

**Have your say**



# **High Street Rental Auctions**

**Bournemouth Town Centre Designated Area Consultation**

High Street Rental Auctions  
**Bournemouth Town Centre**  
Designated Area Consultation Report

August 2025

# Methodology

- The consultation ran from **15 July 2025 to 12 August 2025**
- It was available at [haveyoursay.bcpCouncil.gov.uk/HSRA](https://haveyoursay.bcpCouncil.gov.uk/HSRA)
- Information was displayed and available in the following libraries:
  - Boscombe
  - Bournemouth Town Centre
  - Westbourne
- An email was sent to key stakeholders promoting the consultation. A reminder was also sent
- Alternative formats were available upon request

# Consultation page

## Have your say



# High Street Rental Auctions Bournemouth Town Centre Designated Area Consultation

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## High Street Rental Auctions

We are asking for comments on the proposed area to be designated for High Street Rental Auctions (HSRA).

HSRAs are a new power for councils to require landlords to let out persistently vacant properties to new tenants, such as local businesses or community groups.

HSRAs were introduced in December 2024 as part of [the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023](#) as a tool to see local authorities working proactively with landlords to encourage vibrant and successful high streets.

To be able to use HSRAs, we first must carry out community engagement on the area we want to focus on, asking for comments on the proposed area.

Please read the [Information document](#), [Frequently Asked Questions](#) and use the [online form](#) to give your comments about the proposed area (shown in the map below). You can see the [list of roads](#) in the proposed area and can also look at our [interactive map](#).



Have your say

### Key Dates

Consultation starts  
15 July 2025

Consultation ends  
12 August 2025

### Who's Listening

**Councillor Richard Herrett**

Cabinet Member for Destination, Leisure and Commercial Operations



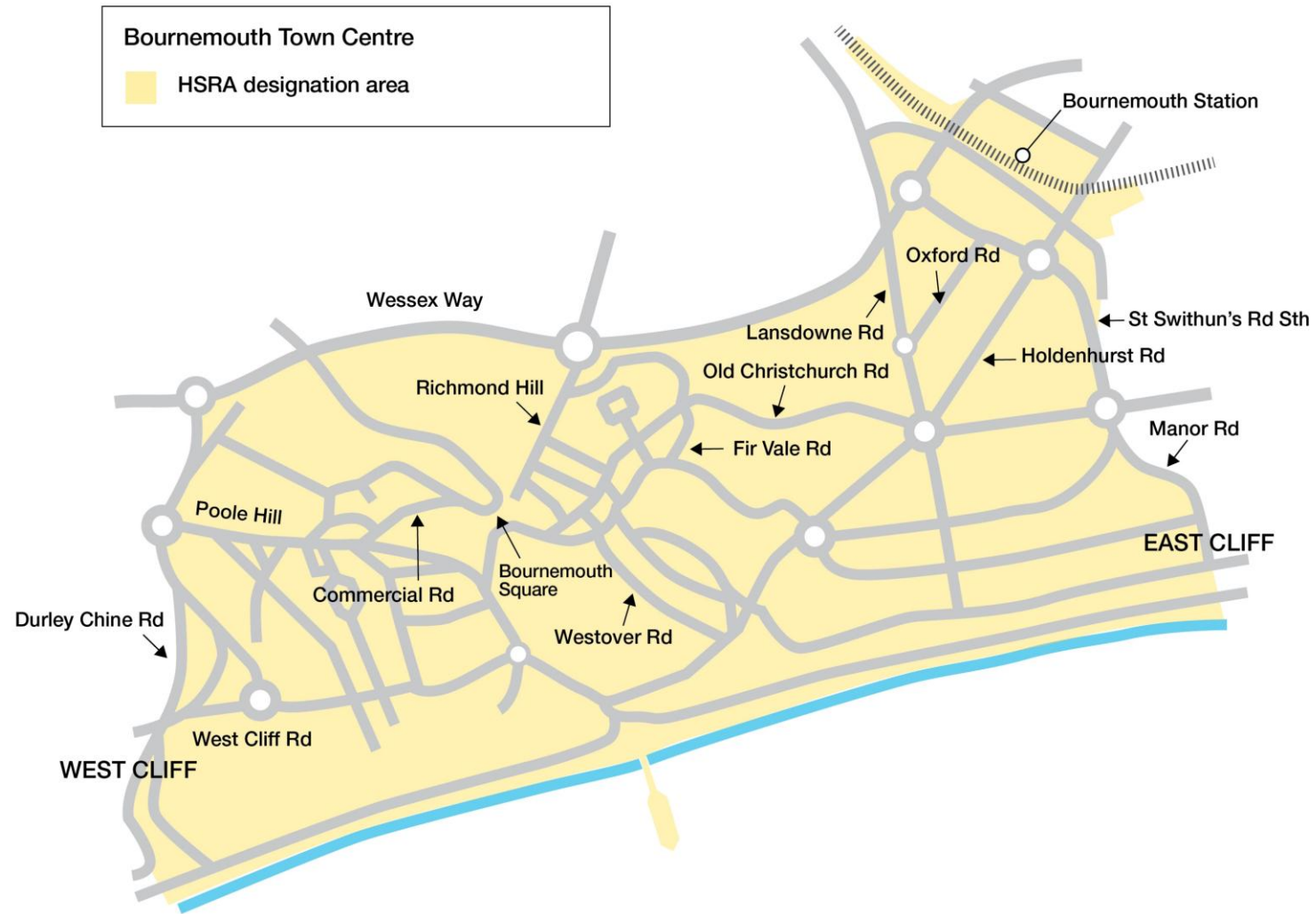
### Documents

[High Street Rental Auctions Information Document.pdf \(253 KB\)](#) (pdf)

[High Street Rental Auctions - List of roads in the proposed area.pdf \(34 KB\)](#) (pdf)

### The proposed area

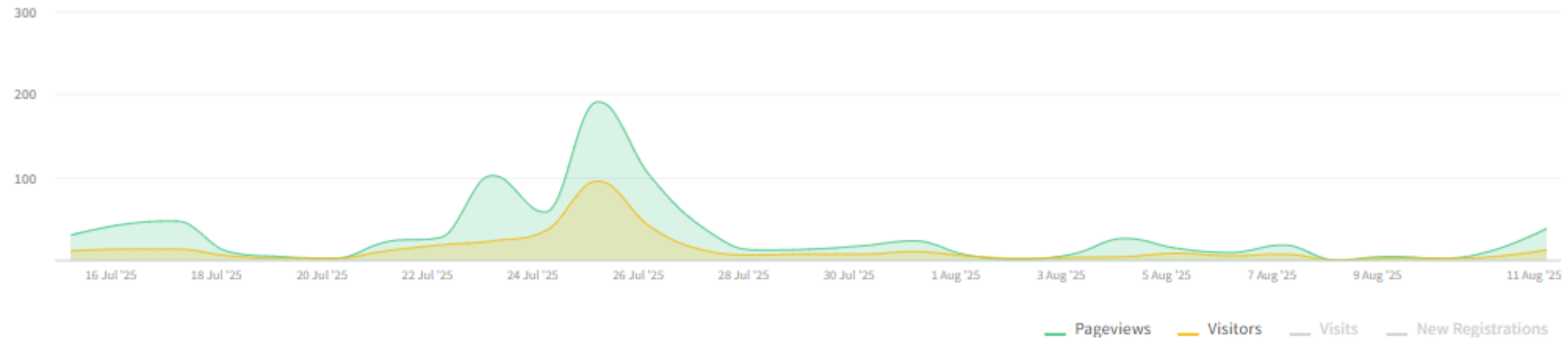
# The proposed designated area



# Consultation webpage visits

## Visitors Summary

Have Your Say Bourmemouth, Christchurch and Poole from 15 Jul'25 to 12 Aug'25

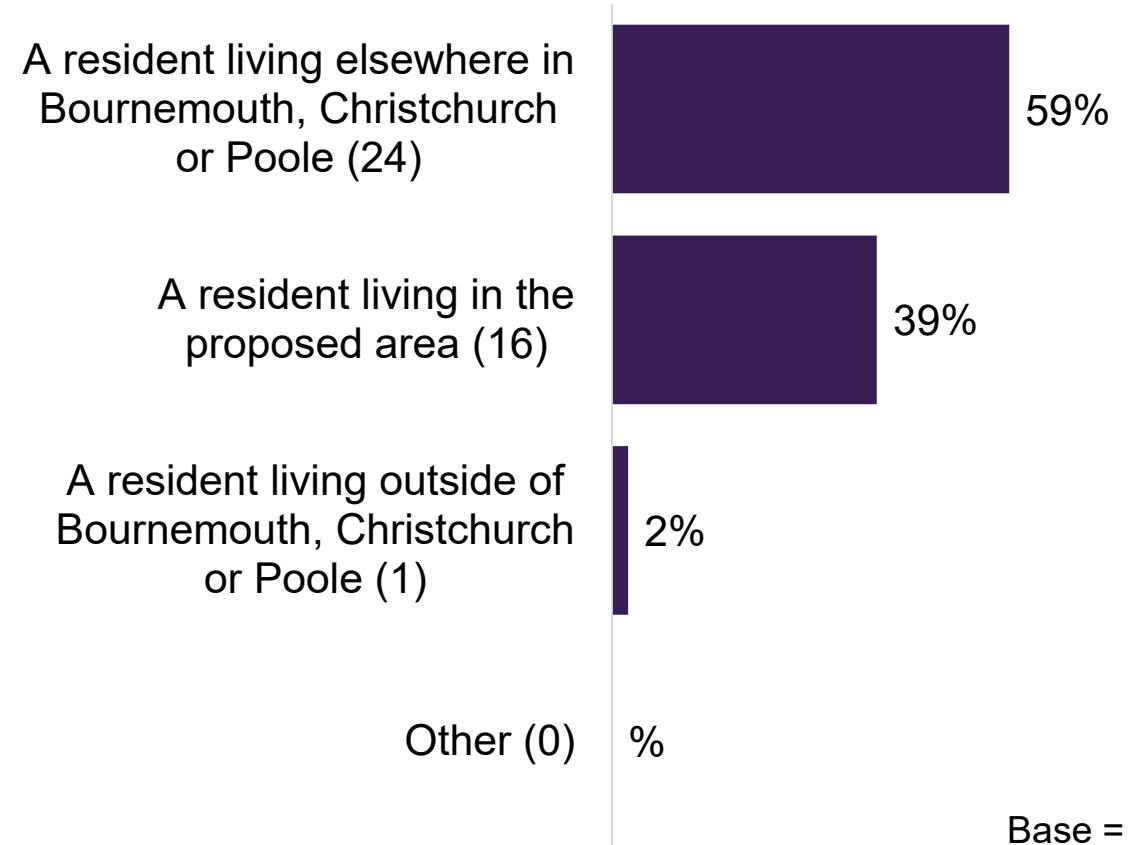


Aware Visitors (viewed EHQ page)	Informed Visitors (Interacted with EHQ page)	Engaged Visitors (Completed survey online)
334	128	45

# Survey findings

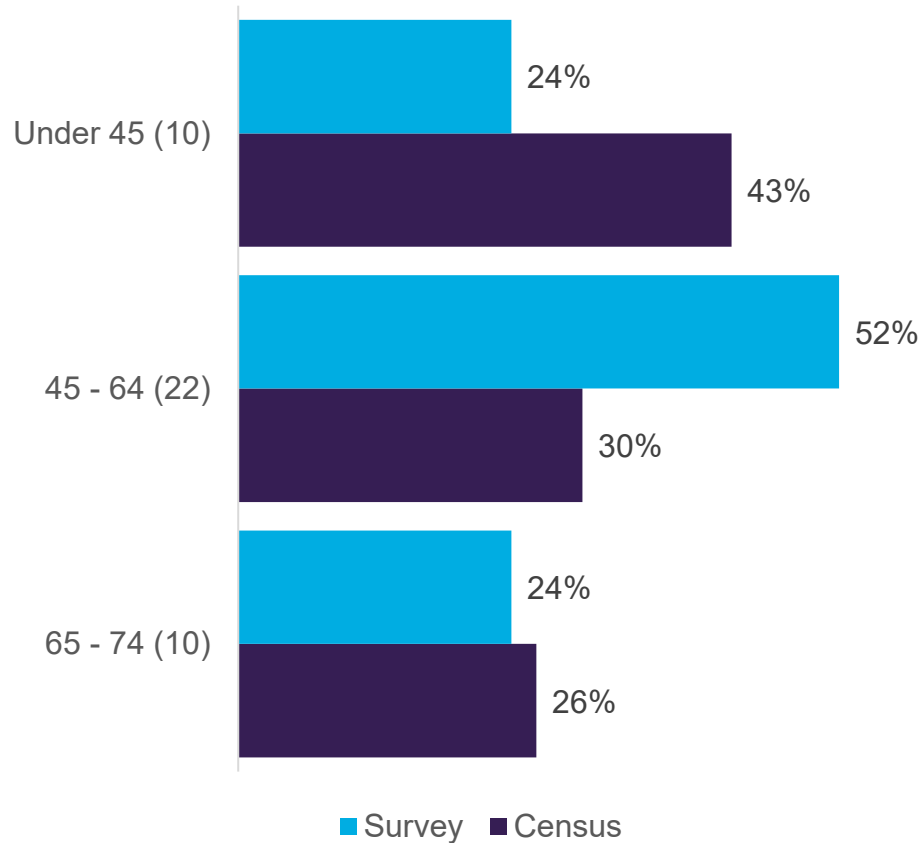
# Response

- **45** respondents completed an online or paper survey.
- **42** were individuals
- **3** responded on behalf of an organisation



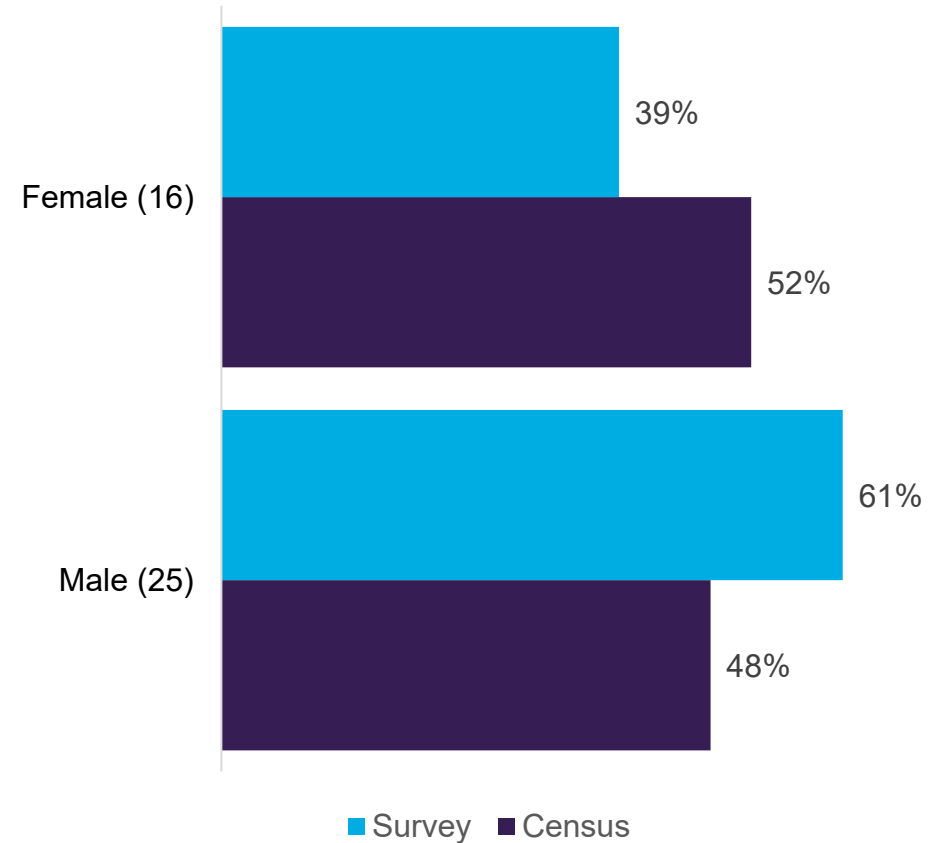
# Respondent profile

## Age



Base = 42

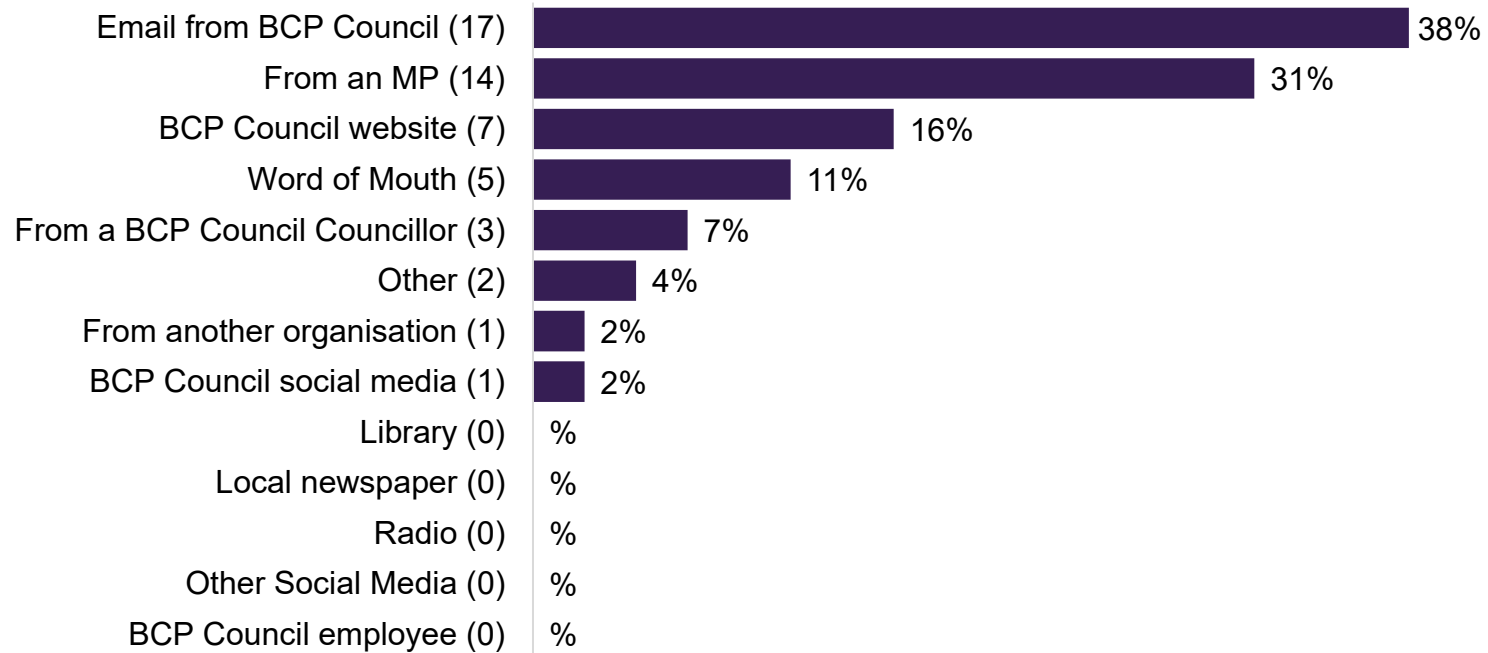
## Sex



Base = 41

# How did you find out about the consultation?

- **38%** of respondents found out from a BCP Council email and **31%** from an MP.
- BCP Council website (**16%**) and BCP Council social media (**2%**) were other Council sources.



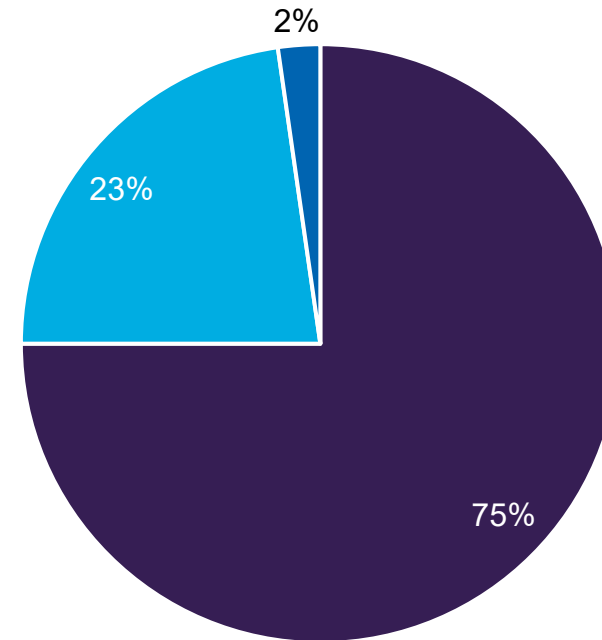
Base = 45

# The proposed area

‘Do you agree or disagree with the proposed area, shown in the map.’

**75%**

of respondents support the proposed area



■ Agree (33) ■ Disagree (10) ■ Don't Know (1)

Base = 44

# Please explain, briefly, why you agree or disagree with the proposed area.

43 respondents wrote a comment.

The comments were coded into themes\*. The table below shows the main themes.

The following table groups the 43 comments received into themes.

Theme	Description	Number
The area	Respondents were <b>in general agreement</b> that the designated area covers the areas which need it most. However, <b>some feel it should be expanded</b> to include Westbourne, Boscombe, Winton, and other high streets with that have high vacancy levels and persistent antisocial behaviour.	23
Supportive views	Many respondents are <b>in favour</b> of HSRA, hoping it will prevent further decline. Some respondents believe that it could empower <b>local businesses and community groups</b> to reimagine the high street.	17
Opposing views	A couple of respondents feel that <b>business rates</b> , not rent, are the real barrier to letting properties. There is also concern about how effective it will be, calling it a “waste of taxpayer money.”	7
Neutral views	Those respondents with neutral views, point to a <b>shared concern about the visible decline and missed potential of vacant properties</b> , and the need for <b>smart community-friendly ways to rejuvenate the area</b> .	19

\*Comments may be coded into more than one theme.

# Comments

“It covers a large enough area to make a difference to the availability of new businesses”

“It adequately covers the central business district of Bournemouth”

“Whilst the area considered the 'Town Centre' is perhaps too wide, this specific area contains the highest density of units where an improvement could be obtained through this initiative”

“Even though I mainly agree with the area I do believe that Westcliff and Westbourne should be included this is due to the criminality that is ongoing. For example, the constant shop lifting at Co-op, Queens Road and Iceland, Poole Road which is number one for shoplifting in the Southwest”

“The area is too big to be classed as a town centre. The nature of the centre has changed drastically over the last few years”

“This area is very much in need of rejuvenation, which would be helped by new tenants”

“Bournemouth Town centre desperately needs new businesses there are too many empty buildings”

“...This proposal on paper suggests a chance to breathe fresh air into the town, bring some of the arty and creative vibes that other towns manage. Giving smaller business/community projects a chance in the town could really turn things around...”

“I am totally against this policy; private property should not be prey to any govt organisation”

“I disagree with the whole principle; it's a terrible idea and a waste of taxpayer's time and money. Landlords do not want empty shops; business rates relief should be offered to help let empty shops not auctions that will get nowhere. It's a dreadful idea.”

“Vacancies are a waste of resource. Local bidders could use spaces imaginatively. Town centre medical centres. More Uni use”

“The belief that landlords do not want to rent out their investment properties is absurd. In my experience properties have been let at below the current Rateable value, with extensive rent-free periods, and the rates bill is a bigger barrier than the rent”

# Do you have any other comments or suggestions about the proposed area?

**31** respondents wrote a comment. 6 of these said they had no further comment to make. The comments were coded into themes\*. The table below shows the main themes. The following table groups the 25 comments received into themes.

Theme	Description	Number
<b>Inclusion of other areas</b>	Suggestions included Richmond Gardens, The Triangle, Lansdowne, Holdenhurst Road, Poole Town Centre, St Peter's Road, Springbourne, Boscombe, Durley Chine & Durley Chine Road, West Cliff Road, Westover Road, East Cliff, Manor Road	<b>7</b>
<b>Reviving empty premises</b>	Respondents supported <b>transformation of unused commercial</b> and outdoor areas into vibrant hubs for local businesses, creativity, and community life. <b>Focus on incentives, accessibility, and smarter urban planning.</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>High street regeneration</b>	Revitalise town centres by <b>repurposing vacant properties</b> , enforcing upkeep, and incentivising independent businesses.	<b>6</b>
<b>Rates over rents</b>	Respondents are more concerned about <b>high business rates</b> than rental costs.	<b>6</b>

\*Comments may be coded into more than one theme.

# Comments

“I would like to see the scheme extended to Poole town centre”

“Would be great to extend up to Holdenhurst Road and Springbourne area, also other high street areas such as Boscombe”

“Shopping on the high street is dead. Give independents more incentives and get more creative with shop usage, look to cities abroad such as Lisbon who have reinvigorated their high streets and reduced ASB”

“Offer business rate incentives to tenants to help landlords let empty properties”

“...for a town that has an arts university, this is not a very artistic town, compared to other seaside towns in the UK, like Brighton, Margate. We need to bring this talent into the centre of town, make affordable studio place. There are so many empty buildings in the centre which can be used for this and takes away the deprivation..”

“Regeneration of centre is definitely a priority, albeit levers council can pull are limited. Will be key to get shops / services that people want to travel to and together form a vibrant whole...”

“...BCP really needs to aim up market more. Things like the Ivy & Bobbys are trying so hard to improve the area and BCP shouldn't put tacky pop up bars in front and ruin their efforts”

“I think we need to do something drastic and quickly to improve the Bournemouth town centre area as it currently is very unappealing to visit and often feels unsafe. I think we need to encourage more creative and diverse businesses to come into the town centre, not just more vape shops, mobile phone shops and Greggs”

“I have first hand accounts from retailers, some of which have withdrawn from Bournemouth and they have not quoted the rents as being the problem...”

“...Probably outside the scope of this consultation but wouldn't reduced business rates etc also be necessary to support new businesses in the same way lower rents would?”

“Invest into local business. Offer free commercial rent for local businesses to start up. This happened in Poole and the same needs to be offered to Bournemouth town centre...”

“By combining the compulsory rental of vacant properties through HSRA with the effective use of Section 215, local authorities can create a powerful two-pronged strategy...”

# Comments

**15** respondents wrote about other issues which covered areas such as:

- **Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour:** Shoplifting, drug use, rough sleeping, and aggressive begging are major deterrents for businesses and visitors. These issues contribute to a perception of the town centre as unsafe, especially at night.
- **Police Presence:** There is a call for a more visible and consistent police presence to deter crime and improve public confidence.
- **Parking Accessibility:** High parking charges are seen as a barrier to town centre visits and some suggestions include using disused land for affordable or free parking to encourage footfall.
- **Tourism Potential Undervalued:** Bournemouth is a tourist hub but lacks quality, diverse offerings beyond chain bars and restaurants. Suggestions include more authentic, local experiences to attract and retain visitors.
- **Community-Led Use of Space:** Underused spaces like the Durley Chine Environmental Hub could be opened up to community groups (e.g. yoga, arts, pop-ups).
- **Cleaning and Maintenance:** There is a call for better street cleaning, maintenance of shopfronts, and removal of unsightly or “tacky” installations. Cleanliness is linked to perceptions of safety and pride in place.
- **Food Markets and Pop-Ups:** There is support for rotating food stalls, pop-up restaurants, and artisan markets, especially in outdoor or underused areas. This is seen to support local enterprise and create a lively atmosphere.
- **Occupant Type and Shop Mix:** There is some desire for a **curated mix of tenants:** fewer vape/mobile shops, more creative, independent, and high-quality businesses.
- **Strategic Shrinking of Retail Zones:** Some suggested consolidating retail into core areas and repurpose peripheral zones for other uses (e.g. housing, culture, green space).
- **Council Leadership and Vision:** A few respondents called for stronger leadership from BCP Council to coordinate efforts, enforce standards, and support long-term regeneration.