



For Immediate Release

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Have your say on the future of Basingstoke town centre

Residents and businesses across the borough are being asked to share their views to help shape the long-term future of Basingstoke town centre.

Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council has appointed a team of experts in looking at how places can be transformed, including HemingwayDesign with Allies and Morrison and JLL, to help develop an ambitious strategy for the town centre area.

High streets across the UK have experienced, and continue to experience, the effects of changes in shopping habits. Although Basingstoke town centre, including Festival Place and The Malls, has had success in attracting investment and new retailers in recent years, the COVID-19 pandemic has meant that town centres across the country are facing significant challenges, such as a decline in footfall and shop closures.

Recognising the importance of a sustainable town centre as a key part of the borough's recovery from the pandemic, the aim is to create a vision and masterplan to guide work and ensure the town centre offers an exciting shopping, leisure and cultural experience.

The study carried out by experts over the next six months will include comprehensive engagement with residents, businesses and other groups and a detailed analysis of the town's requirements and aspirations to create a final vision and masterplan.

Working closely with town centre partners, this long-term vision will ensure the council can provide support where it is most needed and maximise joint development and investment opportunities.

Residents, businesses, organisations and visitors are being encouraged to share their views of the town centre, their shopping habits and what they would like to see to improve the area in future years by taking part in an online survey at www.talkbasingstoketowncentre.co.uk

Leader of Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council Cllr Ken Rhatigan said: "The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the way we live our lives and as we plan for the borough's economic recovery, it is important that look at how we can ensure our town centre remains a top shopping and leisure destination that attracts people to the area.

"We have lots to be positive about and it will be important for us to build upon our key strengths, including heritage, our mix of retailers and strong arts and culture offer, while addressing issues such as connectivity, how we incorporate our town centre parks and sustainable travel.

"We cannot do this alone and I would encourage everyone to share their feedback as it will be important for us to understand how we can improve our offer to help shape our final strategy and ensure the town centre responds to changing customer expectations in the future."

Wayne Hemingway MBE Co-founder of HemingwayDesign said: "All of us know how town centres have been facing a multitude of challenges resulting from a change in our shopping habits and spending preferences. COVID-19 has accelerated this and progressive towns and cities are soul searching, and making plans and taking actions to ensure that they purposefully enter these changing times and positively embrace these societal shifts to become places that have something for all residents, businesses and visitors whether it be places to shop, socialise, enjoy leisure facilities, live and work.

"We urge all of you to have your say, after all it's you who are driving these changes so tell us what you want from the future of your town centre, and what you want to do and see there. So hit this www.talkbasingstoketowncentre.co.uk please and empty your head - we promise we are listening!"

The survey will be open from Monday 15 February to Friday 19 March at www.talkbasingstoketowncentre.co.uk

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Any questions via email to customer.service@basingstoke.gov.uk or by phone on 01256 844844.

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