

Research summary

South Shields Old Town Hall

What people and businesses told us

How and why we did the research

In short

The feedback helps shape options that are realistic, useful and rooted in what local people told us.

- We asked residents and businesses to share their views on the future of the Old Town Hall.
- The work followed funding from the Community Regeneration Partnership with Government to explore how the building could be brought back into regular use.
- The aim was to understand what people value about the building, what uses they support, and what would help the Market Place.

The overall message

In short

The building is seen as more than an empty historic space. People link it to local pride, memories and the identity of South Shields.

- There is strong support for protecting and reusing the Old Town Hall.
 - Most people know the building and see it as part of the town's story.
 - Many residents and businesses believe bringing it back into use would improve the Market Place.
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What people support

In short

A mixed use approach could help the building feel active, flexible and welcoming.

- Residents were most interested in heritage, history, culture and arts uses.
- Businesses preferred ideas that would work alongside the Market Place, such as pop-up space, market space and a café.
- Younger residents and families also liked the idea of a community café.

What should guide the next stage

In short

This points to a plan that respects the past while helping the town centre feel brighter and busier.

- People want the building's history and original character to be protected.
- They also want better access and a space that feels easy to visit and enjoy.
- Businesses want the project to bring more visitors and support local trade.

ANECDOTAL FEEDBACK

What people said

“One of those landmarks that’s tied up with the identity of South Shields.”

“A good focus point for local history tours and walks, heritage events.”

“A space for arts, crafts, classes and exhibitions.”

“Somewhere where people would want to come and maybe have a drink on the weekend.”

Key findings at a glance

A snapshot of the main statistics from residents and businesses

250+

At the heart of South Shields

The Old Town Hall has been part of South Shields for more than 250 years.

The research shows people want its history protected while giving it a useful future.

WHAT THE RESEARCH TELLS US

80%

Protecting our heritage matters

80 percent of residents and 73 percent of businesses said it is extremely important to preserve and reuse historic buildings.

This was lower for under 35s, at 63 percent. Many residents also shared fond family memories of the building.

WHAT THE RESEARCH TELLS US

91%

People know and value the Old Town Hall

91 percent of residents and 86 percent of businesses knew exactly what and where the Old Town Hall is.

Around two thirds of respondents visit South Shields town centre at least weekly.

WHAT THE RESEARCH TELLS US

81%

A strong future as a heritage attraction

81 percent of residents liked the idea of using the building as a heritage or history attraction.

79% also liked the idea of a cultural arts or performance space.

WHAT THE RESEARCH TELLS US

77%

Businesses back market and café uses

77 percent of businesses supported additional market or pop-up space.

75 percent also supported a café. Ideas included canopies and stronger links with the wider Market Place.

WHAT THE RESEARCH TELLS US

90%

A boost for the Market Place

90 percent of residents and 84 percent of businesses believed bringing the building back into use would improve the Market Place.

Under 35s were the most optimistic, with 63% saying it would 'really improve' the area.

WHAT THE RESEARCH TELLS US

67%

Protecting history and building pride

67 percent of residents wanted the redevelopment to preserve local heritage.

49 percent wanted it to increase pride in the town.

WHAT THE RESEARCH TELLS US

52%

Supporting local businesses

Businesses wanted the project to support local trade and bring more people into the area.

52 percent wanted support for local businesses and 48 percent wanted more visitors.

NEXT STEPS

What happens next

- The feedback will help shape options for the future of the Old Town Hall.
- Further technical and feasibility work will help test what can be delivered.
- Updates will be shared as the work develops.

The aim is to protect the building's history while helping it play an active role in the town again.