

Milsom Quarter Masterplan



Consultation & Engagement Report following consultation
on draft Masterplan May - July 22

September 2022

Milsom Quarter Masterplan Consultation – Executive Summary

The Milsom Quarter Masterplan proposes to establish the Milsom Quarter area as the South West's fashion destination. Milsom Street Core, at the heart of Milsom Quarter, is already an established retail destination and in future this area will see a more diverse mix of uses including new fashion and design based employment space, a Fashion Museum and a greater mix of residential and commercial uses.

Changing consumer habits, accelerated by the pandemic, means that Milsom Quarter needs to continue to adapt and be less dependent on retail. To reflect this, the Masterplan proposes to diversify the area to incorporate events, festivals, non-retail businesses and repurpose existing upper floor space to residential use whilst maintaining a fashion focus through developing worker spaces and retaining the world-renowned Fashion Museum within its core.

In response to the Climate Emergency and Ecological Emergency declared by B&NES in 2019 and 2020 respectively, the Masterplan considers the importance of reducing traffic and encouraging active travel such as walking and cycling, repurposing and retrofitting existing buildings to become more energy efficient and introducing greenspaces to tackle the effects of climate change such as increasing temperatures.

The Milsom Quarter Masterplan is vision developed based on six themes:

- A place of creativity and enterprise.
- A new local residential neighbourhood.
- A connecting place.
- A destination for fashion and culture.
- A low traffic environment.
- A climate challenge exemplar.

Within the Milsom Quarter there are four distinct character areas identified: Milsom Street Core, Broad Street Yards, St Michael's Neighbourhood and Walcot Street Gateway. Further information regarding the Masterplan can be viewed here <https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/milsom-quarter>.

Public consultation & engagement on the draft Milsom Quarter Masterplan was held between 4th of May – 15th of July 2022. The consultation activities undertaken and the responses to the consultation are summarised in this consultation report.

On the basis of this report a series of amendments to the draft Masterplan are being sought before it is endorsed by the Council.

1. Consultation Activity Summary

An informal consultation on the Milsom Quarter Masterplan consultation was open between the 4th of May and the 15th of July 2022.

Details of the Milsom Quarter Masterplan consultation were published on the B&NES website <https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/milsom-quarter> which included the full Masterplan document split into chapters and a summary consultation document.

A section on 'have your say' <https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/milsom-quarter/have-your-say> allowed the public to complete an online survey, give feedback on their views and get informed about upcoming online briefings and engagement events.

Key extracts from the website and the summary animated video are included as **Annex 1**.

The public were informed about the Milsom Quarter Masterplan consultation through numerous articles published by the media (see press release and examples of media coverage in **Annex 2**), newsletters (see examples in **Annex 3**), posters displayed in the city centre (**Annex 4**), B&NES social media channels (see examples in **Annex 5**), by email (see example correspondence to key stakeholders as **Annex 6**), on large scale construction hoardings outside the Hilton Hotel (see photos in **Annex 7**), and through informal channels. The Cabinet Member for the project during this period (Cllr Richard Samuel) discussed the Milsom Quarter Masterplan in a video published on YouTube and in an interview with SomerValley FM (**Annex 8**).

Posters detailing the consultation were displayed at 15 New Bond Street and St Michael's Church, which included the time, date and location of the drop-in engagement events (**Annex 4**). Details about the drop-in engagement events were also published on the Milsom Quarter Masterplan section of the B&NES website, B&NES social media channels, B&NES press release and shared through word-of-mouth.

Within the consultation period a combination of online briefings, 1-1 discussions and drop-in engagement events were held with stakeholders, landowners and members of the public (full schedule of in person and online events listed in **Annex 9**).

Consultation responses were captured formally through an online questionnaire (see copy of questionnaire in **Section 4** and responses in **Annex 14**, and notes were also made at both online and in-person events (**Annexes 10, 11 and 13**).

Additional consultation responses were also received by email and letter (see **Annex 11**).

2. Pre-Consultation

The draft masterplan has been developed over the past year through a process of baseline evidence gathering, concept development and focussed stakeholder engagement which led the multidisciplinary team to create a Masterplan Vision, Urban design framework, spatial strategy and design concepts for key sites.

This draft masterplan is the focus for this public engagement, the results of which will inform finalising the masterplan and development of the Delivery Strategy.

This early stage engagement is summarised in the draft Masterplan.

3. Consultation Engagement Sessions

A combination of briefings, 1-1 discussions and drop-in public engagement events were held as part of the Milsom Quarter Masterplan consultation.

Briefings were held for Councillors, Officers, landowners and stakeholders and topics included heritage, tourism and business, transport and accessibility, residents associations, ecology and biodiversity. The meetings were held on MS Teams or Zoom and the presentation material used at these meetings is included as **Annex 12**.

Following the briefing sessions, participating landowners and stakeholders were invited to engage in 1-1 discussions with B&NES on the draft Milsom Quarter Masterplan. These meetings were arranged on MS Teams and a summary of the discussions can be viewed in **Annex 10**. The 1-1 discussions allowed landowners and stakeholders to share their views in front of a smaller audience within a more focussed conversation.

In addition, B&NES held 6 drop-in in person engagement events at 15 New Bond Street, Bath between the 17th of June and the 29th of June. The events ran for a period of 2 hours each and were intentionally organised for a range of times, including morning afternoon and evening across the week to maximise the opportunity for the public to attend and engage. These drop-in sessions were open to all stakeholders and members of the public and were advertised locally via posters and media and on social media. Comments raised at these events can be viewed in **Annex 13**.

A full schedule of responses to the online questionnaire can be viewed in **Annex 14**.

4. Consultation Responses - Summary

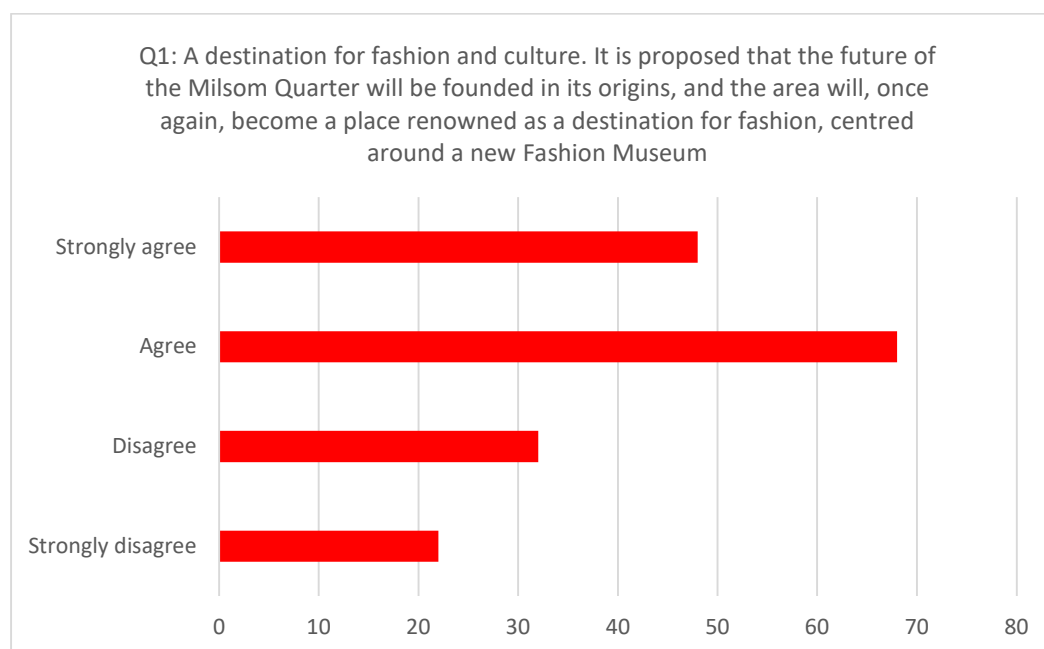
Over 220 responses were received from external sources, 171 through the online survey and the remainder through email, public pop-in events and stakeholder meetings. This is in addition to extensive internal B&NES engagement.

Overall there was clear support for the vision and objectives of the draft Milsom Quarter Masterplan, however the primary concerns raised were focussed on accessibility and movement. Full consultation responses to the online questionnaire are included in **Annex 14**.

Six consultation questions are focused around the six themes of the draft Masterplan. The questions and summary of responses are detailed under each theme heading.

A destination for fashion and culture

It is proposed that the future of the Milsom Quarter will be founded in its origins, and the area will, once again, become a place renowned as a destination for fashion, centred around a new Fashion Museum. Do you agree/disagree with this vision?



The positive responses to this question primarily focussed on keeping the Fashion Museum in the centre of the city, encouraging and retaining independent retailers, supporting use of vacant ground floor units, sustainable fashion and movement.

Comments which disagreed with the question were centred around the themes of sustainability and avoiding fast fashion, traffic and movement, retaining independent stores, keeping the fashion museum central, considering a move diverse range of industries beyond fashion.

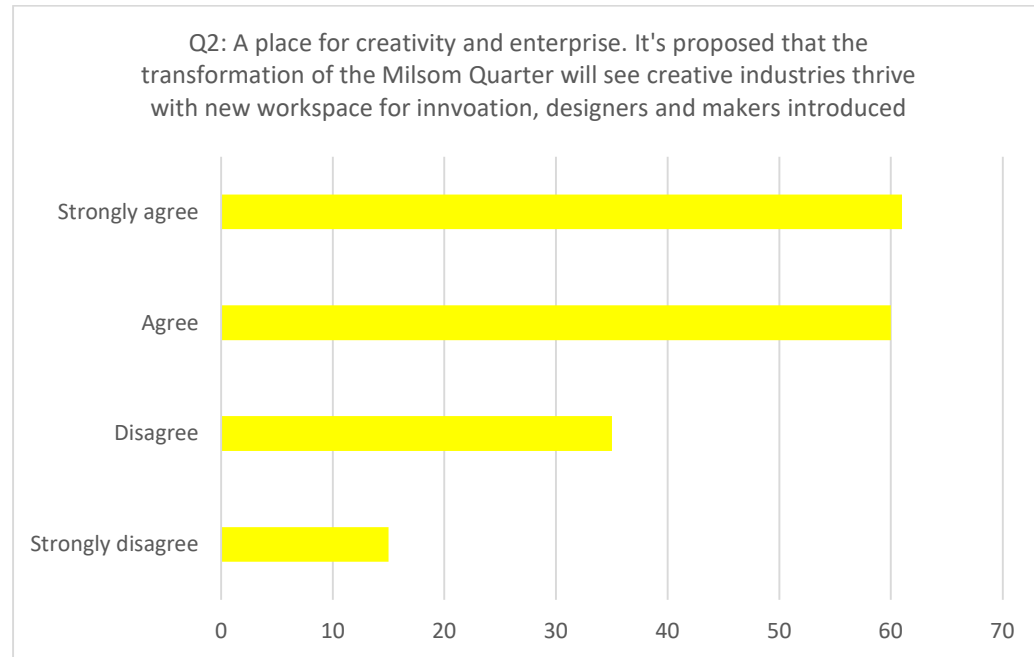
Key points to note in reviewing and updating the draft Masterplan include:

- Encouraging and retaining independent retailers in the Milsom Quarter and throughout the city

- Strengthening the opportunity for a sustainable fashion focus
- Concerns around vehicle movement and parking capacity
- Physical accessibility of the Milsom Quarter
- Emphasise the mix of creative industries to be encouraged, of which fashion is one

A place of creativity and enterprise

It's proposed that the transformation of the Milsom Quarter will see creative industries thrive with new workspace for innovation, designers and makers introduced. Do you agree/disagree with this vision?



The support for this theme primarily included comments around encouraging creative industry and pedestrianisation with re-purposing of car parks. However despite this support it was noted that rents and business rates are high and can exclude the creative and start up industry that the vision aims to support.

The comments which disagreed with this theme also focussed on affordability of rent and business rates for businesses, including supporting existing retailers and occupying existing empty units, rather than creating more floor space. Movement and access to the Milsom Quarter through private vehicle and car parking was also raised as a key issue.

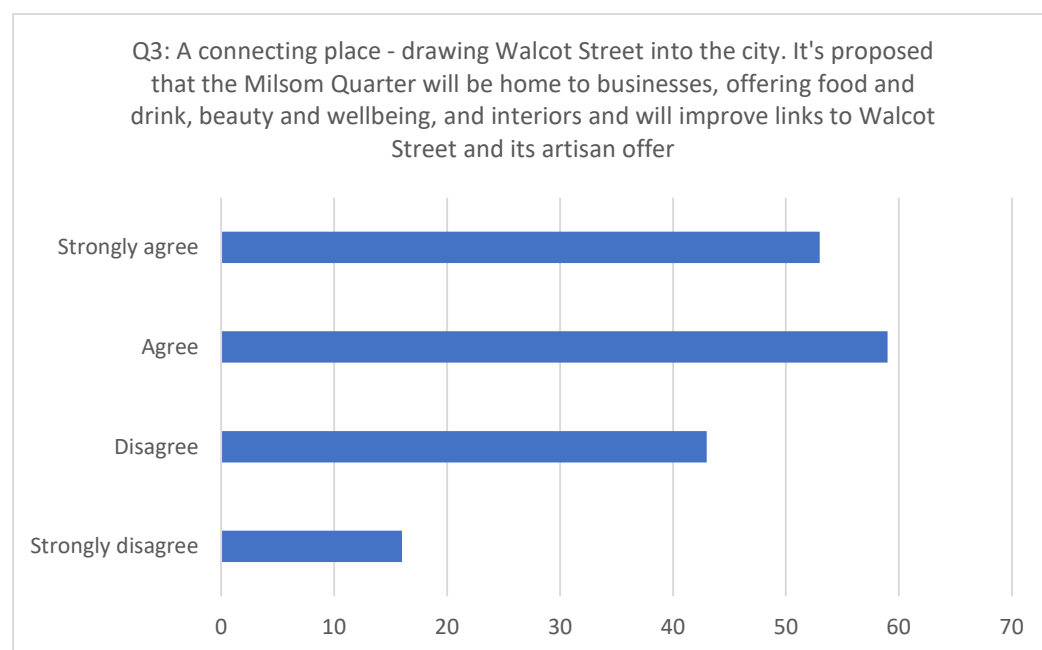
Key points to note in reviewing and updating the draft Masterplan include:

- Affordable rents and business rates need consideration in order to support the aspiration for creative industries
- Consider existing retail and business floorspace in advance of provision of more
- Concerns around vehicle movement through the city, including blue badge access and car parking provision

A connecting place – drawing Walcot Street into the city

It's proposed that the Milsom Quarter will be home to business, offering food and drink, beauty and wellbeing, and interiors and will improve links to Walcot Street

and it's artisan offer. The Milsom Quarter is also proposed as the location for a new Fashion Museum. Do you agree/disagree with this vision?



The positive responses to this question primarily focussed on improving the connectivity to Walcot Street, supporting independent businesses and improving movement of different modes through the Milsom Quarter and up Walcot Street.

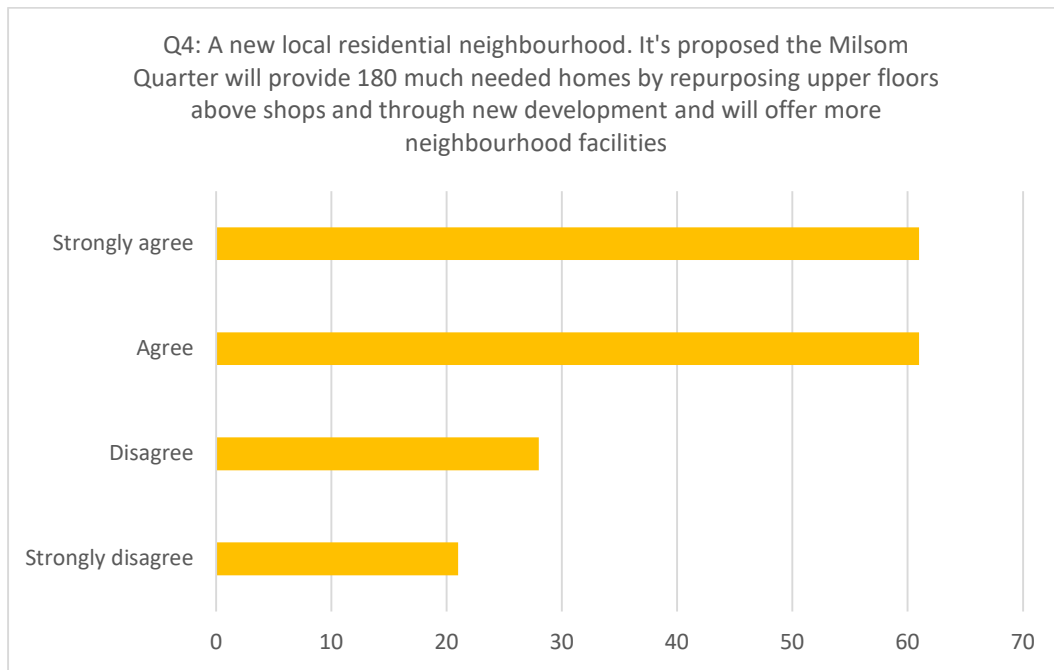
The comments which disagreed with the question were centred around the themes of traffic and movement, supporting a more diverse range of uses than proposed and physical accessibility of the Milsom Quarter.

Key points to note in reviewing and updating the draft Masterplan include:

- Identifying more opportunities to connect to and support Walcot Street
- Concerns around vehicle movement through the city, including blue badge access and car parking provision
- Supporting a more diverse range of uses beyond those identified

A new local residential neighbourhood

It's proposed the Milsom Quarter will provide 180 much needed new homes by repurposing upper floors above shops and through new development and will offer more neighbourhood facilities. Do you agree/disagree with this vision?



The supporting responses to this question focussed on affordability and tenure of proposed housing, providing local services for residents, protecting residents against noise, accessibility of proposed homes and ensuring energy efficiency.

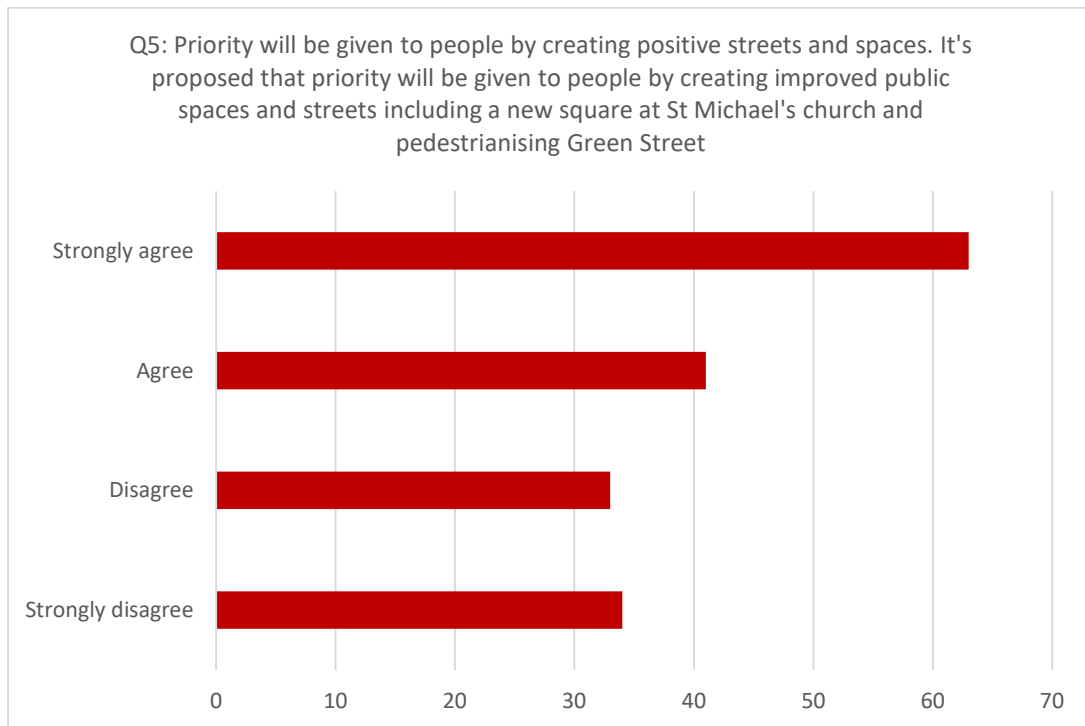
Comments which disagreed with this proposal centred on concerns around traffic and movement, noise disturbance, affordability and tenure, and energy efficiency.

Key points to note in reviewing and updating the draft Masterplan include:

- Detail around delivery of homes that are affordable with a mix of tenures, including supporting key workers, people with disabilities and young people. Reduce risk, where possible, of homes becoming short term lets.
- Consider noise disturbance and energy efficiency of listed buildings to ensure they are suitable homes
- Traffic and movement comments highlighted concerns around parking and traffic pressures of adding residents, physical accessibility of homes proposed and removal of car parking to build on the Cattlemarket site.

Priority will be given to people by creating positive streets and spaces

It's proposed that priority will be given to people by creating improved public spaces and streets including a new square at St Michael's church and pedestrianising Green Street and lower Broad Street. Walking, cycling and public transport will be prioritised whilst still maintaining vehicular access where needed. Do you agree/disagree with this vision?



The positive responses to this question primarily focussed on support for people-priority space, ensuring accessibility, improved environment and air quality of reducing numbers of private vehicles, and considering segregated cycle routes.

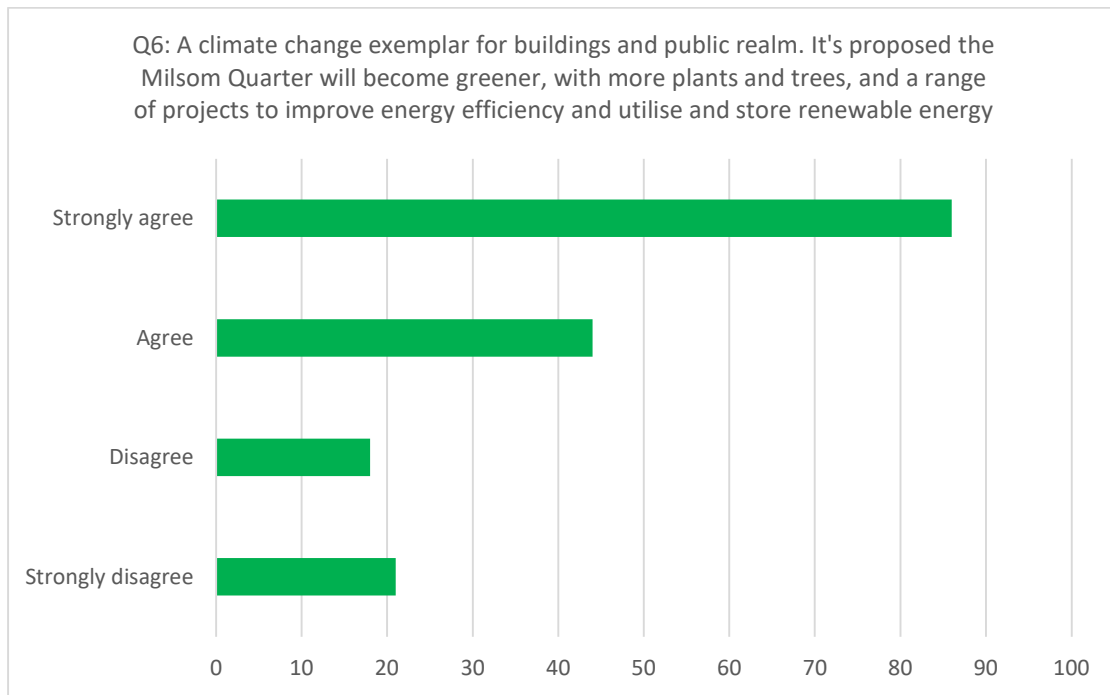
Comments that were not supportive of this theme centred around removal of vehicles and impact on movement, ensuring accessibility and inclusivity, separating cyclists and pedestrians, and wider circulation of vehicles around the city.

Key points to note in reviewing and updating the draft Masterplan include:

- Ensuring physical accessibility, including blue badge drivers
- Public transport access and reliability
- Considering how cyclists and pedestrians will interact in these public spaces
- How circulation around the Milsom Quarter will work in the context of the whole city movement plans and strategies

A climate change exemplar for buildings and public realm

It's proposed the Milsom Quarter will become greener, with more plants and trees, and a range of projects to improve energy efficiency and utilise and store renewable energy. Do you agree/disagree with this vision?



Supporting comments to this question focussed on the climate emergency and sustainability, greening/street trees and heritage.

Comments which disagreed with the question were centred around being sensitive to the historic environment and ensuring accessibility of public space if increasing street trees and greening.

Key points to note in reviewing and updating the draft Masterplan include:

- How sustainability objectives can be achieved with historic buildings or contemporary development in a sensitive heritage environment
- Appropriateness of street trees in certain locations within the world heritage city
- Ensure high quality design of public spaces to ensure that additional greening or trees do not create hazards in public space
- Careful balance of protecting heritage and delivering on climate emergency objectives

In terms of key stakeholder responses:

- *Historic England* commented on the excellent evidence base to the Masterplan and state that the Masterplan is a strong proposal. They consider the Masterplan to be an excellent and thorough study that strikes a good balance between revitalising the area and respecting its heritage. Detailed comments focus on the edges of the Masterplan area and the Cattlemarket site where there is further more detailed design work needed.
- *Bath Preservation Trust* commented that the masterplan is good and that they welcomed it. They called for a timetable for implementation and expressed that the Cattlemarket site is particularly sensitive and they would welcome more locally distinctive designs to be developed as part of the next stage of work. BPT also commented that a masterplan strategy for the whole city should be developed. A number of detailed comments are

made on particular elements and options in the masterplan with rationale and points for more detailed consideration.

- The *World Heritage Site Management Advisory Board* are supportive of the work undertaken and vision for the Milsom Quarter, they have stated that they endorse the Masterplan.
- The *Circus Area Residents Association* stated they were generally supportive of the Masterplan initiative. Issues such as the balance and mix of retail and hospitality, continued access to the riverside at cattlemarket, and the displacement of traffic are mentioned in their response. Opportunities for the Fashion Museum and the relationship to a new public space at the front of the Old Post Office building are also noted. Specific amendments to the Transport and Movement Summary Plan are being picked up as a number of specific inaccuracies in the notations were picked up which lie outside of the Masterplan area but which are shown on this summary diagram.
- *The Federation of Bath's Residents Associations* share many of the regeneration aspirations but consider the main area of concern to be envisaged traffic management modifications, they await the Bath Circulation Plan and further information of implementation and around city centre accessibility in particular.
- *Sam Smith's* (owner of King Edwards School site) responded to say that the Masterplan should feed into the formal Development Plan process, they confirm their intention to implement their current planning consent within the timeframe and state do not therefore support the alternative option explored in the Masterplan for an integrated development with Broad Street Yards. They also emphasise that rear access is required to their site for fire escape and for disabled access and that Broad Street car park would be used by their hotel guests. They also note that a full heritage assessment would be needed of the impact of development proposals on their grade II listed building should these be brought forward.

5. Next Steps

A schedule of updates and amendments to the Masterplan has been created in response to the consultation comments and to provide further information to respond to key policy changes e.g. Biodiversity Net Gain. This schedule will be presented alongside this summary of the consultation when the Masterplan is presented to elected members.