



Aberdeenshire
COUNCIL



TOWN CENTRE HEALTH CHECK SEPTEMBER 2022

ELLON, ABERDEENSHIRE



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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Town centre health checks are a way of analysing the factors that contribute to successful town centres and indicate good standards of vitality and viability. 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.

Town Centre Health Checks have been completed in Aberdeenshire since 2003. However, in 2021 a new methodology was introduced 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.

NPF4 notes that policies should 'encourage, promote and facilitate development in our city and town centres, recognising they are a national asset' (NPF4, page 81).

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 2022 for Ellon. 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

For the principal town centres, the surveys are being conducted every two years as it is considered this would reduce the risk of consultation fatigue and allow for monitoring of any changes within town centres which have occurred in that period. 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 in 2021, 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 263 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

For the principal town centres, the surveys are being conducted every two years as it is considered this would reduce the risk of consultation fatigue and allow for more effective monitoring of any changes within town centres which have occurred in that period. The survey was available on Engage HQ in 2021 and was shared via relevant groups for completion. Several topics were questioned, including the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on businesses. The survey also gave an opportunity to comment on improvements that businesses would like to see to the town centre. The survey was open for three weeks and received 10 responses. A summary of the responses received can be seen on page 46.

FOOTFALL AND TRAFFIC COUNTS

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 a team effort and carried out by Aberdeenshire Council Officers and members of the community. In response to feedback received following the Town Centre Health Checks in 2021, traffic counts were also added to the methodology for all towns. Where possible, traffic counts were carried out at the same location as the pedestrian counts and for the same length of time following completion of the footfall counts. Where traffic counts could not be carried at the same location at the footfall counts, these were done at the closest viable point in order to gain information on the number of vehicles using the town centre.

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

During the 2021 survey, 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, assessing 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 but cold day over two hours. The results from the 2021 accessibility audit were reviewed as part of the survey this year and relevant points updated as necessary. The merits in revisiting the accessibility audit for the principal town centres will be considered in the future to determine the frequency in which they are carried out as part of the Town Centre Health Checks.

How a place looks, its history and what other people think of a 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: Those who use the town centre were divided in their opinions and this was reflected in the comments in the 2021 surveys. The comments received showed the respondents that felt positively about the town centre as a result of the friendly community, local, independent shops and attractive setting next to the river. For others, the town lacked vibrancy, had a poor range and affordability of retail outlets and a lack of activities for young people. The town has a small network of voluntary organisations who were recognised for their efforts in supporting the town centre.

The growth of Ellon: Ellon's location on the banks of the river Ythan meant that the town was once one of the most strategically important in Aberdeenshire and its history can be traced back to Pictish times. By the **1850s** Ellon had grown to become a prosperous town with five churches, three inns, three banks, and a post office. It also had a large selection of shops, and held markets every fortnight. The railway arrived in **1861** but closed to passengers in **1969**. Ellon then benefited from the oil boom that started in the **1970s**, and it has grown dramatically over the decades since as a commuter and suburban town with a prevalence of higher income and private housing. It remains an attractive and interesting town with a rich history.

Source: Understanding Scottish Places and Undiscovered Scotland

IDENTITY & BELONGING



How Do You Feel About Ellon Town Centre?



46% Community

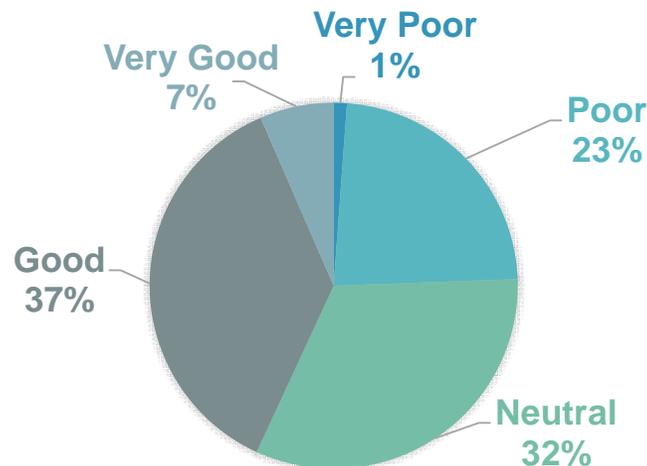
30% Businesses



54% Community

70% Businesses

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



"I love staying in Ellon due to the town centre and what it has within it."

"It has improved since I moved here 19 years ago. It still has room for improvement."

"Generally positive as the shops are improving. Neil Ross Square and the Riverside are fantastic assets."

"The centre has improved over time. There are now less empty shops and the community spirit is good. The work of Ellon Civic Pride is most appreciated. The river and adjoining pathway makes Ellon town centre a pleasant place to visit and meet friends."

"Ellon has lost its heart, many years ago. The town lacks vibrancy....There's really nothing to attract people to Ellon to boost the local economy....Ellon is a commuter town for Aberdeen. Just look at how vibrant Inverurie is in comparison to Ellon. Inverurie, like Ellon is an old market town but there the comparison ends."

"The town centre is boring, not enough shops or things to do."

"Ellon has no soul. Riverside is nice, but the rest is a bit empty/looks shabby or bland."

Business and Community Survey, September 2021

Feeling safe in and around the places that we spend time in 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 in 2021. Safety during the evening was less positive, with more negative responses received. There were also a significant number of neutral responses perhaps indicating that people do not go into the town centre at night. Comments given seemed to relate this negative perception to antisocial behaviour and large groups of people gathering, particularly in the Neil Ross Square area. This was linked with a lack of things to do and places to go for young people in the town which was noted throughout the comments.

Key Safety Features:

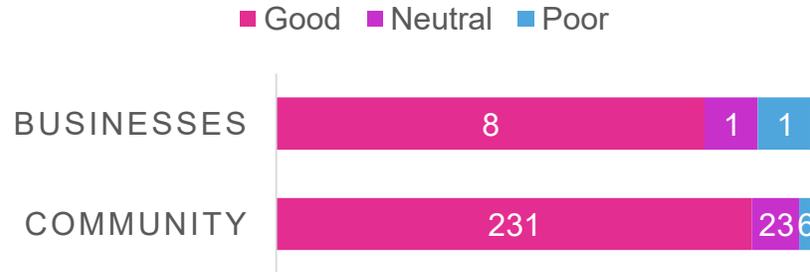
-  Lighting styles are mixed but generally appeared to be well maintained and distributed across the town
-  Ellon and District Pubwatch group in operation
- No central CCTV system in place

Images (Clockwise from Left): Lighting Library; Lighting Neil Ross Square; Lighting The Square.

FEELING SAFE



HOW WOULD YOU RATE: SAFETY DURING THE DAY?



64 Incidences of crime reported
1st September 2021 – 31st July 2022
Police Scotland



“More police presence. CCTV to protect properties and businesses. Tougher stance on anti-social behaviour.”

“I feel that there’s not a lot that happens in the evenings, there is a growing problem with antisocial behaviour which I think needs additional support to deal with. Young people need somewhere to go or an area they feel is theirs.”

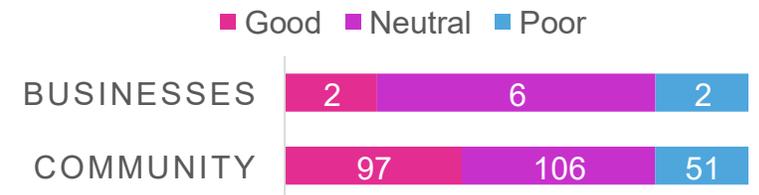
“Not enough visible policing especially at night.”

“CCTV (in Neil Ross Square) so that any vandalism culprits could be identified.”

“More is needed for teenagers, lots of antisocial behaviour at night.”

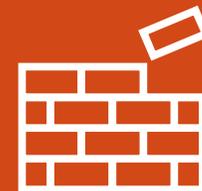
Business and Community Survey, September 2021

HOW WOULD YOU RATE: SAFETY DURING THE EVENING?



Places that are well cared for can make us feel better about a place, while those that are neglected can have the opposite effect. Proper maintenance arrangements allow people to feel supported and more positive about where they live.

CARE & MAINTENANCE



Vacant Unit, Station Road



Good maintenance, Bridge Street



Buildings get maintenance

Observations: The overall maintenance of the buildings within the town centre was noted as a strength during both the 2021 and 2022 site visit, although there were a couple of vacant units where maintenance would be welcomed to bring them back up to standard.

Through the 2021 community survey a number of comments noted that buildings need more maintenance which was also reflected within the survey responses with only 55 respondents of the community survey rating the care and maintenance of buildings as good.

Additionally, a number of units on Bridge Street were getting improvement works completed during the 2022 site visit.

HOW WOULD YOU RATE: CARE & MAINTENANCE OF BUILDINGS?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor

BUSINESSES	1	7	2
COMMUNITY	55	131	72

“Improve building maintenance.”

“Health centre and area around is an eyesore.”

“Pretty centre, with the river and lovely flower beds maintained but the community to keep the town looking good.”

“Needs a general tidy up.”

“Some of the buildings need cleaned up and vegetation removed from gutters and drains.”

“The town is well maintained.”

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



Town Centre Groups	Ellon Civic Pride	Ellon Traders Association (ETA)
Legal Status	Constituted Group	Constituted Group
Membership	Volunteer committee and helpers.	Volunteer committee representing retail and service businesses .
Responsibilities	Ellon Civic Pride are a group of volunteers dedicated to making Ellon clean and beautiful. Over the past year they have planted up hanging baskets, planters and organised litter picking across the town.	Members stay connected regularly through online forums and the group have supported activity such as Farmers and Continental Markets, Christmas events, town centre marketing initiatives, websites, social media marketing, leafleting and clean ups. ETA are the lead group for a Phoenix Fund project to support town centre businesses.
Contact	Ellon Civic Pride	Ellon Central
		Ellon Life

Observations: Ellon Traders Association is a group set up to support retailers and businesses in the town. Funding through the Aberdeenshire Council Phoenix Fund saw the group work in partnership with the Community Council to launch a web-based resource for businesses to access branding and marketing support. It will be interesting to see if this branding raises awareness within the community in future health checks as the group were not mentioned in last year's survey. This may become apparent when the surveys are distributed for next year's health check. Work undertaken by Ellon Civic Pride is widely recognised as benefiting the town centre. It is noted that in summer 2022 the Ellon Community Council dissolved due to being unable to attract the minimum number of members required.

The word cloud (right) shows the survey responses, when asked to name groups that support the town centre. Ellon Civic Pride (88), Ellon Community Council (9) and the Friends of the Cemetery (9) received the most mentions.

Business and Community Survey, September 2021



"Ellon Civic Pride work hard keeping it looking beautiful."
Business and Community Survey, September 2021

49% of survey respondents are aware of groups that support the town centre.

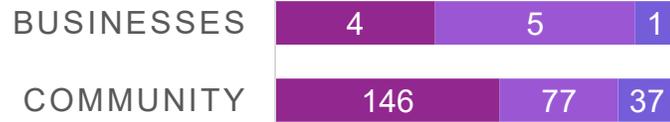
Walking and cycling are beneficial for both our health and the environment. Good places can support and encourage people to walk and cycle by providing quality routes and a pleasant and safe experience.

MOVING AROUND



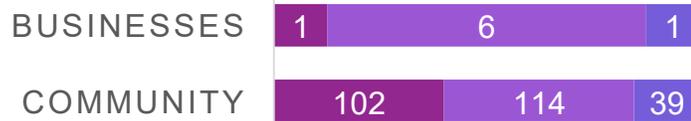
HOW WOULD YOU RATE: GETTING AROUND THE TOWN CENTRE?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor

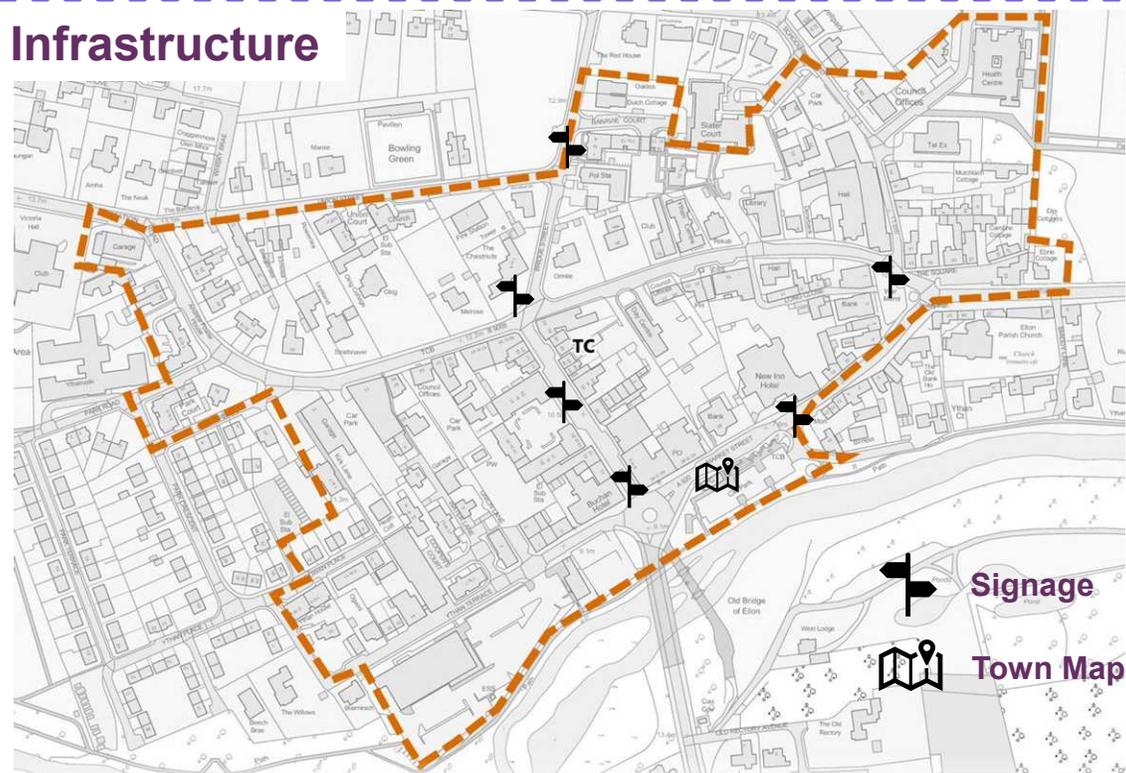


HOW WOULD YOU RATE: SIGNAGE?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor



Infrastructure



“Everything in the centre is in walking distance.”

“It is not a town centre, it is fragmented, anyone visiting the town would not find all the shops as they are spread out.”

“It is tidy and accessible.”

Business and Community Survey, September 2021

Observations: The town centre is shared by vehicles and pedestrians with the exception of Neil Ross Square. Getting around scored as one of the top five best elements of the town for both businesses and the community in the 2021 surveys. Signage is adequate, particularly from the Market Street car park. A number of respondents commented that the town felt disconnected with multiple retail/ service areas and attractions such as the Castle Gardens, difficult to find.



Images (Top to Bottom):
Fingerpost signage;
Town map;
Bicycle and walking signage by the river.

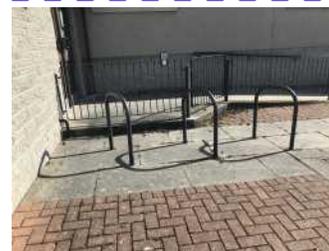
MOVING AROUND: CYCLING

Observations: Ellon is defined as an Integrated Travel Town by the Local Transport Strategy. There are currently no cycle lanes in Ellon Town Centre, however there are a variety of different types and locations of cycle parking distributed throughout the area. In addition, the Formartine and Buchan Way is well signposted. Survey responses showed that most respondents did not have a concern with cycle parking, however there were more poor ratings than good, so this suggests that for some of those who did cycle in the town, they found the experience unsatisfactory.

HOW WOULD YOU RATE: CYCLE PARKING?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor

BUSINESSES	1	6	3
COMMUNITY	35	156	41



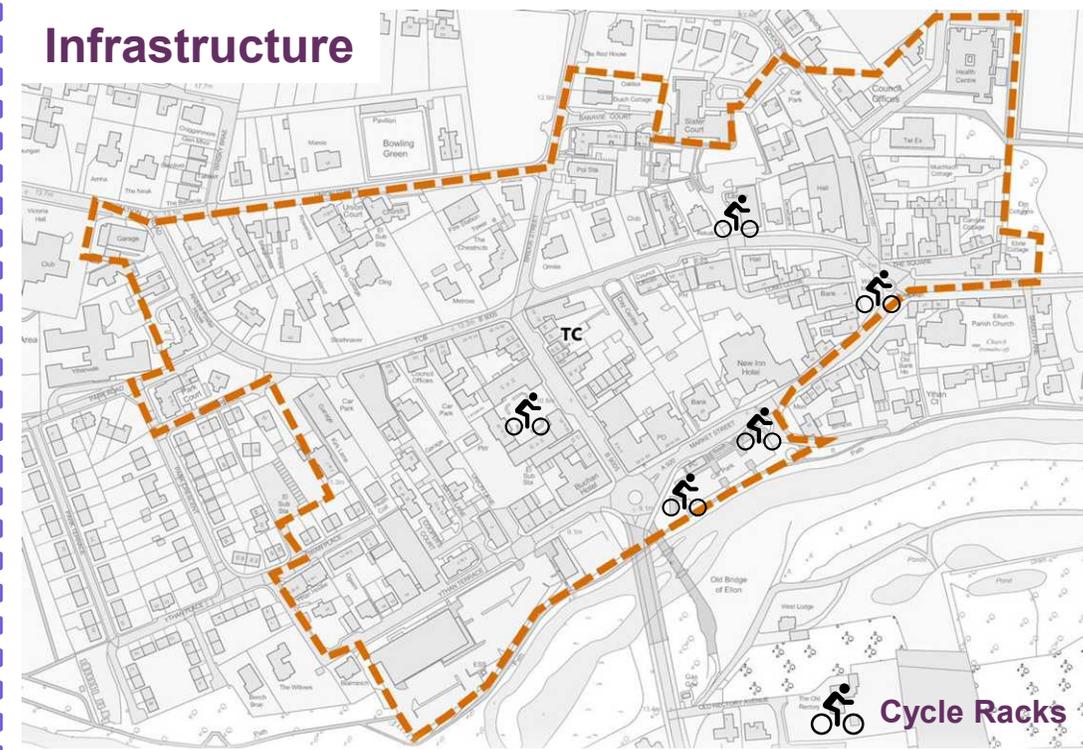
"In the absence of safe cycling routes people are forced to use a car."

"I would like to see... better cycle paths coming in from rural areas."

"Promoted cycle path but not maintained – there are weeds/bushes growing directly over the pathways. Where to park cycles etc in town centre?"

Business and Community Survey, September 2021

Infrastructure



Images (Left to Right): Cycle route signage; Signage to cycle parking, Market Street Car Park; Freestanding racks at the library; Covered cycle racks at Market Street Car Park.

MOVING AROUND: FOOTFALL SURVEY

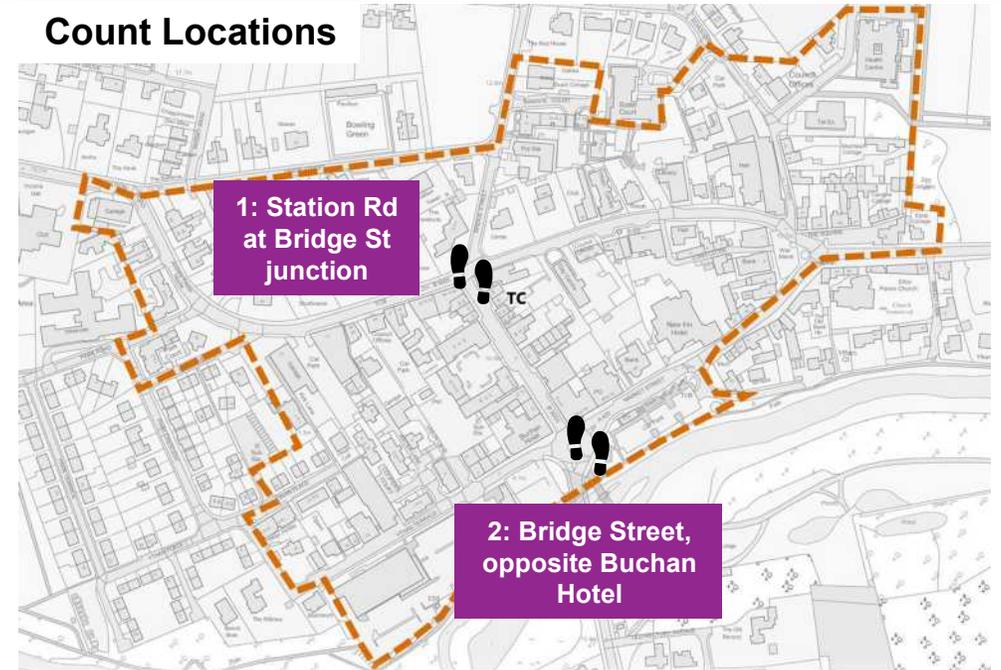
Day	Time	Location 1	Location 2	Hourly Total	Overall Total
Tuesday 	09:30	34	35	69	315
	11:30	36	72	108	
	14:30	32	64	96	
	18:00	10	32	42	
Saturday 	09:30	54	30	84	463
	11:30	88	77	165	
	14:30	44	54	98	
	18:00	42	74	116	
Totals		340	438	778	

HEADLINES

Busiest Location: Station Road
Busiest Time: 11:30
Busiest Day: Saturday

Quietest Location: Station Road
Quietest Time: 18:00
Quietest Day: Tuesday

Count Locations



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 6th and Saturday 17th September 2022 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 Station Road on Saturday morning (88 people) which is the same location, day and time as the previous year, although the number of people is lower (previously 151 people). However, overall counts were higher at the Bridge Street location.

MOVING AROUND: ACCESSIBILITY AUDIT 2021



Participants were recruited from the local community to undertake a survey to identify the effect of roads, pavements and the general streetscape on people who use the town centre in order to identify barriers to moving around and enhancement opportunities to improve connectivity, attractiveness and safety.

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

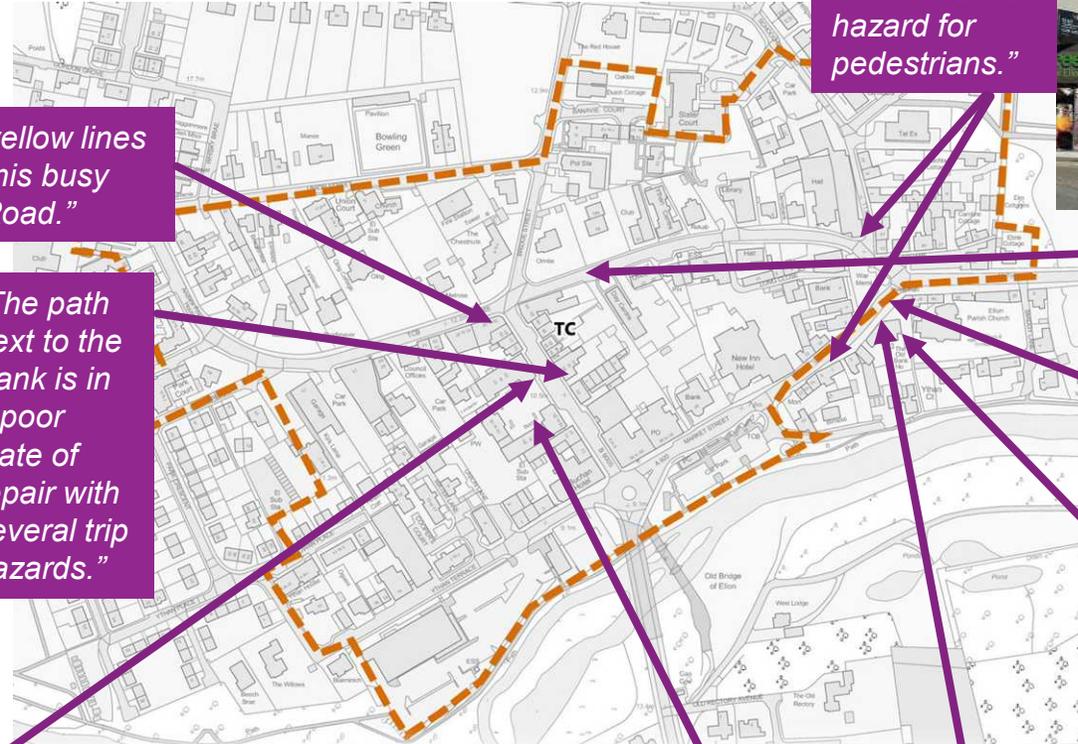
- Footway surfaces and obstructions;
- Facilities and signage;
- Maintenance and enforcement;
- Personal security;
- Crossing points;
- Access to buildings.

The survey took place on Friday 24th September 2021, 09:30 – 11:30. The weather was dry and mild.

ACCESSIBILITY AUDIT 2021

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

- Crossing busy roads can be difficult in several locations, including The Square and Station Road.
- Overall Neil Ross Square offers an open, safe space for pedestrians but the area feels unloved and dated in places.
- Buildings are generally accessible.
- Pinch points on several streets were noticed where pavements narrowed and this caused difficulty for pedestrians, particularly at corners.
- Sense of safety - The town centre generally feels safe.



“Parking on double yellow lines is often an issue at this busy junction on Station Road.”

“The path next to the Bank is in a poor state of repair with several trip hazards.”

“Narrow pavements at corners are a hazard for pedestrians.”

“Poor pavement surfaces on Station Road.”

“These posters highlighting considerate parking are welcome.”



“Good ramp access from the road in Bridge Street onto the pavement.”



“Damaged steps and poor colour contrast are an issue on the raised area of Neil Ross Square but the wider surface is good.”



“Crossing around The Square can be difficult at times.”



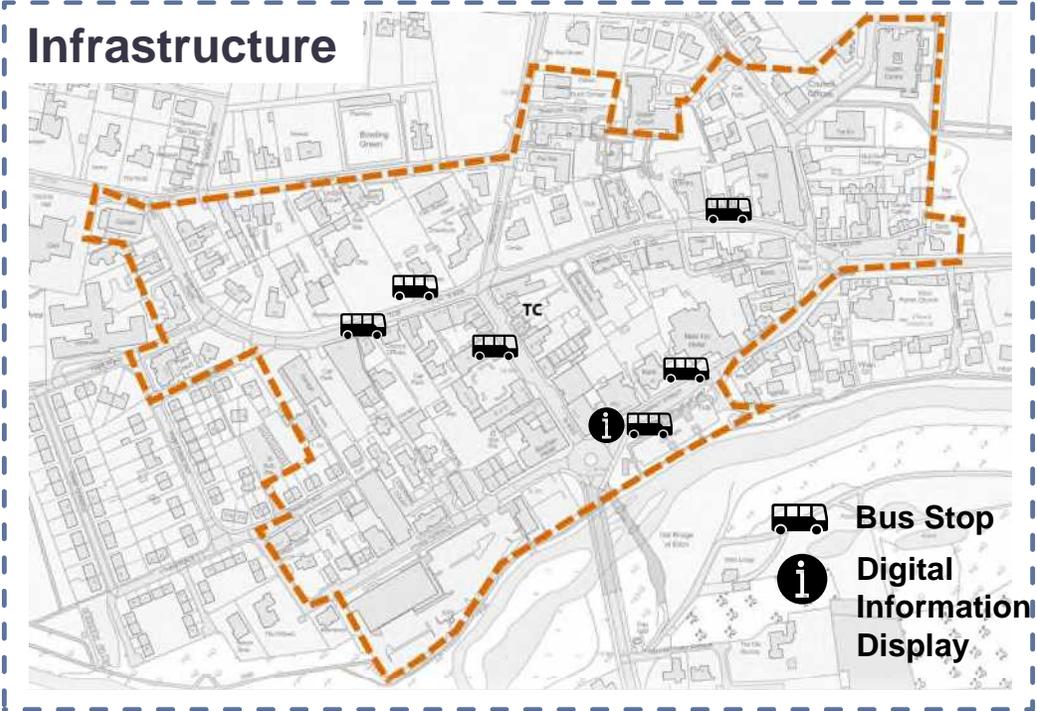
“Poor contrast between street furniture and pavements.”

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.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

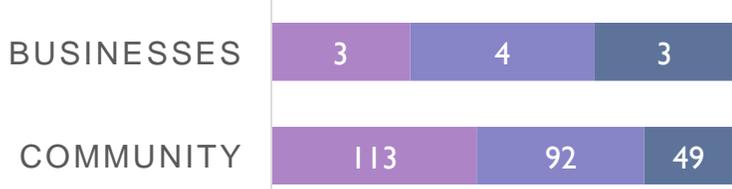


Observations: Ellon Town Centre has reasonable bus links to Aberdeen, Inverurie and a number of other local destinations, as well as a town circular service which provides links to the Park and Ride site on the edge of the town. The timetable is more limited in the evening however. These services are supplemented by a Dial-A-Bus option. There is a busy main interchange on Market Street with reasonable waiting facilities and a real time information display. A number of other bus stops are distributed across the town centre. Overall, respondents from the 2021 survey seemed satisfied with public transport, with few comments made on this topic. The prices of bus services have increased slightly since the previous year.



HOW WOULD YOU RATE: PUBLIC TRANSPORT?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor

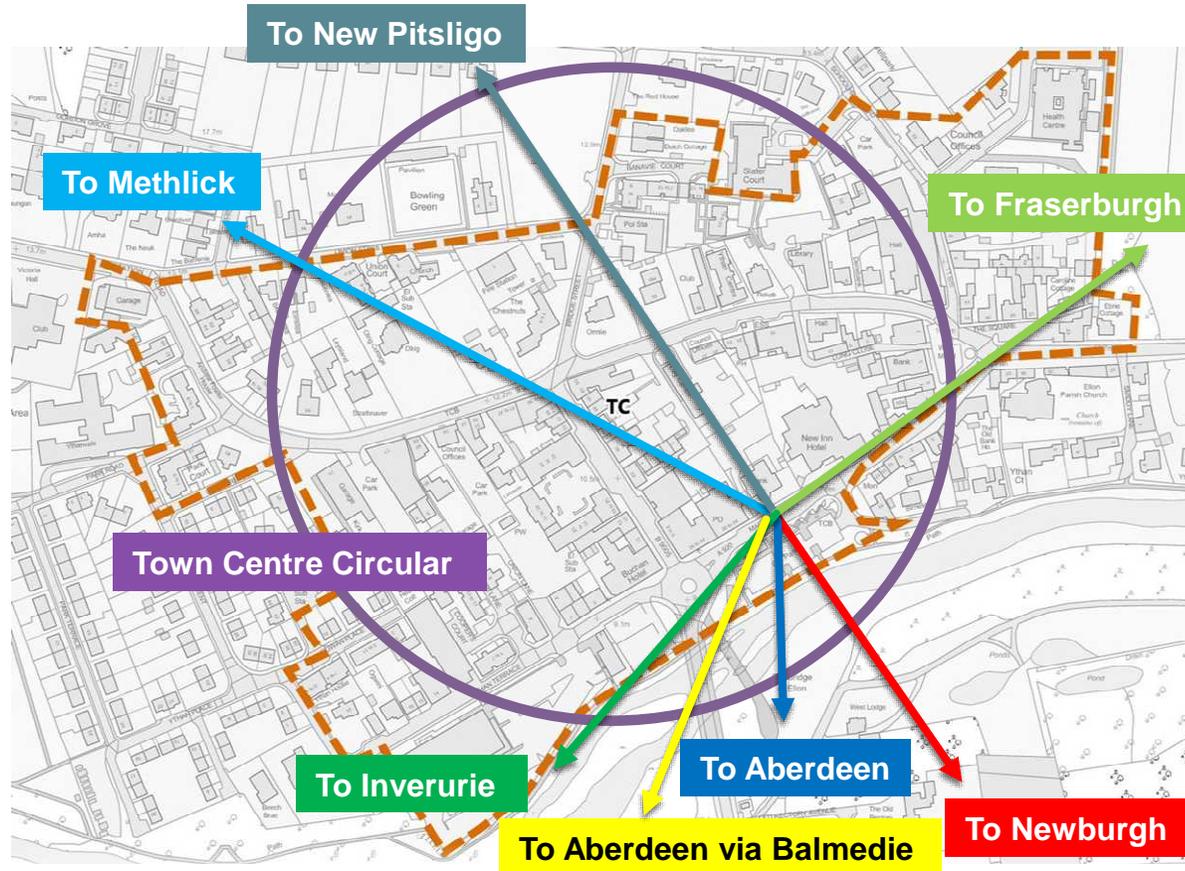


“More regular bus service with Inverurie to link with the next biggest town to Ellon would be good as many people from this area work out that way.”

“It is too hard to get there without a car.”
 Business and Community Survey, September 2021

Images (Clockwise from Top Left): Bus stop Bridge Street; Real time bus information display, Market Street; Covered bus stop, Market Street.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT ROUTES



Key:

- Bus Route 49
- Bus Route 53
- Bus Route 292
- Bus Route 51
- Bus Route 50
- Bus Route X67/68
- Bus Route 61
- Town Circular

An [A2B dial-a-bus](#), pre-booked minibus service is available in Ellon. In most cases a door-to-door service is provided, operating during weekdays. The service is free to use.

Route* (from Market Street)	Frequency (per week day)	Fastest Journey Time	Earliest Travel Time	Latest Travel Time	Cost (Single Standard Ticket)
Bus to Aberdeen (53)	6	52mins	07:01	16:17	£5.20
Bus to Aberdeen (61)	6	46mins	05:30	22:30	-
Bus to Inverurie (49)	6	35mins	07:50	17:23	£5.70
Bus to Newburgh (50)	8	11mins	08:10	18:38	£2.60
Bus to Methlick (292)	2	18mins	09:05	11:15	£4.20
Bus to Fraserburgh (X67/68)	17	51mins	07:45	23:42	£7.80
Town Circular (52)	4	40mins	10:27	16:27	£1.60
Town Circular (55)	2	11mins	10:07	12:01	£1.60
Town Circular (54)	6	44mins	07:16	17:17	£1.60
Bus to New Pitsligo (51)	2	55mins	13:25	18:25	-

* Correct at time of survey

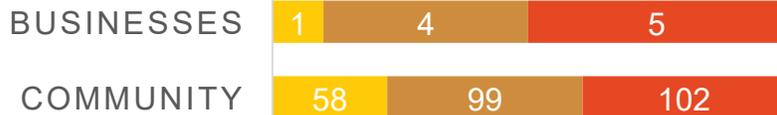
Too much traffic can cause problems for people who live and work in town centres as well as visitors. Traffic and parking arrangements that allow people to move around safely can help people to get the most out of a place.



Image: Looking up Bridge Street.

HOW WOULD YOU RATE: TRAFFIC FLOW?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor



TRAFFIC & PARKING

TRAFFIC



“People parking on double yellow lines causes a real issue in terms of traffic flow.”

“Traffic through the town can be quite heavy.”

“Better traffic control around crossroads at baker, dangerous junction for traffic.”

“Traffic should be 20mph through town centre.”

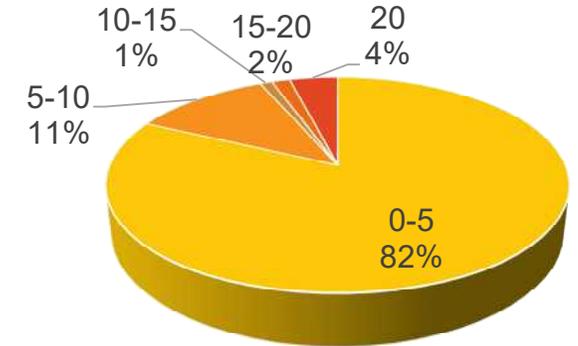
“Bring back one way system. It did allow traffic flow.”

Business and Community Survey, September 2021

Observations: The topic of traffic flow raised a mixed response through the ratings of the 2021 community and business surveys but the majority of the responses rated it as poor. This was also reflected through the comments with a large number of negative comments received on this topic.

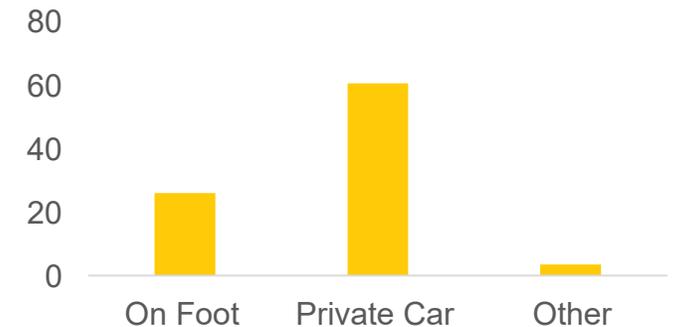
One of the main themes coming out of the responses was the dangerous nature of the junction at Station Road and Bridge Street, which can be intensified by people parking on double yellow lines. This was noticed during both the 2021 and 2022 site visits.

Distance Travelled to Use the Town Centre (Miles)



Source: Community Survey September 2021

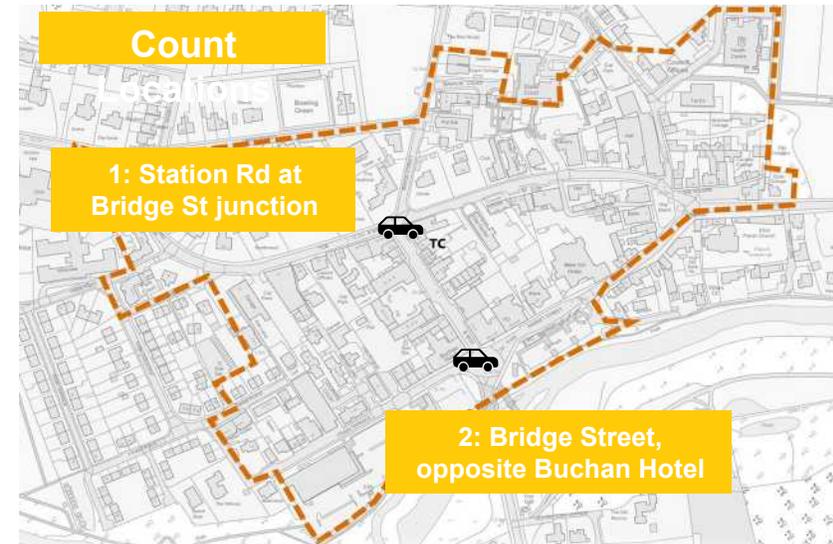
How would you generally travel to the town centre:



Source: Community Survey September 2021

MOVING AROUND: TRAFFIC SURVEY

Day		9:45am-10:00am		11:45am-12noon		2:15:2:30pm		5:45pm-6:00pm		Total number of Vehicles
Tuesday	Location 1	Car	172	Car	156	Car	171	Car	173	804
		Buses	3	Buses	3	Buses	0	Buses	0	
		Lorries	1	Lorries	1	Lorries	4	Lorries	0	
		Vans	25	Vans	21	Vans	27	Vans	24	
		Taxis	5	Taxis	6	Taxis	3	Taxis	1	
		Bicycles	2	Bicycles	0	Bicycles	0	Bicycles	1	
		Other	1	Other	1	Other	2	Other	1	
	Location 2	Car	210	Car	234	Car	271	Car	338	1,239
		Buses	6	Buses	3	Buses	3	Buses	2	
		Lorries	4	Lorries	2	Lorries	7	Lorries	1	
		Vans	30	Vans	27	Vans	36	Vans	36	
		Taxis	5	Taxis	3	Taxis	7	Taxis	2	
		Bicycles	2	Bicycles	2	Bicycles	0	Bicycles	1	
		Other	1	Other	4	Other	1	Other	1	
Hourly Totals (all traffic):		467		463		532		581		2,043



Images: High Street.

MOVING AROUND: TRAFFIC SURVEY

Day		9:45am-10:00am		11:45am-12noon		2:15:2:30pm		5:45pm-6:00pm		Total number of Vehicles
Saturday	Location 1	Car	183	Car	229	Car	194	Car	178	853
		Buses	1	Buses	0	Buses	1	Buses	2	
		Lorries	2	Lorries	2	Lorries	0	Lorries	0	
		Vans	16	Vans	14	Vans	7	Vans	10	
		Taxis	4	Taxis	2	Taxis	2	Taxis	5	
		Bicycles	0	Bicycles	0	Bicycles	0	Bicycles	0	
		Other	0	Other	1	Other	0	Other	0	
	Location 2	Car	139	Car	199	Car	126	Car	251	800
		Buses	3	Buses	0	Buses	1	Buses	3	
		Lorries	0	Lorries	1	Lorries	0	Lorries	0	
		Vans	13	Vans	16	Vans	15	Vans	18	
		Taxis	5	Taxis	3	Taxis	1	Taxis	4	
		Bicycles	0	Bicycles	0	Bicycles	0	Bicycles	0	
		Other	1	Other	1	Other	0	Other	0	
Hourly Totals (all traffic):		367		468		347		471		1653

HEADLINES

Busiest Location: Bridge St (opp. Hotel).
Busiest Time: 17:45
Busiest Day: Tuesday

Quietest Location: Station Rd at Bridge St
Quietest Time: 11:45
Quietest Day: Tuesday

Observations: Vehicle counts were undertaken on Tuesday 6th and Saturday 17th September 2022 for a duration of 15 minutes, four times a day, in two locations. These give information on the number of cars that are passing through the town centre. It cannot be confirmed whether these cars have all contributed to the local economy but were in the town centre at the time of the count.

The vehicle count findings showed the highest footfall count was recorded at Bridge Street opposite the Buchan Hotel on Friday evening and in general this location was always busier than the location at Station Road junction with Bridge Street.

TRAFFIC & PARKING

CAR PARKING AFFORDABILITY

Parking Costs

£0.50

Average hourly rate
September 2021

HOW WOULD YOU RATE: PARKING AFFORDABILITY?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor

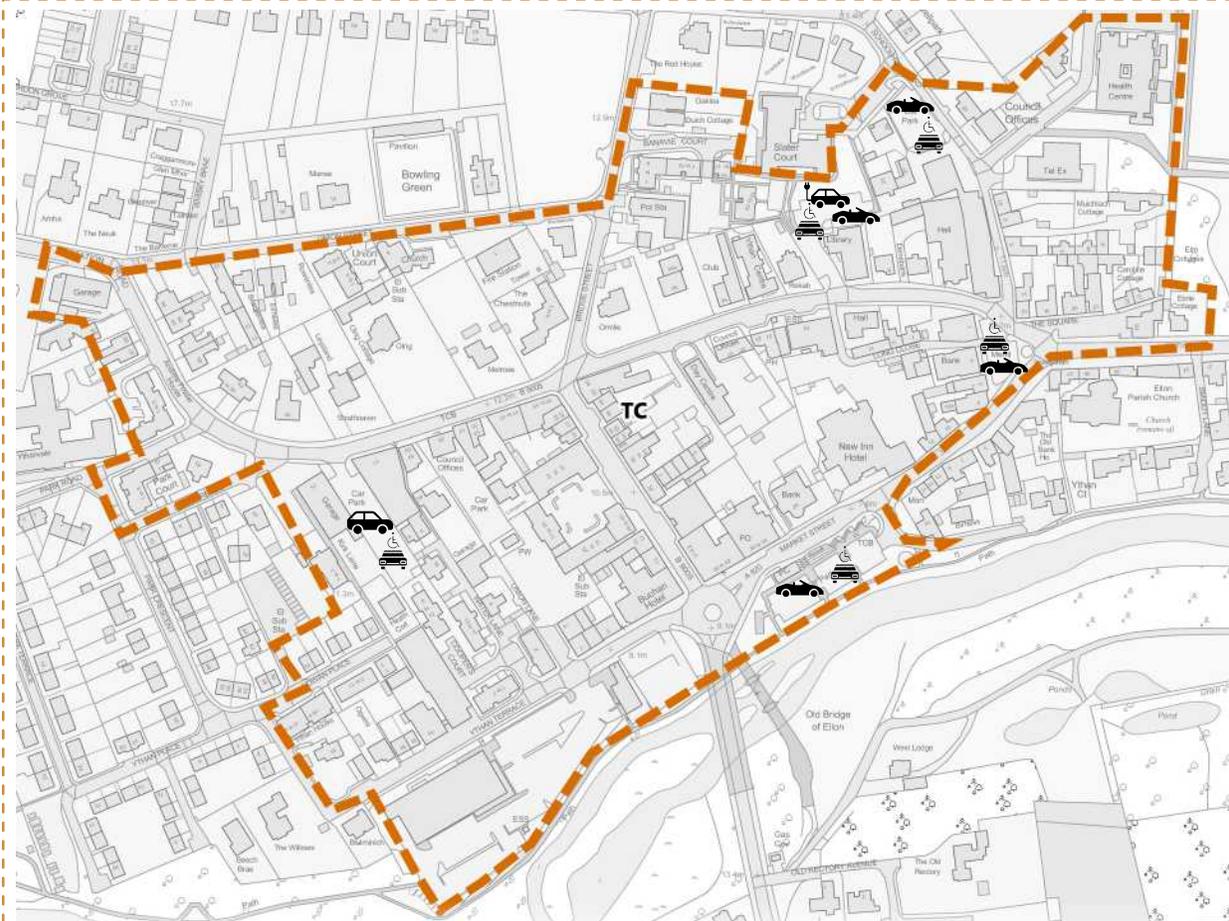
BUSINESSES	2	3	5
COMMUNITY	70	94	92

"There should be free short stay parking."

"More free parking."

"Free parking for the first hour for short jobs e.g. picking up prescriptions."

"Remove short term parking charges to encourage more visitors into the town."



Images (Top to Bottom):
Market Street Car Park,
Schoolhill Car Park and
Station Road (West) Car Park.

Free Parking
 Paid Parking
 EV Charging Spaces
 Disabled Spaces

TRAFFIC & PARKING

CAR PARKING AVAILABILITY



Images: Entrance to Market Street Car Park.

“There needs to be more parking spaces.”

“There needs to be better parking facilities.”

“Lack of disabled parking outside the opticians.”

“Good car parking options available within a short walking distance.”

“Free parking can fill up quickly, meaning you have to pay for parking further away.”

Business and Community Survey, September 2021

HOW WOULD YOU RATE: PARKING AVAILABILITY?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor



Spaces

48

No. of Free Spaces

116

No. of Paid Spaces

12

No. of Disabled Spaces

2

No. of EV Charging Spaces

Observations: Comments were received through the 2021 community survey relating to the affordability of parking. These were largely regarding the wish to see the reintroduction of a free short stay period within the car parks to allow more users to make quick trips into the town centre, e.g. to pick up a prescription.

Comments within the 2021 survey relating to the availability of parking were quite mixed but the main themes coming through the comments related to the desire to see more parking spaces within the town centre, including disabled parking spaces. Although, the comments were mixed over 100 respondents noted that the availability of spaces was good. Whilst on site, it was evident that the free parking within the town centre filled up quickly where as the paid parking car parks were generally less busy with spaces noted at most point during the day when passing.

TRAFFIC & PARKING

EV CHARGING POINTS

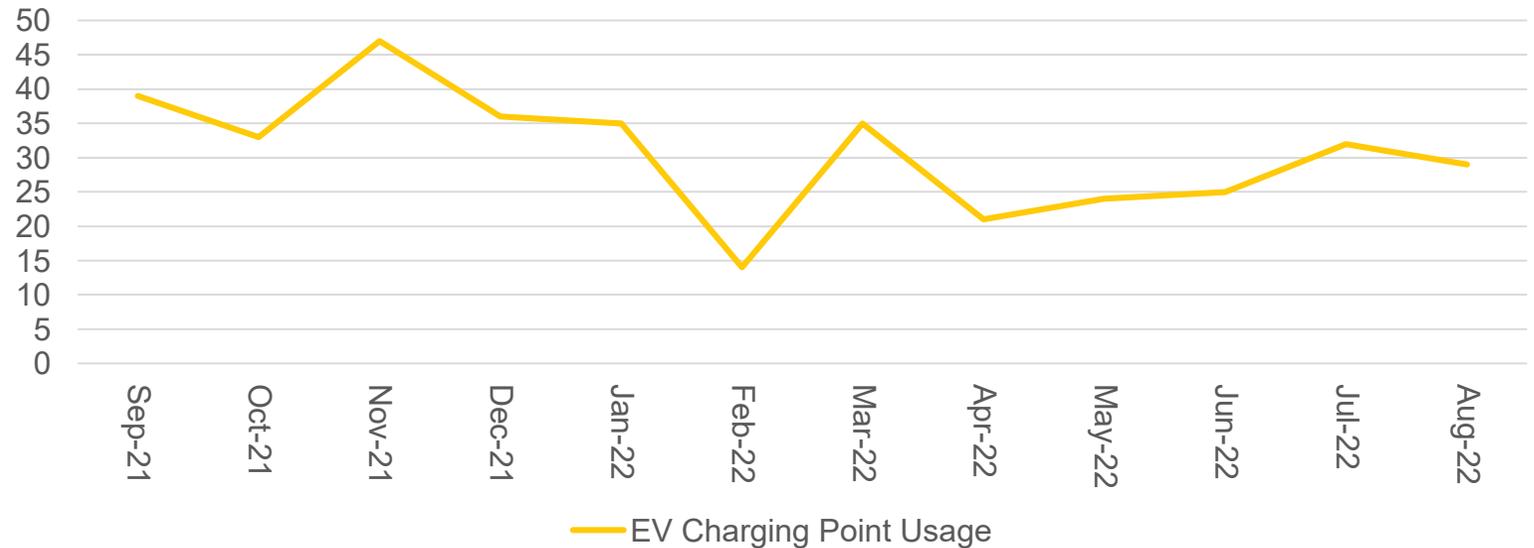
EV Charging Points

2 No. of 22kW charging spaces



Image: Station Road (East) Car Park.

EV Charging Point Usage



EV Charging Points



November 2021

Highest monthly usage of the charging points in Station Road (East) Car Park.

Observations: There are two spaces for electric vehicles in the town centre and are both located within the Station Road (East) Car Park. At time of the site visit none of the spaces were in use but looking at usage data since their installation the spaces are used on a regular basis. Through the survey there were comments received noting the need for more electric charging points in the town centre.

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.

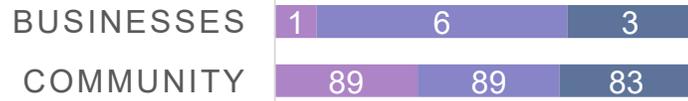
STREETS & SPACES

ATTRACTIVENESS OF TOWN CENTRE



HOW WOULD YOU RATE: ATTRACTIVENESS OF TOWN?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor

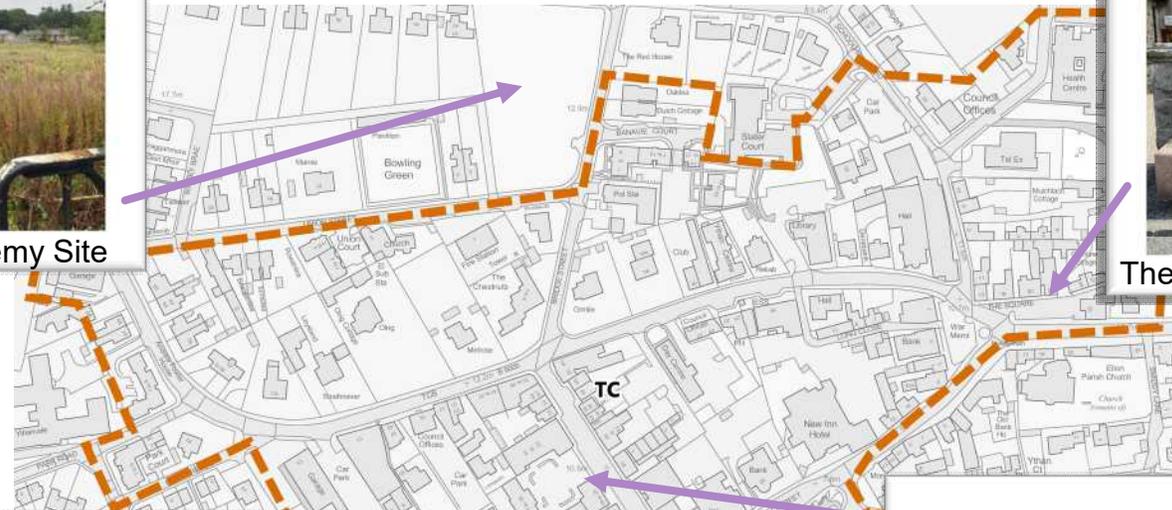


Observations: Overall the town centre within Ellon is very well kept which adds to the overall character and attractiveness of the town centre. The buildings are generally well kept, an example is shown by Market Street and there are a number of planters located within the town centre which along with the public art help to brighten the area.

One downside that was commented on through the 2021 surveys, however, was the vacant site located just to the north of the town centre boundary on Union Street. This is acknowledged but it is not thought that this detracts from the overall feeling within the town centre.



Old Academy Site



The Square



Market Street



Neil Ross Square

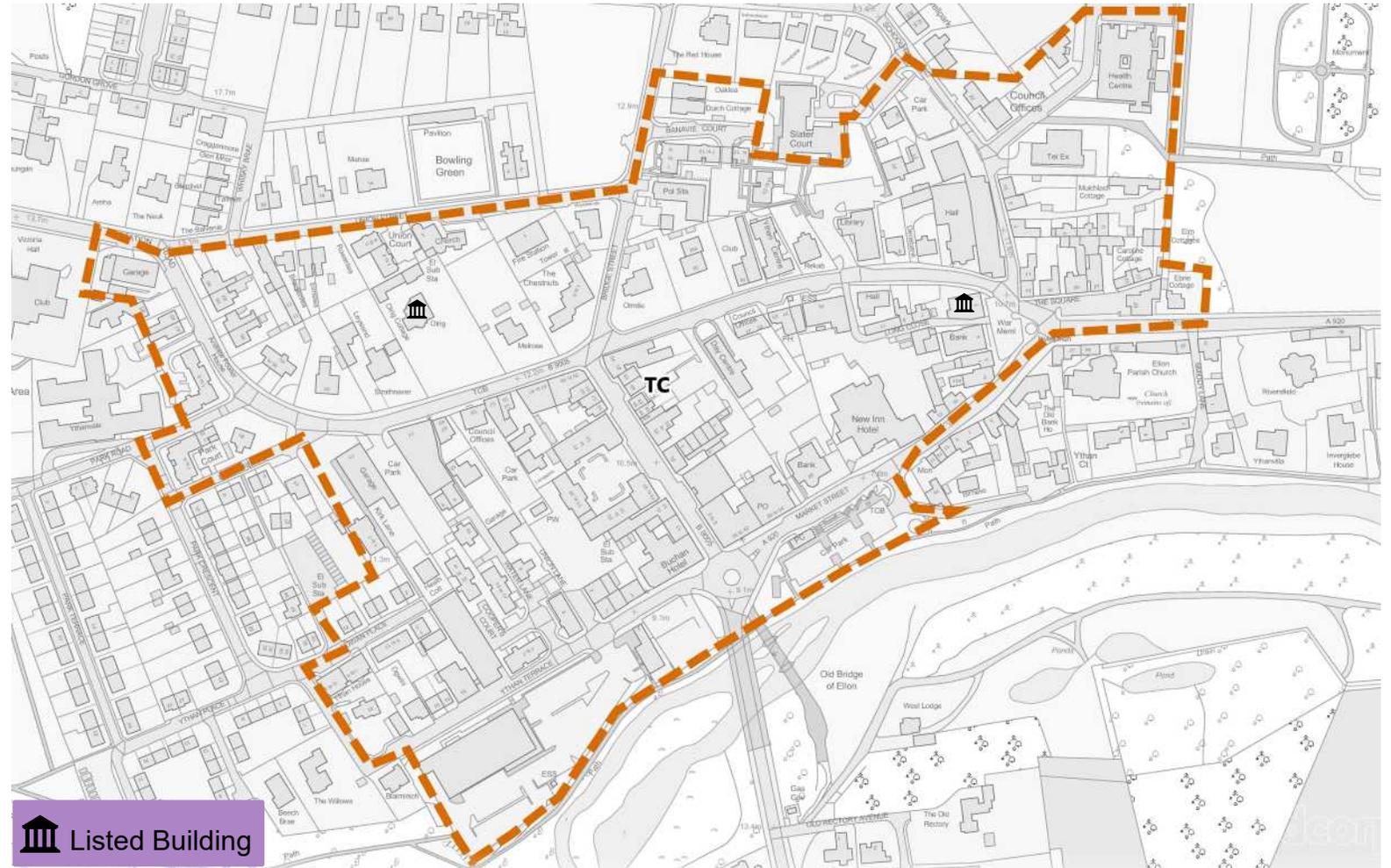
Observations: There are 2 listed buildings located within Ellon Town Centre, both of which are Category B listed. One of the listed buildings is a residential property which is in good condition. There are two more listed buildings on Market Street, which falls adjacent to the town centre boundary. The listed structure in The Square relates to the sculpture only as opposed to the building on which it is located.

Another positive, in relation to the historic environment is that there are no buildings at risk within Ellon Town Centre.



Image: The Square.

STREETS & SPACES: HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT



STREETS & SPACES: SEATING

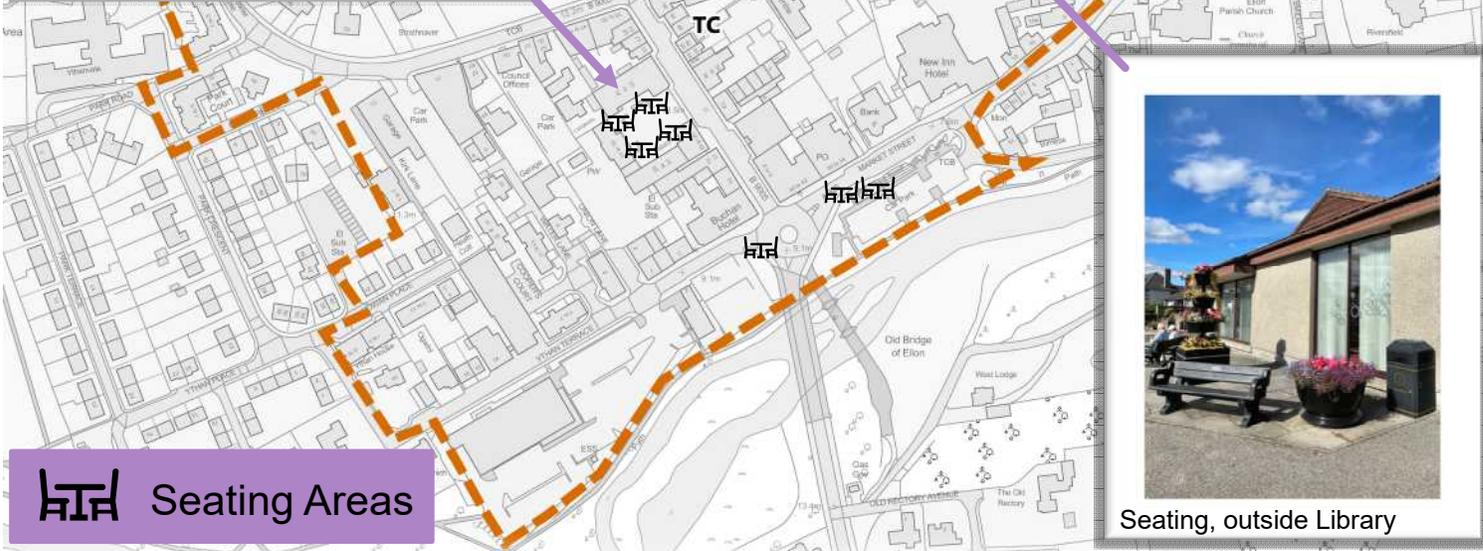
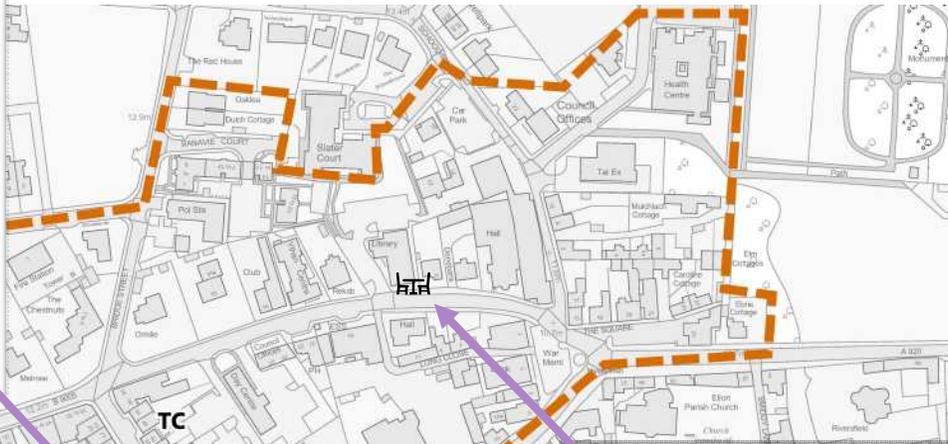
HOW WOULD YOU RATE: SEATING/ AREAS TO CONGREGATE

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor

BUSINESSES	1	5	4
COMMUNITY	69	93	96



Seating, Neil Ross Square



HIA Seating Areas



Seating, outside Library

“Seating area above the toilet block needs maintenance.”

“More seating areas to stop and use coffee shops.”

“Make Neil Ross Square more appealing with nice seating.”

“Need more outside seating areas within the town centre.”

“More attractive seating areas would be welcomed.”

Business and Community Survey, September 2021

Observations: It was observed through the site visit that there was two main seating areas, one at Neil Ross Square and the other at Market Street with two other locations of benches. Through the 2021 survey the desire for more seating within the town centre was highly commented on.

Additionally, it was commented that the seating provided within the town centre could be more attractive and that the seating on Market Street requires maintenance. During the 2022 survey work it is still considered that maintenance is required to the seating within the town centre, but particularly on Market Street.

Observations: There is a good mix of different public art within Ellon Town Centre, with four different pieces of art on show.

The metalwork on the roundabout at the southern end of Bridge Street provides an attractive welcome into the town centre. The metalwork on Market Street outlines the story of the town and why the town grew up in the location that it has. The last piece of metalwork is located in Neil Ross Square. All three of these pieces of art are in good condition and create for an attractive setting within the town.

The fourth piece of artwork is located at the entrance to Ellon Shopping Centre from Bridge Street and was an art piece that was commissioned in 2015. This artwork brightens the town centre through the colour choices of the mural. However, given that the artwork is now 6 years old it is beginning to crack and chip which over time will begin to have an impact on the overall attractiveness of the area and the artwork itself. It is considered that maintenance is now required to ensure this piece of art contributes to the attractiveness of the town centre.

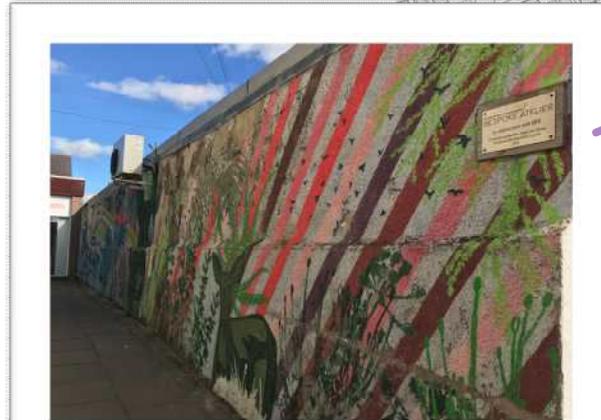
STREETS & SPACES: PUBLIC ART



Neil Ross Square



Market Street



Entrance to Ellon Shopping Centre

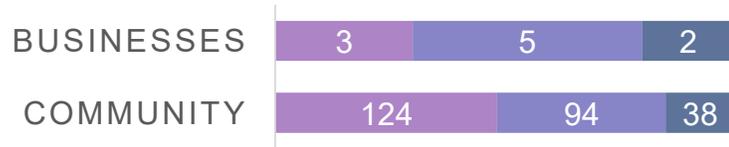


Bridge Street Roundabout

STREETS & SPACES: PAVEMENTS

HOW WOULD YOU RATE: PAVEMENT CLEANLINESS?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor



“Kerbs need maintained.”

“Pavement cleanliness could be much better.”

“Maintenance required due to weeds.”

“Huge amount of chewing gum on the pavements in certain areas.”

Business and Community Survey, September 2021

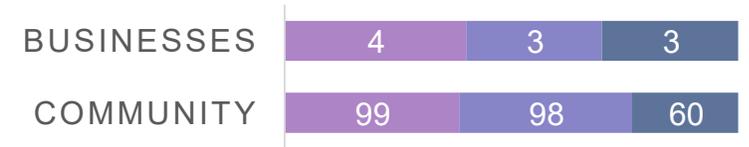
Observations: Generally, the condition of the pavements within Ellon Town Centre were noted as being good through officer survey work, which respondents to the 2021 surveys were generally in agreement with. There were certain areas noted through the town centre as requiring maintenance, as weeds were growing at the edges of the pavements.

There were also a few occasions where the pavements were noted as narrow which could lead to difficulties if you meet someone coming the opposite way, two examples being on Market Street and Station Road.



HOW WOULD YOU RATE: PAVEMENT QUALITY?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor



“Widen pavement on Market Street.”

“Pavements need slabs fixed.”

“Need better pavements.”

“Pavements narrow when meeting people coming the other direction in some locations.”

“Limited access for crossing at lower kerbs in certain areas.”

“Don’t feel pavements cater for disabled people or elderly people.”

Business and Community Survey, September 2021

"Far to many empty shops."

"Need more shops and less empty units."

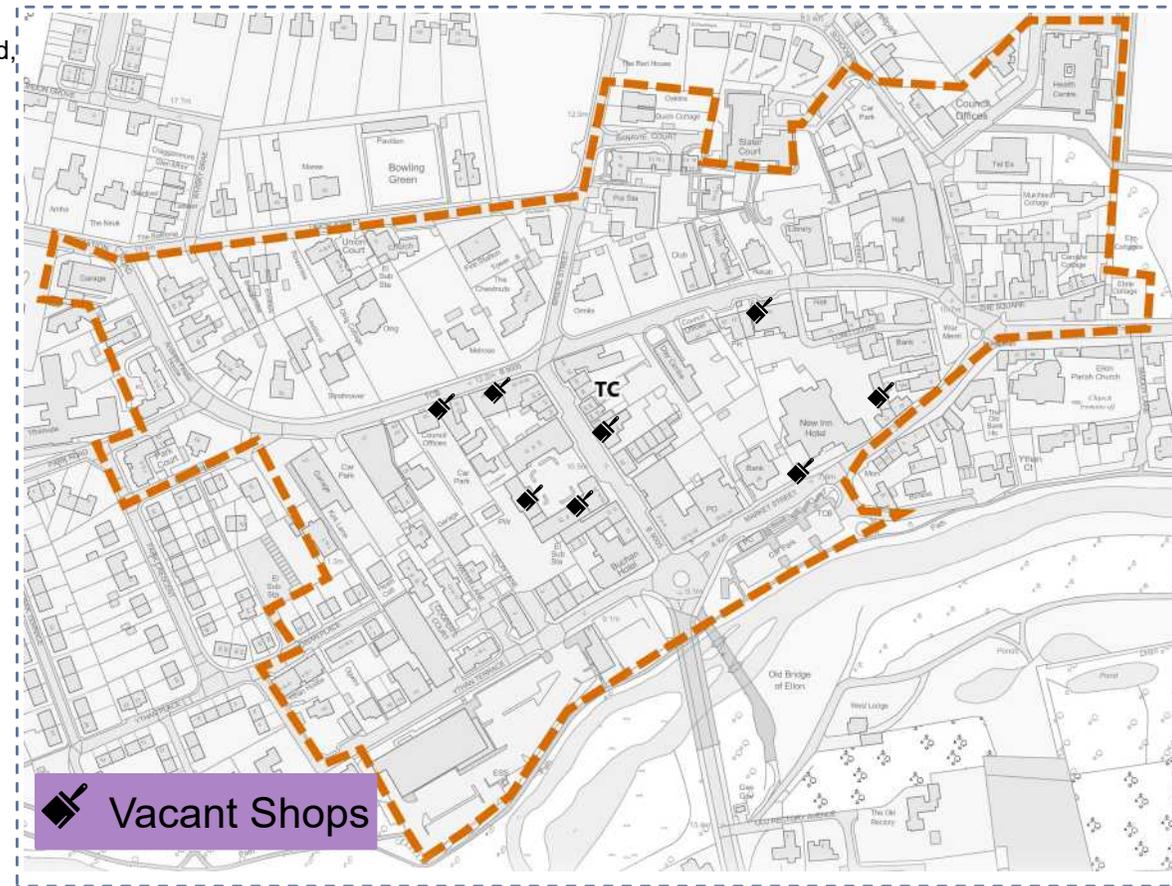
"I would like to see the current empty shops become unique independent shops or restaurants."

"Keep trying to fill the empty units so that more diversity can be offered."

Business and Community Survey, September 2021

STREETS & SPACES: VACANT RETAIL UNITS

Images (Top Left and Clockwise): Station Road, Station Road, Bridge Street and Neil Ross Square.



Observations: The number of vacant units within the town centre has increased since 2021 going from a 5.5% vacancy rate to a 8.7% vacancy rate. However, this is still lower than the Scottish average of 15.7% (Local Data Company).

The increase in vacancy rates can be attributed partly to the now vacant bank building and the new units in New Inn Courtyard one of which is vacant and then the general turnover in the town centre. Comments received through the 2021 surveys noted the desire to see less vacant units in the town so this will need to continue to be monitored.

Vacant Retail Units:

8 Vacant Units in the town centre

8.7%

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.

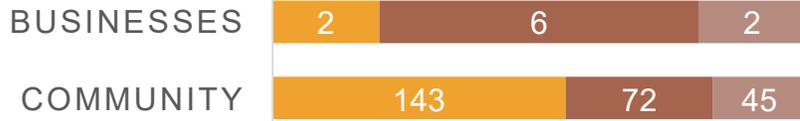
NATURAL SPACE



Observations: Ellon's location next to the River Ythan is undoubtedly an asset for the town and many people commented positively on that aspect. There is a variety of well-maintained planting across the town centre but there is scope to increase this both at the Square and more substantially at Neil Ross Square. This would be welcomed, providing attractive places to sit, eat and socialise outside.

HOW WOULD YOU RATE: PARKS & GREEN SPACES?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor



"Pretty centre, with the river and lovely flower beds maintained by the community to keep the town looking good."

"Ellon Civic Pride do a great job with all the flowers. The Riverside walk is very nice too."

"Consider installing a small garden in the square, to include the war memorial."

"Bigger greenery in Neil Ross Square to attract people spending time there - maybe even a water feature?"

Business and Community Survey, September 2021



Interesting planting schemes help to soften the hard surfaces across the town centre

Ellon Castle Garden and Deer Park are on the boundary of the town centre

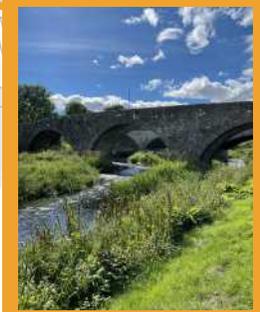


Neil Ross Square has a variety of trees and planters but the overall space feels quite hard

Ellon Civic Pride, are a group of volunteers dedicated to making Ellon clean and beautiful, including areas of the town centre such as Neil Ross Square. Visit their [Facebook](#) page to find out more.



Planting welcomes visitors to the town at the Market Street carpark



The River Ythan on the edge of the town centre is a valued natural asset

Good public places and facilities 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



HOW WOULD YOU RATE: LEISURE AND PLAY FACILITIES?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor

BUSINESSES	2	4	4
COMMUNITY	44	85	124

Observations: Ellon has few play and recreation sites within the town centre itself, but the presence of the Riverside walk and Deer Park on the town centre boundary was reflected through the survey. However, maintenance in a number of parks was noted as being required. Comments from the 2021 community survey also focused on a lack of opportunities for young people. Additionally, there are a number of play/leisure facilities within one mile of the town centre.

“Need lighting in parks in the evenings.”

“Better play parks in the town for children.”

“Tidy up the weeds along the river side path.”

“Playparks need better maintenance.”

“Need better recreational areas (for example skatepark and 4G football pitches.”



FACILITIES & AMENITIES: RETAILER REPRESENTATION

Retailer Representation

55% of businesses in the town centre are independent retailers

41% of businesses in the town centre are Class 1: Shops

21% of businesses in the town centre are Class 2: Financial, Professional and other services

“Better variety of shops required.”

More variety of shops to increase footfall.”

“Better variety of shops and attract some chains.”

“Need more variety of independent shops.”

“Greater range and quality of businesses required.”

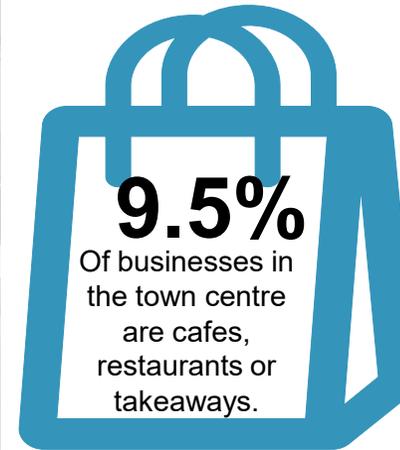
“There is not enough good quality shops.”

“Poor choice of shops.”

Business and Community Survey, September 2021

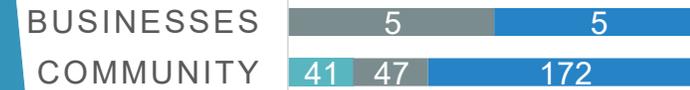


Image (Top to Bottom: Dee Street and High Street.



HOW WOULD YOU RATE: VARIETY OF SHOPS?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor



HOW WOULD YOU RATE: QUALITY OF SHOPS?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor



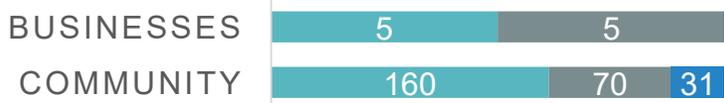
Observations: Ellon has a mix of independent and multiple retailers (chain stores). However, a large number of comments were received through the survey noting that the variety of shops within the town centre was poor and that there needed to be more variety of offering in order to increase the footfall within the town. 172 respondents from the community survey noted that the variety of retail within the town centre was poor.



FACILITIES & AMENITIES: CAFÉ AND RESTAURANTS

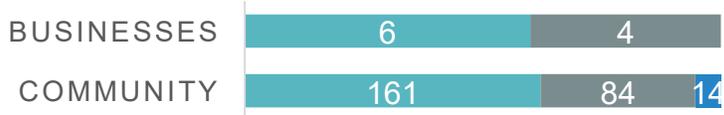
HOW WOULD YOU RATE: CAFÉ/ RESTAURANT CHOICE?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor



HOW WOULD YOU RATE: CAFÉ/ RESTAURANT QUALITY?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor



“We have excellent café, restaurant and takeaway services.”

“There are more than enough coffee shops/cafés but another restaurant choice would be nice.”

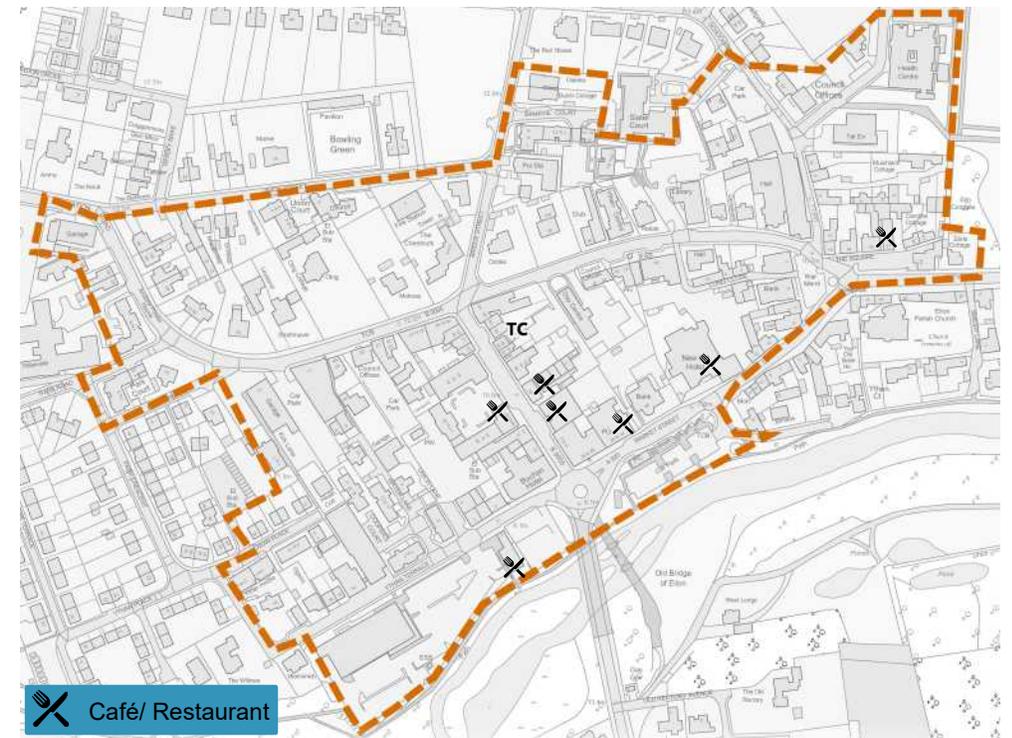
“Would like to see cafés with outdoor seating.”

“More cafés needed.”

“Need more choice of cafés and restaurants to eat in.”

“A modern restaurant in the town centre would be an improvement.”

Business and Community Survey, September 2021



Images (Left to Right): Café The Square, Café Ythan Terrace.

Observations: Although there were some comments received through the surveys noting that there should be more cafés and more choice in restaurants. Both of the topics relating to café/restaurant choice and quality rank within the top five out of all of the topics rated through the 2021 survey. At least 50% of respondents rated choice and quality of cafés/restaurants as good. Since the 2021 survey an additional café has opened on Ythan Terrace which offers a slight mix to the other cafés as it is dog friendly and located just off the paths at the riverside walks.

FACILITIES & AMENITIES: EVENING ECONOMY

HOW WOULD YOU RATE: THE VIBRANCY IN THE EVENING :

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor

BUSINESSES	1	3	6
COMMUNITY	14	87	151

“It would be good to see more evening opening hours.”

“Evenings can be difficult and noisy as there is nowhere for the youth to congregate.”

“There is not a lot that happens in the evenings.”

“There should be some more evening restaurant venues so the town centre is livelier in the evenings.”

“There is nobody around at nights.”

Business and Community Survey, September 2021

Observations: There are a number of units within the town centre that are open in the evening, namely bars, takeaway outlets and Hotels/Restaurants.

Through the 2021 community survey there were a number of comments received relating to there being very little to do in the town centre in the evening and the desire to see something for young people to attend. A number of comments also noted the wish for retail units to open later into the evening to allow flexibility and to bring people into the town centre at night time.

Examples of some of the units open in the evening.



The Bridge Bar

Buchan Hotel

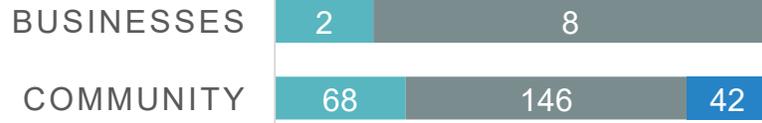
Zanres

☾★ Units open in evening

FACILITIES & AMENITIES: COMMUNITY AND VISITOR SATISFACTION

HOW WOULD YOU RATE: VALUE FOR MONEY?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor



“There is very little atmosphere in the town centre especially on a Saturday which should be a very busy day.”

“Need more range of shops within the town centre.”

“Very little affordable retail.”

“Service is not friendly in several businesses in the town centre.”

“There is a lack of cheap affordable options.”

“The staff in shops are always helpful and very friendly.”

Business and Community Survey, September 2021

Town Centre Offer:

36%

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

Business and Community Survey, September 2021

Observations: There was a mixed response gained from the respondents to the 2021 community survey on this particular topic as the standard of service in shops was rated within the top five of all of the topics however, the variety of goods available was within the bottom five of topics rated.

A large number of comments were also received through the community survey noting the lack of variety of the goods available in the town centre and the desire to see more choice both in terms of variety but also affordability. Since the 2021 survey a number of new units have opened in the town centre which may be reflected in the survey update next year.

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 Ellon in the ‘Towns and Villages’ section of their website:

1,842 Jan-Dec 2019

1,668 Jan-Dec 2020

2,226 Jan-Dec 2021

FACILITIES & AMENITIES: MARKET

“Better outdoor markets. Need more stalls.”

The farmers market does not have many farmers, mostly cakes, dessert and fish.”

“Compared to other markets very poor.”

“Farmers market encourages people into the town centre.”

“Monthly farmers market a great addition.”

“Fantastic farmers market.”

“Town seldom busy unless the farmers market is on.”

“I like the farmers market.”

“The farmers market is great but other than that there is no regular events to speak of.”

Business and Community Survey, September 2021

Observations: Ellon Farmers Market occurs on the last Saturday of the month between March and November. The market runs in Neil Ross Square between 09:00-13:00.

There was a mix of comments received through the 2021 surveys but generally the comments were of a more negative nature. These related to the desire to see more variety including farm produce and more stalls within the market. However, there were also other comments received noting positives the farmers market make to the town as it increases footfall with the town centre whilst it is on.

The farmers market was also rated within the top five topics of the 2021 business survey ratings.

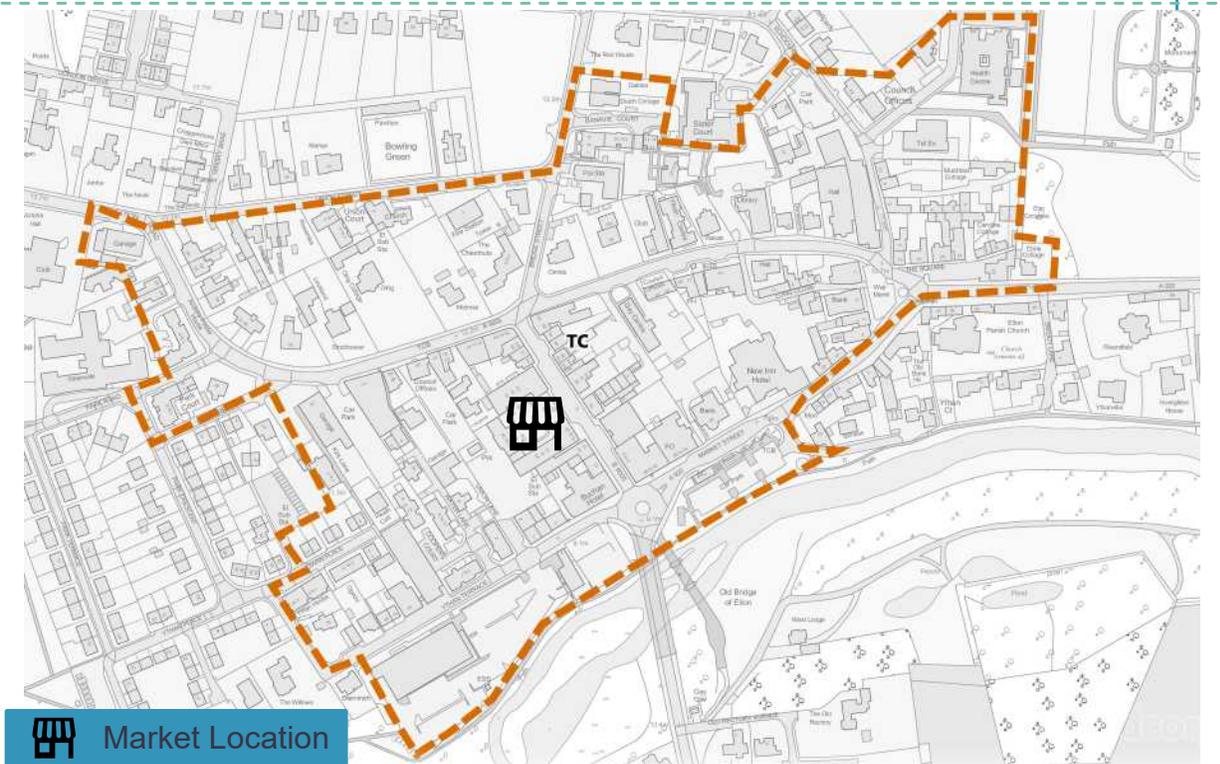


Image: Farmers Market Advertisement Bridge Street Junction.

HOW WOULD YOU RATE: THE MARKET?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor

BUSINESSES	6	4	
COMMUNITY	139	97	15

FACILITIES & AMENITIES: ONLINE SHOPPING

Online Offering

90% of businesses surveyed have online presence

11% of businesses surveyed sell online

100% of the businesses surveyed that sell online make 25% or less of their income from this

58% of the community surveyed said they are more likely to shop online rather than going into the town centre for the same item

66% of the community survey noted that their attitude towards online shopping had changed because of the COVID-19 pandemic

36% of the community survey noted that their usage of the town centre had increased because of the COVID-19 pandemic

Business and Community Survey, September 2021

Observations: There was a real mix of responses within the 2021 surveys relating to online shopping. However, there were three main themes apparent in the comments:

- Shopping local is important,
- Cost of items is generally cheaper online, and
- There is more choice/ variety of items when shopping online.

“More choice of similar items online.”

“Online shop for items that are not available within Ellon.”

“Important to shop local.”

“Cheaper to shop online.”

“I would choose to support local if I can.”

“Prefer to shop in Ellon as I like to see things before buying.”

Business and Community Survey, September 2021



Image: Bridge Street.

FACILITIES & AMENITIES:

CONNECTIVITY

Observations: Mobile coverage within Ellon Town Centre is very strong with all of the top networks being accessible at 4G level. There is currently only limited 5G coverage within the town centre on the EE network only.

The town centre is also well served by broadband coverage for both residential and commercial units with access to ultrafast broadband available.

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

Broadband Coverage in Ellon 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	✓

Average Speed in Ellon Town Centre:

	Download:	40.2 Mbps
	Upload:	16.6 Mbps

Mobile Coverage in Ellon Town Centre:

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

 Good coverage
  You may experience problems
  No coverage
  Some 5G availability

FACILITIES & AMENITIES: OTHER SERVICES

Observations: Ellon Town Centre is well serviced by ATM machines. Additionally, there is a Defibrillator unit within the town centre on the side of the Library allowing access to residents should there be a need for it.



Image: Defib Unit, Library, Station Road.

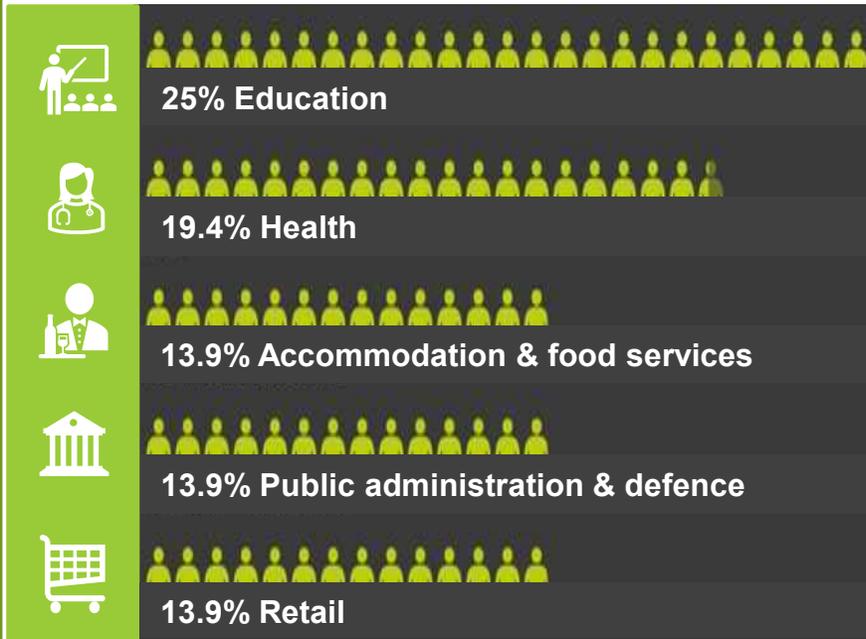
Good-quality work offers important benefits through income, activity, social contact, sense of identity and job satisfaction. A thriving local economy can provide work opportunities and help create lively places where people want to spend time.

WORK & LOCAL ECONOMY



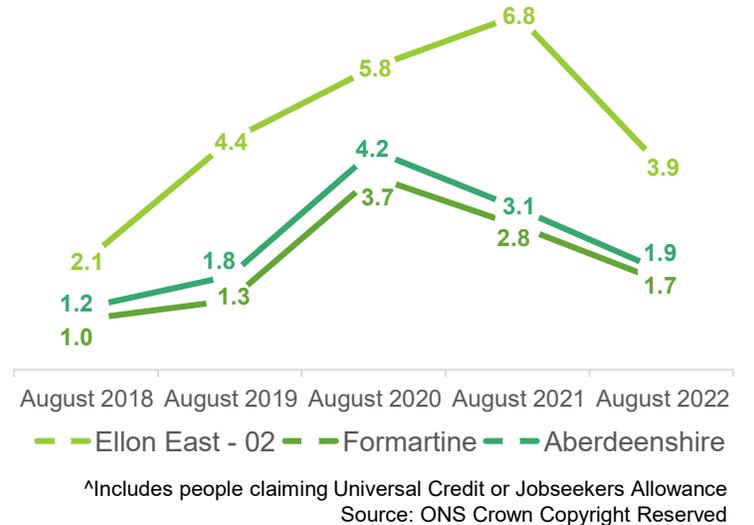
Observations: The most recent employment data shows a high proportion of jobs within the public sector in the town, with retail, hospitality and public administration also key sectors as would be expected. This jobs picture is in line with the income levels for the area, which are lower than for Formartine and Aberdeenshire. The claimant count rate increased in 2020, partly in response to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic but the rate has dropped again this year. Whilst the Ellon Town Centre claimant rate was lower than it was in 2019, it still remains higher than the Aberdeenshire and Formartine rate.

Top 5 Employment Sectors 2021 Ellon Town Centre Data Zone*



Source: Business Register and Employment Survey 2021

CLAIMANT COUNT RATE^ (%)



Settlement Type:
Other Urban Area
(Settlements of 10,000 – 124,999 people)
Scottish Government's Urban Rural Classification, 8-fold

Median Household Income 2021
Town Centre Data Zone*
£24,724



£41,103 Formartine;
£36,889 Aberdeenshire

Source: © CACI Limited 1996 - 2021 This report shall be used solely for academic, personal and/or non-commercial purposes.

Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2020

Town Centre Data Zone*:

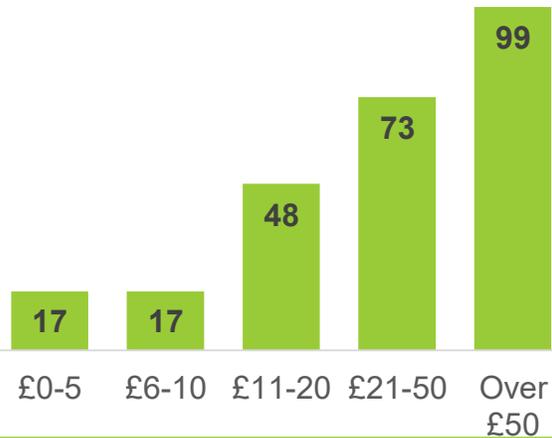
41- 45% most deprived in Scotland

* The data zone (S01006959) that includes the majority of the town centre.

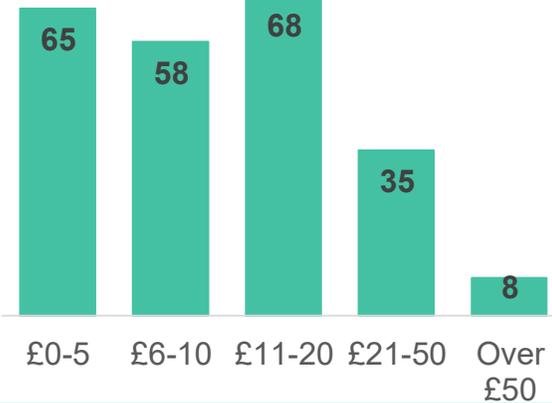
WORK & LOCAL ECONOMY: AVERAGE CONSUMER SPEND 2021

Observations: The consumer spend profiles in 2021 paint an interesting picture and highlight the main attractions for people visiting the town centre. Most larger spend was confined to Food Shopping but we see that Takeaways were also popular with Other Shopping and eating out at similar levels. There was little spend on Events/ Entertainment, echoing comments received from the surveys that said there were few options for things to do in the town centre. This area has the most potential for increased spend.

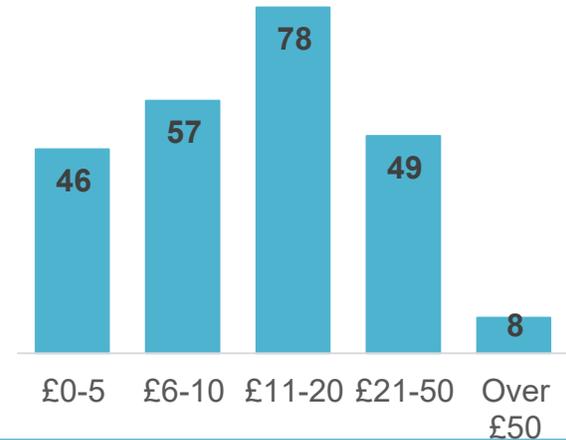
Food Shopping



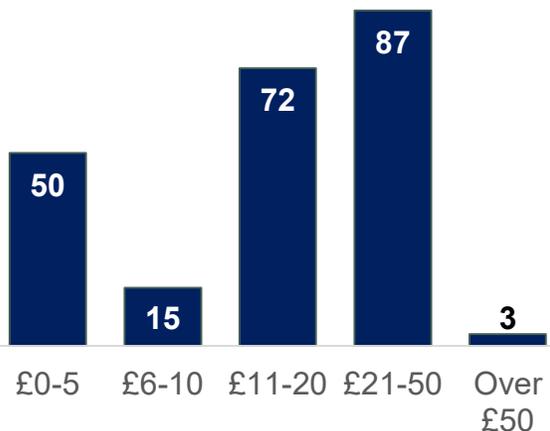
Other Shopping



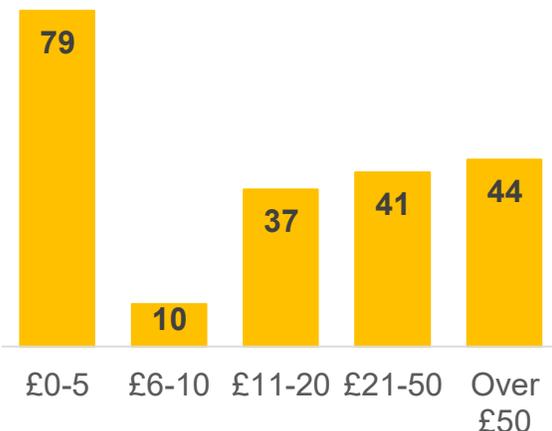
Café/ Restaurant



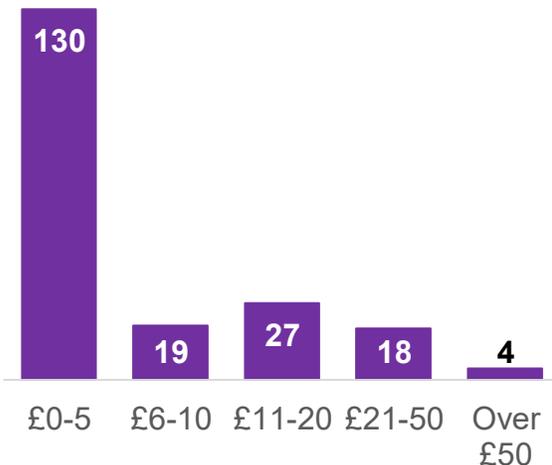
Takeaway



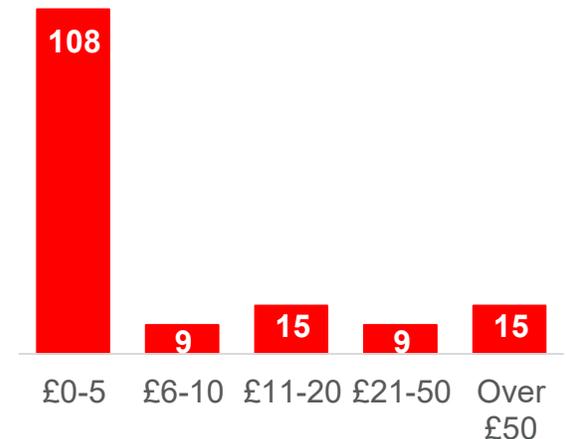
Hair & Beauty



Events/ Entertainment



Other



WORK & LOCAL ECONOMY: BUSINESS SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS 2021

Observations: 10 businesses responded to the survey in 2021 and provided a very positive outlook for the town, despite 70% of respondents reporting a reduction in turnover due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. 70% of businesses were confident in future business performance in the town centre which is encouraging, with 20% also considering growth. Businesses were making use of online tools but this could be supported further.

70%

of business owners surveyed were **established** businesses in the town centre and **30% were start-ups**. None were looking to sell or retire

100%

of business owners surveyed were **Independent** businesses

70%

of business owners surveyed were either **confident** or **extremely confident** about future business performance in Ellon

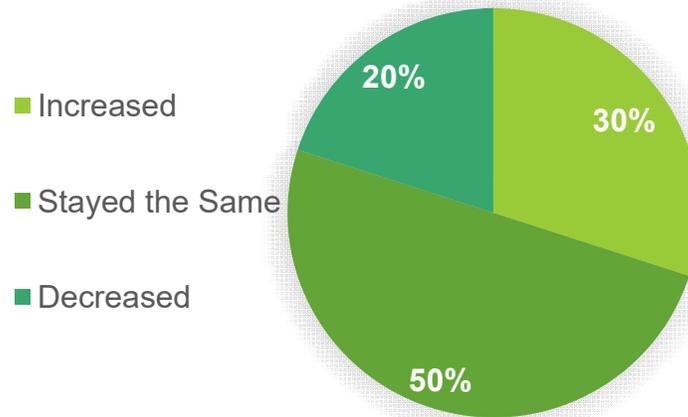
20%

of business owners were looking to **grow** or **expand** in the next year. **50%** were currently unsure about their plans. **30%** were **not** considering growth or expansion

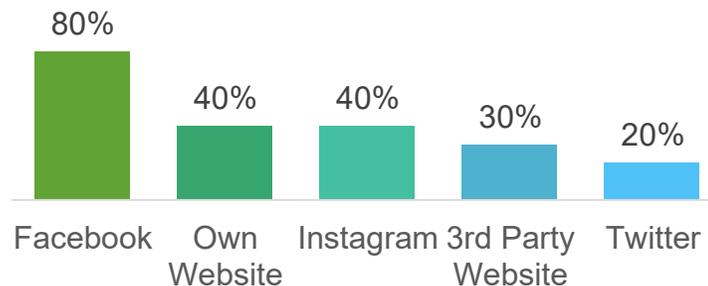
"I feel that my business will expand as the town does."

"There's more useful shops opened in the last few years."

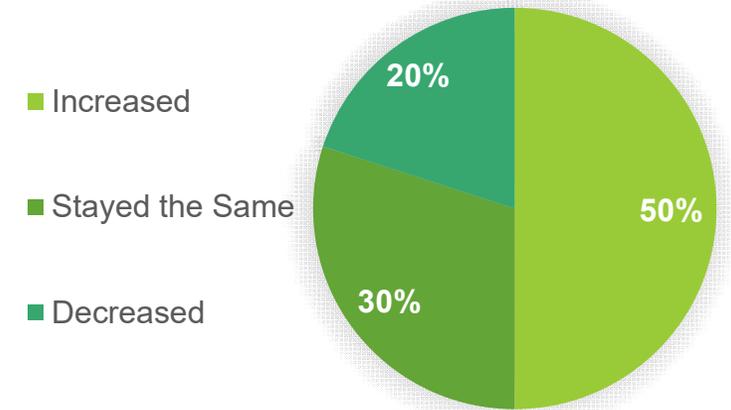
Has employment at your premises changed in the past five years?



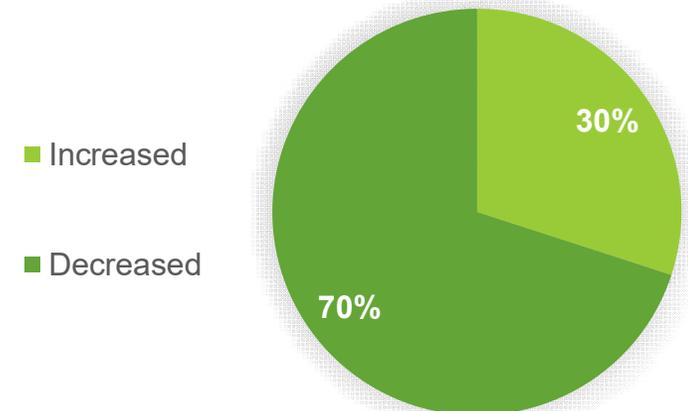
Top 5 Online Marketing Tools Used



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



What difference have the Covid restrictions had on turnover during the period March 2020 to April 2021?



WORK & LOCAL ECONOMY: PROPERTY

Observations: The property market last year looked promising with a number of new businesses opening in the town. However, the vacancy rate has increased this year with some recently vacant units now present. It may be challenging to find an occupant for larger vacant premises, particularly in Neil Ross Square and Bridge Street. Community responses in 2021 suggested that more retail units would be welcomed over services such as hairdressers or takeaways. The high proportion of businesses in rental properties and comments received suggested that high rents could be an issue and are off-putting to potential start-ups. A possible solution could be to explore multi-use space for new businesses to develop their concepts before committing to premises. This could be an opportunity within larger vacant units. Investment in town centre stock was encouraging with 40% of respondents from the business survey confirming that they were looking to invest in their premises within the next five years.

“A few new businesses have opened up in recent years. Would be good to see this continue and offer more variety.”

“A lot of empty buildings and wasted land that have a lot of potential are sat empty. A lot of struggles during pandemic but yet increase in business rate/ rent is off putting for people who would have considered taking building on (me for one!).”

“More retail outlets for people to stay and spend local.”

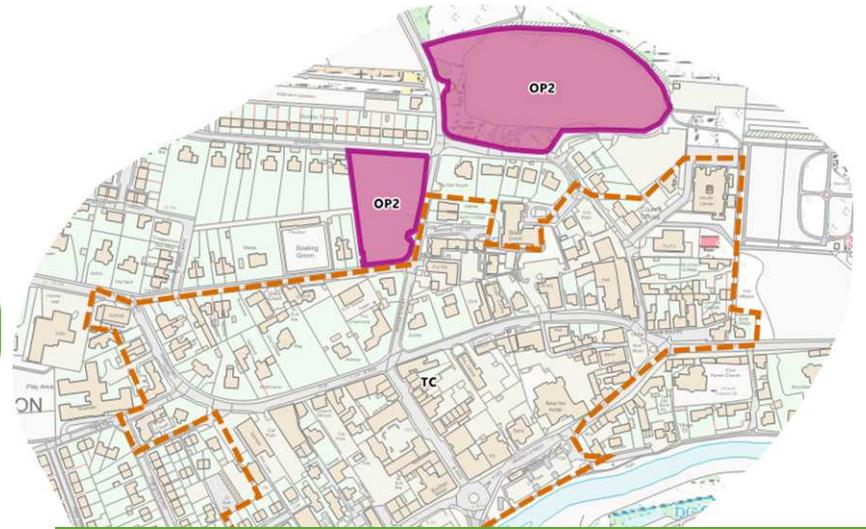
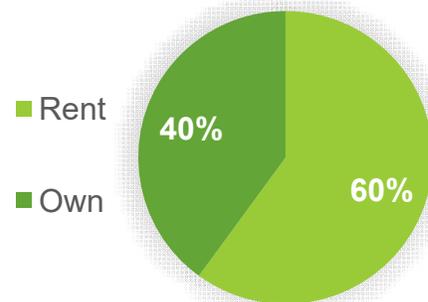
“Like to see opportunities for pop up shops or buildings that allow use for multiple small businesses.”

Business and Community Survey, September 2021



30% of business respondents said they would invest in their premises in the next year, with **10%** in the next five years. **40%** were unsure of their investment plans and **20%** had no plans.

Do you rent or own your premises?



Edge of Town Centre Opportunity Site: OP2: Mixed Use Type - Mixed use options being explored including housing, community uses & office space. An application for offices and a community facility was approved in March 2022.

Planning Applications:

Within the town centre seven planning applications were approved in in the year August 2021-2022. Of note were:

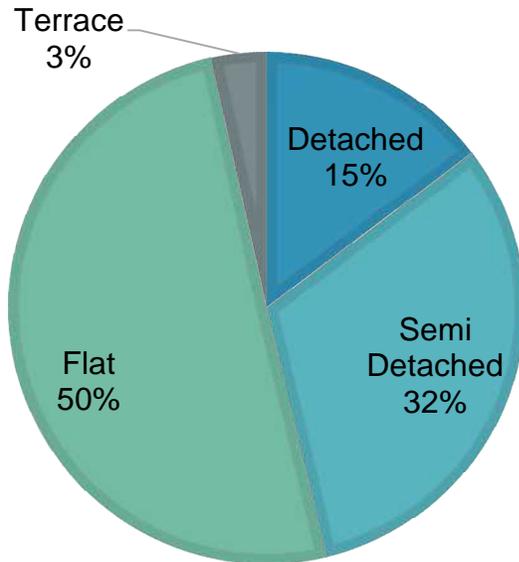
- Erection of decking for seated eating area at Buchan Hotel;
- Alterations to pharmacy shopfront;
- Change of use of offices (Class 4) to shop (Class 1);
- Change of use of first floor from office (Class 2) to flat (sui generis);
- Change of use from office (Class 4) to yoga/pilates studio (Class 11) and holistic therapy (Class 2);
- Amendment (extension) to opening hours of previously approved business development.

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



The mix of dwelling types within the town centre is shown above. The largest proportion of dwellings are flats and there is a strong presence of flats above commercial units but there are also purpose built flats on Union Street for example. In terms of tenure the majority of the dwellings in Ellon Town Centre are either owned outright 30% or are Council Houses 25%.

Housing Profile and Population

The overall population total for Ellon in 2020 was 10,070 and it is estimated that approximately 481 people live within the town centre in 2022.

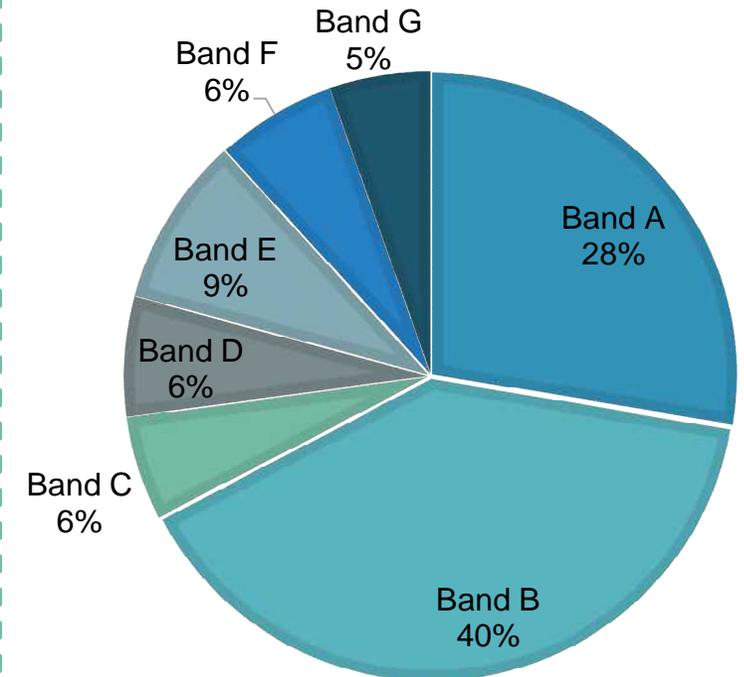
The average house price for dwellings within the town centre boundary in 2018 was £207,273 compared with the average house price in Aberdeenshire of £230,038.



Image: Bridge Street.

In terms of Council Tax Bands (2021), Ellon Town Centre has dwellings in Council Tax Bands A – G. The majority of dwellings however, fall within Band B at 40% of the total.

Council Tax Band



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: The range of events scored in the bottom five indicators in both the 2021 community and business surveys, but this might be influenced by the ongoing impact of COVID-19 pandemic 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 facilities for young people are lacking and the request for additional events for all ages was a popular comment.

“There should be more community events.”

“Better communication about events and more events in the town centre”

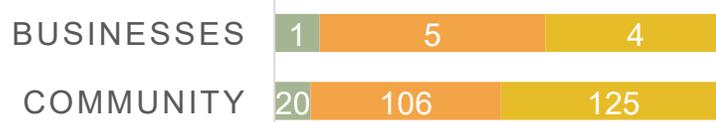
“More events in outdoor open spaces to bring people into the town centre.”

“More social events for all ages.”

Business and Community Survey, September 2021

HOW WOULD YOU RATE: RANGE OF EVENTS?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor



SOCIAL CONTACT



Venue	Indoor / Outdoor	Opening Times
Ellon Baptist Church	Indoor	Mon & Fri: 10:00 Foodbank Mon: 18:30 Kids JAM Club Tues: 10:00 Be Creative Group Tues: 19:45 Bible and Prayer Group Wed: 10:00 Parent and Toddler Group Thurs: 10:00 Seniors Friendship Group Fri: 19:00 YFriday Youth Group Sun: 10:30 Service, 17:00 Prayer Meeting and 18:00 Evening Service
Ellon Catholic Church	Indoor	Tues and Fri: 10:00 Mass Sat: 18:00 Mass Sun: 11:30 Mass
Ellon Library	Indoor	Tues, Thurs: 09:30-18:30 Fri 09:00-17:00 Sat: 10:00-14:00



Image: Ellon Baptist Church, Station Road.

Town Centre Events*^



The following events are planned over the next year:

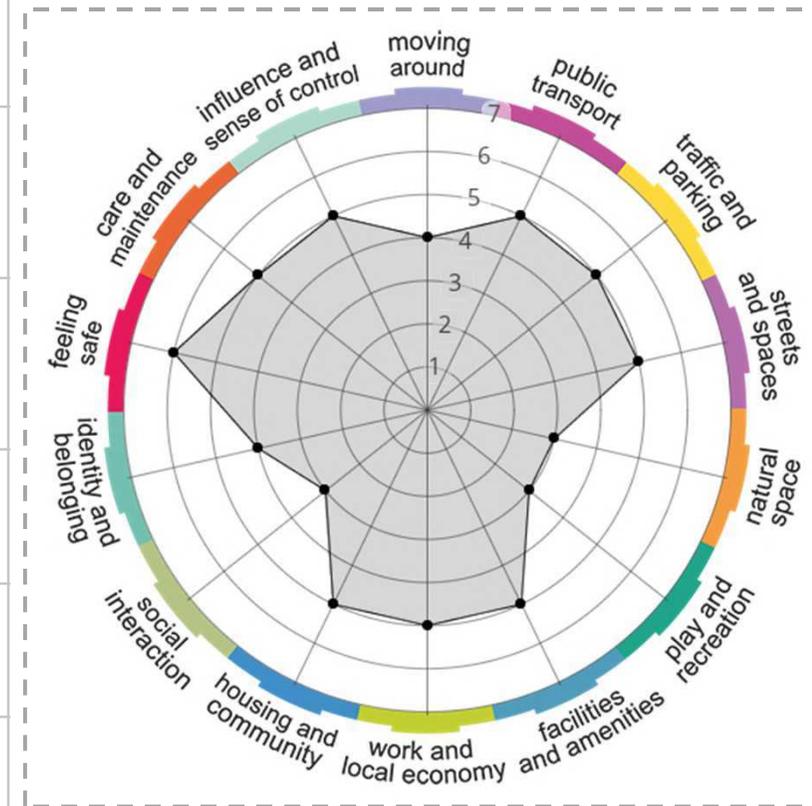
Farmers Market

Last Saturday of the Month (March-November)

*Not an exhaustive list ^Correct at time of survey

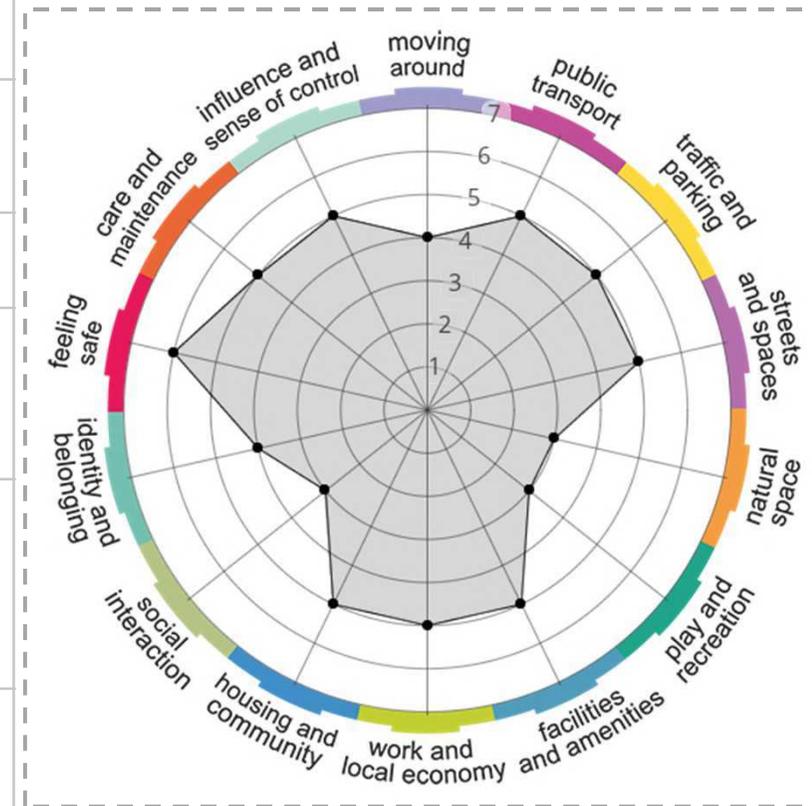
KEY CONSIDERATIONS & OPPORTUNITIES

Theme	Key Improvements
Identity and belonging Rating: 4	Views towards the feel of the town centre were mixed, with strong negative and positive opinions. For those who felt negatively, improving vibrancy, increasing the range and affordability of retail outlets and improving provision for young people would make a difference.
Feeling safe Rating: 6	Overall a very positive indicator for the town centre, particularly in relation to safety during the day. Safety in the evening however, was less well scored and this was attributed to the perception of anti-social behaviour in Neil Ross Square. Interventions could consider tackling this issue.
Care and maintenance Rating: 5	Through the survey the maintenance of the buildings were noted as a positive as they were well kept. However, concerns were raised with weeds in the gutters of some buildings and pavement areas. Any work to remove these weeds would make a visible difference.
Influence and sense of control Rating: 5	Ellon has organised, active volunteer groups working to improve the town centre. A lack of awareness of some of the key groups was evident. Increased marketing and promotion and visible projects could make a difference.
Moving around Rating: 4	The town centre is generally easy to navigate with a large pedestrianised area at Neil Ross Square. Some roads are difficult to cross. Signage is on the whole informative and plentiful. A focus on improved cycling provision could be considered.
Public transport Rating: 5	Ellon is reasonably well provided for with bus services during the day. However the evening provision was more limited. This could be an area for consideration.
Traffic and parking Rating: 5	Ellon is well served by parking spaces, but there were a number of comments received through the surveys requesting additional free parking spaces to support the businesses. Another issue raised was the safety of the junction for cars and pedestrians at the Bridge Street and Station Road. An assessment of this junction could make a difference.



KEY CONSIDERATIONS & OPPORTUNITIES (CONTINUED)

Theme	Key Improvements
<p>Streets and spaces Rating: 5</p>	The town centre is generally well kept and was positively looked at through the surveys. There were a couple of issues that could be addressed in order to improve the feel of the town which includes filling the vacant units and also general tidy up of the pavements.
<p>Natural space Rating: 3</p>	Although Ellon Town Centre is situated next to excellent natural, open space there is no green area within the town centre itself. There is a good range of planters/hanging baskets. Neil Ross Square offers an opportunity to address the lack of green space.
<p>Play and recreation Rating: 3</p>	There are no play and recreation facilities within Ellon Town Centre however, there are a number of parks and open spaces on the boundary of the town centre.
<p>Facilities and amenities Rating: 5</p>	There are a number of services within Ellon Town Centre but through the surveys under 50% of respondents noted that they agreed Ellon had what they would expect to see in a town centre. This could be explored with the residents to see what they feel Ellon is lacking.
<p>Work and local economy Rating: 5</p>	There is a good range of employment opportunities within the town centre, but the claimant count rate is higher than other areas. However, businesses are confident about their future performance and some are looking to grow and invest in their premises. Exploring multi-use space for new businesses to develop their concepts before committing to premises would be welcomed.
<p>Housing and community Rating: 5</p>	There is a good mix of tenure and type of dwellings within the town centre. There is a majority of flats within the town centre but this is expected. The mix of tenure should be maintained so that the town centre provides for all.
<p>Social contact Rating: 3</p>	There are a number of venues for people to meet within the town centre but there was a large demand to see additional events happening in the town centre through the surveys. Notably events for all ages within the community.



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 Quality
4. Café/ Restaurant Choice
5. Ease of Getting Around

Top 5 Lowest Scoring Categories:

1. Variety of Shops
2. Vibrancy in the Evening
3. Variety of Goods Available
4. Range of Events
5. Leisure and Play Facilities

Business

Top 5 Highest Scoring Categories:

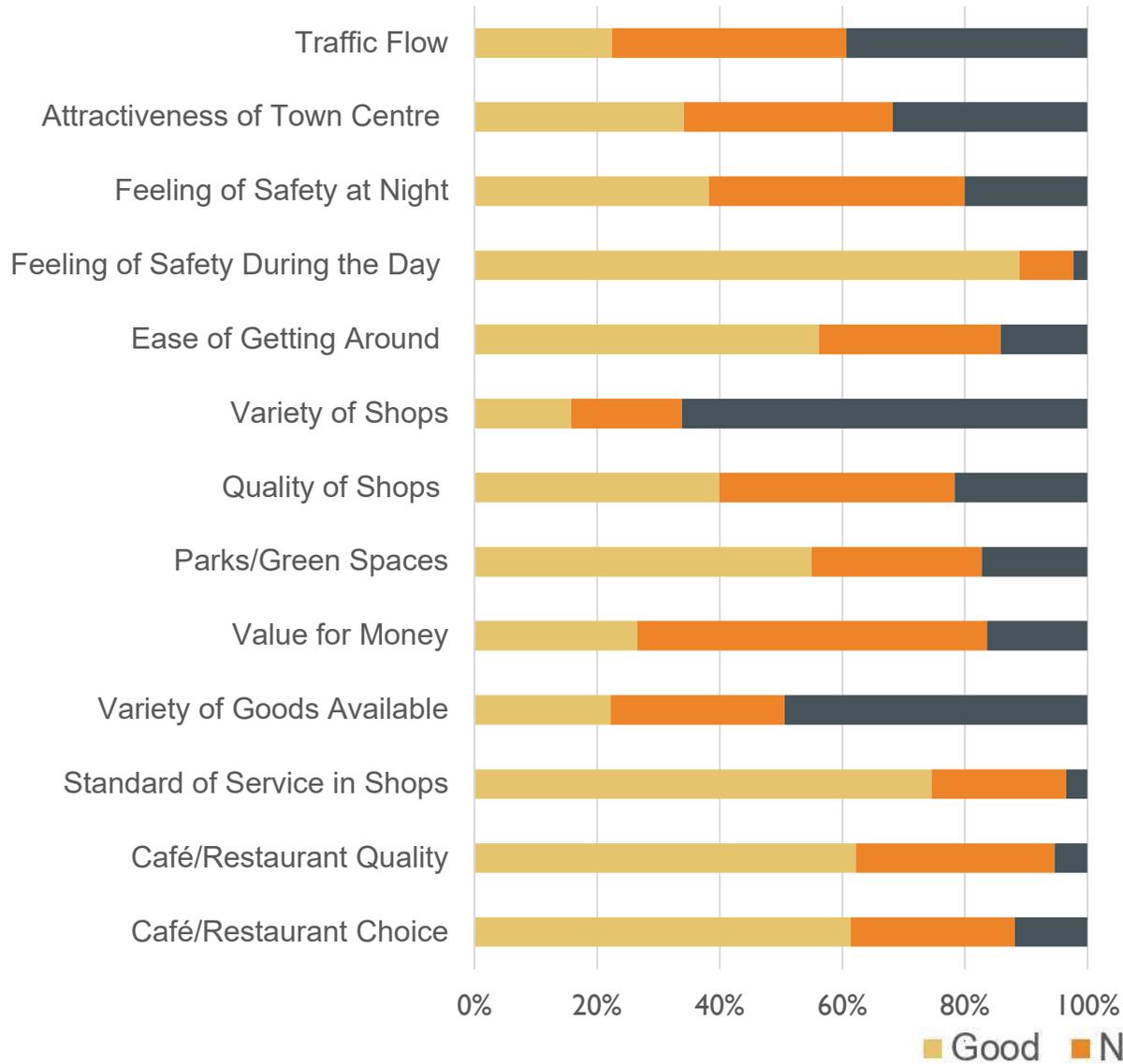
1. Feeling of Safety During the Day
2. Standard of Service in Shops
- =3. Café/ Restaurant Quality
- =3. Farmer's Market
4. Café/ Restaurant Choice

Top 5 Lowest Scoring Categories:

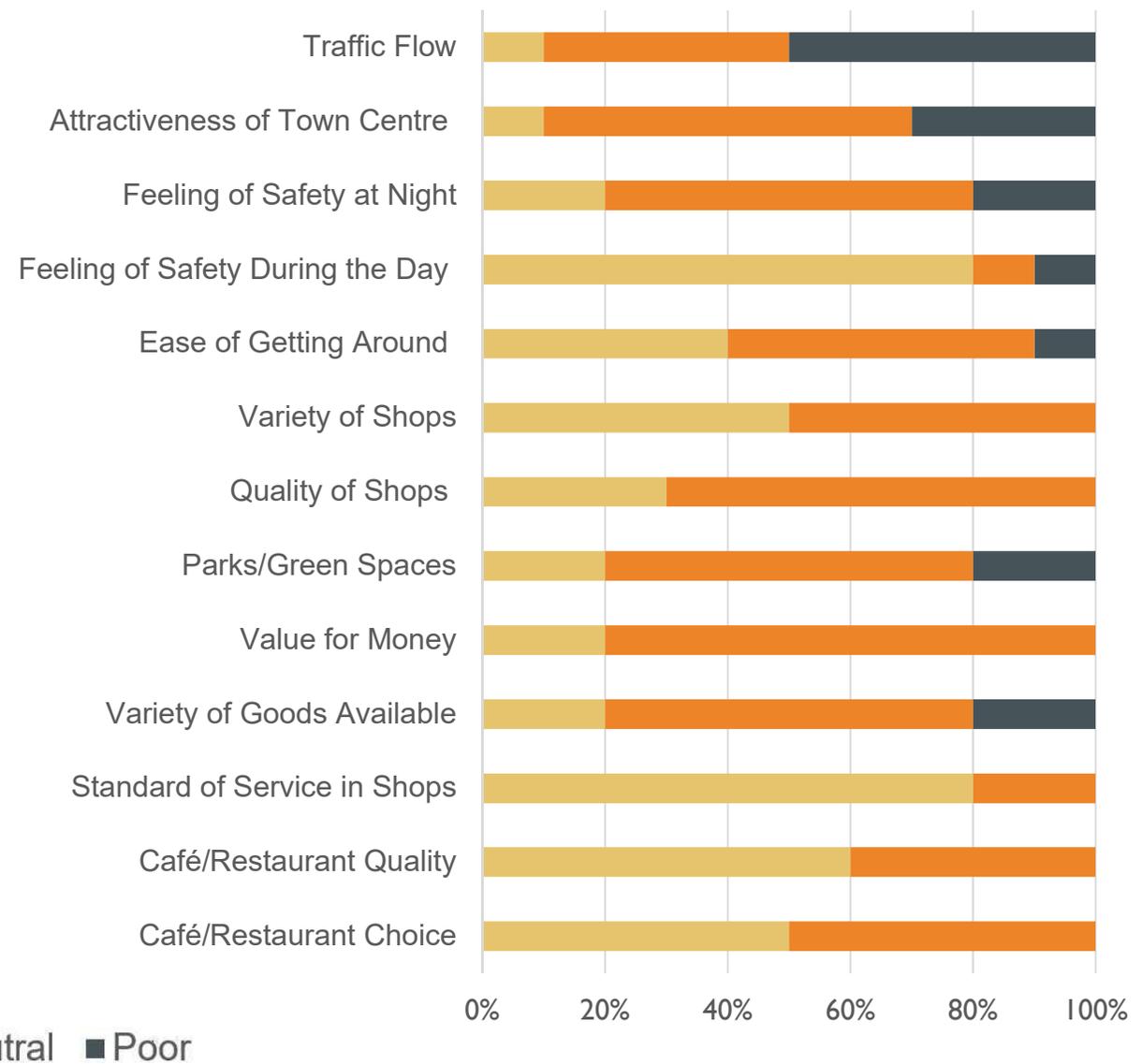
1. Vibrancy During the Evening
2. Parking Space Availability: Cars
3. Traffic Flow
4. Parking Affordability: Cars
- =5. Range of Events
- =5. Seating/ Areas to Congregate

BUSINESS & COMMUNITY SURVEY RESPONSES: How Would You Rate?

Community Responses:

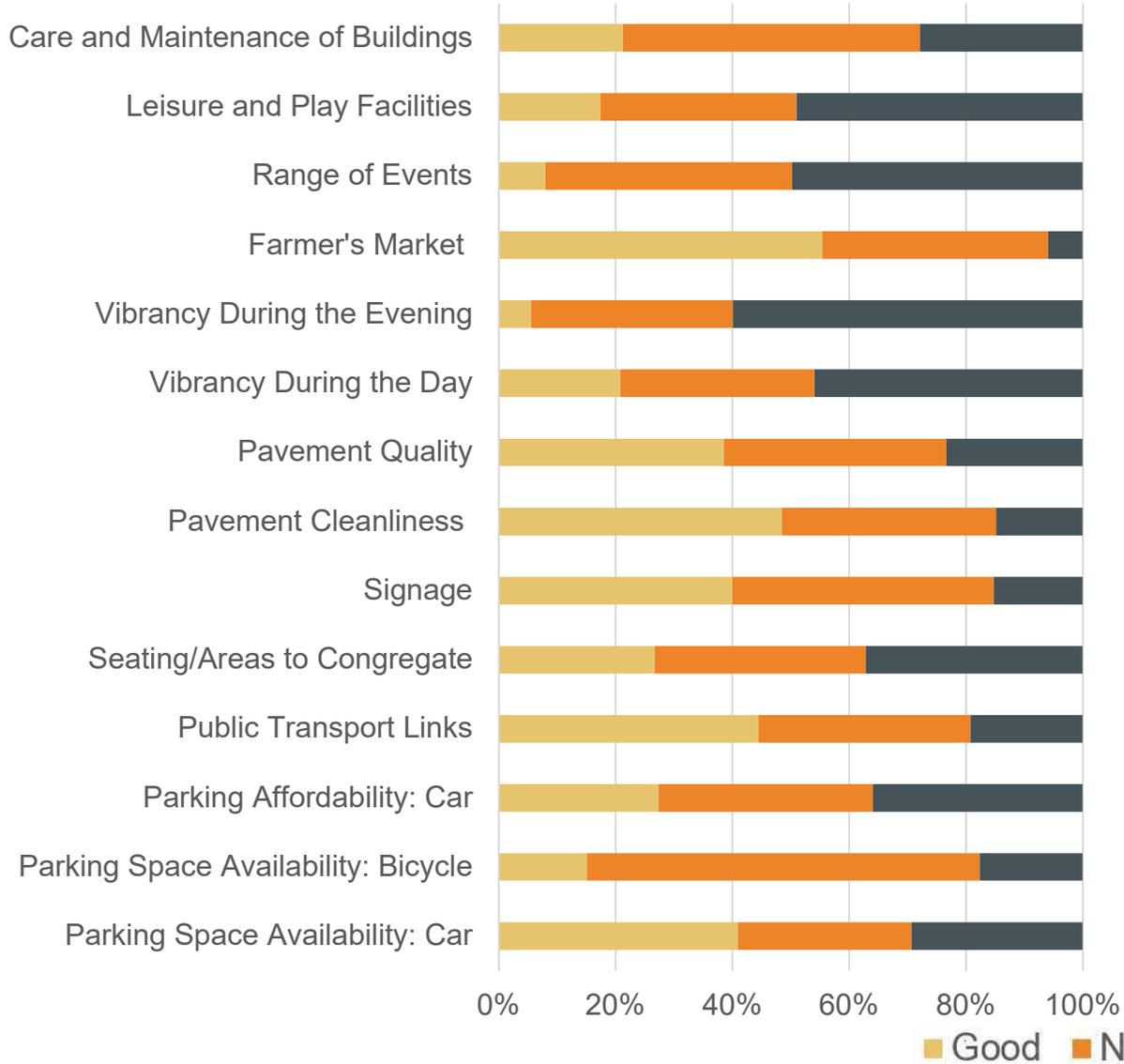


Business Responses:

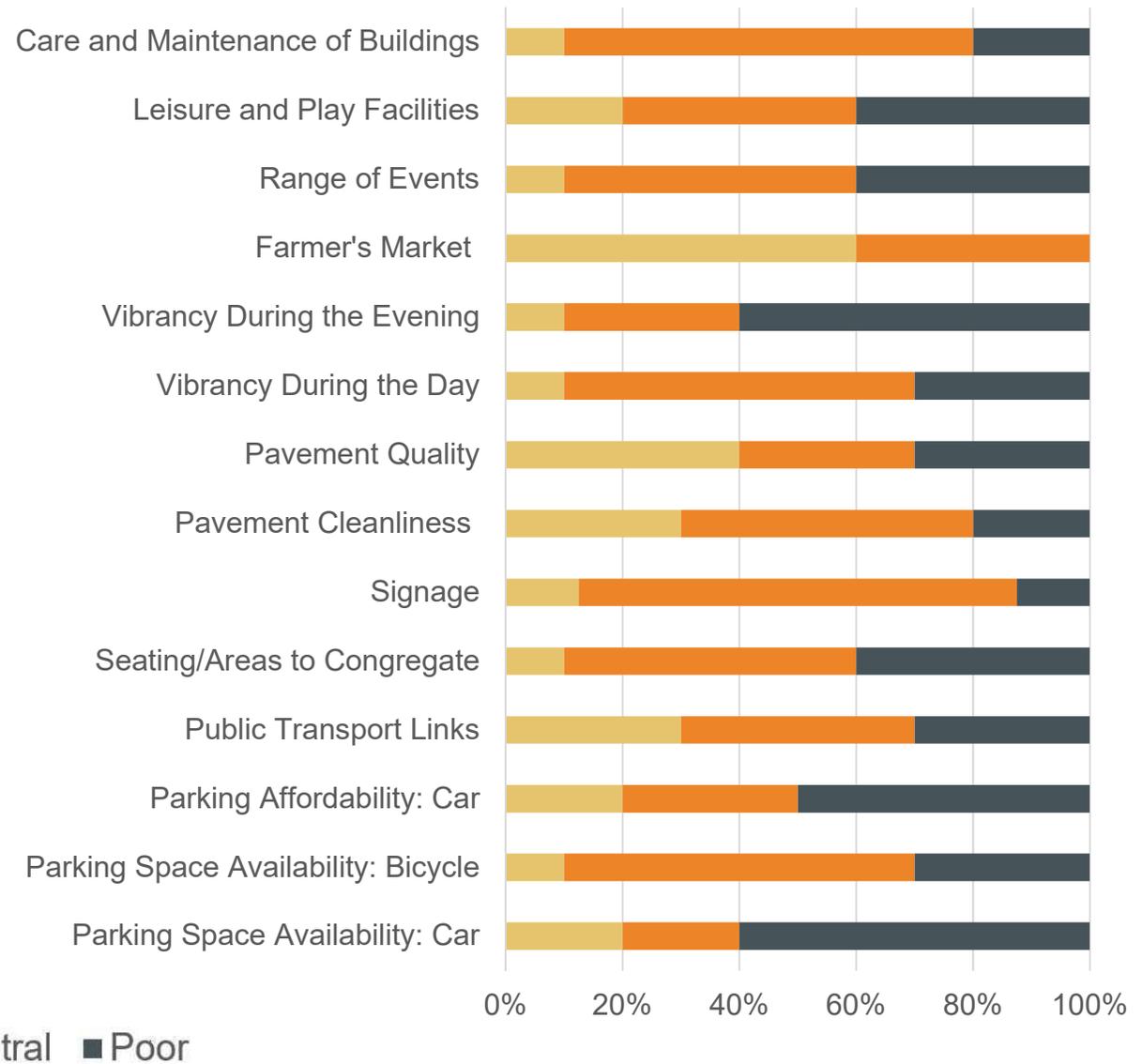


BUSINESS & COMMUNITY SURVEY RESPONSES: How Would You Rate? (Continued)

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 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 in 2021 and 2022 for their contributions to the project:

Business and Community:

Ellon Traders

Ellon Community Council

Footfall Count Volunteers

Accessibility Audit Volunteers: 2 adults



Partner Organisations:

Sergeant Mellis, Intervention Hub,
Police Scotland

Elaine Bisset, VisitAberdeenshire



Council Teams:

Planning Information and Delivery

GIS Team

Community Learning and
Development

Formartine 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 2022

REPORT PRODUCED BY THE PLANNING INFORMATION AND DELIVERY TEAM
PLANNING AND ECONOMY | ENVIRONMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES | ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL

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