

# Welcome

## The Churchgate Regeneration Zone is a Council-owned site in the heart of Hitchin town centre.

North Hertfordshire Council is undertaking the next exciting phase of consultation on the Churchgate regeneration project. Following the initial consultation undertaken in December 2022, the Council is seeking further detailed feedback on your current use and perceptions of the town centre, what you believe its strengths and weaknesses are, and what you would like to see delivered in the future.

Your feedback will help inform and shape a vision for the regeneration of Churchgate that meets the needs of everyone - the Council, community, and key stakeholders.

The following boards look at the Churchgate Regeneration Zone's past, present, and future.

They tell the story of how the town and Churchgate centre has grown and developed over the centuries, how it is currently used, and its important role as a place to live, shop, work, visit and enjoy.

Today we are specifically seeking feedback on your priorities and aspirations for its future.

Together, we can plan and create a space in the heart of the town that reflects the spirit and needs of everyone in North Herts. Join us in contributing and making Churchgate a fantastic destination that we can all be proud of!

**We want to hear from you!** Use the following QR code to fill in our survey. We are seeking feedback on your current use of the town centre, its strengths and weaknesses and the vision for the future of the Churchgate Regeneration Zone.



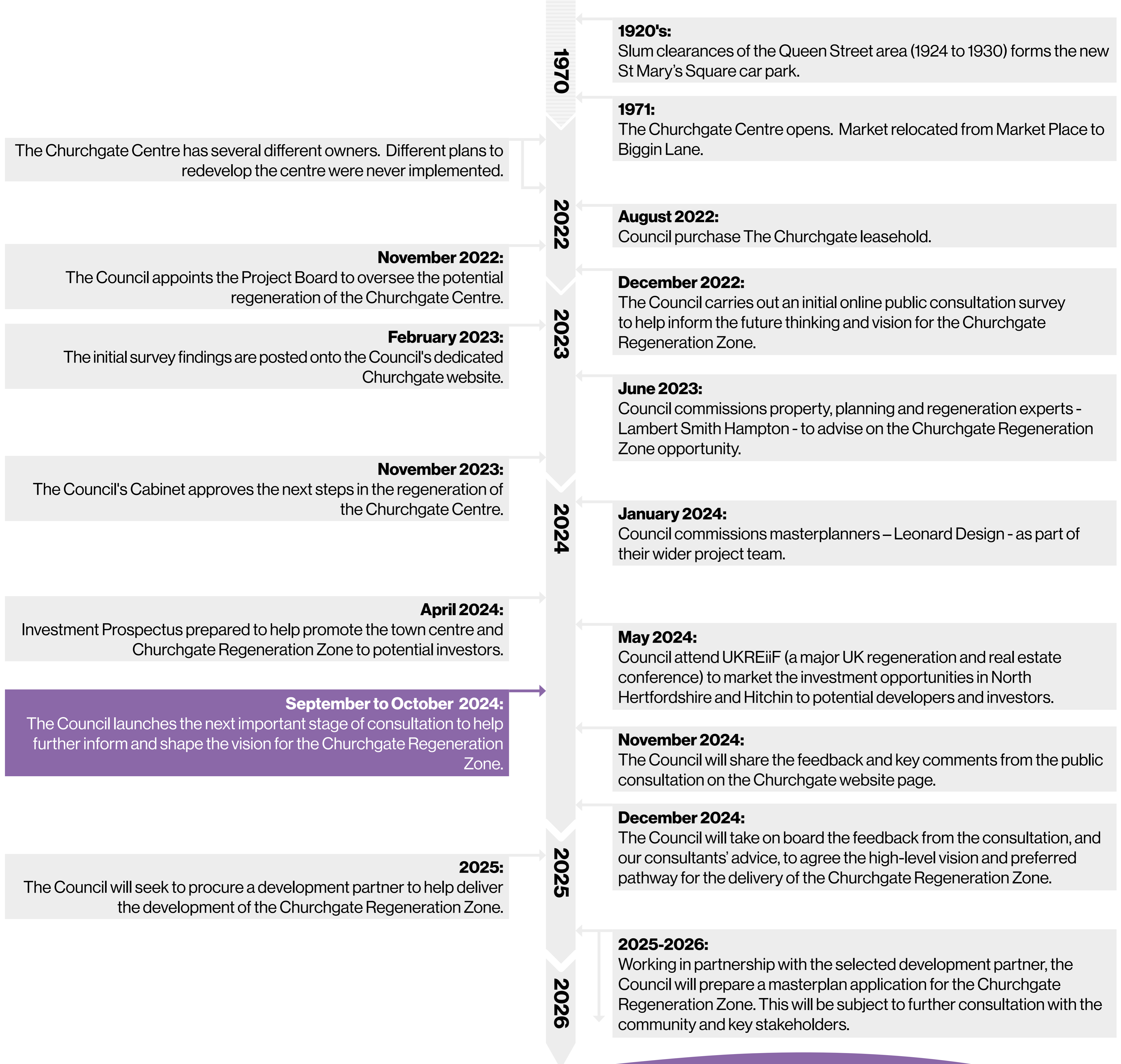
Should you need this in an alternative format (e.g., braille, larger format, community languages) and for any other enquiries, please contact us at: [churchgate.regen@north-herts.gov.uk](mailto:churchgate.regen@north-herts.gov.uk)



# Churchgate Regeneration Zone

**“We are thrilled to be leading on this ambitious, regeneration project alongside our community. This is a fantastic opportunity for the Council to deliver a new scheme that will benefit everyone in the District and beyond.”**

Councillor Daniel Allen,  
Leader of North Herts Council.



# The Past: Hitchin's Rich History

Dating back to at least the 7th century, Hitchin grew significantly during the medieval period, thanks to its thriving wool trade and strategic location on important trade routes.

By the 12th century, Hitchin had established itself as a market town, and St. Mary's Church became a notable landmark, reflecting the town's prosperity.

The arrival of the railway in the 19th century spurred further growth, transforming Hitchin into a commuter town while retaining its historic charm.

Today, Hitchin is known for its well-preserved medieval and Georgian architecture, vibrant market, and rich cultural heritage.



The Parish Church of St Mary



Market Place and the Corn Exchange

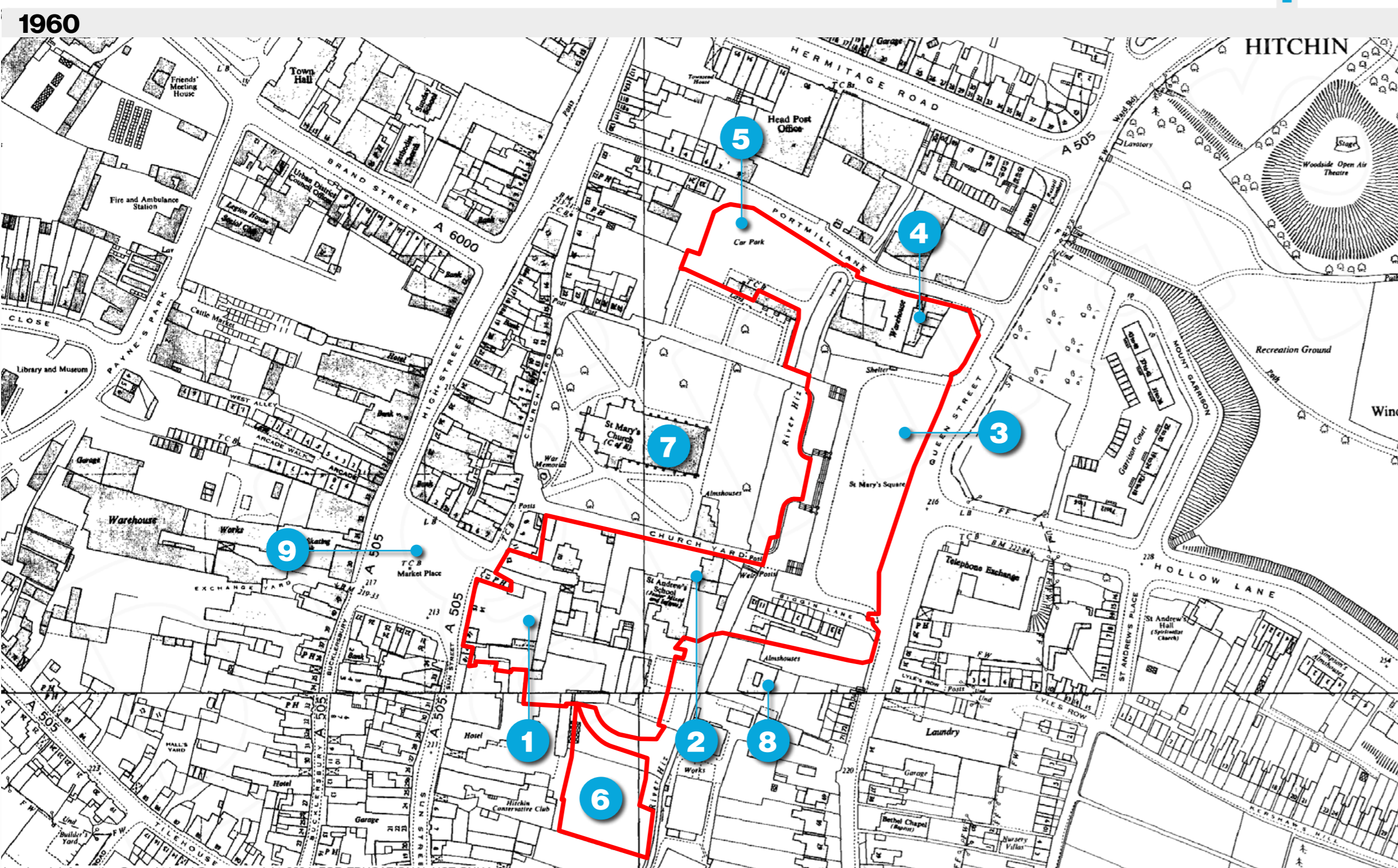
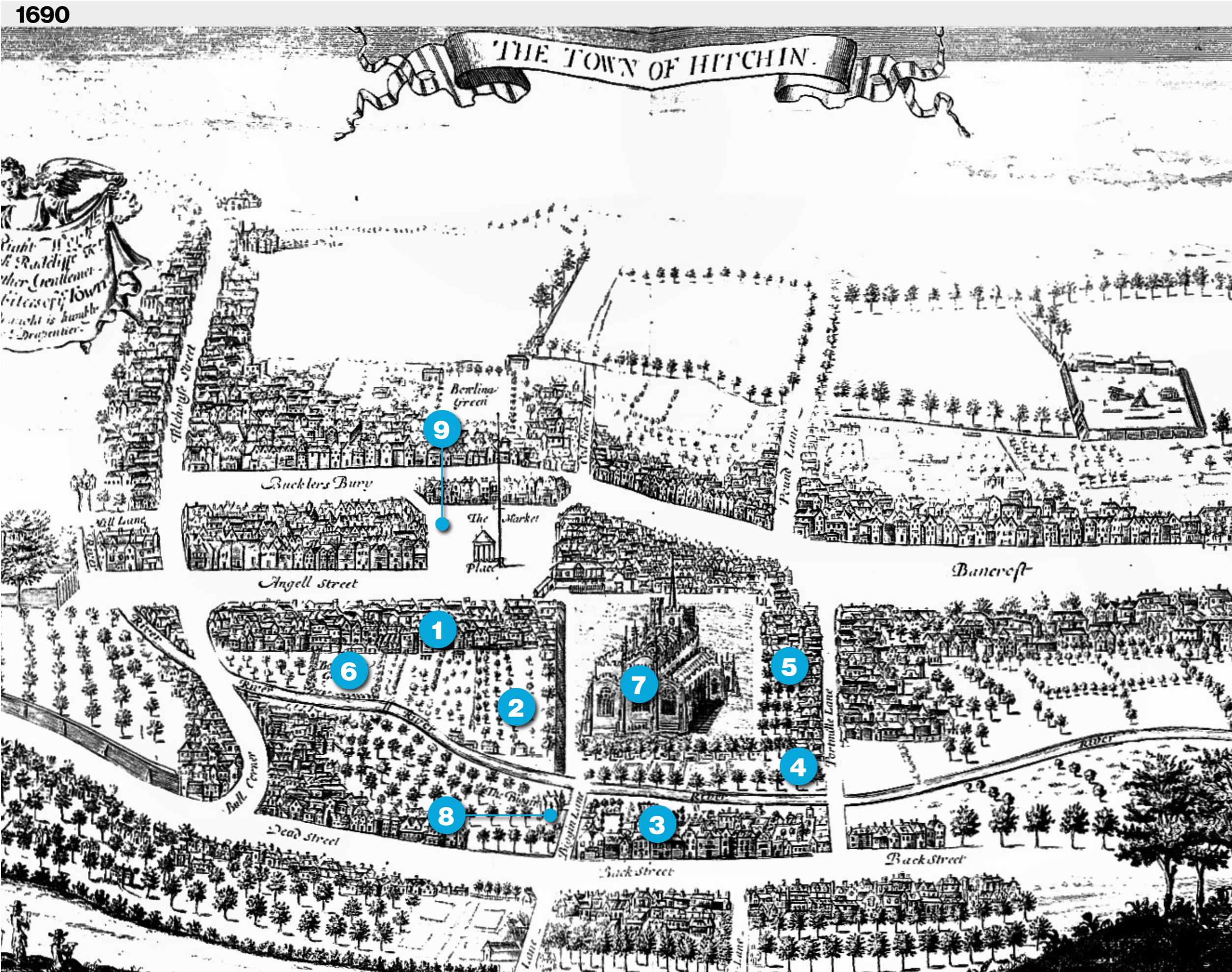


The Sun Inn & Sun Street

- 1 Location of the Churchgate Centre
- 2 Location of the Market
- 3 Location of St Mary's Car Park
- 4 Location of Portmill East Car Park
- 5 Location of Portmill West Car Park
- 6 Location of Biggin Lane Car Park
- 7 St Mary's Church
- 8 The Biggin
- 9 Market Place



# The Past: The Churchgate Regeneration Zone



The origins of the town can be traced back to the Saxon tribe named the 'Hicce' in the 7th Century.

Hitchin is recorded in the Domesday Book as a Royal Manor, 'Rex Willelmus tenet Hiz', translated to: 'King William holds Hitchin', with 600 inhabitants. The market was likely established prior to 1066.

Hitchin thrived on grain, sheep, cattle, cloth-making, brewing, tanning and other industries. Later expanding to malting and brewing.

In 1850 the Great Northern Railway placed Hitchin on the main route between London and the North. The Corn Exchange attracted merchants from as far away as Liverpool with grain moved by train.

The ancient Icknield Way passes immediately to the North with evidence of Roman activity at the settlement.

In 792AD the Mercian King Offa established a Benedictine house here, the precursor to the church of St Mary.

Hitchin Priory was founded as a Carmelite Friary in 1317.

The Biggin was established as a Gilbertine monastery in 1361.

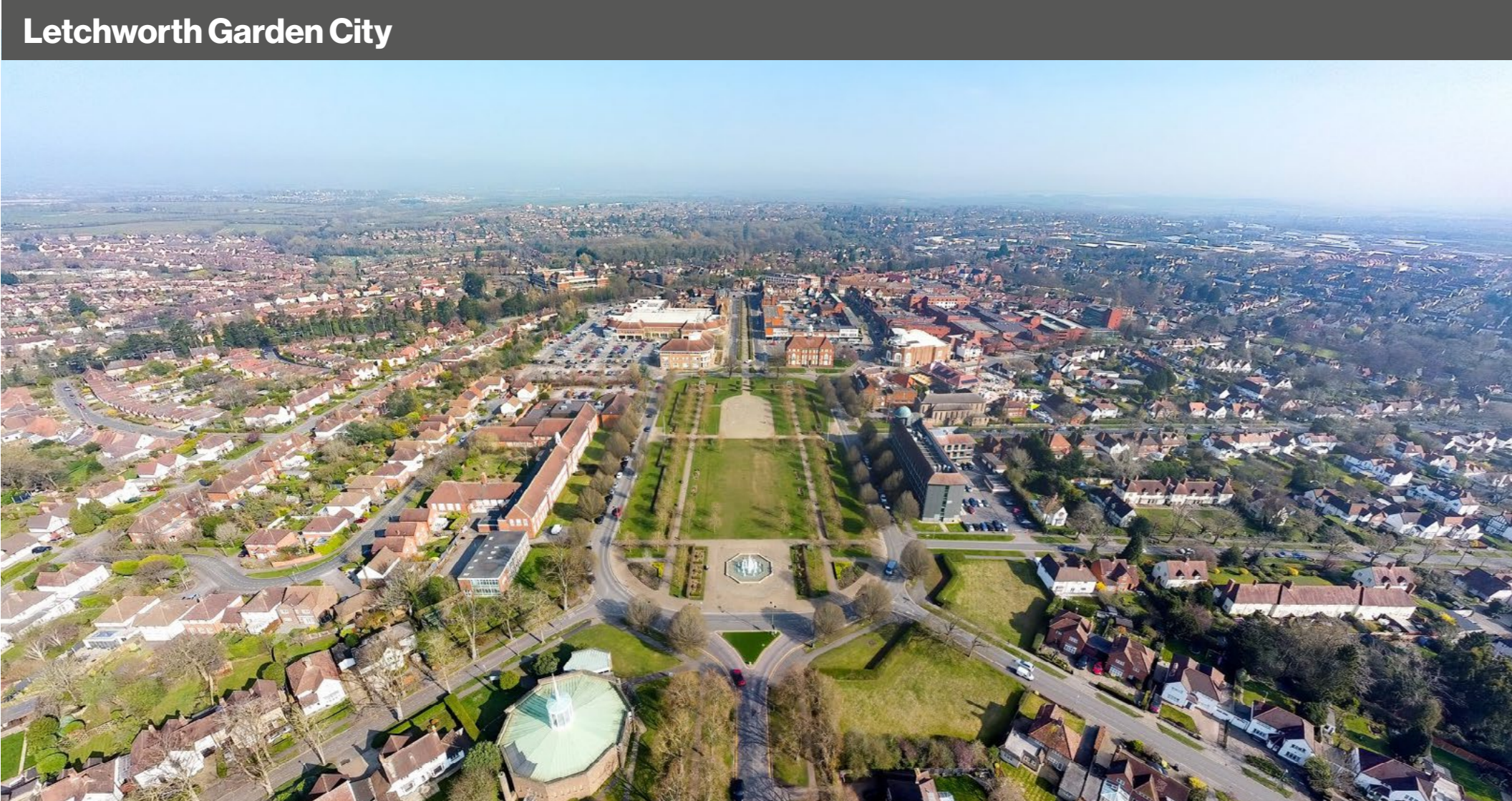
In the 18th Century Hitchin experienced unprecedented prosperity driven by rising population, agricultural improvement, and better links via the railway.

During the 20th century neighbouring towns such as Luton and Stevenage have increased their importance as commercial and shopping destinations; but Hitchin has maintained its niche position as an attractive and prosperous market town.

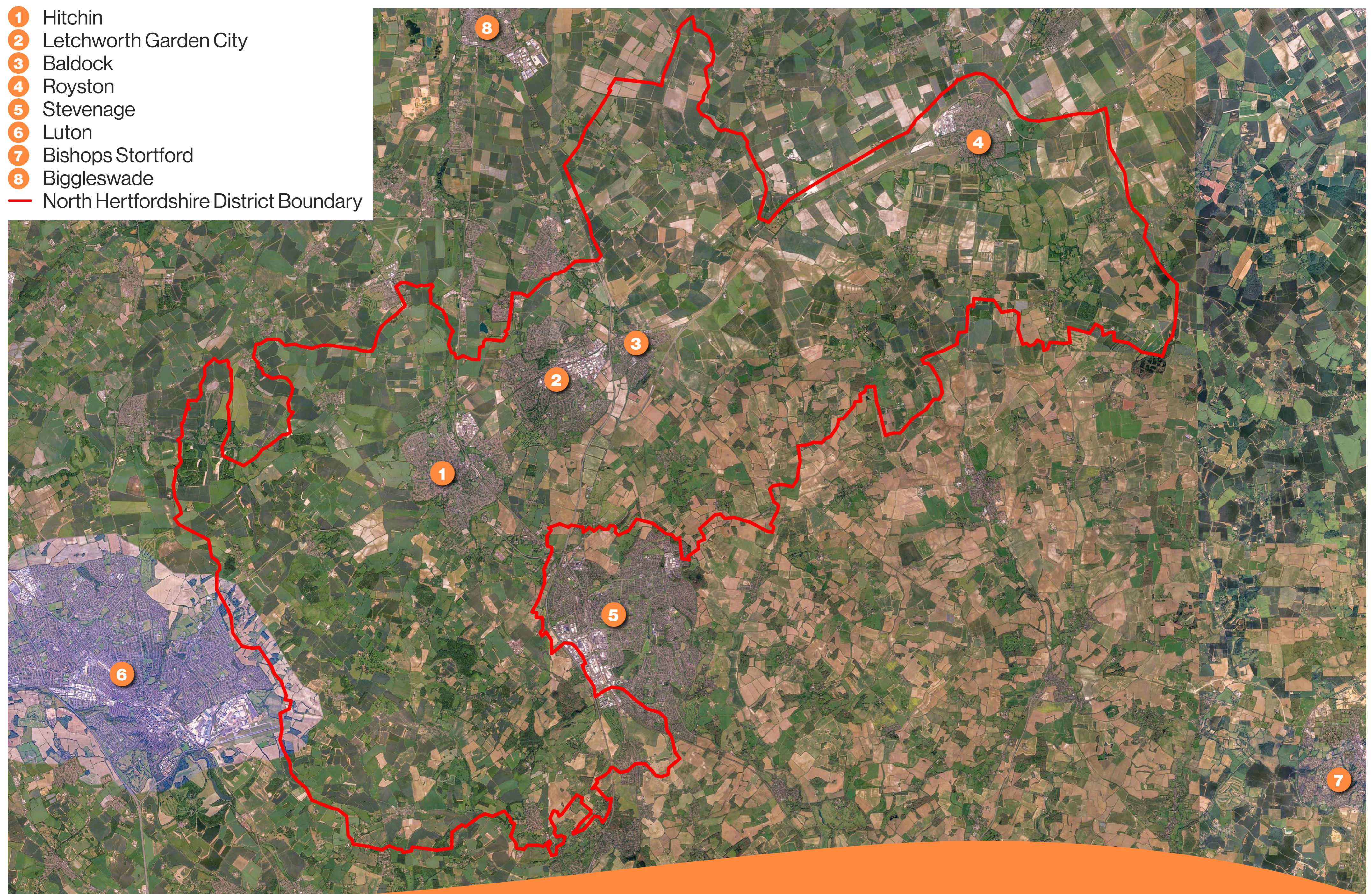
- 1 Location of the Churchgate Shopping Centre
- 2 Location of the Market
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- 8 The Biggin
- 9 Market Place
- Site Boundary

# The Present: North Hertfordshire

Any regeneration of the Churchgate Centre must be mindful of the important role of other key towns in North Hertfordshire and Hertfordshire – including Letchworth Garden City, Baldock, Royston and Stevenage - to ensure that it complements the area's wider offer and economy.



- 1 Hitchin
- 2 Letchworth Garden City
- 3 Baldock
- 4 Royston
- 5 Stevenage
- 6 Luton
- 7 Bishops Stortford
- 8 Biggleswade
- North Hertfordshire District Boundary



# The Present: Hitchin Town Centre



# The Present: Churchgate Regeneration Zone

**The Churchgate Regeneration Zone (CRZ) is a Council-owned site in the heart of Hitchin town centre.**

The site is located next to the town's historic Market Place and wraps around the Grade I listed St Mary's Church and its churchyard.

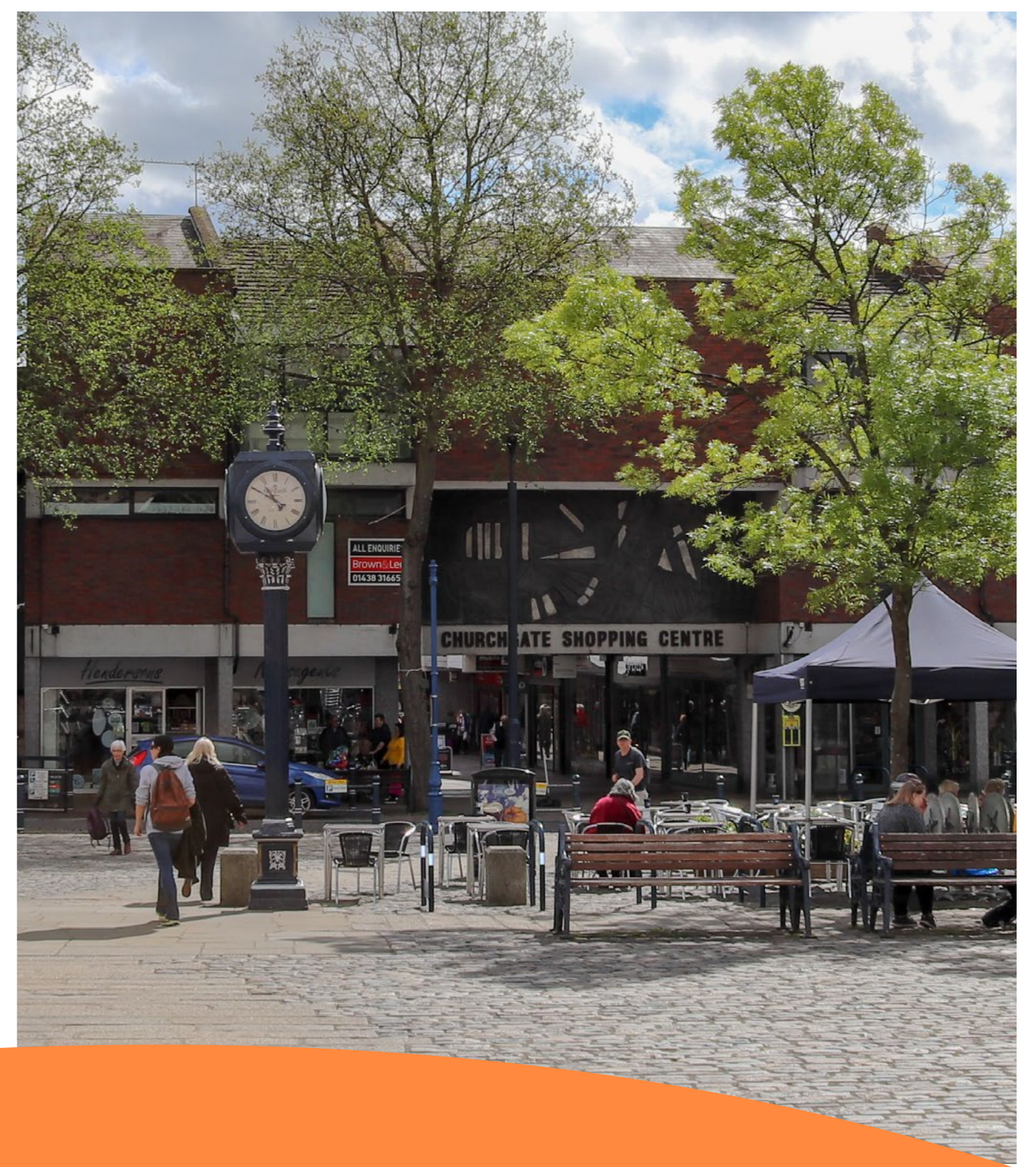
The CRZ extends to over 5 acres and includes:

- The 1970's Churchgate Shopping Centre;
- The 800 year old open-air charter market; and
- 4 surface car parks.

The River Hiz also runs through and under the site.

Respecting the history of Hitchin, the CRZ offers an exciting opportunity to improve and transform the eastern edge of the town centre.

The regeneration of Churchgate and the surrounding area has policy support in the North Hertfordshire Council Local Plan.



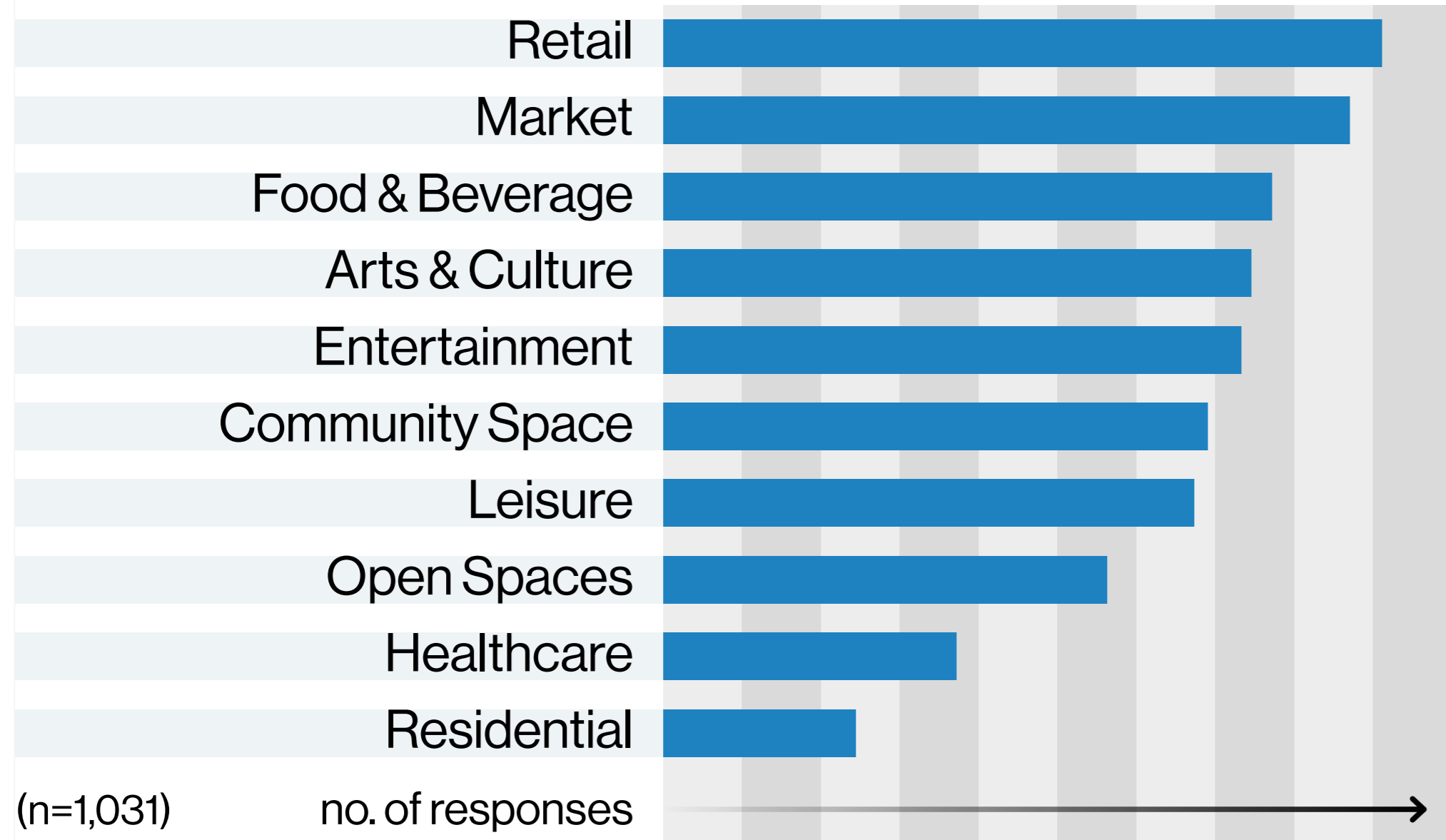
# The Present: What you told us before

The previous consultation ran from 5<sup>th</sup> December 2022 to 5<sup>th</sup> February 2023.

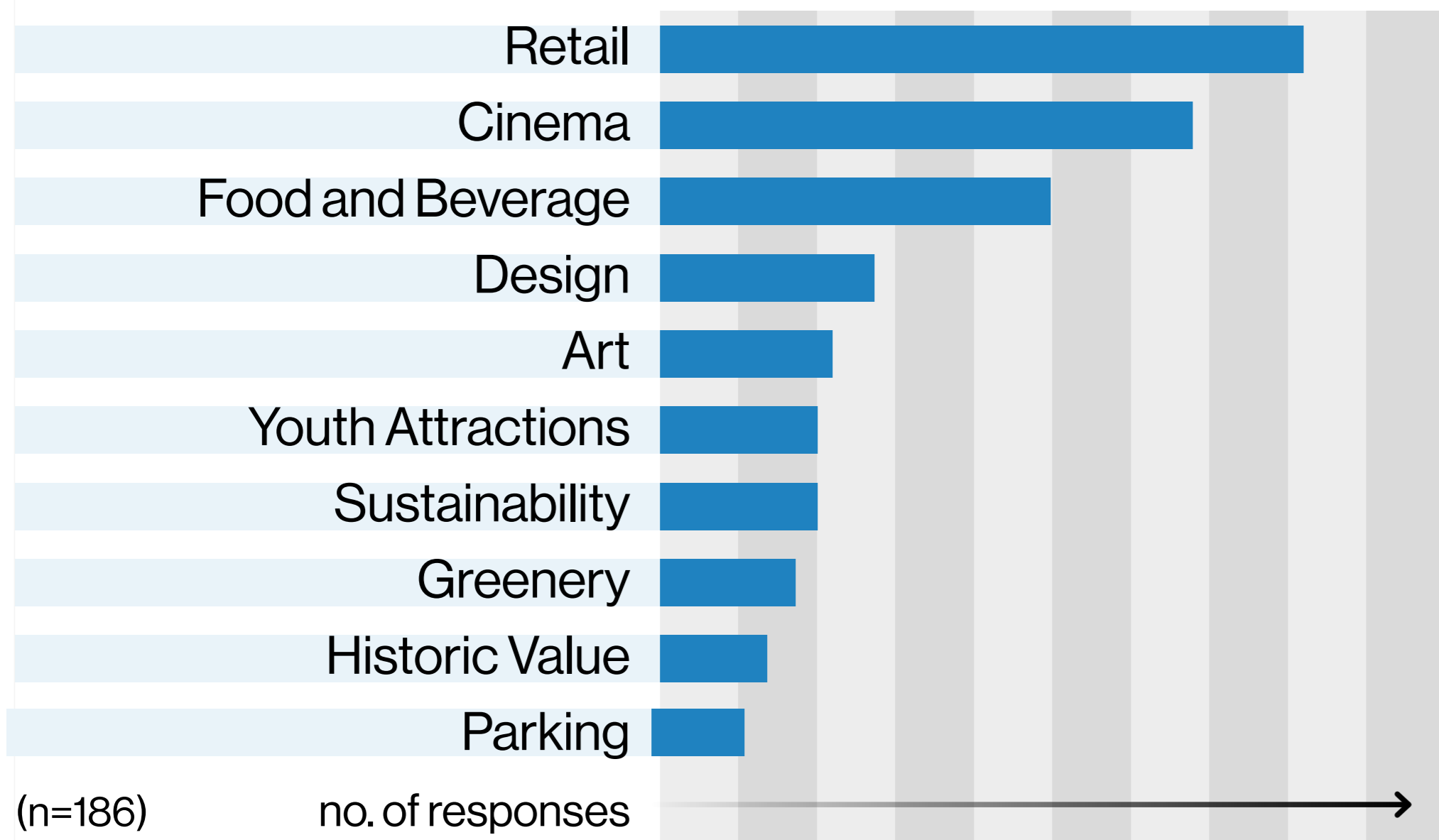
There were a total of 1,482 responses to two main questions, outlined below:

## Question 1:

What are your priorities for the Churchgate area of Hitchin?

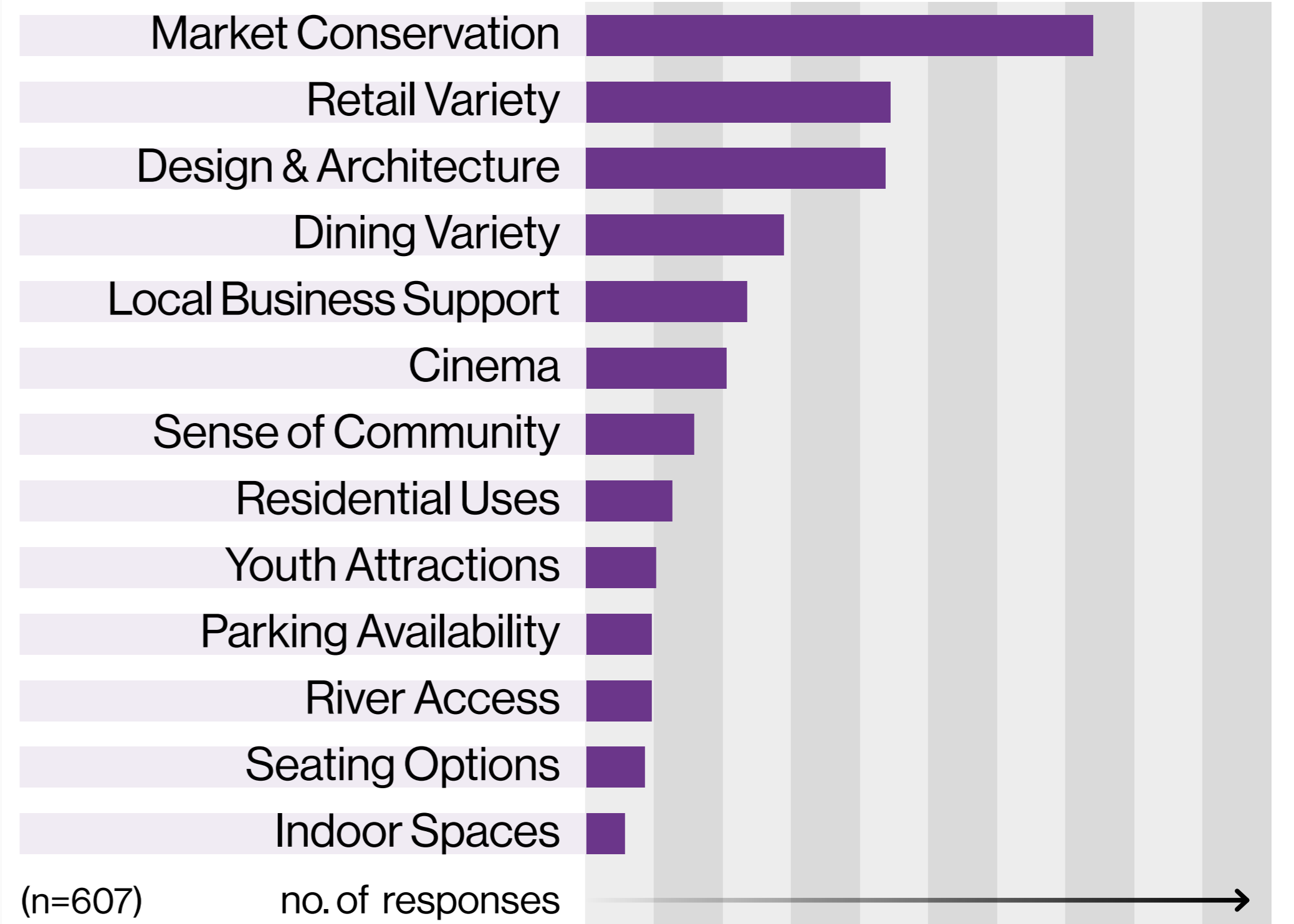


What are your other priorities?



## Question 2:

Is there anything else you would like to tell us?



Across all age groups the top priorities for the Churchgate Centre Regeneration Zone were focused on retail, the market, and food & beverage offers.

### All age groups want:

- To conserve and renovate the market.
- To encourage more small and local businesses.
- A town centre cinema.
- To have a more diverse range of retail and dining options.
- To have more artisanal and craft stores alongside high-street brands, cafés, restaurants, bars and grocery stores.

### Prominent proposals include:

- Indoor market / food markets.
- Enhancing open spaces with greenery, seating and shade.
- More restaurants and bars.
- A cinema.
- Respecting Hitchin's historic architectural style while improving the Churchgate's appearance.





# The Present: Opportunities

There is significant potential to:

Revitalise the Market.

Enhance the River Hiz.

Improve connectivity across Hitchin Town Centre.

Provide a mix of commercial, cultural, arts and community facilities.

Provide a range of new and affordable homes.



- |                              |                  |
|------------------------------|------------------|
| 1 Churchgate Shopping Centre | A High Street    |
| 2 The Market                 | B Sun Street     |
| 3 St Mary's Car Park         | C Bucklersbury   |
| 4 Portmill East Car Park     | D Biggin Lane    |
| 5 Portmill West Car Park     | E Queen Street   |
| 6 Biggin Lane Car Park       | F Hollow Lane    |
| 7 St Mary's Church           | G Portmill Lane  |
| 8 The Biggin                 | H Bancroft       |
| 9 Market Place               | I Hermitage Road |
|                              | J Bridge Street  |

# The Future: Market Opportunities

**Outlined below are a number of different precedents for markets and market halls.**

Please choose your favourite three images that you think would be most appropriate for Hitchin on the sheets provided. The top options selected will be used to inform the design and type of market people want for Hitchin.



**Mackie Mayor Manchester**  
High quality food and drink experience in a converted Grade II listed building, unused since the 1990's.



**Warrington Market**  
Opened in July 2020, Warrington Market houses a food court, two bars and more than 50 traditional market businesses and operators.



**Chester Market**  
A key catalyst for regeneration, the 'modern traditional market' is open 6 days-a-week to 'shop local and eat global'.



**Altrincham Market**  
Reopened in 2014, Market House was converted into a permanent 'gusto hub and canteen' alongside a variety of market vendors.



**The Produce Hall Stockport**  
Transformation from a hall hosting fish and meat markets, cheese stalls, sweet shops and public library to a food hall with 10 vendors.



**Shrewsbury Market Hall**  
A unique food, drink and shopping destination with over 60 traders offering a fusion of hand-crafted and the hard to find.



**Market Hall, Preston**  
Open 6 days-a-week the market sits alongside bars and cafés for a variety of food options to eat in or take away.



**Darley Street Market, Bradford**  
Home to an indoor / outdoor fresh food market, open-plan food and drink hall and stage for music, comedy and cooking events.



**Cambridge Street Collective Sheffield**  
Has food vendors over three floors, live music, interactive experiences, workspace, family-friendly zone and rooftop terrace.



**Great Yarmouth Market Place**  
A new £4.7m venue housing locally loved traders and operating 6 days-a-week, with market days taking up Market Square as well.



**Truro Farmers Market**  
Home to 800 stalls and a market kitchen street food hall as a part of the event space.



**Market Halls, Victoria**  
A carefully curated, eclectic and international range of food and drink from independent kitchens over three floors with outdoor terraces.

# The Future: Streetscape Opportunities

**Outlined below are a number of different precedents for the street scene.**

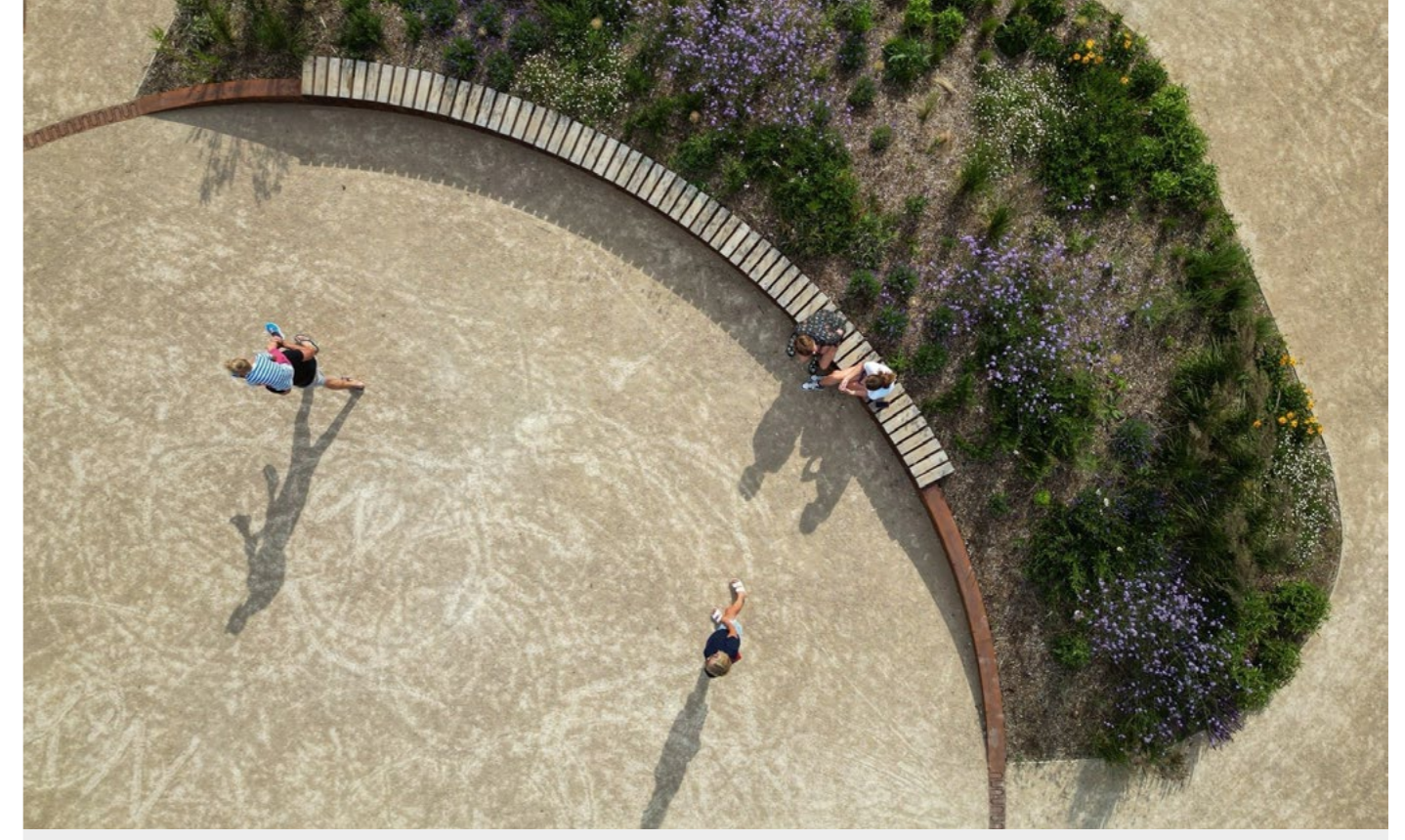
Please choose your favourite three images that you think would be most appropriate for Hitchin on the sheets provided. The top options selected will be used to inform the design and type of street scene people want for Hitchin.



**Rewilding**



**Consistent surfacing**



**Defined spaces**



**Places to meet**



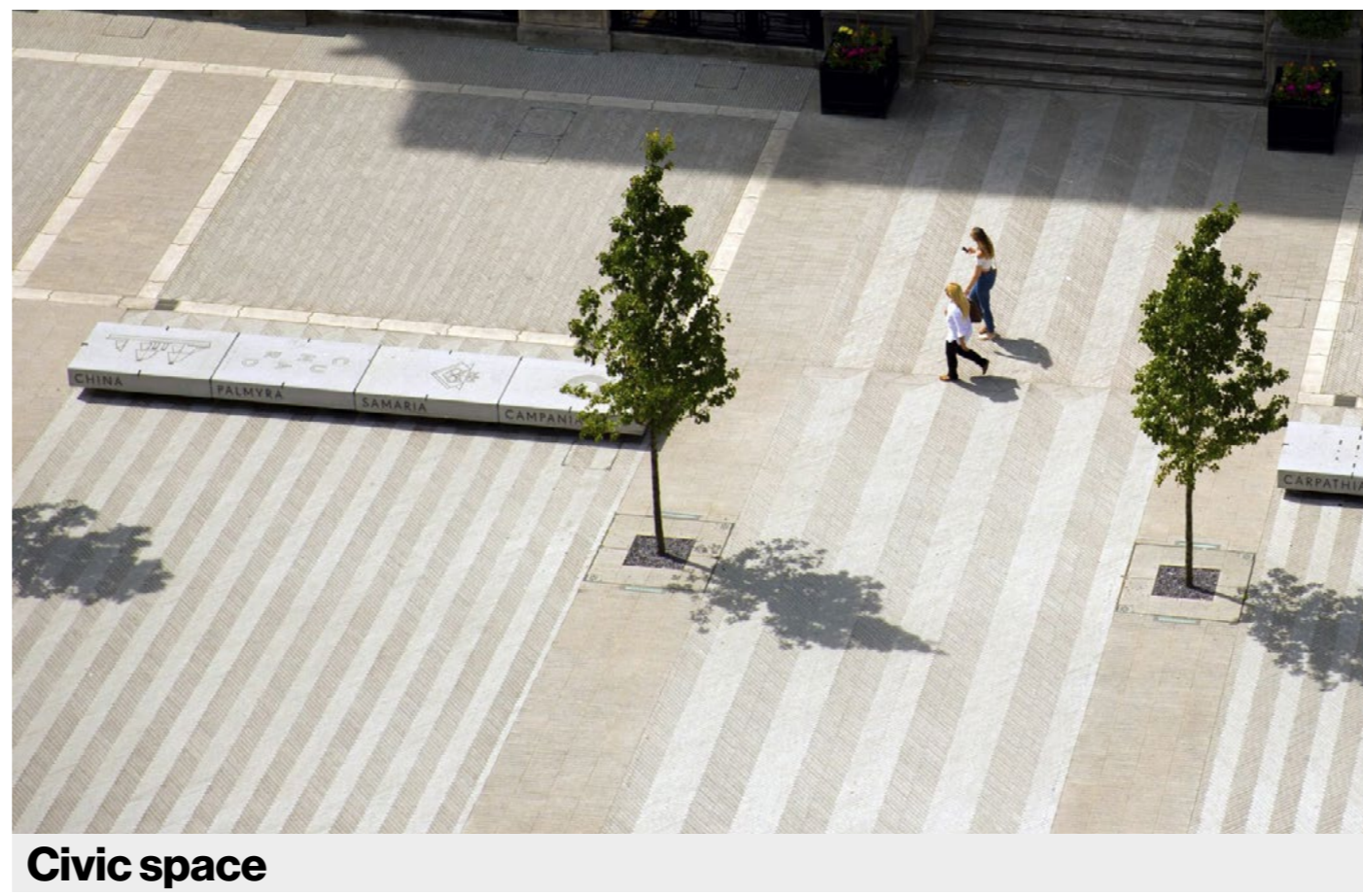
**Playable street furniture or art**



**Planting and seating**



**Children's play space**



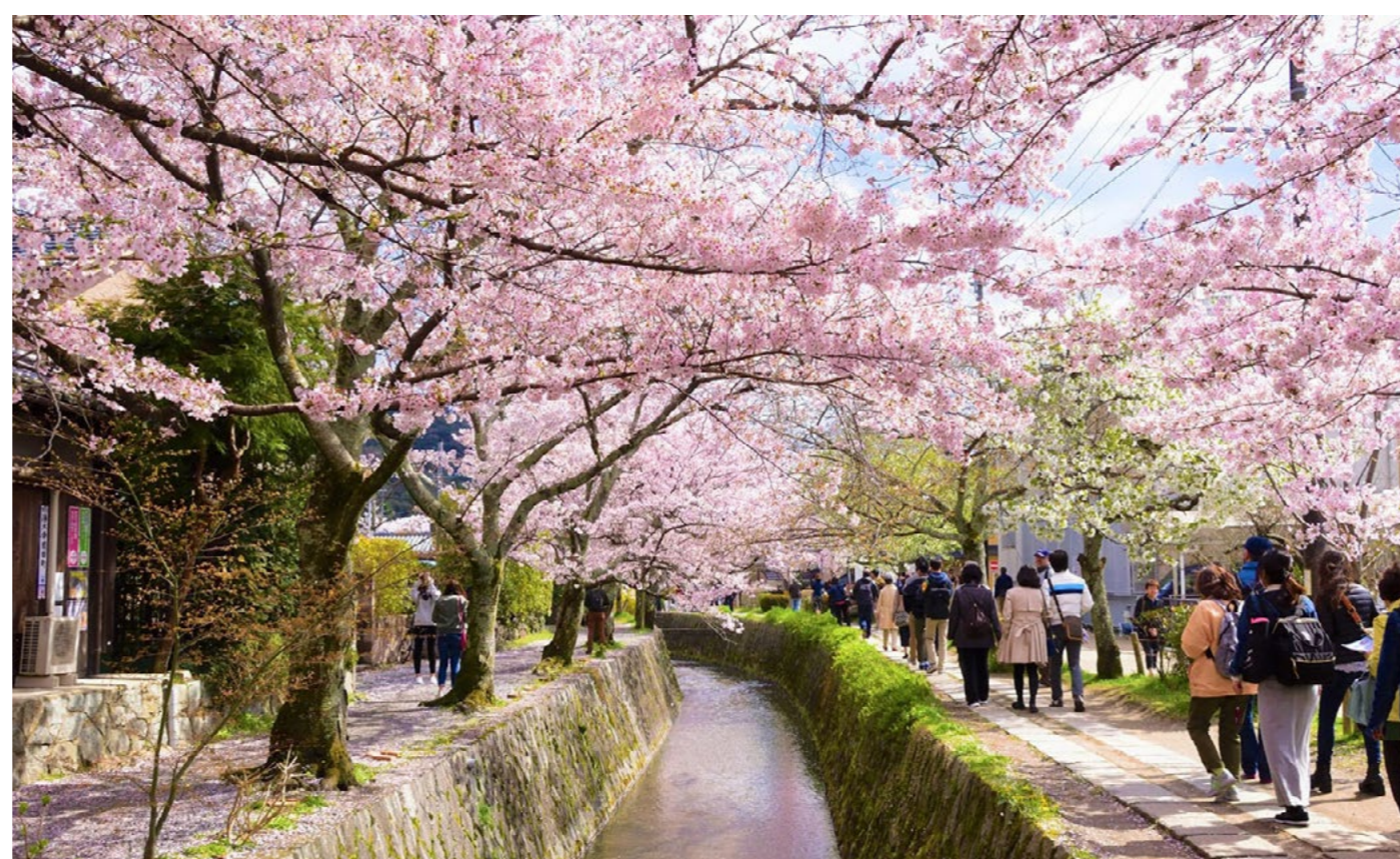
**Civic space**



**Sculptural furniture**



**Green places**



**Opening up and celebrating the River Hiz**



**Scenic walking routes**



**Places to sit and eat**



**Space for performance & events**



**Space for play**

# The Future: Your chance to have your say

**Help us understand how you normally travel to Hitchin and why.**

Let us know your thoughts on the three questions below with post-it-notes and stickers on the sheets provided.

## 1 What is your main purpose for visiting Hitchin town centre today?

Shopping	Visit the Market	Leisure and entertainment	To use public services	Healthcare	Education	Culture and events	Work or business related	Other
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## 2 How did you travel to Hitchin town centre today?

Walk	Bus	Train	Car	Taxi	Other
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## 3 If you travelled by car and parked in Hitchin, where did you park today?

Place a sticker on the sheet provided to indicate where you usually park when you visit Hitchin Town Centre.



# The Future: Your chance to have your say

## Help us understand your vision for the Churchgate Regeneration Zone.

Let us know your thoughts on the three questions below with post-it-notes and stickers on the sheets provided.

### 1 What are the biggest opportunities?

- Delivering new residential development
- Providing open green space
- Developing the evening economy
- Revamping the market
- Providing healthcare provision
- Open up the River Hiz & riverside walk
- Other

### 2 What uses would you like on the site?

- 1 Cafés/ Restaurants
- 2 Cinema
- 3 Gym
- 4 Local shops
- 5 Hotel
- 6 Homes
- 7 National retailers
- 8 Revamped Market
- 9 Supermarket
- 10 Culture, arts and community
- 11 Parking
- 12 Other

### 3 What should go where? Use the numbered stickers to indicate where you think these uses would be best placed on the sheets provided (the numbers correspond to the categories listed above).



# Next Steps: Have your say

**Thank you for taking the time to visit us today and for providing your feedback.**

**Have your say - we need to hear from you!**

We would also appreciate it if you could complete our online survey, which seeks more detail on your current use of Hitchin town centre, and your priorities and aspirations for the potential regeneration of the Churchgate Centre.

Your feedback is vital, as it will help inform the Council's vision and next steps for the future investment in, and development of the Churchgate Regeneration Zone:

Please scan the QR code below to access the survey, or alternatively, please visit:

[www.bit.ly/ChurchgateRegenerationHub](http://www.bit.ly/ChurchgateRegenerationHub)



For accessible formats, please email: [churchgate.regen@north-herts.gov.uk](mailto:churchgate.regen@north-herts.gov.uk)

A limited number of hard copy surveys are available in the hub for those who would prefer to fill out a paper form.

**September to October 2024:**

The Council launches the next important stage of consultation to help further inform and shape the vision for the Churchgate Regeneration Zone.

**November 2024:**

The Council will share the feedback and key comments from the public consultation on the Churchgate website page.

**December 2024:**

The Council will take on board the feedback from the consultation, and our consultants' advice, to agree the high-level vision and preferred pathway for the delivery of the Churchgate Regeneration Zone.

**2025:**

The Council will seek to procure a development partner to help deliver the development of the Churchgate Regeneration Zone.

**2025-2026:**

Working in partnership with the selected development partner, the Council will prepare a masterplan application for the Churchgate Regeneration Zone. This will be subject to further consultation with the community and key stakeholders.

2025

2026

**Together we will seek to shape the future of our town centre through the redevelopment of the Churchgate Regeneration Zone.**

