

Ambition Arnold Survey results 2025

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Background and methodology

Gedling Borough Council has been developing a bold, long-term vision for Arnold town centre through the Ambition Arnold programme, which includes proposals to transform Arnold Leisure Centre and Bonington Theatre into modern, high-quality facilities that would support culture, wellbeing and economic vibrancy. While funding has not yet been secured for this project, the Council has been exploring opportunities to attract investment and was seeking the views of local communities to help shape the vision.

The consultation on the proposals to transform Arnold took place from 27 May 2025 to 1 July 2025. This five-week consultation process included an online survey as well as two drop-in sessions during which staff were available to explain and answer any questions regarding the aspirations of the project and if needed, support the completion of the questionnaire.

Main highlights

The majority of 68% of all respondents thought that overall, the regeneration proposals were right for Arnold. 19% of respondents disagreed and 14% selected the 'Not sure' option.

The comparatively high percentage of respondents, from 70% to 90%, agreed with the following regarding the transformation of Arnold:

Promoting the entity and heritage of our community through art and cultural events in both art centre and the square

The cinema/ theatre with comfortable seats, good layout and a wider programme would attract more visitors

A big pool and modern facilities within the leisure centre

Some outdoor space like a community garden or dedicated play area next to the library

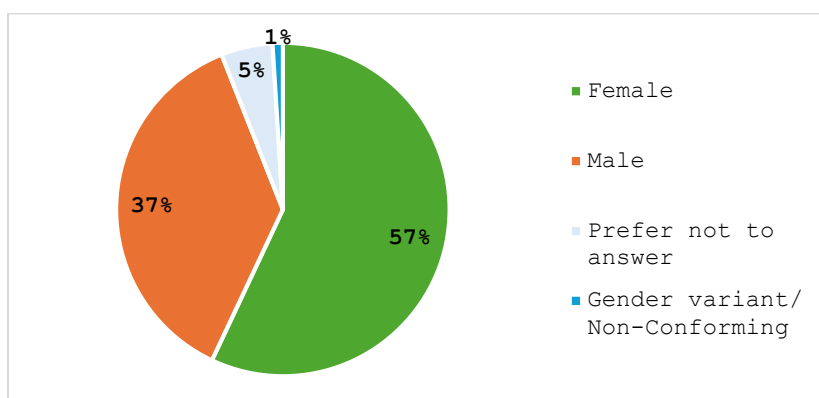
In their comments, the respondents most frequently mentioned their suggestions that the swimming pool should include a spectators' seating area to view swimming competition.

The most frequently mention concern relates to anti-social behaviour in the area and therefore consider it necessary to engage with and provide facilities for young people.

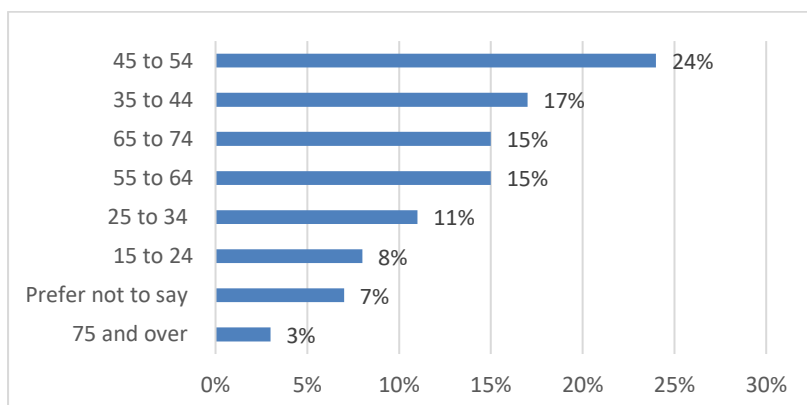
Profile of the respondents

There were 301 responses to this survey. The highest proportion of respondents declared themselves as female (57%), age between 35 to 54 (41%), belonged to the group of English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British ethnic group (85%), did not belong to any religion (48%), did not have any disability (77%) and declared themselves as straight/ heterosexual (81%).

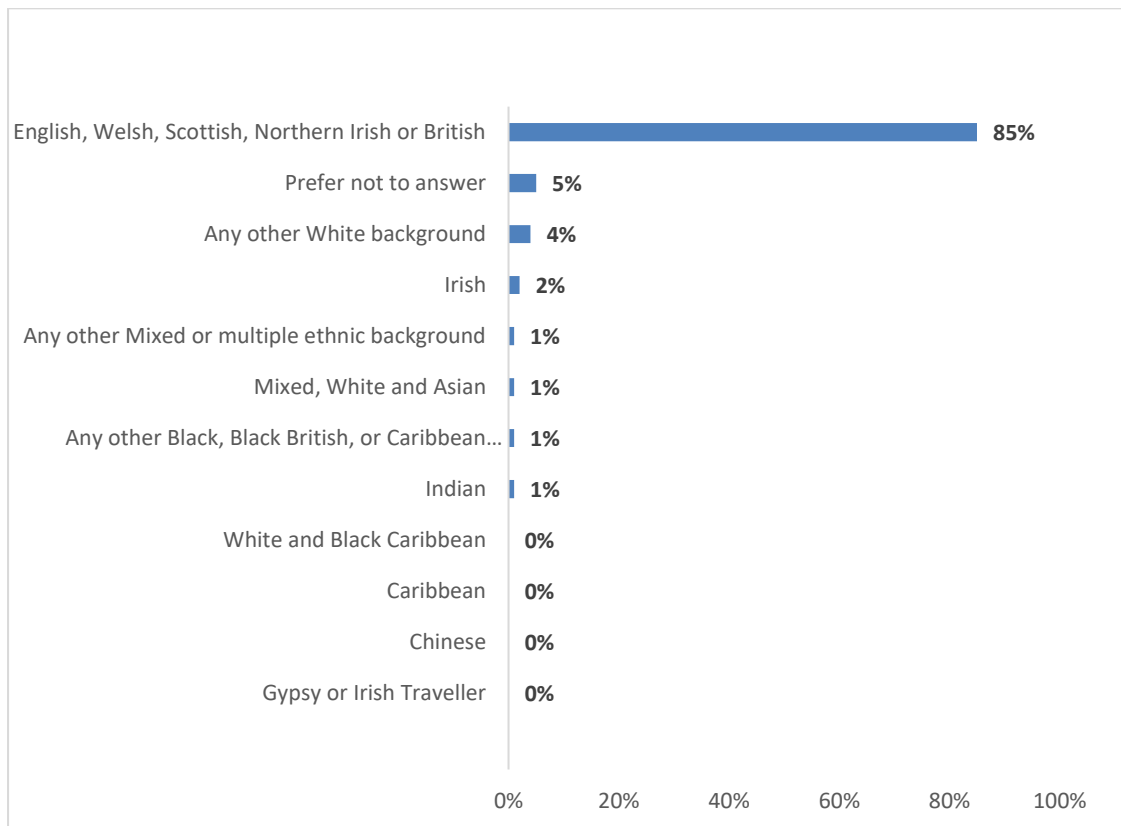
Gender identity



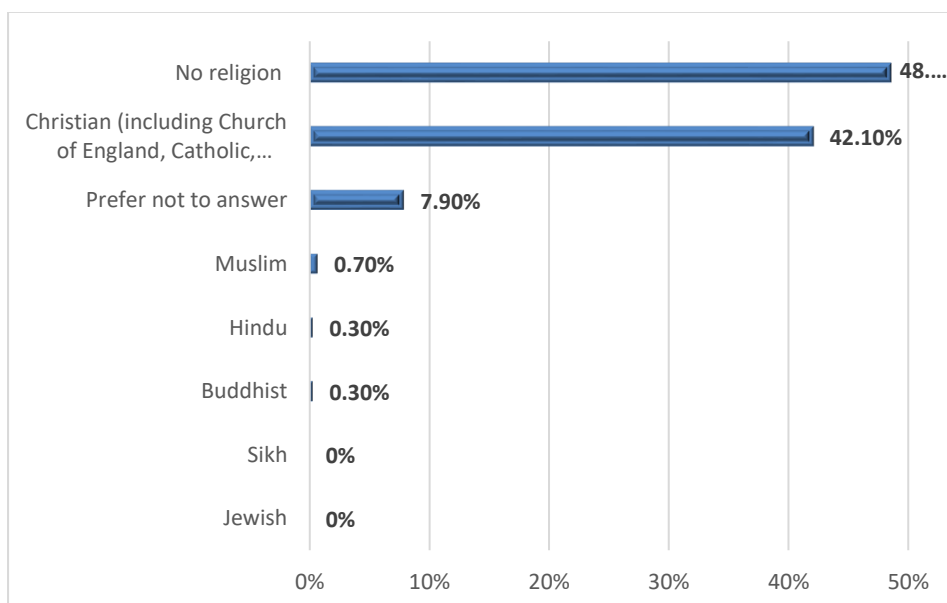
Age



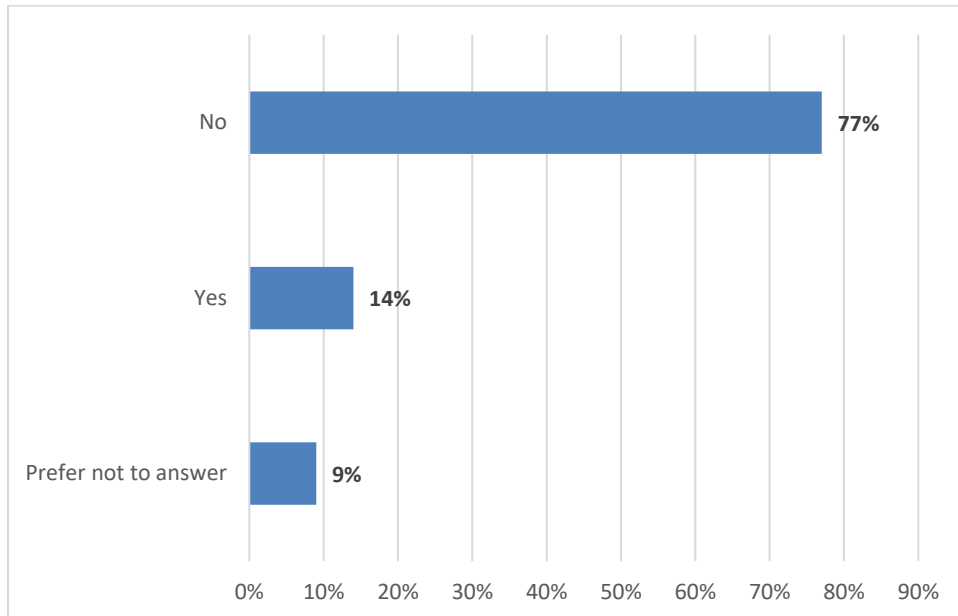
Ethnicity



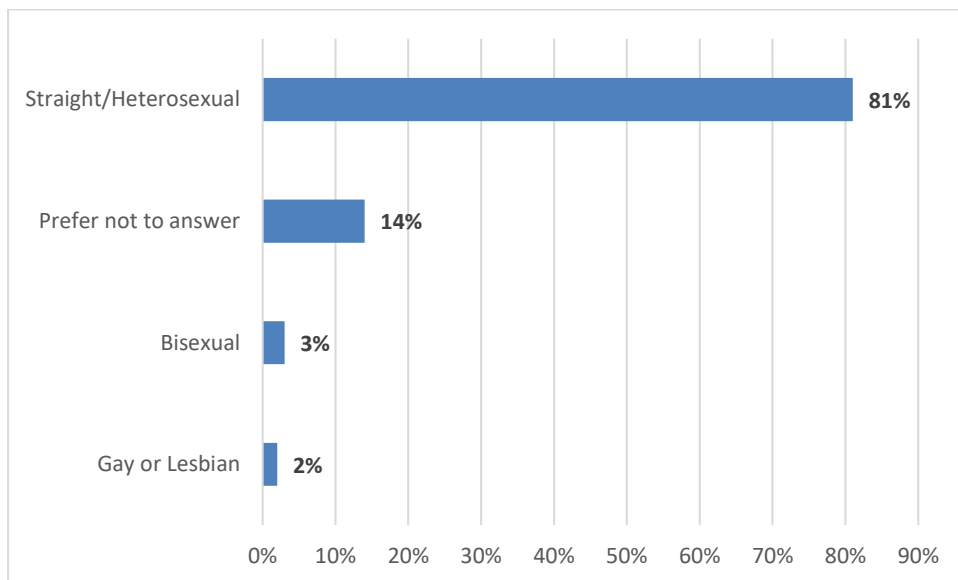
Religion



Respondents who have disability



Sexual orientation



Results analysis

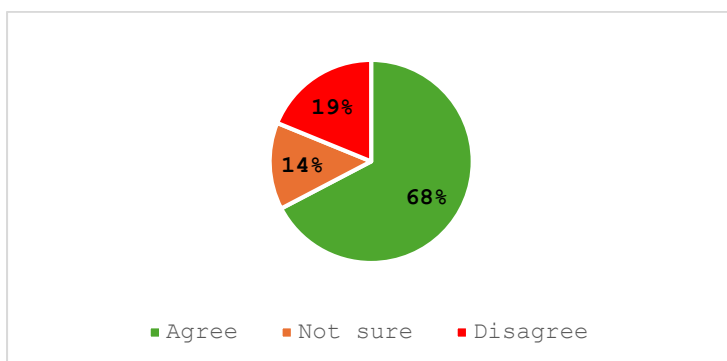
301 respondents completed the questionnaire that included 18 statements about Arnold Town Centre regeneration proposals. The respondents were asked to select a level of their agreement/disagreement with those statements (Please see **Appendix A** for more detailed analysis). The questionnaire also included a free text question, for any general comments to be included.

In this report both quantitative and free text (qualitative) responses to this consultation were categorised within the **S** (Strengths), **W** (Weakness), **O** (Opportunities) and **T** (Threats) matrix. The aim of this approach is that by using the residents,' community groups and partners' views within this matrix, it is possible to establish the following:

- Strengths and Weaknesses analysis that allow a clear distinction between the views on what aspects of Arnold as a place and the development proposals are considered to be positive and what aspects would need more consideration and possible improvements.
- Opportunities and Threats analysis that allow the council to consider suggestions on how to continue and shape work in this area and also raises awareness of the risk associated with this work, which can be identified in advance and therefore be avoided.

1. Strengths

The majority of 68% of all respondents thought that overall, the regeneration proposals were right for Arnold. 19% of respondents disagreed and 14% selected the 'Not sure' option.



A comparatively high proportion of respondents, in the range of 70% to 90%, agreed with the following statements in the questionnaire:

About the arts venue:

- Comfort (e.g. comfortable seating, good layout) is important to me when I visit the cinema or theatre.) (90%)
- A wider events programme including cinema and theatre programme would encourage me to visit the theatre more often or to visit the theatre for the first time (81%)
- This would be a great place to see artwork that promoted the identity and heritage of our community (75%)
- This would be an ideal place to hold community cultural events in the town centre (75%)

About the public square:

- This would be a great place to see murals that promoted the identity and heritage of our community (78%)

About the leisure centre:

- A big pool with modern facilities is what a new leisure centre in Arnold needs (74%)

About the library:

- I think some outdoor space like a community garden or dedicated play area connected to the library and its programmes would be a valuable addition to the library offer (73%)

In addition to these quantitative results, there was a number of comments regarding the positive view about the proposals.

Some examples include the following statements:

‘There is a thriving artist community in Arnold, and this would provide somewhere to showcase local talent’

‘A refreshed theatre would be great addition to the area, as we have started to use the cinema at Bonnington, as it is local and convenient for us at a great price.’

‘I think the new facilities would be a fantastic idea and help the town centre feel like something more luxury.’

‘Murals and artwork are a good idea.’

2. Weaknesses

Comparatively higher percentage of respondents disagreed with the following statement in the questionnaire:

- If there were a gym facility in Arnold leisure centre, I would use it. (29%).
- If I could access wellbeing sessions or other healthcare programme for example reducing stress, quit smoking support groups or health checks) at Arnold leisure centre, I would be interested in attending them. (27%)

There were also some concerns regarding a need for Primary Care related services, included the fact that the proposals were not aligned with the NHS 10 years plan. (‘Fit for Future’ plan)

The fact that usable toilets were not available in the area seemed to be overlooked in the proposals.

Empty shops should also be considered in the plan.

The consultation was conducted midweek, which did not allow those who worked during the week to attend the consultation events.

Some examples include the following statements:

‘More needs to be done about the empty shops to encourage quality brands to Arnold rather than charity shops and vape shops’

‘Arnold really needs accessible toilets at the market end of the town and the top end of town.’

3. Opportunities

The comments that relate to the opportunities were in connection to:

Building a new modern multi storey car park

Considering an inspiring and visually attractive look of Arnold

Considering new shops and businesses

Investing in activities for young people that would potentially prevent anti-social behaviour; working closely with young people (local youth organisations) to further develop this plan

Creating additional safe spaces that could be used in partnership with local charities to provide counselling and therapy sessions

Enabling the swimming pool to be suitable for swimming competition. This should include spectators' seating areas.

Improving access to facilities for disabled people

Including ecologically and financially efficient features to the premisses (e.g. triple glazing, heat pumps and solar panels).

Some examples include the following statements:

'Building something which people can take pride in visually, will age well (i.e., not cheap, gimmicky) and with posterity in mind will do so much for our town which is currently largely uninspiring and run down. It would be a great shame if something were built which looks very bland and utilitarian.'

'Looking at the proposals for the swimming pool, tiered spectator seating is needed to enable competitions to be held.'

'As long as the local services like buses are increased to all areas to cover the changes or the car park will need to be thought of more as when I've been to the centre the "other" car parks are full.'

4. Threats

In their comments respondents mentioned certain risks and considered them important when planning the future for Arnold town centre:

A high level of anti-social behaviour in the area; large open areas might attract anti-social behaviour and littering

Parking capacity is not sufficient for a large number of visitors

The plan included too many elements for a small space

Some examples include the following statements:

'If an outdoor space was created it would need to be monitored often to ensure it is staying clean and not attracting anti-social behaviour.'

'Unfortunately, we are seeing what feels like a rise in antisocial behaviour and I would have concerns that it may be seen as an opportunity for vandalism and antisocial behaviour.'

