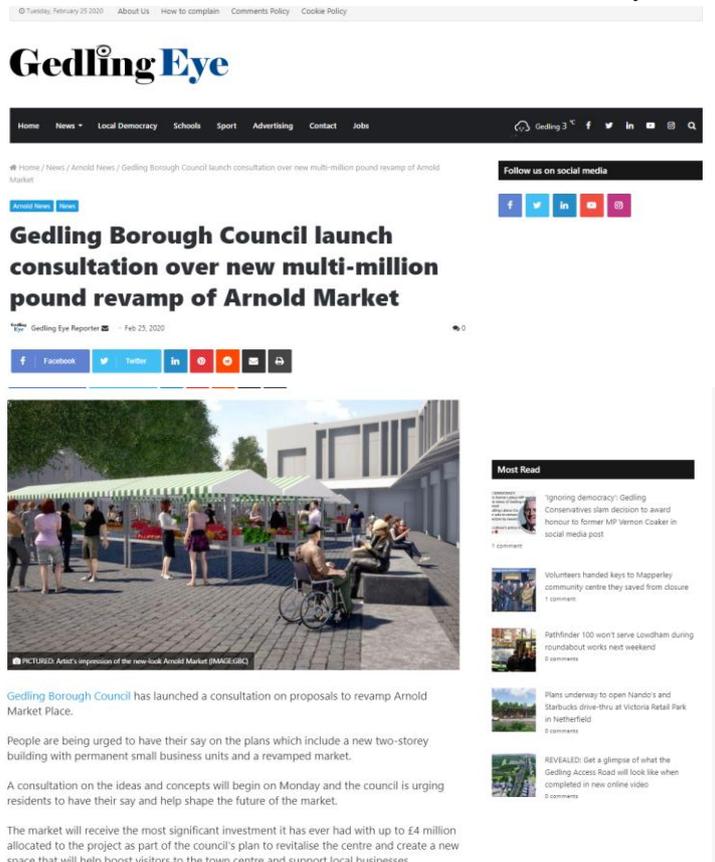
## 2.0 Advertising and promotion

### Press releases and social media

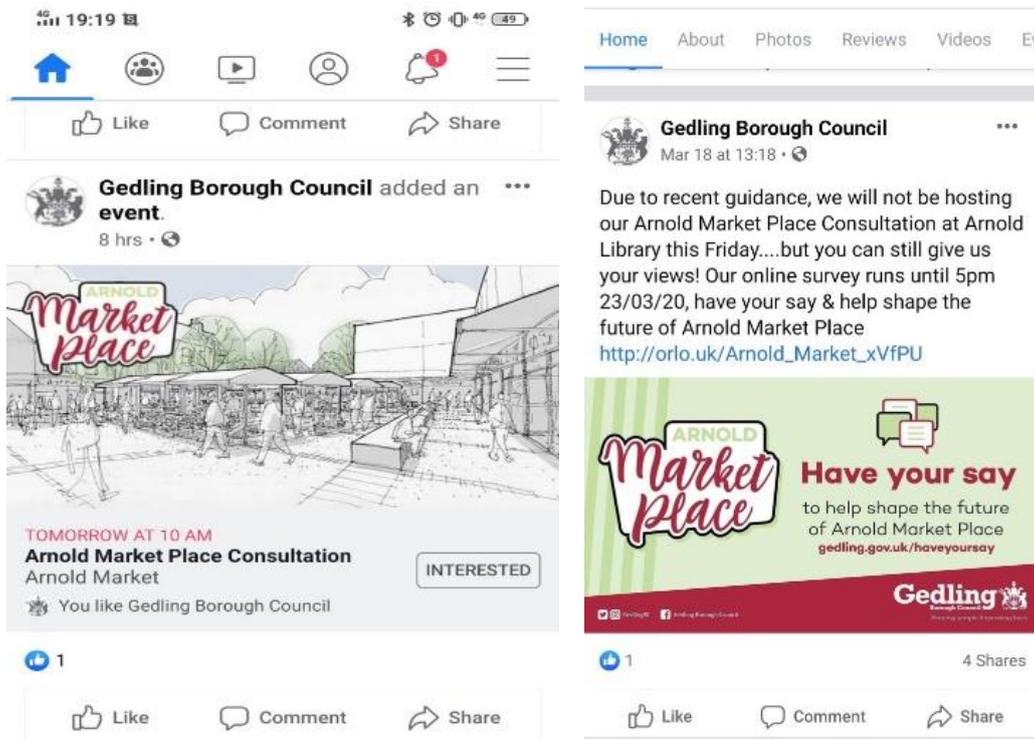
2.1 There were various pieces of publicity in the local press, two articles featured in the Nottingham Post can be seen below:



2.2 The Gedling Eye also covered the consultation on 25 February.



2.3 The Council’s webpages and social media outlets were all updated to make people aware of the consultation and releases made using social media to advertise the various events and how to get involved:



2.4 Through the Council Facebook page some 8,562 people were reached with 1,676 engagements (likes, comments, shares, clicks through to webpage) including 26 comments and 17 shares. This was achieved through two posts during the consultation and a further one at the end.

2.5 Twitter, using the same information as Facebook, achieved 8 retweets and 6 likes. Given the ‘scrolling’ nature of Twitter this was expected.

2.6 145 unique views of the information on the Councils’ ‘Have your Say’ took place with visitors staying for with an average of five minutes being spent on the page. This means that the information would have been read. It was also a page that people arrived directly at, meaning that they will have found the link on other media and clicked through, showing that the Twitter and Facebook information did convert through to people visiting the site.

**On site promotion**

2.7 The Council ran a targeted public consultation in order to maximise the opportunity for local residents, retailers, businesses and other stakeholders to comment on the initial proposals.

2.8 Officers were on-site at the following locations to consult with the general public:

DATE	TIME	LOCATION
Tuesday 25 February	10:00-12noon	Arnold Methodist Church (Coffee Morning)
Friday 28 February	10:00-14:00	Arnold Market Place
Tuesday 3 March	10:00-14:00	Arnold Market Place
Friday 6 March	10:00-14:00	Arnold Library
Tuesday 10 March	16:00-19:00	Bonington Theatre
Saturday 14 March	09:00-12:30	Arnold Market Place
Tuesday 17 March	19:00-21:00	Arnold Local History Group*
Thursday 19 March	14:00-16:00	Netherfield Steering Group*
Friday 20 March	10:00-14:00	Arnold Library*

\*Cancelled due to Covid-19

2.9 There was also specific events planned for the local businesses and Market Traders:

DATE	TIME	LOCATION
Tuesday 25 February	13:00-16:00	Arnold Methodist Church (Invitation only)
Tuesday 3 March	17:00-20:00	Bonington Theatre (Invitation only)
Thursday 12 March	07.30-09.30	Gedling Business Partnership

2.10 Alongside these, there was an online survey which ran for the full period and, additionally, unmanned Consultation ‘Stations’ were put in the Civic Centre reception area, Arnold Methodist Church and Arnold Library. These displays consisted of the proposed images, paper copies of the consultation survey and post cards for people to express their generic views. Post boxes were provided, so all methods could be submitted confidentially. The resident’s magazine ‘Contacts’ also detailed the consultation and was delivered to each household and business in the borough w/c 16 March. Arnold households were the first to receive this, to help with the final push for people to complete the online survey.



*Image 4: Consultation Station at Arnold Library*

2.11 Officers attended Arnold Market Place on three different occasions and were located on a stall close to the main thoroughfare, clearly highlighted with the Council banner, boards and branding. Officers also attended Arnold Methodist Church during a weekly coffee morning and Arnold Library during a busy Friday morning to further promote the opportunity to review the plans (see images below).



*Images 5, 6, 7 and 8: Consultation: On-site at Arnold Market*

2.12 Each of the businesses along the high street were approached and spoken to directly, or given a letter detailing the consultation. They were encouraged to take part by completing the on-line survey, coming along to the retailer session which was by invite only (Bonington Theatre twilight session to fit around business needs) or by arranging to speak to the Town Centre Manager individually at an agreed time/location. This led to positive interactions with the retailers who are keen to see plans progressed.

### **3.0 Consultation events – feedback**

3.1 Over the course of the consultation, 50 businesses and over 1,500 members of the public were directly spoken with. Furthermore, 463 people completed the on-line survey.

**Business and retailer events**

3.2 As part of this targeted engagement, Officers held a ‘closed’ retailer session to speak with the shops along the high street. Generally, feedback was positive with all parties showing support for the works.

3.3 The main comments from the retailer session were as follows:

- Retailers feel isolated and need some direction
- Rents are very high in the main area of the town centre
- Work needs to be done to increase footfall to the area
- Confusion between business rates (and how to apply for relief) and landlord rates
- Positive response to the concept of the new building
- Businesses would like to see more events and activities in the square
- A focus on the redevelopment of the market place is needed, to help improve the viability of shops
- Can something be done to address the number of empty retail units along the high street
- There are no loading bays/short term parking spaces at the far end of Front Street
- The far end of Front Street needs to be considered and not forgotten, especially when planning for the next Christmas event

**Gedling Business Partnership event**

3.4 Officers presented at the monthly Gedling Business Partnership meeting to consult with local businesses (see image below). This was a great opportunity to find out about local business needs and also gather feedback on the proposals.



*Image 7: Presentation to Gedling Business Partnership*

- 3.5 A summary of the key comments made at Gedling Business Partnership is as follows:
- Members very much in favour of the initial plans
  - Suggestion of having a three storey building. First floor for co-working and individual spaces on the third floor
  - Many businesses ‘hop around’ and work in different locations –could we provide hot desking, as this enables start-ups to raise their business profile in different locations
  - Arnold lacks ‘meeting space’ for businesses
  - Use of The Regis Model would provide a professional setting in Arnold
  - Could we use the Brick Lane concept (London) and have a multi-use building

**Arnold Methodist Church events**

3.6 Officers presented at the weekly coffee morning, which takes place on both Tuesdays and Saturdays at Arnold Methodist Church. Many local residents attend the meetings and they are a good opportunity for local community groups to come together. It should be noted that the Church also accommodated a Consultation ‘Station’, as it was viewed that the Community aspect would encourage engagement and worshipers were asked to submit their comments after each service that took place during the Consultation period.

- 3.7 There were a number of comments received, including:
- The council should we be concentrating on filling empty shops
  - Arnold Town Centre is in need of some serious investment
  - The independent offer is good and it would complement the existing shops
  - Like the idea of the market place being an events space
  - Could be a catalyst for further regeneration opportunities in the wider town
  - Upstairs would be good as a community space
  - Liked the idea of independent /local business start-up (grow on model)
  - MUST keep market
  - More traditional stalls / farmers market / events to increase footfall
  - The plans look very industrial, grey, can we make it more vibrant



*Image 8: Display and presentation at Arnold Methodist Church*

### **Market trader event**

3.8 A 'closed' event was held at Arnold Methodist Church for market traders to be given preview of the proposals. Officers presented to those who attended and followed up with any who were unable to attend on the day.

3.9 The main comments were:

- Very positive response to the proposed plans
- Keen to work with Gedling Borough Council to create the 'wow' factor
- Market stalls need to be weatherproof
- Empty stalls on the market are creating a negative image
- The market needs to be close to the main thoroughfare
- Concerns about the layout of stalls – need to have as many stalls facing onto the main thoroughfare as possible
- Toilet facilities – separate provision for traders
- Traders would be happy to move onto Eagle Square for the interim period
- Cars need to be removed from the pedestrian area – dangerous
- Good to have a building with multiple uses on the site – will increase footfall
- Consideration needs to be given to how vehicles will move on and off the site
- More work needs to be done to attract people to the market – increase footfall

### **Consultation stands**

3.10 Postcards were placed at the consultation 'Stations' at the Civic Centre reception, Methodist Church and Arnold Library. The purpose of the postcards were to enable people to submit a comment without having to complete the full questionnaire if this was their preferred method. It would also enable those who are not on-line to take part.

3.11 A summary of some of the headline comments are as follows:

- It would be good to have a Farmers Market at least once a month
- Something is needed for seniors, which will help to tackle loneliness
- Community space is needed, somewhere for people to come together
- My nana and grandad would like the market to come back like the old days. They miss going down, having a natter with friends and socialising
- I feel they should keep the market, I feel it is a part of Arnold!
- Public toilets are required
- More CCTV to secure the market from being vandalised
- A covered over market would be better, stall covers don't seem wide enough

## **4.0 Online survey – feedback received**

4.1 Over the course of the consultation, 463 people completed the on-line survey. The detailed breakdown of the data is shown in Appendix A, but can be summarised below:

- 93% of the 463 respondents were residents and the rest of the respondents included businesses and community groups.
- 99% of all respondents visit Arnold Market
- The most popular destination at present are specific shops such as Asda, Wilko, Boyes and Boots
- The vast majority of respondents (76%) support the initial ideas for redeveloping Arnold Market Place, with the majority wanting to see more done in terms of developing and supporting local independent shops and small business start-ups
- Local independent outlets were the most selected option for potential usage in the proposed buildings on the market, with public toilets next on the list, followed by start-up businesses premises.
- A number of comments received also suggested a mix of independent retail, specialty market sellers and local business start-ups were high on the list of resident's priorities for the site, as was a new public space suitable for community focused events.
- The online survey asked what would encourage people to visit the town centre more often and from the results over 75% of people said specialty markets and events, 75% said a traditional weekly market and almost 40% said public events and performances.

4.2 Respondents specified further suggestions in their comments, as follows:

- Activities for children
- Farmers market
- Craft fairs
- Music event
- Artisan stalls
- Local history events
- Vintage fairs
- Gardener's events/plant markets

**Social media feedback**

4.3 A number of responses were received through Twitter and Facebook, which were reviewed as part of the consultation. Generally the majority of the comments were negative about the development, though this isn't unusual for platforms such as Facebook and a large majority of the comments made were not related to the development and instead were about other areas and non GBC services such as Highways. A brief summary of the comments is as follows:

Suggestions

- Several asking for there to be public toilets
- Street Food Market with seating would be nice
- Permanent indoor market would be good as well as the outdoor market

## Negatives

- Complaints about Calverton, and potentially asking for similar investment there
- Complaints about littering and dog fouling in the area
- Complaints about the roads and pavements
- Comments made about the money going to Arnold and it being long overdue

4.4 Despite this, there was a large amount of engagement with the posts with over 200 link clicks on one of the posts which took users to the online survey.

4.5 Although there were a lot of relatively negative comments, the posts in general did really well in the numbers of likes and shares they received.

## **5.0 Consultation Summary**

5.1 Overall, the consultation was a success and the 4 week programme of events worked well combined (although the end was at the start of the Coronavirus lockdown) with the social media programme and press coverage engaging residents, retailers, and business owners with the proposed plans during a relatively short space of time.

5.2 The feedback received was very positive and most people were really positive about the proposals, being pleased to understand that there was to be investment in the overall area and were keen to see the scheme progress quickly. There were some specific comments raised on the design and uses, which will be reviewed as part of the final scheme design.

5.3 Furthermore, there were comments received which did highlight the need for further investment in the town centre (including public toilet provision) and that this regeneration scheme could be the catalyst for wider improvements in Arnold. Feedback showed that residents would like to see further improvements to support the wider town and existing retailers, with many stating they would rather shop locally to support the high street than travel elsewhere. One respondent said “work is needed to modernise the town centre and these plans would definitely do this.” This is something that Officers will review accordingly.

### **Next Steps**

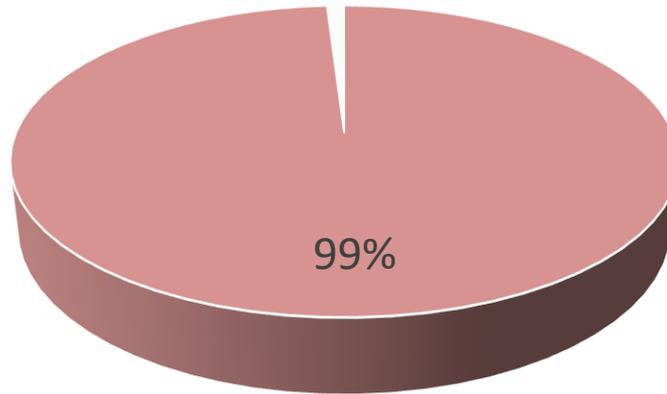
5.4 The comments made as part of this consultation and contained within this report will be shared with all relevant parties and reviewed. The Council will then focus on finalising the scheme and preparing the planning application material. Amendments to the scheme will be made, following consultation feedback and internal comments, and revised drawings will be produced.

## **Appendix A**

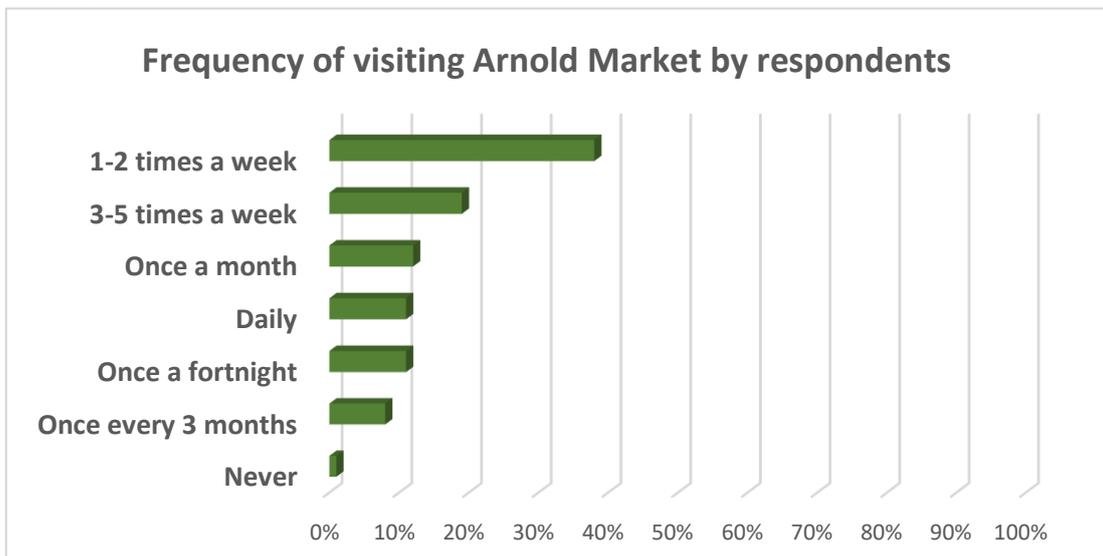
### **Findings about Arnold Centre**

The findings relating to this part of the survey help us understand if and how often the respondents visit Arnold Market and what is the main reason for their visits.

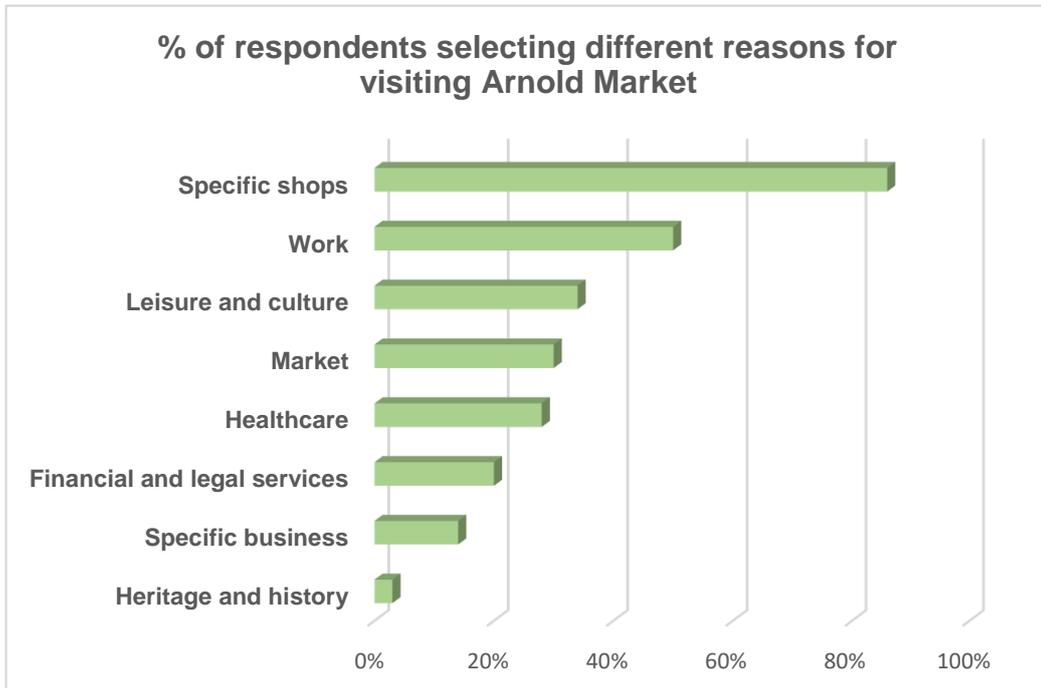
- 99% of the respondents visit Arnold Market



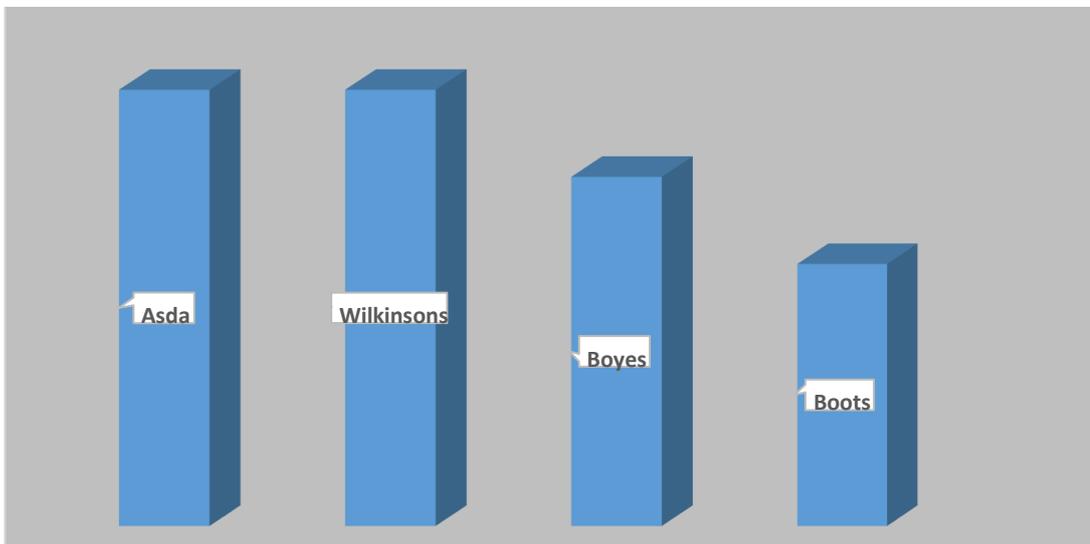
- The majority of respondents (57%) visit Arnold Market once to five times a week.



- The top **3 most selected reasons** for respondents' visits to Arnold Market were: Specific shops 86%, work 50% and leisure and culture 34%.

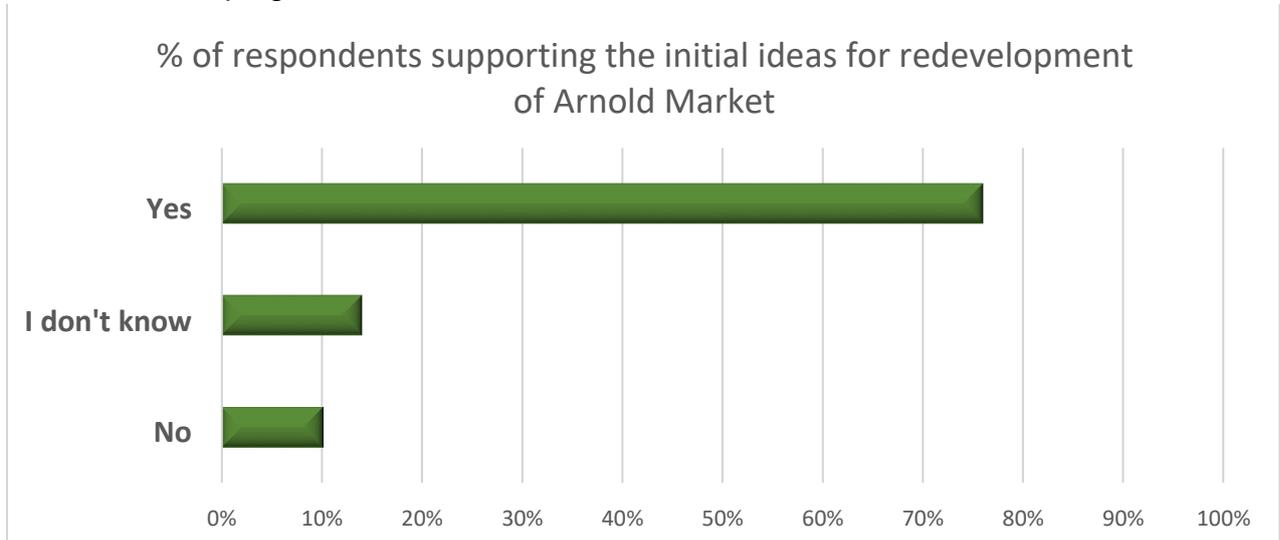


- The most frequently visited shops by the respondents are Asda and Wilko, followed by slightly less frequent visits to Boyes and then Boots.



**Finding about the Arnold Market place proposals**

- The vast majority of respondents (76%) supports the initial ideas for redeveloping of Arnold market.



In their comments, the majority of respondents (76%) who welcomed the new proposals for the Arnold Market place stating that the redevelopment of the area is needed.

“Work is needed to modernise the town centre and these plans would definitely do this.”

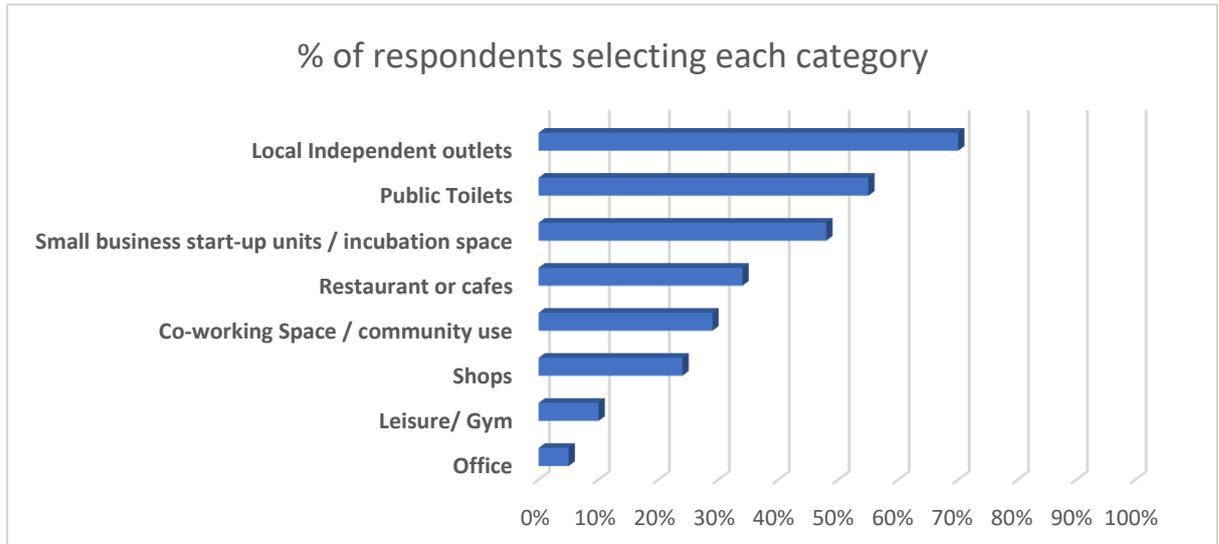
“The market place is not fit for purpose at the moment - and the addition of new, modern commercial premises can only benefit the market and the surrounding businesses, as well as giving a fresh new look to Arnold town centre.”

“Area needs renovation, scheme provides new units and a good open space for events in the centre of town.”

Only a small proportion of the respondents (14%) who selected the ‘I don’t know’ option mainly commented that didn’t have enough knowledge or information to make any judgement.

Even smaller proportion of the respondents that was against the proposals (10%) mainly stated in their comments that they didn’t think it was necessary to spend money on the renovation of this area.

- The top **3 selected usage for the proposed buildings** on the market were: local independent outlets, public toilets and small business start-up units/ incubation space.



In their comments the respondent often mentioned that the proposed buildings should be used for more modern local independent enterprise and small independent businesses:

‘Smaller businesses need to be encouraged into the town to create working opportunities for those that are seeking local work.’

‘Community units and starter units could give new businesses a starter’.

‘To be successful the area needs to provide a different experience for visitors and not the same old same old.’

The need for toilet facilities was also frequently mentioned.

- The **top 3 selected reasons** for respondents to be encouraged to visit Arnold town centre **more often** were: speciality markets and traders' events, traditional weekly market and public events and performances.

