

# **Our South Tyneside Conversation Summary report**

**Our  
South Tyneside  
Conversation**

**What's our  
town missing?**

**What's not  
working?**

**What do we  
need more of?**

**How do we  
create a  
lively town  
centre?**

# How we live has changed a lot lately.

**We're shopping, working and relaxing differently – which has had a significant impact on how and where we spend our time.**

These changes aren't going to reverse or stop. To ensure South Shields continues to be a place where residents, businesses and visitors choose to spend their time we need to carefully reshape our town to meet their needs.





## **A plan by the people, for the people**

We're in the process of creating a masterplan setting out what this will look like.

The masterplan will provide a vision to guide the growth and development of our town over the next 15-20 years.

We conducted **Our South Tyneside Conversation** between October 10 and December 2, 2022 to inform the development of our masterplan.

We called it a conversation (in reality five conversations about five separate areas of South Shields: Mill Dam; South Tyneside College and South Shields Marine School Campus; Town Centre; Coronation Street and Southern Gateway) because that is what it was.

## **An open conversation**

It took place online, on our streets over a free coffee and at drop-in sessions at venues including The Word, South Shields Town Hall and Ocean Road Community Centre.

We encouraged people to take part in our conversation through extensive social and digital advertising, bus advertising, a door-to-door mail-out, on street teams, huge hoardings around the town, local media and our council website and newsletter.

## **An honest conversation**

We asked for your opinions on our thoughts for the town.

There was plenty of discussion and almost 1300 people between the ages of 12 and 75 who live, work and play in South Tyneside took the opportunity to complete a survey.

They kindly answered a host of questions including:

**What is the town missing?**

**What's not working?**

**What do we need less of?**

**What do we need more of?**

## **Plenty of food for thought**

Your responses have given us plenty to consider in developing our masterplan. Some big themes emerged and the future you want for South Shields includes:

- A greater variety of shops
- More spaces for small, local retailers to set up shop
- Improving our Market Place
- Better quality and greener public spaces
- South Tyneside College and South Shields Marine School in the town centre
- Refurbishment of the Customs House

## **We appreciate your time**

We'd like to thank everyone who took part.

Right now, your thoughts and ideas are shaping our masterplan and shaping the future of South Shields.

In the following pages – we'll share what you said and what we're thinking as a result.

**More shopping,  
eating, greenery  
and things to do  
please!**



**Nearly  $\frac{1}{3}$   
want more  
activities**

**Nearly  $\frac{1}{3}$   
want more  
benches  
and green  
areas**

**The majority of people who took part in Our South Tyneside Conversation visit the town on a daily or weekly basis – most often calling in to shop, eat or drink.**

Although one in three said they like the town's shops, restaurants and cafes – there is room for improvement, with 77% of participants saying they wanted more thriving shops and 72% wanting greater retail variety.

**Over  $\frac{1}{2}$  want more eating  
and drinking variety**

**Our South Tyneside Conversation didn't just give people a chance to answer questions – it also provided an opportunity to share whatever they had in mind.**

**Here's a flavour of some of things participants said:**

**“Supporting the existing trade with new blood would be welcomed. Helping attract new diverse and possibly more local business would be welcomed.”**

**“I feel that more, better activities in the town centre would encourage and support tourism, whilst encouraging old style architecture to sit alongside the beautiful listed buildings would help develop the already pretty centre into a future proofed destination.”**

**“Please can we have an amazing bookshop with a café – cosy spaces that are quality! Independent bakers, fresh, artisan bread, chocolatiers – all that kind of thing.”**

**“Plant some trees in all available small places.”**

# Capturing our five conversations

**Our South Tyneside Conversation was really five individual conversations about five different areas of South Shields.**

In addition to asking questions about, and seeking views on, South Shields in general — we were also after specific thoughts on the proposed move of South Tyneside College and South Shields Marine School to King Street as well as views on the town centre; Mill Dam; Coronation Street and Southern Gateway (Fowler Street and the surrounding area).

In the following pages, we replay what you said about each area and begin to share what our masterplan will include — taking your feedback into consideration.





# South Tyneside College and South Shields Marine School

**There was overwhelming support for moving South Tyneside College and South Shields Marine School into the town centre – so this will form part of our masterplan.**

The proposed new campus will bring hundreds of staff, students and parents into South Shields on a daily basis – helping create a vibrant town centre and more activity in King Street, Barrington Street and Chapter Row, which will be great for business.





## Big benefits

A massive 4 in 5 of those surveyed think creating a campus spanning King Street and Barrington Street will benefit the town and two thirds believe it will create a livelier town centre, new opportunities for business and increased footfall.

It will offer modern design and new streetscapes bringing a fresh look and feel and new energy to our town centre while returning a listed building to life.

The proposed campus will create a spark igniting a wider new look, feel and energy in South Shields. Its design will look to our future but respect our past.

**Previous page, this page and following page:** artist impressions of the new South Tyneside College and South Shields Marine School campus.

**82% believe the college will benefit the town centre**

**2/3 of people believe the college will create new opportunities for local businesses**



idp

## What you said

**“We do need innovative ideas to bring more people to town – green spaces, recreational areas for all ages.”**

**“I think it’s a great idea. Many other towns have college campuses in the centre and it works well.”**

**“It should generate demand for different shops and services and hopefully stimulate demand for reoccupation of shops at the western end of King Street. Also, more vibrancy generally.”**

**“It’ll bring life to the town on afternoons and evenings.”**

The proposal includes developing the streets and public spaces around the college, including the creation of a new public square in Barrington Street; gardens and green spaces along Coronation Street and student accommodation on the former library site in Prince Georg Square.

A full planning application for the project, a joint venture between South Tyneside College, South Shields Marine School and South Tyneside Council and part funded by a £20m government grant, will be submitted in the coming weeks.

**This page:** artist's impression of the proposed South Tyneside College and South Shields Marine School viewed from Waterloo Square.



Keep an eye on Council social media channels for latest updates on the planning submission.

# Coronation Street

**Perhaps unsurprisingly, most people surveyed said they visit Coronation Street, which is home to ASDA and plenty of car parking space, for shopping.**

Half of you agreed that our ideas for Coronation Street, which is also home to St Hilda's Church and Waterloo Square, were spot on or almost there — while a quarter weren't sure what would be best for the area.

## **A place to live**

Many of you said that residential and space for small retailers was a priority. We've weighed these views against the demand for car parking in the area and made the decision to protect the area for this purpose for now. We'll continue to monitor this as the masterplan evolves.



# Mill Dam

**Mill Dam is seen as a great area for socialising and leisure by the majority of people who took part in Our Conversation – but you also told us that there was plenty to do to improve it.**

A majority of participants backed our ideas for enlivening the waterfront – with 6 in 10 surveyed believing our ideas for Mill Dam are spot on, or almost there.





**This page and previous page:**  
artist impressions of proposed  
Customs House developments.



## **A place to socialise**

Restaurants and other food and drink options were flagged as missing from the area by two thirds of participants and a third said social and retail space as well as activities for young people and families were needed.

An overwhelming majority, 4 in 5 of you, backed proposals to refurbish the Customs House — with almost half favouring option 3 which outlined improvements in public space as well as food, drink and retail in temporary structures or shipping containers.

## **We're listening**

The Customs House is a beautiful Grade II listed building full of history. We don't think this should change — but we're thinking we could make more of it. Our master plan will consider how we introduce amazing places to eat and drink along with increased rehearsal space.

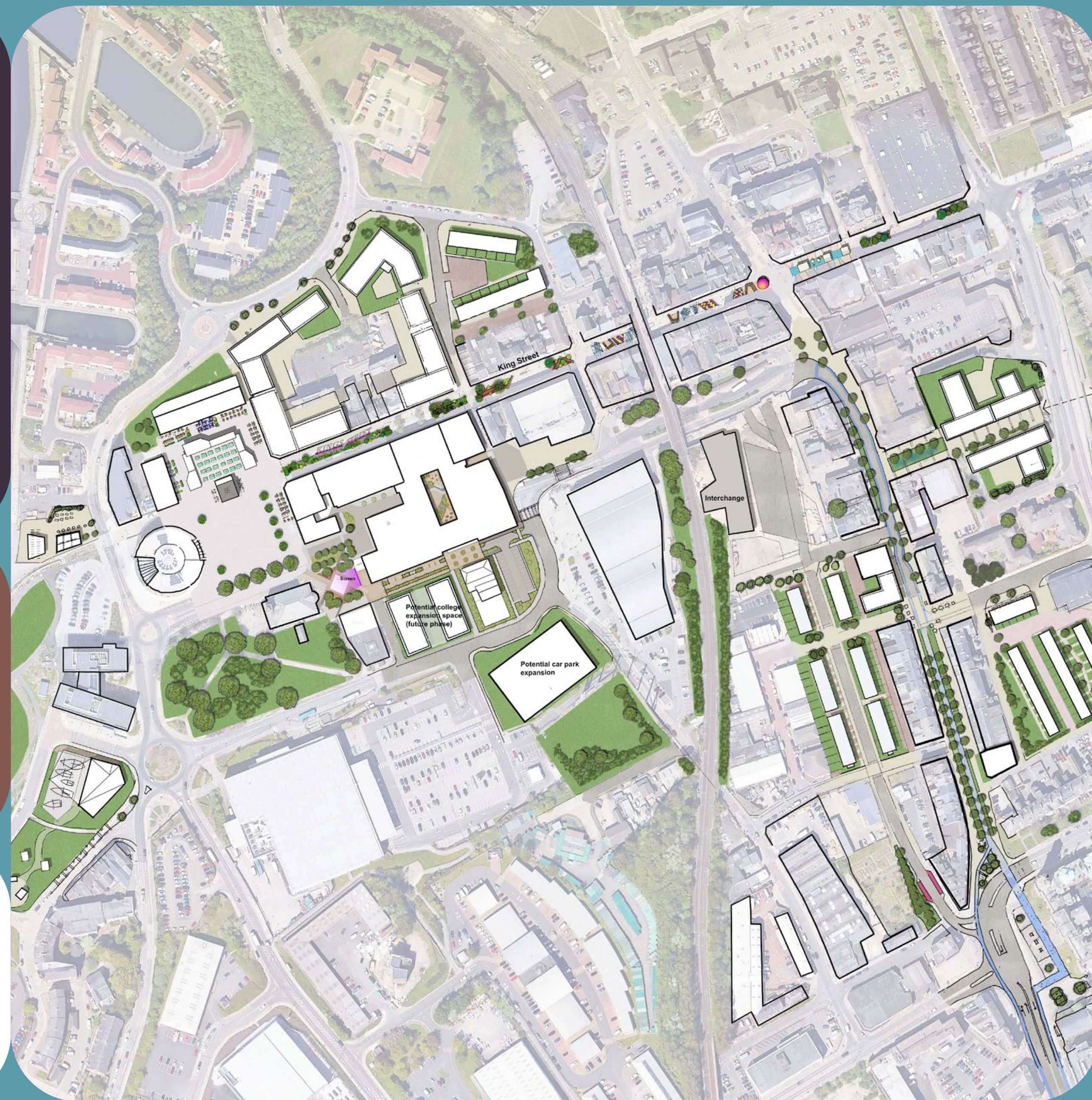
We're also considering combining improved landscaping with food, drink or retail outlets in pop-up or temporary structures and a café and cycle hub at the Ferry Landing, making the most of our fantastic views across the Tyne.



# Southern Gateway

**Sitting south of King Street, the Southern Gateway is how many visitors enter South Shields and creates their first impression of our town.**

It's clear that most of you are keen to create a better first impression! A majority of those surveyed prioritised greater investment and greening of streets and public spaces.





**This page:** artist's impression of Fowler Street.

## Homes and green spaces

Our ideas for the area, which included repurposing the upper floors of commercial premises to create homes, new residential developments and greening public spaces – were backed by 3 in 5 of you who said they were spot on or required just a little work.

Your support means we will take these ideas forward into our master planning.

We'll create new housing opportunities in Charlotte Street, Winchester Street and Mount Terrace and develop student accommodation on the former library site at Prince Georg Square.

To support our proposed shift towards a residential focus, we are considering reducing retail space and creating dedicated shopping clusters and investigating ways to reduce traffic and increase greenery.

# Town Centre

**You told us that increasing the variety of shops on offer in our shopping heart should be a big focus for our masterplan.**

Creating space for small local retailers was prioritised by three quarters of those who took part in Our Conversation and a majority of you highlighted the need to invest in our Market Place and public space.





## **Our masterplan will answer your asks**

We're exploring how we provide opportunities for businesses by making good use of our empty buildings.

Examples of this, which will feature in the masterplan, include introducing a food hall or indoor market space, making use of a vacant building in a prominent location — providing new opportunities for small local businesses and traders. At the same time, this will return a fantastic building back to life.

We'll also be considering how to bring more restaurants into units surrounding our 18th century Market Place with residential opportunities above — bringing more life and footfall to the area — and greater footfall.

Responding to the need to invest in Market Place and our public spaces, the masterplan will include green landscaping, outdoor exhibition space, play activities and public art along King Street and outdoor seating on Market Place — building on significant investment in recent years. We'll also set out a programme of events to attract and entertain.

Making some of this happen will involve working in partnership with business and property owners.

# What next?

**Thanks for taking the time for us to share how we are building upon what you told us through Our South Tyneside Conversation.**

We're in the process of developing our masterplan taking into account all of the things you said.

This will be ready to share with you shortly, keep an eye on Council social media channels for latest updates on the planning submission.

The future of our town is genuinely exciting and we can't wait to hear what you think.



**Our  
South Tyneside  
Conversation**

[www.ourconversation.co.uk](http://www.ourconversation.co.uk)