Salford City Council + MUSE

Community Conversation

Eccles Town Centre Masterplan Vision



October 2026

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1. Executive Summary

1.1 The community conversation about the future of Eccles town centre has generated an exceptional response, with people from across the area sharing what they value most, what makes Eccles special and what they want to see next. A clear and collective ambition has emerged: to revitalise Eccles as a more active, welcoming and vibrant town centre that meets the needs of today while looking to the future.

1.2 Eccles is a place defined by deep civic pride and rich heritage, from the historic presence of St Mary's Church to its pivotal role in the early railway. This pride has been powerfully reflected throughout the engagement process, with residents, businesses and stakeholders demonstrating a strong desire to shape the town's future. There is a shared confidence that Eccles can build on its strengths and reassert itself as a thriving centre of community life.

1.3 Salford City Council and Muse are now focused on translating this momentum into delivery. The priority is to turn the strength of local voice into tangible change on the ground, bringing new energy, uses and opportunities back into Eccles. A successful town centre can play an important role in supporting a stronger and more connected community, providing shared spaces where people can meet, spend time and take part in civic and community life. The ambition is to help Eccles once again become a place where people want to live, work, visit and invest.

1.4 This report charts the journey from the Eccles Vision through to the final masterplan, showing how conversations with the community have directly informed the proposals. It sets out a community-led framework for change, with a masterplan rooted in the priorities, ambitions and ideas of the people of Eccles.

The Community Conversation Reach

Throughout the course of the multi-phase community conversation, we were able to reach a large audience of residents, community groups and stakeholders who were invited to take part. In total:

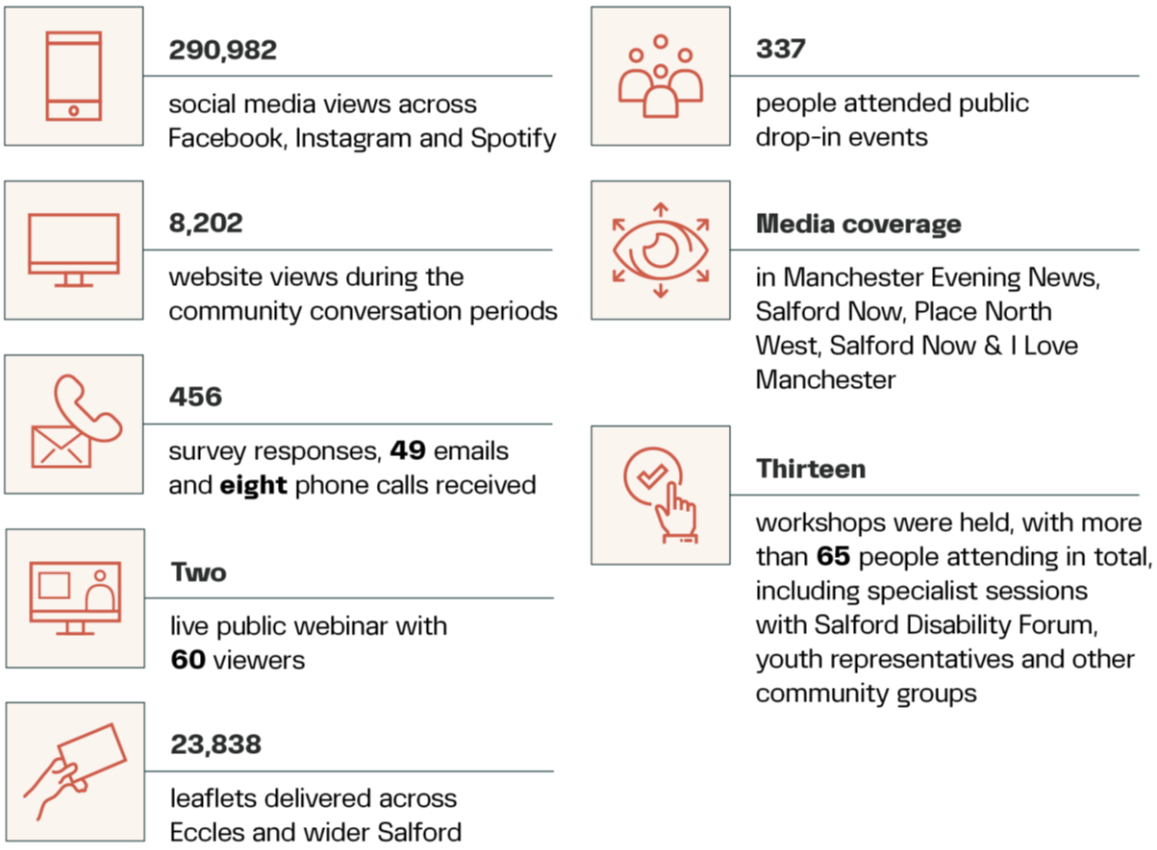


Figure 1.1: Infographic showing the community conversation reach

2. The Partnership

2.1 In 2022, Salford City Council developed the Eccles Vision following engagement with local people on the future of Eccles town centre. The Vision set out a long-term ambition to create a stronger, greener and better connected town centre, while responding to challenges around declining footfall, outdated spaces and changing town centre uses.

2.2 Following the development of the Eccles Vision and the acquisition of the shopping centre, Salford City Council appointed Muse in 2025 as its development partner to help bring the Vision forward and move from vision into delivery.

2.3 The Partnership has since worked collaboratively to develop the Eccles Town Centre Masterplan, supported by an ongoing programme of community conversation and engagement to help shape the future direction of the town centre.

2.4 The Council selected Muse as its development partner due to its strong track record in delivering complex town centre regeneration projects across the UK. A key part of this approach is working closely with local communities, listening to local voices and ensuring they play a central role in shaping how places evolve. With experience across places such as Oldham, Manchester, Warrington, Chester and already within Stockport, Muse brings the expertise to turn long-term plans into real, deliverable change, focused on achieving the best outcomes for the people of Eccles.

2.5 Together, Salford City Council and Muse combine local leadership with delivery expertise. This partnership is focused on listening to the community and making change happen, bringing forward regeneration in a way that is responsible, deliverable and rooted in what people want to see for Eccles.

2.6 Building on the Eccles Vision, the Partnership undertook two further stages of community conversation to develop the masterplan for the town centre. The first stage in 2025 presented initial ideas for how Eccles could change, inviting feedback to test and build on the priorities identified through the Vision. This was followed by a

second stage in 2026, which shared the draft masterplan and provided more detailed thinking for comment.

2.7 This approach ensured the community remained central throughout, shaping the project as it progressed from early ideas through to a deliverable plan, in line with national planning policy which places strong emphasis on community involvement.

3. The Eccles Vision 2022

3.1 Prior to the development of the draft masterplan, Salford City Council undertook early engagement in 2022 to understand what local people wanted to see for Eccles town centre and to establish a clear vision for its future. This work was driven by the need to respond to long-standing challenges facing the town centre.

3.2 Eccles town centre is not working as it should and over time, its role and function has changed. The construction of major road infrastructure, including the M602, reshaped how people moved around the town, while the growth of large-scale retail and leisure destinations, particularly the Trafford Centre and Salford Quays, drew activity, investment and visitors away from Eccles.

3.3 As a result, the shopping centre and surrounding areas were no longer meeting the needs of the community, with limited activity, outdated spaces and fewer reasons for people to spend time in the town. What had once been a stronger, more active centre had become quieter and more inward-looking, with a reduced offer and a weaker sense of place.

3.4 In response, Salford City Council took a proactive lead in shaping a stronger future for Eccles. In 2022, the Council carried out an extensive consultation to understand local priorities and establish a clear vision for the town centre. This placed the community at the heart of the process, ensuring the direction for Eccles was grounded in what matters most to the people who use it every day.

3.5 The Eccles Vision provided the foundation for action. It gave the Council the evidence and confidence to secure £5.3 million of Government funding to purchase the shopping centre and move forward with its demolition, unlocking the first stage of change and creating the opportunity to reshape the town centre.

3.6 Feedback from the 2022 consultation was clear and consistent, with three key priorities emerging to shape the future of Eccles town centre:

- **Our place to eat, meet, work and play:** Feedback showed a strong desire for a more active and welcoming town centre, with more reasons to spend time in

Eccles throughout the day and evening. People felt the existing shopping centre and surrounding areas were outdated and no longer fit for purpose, with limited activity beyond core shopping hours. There was a clear call for a broader, more flexible mix of uses, including independent businesses, food and drink, leisure and community activity, creating a town centre where people can spend time, not just pass through.

- **Strong roots, green shoots:** Feedback highlighted the importance of Eccles' heritage, character and green spaces, with strong local pride in landmarks such as St Mary's Church, historic buildings and waterways. There was a clear expectation that regeneration should build on these strengths, protecting what makes Eccles distinctive while introducing new opportunities for the future. This includes improving green spaces and making more of Eccles' heritage as the town centre changes.
- **Creating connections:** There was a clear call to make better use of Eccles' strong transport links and central location, both to attract more people into the town and to better support local businesses and residents. Feedback focused on improving connections within the town centre and to surrounding areas, including walking, cycling and public transport, and creating a more joined-up, accessible and well-connected place.

4. Creating the Masterplan – The Community Conversation Approach

4.1 The Eccles Vision 2022 established a clear direction for the future of Eccles town centre, shaped by the priorities and ambitions raised by local people. With the vision in place, the next stage was to develop a masterplan alongside Muse as a trusted development partner that could translate these ambitions into a clear framework for how Eccles town centre could evolve over time.

4.2 The masterplan has been prepared to provide a long-term framework for how the town centre could evolve over time, setting out proposals and guiding principles for future development, public spaces, movement, homes, activity and investment. The masterplan will be considered by Salford City Council's Cabinet and, if approved, will help guide future regeneration and decision-making across the town centre when future planning applications come forward.

4.3 Following the agreement of the partnership between Salford City Council and Muse, the focus shifted towards developing proposals for the Eccles Town Centre Masterplan. Building on the Eccles Vision 2022 as the foundation for change, the Partnership developed a community conversation approach designed to ensure local people could continue to influence how their town centre evolves as proposals developed over time.

4.4 The community conversation was structured across two stages to give local people the opportunity to help shape and refine the masterplan as it developed over time:

- The Autumn 2025 conversation on early ideas and direction for Eccles town centre; and
- The Spring 2026 conversation on the draft masterplan proposals.

4.5 This phased approach ensured community engagement remained central throughout the development of the masterplan, with feedback from local people directly shaping its evolution. The first stage focused on testing early ideas and priorities for Eccles town centre, and the second stage then returned to the community with the draft

masterplan to assess how well it reflected local aspirations and to identify where further refinement or changes were needed ahead of finalisation.

4.6 A key priority of the engagement approach was to minimise barriers to participation and ensure that a wide cross-section of the Eccles community could be involved. To achieve this, a range of different engagement methods and feedback channels were used, making it as easy and flexible as possible for people to take part. This recognised that people engage in different ways and at different points in the process. The approach combined both in-person and online activity, alongside formal and informal conversations, creating opportunities for both in-depth feedback and more accessible, everyday discussions within community settings.

4.7 Across both stages of the community conversation, a broad programme of engagement and awareness raising was undertaken, including:

- public drop-in events, attended by over 445 people across both stages of the conversation
- workshops and stakeholder sessions, attended by 65 people, involving a wide range of local groups and organisations, including Salford Disability Forum, elected members, local businesses, community representatives and young people through Salford City Academy.
- online surveys and feedback forms, generating over 480 pieces of feedback across both stages of the community conversation
- direct conversations with community groups and local organisations
- live public webinar sessions, allowing people to hear directly from the project team and ask questions remotely
- dedicated feedback channels through email, Freephone and Freepost
- a dedicated website providing project information, event details and opportunities to give feedback

- targeted awareness raising through leaflet distribution, posters, media engagement and social media activity

4.8 The engagement approach continued to evolve between stages, strengthening participation and reaching a broader range of voices as the masterplan developed. This included more targeted engagement with community groups and a stronger presence at local events, enabling direct conversations about the proposals and gathering further feedback on the draft masterplan. Activity included engagement at the Get In! To Eccles festival, sessions at Rainbow Rooms and Mustard Tree, and a dedicated outreach session with Eccles Mosque, using gazebos and exhibition materials to encourage open discussion and participation from members of the local community.

4.9 Further detail on awareness raising and engagement activity for both stages of the community conversation is provided in Appendices 1 and 3, with detailed summaries of conversation feedback received through surveys, emails, phone calls, workshops and stakeholder engagement provided in Appendices 2 and 4.

Demographic profile

4.10 Demographic information was collected from respondents who completed the online feedback surveys during both phases of the Community Conversation. Approximately 400 people provided demographic information, although not every respondent answered every demographic question. A full breakdown of the demographic responses is provided at **Appendix 1.**

4.11 The responses show some clear patterns in the demographic profile of those who completed the surveys. 82% of respondents identified as White British, 95% said they identified with the gender they were assigned at birth and 75% identified as heterosexual or straight. Most respondents did not identify as having a disability. In relation to employment, 55% were in full-time employment, with retired respondents forming the next largest group at 19%.

4.12 Some groups were less represented within the survey responses. 9% of respondents identified across Arab, British Asian, mixed heritage and Black backgrounds, while

smaller proportions of respondents identified as having a disability (12%) or from minority faith groups. This highlighted the importance of supplementing the survey with targeted engagement to broaden participation across the Community Conversations, with additional activities outlined within this section.

4.13 Other characteristics showed a more balanced spread. Responses by sex were relatively evenly distributed, although there were slightly more female respondents at 56%. In relation to religion, responses were more mixed, with 48% saying they belonged to a particular religion and 39% saying they did not. The age profile also showed a good spread across respondents aged 25 to 65+, rather than responses being concentrated within one age group. Fewer responses were received from those aged 18–24, with additional outreach undertaken with younger adults and children through targeted youth engagement.

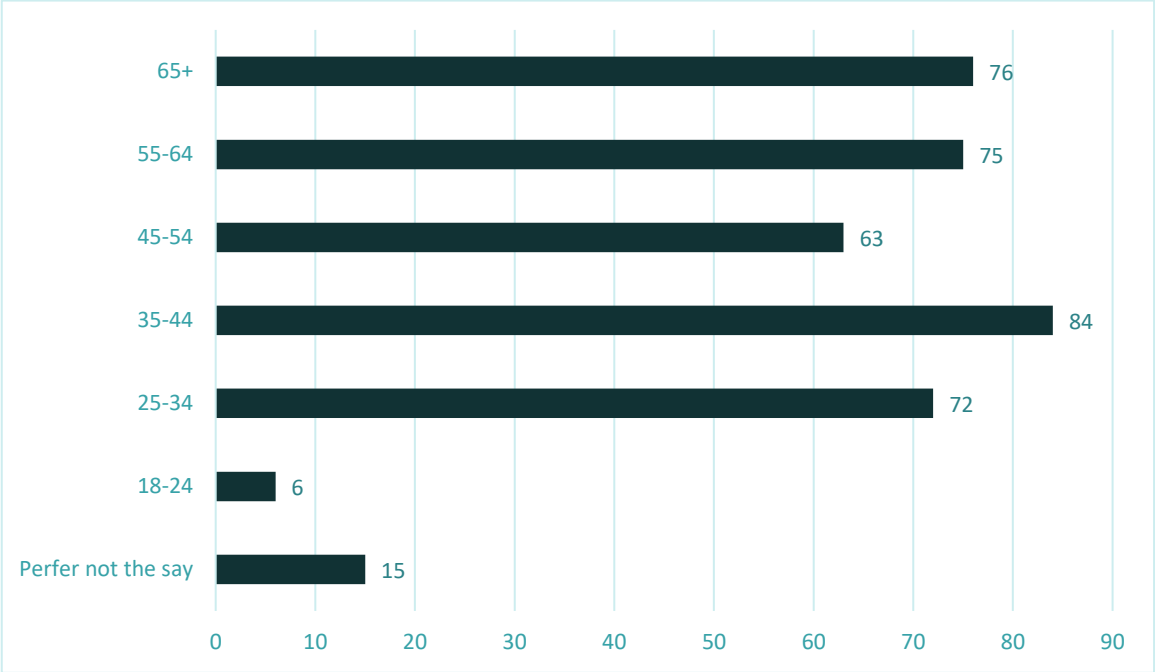


Figure 4.1: Responses to age

Targeted engagement

4.14 As part of the wider Community Conversations activity, targeted engagement was undertaken to broaden participation and reach groups who were less represented through the online survey or who may be less likely to take part through more

traditional consultation methods. This included working directly with local organisations and community groups and adapting the engagement approach to suit different audiences.

- **Young people**: Dedicated workshops were held with young people at Salford City Academy and Castle Youth & Community Centre. Interactive activities, including Lego Serious Play, were used to create a more engaging format and provide an alternative way for younger people to share their views on the future of Eccles Town Centre.

- **Eccles' Muslim community**: The project team attended Eccles Mosque during Friday prayers to speak directly with people, encourage participation in the conversation and signpost people to the project website and online survey.

- **People with disabilities**: Dedicated engagement was undertaken with Salford Disability Forum, including specialist workshops and presentations focused on accessibility and the experience of people with disabilities using Eccles Town Centre.

- **Rainbow Rooms Community Centre**: The project team attended Rainbow Rooms Community Centre on Liverpool Road, close to the proposed changes within Eccles Town Centre. The session helped ensure regular users were aware of the Masterplan Vision and provided an additional opportunity for them to hear about the proposals and share their feedback.

- **Barton community groups**: Smaller-scale engagement was undertaken through established local groups in Barton, including a session with people attending a regular community bingo group. This provided an informal opportunity for people to hear about the proposals, ask questions and share feedback in a familiar community setting.

4.15 This targeted activity complemented the wider public engagement programme and helped broaden participation across the Community Conversations.

Geographical reach

4.16 Respondents were invited to provide their postcode through the online feedback surveys during both phases of the Community Conversation. Postcodes were also collected from people who registered to receive project updates. This information was used to understand the geographical reach of the engagement and where participants were located in relation to Eccles Town Centre. The maps below showthe distribution of postcode locations across Eccles and the surrounding area, using a colour scale to indicate the concentration of responses. Darker red areas represent a higher number of postcodes, with the shading moving through to lighter orange where fewer postcodes were received.

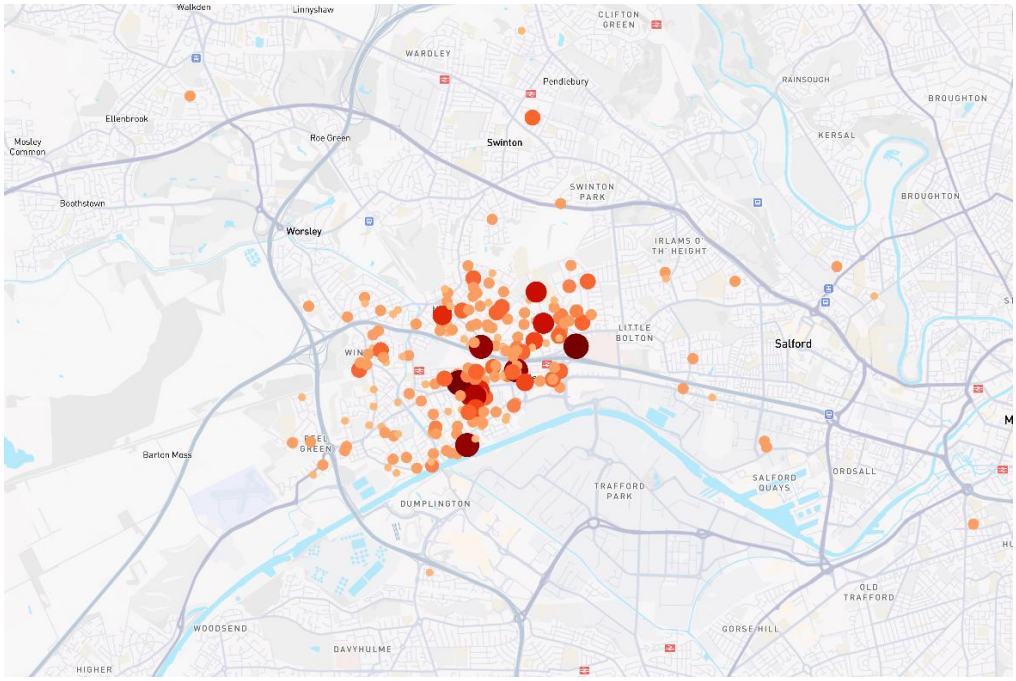


Figure 4.2: Map showing postcode locations of survey respondents and project update registrations

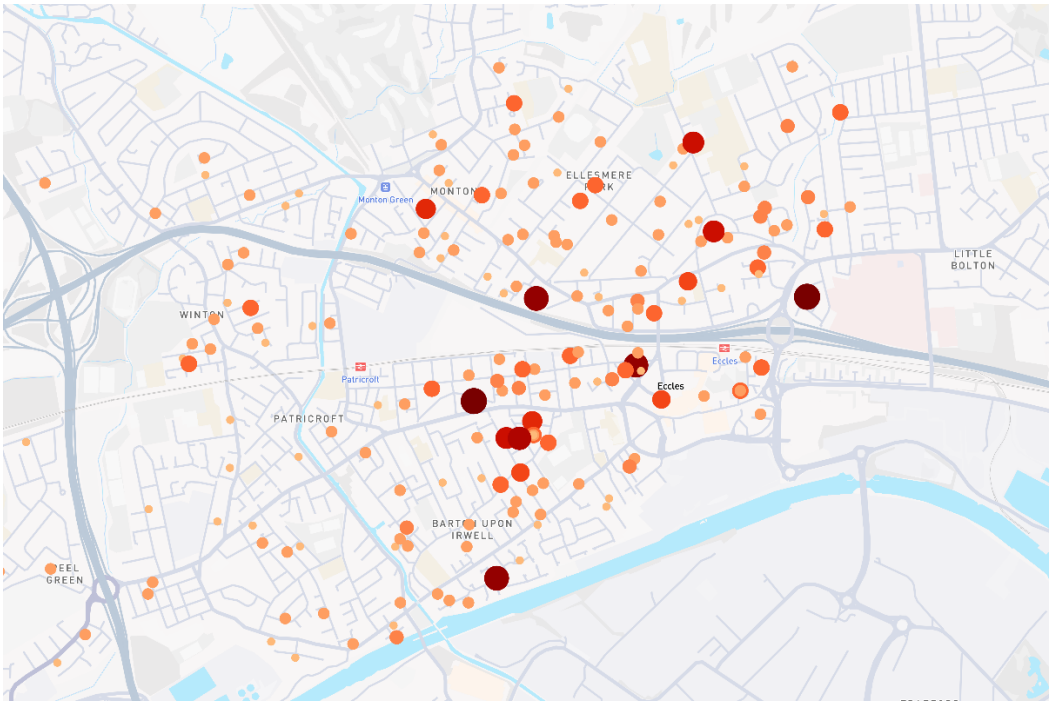


Figure 4.3: Zoomed in map of Eccles showing postcode locations of survey respondents and project update registrations

4.17 The postcode data demonstrates a strong concentration of engagement within Eccles and the surrounding communities. Of the 495 postcodes provided, 471 were from within the Salford City Council boundary. More than half of all postcodes received were from Eccles ward (55%), with a further 29% from Barton & Winton ward. Together, these two wards accounted for the large majority of responses and cover the communities closest to the proposed regeneration of Eccles Town Centre.

4.18 This demonstrates that the Community Conversations achieved strong local reach, with the majority of those providing postcode information living in or close to Eccles Town Centre. This reflects the extensive outreach undertaken throughout both phases of engagement and supports the aim of creating a genuine conversation with the communities most directly impacted by the redevelopment of Eccles Town Centre.

4.19 A smaller number of responses were received from elsewhere in Salford, other Greater Manchester authorities and locations elsewhere in the UK. The full geographic breakdown is set out below:

Local Authority	Ward	Number of Responses
Salford City Council (Total 471 responses)	Eccles	271
	Barton & Winton	144
	Higher Irlam & Peel Green	22
	Weaste & Seedley	15
	Worsley & Westwood Park	9
	Pendleton & Charlestown	5
	Swinton Park	4
	Little Hulton	3
	Quays	2
	Swinton & Wardley	1
Greater Manchester: (Total 8) • Stockport Council • Manchester City Council • Tameside Council • Bolton Council • Trafford Council	Hulme	2
	Hyde Werneth	2
	Kearsley	2
	Lostock and Barton	1
	Brinnington & Stockport Central	1
Other authorities in UK: (total 11) • Blackpool Council	Claremont	7
	Hacton	2
	Bo'ness and Blackness	2

• Havering Council (London) • Falkirk Council		

Table 4.1: Table outlining the local authority and wards of postcode data

5. Autumn 2025 Community Conversation (Ideas Stage)

Overview

5.1 The first stage of engagement focused on exploring early ideas and priorities for the future of Eccles town centre. Building on the Eccles Vision 2022, the Partnership developed a set of emerging ideas to explore how the three key themes (Our place to eat, meet, work and play; Strong roots, green shoots; and Creating connections) could begin to shape a future masterplan for Eccles.

5.2 This stage of the community conversation marked the shift from the high-level ambitions established through the Eccles Vision towards more developed thinking about how regeneration could work in practice across the town centre. It was designed to test early ideas, explore what change should bedelivered day-to-day and begin shaping the direction of the emerging masterplan alongside the community.

5.3 People were asked for their views on:

- What a successful town centre should look and feel like in practice
- The types of uses and activities they would like to see
- How the town centre should function day-to-day
- What changes would make Eccles a better place to spend time
- Priorities for the future of the town centre, including activity, movement and connections, green spaces, accessibility, heritage and safety
- Potential character areas across the town centre and how different parts of Eccles could develop their own distinct identity and role as part of the wider masterplan

5.4 This stage of engagement helped to build a clearer understanding of what matters most to the community as ideas for the town centre began to take shape. People

remained at the heart of the process throughout, with feedback directly informing the next stage of work and the development of the draft masterplan.

5.5 To support this, an extensive programme of engagement and awareness raising was undertaken to ensure as many people as possible were aware of the conversation and had the opportunity to take part. Further detail on awareness raising and engagement activity is provided in **Appendix 2,** with a detailed summary of conversation feedback and responses received through surveys, emails, phone calls, workshops and stakeholder engagement provided in **Appendix 3.**

Feedback Themes

5.6 The Autumn 2025 community conversation gave local people the opportunity to share what they value about Eccles, what challenges the town centre currently faces and what they would like to see in the future. Feedback focused on how Eccles town centre could become a more vibrant, active and welcoming place, while protecting the heritage, character and strong sense of community that people value.

5.7 Participation and awareness remained strong throughout the community conversation. In total, **395 pieces of feedback** were received, alongside **over 275 people attending in-person events.** The dedicated website also recorded around **2,400 views** during the conversation period, while social media activity across Facebook and Instagram generated around **139,516 impressions** and **4,216 click-throughs**, helping raise awareness of the conversation and opportunities to take part across the Eccles community.

5.8 Across all engagement activity, there was a strong sense of pride in Eccles and a shared ambition to see the town centre improve. People spoke positively about its heritage, strong community and excellent transport connections, while also being clear about the challenges that need to be addressed.

- **A stronger town centre:** There was a clear call for a town centre that feels more active, welcoming and used throughout the day and evening. People want more reasons to spend time in Eccles, not just pass through it. This included a stronger mix of shops, cafés and social spaces, alongside opportunities for

events and community activity. There was particular support for independent businesses and uses that reflect the character of Eccles, helping to bring more life into the town centre.

- **Getting around:** Improving how people move around Eccles was a consistent theme. Many people raised concerns about traffic dominance, rat-running and the impact of cars in parts of the town centre. There was strong support for safer, clearer walking and cycling routes, alongside better signage and improved access to public transport. Parking was also highlighted as important, with a need to balance accessibility with creating a more people-friendly environment.

- **Heritage and character:** People are proud of Eccles and want to see its history and identity reflected more strongly in the town centre. There was clear support for protecting historic buildings and celebrating local stories, including the town's transport history. At the same time, people want new development to respect the scale and character of Eccles, ensuring that change feels rooted in the place rather than replacing it.

- **Accessible for everyone:** Accessibility was raised as a fundamental priority. People highlighted barriers such as uneven paving, poor maintenance and limited step-free access, which make it difficult to move around the town centre. There was strong support for improving accessibility across all aspects of the town centre, including better routes, more convenient disabled parking and spaces that are easy for everyone to use. People also wanted more places to sit, relax and spend time outdoors, helping to make the town centre more welcoming and comfortable for everyone.

- **Greener streets and spaces:** There was a clear desire for a greener, more attractive town centre. People want more trees, planting and natural features to improve how Eccles looks and feels, alongside better quality public spaces where they can spend time. At the same time, there was a strong message about the importance of maintenance, with concerns raised about litter, empty buildings and the overall condition of the town centre.

- **Feeling safe:** Safety was a key concern across many responses. People highlighted issues such as antisocial behaviour, poor lighting and areas that feel unsafe, particularly in the evening. There was strong support for creating a town centre that feels safer through better lighting, more activity and clearer, more open spaces that are well used throughout the day and night.

5.9 Taken together, this feedback provides a clear direction for change. While people value what Eccles already offers, there is a strong and consistent message that the town centre needs to evolve - becoming more active, accessible, greener and safer, while building on its heritage and strong sense of community.

6. Spring 2026 Community Conversation (Draft Masterplan Stage)

The Draft Masterplan

6.1 Following the Autumn 2025 community conversation, the project team used the feedback received to develop a draft masterplan for Eccles town centre. The draft masterplan translated the priorities and ideas raised by the community into clearer proposals for how the town centre could change over time, including where key improvements, development and public spaces could be located.

6.2 The draft masterplan also introduced more detailed plans, visuals and CGI imagery to help people better understand the proposed direction for Eccles town centre and how different parts of the masterplan could look and function in the future. This included proposals relating to movement and connections, public spaces, homes, activity, heritage, green spaces and the future role of Church Street as the town centre core.

6.3 The key themes raised through the Autumn 2025 conversation and how they informed the draft masterplan are outlined below.

A Stronger town centre



Church Street, outside of St Mary's Church

6.4 The draft masterplan re-established Church Street as the heart of Eccles town centre, creating a more active, welcoming and walkable town centre core focused around shops, cafés, services and community activity.

6.5 The proposals included improvements to Church Street, a new Civic Square and a mixed-use space opposite St Mary's Church. Together, these would create flexible spaces for events, activities and everyday community use, while supporting local businesses and encouraging more people to spend time in Eccles throughout the day and evening. Following the consultation, the proposals were further developed to extend the green space and include an ambition to provide step-free access into the Church Gardens. This was highlighted further during the second Community Conversation and is addressed later in the report.

Getting around



The new Civic Square, looking from the Gateway towards Eccles Town Hall

6.6 The draft masterplan included proposals to make Eccles town centre easier, safer and more pleasant to move around, with a stronger focus on walking, cycling and public transport connections.

6.7 The proposals strengthened links between the train station, bus interchange and high street, while introducing clearer and more accessible routes throughout the town centre. The draft masterplan also explored changes to street layouts and vehicle movement to help create a more people-focused environment and improve movement across Eccles town centre.

Heritage and character



Church Street, with St Mary's Church on the left hand side

6.8 The draft masterplan included proposals to reinforce the identity and historic character of Eccles town centre, while strengthening the setting of key heritage assets such as St Mary's Church and Church Street.

6.9 The proposals sought to ensure new development reflected the scale, character and history of Eccles, while introducing distinct character areas across the town centre to help different parts of Eccles develop their own identity as part of a wider town centre vision.

Accessible for everyone



Church street, looking north from Eccles Town Hall

6.10 The draft masterplan embedded accessibility throughout the proposals, including clearer and more legible routes, improved step-free movement and spaces that are easier for everyone to navigate and use.

6.11 Accessibility informed proposals relating to movement, public spaces and the day-to-day experience of the town centre, helping ensure Eccles works better for people of all ages and abilities.

Greener streets and spaces



Aerial sketch of the draft masterplan for Eccles town centre by day

6.12 The draft masterplan included proposals to introduce more greenery and improve the quality of public spaces across Eccles town centre, including additional planting along streets and routes and improvements to spaces such as St Mary's Gardens.

6.13 The proposals also created greener and more welcoming places where people can spend time, relax and socialise, while recognising the importance of long-term management and maintenance in helping the town centre feel cared for, attractive and welcoming.

Feeling safe



Aerial sketch of the draft masterplan for Eccles town centre by night

6.14 The draft masterplan included proposals to create a town centre that feels safer, more welcoming and better used throughout the day and evening, with a focus on improving lighting, visibility and activity across key streets and public spaces.

6.15 The proposals also introduced clearer and more open routes through the town centre, alongside new homes, community activity and active public spaces intended to support a busier and more overlooked environment across Eccles town centre.

The Community Conversation

6.16 The second stage of community conversation was undertaken during Spring 2026 to gather feedback on the draft masterplan and understand whether the plans were moving in the right direction.

6.17 This stage focused on identifying what people supported in the draft masterplan, where further clarity or refinement was required, and whether any elements should be strengthened ahead of finalising the masterplan.

6.18 People were asked for their views on:

- the overall direction of the draft masterplan
- whether the proposals reflected earlier community feedback
- what aspects of the draft masterplan they supported
- what could be improved or strengthened
- whether there were any proposals they felt should change

6.19 These activities sat alongside the continuation of workshops, public events, online engagement and direct feedback channels, helping ensure opportunities to take part extended beyond formal events and reached people across a range of community settings throughout Eccles. Further detail on awareness raising and engagement activity is provided in **Appendix 4**, with a detailed summary of feedback received through surveys, emails, phone calls, workshops and stakeholder engagement provided in **Appendix 5**.

Draft Masterplan feedback

6.20 The Spring 2026 community conversation continued to see strong engagement from local people across Eccles, with residents, stakeholders and community groups sharing their views on the direction of the draft masterplan, what they supported and where they felt further improvements could be made. In total, **87 pieces of feedback were received, alongside over 205 people attending in-person events.**

6.21 While fewer formal feedback forms were submitted compared to the Autumn 2025 conversation, levels of awareness and participation remained strong throughout the draft masterplan stage. Website engagement remained consistent across both stages of the community conversation, **with around 2,400 website views recorded during the Autumn 2025 conversation and around 2,300 views during the Spring 2026 draft masterplan stage.**

6.22 Social media engagement also remained high. **During the Autumn 2025 conversation, social media activity generated around 139,516 impressions and 4,216 click-throughs, while the Spring 2026 draft masterplan stage generated around 135,175**

impressions and 2,109 click-throughs across Facebook and Instagram. Alongside continued attendance at public events and workshops, this demonstrated sustained local interest in the future of Eccles town centre and ongoing participation throughout the process.

6.23 The lower number of formal responses at the draft masterplan stage reflects the more focused nature of the second phase, which returned to the community with a developed set of proposals shaped by earlier feedback. At this stage, engagement typically becomes more targeted, with conversations centred on refining rather than generating ideas. Importantly, levels of awareness, participation and informal engagement remained strong, indicating continued interest and confidence in the emerging proposals for Eccles town centre.

6.24 Feedback on the draft masterplan showed broad support for the overall direction of change for Eccles town centre, while also identifying areas where people wanted further detail, clarification or refinement. Across workshops, public events and direct feedback channels, many people supported the ambition to create a more active, greener and better connected town centre, while feedback also highlighted the importance of ensuring proposals remain inclusive, accessible and reflective of Eccles' identity and heritage.

6.25 The feedback received during the draft masterplan stage was grouped into a number of key themes, which are summarised below.

A more active town centre

What people supported in the draft masterplan	What needs further detail/consideration
There is strong support for creating a busier and more vibrant town centre, with more reasons for people to spend time in Eccles throughout the day and evening. Positive feedback focused on the proposed Civic	Further detail was requested on how activity, events and community uses would operate and be sustained over time, alongside greater clarity on how a varied

Square, Church Street improvements, community activity and more flexible spaces that could support events, social activity and independent businesses over time.	mix of shops, businesses and independent operators could be supported.

Table 6.1: A more active town centre feedback theme

Accessible and inclusive town centre

What people supported in the draft masterplan	What needs further detail/consideration
Accessibility remained a significant priority throughout the conversation. There was strong support for proposals focused on improving step-free access, clearer routes, seating and wayfinding across the town centre, alongside accessibility being embedded throughout the proposals rather than treated as an add-on.	Feedback highlighted the need for further detail on accessible parking, crossing points, surface materials, seating types and how routes would support disabled users and people with mobility or visual impairments. There was also a strong emphasis on ensuring streets and spaces remain uncluttered and easy to navigate.

Table 6.2: Accessible and inclusive town centre feedback theme

Moving around the town centre

What people supported in the draft masterplan	What needs further detail/consideration
There was strong support for improving how people move around Eccles, with a focus on making it easier, safer and more intuitive to get around on foot, by bike and via public transport. Positive feedback	People wanted further detail on how traffic management, parking and movement changes would operate in practice across the town centre. Feedback also highlighted concerns around the potential impact on

focused on strengthening connections between key destinations within the town centre, alongside improved cycling provision, clearer routes and better wayfinding between the railway station, tram stop, bus interchange and high street.	surrounding roads, alongside requests for more information on accessible parking, cycle parking, station access and safer routes to Eccles and Patricroft stations.

Table 6.3: Moving around the town centre feedback theme

Greener streets and spaces

What people supported in the draft masterplan	What needs further detail/consideration
There was strong support for introducing more greenery, planting and greener public spaces throughout the town centre. Positive feedback focused on improvements to St Mary's Gardens, opportunities for informal use and spaces where people can spend time and relax. Early greening and visible public realm improvements were also seen positively.	Feedback highlighted the importance of understanding how green spaces would be delivered and maintained over time, alongside interest in opportunities for community involvement, local storytelling and heritage within public spaces.

Table 6.4: Greener streets and spaces feedback table

Eccles' character and heritage

What people supported in the draft masterplan	What needs further detail/consideration
Feedback reinforced the importance of protecting and celebrating Eccles' heritage and identity throughout the masterplan.	Further detail was requested on how heritage, artwork, interpretation and local identity would be reflected throughout the

People responded positively to proposals that strengthen the role of St Mary's Church and Church Street, while also supporting the inclusion of local stories and heritage within future spaces and routes.	town centre, including retaining important local features and strengthening connections between civic and heritage spaces.

Table 6.5: Eccles' character and heritage feedback table

Feeling safe in Eccles

What people supported in the draft masterplan	What needs further detail/consideration
There was strong support for creating a town centre that feels safer, more welcoming and easier to navigate throughout the day and evening. Positive feedback focused on creating busier, better-used spaces with clearer routes, active frontages and stronger natural surveillance.	Feedback highlighted the importance of lighting design, visibility and ensuring routes and public spaces feel open and overlooked. Suggestions also focused on how safety could be improved within parking areas and around key pedestrian routes.

Table 6.6: Feeling safe in Eccles feedback table

New homes

What people supported in the draft masterplan	What needs further detail/consideration
Feedback showed support for introducing new homes within Eccles town centre, particularly where this helps bring more activity, footfall and town centre living into the area. There was recognition that a mix	Some comments raised concerns around building heights and ensuring new development responds positively to the scale and character of Eccles. Feedback also highlighted the importance of

of housing types and tenures could help support a more balanced and active community.	accessibility, parking provision and ensuring homes provide high-quality places to live.

Table 6.7: New homes feedback table

7. Refining the Final Masterplan – You Said, We Listened

7.1 Feedback received during the Spring 2026 community conversation helped refine and strengthen the masterplan prior to finalisation. While there was strong support for the overall direction of travel, feedback also identified areas where people wanted additional detail, clarification or refinement before the masterplan was finalised.

7.2 In response, the project team continued to develop proposals relating to movement, accessibility, public spaces, heritage, safety and town centre activity to ensure the final masterplan better reflected the feedback received throughout the community conversation process.

7.3 The key themes raised during the draft masterplan conversation, alongside how feedback has informed the final masterplan, are outlined below.



Aerial sketch of the updated masterplan for Eccles town centre following two round of community conversation

Theme	What you told us	How the final masterplan responds
A more active town centre	There was strong support for proposals that would help create a busier, more vibrant and welcoming town centre, with more reasons for people to spend time in Eccles throughout the day and evening. Positive feedback focused on the proposed improvements to Church Street, the introduction of the Civic Square, opportunities for community activity and more flexible spaces that could support events, social activity and independent businesses over time. At the same time, people wanted further detail on how events, activities and community uses would operate in practice and be sustained long-term. There was also a strong interest in understanding how a broader mix of shops, businesses and independent operators could be supported as the town centre evolves.	In response to this feedback, the final masterplan continues to strengthen Church Street as the main high street and focus of Eccles town centre, helping to create a busier and more vibrant heart for the town. Feedback also showed strong support for creating more welcoming and usable space around St Mary's Church, recognising its importance as an asset for the town centre. The final masterplan therefore includes additional green space around the church, alongside a flexible mixed-use space and the proposed Church Square. Together, these proposals aim to blend town centre living with attractive green space and create more opportunities for people of all ages to meet, spend time and take part in community activities throughout the day and evening. The detailed use and design of the mixed-use space will be developed further. The final masterplan also continues to support more activity throughout the public realm, helping encourage people to spend more time in Eccles town centre. Different public spaces within the draft masterplan

		received positive feedback and have therefore been retained within the final masterplan, with spaces designed to support a wider range of uses and activities including civic events, community activity, markets and informal social use. This includes the Civic Square creating a more welcoming setting around key civic buildings, alongside Church Square being arranged into smaller and more flexible spaces. The introduction of new homes within the town centre will also help increase footfall, support local businesses and create more natural activity throughout the day and evening. At this stage, the masterplan establishes the overall ambition and framework for these spaces rather than the detailed arrangements for their operation. Further work will therefore be undertaken through later stages of planning and delivery to determine how events, community uses and activities will be managed and sustained, and how independent businesses and a varied retail offer can be supported as the town centre evolves.

Accessible and inclusive town	Accessibility remained a significant priority throughout the conversation. There was strong support for proposals focused on improving step-free access, clearer routes, seating and wayfinding across the town centre, alongside accessibility being embedded throughout the proposals rather than treated as an add-on. At the same time, feedback highlighted the need for further detail on accessible parking, crossing points, surface materials, seating types and how routes would support disabled users and people with mobility or visual impairments. There was also a strong emphasis on ensuring streets and spaces remain uncluttered and easy to navigate.	In response to this feedback, the final masterplan continues to prioritise accessibility throughout the town centre, with the street layout arranged to create clearer and more legible routes between key destinations. Step-free routes will be prioritised wherever possible, including improved access around St Mary's Gardens. The final masterplan also includes a series of accessibility principles that will guide future detailed design work. This includes clearer separation between pedestrian and vehicle routes, tactile paving and wayfinding features, appropriate surface materials, and seating designed to support a range of needs, including backrests, armrests and covered seating areas. Future detailed design work will also continue to follow inclusive design principles and Building Regulations requirements to help ensure spaces across Eccles town centre are safe, accessible and easy to navigate for all users. At this stage, the masterplan establishes the overall accessibility principles and broad approach rather than the

		detailed design and operation of individual routes and crossing points. The location and management of accessible parking, together with the detailed design of crossings and routes through the town centre, will therefore be considered through later stages of planning and delivery.
Moving around the town centre	There was strong support for improving how people move around Eccles, with a focus on making it easier, safer and more intuitive to get around on foot, by bike and via public transport. Positive feedback focused on strengthening connections between key destinations within the town centre, alongside improved cycling provision, clearer routes and better wayfinding between the railway and tram stations, bus interchange and high street. At the same time, people wanted further detail on how traffic management, parking and movement changes would operate in practice across the town centre. Feedback also highlighted concerns around the potential	In response to this feedback, the final masterplan continues to strengthen east–west movement routes across the town centre and improve pedestrian connections between key destinations, including the station, bus interchange and Church Street. The final masterplan also retains proposals for improved cycling connections and includes indicative locations for cycle parking throughout the town centre. Parking for new residential development will be provided within courtyard areas. The masterplan also includes on-street parking and a vehicle drop-off area along Vicarage Grove. Wider parking requirements across Eccles town centre, including accessible parking and other drop-off

	impact on surrounding roads, alongside requests for more information on accessible parking, cycle parking, station access and safer routes to Eccles and Patricroft stations.	provision, will be considered through the future parking strategy. The final masterplan will continue to be supported by further transport and highways assessment work as proposals progress, helping assess the impact of movement and traffic changes across Eccles and surrounding roads. At this stage, the masterplan sets out the broad approach to movement, access and parking rather than the detailed operation of individual routes and restrictions. Further work will therefore be undertaken through later transport, highways and detailed design stages to determine how traffic restrictions, movement changes, parking arrangements and access routes will operate and be managed in practice.
Greener streets and spaces	There was strong support for increasing green space within the town centre, with a clear desire for a greener, more welcoming and family-friendly environment. Positive	In response to this feedback, the final masterplan continues to strengthen the role of green spaces and

	feedback focused on improving St Mary's Gardens, introducing more planting and greenery throughout Eccles, and creating spaces where people can spend time, relax, come together and take part in community activity. There was also strong support for delivering visible improvements early to help signal positive change within the town centre. At the same time, people wanted further detail on how and when green spaces and planting would be delivered, particularly as part of early phases or "quick wins". Feedback also highlighted concerns around long-term maintenance and management, alongside interest in how community groups could help care for spaces and how heritage, art and local storytelling could be incorporated into greener public spaces.	planting throughout Eccles town centre, helping create a greener, more welcoming and family-friendly environment. The final masterplan includes additional planting and greening across key routes and spaces, including further greening within the east–west connection and the extension of St Mary's Gardens into the new Church Square. The final masterplan also includes more opportunities for activity and informal use within public spaces, helping encourage people to spend more time in the town centre. Spaces across Eccles have been designed to support a range of uses, including seating, informal social spaces, dog walking, community activity and opportunities for events and play. The phasing strategy will also continue to explore opportunities to deliver public realm and landscape improvements early as part of future phases, responding to feedback around visible "quick wins" and early greening. Opportunities for community involvement within spaces

		such as St Mary's Gardens will also continue to be explored as proposals progress. At this stage, the masterplan establishes the overall approach to green space, planting and community use rather than the detailed arrangements for long-term management and maintenance. These arrangements, including opportunities for community involvement in planting and caring for spaces, will be considered through later stages of planning, design and delivery.
Eccles' character and heritage	There was strong support for ensuring Eccles' heritage is retained, celebrated and made more visible throughout the town centre. Positive feedback focused on protecting key historic features and reflecting Eccles' identity and local stories through public spaces, artwork, routes and new development. People responded positively to proposals that strengthened the role of St Mary's Church and Church Street, while also recognising the importance of local heritage features such as Eccles Cross, the church's sundial and	In response to this feedback, the final masterplan continues to strengthen the role of heritage and identity throughout Eccles town centre. Opportunities have been identified to celebrate Eccles' heritage through the design of buildings, public spaces and artwork, including references to local materials, textures and historic features within the emerging design approach. The final masterplan also includes proposals for a future heritage and artwork strategy, helping identify opportunities for interpretation, storytelling and public art throughout the town centre. This includes extending the

	references to Eccles' transport and industrial history. At the same time, people wanted further detail on how heritage and local identity would be reflected across the town centre in practice. Feedback highlighted the need for clearer proposals around heritage interpretation, storytelling, public art and the future treatment of existing heritage assets and civic spaces. There was also a strong emphasis on ensuring new development respects the existing scale and character of Eccles.	existing heritage trail, improving the setting of key civic and heritage spaces, and exploring how historic features and local stories can be better integrated into public spaces and routes. Public realm proposals also continue to support stronger connections between important civic and heritage assets, including the Town Hall, Library, Cenotaph and St Mary's Church, helping create a more cohesive and legible town centre environment. At this stage, the masterplan establishes the overall approach to celebrating Eccles' heritage and identity rather than the detailed treatment of individual features, artworks and local stories. A future heritage and artwork strategy, alongside later design work, will identify which historic features should be retained and how heritage interpretation, public art and local stories can be incorporated across the town centre.
Feeling safe in Eccles	There was strong support for creating a town centre that feels safer, more welcoming and easier to navigate throughout the day and	In response to this feedback, the final masterplan continues to promote a more active and well-used town centre, helping increase natural surveillance and activity

	evening. Positive feedback focused on the relationship between activity, visibility and safety, with people recognising that busier and better-used spaces can help improve confidence and create a stronger sense of security across the town centre. There was also support for proposals that improve sightlines, create clearer routes and encourage more active frontages throughout Eccles. At the same time, people wanted further detail on lighting, visibility and how spaces would feel and operate after dark. Feedback highlighted the importance of well-lit routes, overlooked spaces, clear wayfinding and parking areas that feel safe and easy to use. There were also concerns around avoiding hidden areas, poor visibility and lighting approaches that could create glare or accessibility issues.	throughout the day and evening. The introduction of new homes within the town centre will help increase footfall and support a greater sense of activity and presence across Eccles. The final masterplan also continues to prioritise clear and legible routes throughout the town centre, with proposals designed to improve visibility, sightlines and movement between key destinations. Public spaces and routes have been arranged to create more open and overlooked environments, supported by active frontages and stronger connections across the town centre. Future public realm and landscape proposals will also continue to include a lighting and wayfinding strategy focused on creating safer, well-lit and inclusive streets and spaces throughout Eccles town centre. At this stage, the masterplan establishes the overall approach to safety, lighting and natural surveillance rather than the detailed design of individual routes. Further work through later design stages will determine how lighting, sightlines, overlooking and wayfinding are incorporated to

		help ensure streets and public spaces feel safe and welcoming throughout the day and evening.
New homes	There was general support for introducing new homes within Eccles town centre, particularly where this helps bring more activity, footfall and life into the area. Positive feedback focused on the role new homes could play in supporting a busier and more active town centre, alongside support for a mix of housing types and tenures that can help create a balanced and inclusive community. There was also support for homes being well connected to shops, services, public spaces and transport links within the town centre. At the same time, people wanted further detail on building heights, housing mix and how new homes would reflect the existing character of Eccles. Feedback highlighted the importance of ensuring homes are accessible, well designed and suitable for a range of	In response to this feedback, the final masterplan continues to include a mix of housing typologies throughout Eccles town centre, including a combination of apartments and townhouses. The masterplan also continues to support a mix of tenures, helping create a more balanced and inclusive residential community within the town centre. The final masterplan arranges taller buildings in locations considered more appropriate for larger-scale development, including adjacent to the motorway corridor, while building heights reduce towards the historic heart of Eccles town centre to better respond to existing character and heritage. Accessibility has also continued to inform the approach to new homes, including accessible parking provision within residential courtyards and an inclusive approach to movement between buildings, homes and surrounding public spaces.

	needs, alongside requests for more information on affordability, wheelchair-accessible homes and how opportunities for local people would be supported.	The overall ambition of the final masterplan remains to support a more vibrant town centre through a balanced mix of homes, community facilities, public spaces and town centre uses. At this stage, the masterplan establishes the overall approach to housing mix, scale and accessibility rather than the detailed delivery of individual homes. Affordable housing provision, tenure mix, specific housing types and accessibility standards will therefore be determined through later design, planning and delivery stages, taking account of relevant planning policy and viability considerations.

Table 7.1: Table showing the feedback themes during the second phase of the community conversation and how the masterplan responds

8. Quick Wins

Overview

8.1 Alongside feedback on the long-term future of Eccles town centre, the community conversations also explored what shorter-term improvements and "quick wins" people would like to see delivered while the wider masterplan progresses. This formed an important part of both the Autumn 2025 and Spring 2026 community conversations.

8.2 These shorter-term improvements are often referred to as "meanwhile uses" – temporary activities, spaces and interventions introduced ahead of longer-term redevelopment and delivery. Meanwhile uses can help bring activity into underused spaces, test ideas for the future town centre and ensure areas continue to feel active, welcoming and well-used as regeneration progresses over time.

8.3 People were clear that they wanted to see visible improvements within Eccles town centre as early as possible, rather than waiting for longer-term redevelopment to be completed. There was a strong desire to ensure spaces across the town centre remain active, welcoming and well-used during the delivery of the wider masterplan, helping build confidence and maintain momentum as change takes place over time.

8.4 Church Street and Regent Street were identified as the most important locations for early activity and visible improvements, with people seeing these areas as the heart of Eccles town centre where quick wins would have the greatest impact. There was also strong support for introducing more planting and greening as an early priority, helping improve the look and feel of the town centre in the short term.

8.5 Across both community conversations, people highlighted a range of ideas for meanwhile uses and quick wins, including:

- pop-up markets and street food traders
- short-term spaces for independent businesses and start-ups
- community cafés and social spaces

- festivals, events and live performances
- temporary green spaces, planting and pocket parks
- seating and informal social spaces
- play, sport and activity spaces for young people
- community growing and gardening opportunities
- flexible spaces that could support different activities over time

8.6 At the same time, people highlighted the importance of ensuring meanwhile uses are well managed, safe and linked to the long-term ambitions of the masterplan. Feedback raised concerns around:

- poor-quality or temporary structures that feel untidy
- inactive or empty-feeling spaces
- poor maintenance, litter and antisocial behaviour
- over-reliance on alcohol-led activity
- temporary uses that do not contribute to longer-term change within Eccles town centre

Meanwhile Use Strategy & Quick Wins

8.7 This feedback is being considered as part of a coordinated meanwhile use strategy, focused on bringing early, visible change to Eccles town centre while longer-term proposals are progressed. The strategy will build on the ideas and priorities identified through engagement, ensuring that short-term interventions respond to what the community wants to see, while also supporting the overarching vision for Eccles. It will prioritise well-designed, high-quality and actively managed uses that keep key areas animated and welcoming, particularly along Church Street and Regent Street. At the same time, it will address concerns raised by ensuring meanwhile uses contribute positively to the town centre's look and feel, avoid creating inactive or poorly

maintained spaces, and play a clear role in laying the foundations for long-term regeneration.

9. Conclusion

9.1 The Eccles Town Centre community conversations provided a meaningful and inclusive platform for local people, businesses, stakeholders and community organisations to actively shape the future direction of Eccles town centre. Delivered across two stages between Autumn 2025 and Spring 2026, the programme ensured that a wide range of voices directly informed the vision and proposals.

9.2 Across both stages, participation was strong and engagement was constructive, revealing a clear sense of pride in Eccles and a shared determination to see the town centre thrive. Feedback consistently identified a set of core priorities: revitalising Church Street and the wider town centre core, improving movement and accessibility, celebrating Eccles' heritage and identity, enhancing green infrastructure and public spaces, creating a safer and more welcoming environment, and introducing new homes to support a more active and resilient town centre.

9.3 The community conversations played a defining role in shaping the masterplan. Insights gathered through a comprehensive programme of surveys, workshops, public events, webinars, stakeholder meetings, emails, phone calls and direct conversations were not only reflected in the draft masterplan, but were instrumental in refining and strengthening the final proposals.

9.4 This approach went beyond traditional consultation by prioritising accessibility, inclusivity and ongoing dialogue. A wide range of engagement methods, both online and in person, enabled participation from diverse audiences, including targeted outreach to community groups. This ensured that engagement was not a single event, but an evolving process that remained responsive throughout the development of the masterplan.

9.5 The final masterplan reflects the themes, priorities and concerns expressed throughout the community conversations and demonstrates a clear and transparent link between local feedback and the direction of proposals. Importantly, it recognises the need for both long-term transformation and early, visible change, with support for

meanwhile uses and short-term improvements that can build momentum, foster activity and strengthen confidence in the town centre.

9.6 As the project moves forward into design and delivery, continued engagement will be essential to maintain this momentum and ensure proposals remain responsive to local needs. The community conversations have established a strong and credible foundation for the next phase of work, resulting in a masterplan that is not only deliverable, but genuinely reflective of the identity, ambitions and future potential of Eccles.

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