



Hitchin Town Talk – December 8th, 2022

Date: Thursday, 8th December

Time: 6.30-7.15pm

Venue: Hitchin Town Hall

Themed Town Talk = **'Have Your Say on the Future of Churchgate'**

We invited people along to talk with our NHC Commercial Manager, Chloe Gray, about the plans for Churchgate.

She is leading on a new consultation. This consultation is relevant to everyone who lives, works, or studies in North Herts. More information can be found here, [Have your say on the regeneration of the Churchgate Shopping Centre in Hitchin | North Herts Council \(north-herts.gov.uk\)](https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/news-and-events/hitchin-town-talk)

There was another good turnout for this Town Talk and there were a few business owners and local residents in attendance, who were interested in getting their thoughts and ideas across to our local Councillors and our Commercial Manager.

Cllr Ian Albert addressed the members of the public and gave a brief introduction about the new consultation and mentioned that we will continue with more themed Town Talks concentrating on various Hitchin matters going into 2023 and beyond.

Chloe Gray, NHC Commercial Manager, gave a brief introduction about the new consultation. She explained that North Herts Council recently acquired the leasehold for the Churchgate Shopping Centre and ahead of drawing up proposals for the site, would like to invite residents and businesses to take part in its initial consultation to get their views on what they would most like to see in the centre.

The consultation closes on February 5th. [Churchgate Shopping Centre regeneration | North Herts Council \(north-herts.gov.uk\)](https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/news-and-events/hitchin-town-talk)

Chloe then opened the floor to questions.

Questions from the public

A member of the public highlighted that a map of the entire area of Churchgate would be useful to include on the online consultation.

Response - This will be looked at and added if possible.

Update - A map has now been added to Page 2 to show the area that this consultation covers.

The page where we (NHC) ask the question > **What are your priorities for the Churchgate area of Hitchin?**

We need to have clear definitions of what each category is. For example - Some people class *Leisure* as swimming or the gym, others may class it as reading or viewing artworks. Some may even class it as going to the pub for a drink.

One member of the public audience suggested that rankings were hard to analyse/ examine. People generally rank the first three and then fill in the rest with less thought.

Response - This will be noted. It may be that the software has limited us (NHC) at this stage.

A business owner brought to the rooms attention that Brown and Lee are asking shop owners to pay for any damages/ things that need fixing. For example, leaks and smashed windows. What should business owners do as this is causing some confusion and stress.

Response - Cllr Hoskins told everyone to do nothing till we (NHC) have investigated it.

A member of the public asked 'How does this fit in with the Hitchin Town Centre Strategy?' Why isn't this Churchgate regeneration project happening along with, or included in, the Hitchin Town Centre Strategy. People were aware that the Letchworth Town Centre Strategy is already underway.

Response – The Hitchin Town Centre Strategy is following soon. Councillors suggested that it was important that the scheme must all fit into an overall vision for the town centre.

A question from a Cllr - '*How do we know when it is done?*' When do we know the consultation process is over?

Response – The consultation has only just begun. We aren't able to give times and dates until the first round of consultations have taken place and results from the public are in.

Councillors' welcome comments about the survey. They have suggested sending feedback to either Cllr Ian Albert or Cllr Keith Hoskins (Cllr Keith Hoskins is Chair of the Project Board).

You can also give feedback on the survey by using its 'comments' section.

Councillor emails for feedback

Councillor Keith Hoskins keith.hoskins@north-herts.gov.uk

Councillor Ian Albert ian.albert@north-herts.gov.uk

Town Talk was closed at 7.15pm

Date of next Town Talk: March 28th