

High Street Rental Auction Consultation Summary

The consultation period ran for 28 days from 9am on Wednesday 22 July 2026 and closed at 5pm on Wednesday 19 August 2026.

A consultation event was held online on 3 August 2026 between 6pm and 7pm and this was attended by two interested parties who raised the following issues:

- Interest in how one could apply for a property through the auction process
- Interest in the fair market rent element of the proposal.

Officers present explained the process and discussed the points raised. During the discussion, interested parties suggested that the boundary should be amended to include additional areas but did not specify where these amendments should be.

The Council received five formal responses to the consultation which expressed support for the proposal in general but raised the following issues:

- Need to add Fore Street and Eagle Street in the High Street Rental Auction boundary as there are high levels of vacant properties and these are important to the wider regeneration of the town centre. There are also concerns raised in the area regarding anti-social behaviour and that this is driving businesses from the area.

Officer response: It is acknowledged that there are vacant properties within the area identified. The boundary has been drawn to reflect a defined town centre area, and these streets would fall outside of this boundary. There is potential in future, subject to a further consultation, to include a broader area should the High Street Rental Auction be successful.

- Department stores should be included within the consideration for the High Street Rental Auction process.

Officer response: The guidance does suggest that department stores are not appropriate for the High Street Rental Auction process. This does not rule out their inclusion but just identifies the risks involved. This will be carefully considered as part of the process of identifying suitable vacant properties in line with government guidance.

- Consideration needs to be had to the types of businesses entering these vacant properties with independent hospitality playing an important role around which local communities, creative scenes and distinct identities can develop.

Officer response: Agreed and consideration will be given to the use class in any High Street Rental Auction process.

- Need to provide support to independent operators once they access a vacant property as finding a property is only one step in the process.

Officer response: The Economic Development Team can assist independent businesses by directing them to the correct resources and support.

- Document submitted by Ipswich Umbrella supporting the regeneration of Upper Orwell Street and potential opportunities for a community led approach.

Officer response: The High Street Rental Auction process is a legal process and the proposals suggested within the document sit outside of the remit of the High Street Rental Auction.