



**Aberdeenshire**  
COUNCIL



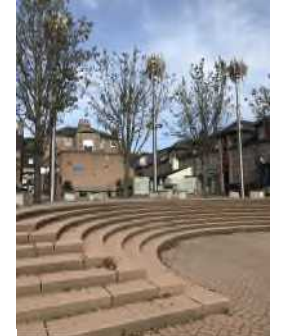
# TOWN CENTRE HEALTH CHECK SEPTEMBER 2022

BANCHORY, 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 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

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 170 responses. A summary of the responses received can be seen on page 45.



**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 6 responses. A summary of the responses received can be seen on page 45.

## **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 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:** The results from the 2021 surveys showed that a slight majority of those who used the town centre felt positively towards it. Some respondents noted a decline in the high street offering, whilst others noticed an improving picture since the previous year, which contributed to the positive score. The town continues to have an extensive network of community organisations which contribute to 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?



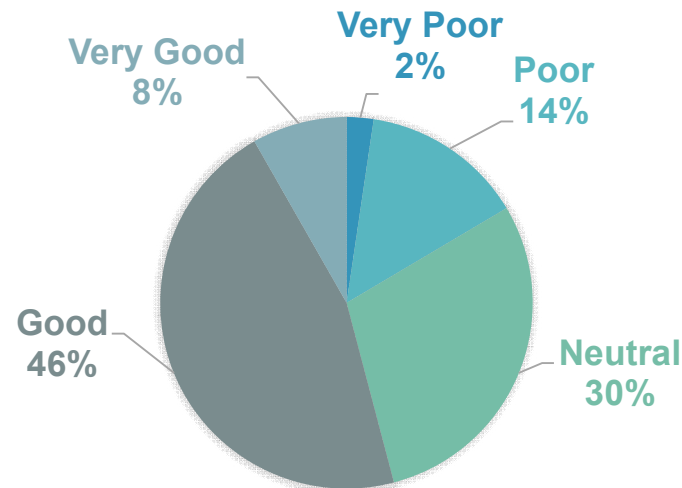
56% Community

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."*

*"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."*

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 survey responses in 2021. Safety during the evening was also positive but with many more neutral responses 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. Different lighting styles are used throughout the town centre, in particular 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

**36** Incidences of crime reported  
1<sup>st</sup> September 2021 – 31<sup>st</sup> July 2022  
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."*

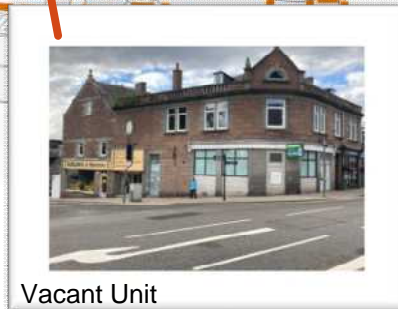
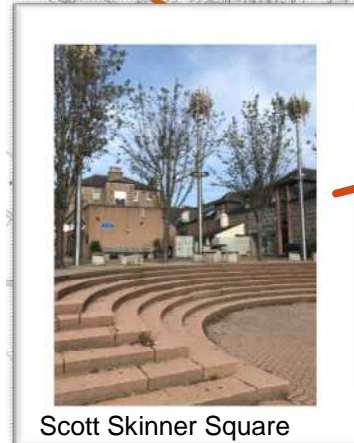
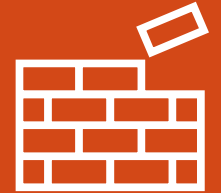
*"It's a nice town with a good feel to it."*

*Business and Community Survey, September 2021*

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 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



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

*“Empty shops are an eyesore.”*

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

*Business and Community Survey, September 2021*

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

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor

BUSINESSES	1	4	1
COMMUNITY	34	85	49

**Observations:** Within the 2021 Survey results the overall care and maintenance of buildings within Banchory was noted as good by the majority of respondents and this is something that was confirmed by the site visit.

A number of comments were received at this point noting that some of the vacant buildings were starting to detract from the overall appearance of Banchory Town Centre. However, through the 2022 site visit the building that gathered the majority of comments, the Old Subway unit, has been renovated and is now back in use as a restaurant which helps to bring more footfall to this part of the town centre. There are other vacant units within the town centre that will need to continue to be monitored to ensure that they don’t fall into disrepair.

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



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.

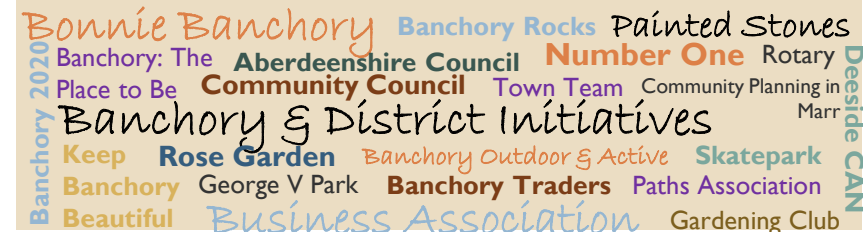
Town Centre Groups	Banchory & District Initiatives (BDI)	Banchory Gardening Club	Banchory Business Association (BBA)	Banchory Community Council
Legal Status	Registered Charity	Constituted Group	Constituted Group	Community Council
Membership	Residents of, or workers in Banchory	Volunteer committee and over 150* members.	Businesses from Banchory and surrounding area.	The community; 9 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 Flower Show, plant sales, talks and workshops. Bonnie Banchory, a sub-group of the club look after the planters and hanging baskets in the town and were recently awarded money from the Community Council to further the work they do.	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 Championships; 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="#">Banchory Gardening Club</a>	<a href="#">Banchory Business Association</a>	<a href="#">Banchory Community Council</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 were 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.  
*Business and Community Survey, September 2021*



# MOVING AROUND



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.

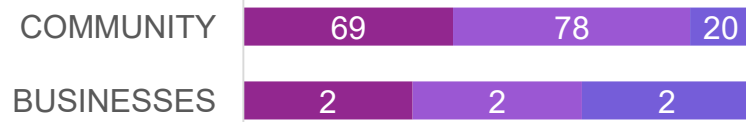
## HOW WOULD YOU RATE: GETTING AROUND THE TOWN CENTRE?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor



## HOW WOULD YOU RATE: SIGNAGE?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor



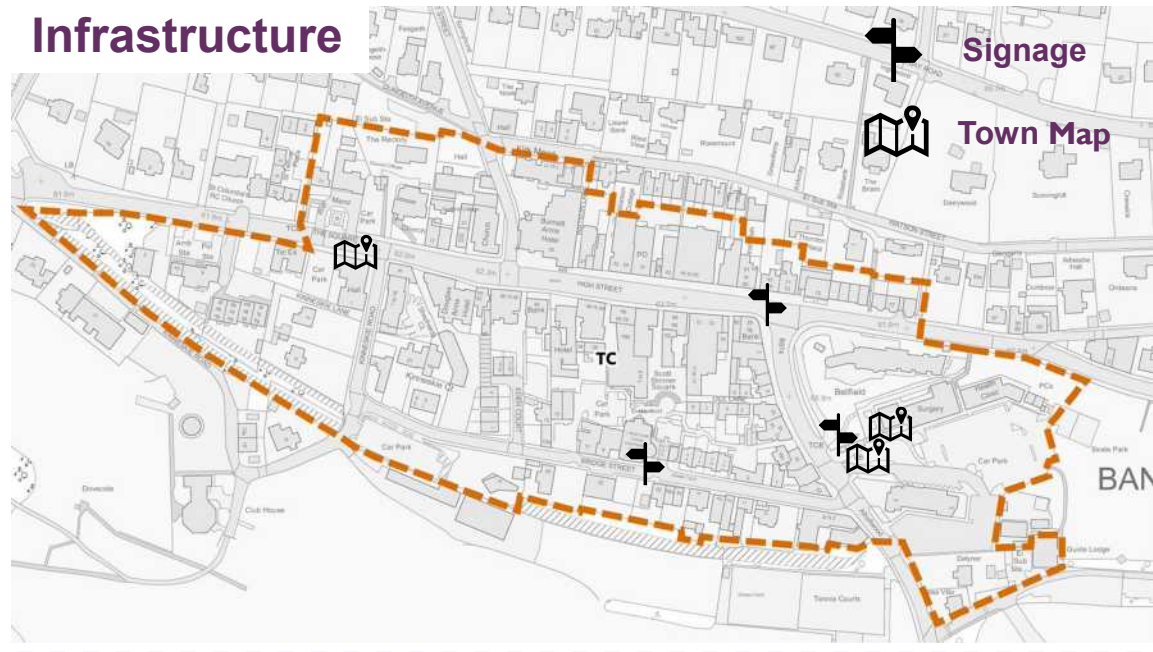
*“Too many people trying to cross west end of High Street where there is no crossing.”*

*“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.”*  
Business and Community Survey, September 2021

### Infrastructure



**Observations:** The majority of respondents in the 2021 survey 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 throughout the town centre. These could perhaps be extended further across the town, or perhaps within the shopping centre of Scott Skinner Square.



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

# 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. The 2021 survey results suggested that the majority of the community respondents had a neutral perception of cycling facilities, although 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.



*“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 centre.”*

*Business and Community Survey, September 2021*


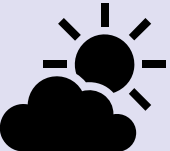
Images (Top to Bottom): Cycle racks outside the Library, Scott Skinner Square; Covered cycle racks, Bellfield Car Park; Cycle racks, Kinneskie Road; Cycle racks, High Street.

## HOW WOULD YOU RATE: CYCLE PARKING?

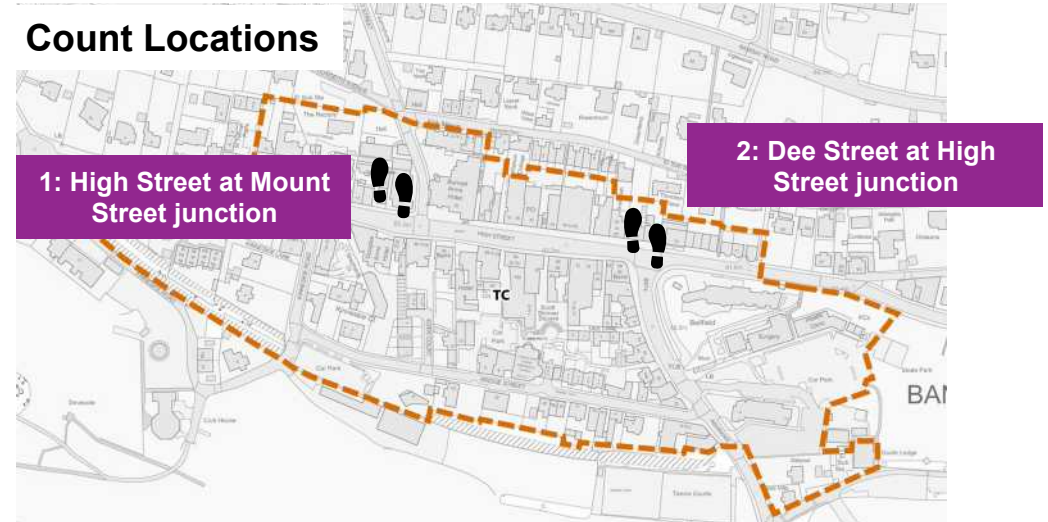
■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor

BUSINESSES	2	2	2
COMMUNITY	31	88	43

# MOVING AROUND: FOOTFALL SURVEY

Day	Time	Location 1	Location 2	Hourly Total	Overall Total
<b>Friday</b> 	09:30	29	51	80	<b>547</b>
	11:30	72	74	146	
	14:30	111	83	194	
	18:00	52	75	127	
<b>Saturday</b> 	09:30	55	56	111	<b>635</b>
	11:30	171	84	255	
	14:30	93	97	190	
	18:00	45	34	79	
<b>Totals</b>		<b>628</b>	<b>554</b>	<b>1182</b>	

## Count Locations



1: High Street at Mount Street junction

2: Dee Street at High Street junction

**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 Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> and Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> 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 High Street at the Mount Street junction on Saturday mid-morning (171 people), which was the same as the previous year. It was also the busiest count point in general over the course of the footfall survey. Overall, the counts are lower than those recorded last year, particularly the Saturday count (847 recorded in 2021).

## HEADLINES

**Busiest Location:** High St at Mount St  
**Busiest Time:** 11:30  
**Busiest Day:** Saturday

**Quietest Location:** High St at Mount St  
**Quietest Time:** 09:30  
**Quietest Day:** Friday

# 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.

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 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:

- 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."



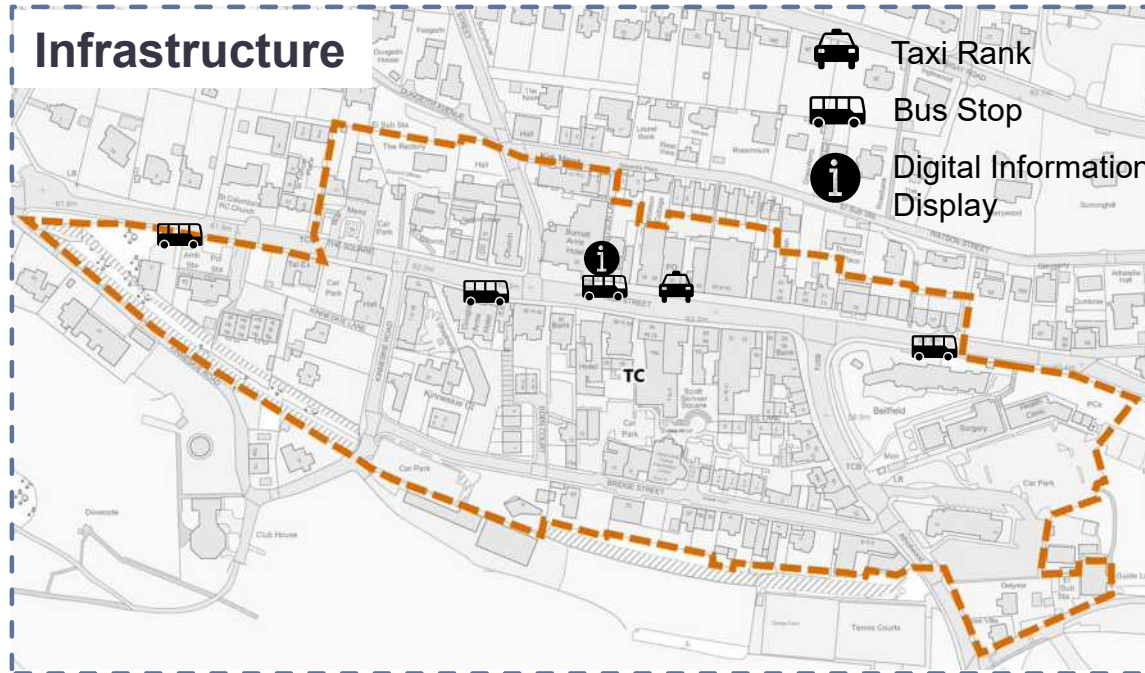
"Poor contrast on the pavement surface in Dee Lane."



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, which has reduced from 8 to 6 journeys per week day since last year. 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 the 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 respondents in the 2021 survey felt that public transport provision was 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. There has been an increase in the price of bus services since last year.

# PUBLIC TRANSPORT



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

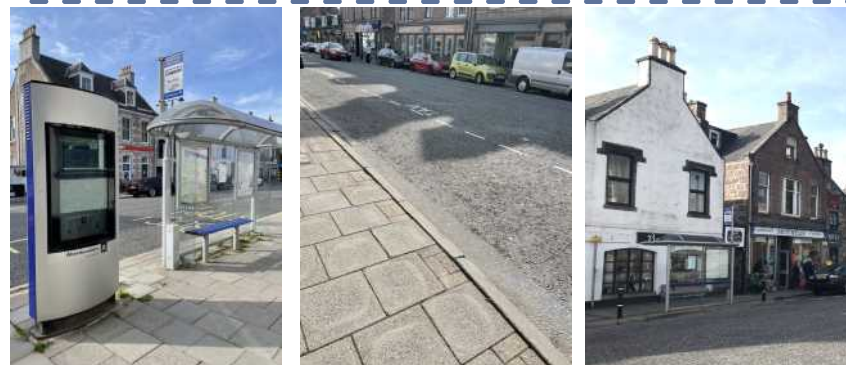
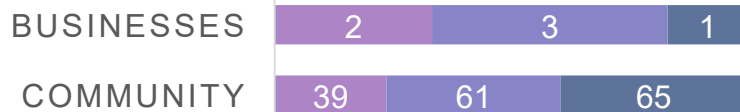
*“Bus stops would be better located to the Bellfield Car Park as they interfere with movement and safety of traffic and pedestrians. Could buses drop off on the high street, then wait/changeover in Bellfield? The current location of buses also contributes to localised traffic pollution.”*

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

*Business and Community Survey, September 2021*

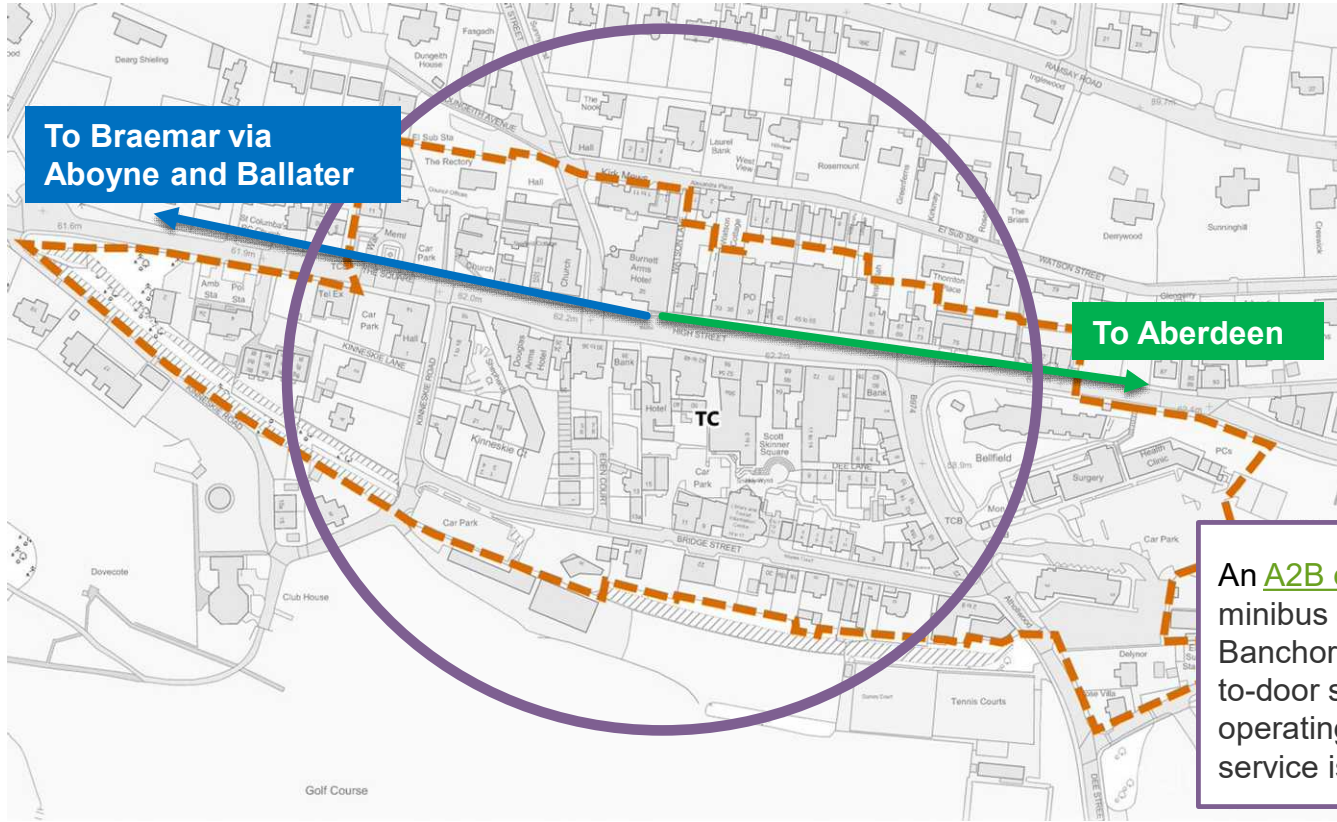
## HOW WOULD YOU RATE: PUBLIC TRANSPORT?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor



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




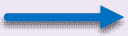

Route (all from main bus stop) *	Frequency (per week day)	Fastest Journey Time	Earliest Travel Time	Latest Travel Time	Cost (Single Standard Ticket)
Bus to Aberdeen (201)	28	52mins	05:26	22:52	£5.70
Bus to Braemar (201)	9	1hr 8mins	08:49	20:12	£9.50
Bus to Aboyne (201)	17	18mins	07:39	00:13	£5.70
Town Circular (205)	6	27mins	09:34	15:34	£1.60

\* 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 on the High Street.



- Key:**
-  Bus Route 201
  -  Bus Route 201
  -  Town Circular

*“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.”*

*Business and Community Survey, September 2021*



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.

# TRAFFIC & PARKING

## TRAFFIC



Image: High Street.

*“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.”*

*Community and Business Survey, September 2021*

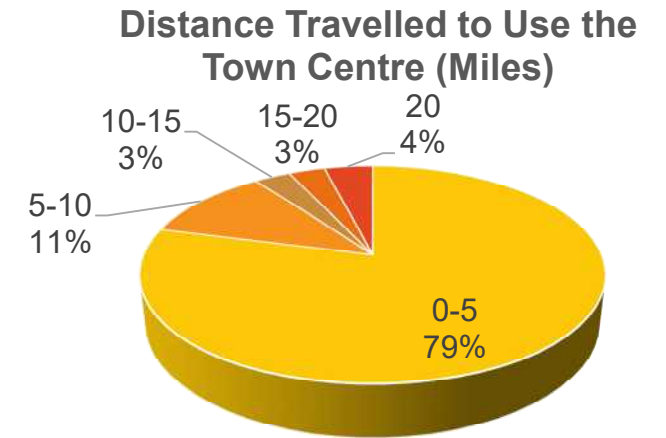
### HOW WOULD YOU RATE: TRAFFIC FLOW?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor



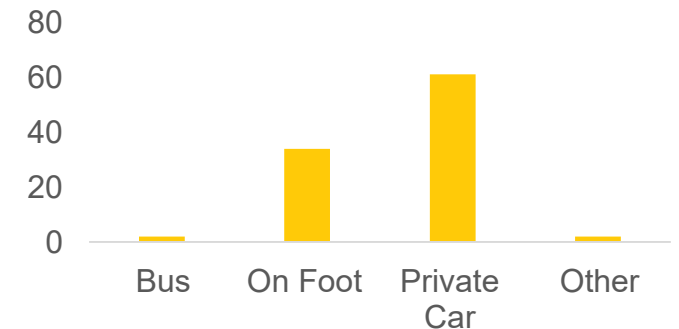
**Observations:** Through the 2021 surveys the topic of traffic flow was rated within the bottom five topics of both the community and business surveys.

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. During the 2022 survey, traffic counts were completed which are outlined in the next couple of pages which will allow traffic within the town centre to be reviewed over the next few years.



Source: Community Survey September 2021

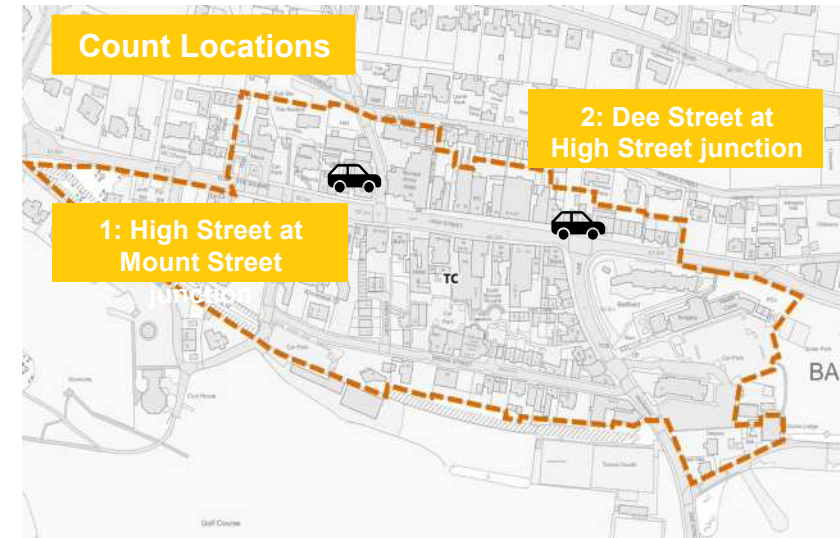
### How would you generally travel to the town centre:



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
Friday	Location 1	Car	124	Car	163	Car	170	Car	146	738
		Buses	5	Buses	3	Buses	3	Buses	1	
		Lorries	2	Lorries	7	Lorries	1	Lorries	0	
		Vans	16	Vans	23	Vans	27	Vans	15	
		Taxis	3	Taxis	2	Taxis	7	Taxis	7	
		Bicycles	1	Bicycles	0	Bicycles	4	Bicycles	0	
		Other	1	Other	0	Other	3	Other	1	
	Location 2	Car	208	Car	243	Car	251	Car	276	1142
		Buses	5	Buses	5	Buses	2	Buses	1	
		Lorries	2	Lorries	6	Lorries	1	Lorries	0	
		Vans	28	Vans	29	Vans	34	Vans	16	
		Taxis	5	Taxis	2	Taxis	4	Taxis	6	
		Bicycles	3	Bicycles	2	Bicycles	2	Bicycles	4	
		Other	1	Other	0	Other	3	Other	3	
Hourly Totals (all traffic):		404		485		512		476		1880



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	109	Car	189	Car	157	Car	102	650
		Buses	2	Buses	2	Buses	1	Buses	3	
		Lorries	1	Lorries	2	Lorries	0	Lorries	0	
		Vans	12	Vans	14	Vans	8	Vans	12	
		Taxis	2	Taxis	2	Taxis	2	Taxis	5	
		Bicycles	4	Bicycles	4	Bicycles	1	Bicycles	1	
		Other	2	Other	1	Other	9	Other	3	
	Location 2	Car	131	Car	146	Car	159	Car	189	702
		Buses	0	Buses	1	Buses	0	Buses	2	
		Lorries	0	Lorries	0	Lorries	1	Lorries	0	
		Vans	12	Vans	12	Vans	8	Vans	8	
		Taxis	0	Taxis	1	Taxis	0	Taxis	2	
		Bicycles	11	Bicycles	2	Bicycles	2	Bicycles	1	
		Other	5	Other	6	Other	3	Other	0	
Hourly Totals (all traffic):		291		382		351		328		1352

## HEADLINES

**Busiest Location:** Dee St at High St  
**Busiest Time:** 17:45  
**Busiest Day:** Friday

**Quietest Location:** High St at Mount St  
**Quietest Time:** 17:45  
**Quietest Day:** Saturday

**Observations:** Vehicle counts were undertaken on Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> and Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> 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 Dee Street at the High Street junction on Friday evening and in general this location was always busier than the location at Mount Street, High Street junction.

# TRAFFIC & PARKING

## CAR PARKING AFFORDABILITY

### Parking Costs

**£0.50**

Average hourly rate  
September 2022

### HOW WOULD YOU RATE: PARKING AFFORDABILITY?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor

BUSINESSES



COMMUNITY



*“More free parking away from the High Street.”*

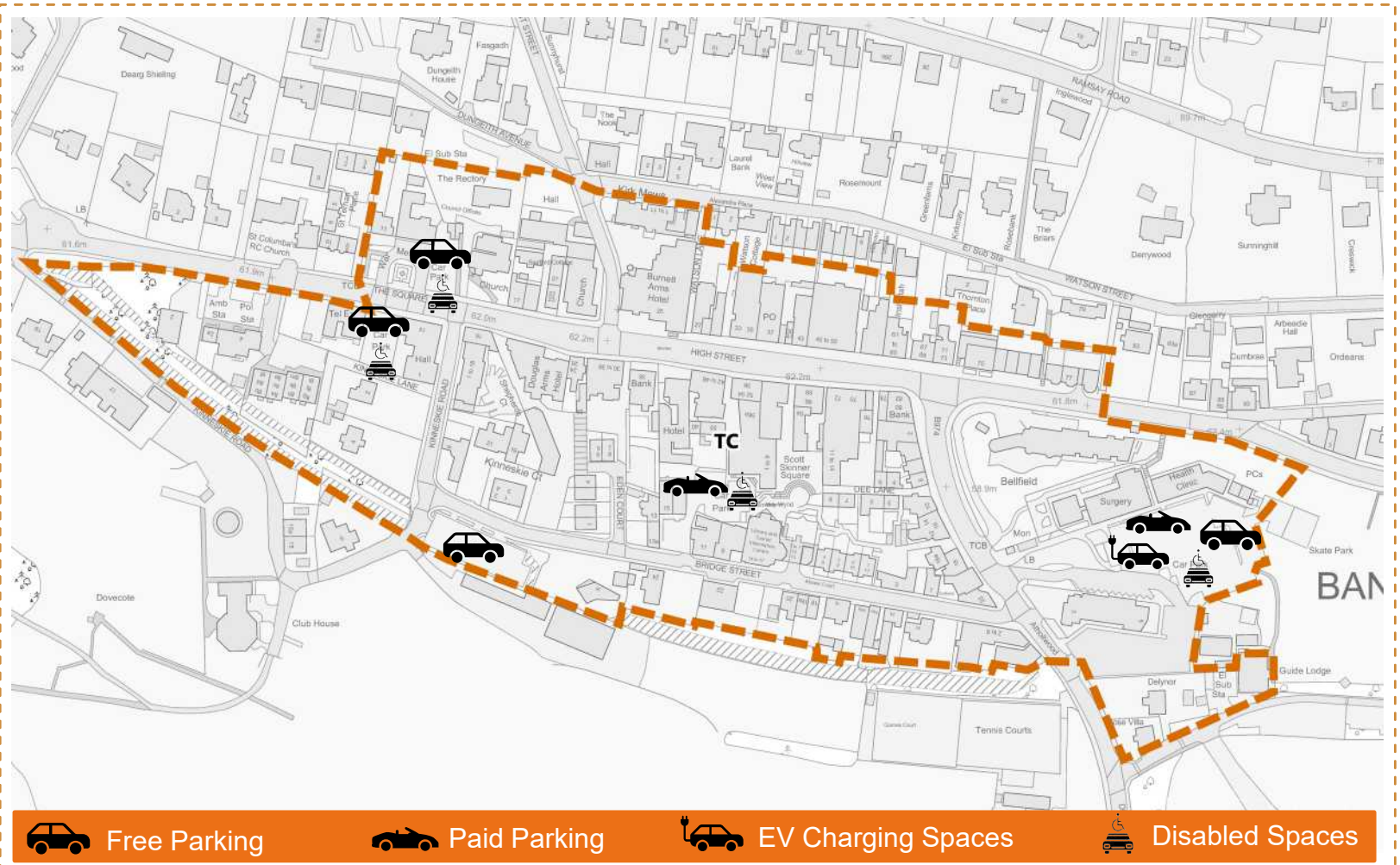
*“Remove car parking charges.”*

*“Improve short term free parking availability.”*

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

*“There should be cheaper parking.”*

Community and Business Survey, September 2021



Free Parking



Paid Parking



EV Charging Spaces



Disabled Spaces

# TRAFFIC & PARKING

## CAR PARKING AVAILABILITY



Image: Bellfield Car Park.

*“Need more parking spaces.”*

*“Better disabled parking spaces are needed.”*

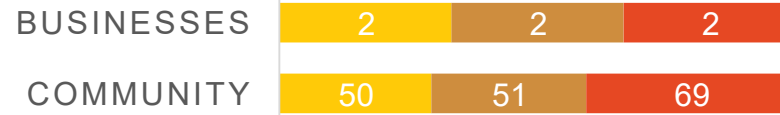
*“Need to find additional parking options.”*

*“Need more adequate parking spaces.”*

*Community and Business Survey, September 2021*

### HOW WOULD YOU RATE: PARKING AVAILABILITY?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor



**Spaces**

**116** No. of Free Spaces

**110** No. of Paid Spaces

**12** No. of Disabled Spaces

**2** No. of EV Charging Spaces

**Observations:** During both the 2021 and 2022 site visits it was noted that there was generally good usage of the car parks within the town centre.

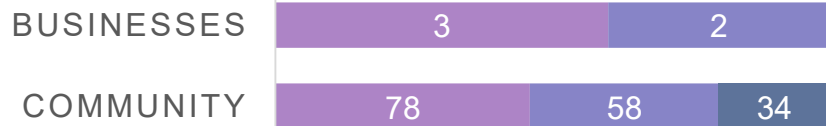
In terms of affordability this was highly commented on through the 2021 community survey, with a strong desire for the short stay free parking to be reintroduced. As it was noted that some of the free parking that is in the town is used by people who stay all day so the re-introduction of free short term parking would hopefully result in a higher turnover of parking spaces which in turn could 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 located throughout the whole 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.

### HOW WOULD YOU RATE: ATTRACTIVENESS OF TOWN?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor



**Observations:** The attractiveness of the town received a fairly mixed response in the ratings from the 2021 community survey, however, overall the majority rated as good or neutral. The open space on Dee Street and Scott Skinner Square provides an attractive place for people 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 and brought back into use.

*“Need to make the town more attractive to visitors.”*

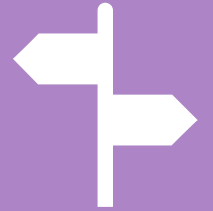
*“Need to make the vacant shop fronts more attractive.”*

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

*Business and Community Survey, September 2021*

# STREETS & SPACES

## ATTRACTIVENESS OF TOWN CENTRE



**Town Hall**

**Vacant Unit, Dee Street/ High Street**

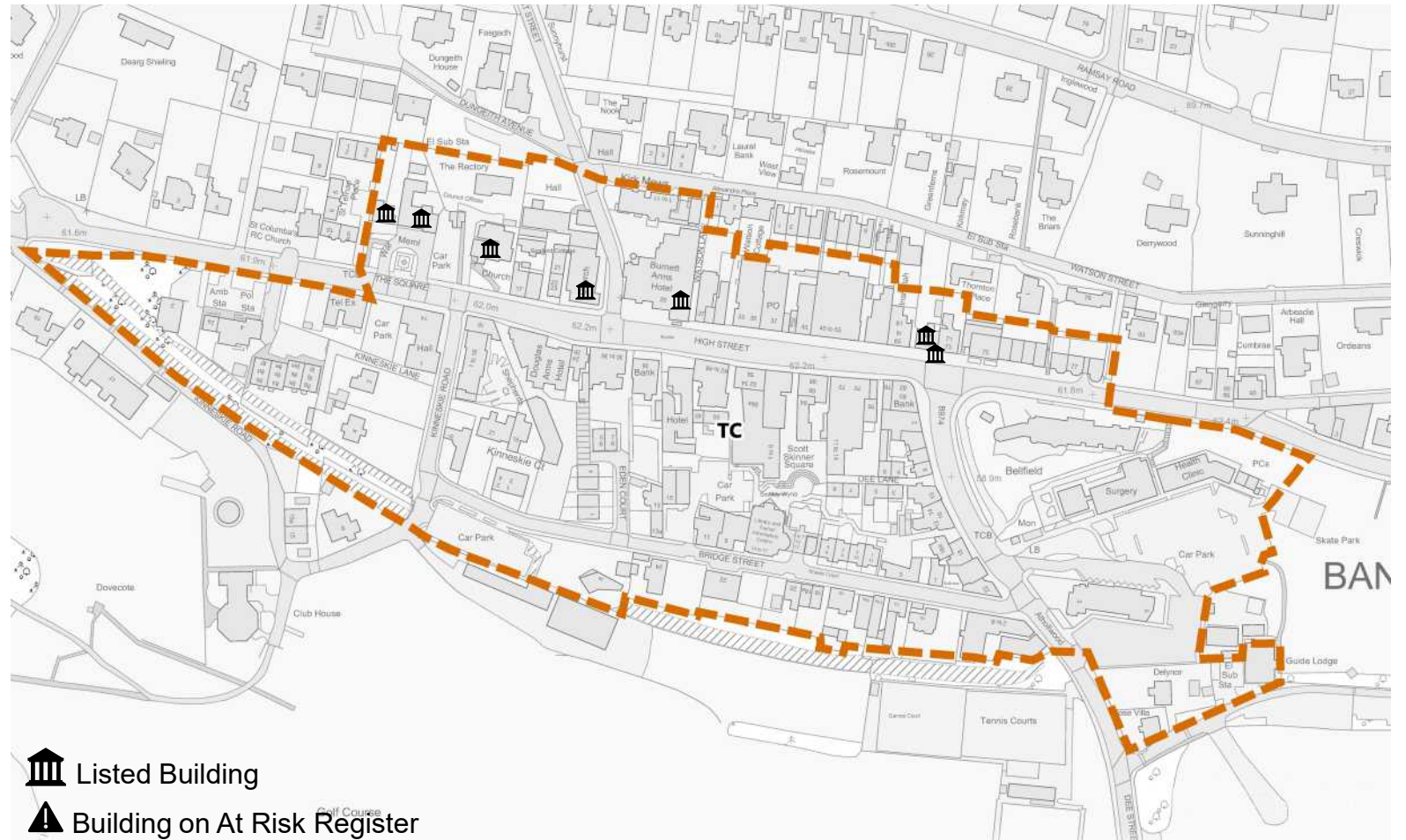
**TC**


**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

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

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor

BUSINESSES



COMMUNITY



Bench, The Square



Bench, Bellfield Car Park



Seating, Scott Skinner Square



*“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.”*

*Business and Community Survey, September 2021*

**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 are 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. There is some opportunity for this to be achieved in Scott Skinner Square without it impacting on the usable pavement area of the High Street, Dee Street or Bridge Street.



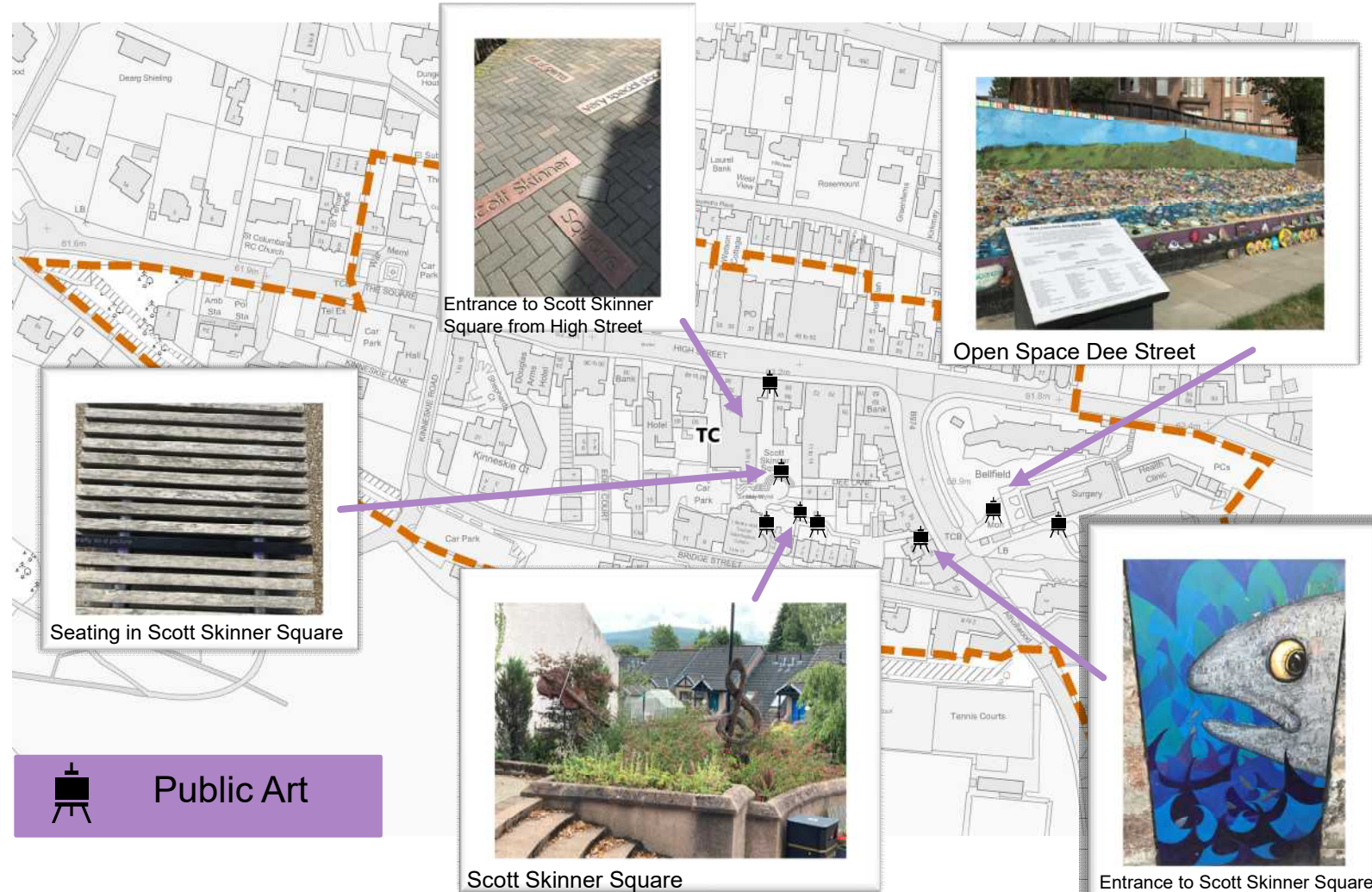
# STREETS & SPACES: PUBLIC ART

**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 then drawing them into the different parts of the town centre. This is generally used in areas where there is either information to be shared such as, Bellfield Car Park, or to invite people in to spend time in for example Scott Skinner Square.

Within Scott Skinner Square the seating areas and tables have words associated with Banchory engraved in them. These words came from the local community when the regeneration work for the square was carried out in 2014-2015. To keep engaging the community with this work a quiz can be found on the Visit Banchory website to try and find the 43 phrases.

The Painted Stones Project located on Dee Street came about 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.

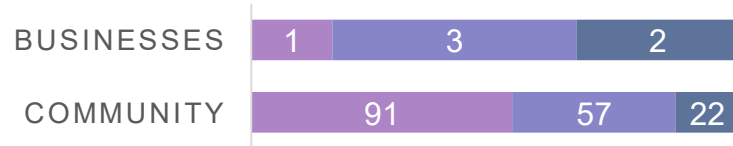
Additionally, through the 2022 site visit work the introduction of the violin and musical note within Scott Skinner Square makes a node to represent Banchory's musical heritage.



# STREETS & SPACES: PAVEMENTS

## HOW WOULD YOU RATE: PAVEMENT CLEANLINESS?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor



*“Pavements are well cleaned.”*

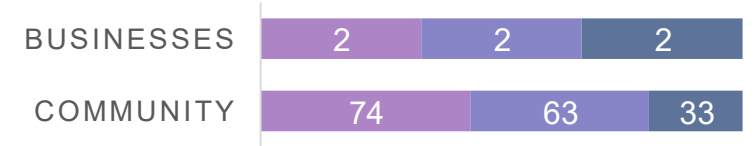
*Business and Community Survey, September 2021*

**Observations:** The quality of the pavements and the cleanliness of the pavements were viewed positively amongst the community with the majority of respondents in the 2021 survey giving a rating of good or natural.

There were a couple of areas on High Street and Dee Street where it was noted that there are uneven pavements that could be improved. In contrast, there were also areas where the pavements were noted to be clean and of good quality. These points were still evident during the 2022 site visit work.

## HOW WOULD YOU RATE: PAVEMENT QUALITY?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor



*“Widen pavements on High Street.”*

*“Fix the uneven pavements.”*

*Business and Community Survey, September 2021*



*“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.”*

*Business and Community Survey, September 2021*

# STREETS & SPACES: VACANT RETAIL UNITS

**Observations:** The number of vacant units is something that was highly commented on through the 2021 surveys with the majority of comments noting there were too many vacant units within the town centre. The vacancy rate within the town centre in 2021 was 6% and has risen to 7% within 2022.

Since 2021 two larger units have become vacant with the closure of the bank and a shop moving from their original unit to a smaller unit which was previously vacant within the town centre.



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



## Vacant Retail Units:

**6** Vacant Units in the town centre

**7%** Vacancy Rate at time of survey

# NATURAL SPACE



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:** Within Banchory Town Centre, there are small pockets of natural space and it is bordered by large green spaces such as Bellfield Park. There are well maintained planters and hanging baskets across the town centre which are looked after by local volunteers. This was all recognised in the survey responses in 2021, and the category scored in the top five most positive aspects for both the community and businesses. Suggestions for improvements included enhancing links to the local countryside and the River Dee and supplementing existing planting in areas such as Scott Skinner Square.

*“There are strong.. groups and.. businesses who dedicate their own time to maintaining various aspects of the town centre.. such as hanging baskets and flower beds.”*

*“Need to really consider environment and our response for the future - planning for wilding areas, tree planting, enhancing areas of natural significance.”*

*“More sustainable planting is required on the high street. The road is wide enough to use some of the space for permanent planting.”*

*“A few more flowers around wouldn't go amiss. Scott Skinners Square needs brightening/ livening up.”*  
Business and Community Survey, September 2021

**Planted grass verges provide a 'green' entrance to the town centre from the west**

**Planting on the north side of the High Street softens hard landscaping**

**Bellfield Community Rose Garden**

**Scott Skinner Square has a mixture of trees, planters and hanging baskets**

**The town centre is bordered by large green spaces such as the golf club**

**The Memorial Garden offers a green area to sit within the town centre**

**The Deeside Way runs along the town centre boundary**

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

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor

BUSINESSES	4	2	
COMMUNITY	118	37	15

Bonnie Banchory, a part of the Banchory Gardening Club are a band of volunteers who help to maintain planting in the town centre. Visit their [Facebook](#) page to find out more.

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



**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 the community and business surveys in 2021.

The parks that were mentioned within the comments of the 2021 survey were 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

BUSINESSES	4	1	1
COMMUNITY	48	65	57

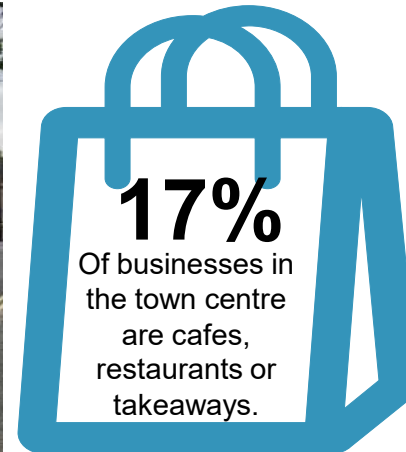
# FACILITIES & AMENITIES: RETAILER REPRESENTATION

## Retailer Representation

**73%** of businesses in the town centre are independent retailers

**52%** of businesses in the town centre are Class 1: Shops

**24%** of businesses in the town centre are Class 2: Financial, Professional and other services



## HOW WOULD YOU RATE: VARIETY OF SHOPS?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor



## 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.”*

*“There is limited variety of shops.”*

*“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.”*



**Observations:** There is a good distribution between independent and multiple (chain) retailers within the 85 units within the town centre with the majority being independent retailers. A large proportion of the comments received through the 2021 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 of variety of shops ranked within the bottom five ranked topics through the 2021 community survey.

# FACILITIES & AMENITIES: CAFÉ AND RESTAURANTS

HOW WOULD YOU RATE:  
CAFÉ/ RESTAURANT  
CHOICE?

HOW WOULD YOU RATE:  
CAFÉ/ RESTAURANT  
QUALITY?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor



**Observations:** The choice of cafés and restaurants is something that was rated as good by the majority of respondents within both the 2021 community and business surveys and was rated within the top five of all topics. Additionally, the quality of the cafés and restaurant was ranked within the top five topics of all topics rated through the 2021 community survey.

Through the surveys there is a community desire to see additional seating outside the cafés, 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 cafés but not enough restaurants. Since the 2021 survey a new restaurant and café have opened which will increase consumer choice.

“There should be better variety of cafes.”

“Establish Scott Skinner Square as a cafe/restaurant location with outdoor seating.”

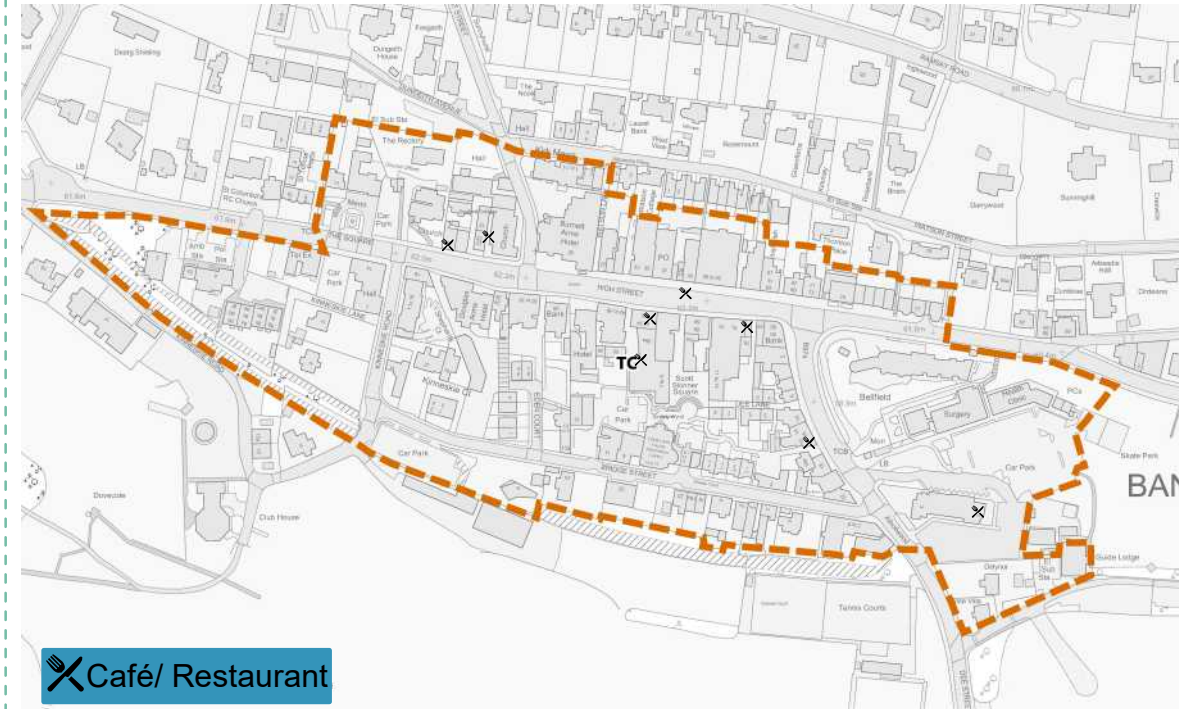
“There are too many cafes.”

“Should fill the last few remaining empty shops into vibrant cafes.”

“More outside seating around the cafes would be an improvement.”

“Lots of cafes but not enough restaurants.”

Business and Community Survey, September 2021



Images (Top to Bottom): Mamma Mia Pizzeria, High Street and The Pancake Place, Scott Skinner Square.

# 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): Banchory Town Hall, Banchory Group Practice and Banchory Police Station.

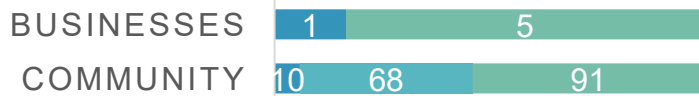




# FACILITIES & AMENITIES: EVENING ECONOMY

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

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor



*“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.”*

Business and Community Survey, September 2021

**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 of the 2021 surveys.

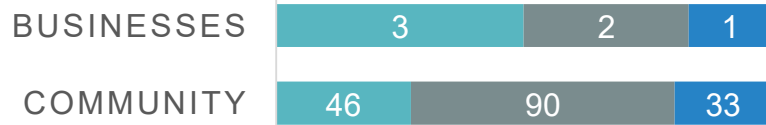
Additionally, a large proportion of comments received through the 2021 surveys noted that there was a real lack of anything to do within the town centre in the evening. It was thought that if there were more events, restaurants and entertainment events in the town centre this would improve the town centre and encourage more people to use the town centre in the evenings.



# 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.”*

*Business and Community Survey, September 2021*

## Town Centre Offer:

**54%**

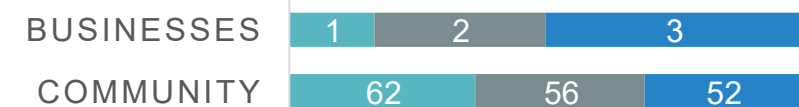
of the community agree that it offers all services expected (retail, café, pubs etc)

*Business and Community Survey, September 2021*

**Observations:** There was a mixed response to the visitor satisfaction survey in 2021 but feedback was generally positive, especially relating to the standard of service in shops. Value for money was generally rated as neutral with a couple of comments noting a need for 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 2021 surveys noting that there should be more variety of goods on offer within the town centre to provide a greater choice for consumers.

## 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

**2,558** Jan-Dec 2021

# 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.”*

*Business and Community Survey, September 2021*

## HOW WOULD YOU RATE: THE MARKET?

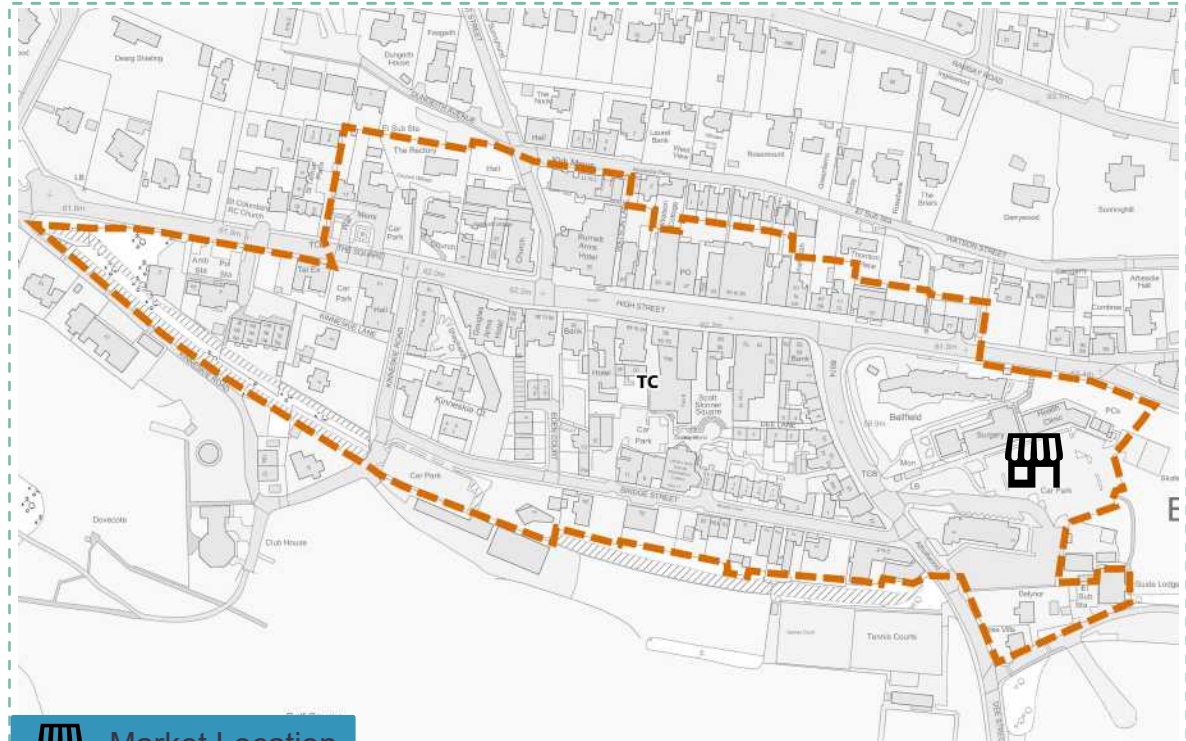
■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor



**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 through the 2021 business and community surveys were generally good from the community but was rated as the top theme within the business survey.

Through the 2021 community survey one point that was strongly made was the feeling 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

*Business and Community, September 2021*

**Observations:** Within the 2021 community survey there were a real mix of responses received 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."*

*Business and Community Survey, September 2021*



Images (both): High Street.

# FACILITIES & AMENITIES:







## CONNECTIVITY

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



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	✓
<b>A+</b>	ADSL2+	✓
<b>A</b>	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	✓	✓	✓	✗
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:** Banchory Town Centre is well serviced by ATM machines. Additionally, there is a defibrillator unit on the High Street which is available for use 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.

# WORK & LOCAL ECONOMY



**Observations:** The employment and income picture is as would be expected of a town of this size and location, 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 rose in 2020, partly in response to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, but this has now fallen back down to the same levels as in 2019. Very low levels of deprivation are reflected in the income data.

## 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 2021 Town Centre Data Zone\*

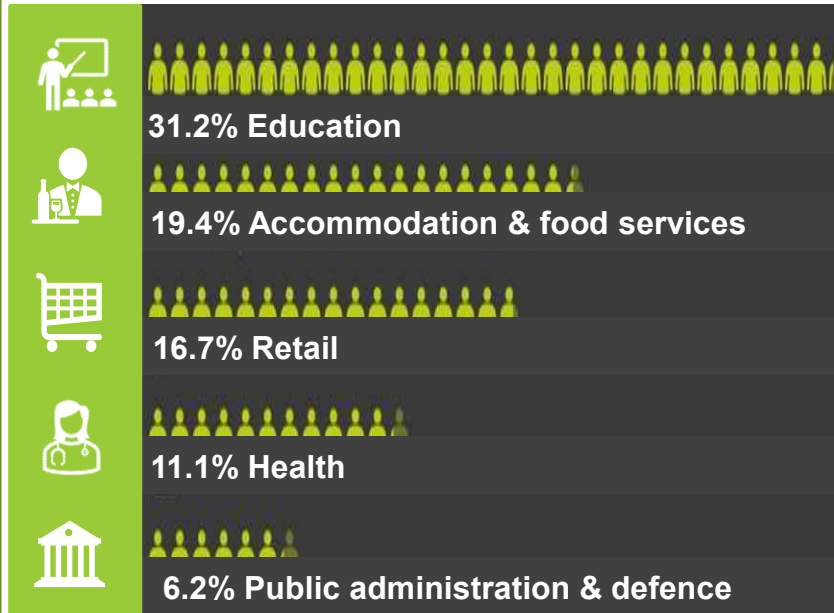
**£40,944**



£40,207 Marr; £36,889 Aberdeenshire

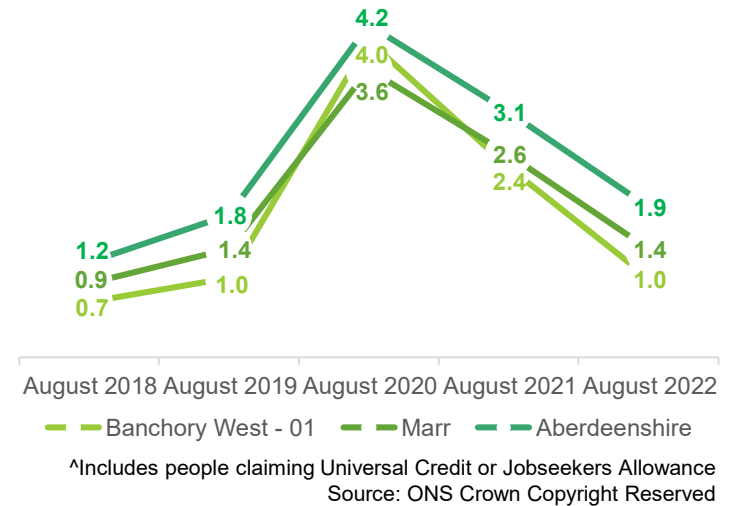
Source: © CACI Limited 1996 - 2021 This report shall be used solely for academic, personal and/or non-commercial purposes.

## Top 5 Employment Sectors 2021 Banchory Town Centre Data Zone\*



Source: Business Register and Employment Survey 2021

## CLAIMANT COUNT RATE^ (%)



## Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2020

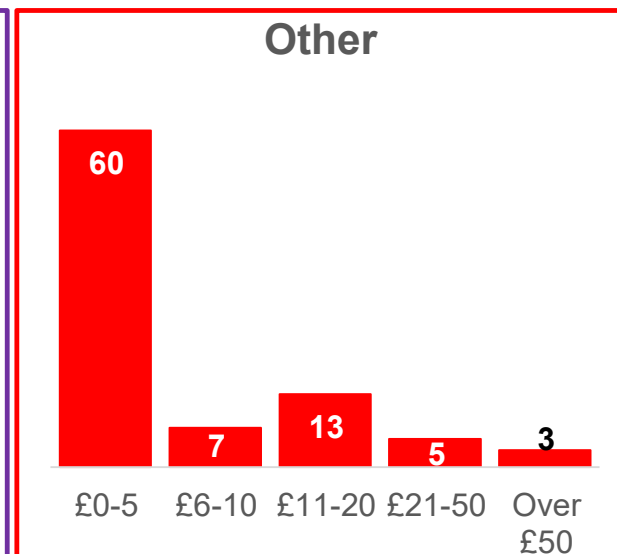
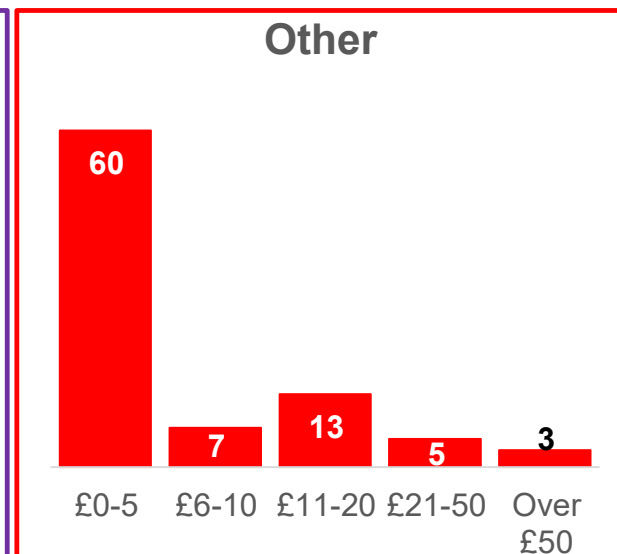
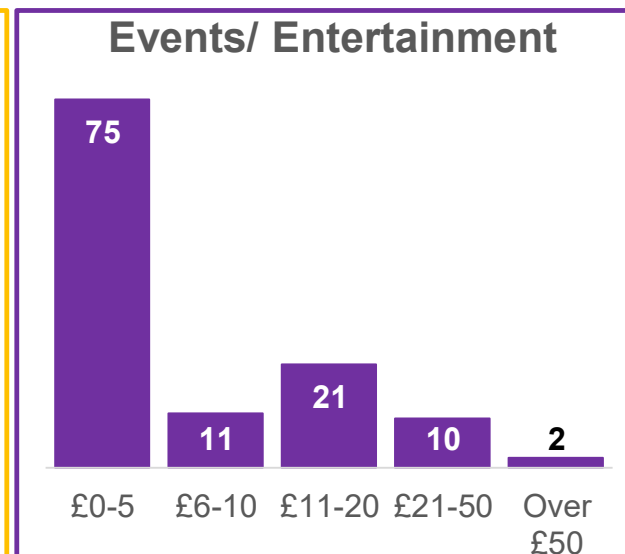
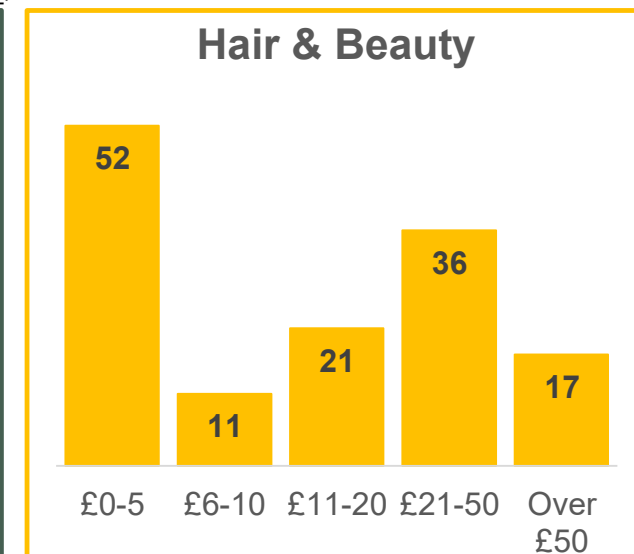
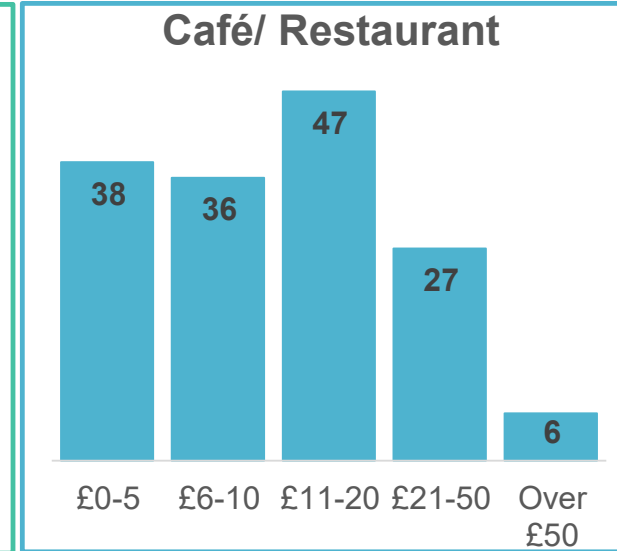
Town Centre Data Zone\*:

**5-10%** least deprived in Scotland

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

## WORK & LOCAL ECONOMY: AVERAGE CONSUMER SPEND 2021

**Observations:** From the survey responses in 2021, 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 were at a reasonably high level, with Café/ Restaurant and Other Shopping spread across the mid to lower levels. The Hair and Beauty sector, although fewer people overall, seemed to be a higher value spend. There was little spend on Events/ Entertainment, perhaps highlighting the lack of opportunities in this area. Overall the average consumer spend in 2021 shows a positive picture with good levels of spend in different areas.





# WORK & LOCAL ECONOMY: BUSINESS SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS 2021

**Observations:** Six businesses responded to the survey in 2021 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 were 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 were looking to **grow** or **expand** in the next year

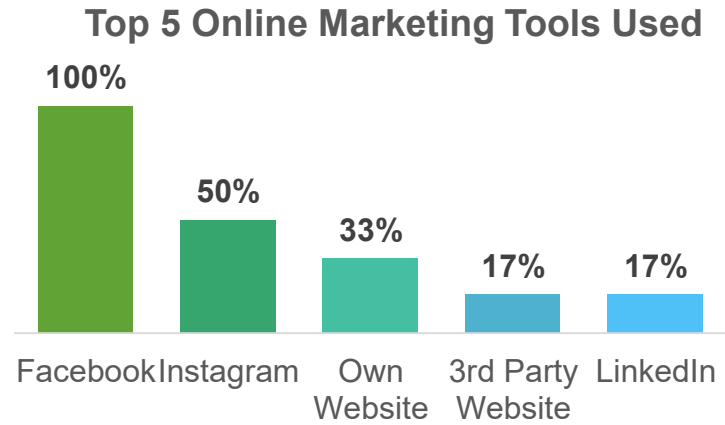
*“Retail is moving online so traditional retail shops are losing customers. There are too many retail units in the town centre for the number of potential customers. The town centre is confused whether to target visitors/tourists or local residents, therefore retail units are only targeting 50% of potential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

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

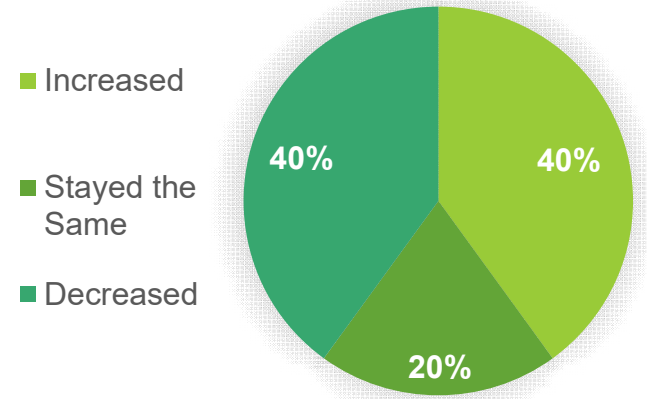
*“Although there remain empty premises, there is a vibrancy and enthusiasm with the new small ventures opening.”*

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

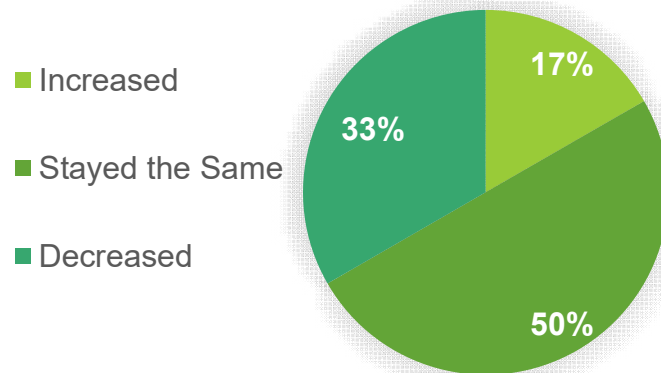
Business and Community Survey, September 2021



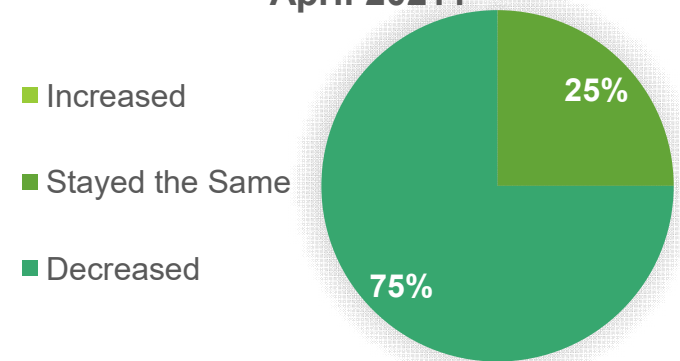
**How has turnover at your premises changed in the past five years?**



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



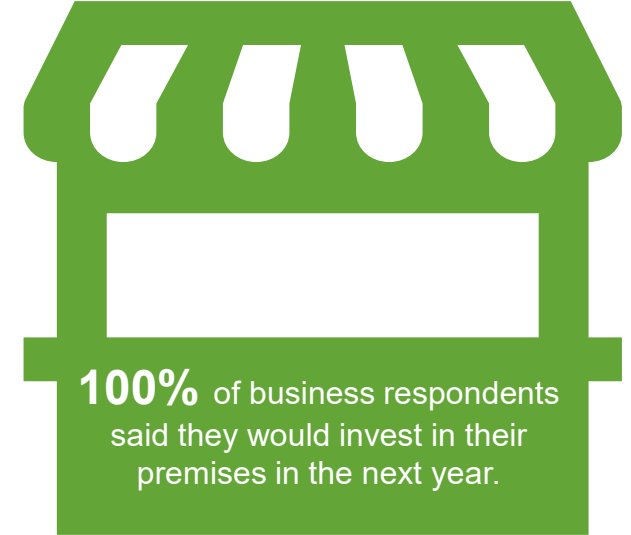
**What difference have the COVID-19 restrictions had on turnover during the period March 2020 to April 2021?**



## WORK & LOCAL ECONOMY: PROPERTY

**Observations:** The commercial property market seems to be steady in Banchory, with some new businesses opening up in the town since last year. However, the closure of a large former retailer and bank building on the High Street is a loss in the town centre. The majority of premises used by respondents were rented at the time of the surveys in 2021. There was a very bright outlook for investment in town centre stock with 100% of respondents confirming they were looking to invest in their premises within the next year. In the year from August 2021 to August 2022, there were fewer planning applications submitted, with only two applications submitted within the town centre boundary. In the previous year, seven applications were submitted which included various change of uses within the town centre boundary.

Feedback received in the surveys in 2021 suggested that supporting 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-ups, 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."*

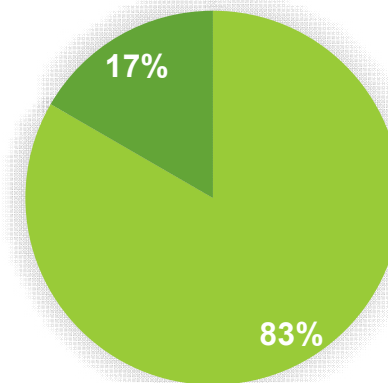
*"Shorter leases and lower rents on local shop units so businesses can test market as Sheridan's did."*

*"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."*

Business and Community Survey, September 2021

### Do you rent or own your premises?



■ Rent ■ Own

### Planning Applications:

Within the town centre two planning applications were approved between August 2021 – August 2022. These were:

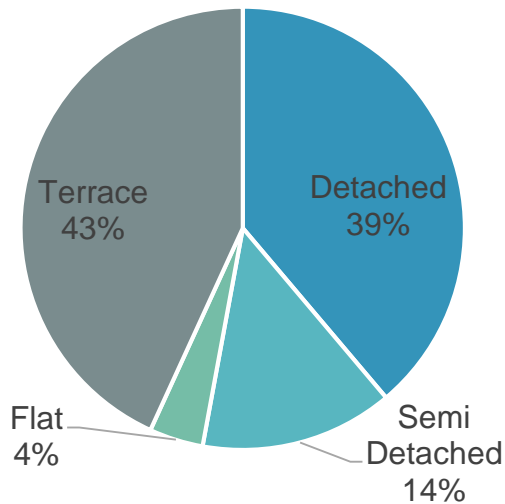
- Erection of Temporary Modular Units to Form Medical Consulting Rooms;
- Installation of a Projecting Sign.

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 the dwellings are terraced properties.

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

## Housing Profile and Population

The overall population total for Banchory in 2020 was 7,440 and it is estimated that approximately 390 people live within the town centre in 2022.

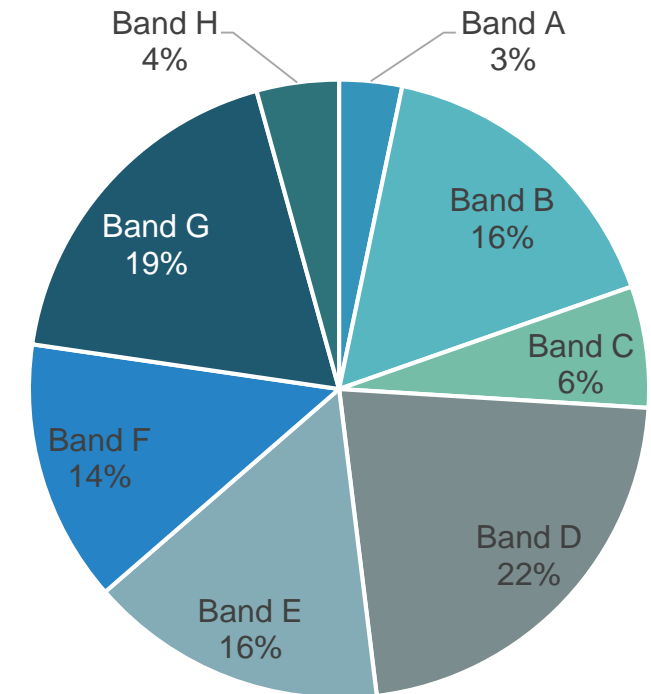
The average house price for dwellings within the town centre boundary in 2018 was £284,087 compared with the average house price in Aberdeenshire of £230,038.



Image: High Street.

In terms of Council Tax Bands (2021), 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

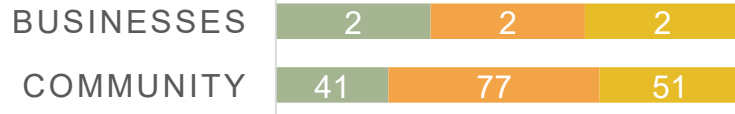


Feeling isolated can be damaging to our health and wellbeing. Good places provide a variety of spaces to meet and spend time with others.

**Observations:** Within the 2021 survey, the range of events received a relatively mixed score 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 09:00-18:00, Tues and Thurs 09:00-18:00, Sat 10:00-14:00
Town Hall	Indoor	Open 7 days but booking required
St Ternan's Scottish Episcopal Church	Indoor	Tues Communion 09:00 Thurs Communion 10:15 Sun Communion 08.00. Holy Eucharist (1st, 2nd and 4th of the month), Family Eucharist, Choral Matins (3rd), Family Eucharist (5th) 11.00. Evensong (1 <sup>st</sup> ) 18.30.
Banchory Ternan West Parish Church of Scotland	Indoor	Sun Service: 10:30
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."*

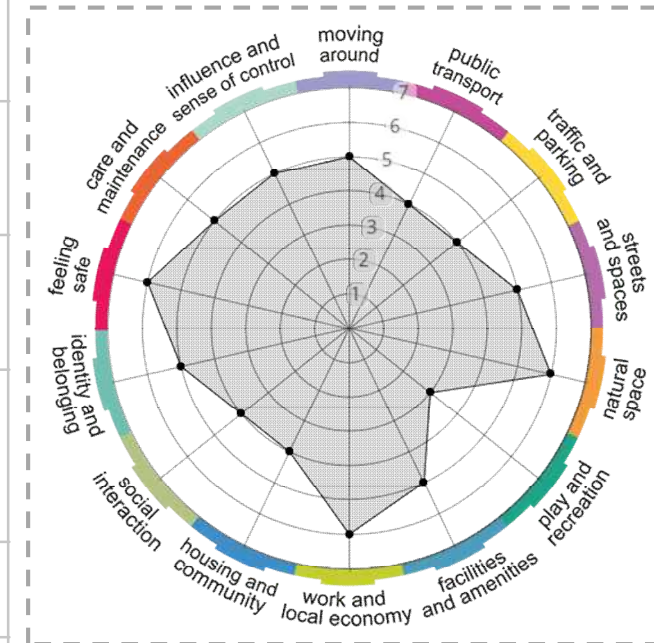
*Business and Community Survey, September 2021*



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

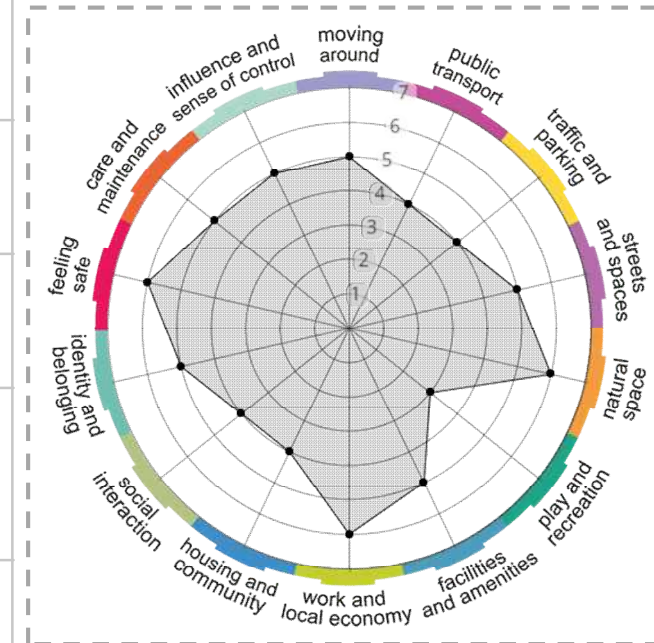
# KEY CONSIDERATIONS & OPPORTUNITIES

Theme	Key Improvements
<p><b>Identity and belonging</b> Rating: 5</p>	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.
<p><b>Feeling safe</b> Rating: 6</p>	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.
<p><b>Care and maintenance</b> Rating: 5</p>	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.
<p><b>Influence and sense of control</b> Rating: 5</p>	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.
<p><b>Moving around</b> Rating: 5</p>	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.
<p><b>Public transport</b> Rating: 4</p>	Although connections east to west are good, there is a limited service to other neighbouring communities, which resulted in respondents rating this poor overall.
<p><b>Traffic and parking</b> Rating: 4</p>	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
<p><b>Streets and spaces</b> Rating: 5</p>	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.
<p><b>Natural space</b> Rating: 6</p>	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.
<p><b>Play and recreation</b> Rating: 3</p>	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.
<p><b>Facilities and amenities</b> Rating: 5</p>	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.
<p><b>Work and local economy</b> Rating: 6</p>	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.
<p><b>Housing and community</b> Rating: 4</p>	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.
<p><b>Social contact</b> Rating: 4</p>	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:

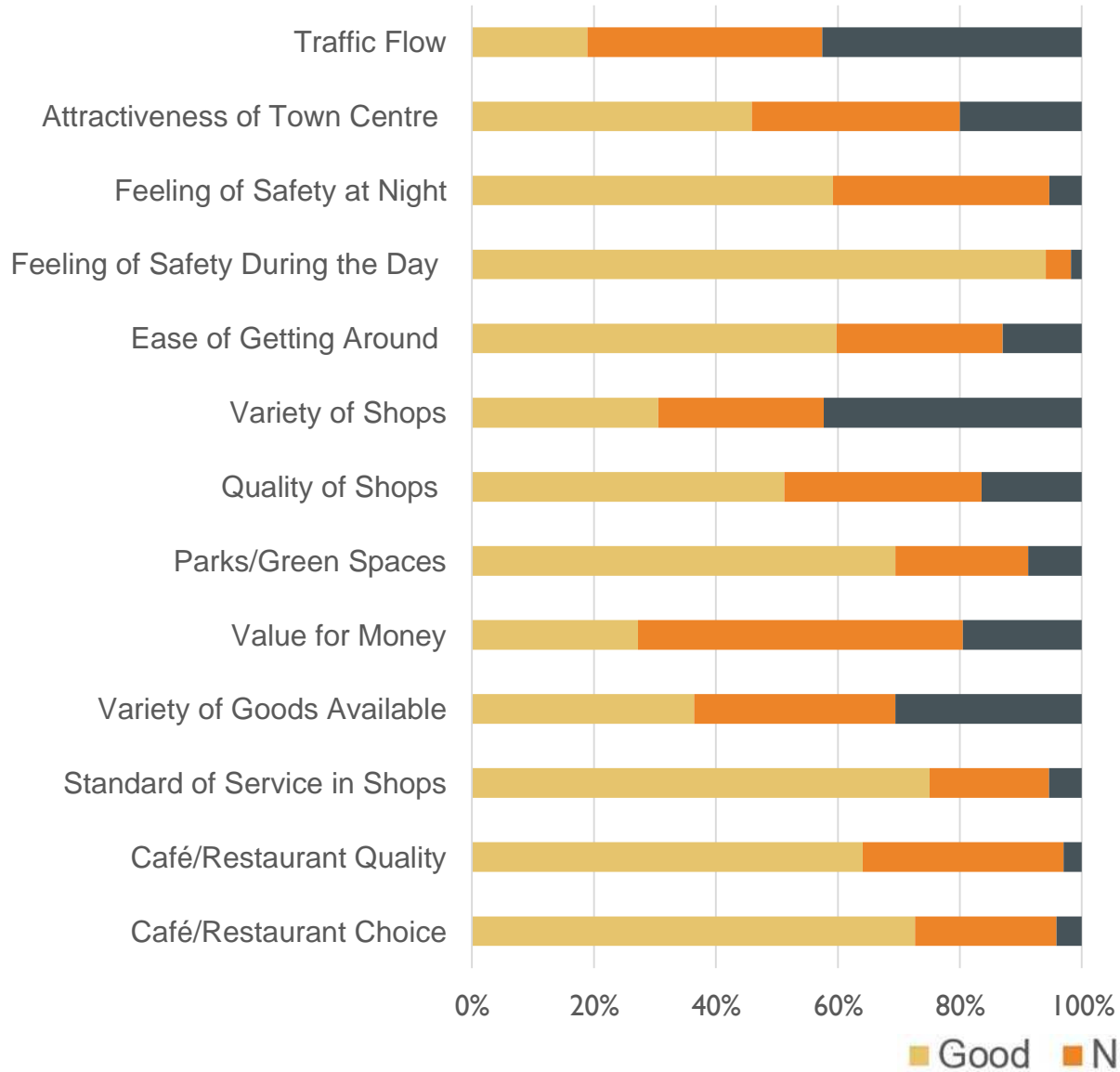
- + =1. Farmers Market
- + =1. Feeling of Safety During the Day
- + =2. Parks and Green Spaces
- + =2. Café/ Restaurant Choice
- + =2. Feeling of Safety at Night

#### Top 5 Lowest Scoring Categories:

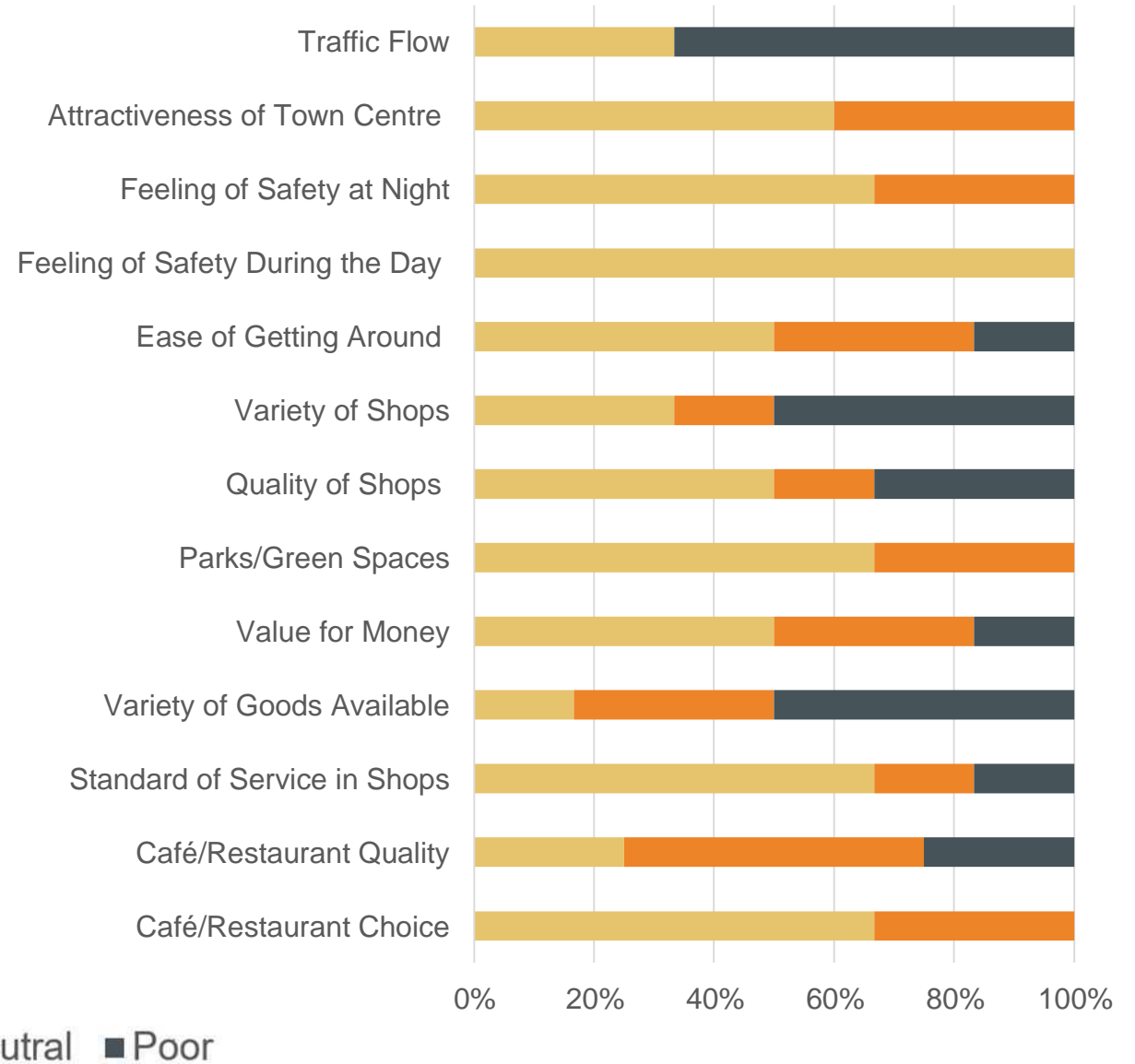
- 1. Vibrancy in the Evening
- 2. Traffic Flow
- 3. Seating/ Areas to Congregate
- 4. Parking Affordability - Cars
- 5. Variety of Goods Available

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

## Community Responses:



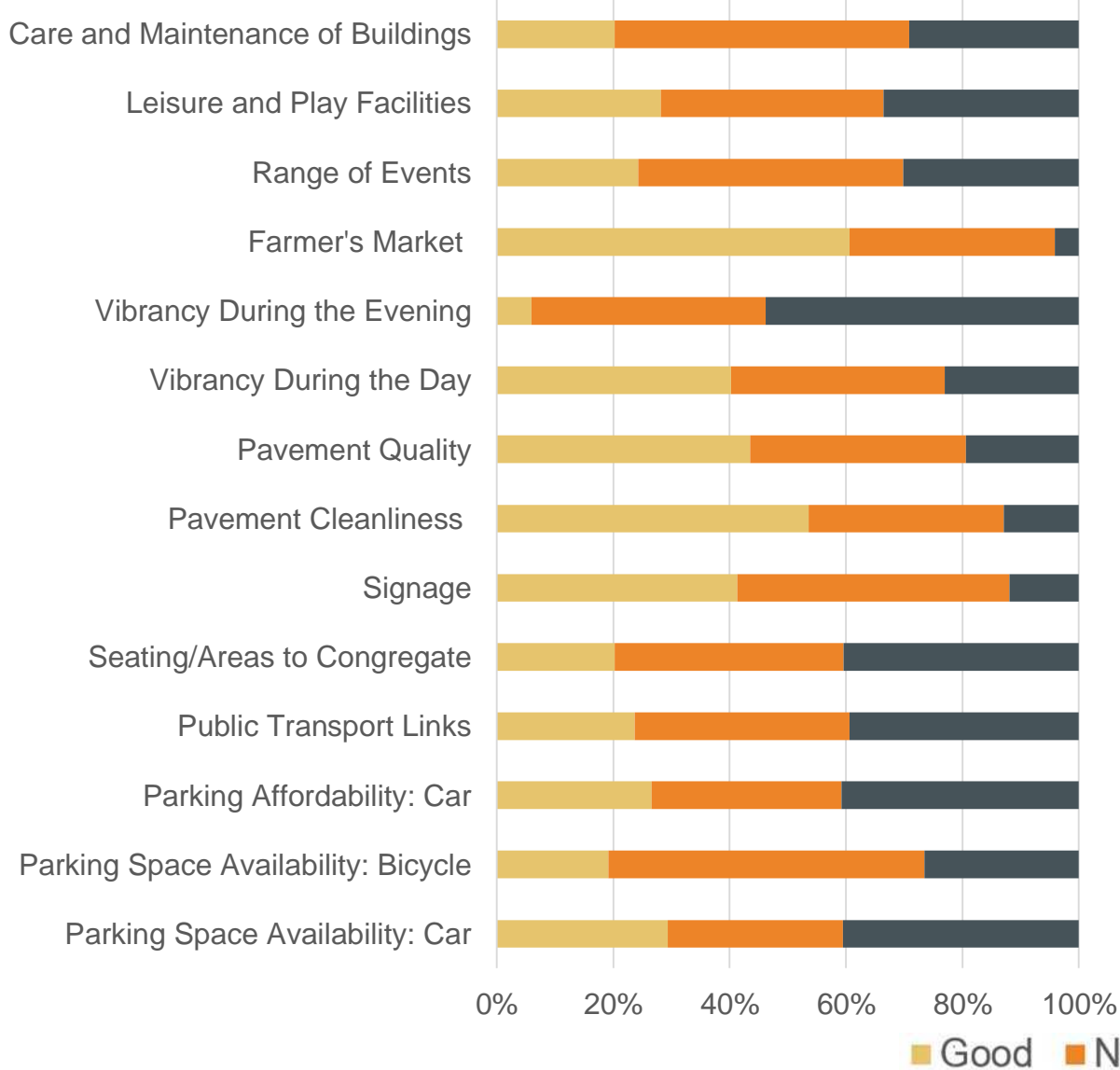
## Business Responses:



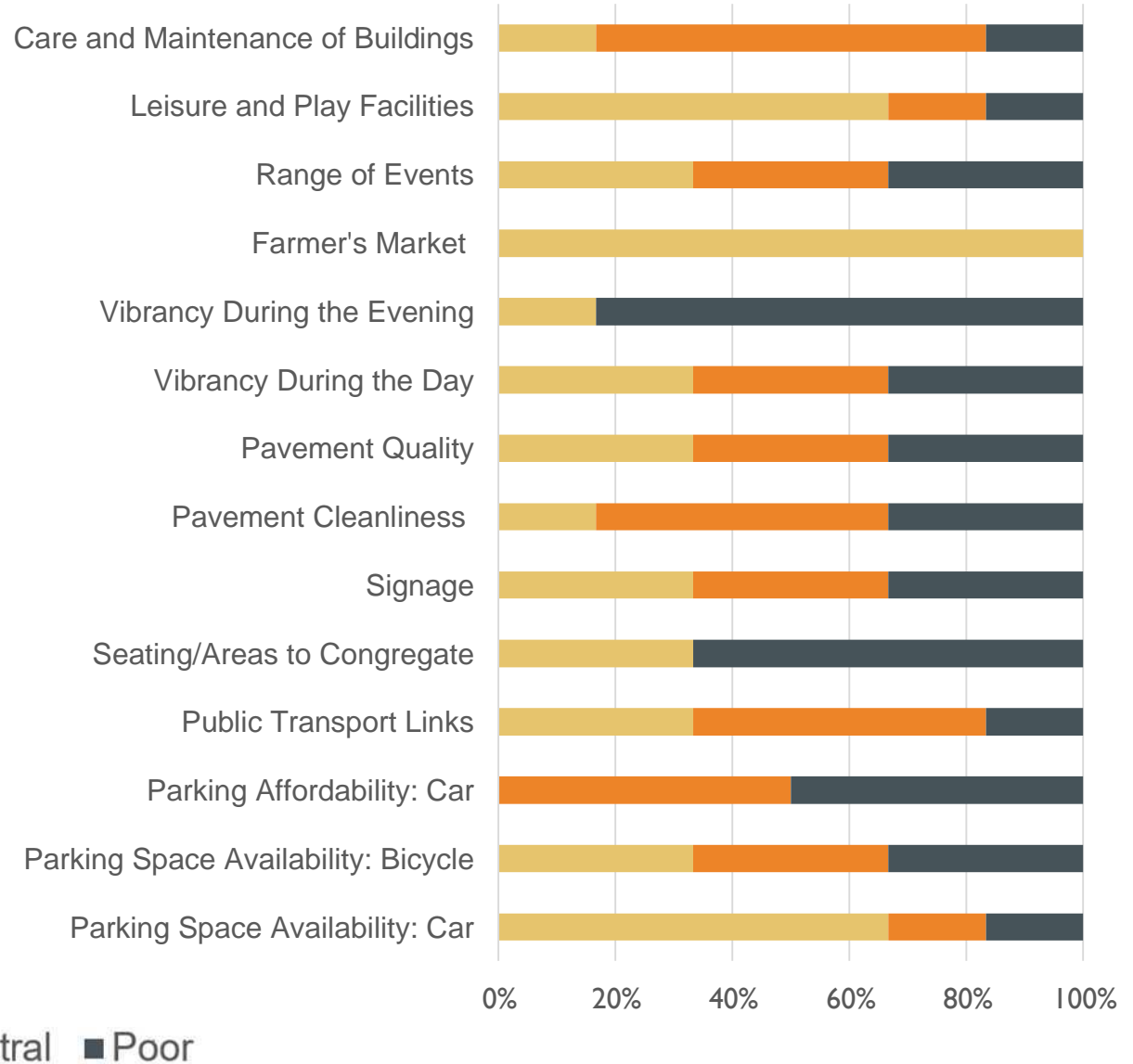


# BUSINESS & COMMUNITY SURVEY RESPONSES: How Would You Rate?

## 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 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:

Banchory Business Association

Banchory Community Council

Number One, Banchory

Footfall Count Volunteers

Accessibility Audit Volunteers: 5 adults



## Partner Organisations:

Sergeant Walker, Partnerships, Preventions and Interventions, 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

Transportation

Economic Development

Customer and Digital Services

Planning Policy

**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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