CAPITAL&CENTRIC

CONSULTATION ANALYSIS | AUGUST 2026

ST NEOTS. TEBBUTTS ROAD CONSULTATION ANALYSIS.

1,737

TOTAL RESPONSES REVIEWED

89.8%

OPPOSED TO PROPOSALS

7.3%

SUPPORTIVE OF PROPOSALS

INTRODUCTION

ABOUT THIS CONSULTATION

This report analyses the feedback received during the St Neots consultation on the proposed redevelopment of the Tebbutts Road site.

Engagement was designed to reach residents, businesses, town centre users and surrounding communities through a mix of digital and in-person channels, including local communications, online consultation materials, and in-person engagement supported by paper response forms.

The result was a very substantial volume of feedback and a clear demonstration that people in and around St Neots care deeply about the future of the town centre.

TWO POSITIVES TO NOTE AT THE OUTSET

Strong participation. Respondents did not simply tick boxes. Many gave detailed comments, often at length, showing a high level of public engagement and a strong sense of ownership over the future of St Neots.

Principle vs. proposal. Opposition to the current proposals is not the same as opposition to regeneration. A recurring theme is that St Neots does need investment - but many respondents do not believe this proposal, on this site, is the right way to achieve it.

The consultation does not show blanket resistance to change. It shows strong concern about whether this proposal, on this site, would help or harm the town centre.

KEY ANALYTICAL FINDING

TOTAL RESPONSES REVIEWED
1,737

Online and email responses

RECORDED SUPPORT POSITION
1,728 OF 1,737

9 responses had no recorded support answer

IN-PERSON AND PAPER RESPONSES
SUBSTANTIAL ADDITIONAL BODY

Trackers for online and offline forms reinforces same direction and themes throughout

CONSULTATION PERIOD
AUGUST 2026

Tebbutts Road site, St Neots

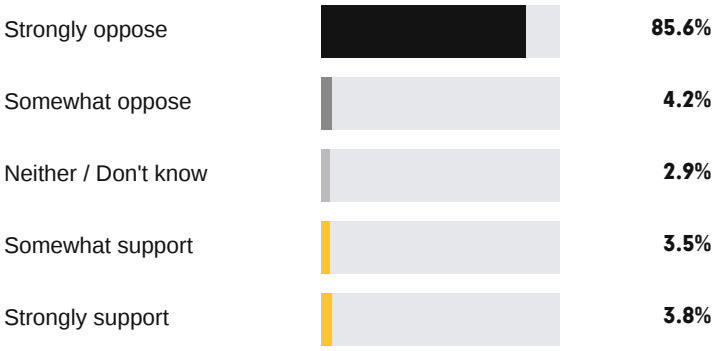
ANALYSIS BASE
SPREADSHEET PRIMARY

Paper tracker used to corroborate and strengthen findings

ONLINE AND EMAIL RESPONSES

THE QUANTITATIVE PICTURE

Among the 1,728 responses that recorded a support position, the breakdown is as follows. The result is unequivocal: opposition dominates very heavily.



GROUPED SUMMARY (OF 1,728 WHO ANSWERED)

89.8%	7.3%	2.9%
OPPOSED 1,552 responses	SUPPORTIVE 126 responses	NEUTRAL / UNCERTAIN 50 responses

FULL SPREADSHEET BASE (1,737)

Including the 9 responses with no recorded support answer, the picture remains effectively unchanged:

- Opposed - 1,552 of 1,737, or **89.4%**
- Supportive - 126 of 1,737, or **7.3%**
- Neutral or uncertain - 50 of 1,737, or **2.9%**
- No recorded answer - 9 of 1,737, or **0.5%**

IN-PERSON AND PAPER TRACKER

The paper tracker is significantly larger than equivalent trackers for other consultations. Dominant themes repeated throughout include:

- Loss of Tebbutts Road car park
- Impact on town centre access
- Harm to High Street footfall
- Effect on shops and local businesses
- Disabled access and access to GP/dental services
- Scale, height and fit with the town
- Empty shops and other sites should come first
- Housing growth without matching infrastructure

Overall conclusion: The online/email and in-person/paper responses are consistent in direction and strength. There is no evidence in the tracker of a materially different public mood. Opposition is dominant and highly consistent across both channels.

MAIN ISSUES RAISED

WHAT RESPONDENTS TOLD US - PART ONE

01

Parking and the loss of Tebbutts Road car park

The single most dominant theme. Respondents repeatedly describe Tebbutts Road as the main, largest, busiest, most convenient car park in the town centre. Many state it is frequently full, leading them to conclude its removal would be highly damaging.

> *"If people cannot park, they will not come into town, and if they do not come into town, local businesses will suffer further."*
>
> RECURRING RESPONDENT VIEW

Notably, St Neots has already lost parking through earlier town centre changes, particularly around the market square. For many respondents, the loss of Tebbutts Road would compound an already fragile situation. The parking issue has become symbolic - many believe the proposal misunderstands how the town currently works and what keeps it alive.

02

Access to doctors, dentists and essential services

A particularly strong variation on the parking theme. Respondents repeatedly refer to nearby GP surgeries, dentists, pharmacies and other services. Many say this car park is heavily relied upon by patients, carers, older residents and those with health conditions that make longer walks difficult.

This concern turns the debate from convenience into need. The question is not whether another car park exists somewhere else, but whether people can reasonably and safely reach the services they rely on. This is one of the clearest practical objections in the dataset.

03

Accessibility and disabled access

A major cross-cutting theme and one of the strongest moral arguments within the responses. Respondents refer specifically to disabled users, blue badge holders, older people, those with mobility issues, and families with children.

A common concern is that alternative car parks are either too far away, less convenient, or unreliable because of flooding, capacity or private management issues. Respondents are not simply asking for convenience for drivers. They are defending the ability of less mobile residents and visitors to continue using the town centre in a practical and dignified way.

04

Impact on the High Street and local businesses

A very large number of respondents believe removing Tebbutts Road car park would reduce footfall and further weaken the town centre economy. This is often expressed in direct terms, with respondents saying the proposal would "kill" the High Street.

Many respondents say St Neots already has empty units, a weak retail mix and too many shops standing vacant.

> Regeneration should first strengthen the existing High Street, not compete with it or remove the infrastructure that helps people access it.
>
> RECURRENT THEME ACROSS ONLINE AND PAPER RESPONSES

WHAT RESPONDENTS TOLD US - PART TWO

05

Existing empty shops and other sites should come first

A very clear pattern in the responses is the repeated suggestion that other sites should be prioritised before Tebbutts Road. Respondents regularly mention empty High Street units, underused buildings and other brownfield or town centre opportunities.

This makes the responses more constructive than they might first appear. People are not just rejecting change. They are proposing a different order of priorities: start with places that are genuinely empty or underperforming before building over an active and valued public asset.

06

Housing growth and infrastructure pressure

Many respondents situate the proposal within the wider context of housing growth in and around St Neots, especially references to Wintringham, Loves Farm and other major developments.

The common concern is that the town is already expanding rapidly yet infrastructure has not kept pace. Respondents mention healthcare, dentists, schools, roads, sewage, traffic and parking as areas already under pressure. For many, the Tebbutts Road proposal is being judged as another example of housing growth coming ahead of infrastructure.

07

Design, height and fit with the town

Many respondents object to references to two five-storey buildings, arguing that this would be too tall, too dominant and out of keeping with the character of St Neots as a market town. Concerns include visual impact on surrounding homes and impact on light.

The proposed architecture and language around features such as the crinkle-crankle wall and community spaces drew notable scepticism. Several respondents saw this language as decorative or distractive when compared with their more immediate concerns about parking, access and viability.

08

Public benefit and what the town gains

A recurring underlying question is what St Neots actually gains from the proposal. Many people struggle to identify a convincing public benefit that outweighs the perceived loss of a key car park.

New commercial units are not automatically seen as positive because many respondents believe there is already too much empty retail space. New homes are not automatically seen as positive because of substantial housing growth elsewhere. For many respondents, the scheme appears to take away more than it gives.

PRINCIPLE VS. PROPOSAL

Opposition to the current scheme is not the same as opposition to regeneration itself. Many respondents say they support investment in St Neots, better shops, or a stronger town centre offer - but not this proposal on this site, in this form. That distinction changes how the consultation should be interpreted.

THE QUESTIONS AND WHAT THEY TELL US

THE SUPPORT QUESTION

The first question gives a strong overall measure of sentiment, and the result is unequivocal: opposition dominates very heavily.

However, the open comments show a nuance that matters. Many respondents oppose the current proposal while also expressing support for regeneration in principle. This means the question works as a measure of reaction to the scheme as presented, but should not suggest that the public opposes all redevelopment or town centre change.

"WHICH PARTS MATTER MOST TO YOU?"

The second question asked respondents to select up to three elements that mattered most. This question has a basic interpretive limitation: importance is not the same as approval.

A respondent may select new homes, commercial spaces, the pavilion or the crinkle-crankle wall because they oppose those elements, not because they support them. Several comments explicitly make this point. A number of respondents also complained there was no option for "none of the above".

The second question should be treated as an indicator of what was most salient, not as evidence of positive endorsement.

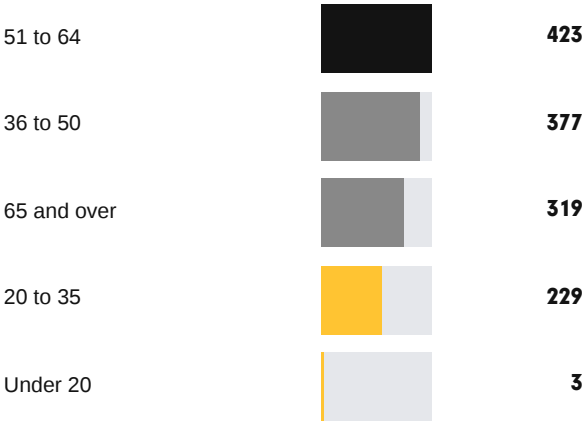
OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES

The open-ended responses are where the consultation becomes most revealing. They show in clear terms what people were actually reacting to: the loss of Tebbutts Road car park, concern for doctors and dentists, the condition of the High Street, housing growth, empty shops, disabled access, town centre footfall, design scale, and public benefit.

These open comments carry much of the analytical weight of the consultation. They explain not just what respondents think, but why.

AGE PROFILE OF ONLINE RESPONDENTS

Where age was recorded among online and email responses:



What this tells us: The consultation was most heavily represented by middle-aged and older adults. That is relevant because many of the dominant concerns - parking, access to services, and town centre usability - are especially likely to matter to these age groups.

That does not weaken those concerns, but it does suggest that future engagement should continue to make space for younger voices, especially if younger households are part of the intended market for new housing or town centre change.

It is worth noting that even among younger respondents there is substantial opposition. Support is present, but it is clearly a minority view.

Formal and semi-formal responses also appear in the dataset, including local councillors, business-linked responses, and longer-form submissions focused on healthcare access, town centre viability and economic impact. These reinforce the main themes and do not introduce any different direction of opinion.

OVERALL FINDINGS

SEVEN KEY CONCLUSIONS

01

Overwhelming opposition to the proposals as presented

89.8% of those who recorded a support position were opposed. This is strongly reinforced by the in-person and paper responses.

02

Opposition to the proposal is not opposition to regeneration

Many respondents want St Neots to improve. However, they do not believe this scheme, on this site, is the right form of regeneration.

03

Parking is absolutely central to the consultation

The proposed loss of Tebbutts Road car park is the issue that dominates more than any other and appears to drive the overall strength of opposition.

04

Accessibility and service access are major concerns

Tebbutts Road is seen as essential access to doctors, dentists, the High Street and everyday life for older and less mobile users - not simply a convenience for shoppers.

05

Town centre needs lie elsewhere for many respondents

Filling empty shops, reducing barriers to trade, supporting existing businesses and making better use of genuinely vacant sites are all seen as more pressing priorities.

06

Many believe the proposal would weaken not strengthen the town centre

The common fear is that less parking means less access, less footfall and ultimately a weaker High Street - the opposite of regeneration.

07

A persistent strategic question runs through the responses

If this scheme removes one of the town's most valued and heavily used assets, what does St Neots gain that it does not already have - and is that gain worth the loss? For most respondents, the answer is no.

Respondents are not only asking whether St Neots should change. They are asking whether this scheme would take away one of the things the town still relies on.

CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE CONSULTATION

CLOSING ASSESSMENT

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The St Neots consultation generated a substantial and highly consistent body of feedback. The exact spreadsheet dataset reviewed for this analysis contains 1,737 records.

THE NUMBERS AT A GLANCE

1,552
OPPOSED (89.8% OF THOSE WHO ANSWERED)

126
SUPPORTIVE (7.3%)

50
NEUTRAL OR UNCERTAIN (2.9%)

1,737
TOTAL RESPONSES REVIEWED

The in-person and paper responses strongly reinforce the same overall direction of opinion and repeat the same principal themes.

The clearest conclusion is that respondents are not generally rejecting investment in St Neots. They are challenging whether this proposal, in this location, would improve the town or instead damage its accessibility, weaken the High Street, and add pressure to a place already experiencing significant growth.

PRINCIPAL CONCERNS - CONSISTENT ACROSS BOTH CHANNELS

- The loss of Tebbutts Road car park
- Reduced access to doctors, dentists and essential services
- Weaker support for the High Street
- More pressure on already strained infrastructure
- Too much housing in the wrong place
- Empty and underused sites should be prioritised first
- Scale, height and character out of keeping with the town
- Insufficient public benefit to justify the loss of a valued asset

THE CONSULTATION MESSAGE IS CLEAR

The consultation does not lack a message. Its message is strong, repeated and coherent.

People are not only asking whether St Neots should change. They are asking whether this scheme would take away one of the things the town still relies on - and whether the proposed benefits are sufficient justification for that loss.