



Northumberland
County Council

Ashington Investment Plan Consultation Update

21st July 2021

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Ashington Town Board - June 2021 Consultation

Ashington Investment Plan

The consultation sought your views on:

- Our Vision for Ashington
- Our Objectives for Ashington
- Best things about Ashington
- Worst things about Ashington
- Three things you'd like to change about Ashington



The Ashington Town Board have received a total of 453 responses to the survey (446 online and 7 paper) .

We would like to thank the community of Ashington for your valuable feedback; we have read all of your comments.

What follows is a summary of the important messages you gave us.

Vision

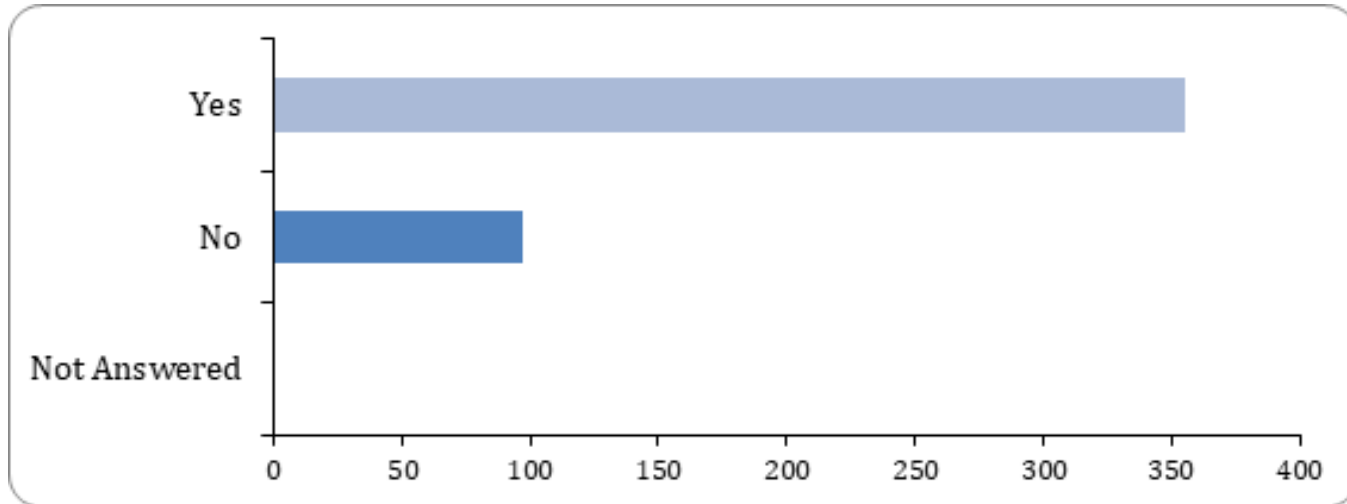
'Proud past, prosperous future, clean growth leader'

By 2030, Ashington will be a thriving centre for businesses, residents, learners and young people, providing thousands of quality jobs in advanced manufacturing and low carbon clean growth industries, more and better homes, excellent skills and education opportunities, an attractive leisure and culture offer, and a great quality of life for a growing and prosperous population.

Vision

There were 452 responses to this part of the question.

78.37% of respondents support the vision



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	355	78.37%
No	97	21.41%
Not Answered	1	0.22%

Objectives

SO1: GROWING TOWN - to grow our economy and population by building on our established manufacturing strengths, and capitalising on low carbon industry opportunities, investing in business growth, high-quality job creation, education and skills, housing, leisure, and culture for the benefit of all of our people, communities and businesses.

SO2: VIBRANT TOWN - to increase vibrancy and activity in Ashington town centre, creating a thriving community of residents of all ages, workers, and learners using the centre for leisure and culture, education, employment, and housing, providing a place where everyone feels welcome and safe.

SO3: CONNECTED TOWN - to make Ashington an accessible and well-connected town, supporting growth and improving quality of life by making it easier for residents, workers, learners, visitors, and businesses to arrive at and move around the town, and to be digitally connected.

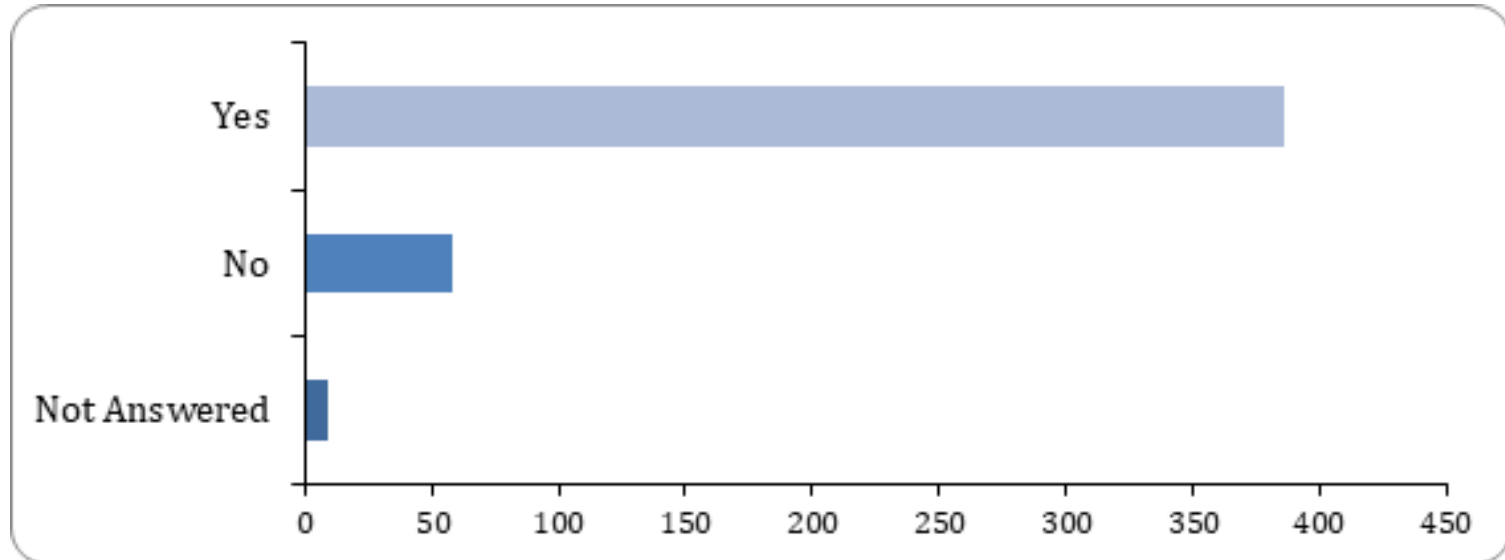
SO4: INCLUSIVE TOWN / OPPORTUNITY TOWN - to enable all of Ashington's people, communities and businesses to share in the benefits of growth through access to better skills, jobs and housing, and to be resilient to challenges, including unemployment, economic exclusion, digital exclusion and recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic.



Objectives

There were 444 responses to this part of the question.

85.21% of respondents support our objectives



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	386	85.21%
No	58	12.80%
Not Answered	9	1.99%

1: Currently what are the BEST things about Ashington as a place to live, work, study, visit, or run a business?

There were 440 (97.13%) responses to this part of the question.

Topic	Mentions	%
Walks / River / Parks / Nature	147	33.4%
People / Community / Neighbours	140	31.8%
Proximity to coast / National Parks / Northumberland / Countryside	70	15.9%
Leisure Centre / Sports Clubs	65	14.8%
Woodhorn/ History / Heritage	47	10.7%
Shops / ASDA / Supermarkets	41	9.3%
Road Links	40	9.1%



2: Currently what are the WORST things about Ashington as a place to live, work, study, visit, or run a business?

There were 447 (98.68%) responses to this part of the question.

Topic	Frequency	%
Retail offer	220	49.2%
Crime, ASB, Car racing	181	40.5%
Town Centre environment	126	28.2%
Quality of Place - litter, graffiti, fly tipping, dog mess, weeds	123	27.5%
Drugs Alcohol	91	20.4%
Slow progress with Portland Park site / Cinema / Investment	74	16.6%
Existing Housing, Private Landlords	70	15.7%
Roads / Potholes	56	12.5%
Employment Opportunities / Unemployment	54	12.1%
Food Offer / Pubs	52	11.6%
Leisure facilities / Family Activities / Attractions	52	11.6%
Existing Public Transport	51	11.4%

3: What are the THREE most important changes that would make Ashington a better place to live, work, study, visit, or run a business?

There were 442 (97.57%) responses to this part of the question.

Topic	Mentions	%
Retail offer	215	48.6%
Crime, ASB, Car racing / Animal Cruelty Drugs / Alcohol / Policing / CCTV / Safety	159	40.0%
Leisure facilities / Family Activities / Attractions / Sports / Cinema	91	20.6%
Rail	81	18.3%
Employment opportunities / AkzoNobel / British Volt / Hospital	78	17.6%
Quality of Place - litter, graffiti, fly tipping, dog mess, weeds	63	14.3%
High Street environment	60	13.6%
Need for progress on the Portland Park site / Cinema / Investment	59	13.3%
Independent / local / small business offer / New Business	46	10.4%
Roads	45	10.2%
Food Offer / Pubs	43	9.7%
Public Transport	41	9.3%

Business Focus Group

Because only a small number of respondents (3.09%) to the online survey represented the business owner / manager sector, we held a Business Focus Group on the 5th July. It was attended by six people. We asked them the same questions as the community were asked in the online and paper questionnaire.

Vision

The group felt that the vision was correct and hoped that it is achievable.

Strategic Objectives

The group felt that the objectives covered a lot of the complex issues for the town and hoped that the work of the Ashington Town Board would be able to fulfil the breadth of these objectives.

Best things about Ashington

- Friendly people
- Strong community feeling
- Positive attitudes
- Sense of belonging
- Good variety of retailers in the town

Business Focus Group - continued

Worst things about Ashington

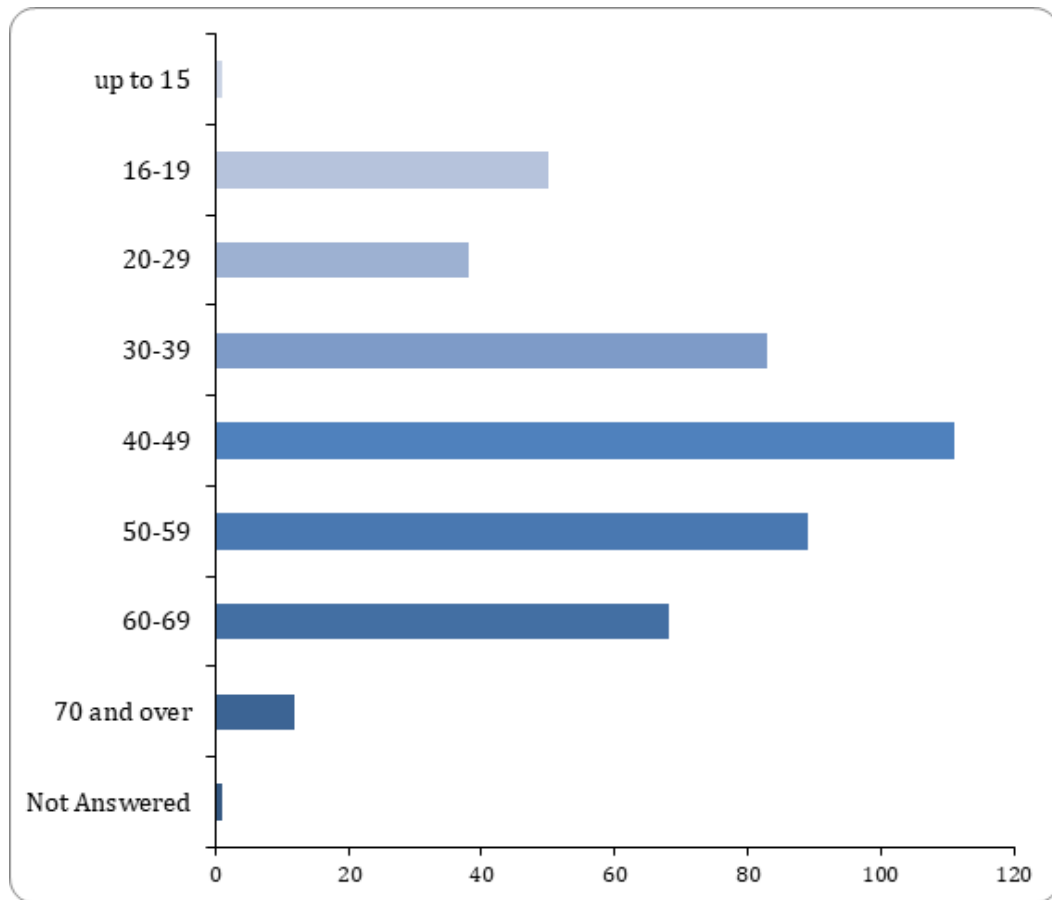
- Needs to be more forward looking
- Poor state of town centre
- Need more communications/awareness of how to raise issues
- Residents and businesses need to lead by example to improve the town
- More support is needed to help small businesses to expand; need to remove some of the barriers to help make this easier

Things to change

- Businesses to support each other more
- Parking for businesses
- Better internet access/Wifi
- Need to encourage young people to stay in Ashington to live and work
- Some support schemes, e.g. Kickstart, can be difficult to access, this should be easier

The following demonstrates some of the demographics of the respondents, to the survey, important so that we can be sure that we are not missing a representative group. We will always strive to seek the views of everyone in the community.

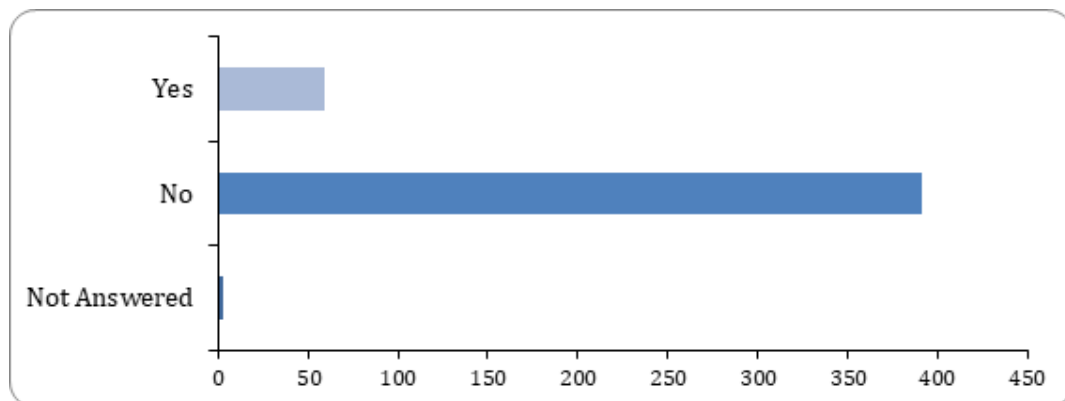
Age of Respondents



Option	Total	Percent
up to 15	1	0.22%
16-19	50	11.04%
20-29	38	8.39%
30-39	83	18.32%
40-49	111	24.50%
50-59	89	19.65%
60-69	68	15.01%
70 and over	12	2.65%
Not Answered	1	0.22%

Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

There were 450 responses to this part of the question.

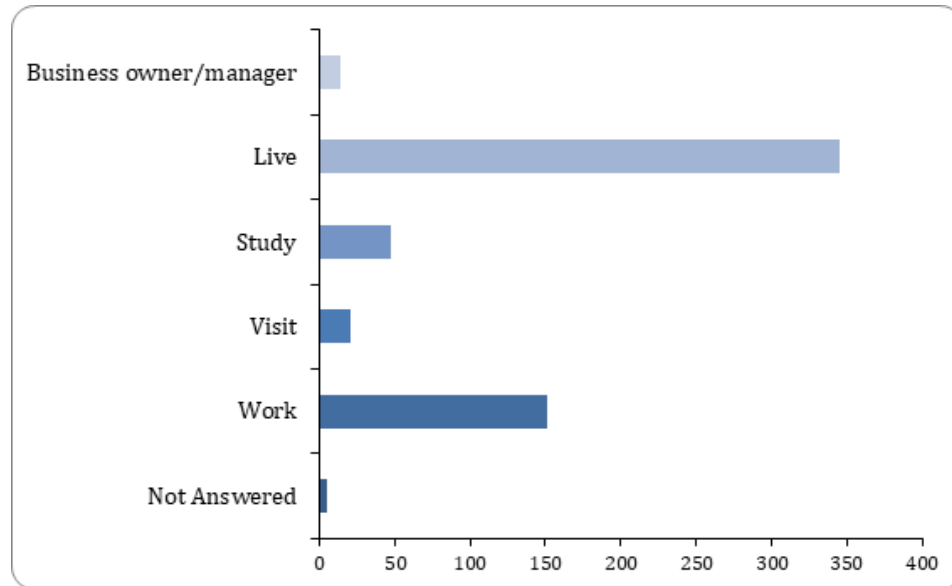


Option	Total	Percent
Yes	59	13.02%
No	391	86.31%
Not Answered	3	0.66%

Total Population	39032	100%
Incapacity Benefit & Severe Disablement Allowance	21	0.05%
DLA	1138	2.92%
Employment and Support Allowance	1754	4.49%
Industrial Injuries Disability Benefit	1173	3.00%
PIP	2039	5.22%
Total	6125	15.69%

Why do you come to Ashington?

There were 448 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Business owner/manager	14	3.09%
Live	345	76.16%
Study	47	10.38%
Visit	21	4.64%
Work	151	33.33%
Not Answered	5	1.10%

We will use your feedback to inform the development of the Ashington Investment Plan. We aim to consult with you again on some development ideas in the Autumn.



Get in touch at growth@northumberland.gov.uk if you have anything you'd like to add.