



**Aberdeenshire**  
COUNCIL



# TOWN CENTRE HEALTH CHECK SEPTEMBER 2021

BANCHORY, ABERDEENSHIRE



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# INTRODUCTION

## INTRODUCTION

A town centre health check is recommended by the Scottish Government as a way of analysing the factors that contribute to successful town centres and indicate good standards of vitality and viability. Within national planning policy, the vitality of a centre is a measure of how lively and busy it is, whilst viability is a measure of its centre's capacity to attract ongoing investment (Scottish Planning Policy (SPP), paragraph 59).

Town Centre Health Checks have been completed in Aberdeenshire since 2003. However, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the need for robust baseline data, this report has been prepared using new methodology to showcase a fresh and updated approach for Aberdeenshire.

Aberdeenshire is an extremely attractive area with a variety of coastal and rural environments, commuter towns, high levels of employment, and there is considerable new housing and employment land planned for the near future. Maintaining town centres' attractiveness, activeness, and accessibility is vital for the region to be able to continue to thrive.

## BACKGROUND

The importance of town centres is widely acknowledged. Town centres are at the heart of communities, providing a sustainable focus for shopping, business, leisure, services and community life, and shaping their sense of place. The planning system has an important role to play in supporting successful town centres, through influencing the form and type of future development. In order to assess how a centre should be supported, evidence of its current performance is required.

SPP sets out how successful, sustainable places can be created and maintained in Scotland. It is vital for town centres in Aberdeenshire to be successful and viable in order to provide for their populations and draw visitors.

Town centres with a vibrant retail scene, a wide variety of services, attractive buildings and open space create economic growth, attract more people to the region, and promote a sense of well-being and identity.

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to present the results of the Town Centre Health Check 2021 for Banchory. The results are presented to enable an understanding of the vitality and viability of the town centre. The results are not to be considered definitive of the well-being of a town centre, but rather they are intended to provide an evidence-based comparative perspective on this matter and assist in identifying actions that could be undertaken to improve and maintain their status.

### WHY COMPLETE A HEALTH CHECK?

Health checks contribute to the planning system's efforts to support successful town centres through giving an overview of their current performance. They provide an analysis of the infrastructure and viability of the town centre which can be used to inform the Local Development Plan and decisions on planning applications. The findings are also utilised to create help a stronger "town centre first principle" policy.

# METHODOLOGY

## TOWN CENTRE HEALTH CHECKS SHOULD:

- Support implementation of the Local Development Plan
- Add value by collecting data on a wider set of indicators that provide insight into economic, social and environmental factors that play a part in the vitality of a town centre
- Have a clear, easy to follow and accessible format and methodology
- Work collaboratively both within the Council and externally with businesses and the community to collect and share baseline data
- Provide the foundation for other town strategies and plans and any subsequent funding applications

To achieve these results, the following methods of data collection and presentation were utilised:

## DESK TOP RESEARCH

Desk top research was completed to provide the critical first step of gathering information for the town centre. Background information on the current situation of the town centre was then analysed further when out on site. Data was gathered from within the Council and from external partners.

## COMMUNITY SURVEY

The community survey was designed to gain an understanding of the views of both the residents and visitors of the town centre. The survey was available on Engage HQ, shared via a press release, advertised on the Council's Social Media and emailed to relevant groups to advertise further. The survey asked questions on several different topics and provided respondents the opportunity to identify what improvements they would like to see to the town centre. The survey was open for three weeks and received 170 responses. A summary of the responses received can be seen on page 46.



**Look out for: Quote Boxes.** Comments were asked for in both the community and business surveys and a selection have been included in the report to give a flavour of the different responses received.

# METHODOLOGY (CONTINUED)

## **BUSINESS SURVEY**

The survey was available on Engage HQ and shared via Banchory Business Association and Banchory Community Council. Several topics were questioned, including the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on businesses. It also gave an opportunity to comment on improvements they would like to see to the town centre. The survey was open for three weeks and received 6 responses. A summary of the responses received can be seen on page 46.

## **FOOTFALL COUNT**

The footfall count was completed at two locations throughout the town centre to gain information on the vitality at different times of the day. Four time slots were selected to gain information of the vibrancy in the morning, afternoon and evening. The counts were completed for 15-minute periods on a weekday and weekend to try and gain an insight into the number of people moving around the town centre. These footfall counts were carried out by Aberdeenshire Council Officers.

## **SITE SURVEY**

This work was completed on a clear day and provided up to date information on the vitality and viability of the town centre. Several recording methods were used including maps, photographs and written analysis. The Place Standard themes were used to analyse the town centre and allowed for different themes to be analysed on an individual basis but also as a collective.

## **ACCESSIBILITY AUDIT**

Supported by Community Learning and Development officers, we worked with members of the local community with lived experience to undertake an assessment of the town centre, reviewing footway surfaces and obstructions, facilities and signage, maintenance and enforcement, personal security, crossing points and access to buildings. The survey took place on a dry day over two hours.

How a place looks, its history and what other people think of the place can affect how we feel. A strong local identity can help us feel pride in our place, our community and in ourselves as a result.

**Observations:** A slight majority of those who use the town centre feel positive towards it. Some respondents are witnessing a decline in the high street offer whilst others have noticed an improving picture over the past year which has contributed to the positive score. The town has an extensive network of community organisations which seems to have resulted in a good sense of community spirit.

**The growth of Banchory:** Banchory's origins lie in an early Christian settlement which developed in **AD500** to the east of the town we know today. This site saw continued development until a new church was built further to the west. Then in **1798**, a bridge was built over the River Dee and the northern side of this became the natural growth point for the town. Banchory then grew quickly through the **1800s**, with the railway reaching the village in **1853**. This brought new economic activity to the town including a number of hotels. The railway closed in **1966**. Banchory continues to be a tourist destination with a wide variety of activities and attractions nearby.

This type of medium-sized town is a suburban or commuter locality with a prevalence of higher income and private housing. A large proportion of the population are over 45, and many are retired.

Sources: Understanding Scottish Places and Undiscovered Scotland.

## IDENTITY & BELONGING



### How Do You Feel About Banchory Town Centre?

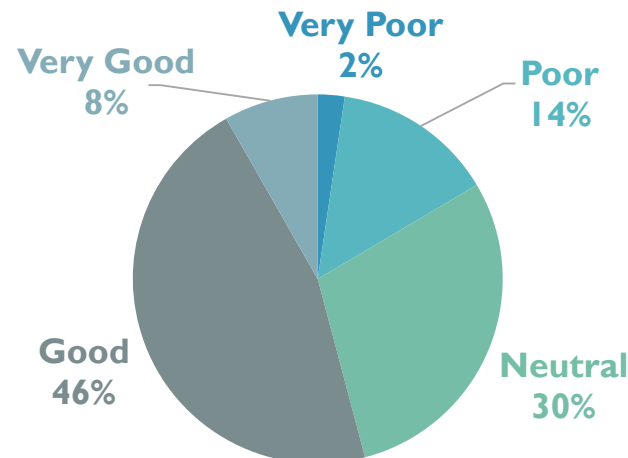


**56%** Community  
**60%** Businesses



**44%** Community  
**40%** Businesses

### IN YOUR OPINION, COMMUNITY SPIRIT IN THE TOWN CENTRE IS?



*"Recently more shops have opened and it is, at last, looking and feeling more like a busy village."*

*"Good to see units slowly filling up but more everyday shops are needed rather than coffee shops."*

*"Has lots to offer, nice shops and looks good."*

*"High street is improving again and enjoy meeting people I know for a blether."*

*"I love living here but the high street has declined over the last few years which is rather sad."*

*"The town centre is generally bustling and there are a good selection of shops with quite a few unusual shops which are not part of a large chain. There is a good atmosphere in the town centre and people are friendly."*

*"Lovely place - however the town centre and High Street is dying, and I am concerned with the decline of the oil industry it will get worse."*

*"There seems to be several closed business premises and the town doesn't have a busy feel about it, it often feels like a through-road to other places with nothing exciting enticing visitors to stop."*

Feeling safe in and around the places that we spend time can have a significant impact on people's activities and on their health and wellbeing. Through their design and maintenance, good places should feel safe and secure for all, and help to minimise crime and antisocial behaviour.

**Observations:** Safety during the day was the most positive rated category by both businesses and visitors to the town in the surveys. Safety during the evening was also positive but many more neutral responses were received, perhaps indicating that the town centre is less used in the evening. There were very few comments provided on this topic, of those that were received the focus was on antisocial behaviour in the evening. Lighting styles were in keeping with different parts of the town centre and a feature has been made of the lights in Scott Skinner Square.

#### Key Safety Features:



Lighting appeared to be well maintained and distributed across the town



No central CCTV system in place

# 21

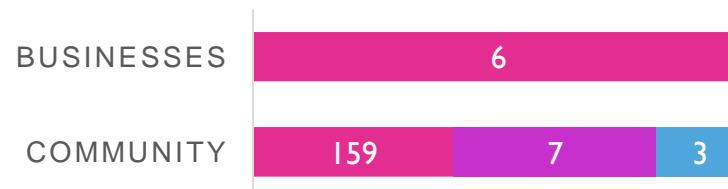
Incidences of crime reported  
1<sup>st</sup> September 2020 – 31<sup>st</sup> August 2021  
Police Scotland

## FEELING SAFE



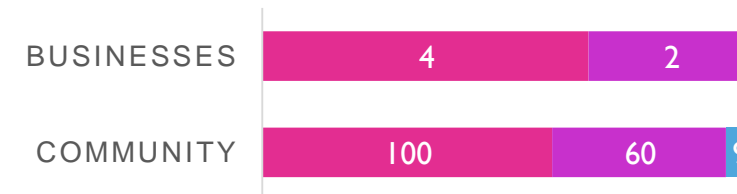
### HOW WOULD YOU RATE: SAFETY DURING THE DAY?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor



### HOW WOULD YOU RATE: SAFETY DURING THE EVENING?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor



*"Can be problems with racing cars at night but seem to have a good police presence."*

*"Gangs at night. Boy racers in cars. Horrible."*

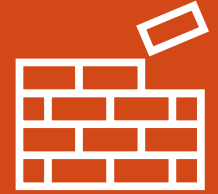
*"It's a nice town with a good feel to it."*

Images (Clockwise from Top Left): Traditional lighting, High Street; Lighting forms part of the public art in Scott Skinner Square; Functional lights on main road; Traditional lighting, Postie's Walk.



Places that are well cared for can make us feel positive, while those that are not looked after properly can have the opposite effect. Proper maintenance arrangements allow people to feel supported and more positive about where they live.

# CARE & MAINTENANCE



Burnett Arms



Chemist, High Street

**Observations:** The overall care and maintenance of buildings within Banchory is something that during the site visit was noted as good.

In general, buildings within the town centre are in good condition. However, it was noted through the surveys that the vacant units are starting to become run down and detract from the overall appearance. There is a community desire to see improved maintenance of the vacant units.

The images (left) give an impression of the town centre environment.

## HOW WOULD YOU RATE: CARE & MAINTENANCE OF BUILDINGS?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor

BUSINESSES



COMMUNITY



*"One or two buildings are looking run down, can owners be persuaded to carry out basic maintenance."*

*"The rating would have been a neutral if it wasn't for the Subway building."*

*"The Town Hall looks quite tired, and grubby which is a shame as it's quite an impressive building."*

*"Empty shops are an eyesore."*



Scott Skinner Square



Vacant Unit



People's views about their local area should be heard. Having a voice in decision making and feeling able to make changes can help to build stronger communities and better places. Having a sense of control can make people feel positive about their lives.

## INFLUENCE & SENSE OF CONTROL



**Observations:** Banchory Town Centre is well represented with a number of different organisations working together to ensure the best outcomes for residents and businesses alike. Tools such as co-ordinated logos and websites are well used across the town but awareness of groups in the wider community could be improved.

Town Centre Groups	Banchory & District Initiatives (BDI)	Banchory Gardening Club	Banchory Business Association (BBA)	Banchory Community Council
Legal Status	Registered Charity	Constituted Group	Constituted Group	Community Council
Membership	Residents of, or workers in Banchory	Volunteer committee and over 150* members.	Businesses from Banchory and surrounding area.	The community; 14 Councillors*
Responsibilities	The focus of the organisation is to develop projects that improve community facilities and create more vibrant tourist amenities. Examples of projects include: Scolty Trails Improvement Project; St Ternan Fair; Christmas Lights and Hanging Baskets; River Dee Radio; Farmers Market; Website and; Number One.	A local Gardening Club who organise an Annual Show, plant sales, talks and workshops. Bonnie Banchory, a sub-group of the club look after the planters and hanging baskets in the town.	BBA aims to promote the interests of member businesses within the local area, to provide growth and networking opportunities and to help Banchory develop into a great place to both live and do business, now and in the future. The BBA is active in the local community and organises several events, including: The North of Scotland Pipe Band Championship; The Summer Shop Window Competition and; The Christmas Lights Switch On.	Community Councils (CC) are the most local tier of statutory representation in Scotland, bridging the gap between local authorities and communities. Key tasks: Representing CCs on other organisations; Campaigning on local issues; Conducting local surveys; Organising public meetings on major development proposals or the Local Development Plan; Statutory Body for public consultation on Planning and Licensing; Representing and providing a platform for public views.
Contact	<a href="#">Get In Touch - VisitBanchory</a>	<a href="mailto:banchorygardeningclub@btinternet.com">banchorygardeningclub@btinternet.com</a>	<a href="mailto:info@banchorybusinesses.co.uk">info@banchorybusinesses.co.uk</a>	<a href="mailto:banchorycommunity@hotmail.com">banchorycommunity@hotmail.com</a>

\*Correct at time of survey.

"BDI and businesses are doing a great job creating new events and attracting visitors to the town."

40% of survey respondents are aware of groups that support the town centre.

The word cloud (right) shows survey responses, with Banchory & District Initiatives (15), Bonnie Banchory (14) and Banchory Business Association (14) receiving the most mentions.

Word cloud content (from left to right, top to bottom):  
 Bonnie Banchory, Banchory Rocks, Painted Stones, Banchory: The Aberdeenshire Council, Number One, Rotary, Place to Be, Community Council, Town Team, Community Planning in Marr, Banchory & District Initiatives, Keep Rose Garden, Banchory Outdoor & Active, Skatepark, Banchory, George V Park, Banchory Traders, Paths Association, Beautiful, Business Association, Gardening Club.

Walking and cycling are good for both our health and the environment. Good places can support and encourage people to walk and cycle by providing good quality routes and a pleasant and safe experience.

## HOW WOULD YOU RATE: GETTING AROUND THE TOWN CENTRE?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor

BUSINESSES 3 2 1

COMMUNITY 101 46 22

## HOW WOULD YOU RATE: SIGNAGE?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor

COMMUNITY 69 78 20

BUSINESSES 2 2 2

*"Too many people trying to cross west end of High Street where there is no crossing."*

*"Parking and getting around is much easier than in Aberdeen."*

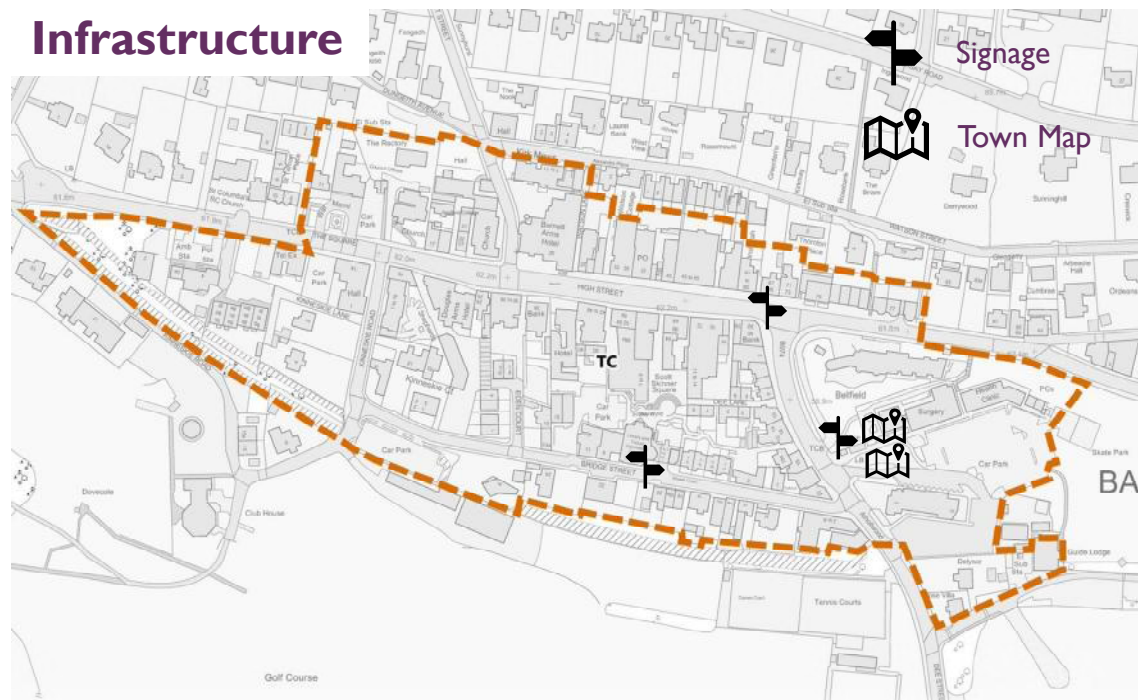
*"Too few Zebra crossings. Cars seem to get priority over pedestrians and cyclists."*

*"More priority for pedestrians and cyclists."*

# MOVING AROUND



## Infrastructure



**Observations:** The majority of respondents rated getting around the town centre as good or neutral. However, a number of comments were received in relation to a conflict between cars and pedestrians and the need for additional crossing points, particularly at the west end of the High Street. Signage was less well rated despite a number of attractive and useful signs and map boards installed around the east end of the town centre. These could perhaps be extended further across the town.



Images (Top to Bottom): Signage, Dee Street; Town Maps, Bellfield Car Park.



# MOVING AROUND: CYCLING

**Observations:** Cycle racks are distributed across the town centre, with the main provision in the Bellfield car park. There are no cycle lanes. Bikes can be carried on the [Deeside bus route](#) between Aberdeen and Braemar. Survey results suggest that the majority of the community respondents have a neutral perception of cycling facilities. However, there were more negative responses than positive. Comments provided by respondents suggested that infrastructure could be improved to enhance the cycling experience in the town centre. The [Deeside Way](#), which borders the town centre, provides an accessible route to the local countryside but there could be opportunities to improve links between this path and the town centre.

## HOW WOULD YOU RATE: CYCLE PARKING?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor

BUSINESSES

2

2

2

COMMUNITY

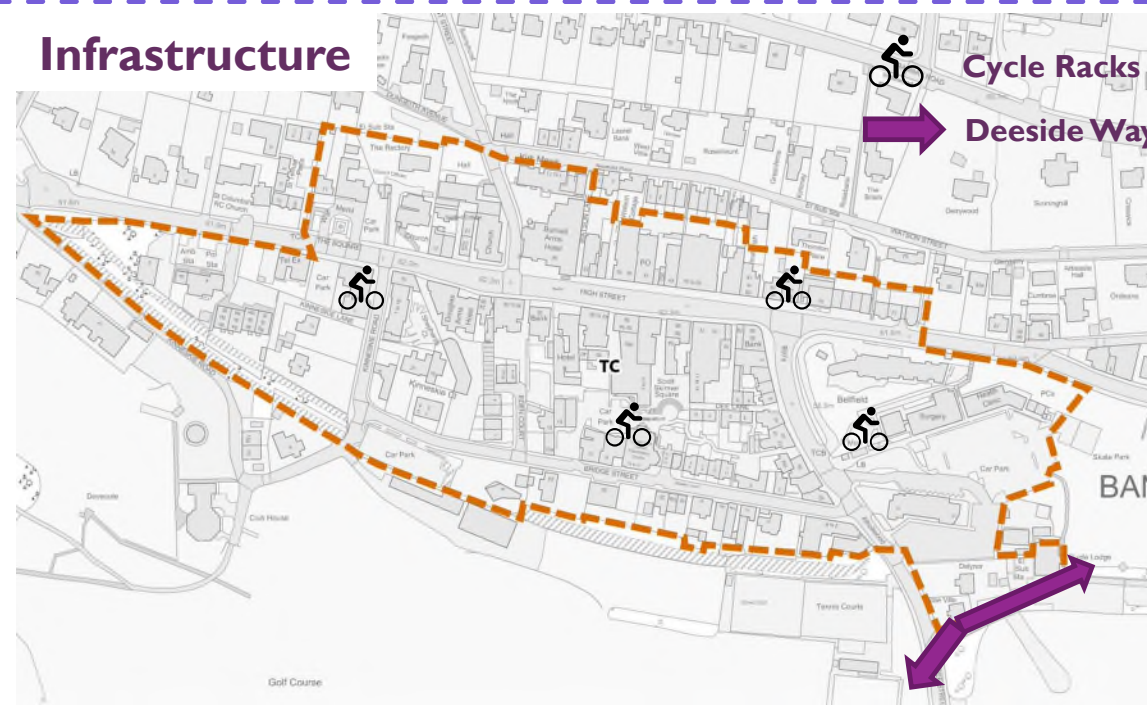
31

88

43



## Infrastructure



Images (Top to Bottom): Cycle racks outside the Library, Scott Skinner Square; Cycle racks, Kinneskie Road; Covered cycle racks, Bellfield Car Park.



*“Improvement - ....More Sheffield racks covered and in High St. near shops. Block off parking at junctions and increase the pedestrian space. Ensure all buses can carry bikes. Cycle lanes with a rideable surface.”*

*“Improvement - More bicycle parking.”*

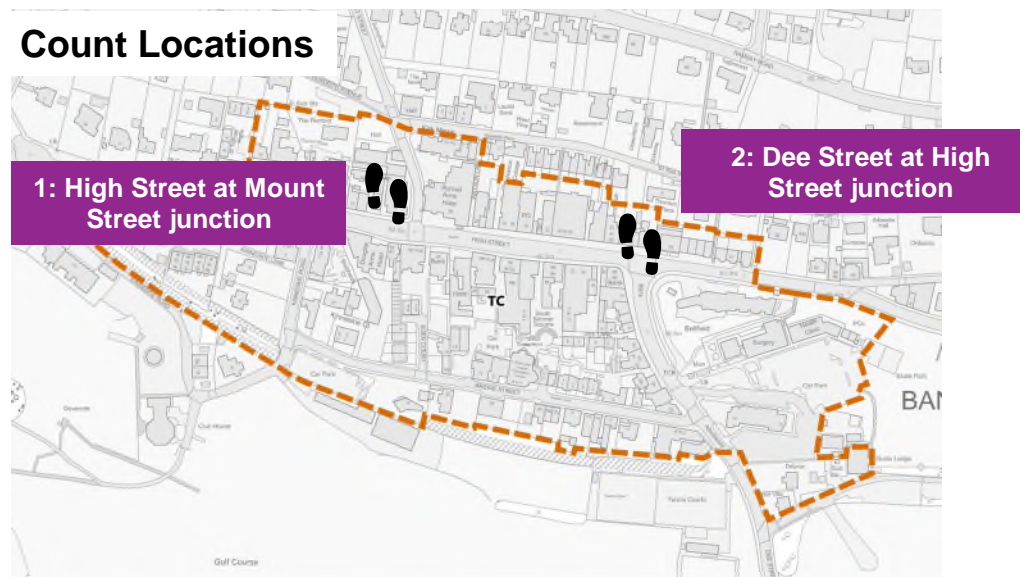
*“It is often intimidating trying to cycle through the town*



# MOVING AROUND: FOOTFALL SURVEY

Day	Time	Location 1	Location 2	Hourly Total	Overall Total
<b>Tuesday</b> 	09:30	47	63	110	<b>657</b>
	11:30	107	88	195	
	14:30	107	<b>115</b>	222	
	18:00	89	41	130	
<b>Saturday</b> 	09:30	98	35	133	<b>847</b>
	11:30	<b>171</b>	114	285	
	14:30	141	149	290	
	18:00	102	37	139	
<b>Totals</b>		<b>862</b>	<b>642</b>	<b>1504</b>	

## Count Locations



**Observations:** Footfall is a measure of the vitality of the town centre and can be directly linked to economic activity.

Pedestrian counts were undertaken on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> and Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> September for a duration of 15 minutes, four times a day, in two locations.

The pedestrian count findings showed the highest footfall count was recorded at High Street at the Mount Street junction on Saturday morning (171 people). It was also the busiest count point in general over the course of the footfall survey.

## HEADLINES

**Busiest Location:** High St at Mount St  
**Busiest Time:** 14:30  
**Busiest Day:** Saturday

**Quietest Location:** Dee St at High St  
**Quietest Time:** 09:30  
**Quietest Day:** Tuesday

# MOVING AROUND: ACCESSIBILITY AUDIT



Participants were recruited from the local community to undertake a survey to identify the effect of roads on people who walk and to identify barriers to walking and enhance opportunities to improve connectivity, attractiveness and safety.

The group included two adults with limited mobility, an adult with limited vision, and a parent of a child who uses a wheelchair.

Volunteers reviewed the following elements, and their comments are noted on the next page:

- Footway surfaces and obstructions;
- Facilities and signage;
- Maintenance and enforcement;
- Personal security;
- Crossing points;
- Access to buildings.

The survey took place on Friday 17<sup>th</sup> September 09:30 – 11:30. The weather was dry and mild.



# ACCESSIBILITY AUDIT

**Observations:** Participants identified a number of consistent themes during the audit:

- One crossing on the High Street is very limiting – a second at the west end would be welcomed. It would also be beneficial to have a safe crossing point on Dee Street near the car park.
- Disabled parking spaces are limited.
- Toilet facilities would be beneficial at the west end of town, and fully accessible facilities, such as 'Changing Places' toilets would be welcomed.
- The contrast on some pavements/steps can be difficult to navigate for those with visual impairments
- Some businesses have steps or are difficult to navigate when inside.
- Sense of safety - The town centre generally feels safe for getting around.

"Benches so close to the road don't feel safe with children."



"Obstructions, such as this large road sign are a hazard on pavements."



"The wide pavement on the north side of the High Street is good."



"Dee Street is difficult to navigate with steps, a slope and uneven surfaces."



"Tactile paving is missing at this junction on High Street."



"Overhanging trees are a danger to the visually impaired."



"Crossing at this end of the town centre is very difficult at times."



"The steps in Scott Skinner Square are poorly defined."



"Damaged steps and pavements are a trip hazard."



"Poor contrast on the pavement surface in Dee Lane."



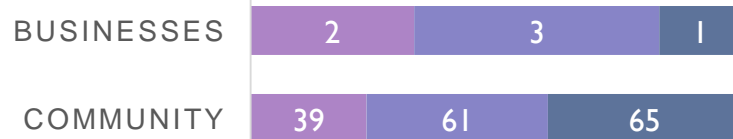


Access to an affordable, reliable and well-connected public transport service is important for all communities. Good public transport encourages people to get around in ways that are better for the environment.

**Observations:** Banchory has a regular connection to settlements along the A93 travelling east to west which is supplemented with a town service. There are no timetabled connections to towns/villages in any other direction but there is a Dial-a-Bus service. There is no railway line. Bus stops can be accessed on High Street, where there is also a large taxi rank. Real time information can be viewed at one of the stops. The majority of community survey respondents feel that public transport provision is poor or neutral. There were several comments received concerning public transport which related to poor connections with the surrounding area and the unreliability of the service at times. There were also comments about the infrastructure in the town in relation to the location of the taxi rank and the bus stops.

## HOW WOULD YOU RATE: PUBLIC TRANSPORT?

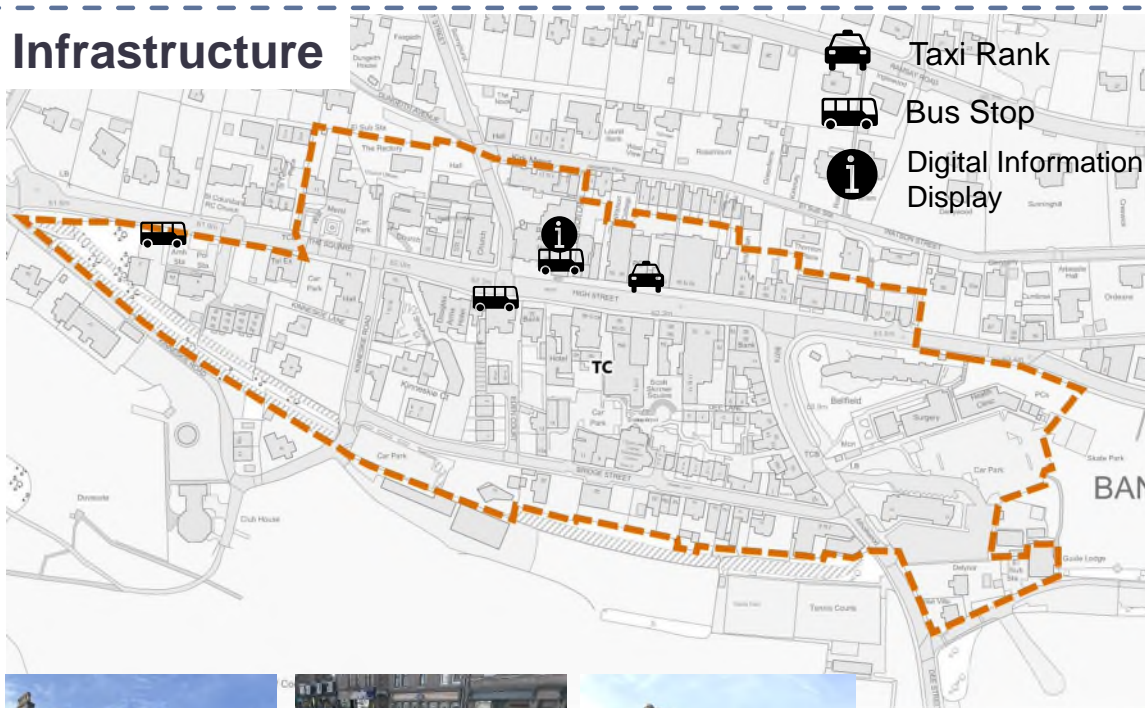
■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor



# PUBLIC TRANSPORT



## Infrastructure



*"Too many taxis are allowed to park on the high street."*

*"Bus stops would be better located to the Bellfield Car Park as they interfere with movement and safety of traffic and pedestrians. Could buses drop off on the high street, then wait/changeover in Bellfield? The current location of buses also contributes to localised traffic pollution."*

*"Improvement - Much more focus on getting to net zero - better public transport..."*






Images (Left to Right): Covered bus stop and digital information display, High Street; Taxi rank, High Street; Covered bus stop, High Street.

# PUBLIC TRANSPORT ROUTES



## Key:

-  Bus Route 201
-  Bus Route 201
-  Town Circular

Route (all from main bus stop) *	Frequency (per week day)	Fastest Journey Time	Earliest Travel Time	Latest Travel Time	Cost (Single Standard Ticket)
Bus to Aberdeen (201)	28	54mins	05:26	22:52	£5.50
Bus to Braemar (201)	10	1hr 8mins	08:49	22:43	£9.00
Town Circular (205)	8	27mins	09:34	16:34	£1.50

\* Correct at time of survey

An A2B dial-a-bus, pre-booked minibus service is available in Banchory. In most cases a door-to-door service is provided, operating during weekdays. The service is free to use.



Image: A2B bus at the bus bay in Bellfield car park.

*"Public transport links from Banchory to other local and regional areas are relatively poor. Whilst there is a relatively frequent bus service, the duration and cost of trips mean it is usually easier to drive. The town misses a rail link."*

*"Buses - poor service, sometimes not turning up."*

*"Buses from outlying villages are few and far between."*

*"The public transport links are not great especially in the evenings, public transport is also expensive."*



Too much traffic can cause problems for people who live in, work in, or visit an area. Traffic and parking arrangements that allow people to move around safely can help people to get the most out of a place.

## TRAFFIC & PARKING

### TRAFFIC



Image: High Street.

### HOW WOULD YOU RATE: TRAFFIC FLOW?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor

BUSINESS

2

4

COMMUNITY

32

65

72

*"Less traffic congestion in the town centre would be an improvement."*

*"Traffic calming measures are needed."*

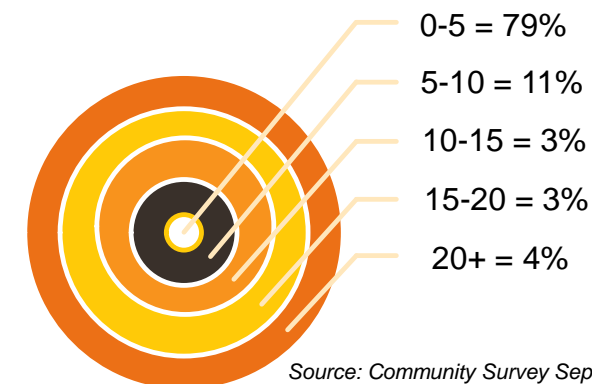
*"It was better when there was no parking on the High Street as it helped with the traffic flow through the town."*

*"Traffic can be congested so traffic flow could be improved."*

**Observations:** The topic of traffic flow was rated within the bottom five topics of both the community and business surveys.

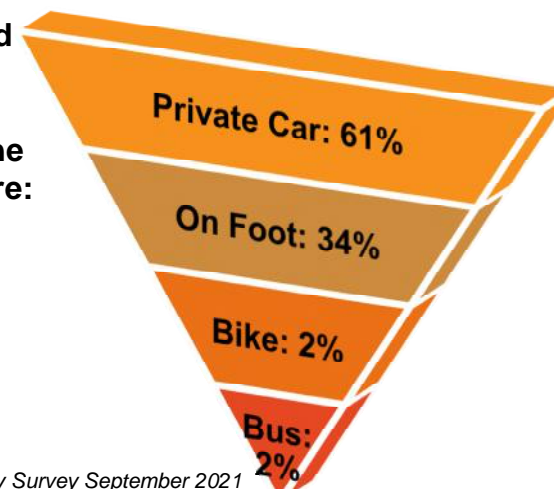
A number of respondents noted that there is a desire to see the congestion within the town centre improved, particularly along the High Street. A number of comments were received to say this could be achieved by removing the on-street parking on the High Street.

### Distance Travelled to Use the Town Centre (Miles)



Source: Community Survey September 2021

**How would you generally travel to the town centre:**



Source: Community Survey September 2021



# TRAFFIC & PARKING

## CAR PARKING AFFORDABILITY

### Parking Costs

**£0.50**

Average hourly rate  
September 2021

### HOW WOULD YOU RATE: PARKING AFFORDABILITY?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor

BUSINESS

3

3

COMMUNITY

45

55

69

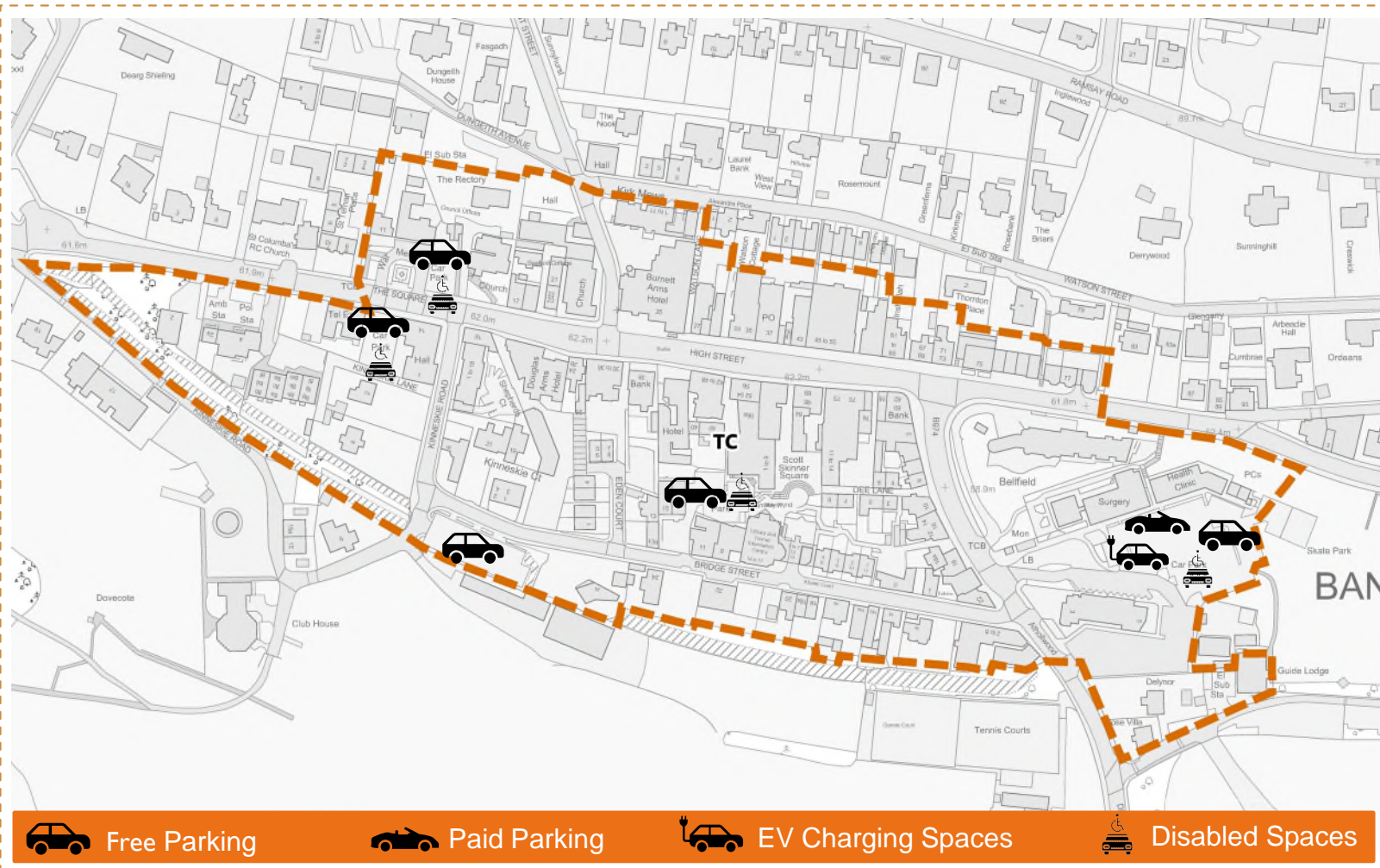
*"More free parking away from the High Street."*

*"Remove car parking charges."*

*"Improve short term free parking availability."*

*"A return to free parking for the first hour in the car parks."*

*"There should be cheaper parking."*



# TRAFFIC & PARKING

## CAR PARKING AVAILABILITY



Image: Bellfield Car Park.

*“Need more parking spaces.”*

*“Better disabled parking spaces are needed.”*

*“Need to find additional parking options.”*

*“Need more adequate parking spaces.”*

### HOW WOULD YOU RATE: PARKING AVAILABILITY?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor

BUSINESS	2	2	2
COMMUNITY	50	51	69

### Spaces

116

No. of Free Spaces

110

No. of Paid Spaces

12

No. of Disabled Spaces

2

No. of EV Charging  
Spaces

**Observations:** During the site visit there was generally good usage of the car parks within the town centre.

In terms of affordability this was highly commented on through the community survey with a strong desire for the short stay free parking to be reintroduced. As it was noted that some of the free parking that is in the town is used by people who stay all day so the re-introduction of free short term parking would hopefully result in more people using the town centre.

Additionally, comments were received in relation to the availability of parking spaces with calls for additional parking spaces but particularly more disabled car parking spaces.



Buildings, landmarks, greenery, views and natural landscape can all help to create an attractive, distinctive place that people enjoy. These features can also help people to find their way around.

## HOW WOULD YOU RATE: ATTRACTIVENESS OF TOWN?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor

BUSINESS

3

2

COMMUNITY

78

58

34

**Observations:** The attractiveness of the town received a fairly mixed response in the ratings from the community, however, overall the majority rated as good or neutral. The open space on Dee Street and Scott Skinner Square provide attractive places to stop within the town centre. Additionally, the majority of buildings within the town centre are well kept and contribute to the overall attractiveness of the town.

A number of comments that were received which altered the ratings slightly related to the vacant units in the town centre and the desire to see these improved.

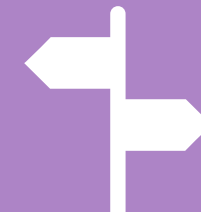
*"Need to make the town more attractive to visitors."*

*"Need to make the vacant shop fronts more attractive."*

*"Town looks lovely during the day with the flower boxes etc."*

# STREETS & SPACES

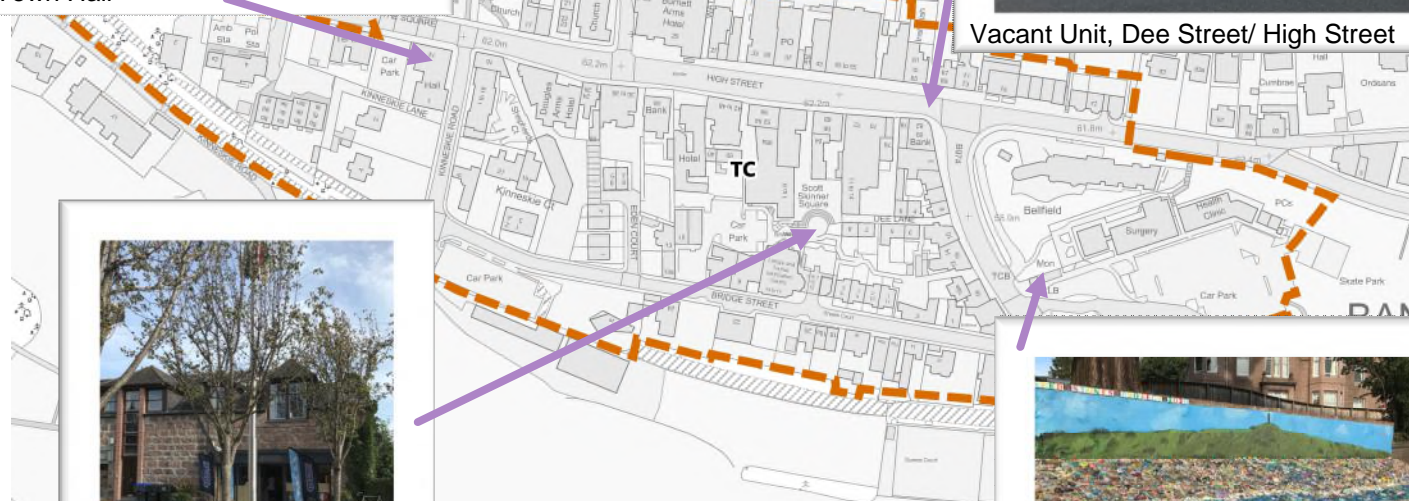
## ATTRACTIVENESS OF TOWN CENTRE



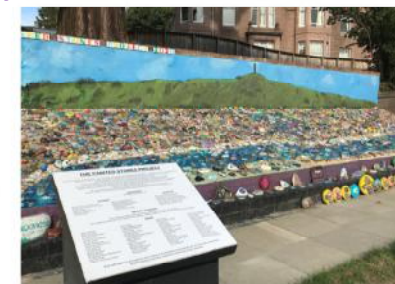
Town Hall



Vacant Unit, Dee Street/ High Street



Scott Skinner Square

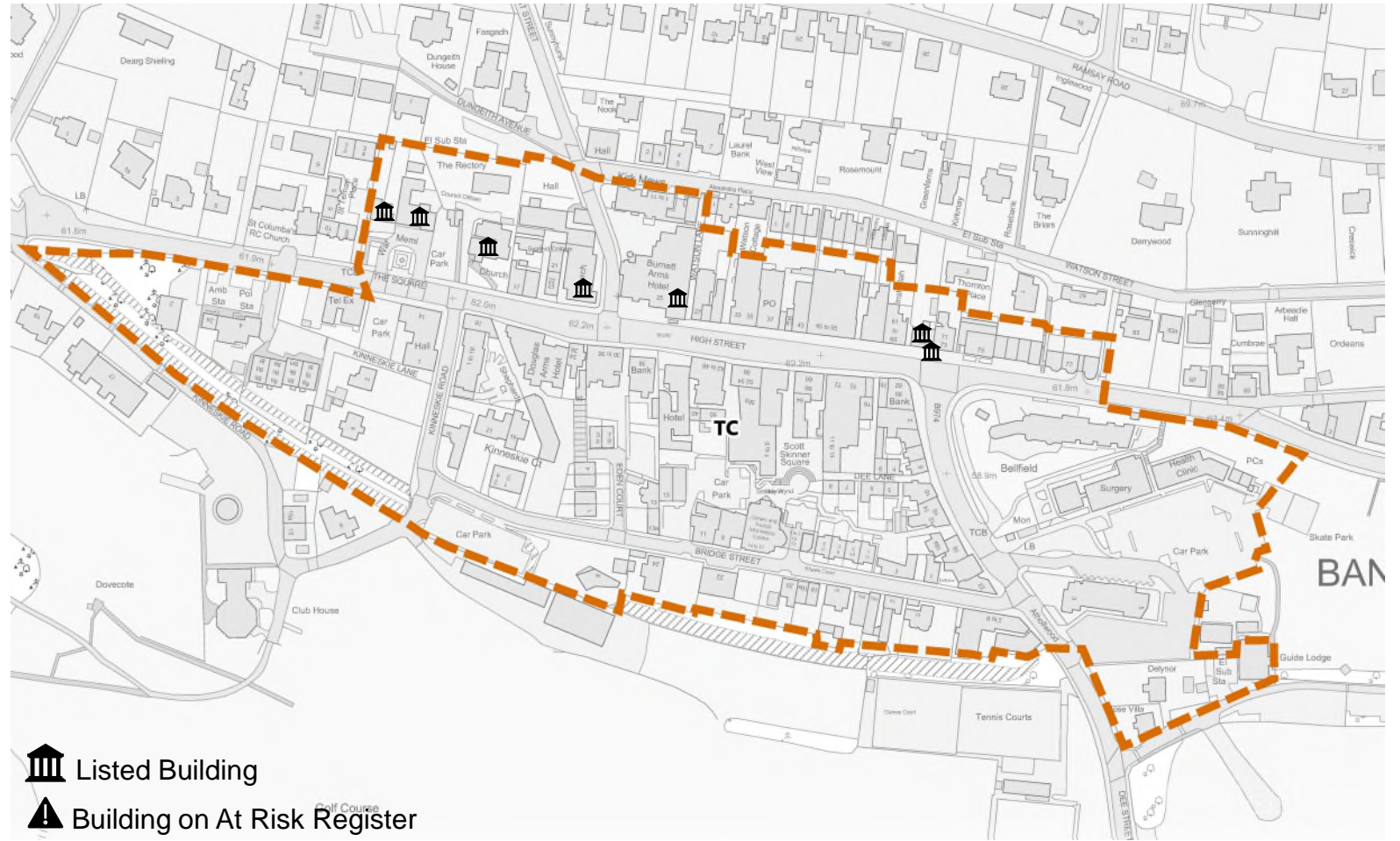


Open Space, Dee Street



**Observations:** There are 7 listed buildings within Banchory Town Centre covering two out of the three listing categories. There are 4 Category C listed and 3 Category B listed buildings. The listed buildings are all in good condition which means that there are no buildings on the Buildings at Risk Register.

## STREETS & SPACES: HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT



Listed Building



Building on At Risk Register

Images (Top Left and Clockwise): Chemist on High Street, St Ternan's Episcopal Church on High Street and Burnett Arms on High Street.



# STREETS & SPACES: SEATING



Bench, The Square



Bench, Bellfield Car Park



Seating, Scott Skinner Square

**HTA** Seating Areas

## HOW WOULD YOU RATE: SEATING/ AREAS TO CONGREGATE

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor

BUSINESSES

2

4

COMMUNITY

34

66

68

*"There are not enough decent seating areas."*

*"Would like to see some outdoor seating around the cafes."*

*"Seating has been improved with upgrade of Scott Skinner Square."*

*"More seating areas would be welcomed."*

*"Widen pavements to create space for outdoor seating."*

**Observations:** The available seating was in relatively good condition, with the seating in Scott Skinner Square having an element of public art associated within them as there is phrases about Banchory engraved into them. The seating in Bellfield Car Park is also engraved with the 'Banchory The Place to Be' logo.

However, something that was widely commented on through the surveys was the desire to see more seating areas within the town centre and there was a desire to see some more outdoor seating that could be used by the cafes.



**Observations:** There are a number of different pieces of public art throughout the town centre which makes for an attractive setting. The use of writing within the paving is a good way of catching peoples attention and them drawing them into the different parts of the town centre.

The newest addition to the public art within Banchory is the Painted Stones Project located on Dee Street. During the COVID-19 pandemic members of the community painted stones and these were brought together to produce an image of the local surroundings including the River Dee and Scolty Hill.

## STREETS & SPACES: PUBLIC ART



Public Art

Images (Top Left and Clockwise): Seating in Scott Skinner Square, Entrance to Scott Skinner Square from High Street, Entrance to Scott Skinner Square from Dee Street, Open Space Dee Street.





# STREETS & SPACES: PAVEMENTS

## HOW WOULD YOU RATE: PAVEMENT CLEANLINESS?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor

BUSINESS	1	3	2
COMMUNITY	91	57	22

*"Pavements are well cleaned."*

**Observations:** The quality of the pavements and the cleanliness of the pavements were viewed positively amongst the community with the majority of respondents rating as good or neutral.

There were a couple of areas on High Street and Dee Street where it was noted that there was uneven pavements that could be improved. In contrast, there were also areas where the pavements were noted to be clean and of good quality.

## HOW WOULD YOU RATE: PAVEMENT QUALITY?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor

BUSINESS	2	2	2
COMMUNITY	74	63	33

*"Widen pavements on High Street."*

*"Fix the uneven pavements."*



*"More needs to be done to advertise the vacant units."*

*"Some of the empty shops are eyesores and have been empty for too long."*

*"Some of the empty units are in disrepair."*

*"It would be good to see some of the empty shops reused."*

**Observations:** The number of vacant units is something that was highly commented on through the surveys with the majority of comments noting there were too many vacant units within the town centre. The vacancy rate within the town centre at the time of survey was at 6%.

Although there is a perception of the vacancy rate being high it is lower than the Scottish average at the time of the survey, Q3 2021, which is 15% (Scottish Retail Consortium and Local Data Company).



Images (Top left and Clockwise): High Street, Scott Skinner Square, High Street and Dee Street.

## STREETS & SPACES: VACANT RETAIL UNITS



### Vacant Retail Units:

5

Vacant Units in the town centre

6%

Vacancy Rate at time of survey



Natural space includes parks and woodlands, fields, streams and rivers, green space alongside paths and roads, and tree-lined streets. These can be good for wildlife, improve air quality and benefit our health and wellbeing.

**Observations:** There is no public green space within the town centre, however this element scored in the top five best features of the town in both business and community surveys. This is perhaps due to the centre's close proximity to large open green spaces by the River Deveron. The Square is home to a variety of different freestanding planters that create an attractive display. Surrounding streets however, had little or no greenery.

### HOW WOULD YOU RATE: PARKS & GREEN SPACES?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor

BUSINESSES	12	5	3
COMMUNITY	106	58	29

*"There are plenty of green spaces around the town, but nothing in the centre."*

*"The volunteers who attend to the flowers in the square are fantastic and brightens the place up."*

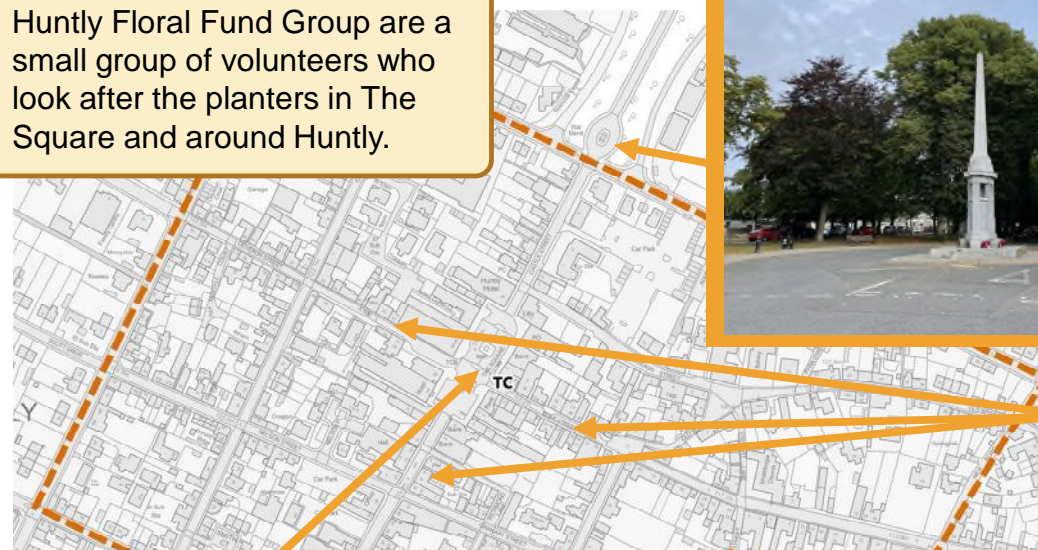
*"Green space in the square would be wonderful."*

*"It's very dull, grey, there is a stark lack of greenery or life in the town centre."*

## NATURAL SPACE



Huntly Floral Fund Group are a small group of volunteers who look after the planters in The Square and around Huntly.



On the edge of the town centre the War Memorial marks the start of Huntly's expansive green areas, which include parks, sports facilities and the River Deveron



The Square, at the heart of the town centre, has a variety of freestanding planters to soften the hard landscaping



Streets surrounding the Square (Duke Street, Gordon Street, Deveron Street) had little or no greenery



Good places encourage children to play and allow adults to enjoy leisure and sporting activities. Opportunities for play and recreation can improve the quality of our lives and our health.

## PLAY & RECREATION



**Observations:** Banchory has no play and recreation sites within the town centre itself. However, the topic of play and leisure facilities received a mixed response through both of the surveys. The parks that are mentioned within the comments of the survey are mainly Bellfield Park and King George V Park and Pavilion which are found adjacent to the town centre boundary. Although, not within the town centre, these parks have an intrinsic relationship with the town centre as they attract people to the town centre where there is parking and attractions. Comments relating to these parks generally noted that improvements were required and that additional play park facilities should be installed.

### HOW WOULD YOU RATE: LEISURE AND PLAY FACILITIES?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor



Facilities and amenities are the things that we need to live and enjoy life. This can include shops, schools, nurseries, libraries, GP surgeries and places to eat, drink and meet friends. Access to facilities and amenities is important to support healthy, fulfilling lives.

# FACILITIES & AMENITIES

## RETAILER REPRESENTATION

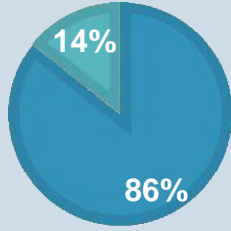
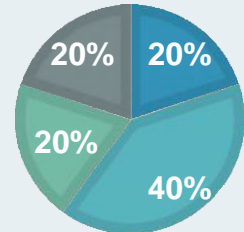


Use Class Order Classification The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Scotland) Order 1997	Number of Units within Use Class	Distribution of Units in Use class	
<b>Class 1: Shops</b> (Retail sale of goods other than hot food, post office; sale of tickets; travel agency; sale of cold food for consumption off the premises; hairdressing; direction of funerals; the display of goods for sale; hiring out of domestic or personal goods or articles; launderette or dry cleaners; reception of goods to be washed, cleaned or repaired; where the sale, display or service is principally to visiting members of the public)	42 units	<b>CLASS 1: SHOPS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Charity</li> <li>Clothes &amp; Footwear</li> <li>Entertainment</li> <li>Florists</li> <li>Food &amp; Drink</li> <li>Hairdresser &amp; Barber</li> <li>Home &amp; Garden</li> <li>Other</li> </ul>	
<b>Class 2: Financial, Professional and other services</b> (Use for the provision of - financial services; professional services; or any other services (including use as a betting office) e.g. offices of accountants, dentists, doctors, solicitors, beauticians, estate agents)	21 units	<b>CLASS 2: FINANCIAL, PROFESSIONAL &amp; OTHER SERVICES</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Banks</li> <li>Accountants, Solicitors, Estate Agents</li> <li>Beauticians</li> <li>Dentists</li> <li>Other</li> </ul>	

Images (Top to Bottom): Dee Street streetscape and High Street streetscape.

# FACILITIES & AMENITIES:

## RETAILER REPRESENTATION

Use Class Order Classification The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Scotland) Order 1997	Number of Units within Use Class	Distribution of Units in Use class
<b>Class 3: Food and Drink</b> (The sale of food or drink for consumption on the premises. e.g. cafes, restaurants, snack bars)	7 units	<b>CLASS 3: FOOD AND DRINK</b>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Café</li> <li>■ Restaurant</li> </ul>
<b>Sui Generis</b> (For the sale of hot food for consumption off the premises. e.g. pizza shops, takeaways, kebab shops, fish and chip shops)	5 units	<b>SUI GENERIS: HOT FOOT TAKEAWAY</b>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Fish and Chips</li> <li>■ Chinese</li> <li>■ Indian</li> <li>■ Other</li> </ul>
<b>Sui Generis</b> (Use as a Public House)	3 units	3 Public Houses



Images (Top to Bottom): High Street Streetscape and Scott Skinner Square.



# FACILITIES & AMENITIES:

## RETAILER REPRESENTATION

### Retailer Representation

71%

of businesses in the town centre are independent retailers

23%

of businesses in the town centre are multiple retailers

\*have multiple stores operating under one brand name and have common ownership.

3

No. of Charity Shops

54%

of visitors to Banchory Town Centre agree that it offers all services expected (retail, café, pubs etc)

**Observations:** There is a good distribution between independent and multiple (chain) retailers within the town centre with the majority being independent retailers. A large proportion of the comments received through the surveys related to the lack of variety within the town centre and the desire to see the vacant shops being filled to increase this. The topic ranked within the five lowest ranked topics through the community survey.

### HOW WOULD YOU RATE: VARIETY OF SHOPS?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor

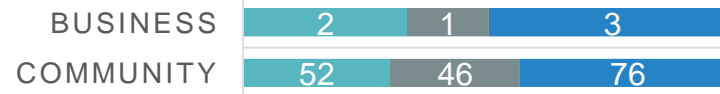
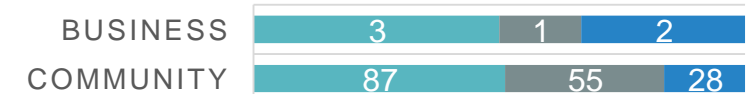


Image: High Street.

### HOW WOULD YOU RATE: QUALITY OF SHOPS?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor



*"Need a greater variety of shops."*

*"Get the empty shops filled with a better variety of shops."*

*"More variety of shops needed."*

*"Need more shop variety, should be incentives to try and get the empty units filled with additional retail."*

*"Need better quality of shops."*

*"The variety and quality of shops is very good."*

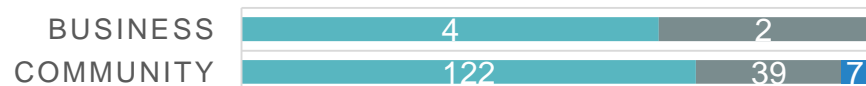
*"There is limited variety of shops."*

# FACILITIES & AMENITIES:

## CAFE AND RESTAURANTS

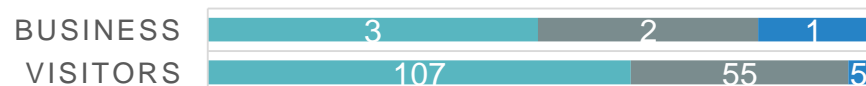
### HOW WOULD YOU RATE: CAFE/ RESTAURANT CHOICE?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor



### HOW WOULD YOU RATE: CAFE/ RESTAURANT QUALITY?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor



*"There should be better variety of cafes."*

*"Establish Scott Skinner Square as a cafe/restaurant location with outdoor seating."*

*"There are too many cafes."*

*"Should fill the last few remaining empty shops into vibrant cafes."*

*"More outside seating around the cafes would be an improvement."*

*"Plenty cafes."*

*"Lots of cafes but not enough restaurants."*

**Observations:** The choice of cafes and restaurants is something that was rated well by the majority of respondents within both the community and business surveys and rated within the top five of all topics. Additionally, the quality of the cafes and restaurant was also noted within the top five topics through the community survey.

Through the surveys there is a community desire to see additional seating outside the cafes, whether this is on High Street or in Scott Skinner Square. Also, it was noted through the surveys that Banchory Town Centre offers plenty of cafes but not enough restaurants.



✂ Café/ Restaurant

Images (Left to Right): Birdhouse Café, High Street and Tease, High Street.



# FACILITIES & AMENITIES:

## CULTURAL AND LEISURE OUTLETS, AND PUBLIC SERVICES

**Observations:** There is a good selection of different cultural and public services within the town centre, however, there are no leisure facilities within the town centre boundary. There is a range of uses from the Town Hall, Churches, Library and the Police Station.

Although, there are no leisure facilities within the town centre boundary there are a number of facilities on the boundary including the golf course, skate park and play park.



 Cultural Outlets

 Leisure Outlets

 Public Services

Images (Left to Right): Banchor Town Hall, Banchor Group Practice and Banchor Police Station.





# FACILITIES & AMENITIES: EVENING ECONOMY

## HOW WOULD YOU RATE: THE VIBRANCY IN THE EVENING :

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor

BUSINESS	1	5	
COMMUNITY	10	68	91

*“Need to improve the evening vibrancy.”*

*“There needs to be something to do in the evenings to attract more visitors.”*

*“A greater selection of evening entertainment/events would be an improvement.”*

*“Town should be improved for visiting at night.”*

*“More restaurants for the evening would be good.”*

*“More evening events should be considered to attract people to use the area more.”*

### Observations:

Vibrancy in the evening was rated poorly by both the community and businesses and was in the bottom five of all topics in both surveys.

Additionally, a large proportion of comments received noted that there was a real lack of anything to do within the town centre in the evening. Comments received noted that it would be an improvement and would encourage people to use the town centre more in the evening if there were events, restaurants and entertainment venues open.

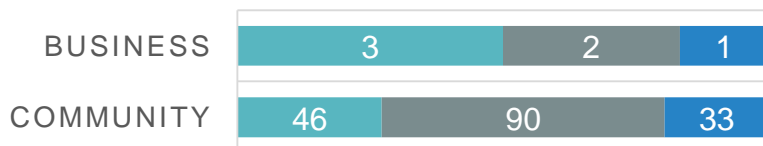


# FACILITIES & AMENITIES:

## COMMUNITY AND VISITOR SATISFACTION

### HOW WOULD YOU RATE: VALUE FOR MONEY?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor



*"The variety and quality of shops is very good and they provide value for money and customer service."*

*"Poor selection of shops which provide good value for money - tend to cater for upper end of market."*

*"Not a lot of variety in the shops."*

*"There needs to be more affordable shops."*

*"Require a greater variety of shops within the town centre."*

### Town Centre Offer:

# 54%

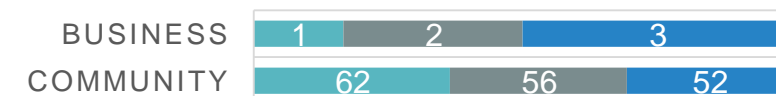
of the community agree that it offers all services expected (retail, café, pubs etc)

**Observations:** The topics within the visitor satisfaction service received mix comments but generally the topics were majority rated as good, especially the standard on service in shops. Value for money was majority rated as neutral with a couple of comments noting that there needs to be more affordable shops within the town centre and also another comment noting that the shops tend to cater for the higher end of the market.

The topic of variety of goods received a number of comments through the surveys noting that there should be more variety of goods on offer within the town centre.

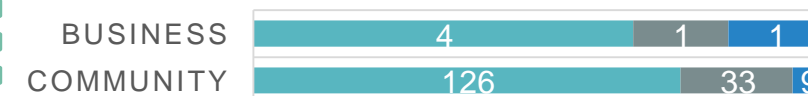
### HOW WOULD YOU RATE: VARIETY OF GOODS AVAILABLE?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor



### HOW WOULD YOU RATE: STANDARD OF SERVICE IN SHOPS?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor



**Tourism:** Data provided by VisitAberdeenshire shows the number of page views received for Banchory in the 'Towns and Villages' section of their website:

**1,252** Jan-Dec 2019

**1,168** Jan-Dec 2020



# FACILITIES & AMENITIES: MARKET

*"The continuation of regular markets keeps people interested."*

*"Move the farmers market into The Squares to encourage more footfall in the town itself on these days rather than just parking and leaving that many visitors do."*

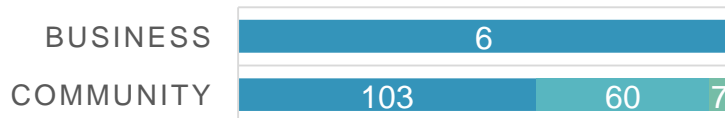
*"Farmers market is good, but could be bigger."*

*"Farmers market can be expensive although nice to have."*

*"Support for the farmers market to encourage more businesses to attend."*

## HOW WOULD YOU RATE: THE MARKET?

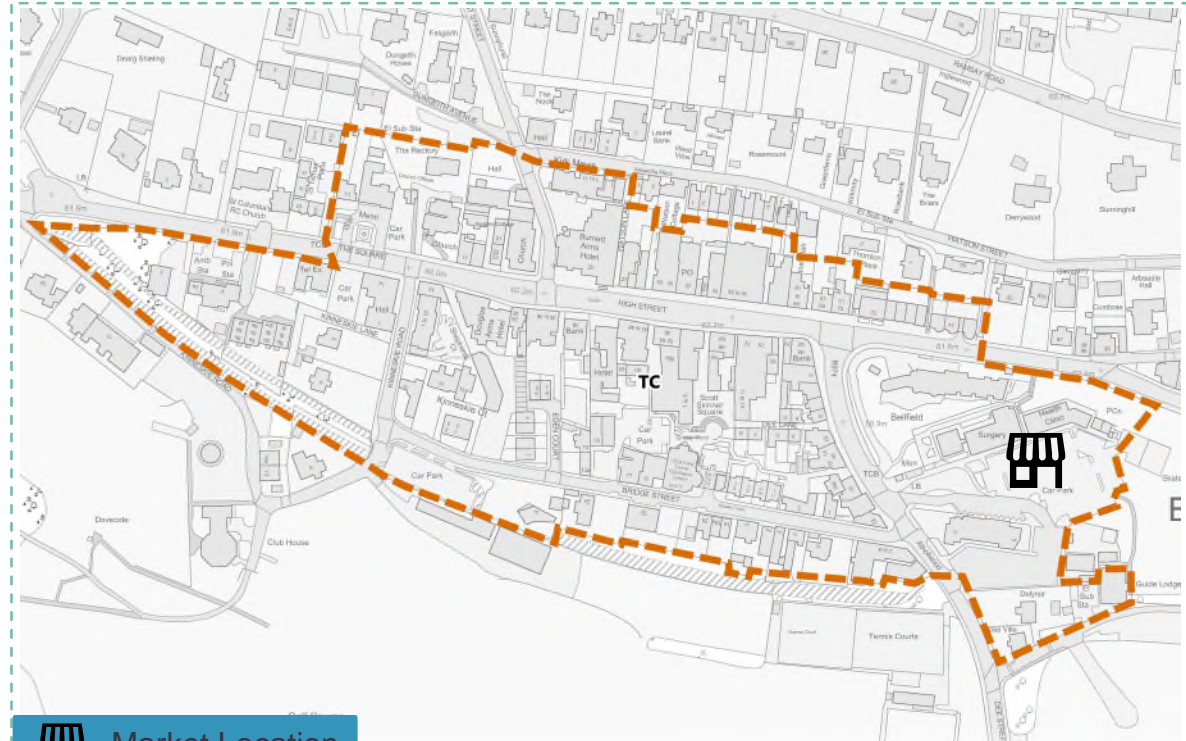
■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor



**Observations:** Banchory Farmers Market happens on the third Saturday of the month from 9am-1pm in Bellfield Car Park.

The ratings of the Farmers Market was generally good from the community and was the top rated topic out of all of them through the business survey.

One theme that was coming through the comments to the surveys was the community noting that the Farmers Market should be moved up into Scott Skinner Square to try and encourage people to also visit the shops and not just park, attend the Market and leave without visiting the other shops on offer.



 Market Location



Image: Farmers Market Advertisement.

# FACILITIES & AMENITIES:

## ONLINE SHOPPING

### Online Offering

**83%** of businesses surveyed have online presence

**40%** of businesses surveyed sell online

**50%** of the businesses surveyed that sell online make 25% or less of their income from this

**41%** of the community surveyed said they are more likely to shop online rather than going into the town centre for the same item

**69%** of the community survey noted that their attitude towards online shopping had changed because of the COVID-19 pandemic

**43%** of the community survey noted that their usage of the town centre had decreased because of the COVID-19 pandemic

**Observations:** Within the survey there was a real mix of responses to the questions about shopping online.

A number of respondents noted that they would rather shop local than buying online in order to support the local economy. Whilst others noted that convenience, pricing and variety of goods were the main reasons for online shopping.

*"I like to support local businesses and I always try to buy things locally."*

*"Online shopping cheaper than local."*

*"Very few things available in Banchory so we have to shop online."*

*"It is easier to get what you want online."*

*"Shop in Banchory to support the local economy."*

*"I try to shop local."*



Image: High Street.



# FACILITIES & AMENITIES:









## CONNECTIVITY

**Observations:** Mobile coverage within Banchory Town Centre is very strong with all of the top networks being able to be connected to at a 4G level and the There is currently no coverage of 5G within the town centre.



Broadband coverage is also strong with fibre and superfast broadband being available within the town.

There is no free public WIFI available within the town centre.

### Broadband Coverage in Banchory Town Centre:

	FTTH/FTTP	✗
	Ultrafast Broadband (>=100 Mbps)	✗
	Superfast Broadband (>24 Mbps)	✓
	Fibre (FTTC or FTTH or Cable or G.Fast)	✓
	Wireless	✗
	LLU	✓
	ADSL2+	✓
	ADSL	✓

### Internet Speed Test in Banchory Town Centre:

	Download:	17.6 Mbps
	Upload:	0.7 Mbps

### Mobile Coverage in Banchory Town Centre:

		Voice	3G	4G	5G
Three	Indoor	✓	✓	✓	✗
	Outdoor	✓	✓	✓	
O2	Indoor	✓	✓	✓	✗
	Outdoor	✓	✓	✓	
EE	Indoor	✓	✓	✓	✗
	Outdoor	✓	✓	✓	
Vodafone	Indoor	✓	✓	✓	✗
	Outdoor	✓	✓	✓	

 Good coverage
  You may experience problems
  No coverage

# FACILITIES & AMENITIES: OTHER SERVICES

**Observations:** Banchory Town Centre is well serviced by ATM machines. Additionally, there is a Defibrillator unit on the High Street which can be used by anyone within the town centre should the need arise.



Image: Defib, High Street.





Good-quality work offers important benefits through income, activity, social contact, sense of identity and job satisfaction. A thriving local economy can provide work opportunities and help create lively places where people want to spend time.

**Observations:** The employment and income picture is as would be expected with a high proportion of retail and hospitality jobs. However, there is an interesting mix across other sectors, with education accounting for a significant proportion of the jobs in this data zone. This provides a variety of employment opportunities at differing skill levels. The claimant count rate has increased, partly in response to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic but numbers are now falling. Very low levels of deprivation are reflected in the income levels.

### Settlement Type: Accessible Small Town

(Settlements of 3,000 to 9,999 people, and within a 30 minute drive time of a Settlement of 10,000 or more.)

Scottish Government's Urban Rural Classification, 8-fold

**Median Household Income 2020**  
**Town Centre Data Zone\***  
**£42,058**



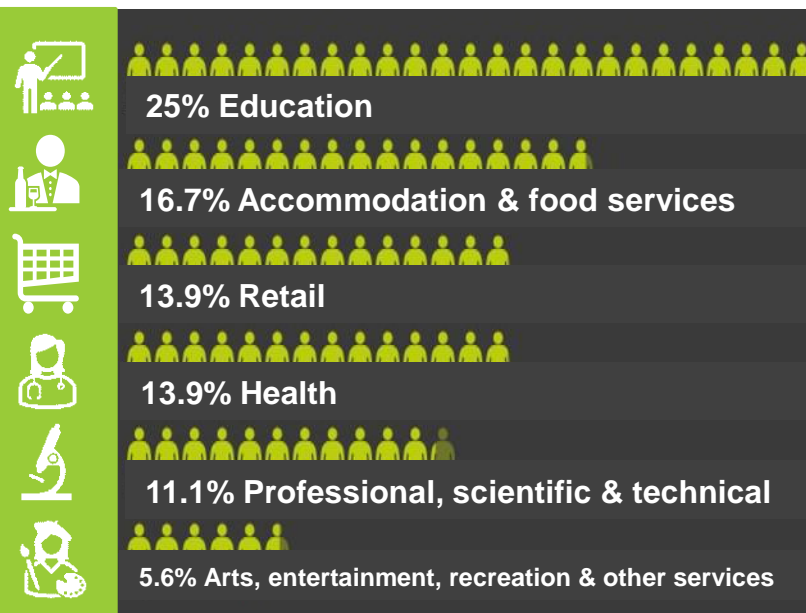
£40,156 Marr; £37,853 Aberdeenshire

Source: © CACI Limited 1996 - 2020 This report shall be used solely for academic, personal and/or non-commercial purposes.

## WORK & LOCAL ECONOMY

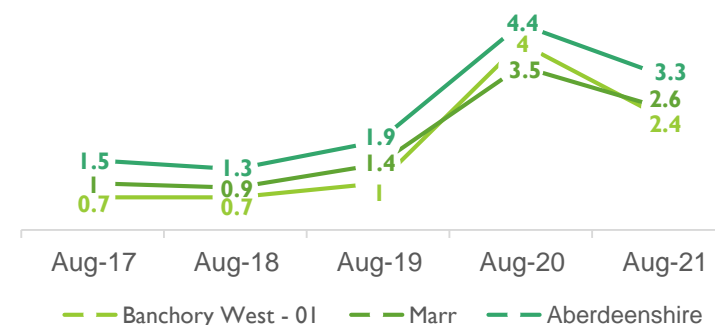


### Top 5 Employment Sectors 2020 Banchory Town Centre Data Zone\*



Source: Business Register and Employment Survey 2020

### CLAIMANT COUNT RATE<sup>^</sup> (%)



<sup>^</sup>Includes people claiming Universal Credit or Jobseekers Allowance  
Source: ONS Crown Copyright Reserved

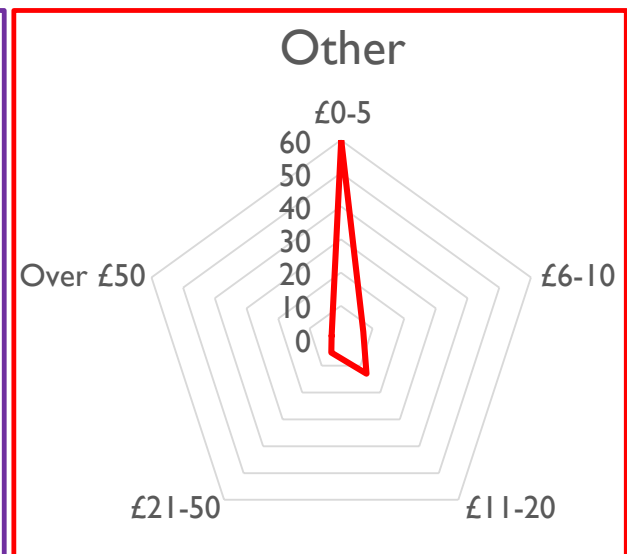
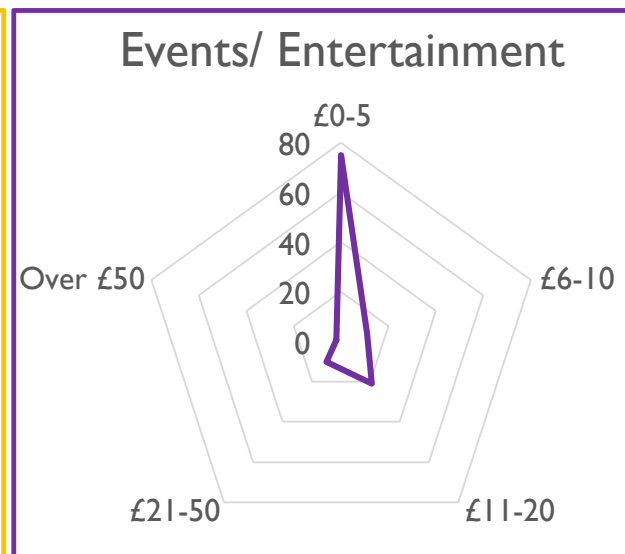
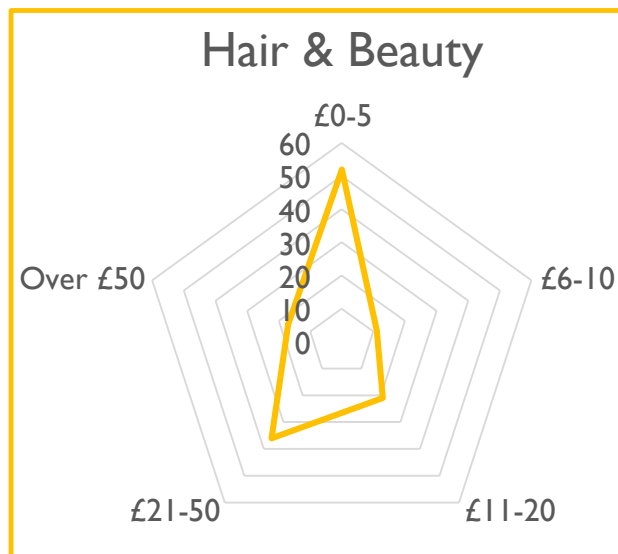
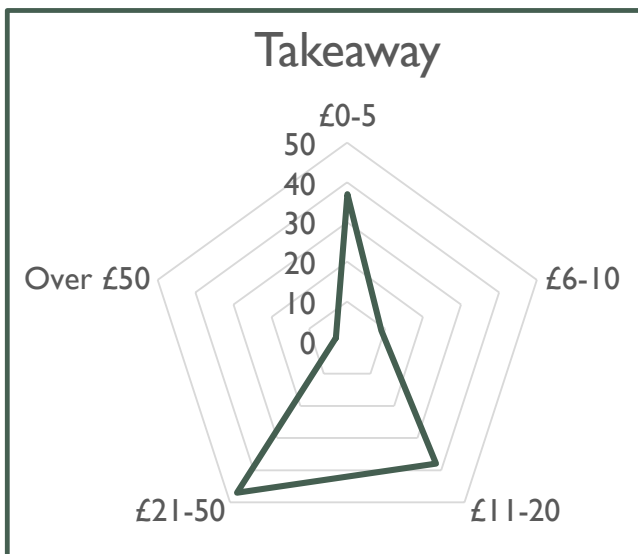
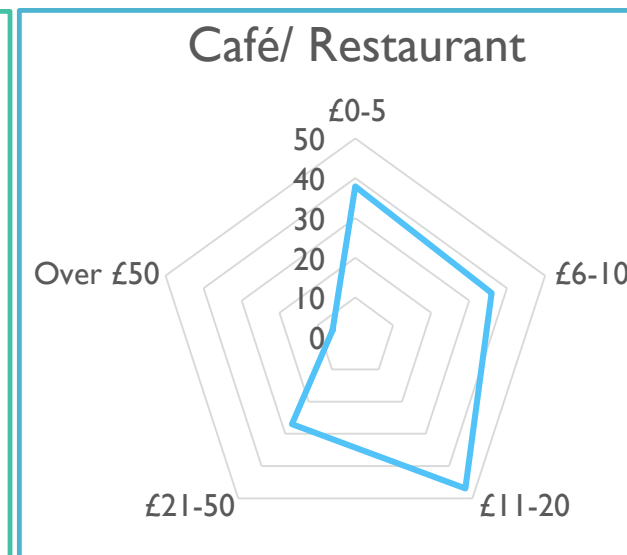
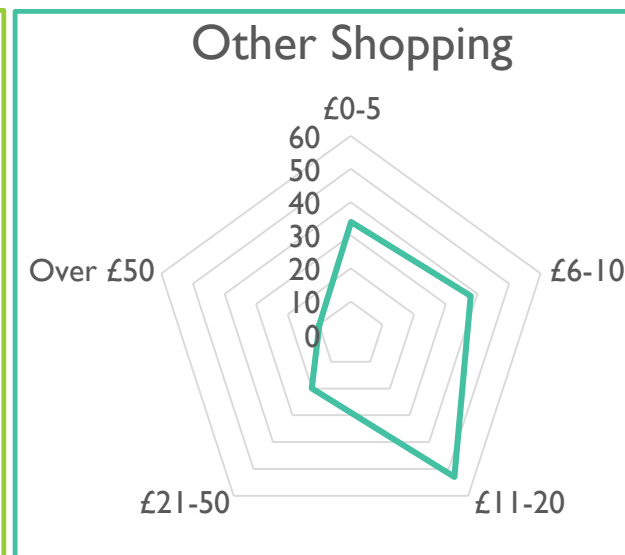
### Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2020

**Town Centre Datazone\*:**  
**10%** least deprived in Scotland

\* The data zone (S01006865) that makes up the majority of the town centre.

## WORK & LOCAL ECONOMY: AVERAGE CONSUMER SPEND

**Observations:** The graphs show a reasonably balanced spend profile in the town centre across most categories, with food shopping accounting for the biggest expenditure by visitors. Takeaways are at a reasonably high level, with eating out and other shopping spread across the mid to lower levels. The Hair and Beauty sector, although fewer people overall, seems to be a higher value spend. There is very little spend on Events/ Entertainment highlighting the lack of opportunities in this area, picked up elsewhere in the health check. Overall this is a positive picture with good levels of spend in different areas.





## WORK & LOCAL ECONOMY: BUSINESS SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

**Observations:** Six businesses responded to the survey and provided a mixed outlook for the town, highlighting the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on different sectors, with some winners and losers. When looking at the longer term trend for turnover the picture is more encouraging with 60% showing a stable or improved position over the past five years and a good start-up rate. The future also looks brighter with high levels of confidence and 100% of respondents looking to grow or expand in the next year. Businesses are making good use of online tools.

**67%** of business owners surveyed were **established** businesses in the town centre and **33% start-ups**

**100%** of business owners surveyed were **Independent** businesses

**67%** of business owners surveyed were either **confident** or **extremely confident** about future business performance in Banchory

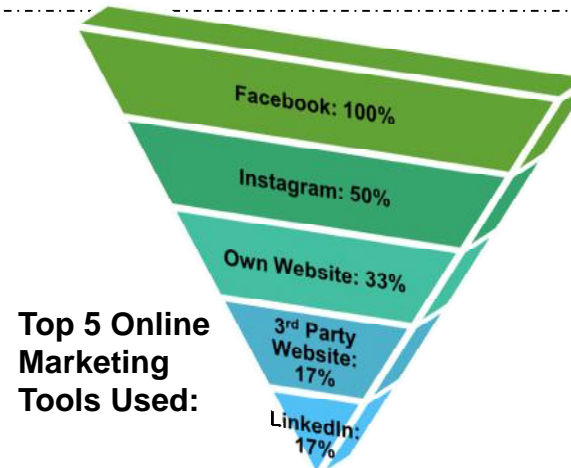
**100%** of business owners surveyed are looking to **grow** or **expand** in the next year

*"Retail is moving online so traditional retail shops are losing customers. There are too many retail units in the town centre for the number of potential customers. The town centre is confused whether to target visitors/tourists or local residents, therefore retail units are only targeting 50% of potential market..."*

*"Retail space is filling up, bring a buzz back to the high street."*

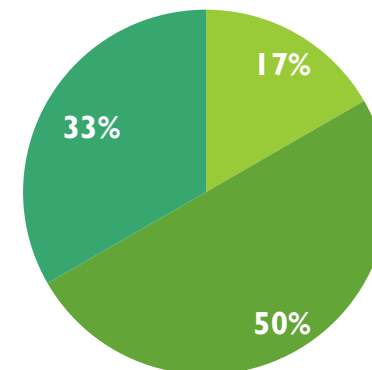
*"Although there remain empty premises, there is a vibrancy and enthusiasm with the new small ventures opening."*

*"Local businesses are trying really hard to make an attractive town centre with a variety of useful shops."*



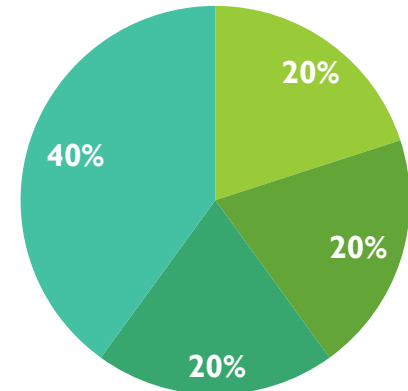
**Has employment at your premises changed in the past five years?**

- Increased by more than 25%
- Stayed the Same
- Decreased by more than 25%



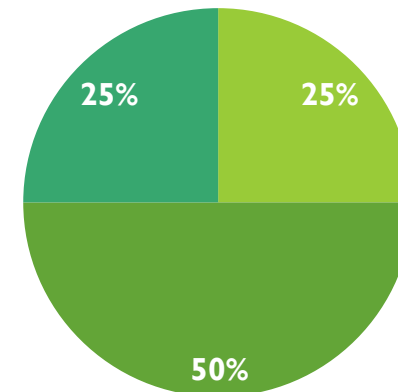
**How has turnover at your premises changed in the past five years?**

- Increased by 16-25%
- Increased by 0.1-5%
- Stayed the Same
- Decreased by more than 25%



**What difference have the COVID-19 restrictions had on turnover during the period March 2020 to April 2021?**

- Stayed the Same
- Decreased by more than 25%
- Decreased by 16-25%



## WORK & LOCAL ECONOMY: PROPERTY

**Observations:** The commercial property market seems to be improving in Banchory, with a number of new businesses opening up in the town in recent times, as indicated in the business survey. The majority of premises used by respondents are rented. There is a very bright outlook for investment in town centre stock with 100% of respondents confirming they are looking to invest in their premises within the next year. Planning applications approved in 2020 consisted mainly of Change of Use applications, perhaps reflecting the dynamic property market, but also comments received throughout the health check in relation to the provision of cafes/takeaways.

Feedback received in the surveys also suggested that supporting this recent investment by further encouraging new businesses to the town would be welcomed and that this could be achieved through the provision of affordable space for start-up's, such as pop-up spaces and incentives such as rent or rate relief.

*"I would like to see all of the units on the high street utilised or even used more frequently. They could even host pop up shops for a short period whilst looking for longer term leases."*

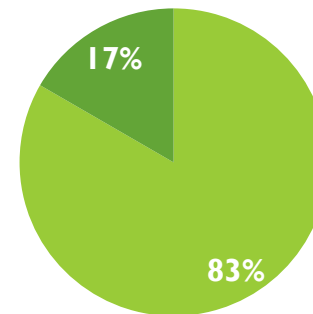
*"Work with Banchory Business Association to develop pop-up shopping units to support new business start ups."*

*"Shorter leases and lower rents on local shop units so businesses can test market as Sheridan's did."*

*"Improvements are being made and my answers to this survey would have been more negative 2 years ago. My concern is the high rents are a barrier to start ups and innovation."*

*"More should be done to encourage landlords to provide favourable terms for letting properties which have been unoccupied for years."*

### Do you rent or own your premises?



■ Rent ■ Own



### Planning Applications:

Within the town centre seven planning applications were approved in 2020. Of note were:

- Erection of 7 signs;
- 1 Change of Use from Restaurant (Class 3) to Hot Food Takeaway (Sui Generis);
- 1 Change of Use from Shop (Class 1) to Non Residential Institution (Class 10);
- 1 Change of Use from Shop (Class 1) to Food and Drink (Class 3);
- 1 Change of Use from Shop to Hot Food Takeaway (Sui Generis).

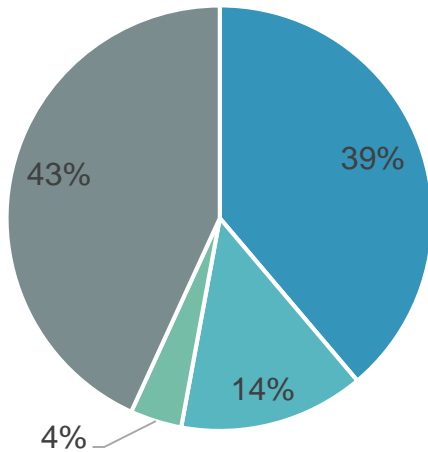


Housing is central to people's lives and helps to shape the appearance and character of places. Good places provide a mix of housing that supports a socially balanced community and meets people's needs throughout life.

# HOUSING & COMMUNITY



## DWELLING TYPE



■ Detached ■ Semi Detached ■ Flat ■ Terrace

The mix of dwelling types within the town centre is shown above. The majority of the dwellings are terraced properties.

Of these dwelling types within the town centre the main tenure is rented properties with 74% of properties are either owned outright or owned with a mortgage.

## Banchory Housing Profile and Population

The overall population total for Banchory in 2016 was 7,560 and it is estimated that approximately 394 people stay within the town centre.

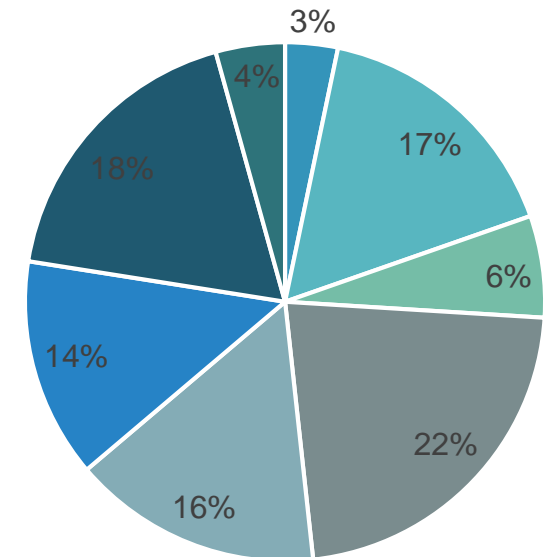
The average house price for dwellings within the town centre boundary in 2018 was £284,087.



Image: High Street.

In terms of Council Tax Bands (2020), Banchory Town Centre has dwellings in Bands A-H on the scale of the Council Tax Bands. There is a good mix through all bands.

## COUNCIL TAX BAND



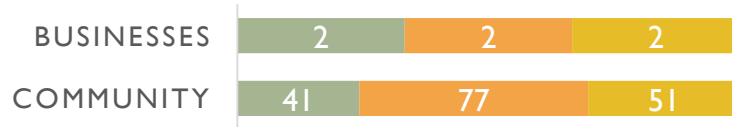
■ Band A ■ Band B ■ Band C ■ Band D  
■ Band E ■ Band F ■ Band G ■ Band H

Feeling isolated can be damaging to our health and wellbeing. Good places provide a variety of spaces to meet and spend time with others.

**Observations:** Range of events received a relatively mixed scored in both surveys but this could have been influenced by the COVID-19 restrictions at the time of the survey. There are a number of venues that are available for social interaction in the town centre, including a number of cafes, but the desire to have more events was highly commented on, in particular events in Scott Skinner Square.

### HOW WOULD YOU RATE: RANGE OF EVENTS?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor



### Town Centre Events\*^



The following events are planned over the next year:

#### Farmer's Market

3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of every month

\*Not an exhaustive list ^Correct at time of survey

## SOCIAL CONTACT



Venue	Indoor / Outdoor	Opening Times
Library	Indoor	Mon, Fri and Sat: Click and collect only Tues, Wed and Thurs: 10am-2pm
Town Hall	Indoor	Open 7 days but booking required
St Ternan's Scottish Episcopal Church	Indoor	Tues/ Thurs: Communion 9:30am/ 10:15am  Sun: Communion 8.00am. Holy Eucharist (1st, 2nd and 4th of the month), Family Eucharist, Choral Matins (3rd), Family Eucharist (5th) 11.00am. Evensong (1 <sup>st</sup> ) 6.30pm.
Banchory Ternan West Parish Church of Scotland	Indoor	Sun Service: 10:30am
Guide Lodge	Indoor	Times unavailable at time of survey

*"More events should be designed to bring people into the town centre."*

*"There should be more events taking place in Scott Skinner Square."*

*"More events that are better publicised."*

*"Greater selection of evening entertainment/ events."*

*"More events."*

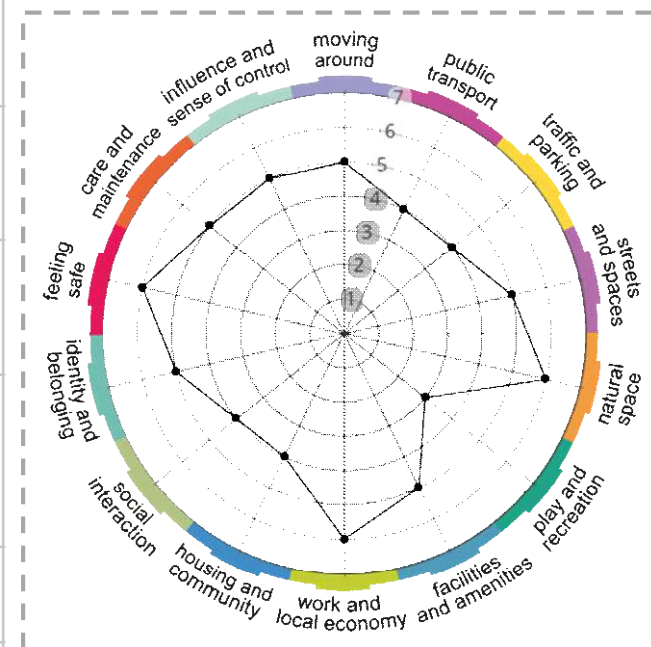


Images: Left, Banchory Library; Right, Banchory Ternan West Parish Church of Scotland.



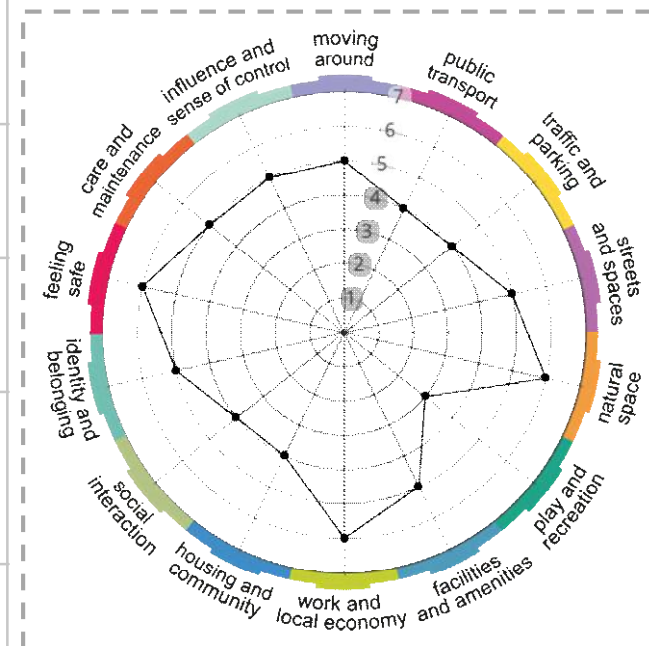
# KEY CONSIDERATIONS & OPPORTUNITIES

Theme	Key Improvements
<b>Identity and belonging</b> Rating: 5	Banchory Town Centre has a strong sense of identity and scored highly for community spirit. People were mixed about how they felt about the town centre. Recent improvements to the town centre were viewed positively so building on this would help the overall score.
<b>Feeling safe</b> Rating: 6	Overall a very positive indicator for the town centre, particularly in relation to safety during the day. Safety during the evening was also rated positive but with more neutral ratings. This perhaps indicates that less people use the town in the evening, so if evening use increases as desired this may need monitoring.
<b>Care and maintenance</b> Rating: 5	Overall the general care and maintenance of buildings within Banchory is good. However, there is community desire to see upgrades to the empty buildings especially the former Subway store on the High Street.
<b>Influence and sense of control</b> Rating: 5	Banchory is well-served with active organisations working together to maintain and improve the town centre. Not all people are aware of these groups so greater promotion could be explored.
<b>Moving around</b> Rating: 5	Although this scored well overall, there is some conflict between vehicles and pedestrians/cyclists with a desire expressed for more crossing points and cycle lanes. Signage was good but could be extended to the west end of the town centre. There is potential to improve active travel links between the town and nearby path/cycle networks.
<b>Public transport</b> Rating: 4	Although connections east to west are good, there is a limited service to other neighbouring communities, which resulted in respondents rating this poor overall.
<b>Traffic and parking</b> Rating: 4	Issues associated with traffic congestion were raised through the survey and resulted in the topic featuring in the bottom five topics. Community aspirations to see short term free parking also featured heavily within the comments.



# KEY CONSIDERATIONS & OPPORTUNITIES (CONTINUED)

Theme	Key Improvements
<b>Streets and spaces</b> Rating: 5	Generally the topics within this section were rated positively including public art and the attractiveness of the town. Although the number of vacant units was something that received a large number of negative comments. Something that could be done to address community aspirations is providing additional seats outside cafes within the town centre.
<b>Natural space</b> Rating: 6	Banchory Town Centre has good natural spaces and is also bordered by large open areas. This is supplemented by volunteers looking after planters and hanging baskets. Scott Skinner Square offers potential to increase green space provision further.
<b>Play and recreation</b> Rating: 3	There are no play and leisure facilities within the town centre boundary. However, there are two parks adjacent to the town centre boundary and additional facilities approximately 1 mile from the town centre.
<b>Facilities and amenities</b> Rating: 5	There are a good range of facilities within Banchory but further variety of the offering of facilities and amenities would increase the score as everything that is currently within the town centre is well maintained.
<b>Work and local economy</b> Rating: 6	There is a good range of well-paid employment opportunities within the town centre and consumer spend is well-distributed across different sectors. Businesses are reasonably confident about their future performance and all are looking to grow and invest in their premises. Exploring opportunities to support pop-up spaces or rent or rate incentives to help new businesses would be welcomed.
<b>Housing and community</b> Rating: 4	There are a mix of house types within the town centre and this should continue to be monitored to ensure there are types and tenures of housing that would provide for all of the community.
<b>Social contact</b> Rating: 4	There are a mix of indoor venues allowing for social interaction within the town centre. This could be complimented by the introduction of further outdoor events within the town centre perhaps utilising Scott Skinner Square to encourage people into the town during the day and into the evening.






**BUSINESS & COMMUNITY SURVEY RESPONSES: How Would You Rate? Top 5 Highest and Lowest Scoring Categories****Community****Top 5 Highest Scoring Categories:**

- 
- + 1. Feeling of Safety During the Day
  - + 2. Standard of Service in Shops
  - + 3. Café/ Restaurant Choice
  - + 4. Parks and Green Spaces
  - + 5. Café/ Restaurant Quality


**Top 5 Lowest Scoring Categories:**

- 
- 1. Vibrancy in the Evening
  - 2. Traffic Flow
  - 3. Variety of Shops
  - 4. Parking Affordability - Cars
  - 5. Parking Space Availability - Cars

**Business****Top 5 Highest Scoring Categories:**

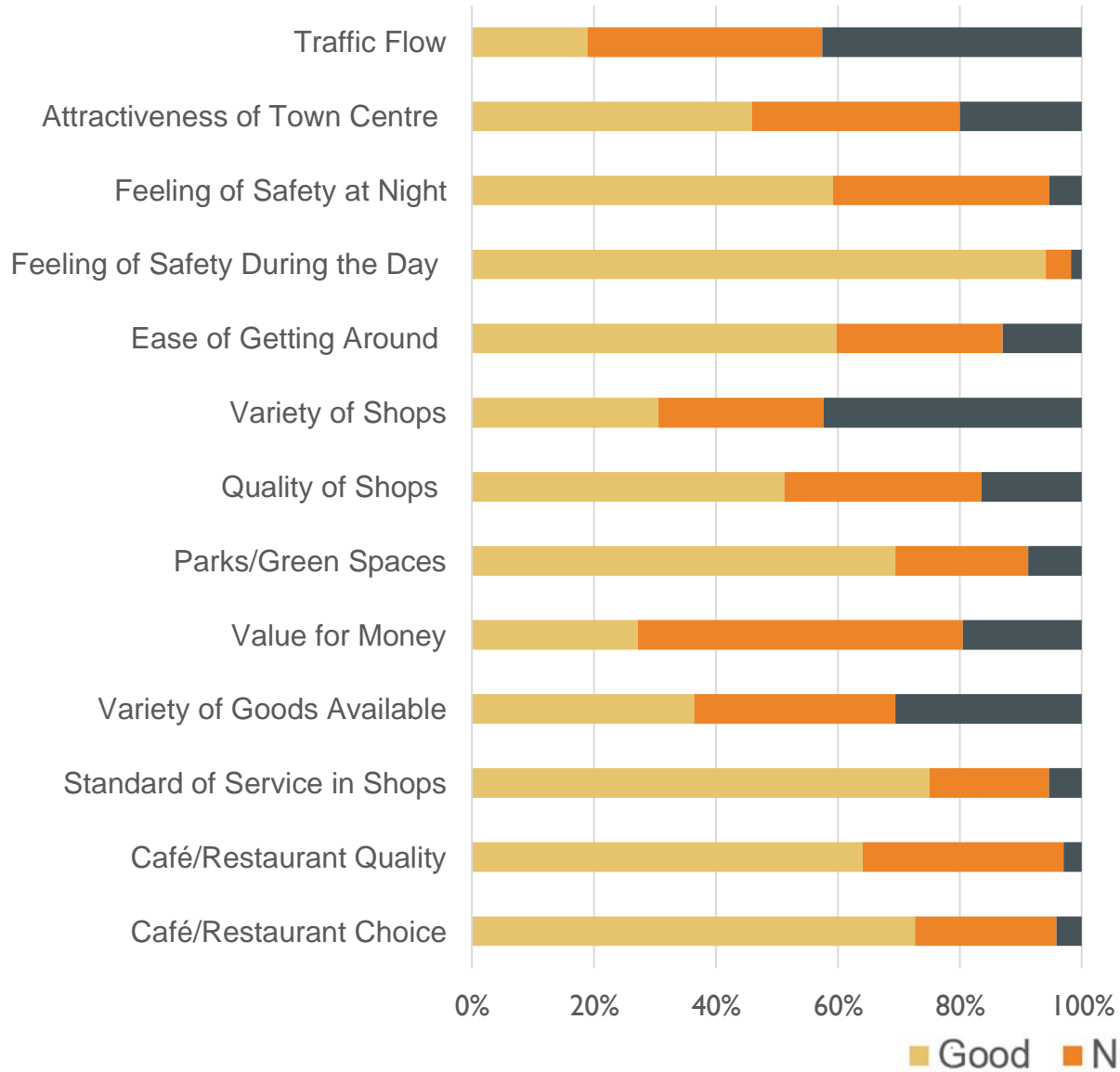
- 
- + =1. Farmers Market
  - + =1. Feeling of Safety During the Day
  - + =2. Parks and Green Spaces
  - + =2. Café/ Restaurant Choice
  - + =2. Feeling of Safety at Night

**Top 5 Lowest Scoring Categories:**

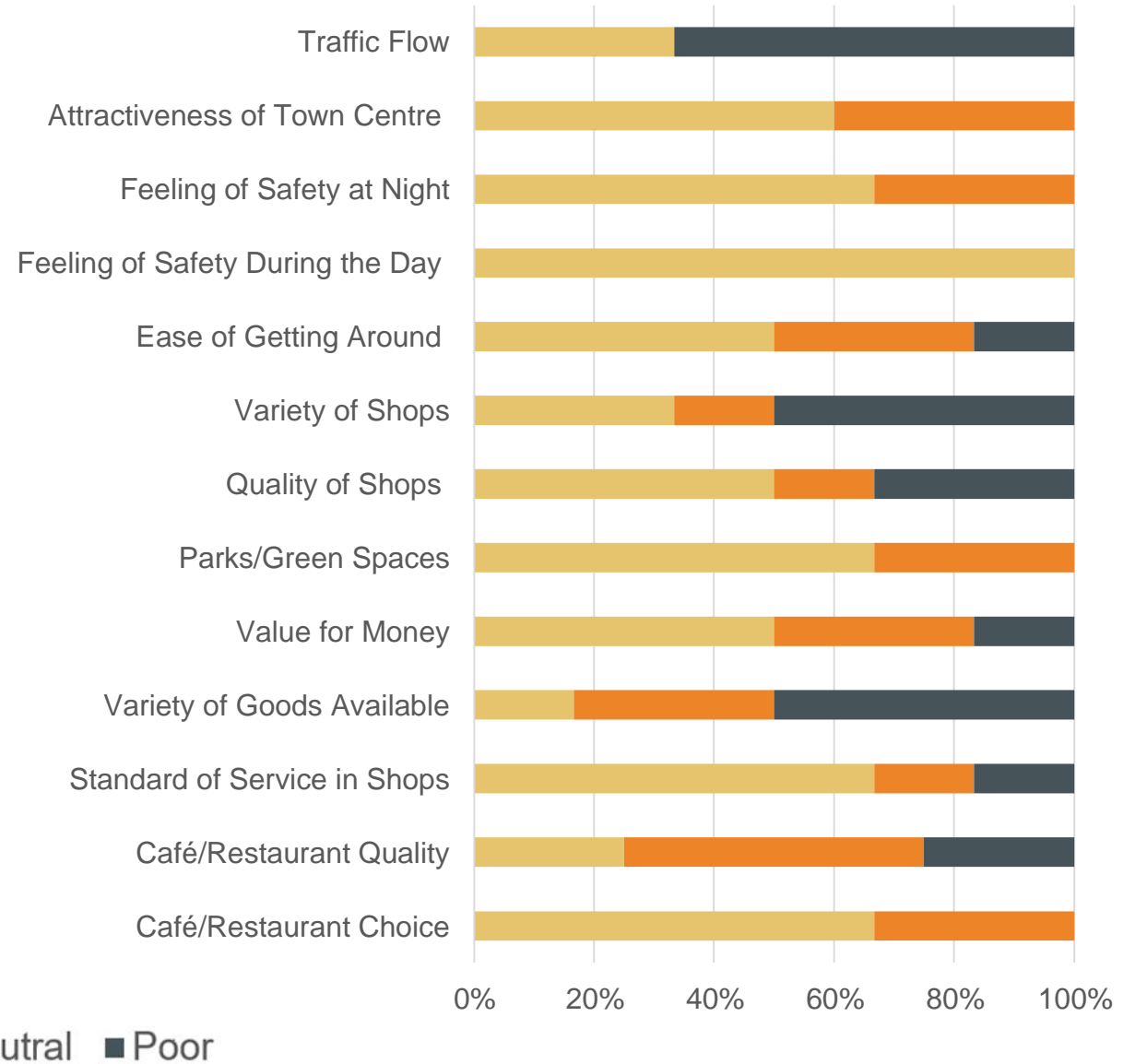
- 
- 1. Vibrancy in the Evening
  - 2. Traffic Flow
  - 3. Seating/ Areas to Congregate
  - 4. Parking Affordability - Cars
  - 5. Variety of Goods Available

## BUSINESS & COMMUNITY SURVEY RESPONSES: How Would You Rate?

### Community Responses:



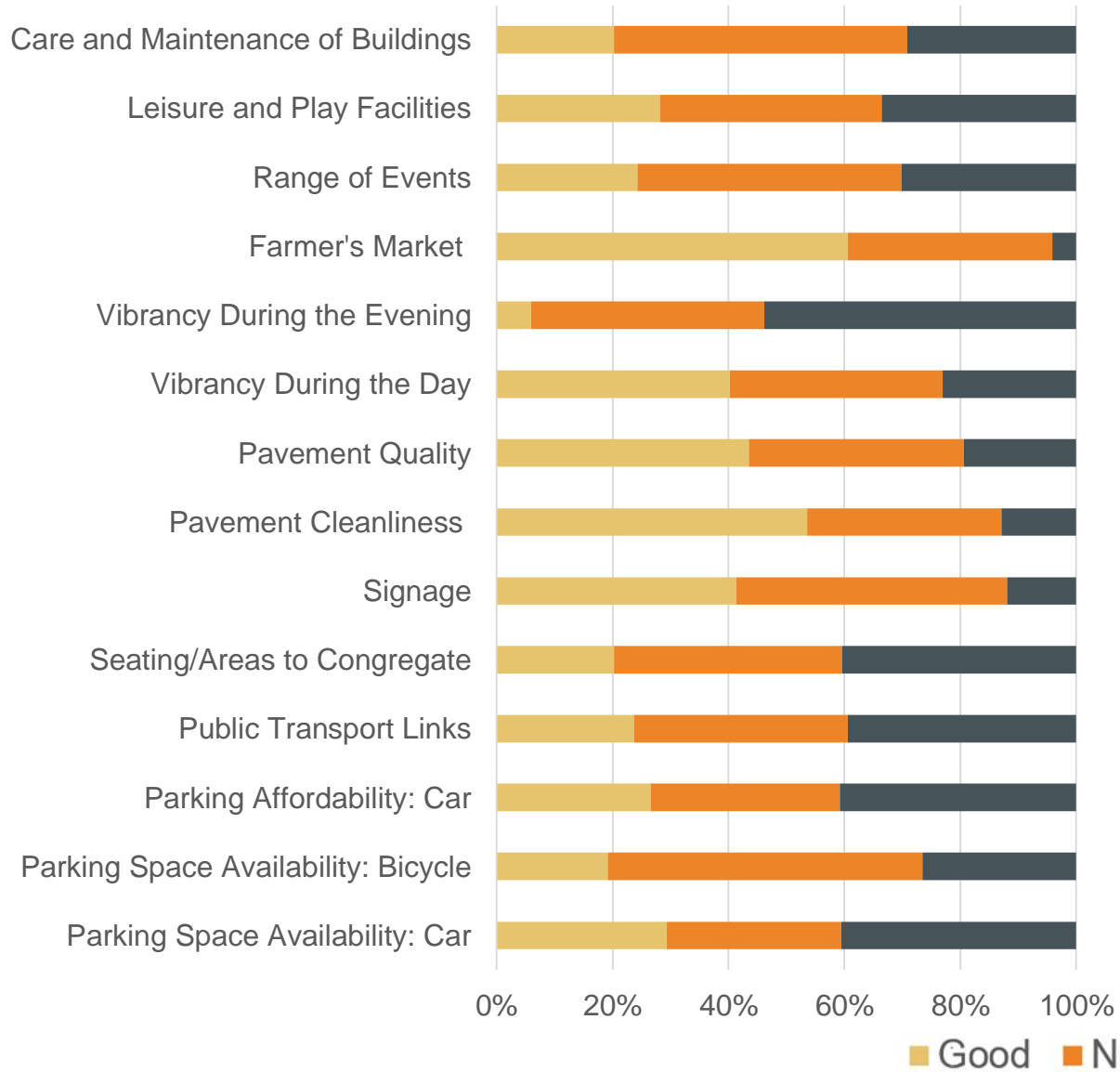
### Business Responses:



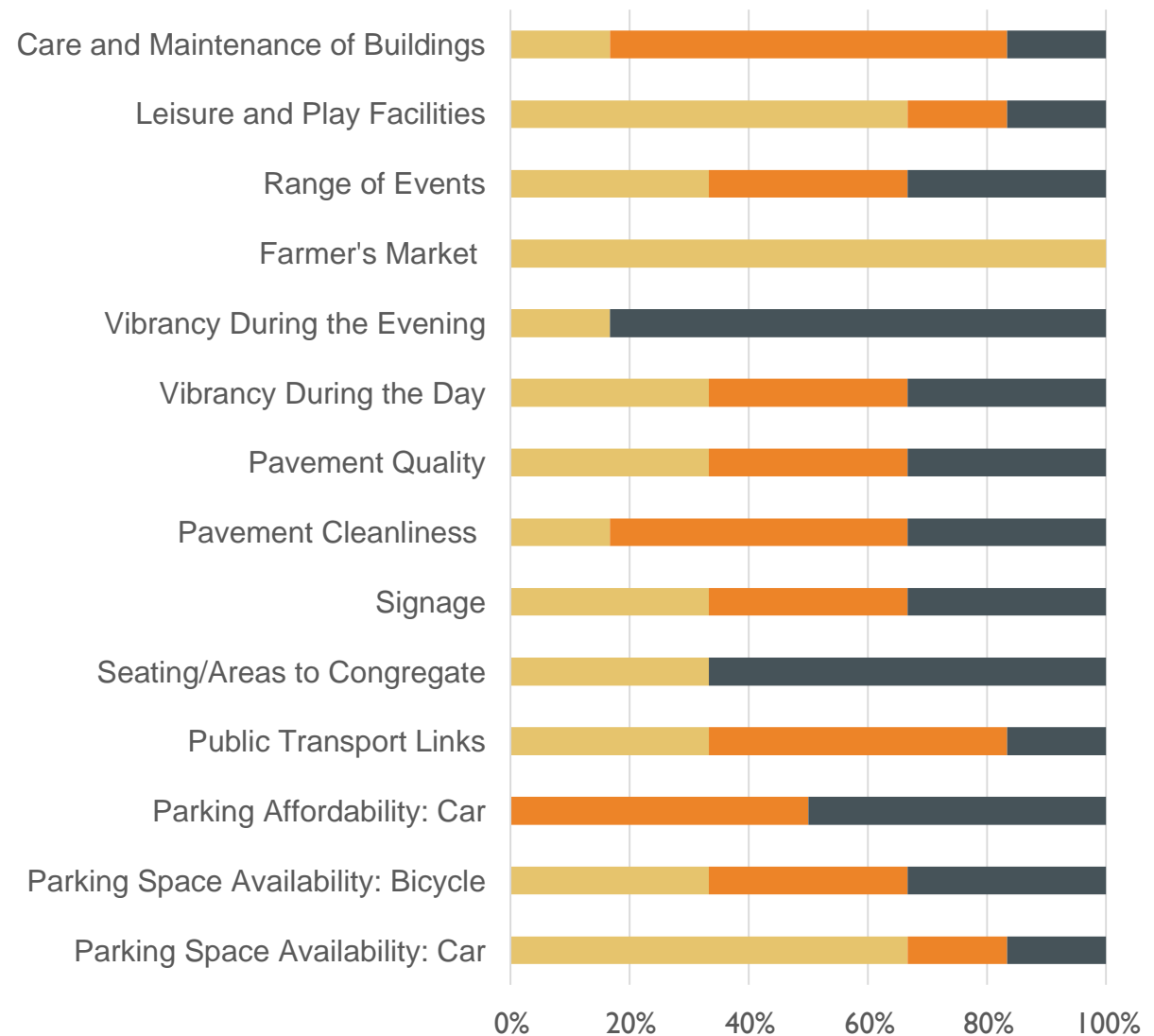


## BUSINESS & COMMUNITY SURVEY RESPONSES: How Would You Rate?

### Community Responses:



### Business Responses:



# A PARTNERSHIP APPROACH: WORKING TOGETHER FOR THE BENEFIT OF OUR TOWNS

A key element of the new approach to undertaking Town Centre Health Checks in Aberdeenshire in 2021 is to work in partnership with stakeholders with an interest in the success of our town centres to collect and share knowledge, information and opportunities. This has added an extra dimension to the health checks, providing a base from which future, plans, strategies, engagement and collaboration can be built upon. A big 'thank you' goes to the following teams, organisations and individuals for their contributions to the project:

## Business and Community:

Banchory Business Association

Banchory Community Council

Number One, Banchory

Footfall Count Volunteers

Accessibility Audit Volunteers: 5 adults



## Partner Organisations:

Sergeant Mellis, Intervention Hub,  
Police Scotland

Elaine Bisset, VisitAberdeenshire



## Council Teams:

Planning Information and Delivery

GIS Team

Community Learning and  
Development

Marr Area Office

Community Payback Unpaid Hours  
Service

Community Engagement and  
Equalities

Economic Development

Transportation

Planning Policy

Customer and Digital Services

**Aberdeenshire**  
COUNCIL



# Aberdeenshire COUNCIL



TOWN CENTRE HEALTH CHECK  
SEPTEMBER 2021

REPORT PRODUCED BY THE PLANNING INFORMATION AND DELIVERY TEAM  
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