



Aberdeenshire
COUNCIL



TOWN CENTRE HEALTH CHECK SEPTEMBER 2022

MINTLAW, 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. From 2022 and then every second year, town centre health checks will be carried out on the remaining eight academy towns that are not classed as Principal Town Centres through the Local Development Plan.

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

WHY COMPLETE A HEALTH CHECK?

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

METHODOLOGY

TOWN CENTRE HEALTH CHECKS SHOULD:

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

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

DESK TOP RESEARCH

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

COMMUNITY SURVEY

The surveys for the eight academy town centres are being conducted every second year in line with when the town centre health checks are being completed. It is considered this would reduce 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 2022, 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 16 responses. A summary of the responses received can be seen on page 33.



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

METHODOLOGY (CONTINUED)

BUSINESS SURVEY

The surveys for the eight academy town centres are being conducted every second year in line with when the town centre health checks are being completed. 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 2022 and was shared via relevant groups for completion. 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 3 responses. A summary of the responses received can be seen on page 33.

FOOTFALL AND TRAFFIC COUNTS

The footfall count was completed at two locations within the town centre to gain information on the vitality at different times of the day. Three time slots were selected to gain information of the vibrancy in the morning and afternoon. The counts were completed for 15-minute periods on a weekday to try and gain an insight into the number of people moving around the town centre. As there were no counts conducted in the evening and weekend, questions were included in the community survey to gain an insight on how often, when and why people visit the town centre. These footfall counts were a collaborative effort and carried out by Aberdeenshire Council Officers and members of the community. Traffic counts were also included in 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.

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: There was a fairly even split of those who felt positive towards the town centre, but a slight majority felt negative about it. This is reflected in the comments where respondents consider there to be a lack of facilities. However, there were some who felt that the town centre provided for their needs. A common negative theme which arose from the surveys was the perceived impact of the parking and traffic going at the central roundabout. Over half of respondents had a neutral opinion on community spirit and only a quarter rated it as good. .

The growth of Mintlaw: Mintlaw is a prehistoric site and a planned village forms the heart of the town, dating from **1813**. The existence of the town can largely be accredited to its geographical location, sitting at the crossroads from the old coach routes from Aberdeen to Fraserburgh and Peterhead to Banff. The village grew with the arrival of the railway in the **1860s**, when the former railway line from Aberdeen to Peterhead opened and again in the **1970s** with the arrival for the North sea oil and gas industry. Unusually the centre of the settlement, known as The Square, comprises of a roundabout and war memorial surrounded by various local amenities. Mintlaw is an important service centre for the surrounding rural area and provides a small provision of shops and businesses.

Source: Understanding Scottish Places, Mintlaw Community Action Plan Undiscovered Scotland

IDENTITY & BELONGING



How Do You Feel About Mintlaw Town Centre?



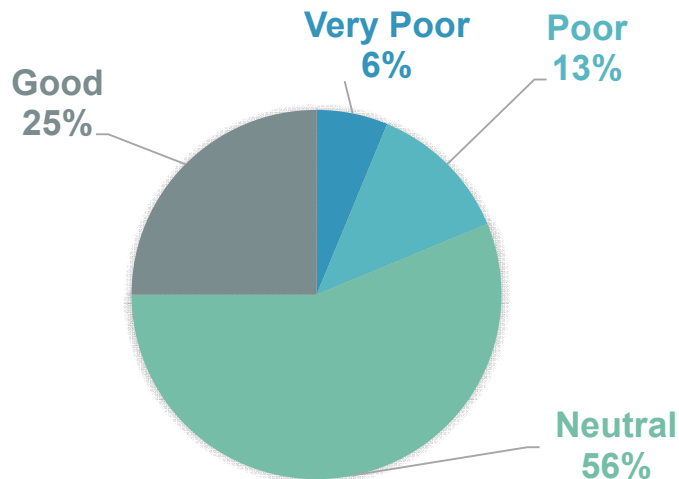
44% Community

56% Community

67% Businesses

33% Businesses

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



"Nothing left - no pubs in the square, no bank, fast flowing traffic at roundabout, crazy parking at roundabout, no bus depot, no pedestrian crossing at roundabout."

"I like it, has everything one needs."

"The town is expanding and there are not enough amenities for the town and nothing for younger / teens to do!"



"It is my nearest village, it has reasonable selection of shops and services. However one negative is allowing too much development, too many new housing developments, which ruins the small community feel and also there is insufficient services for all these new houses - especially health services."

"Reasonable selection of shops."

Business and Community Survey, September 2022


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 rated in the top five categories in the community survey, and received 100% positive rating by businesses. This is reflected in the crime statistics. Safety during the evening was less positive, with more negative responses received, although there were also a similar number of neutral responses, perhaps indicating that the town centre is not used as much at night. Safety in relation to the volume of traffic and lack of crossing points was a considerable concern. Street lighting appears to be well maintained and distributed throughout the town centre. There is no central CCTV system.

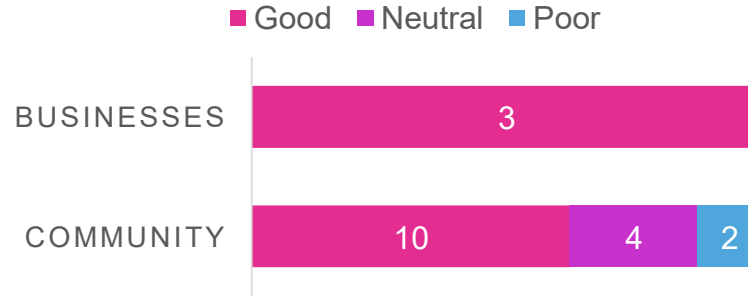
- Key Safety Features:**
-  Modern lighting on main streets and around roundabout
 -  No central CCTV system in place

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

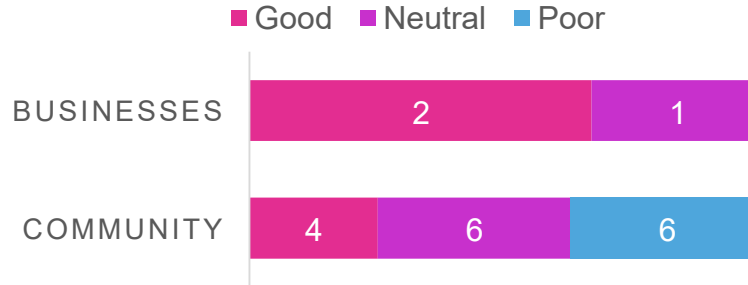
FEELING SAFE



HOW WOULD YOU RATE: SAFETY DURING THE DAY?



HOW WOULD YOU RATE: SAFETY DURING THE EVENING?



“A crossing with lights near the roundabout for old people to cross to the shops across South Road.”

“Roundabout parking needs to be addressed as unsafe reversing onto carriageway.”

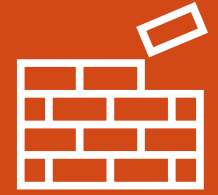
“Parking on roundabout leads to dangerous reversing into flow of traffic. Parking on pavements creates obstacles to pedestrians. Parking at inappropriate places causes obstructions and danger to other road users.”

Business and Community Survey, September 2022



Images (Left to Right): Lighting outside buildings at The Square; Lighting on the roundabout.

CARE & MAINTENANCE



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.



Shops in the Square



Vacant Unit



Public Hall



Vacant Unit



Observations:
Generally the buildings within the town centre boundary are in good condition.

However, a number of comments were noted about bringing the vacant buildings back into use as they are in prominent locations and detracting from the overall appearance of the town.

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

HOW WOULD YOU RATE: CARE & MAINTENANCE OF BUILDINGS?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor

BUSINESSES



“Encourage the sale/ reopening of the pub.”

“An improvement would be to see the derelict buildings renovated.”

“The large derelict building that has been empty for 20 years plus is an eyesore.”

Business and Community Survey, September 2022

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: Mintlaw does not have many groups which help directly with town centre matters, but of those that do they are not well known in the local community. There may be opportunities to build upon the work these groups do to enhance their presence in the community.

Town Centre Groups	Mintlaw and District Community Council	Town Hall Committee
Legal Status	Community Council	Constituted Group
Membership	The community; 12 members*	Volunteers
Responsibilities	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.	Local group who operate the Mintlaw Public Hall, where several groups use the venue for various activities. Fundraising events are also run to help support the running of the hall.
Contact	Mintlaw Community Council	

*Correct at time of survey

13% of community survey respondents are aware of groups that support the town centre.

"The regeneration/committee at the town hall are revamping the square with positive outcomes."

Business and Community Survey, September 2022

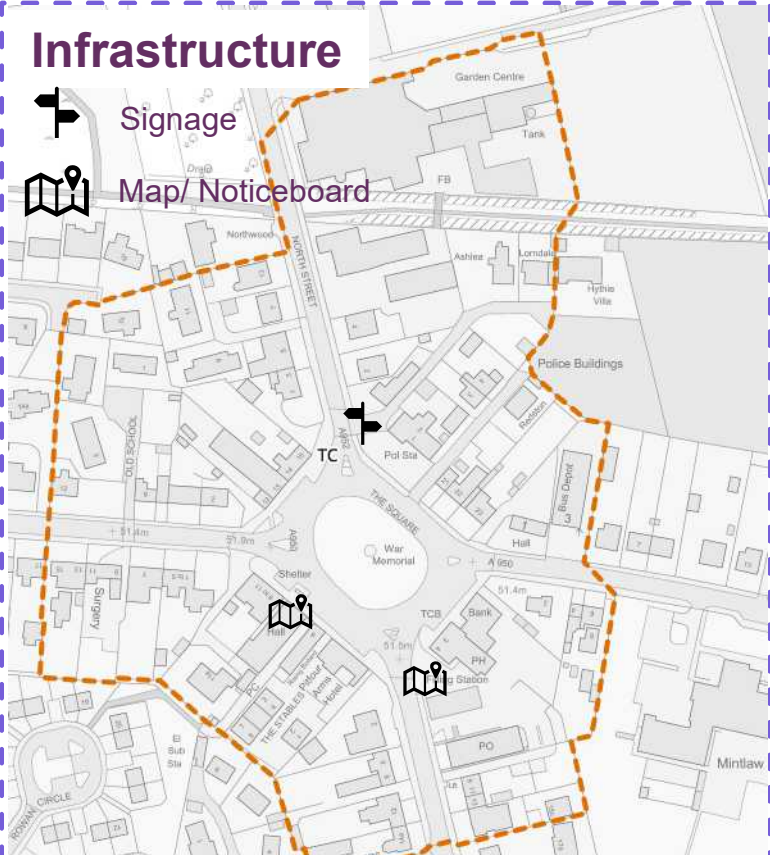
Community Council
Town Hall Committee

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

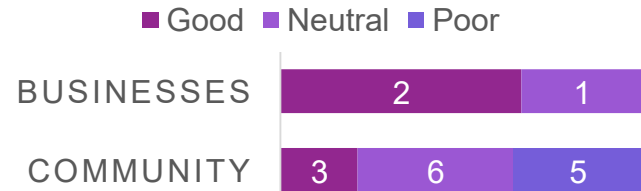


Infrastructure

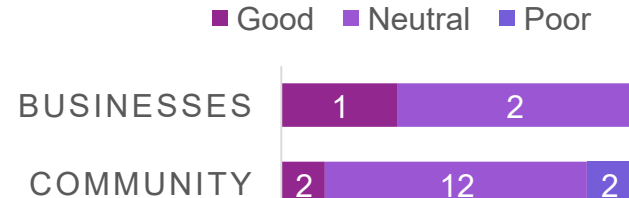


Observations: The majority of respondents in the community survey rated getting around the town centre as neutral or poor. This was further enforced through the comments where people felt the road crossings were difficult and dangerous, in addition to parking and reversing onto the roundabout being a cause of concern. Signage was rated as mainly neutral, indicative of the lack of signage within the town centre which was noted during the site survey. The Mintlaw and District Community Council has a noticeboard located on South Street and there is another noticeboard on the public hall. There are no cycle lanes in the town centre and there is also a lack of cycle facilities. The Buchan and Formartine Way crosses through the town centre boundary, to the south of the Happy Plant Garden Centre, with signage located on North Street.

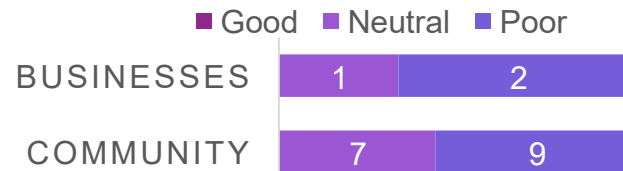
HOW WOULD YOU RATE: GETTING AROUND THE TOWN CENTRE?



HOW WOULD YOU RATE: SIGNAGE?



HOW WOULD YOU RATE: CYCLE PARKING?



“People park on pavements completely blocking them when visiting Nisa shop. Crossing the roads at the roundabout is a nightmare.”

“Not pedestrian friendly.”



Images (Top to Bottom): Noticeboard, Public Hall; Cycle signage, North Street; Noticeboard, South Street.

MOVING AROUND: VISITING THE TOWN CENTRE

Observations: The majority of survey respondents visit Mintlaw Town Centre every few days, with Post Office/ Council services being the main reason for their visit, followed by shopping. The most frequent time for visiting was during the week between 12pm-6pm. There were fewer trips to the town centre after 6pm during the week and weekend, which is reflective of comments noting the lack of facilities in the evenings and also highlighted in the health check.

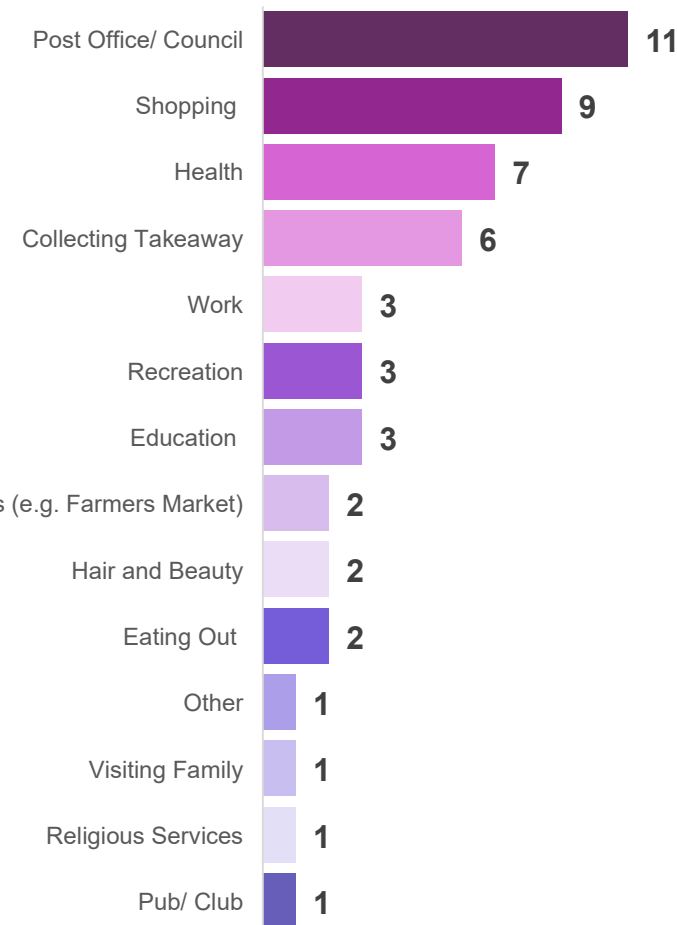
“Nothing left - no pubs in the square, no bank.”

“I like it, has everything one needs.”

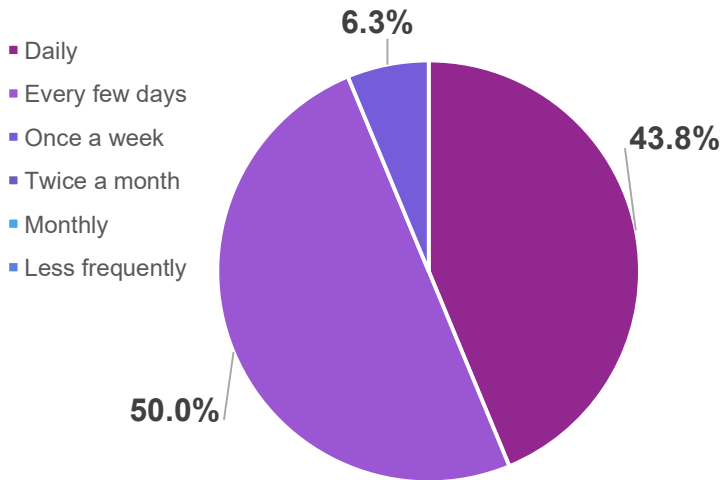
“Doesn't have enough restaurants for the size of the village.”

Community Survey, September 2022

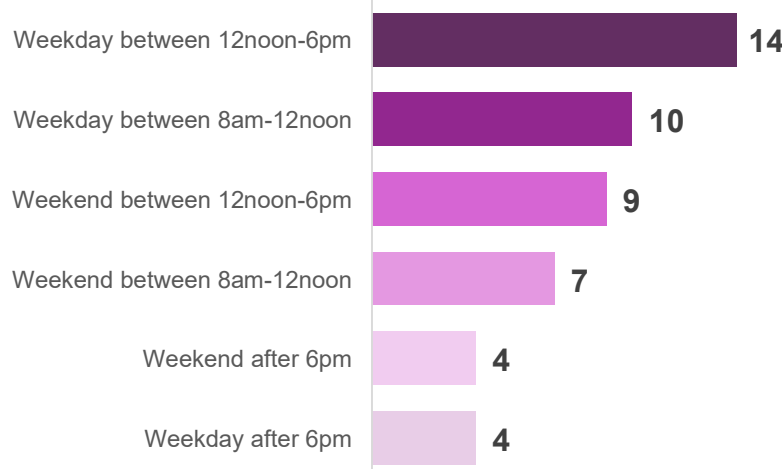
GENERALLY, WHY DO YOU VISIT MINTLAW TOWN CENTRE?*



HOW OFTEN DO YOU VISIT MINTLAW TOWN CENTRE?




WHEN WOULD YOU GENERALLY VISIT MINTLAW TOWN CENTRE?*



*Survey respondents were able to select multiple answers for these questions

MOVING AROUND: FOOTFALL SURVEY

Day	Time	Location 1	Location 2	Hourly Total	Overall Total
Tuesday 	09:30	11	12	23	80
	11:30	7	16	23	
	14:30	17	17	34	
Totals		35	45	80	

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 20th September 2022 for a duration of 15 minutes, three times a day, in two locations.

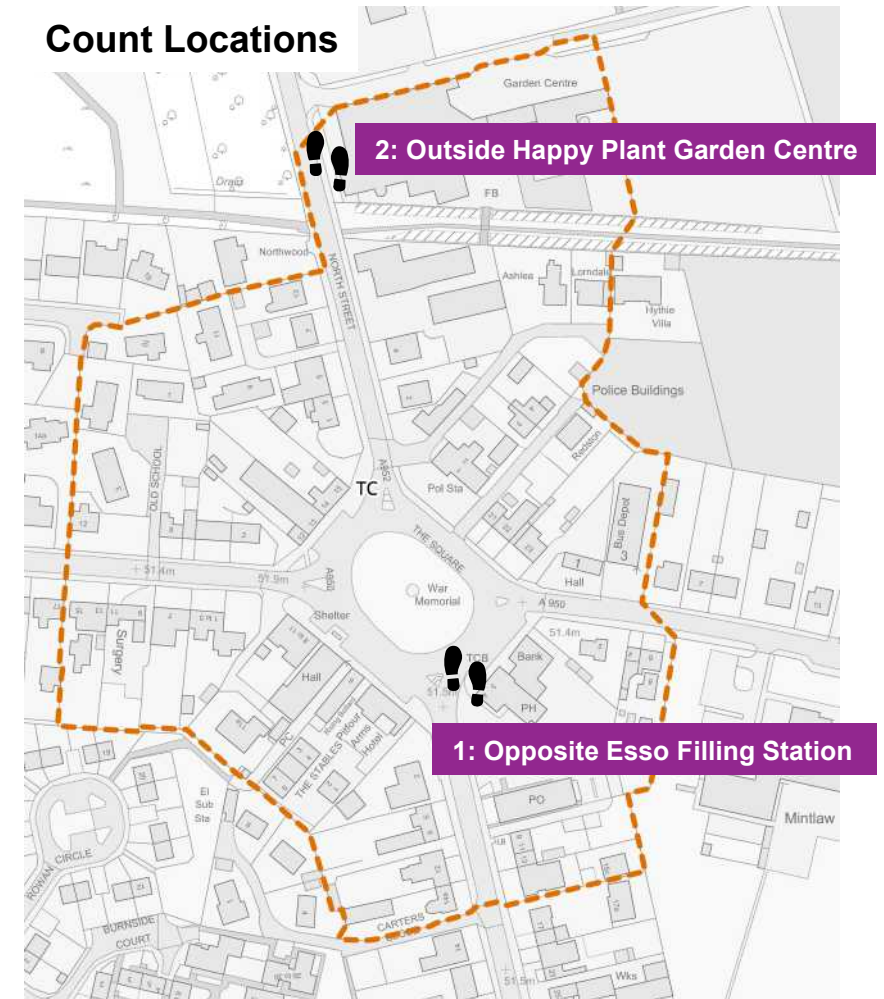
The pedestrian count findings showed the highest footfall count was recorded at 14:30 at both locations (17 people). Outside Happy Plant Garden Centre had a slightly higher footfall count over the course of the survey.

HEADLINES

Busiest Location: Esso Filling Station/
Happy Plant Garden Centre
Busiest Time: 14:30

Quietest Location: Esso Filling
Station
Quietest Time: 11:30

Count Locations



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: Mintlaw Town Centre has good services to Aberdeen and Fraserburgh, in addition to services to other towns/ villages in the surrounding area. There is an A2B Dial-A-Bus service which covers the central Buchan area. One covered bus shelter is located within the town centre boundary. Survey responses show a mixed response to public transport, with few comments provided on this topic.

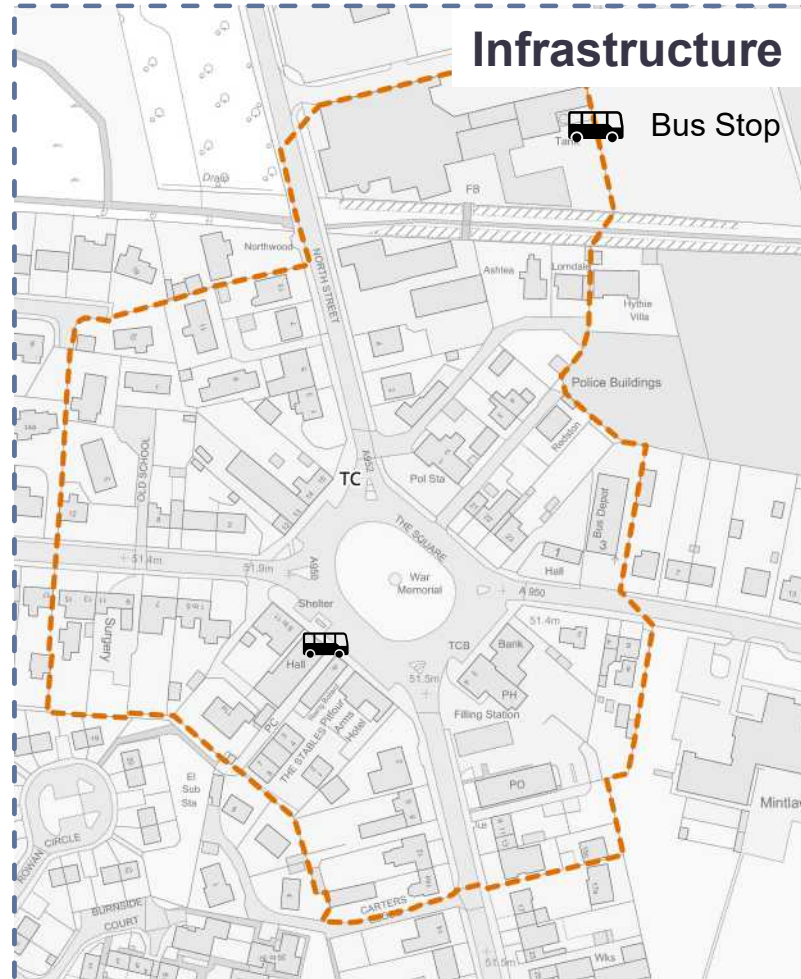


Image: Covered bus shelter, The Square

“Public transport does not get into Aberdeen early enough for 1st trains leaving for Edinburgh or Glasgow plus no early bus connection to airport early morning either.”

“Bus stop and car parking not compatible”

“Better transport links to tie in with train services in Aberdeen and also airport travel to Dyce.”

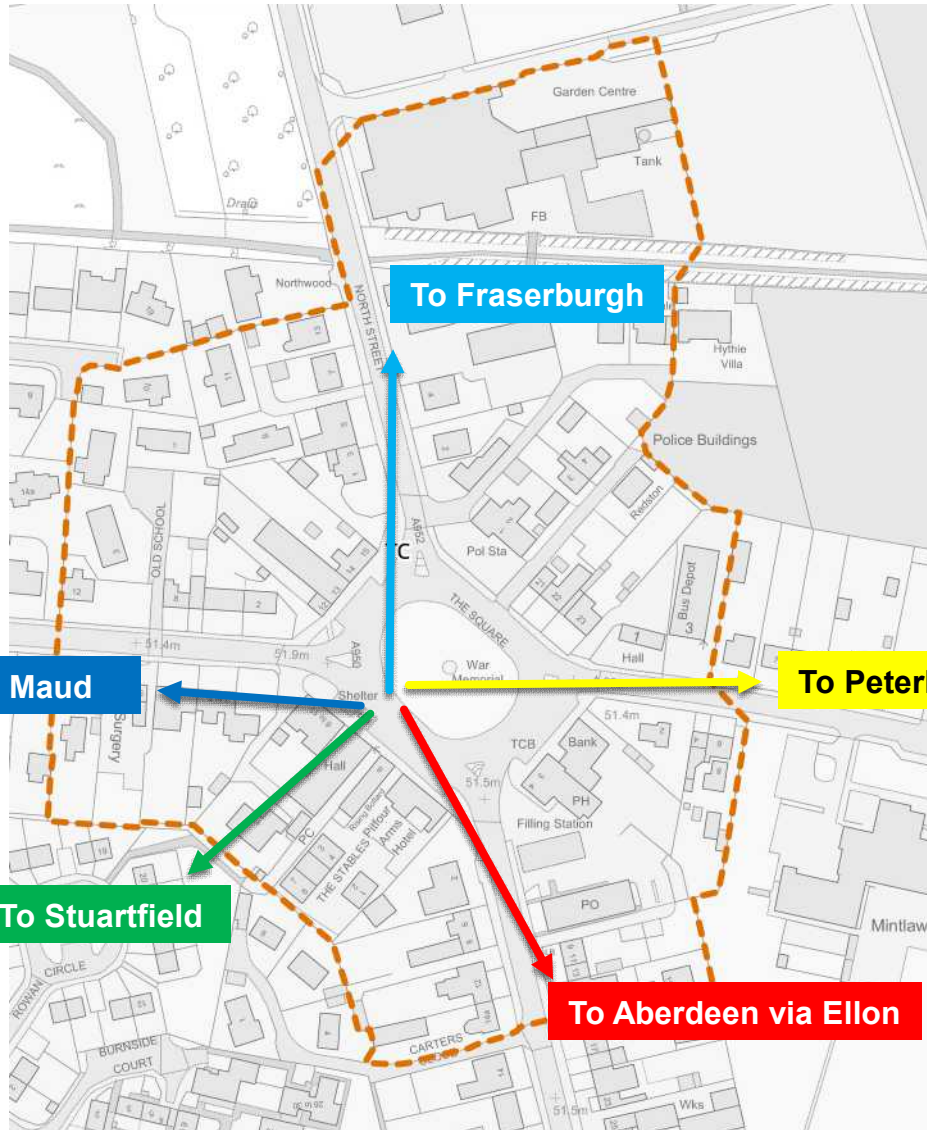
Business and Community Survey, September 2022

HOW WOULD YOU RATE: PUBLIC TRANSPORT?






■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor



PUBLIC TRANSPORT ROUTES



Key:

-  Bus Route 66/A
-  Bus Route 66
-  Bus Route X67/68
-  Bus Route X67/68
-  Bus Route 66/A

Route*	Frequency (per week day)	Fastest Journey Time	Earliest Travel Time	Latest Travel Time	Cost (Single Standard Ticket)
Bus to Aberdeen (via Ellon) (X67/68)	27	56mins	05:38	21:39	£7.80
Bus to Fraserburgh (X67/68)	29	26mins	07:21	00:05	£4.70
Bus to Maud (66)	2	15mins	09:53	12:53	£1.60
Bus to Stuartfield (66/A)	8	8mins	06:04	20:22	£2.10
Bus to Peterhead (66/A)	10	11mins	06:27	20:56	£4.20

* Correct at time of survey

An [A2B dial-a-bus](#), pre-booked minibus service is available in Mintlaw. In most cases a door-to-door service is provided, operating during weekdays. The service operates Mon-Fri, 07:30-18:30 and Sat, 08:00-18:30.

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

TRAFFIC & PARKING

TRAFFIC



Image: The Square.

“There should be a 20mph speed limit around the roundabout.”

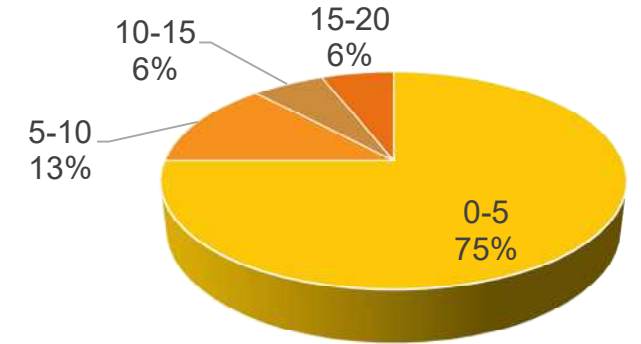
“Would be great to see improved road safety measures.”

“The traffic situation requires improvement.”

“The traffic through the town centre is poor.”

Business and Community Survey, September 2022

Distance Travelled to Use the Town Centre (Miles)



Source: Community Survey September 2022

HOW WOULD YOU RATE: TRAFFIC FLOW?

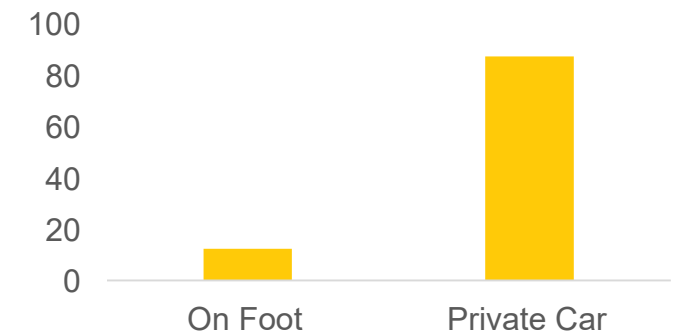
■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor



Observations: The comments relating to traffic flow in general are suggesting changes to improve the area in one way or another to increase the road safety within the town.

The topic of traffic flow was ranked within the bottom five of all topics rated through the community survey.

How would you generally travel to the town centre:



Source: Community Survey September 2022

MOVING AROUND: TRAFFIC SURVEY

Day		9:45am-10:00am		11:45am-12noon		2:15:2:30pm		Total number of Vehicles
		Car		Car		Car		
Tuesday	Location 1	Car	91	Car	98	Car	106	407
		Buses	4	Buses	3	Buses	1	
		Lorries	14	Lorries	11	Lorries	9	
		Vans	24	Vans	13	Vans	17	
		Taxis	0	Taxis	1	Taxis	1	
		Bicycles	0	Bicycles	2	Bicycles	1	
		Other	4	Other	4	Other	3	
	Location 2	Car	78	Car	85	Car	75	340
		Buses	2	Buses	3	Buses	1	
		Lorries	6	Lorries	5	Lorries	13	
		Vans	23	Vans	10	Vans	21	
		Taxis	3	Taxis	3	Taxis	4	
		Bicycles	0	Bicycles	2	Bicycles	0	
		Other	4	Other	1	Other	1	
Hourly Totals (all traffic):		253		241		253		747

HEADLINES

Busiest Location: Outside Happy Plant

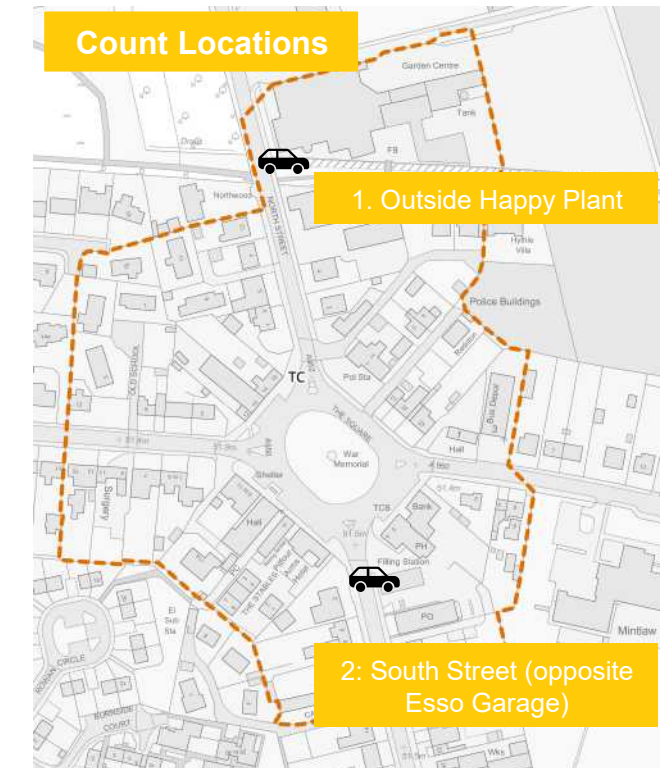
Busiest Time: 14:15

Busiest Day: Friday

Quietest Location: South Street (opp Esso Garage)

Quietest Time: 11:45

Quietest Day: Thursday



Observations: Vehicle counts were undertaken on Tuesday 20th September 2022 for a duration of 15 minutes, three times a day, in two locations. These give information on the number of cars that are passing through the town centre, it can't 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 vehicle count was recorded outside Happy Plant on Tuesday afternoon.

TRAFFIC & PARKING

CAR PARKING AFFORDABILITY AND AVAILABILITY

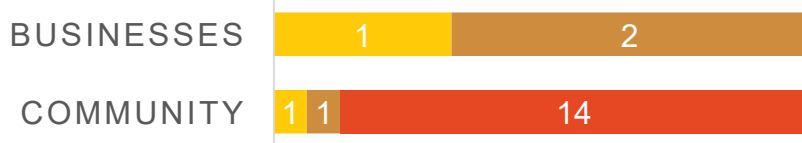
HOW WOULD YOU RATE: PARKING AFFORDABILITY?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor



HOW WOULD YOU RATE: PARKING AVAILABILITY?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor



“Better parking near the Square.”

“Improve the parking facilities.”

“It would be great to see safer parking in the town centre.”

“There needs to be better parking.”

“Roundabout parking needs sorted.”

Business and Community Survey, September 2022

Observations: There is no Council car park within the town centre of Mintlaw, although there is parking available for the shops on the roadside and in parking spaces located around the roundabout.

A number of comments have been received in relation to the availability of parking, and there is a strong community aspiration to see improvements made to the parking that is located in the vicinity of the roundabout.

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: There are no vacant retail units within the town centre, however there are two large vacant former pub/ hotel units which slightly detract from the overall appearance and it would be beneficial for the town centre if these were brought back into use.

The survey attracted a mix of ratings in relation to the attractiveness of the town but the majority of respondents agreed on a neutral rating.

STREETS & SPACES

ATTRACTIVENESS OF TOWN CENTRE



War Memorial in centre of the roundabout



Happy Plant Garden Centre, North Street



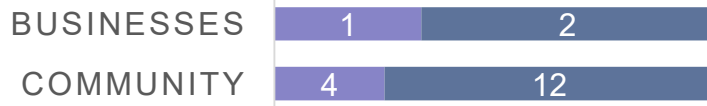
Mintlaw Public Hall, The Square



Public bench with artwork, South Street

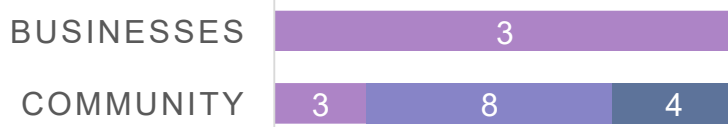
HOW WOULD YOU RATE: SEATING/ AREAS TO CONGREGATE

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor



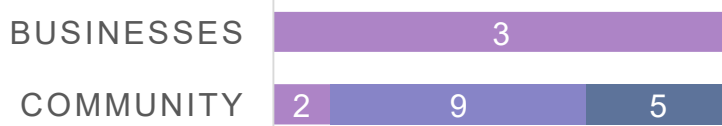
HOW WOULD YOU RATE: PAVEMENT CLEANLINESS?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor



HOW WOULD YOU RATE: PAVEMENT QUALITY?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor



STREETS & SPACES: HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT, PUBLIC ART, HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT, PAVEMENTS AND SEATING

Observations: There is one listed building within Mintlaw Town Centre. The Category C listed building is in good condition and is a residential property.

There is only one seat within the town centre, although the seat itself contributes positively to the attractiveness of the town. The topic of seating was ranked within the bottom five of all topics in both the business and community surveys.

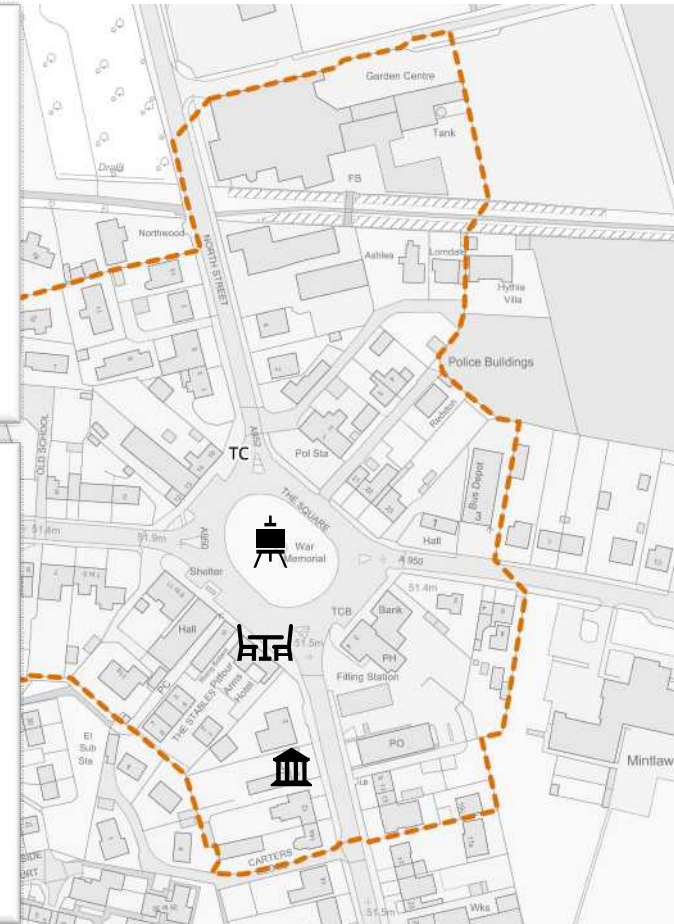
The topics of pavement quality and cleanliness received a mixed response through the surveys but the largest proportion of ratings for both topics were neutral.



Public bench with artwork, South Street



War Memorial in centre of the roundabout



Listed Building



Seating Areas



Public Art

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 Mintlaw Town Centre, the roundabout is an area of green space with the war memorial at its centre. This space is not easily accessible or a safe useable space, but does provide a visually appealing setting in the heart of the town. There are some planters and other planting which add colour to the area which is largely dominated by hard landscaping. The town is bordered by open countryside, and access to the Formartine and Buchan Way from within the town centre boundary is an asset. Few comments were received in relation to parks or green spaces, but there were nearly as many poor ratings for this category as there were good ratings.

HOW WOULD YOU RATE: PARKS & GREEN SPACES?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor



NATURAL SPACE



Park to north of town centre



Formartine and Buchan Way



Greenspace on roundabout at war memorial



Planters and shrubs within the town centre

“The centre would vastly improve by a heavy reduction in traffic and turn more into a ‘village green’ like space where the old farming village heritage feel is preserved whilst a growing Mintlaw is prepared for the remainder of the century.”

Business and Community Survey, September 2022.

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.

HOW WOULD YOU RATE: LEISURE AND PLAY FACILITIES?

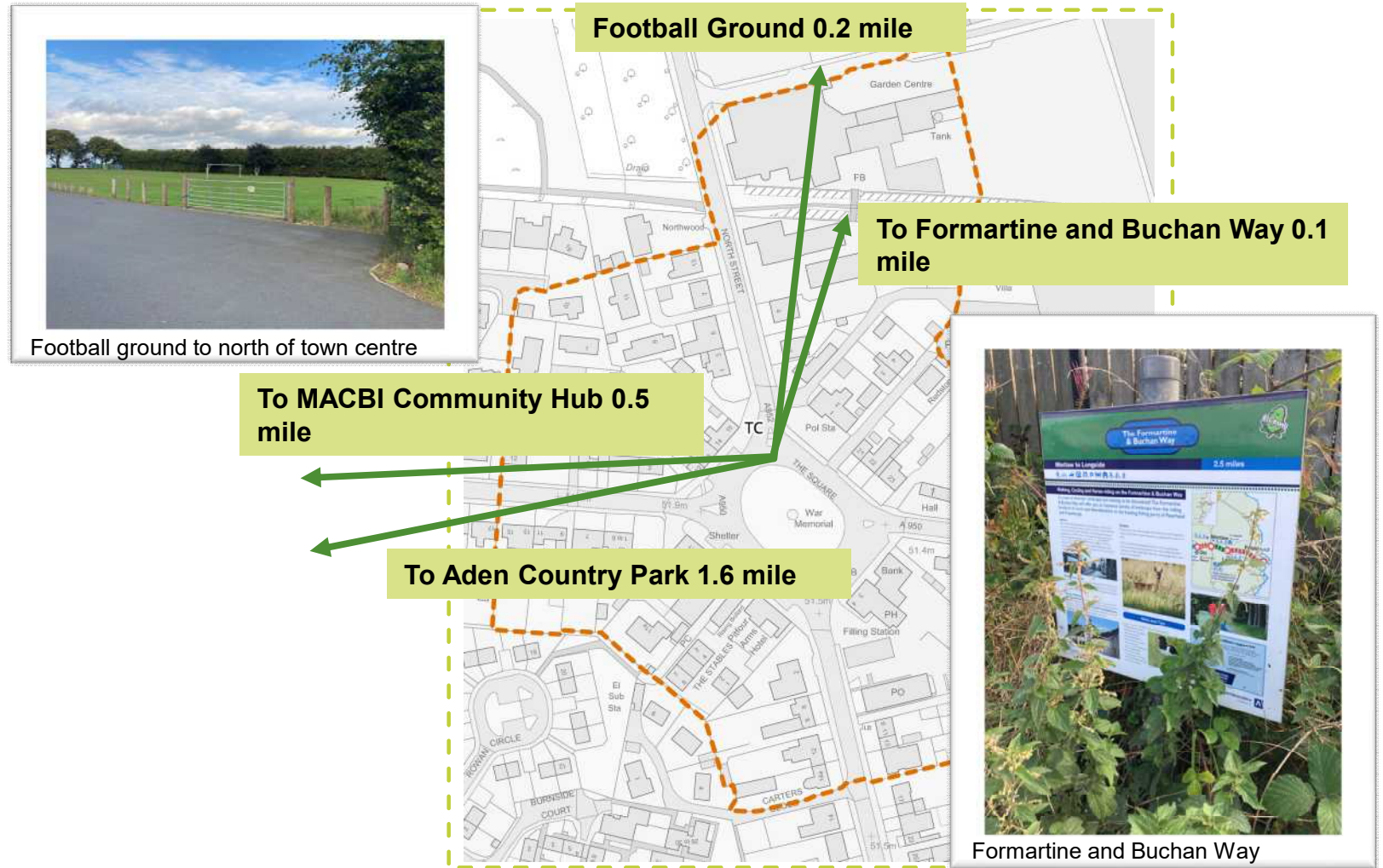
■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor

BUSINESSES



Observations: Mintlaw has no play and recreation sites within the town centre itself, but the presence of the Formartine and Buchan Way access and Football Ground on the town centre boundary was reflected through the survey. Comments also focused on a lack of opportunities for young people. However, there are a limited number of play and recreation facilities less than 1 mile from the town centre and Aden Country Park just over a mile and a half away.

PLAY & RECREATION



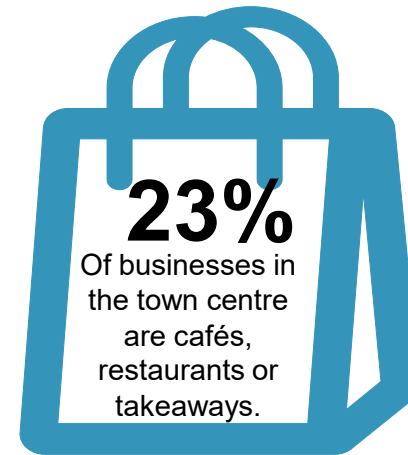
FACILITIES & AMENITIES: RETAILER REPRESENTATION

Retailer Representation

23% of businesses in the town centre are independent retailers

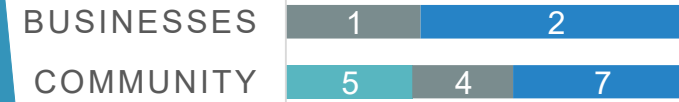
47% of businesses in the town centre are Class 1: Shops

23% 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



“Would prefer a wider range of shops.”

“There is not enough choice in the town centre.”

“There are a variety of shops within the town centre.”

Business and Community Survey, September 2022



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

FACILITIES & AMENITIES: CAFÉ AND RESTAURANTS AND EVENING ECONOMY

HOW WOULD YOU RATE: CAFÉ/ RESTAURANT CHOICE?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor



HOW WOULD YOU RATE: CAFÉ/ RESTAURANT QUALITY?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor



HOW WOULD YOU RATE: THE VIBRANCY IN THE EVENING?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor

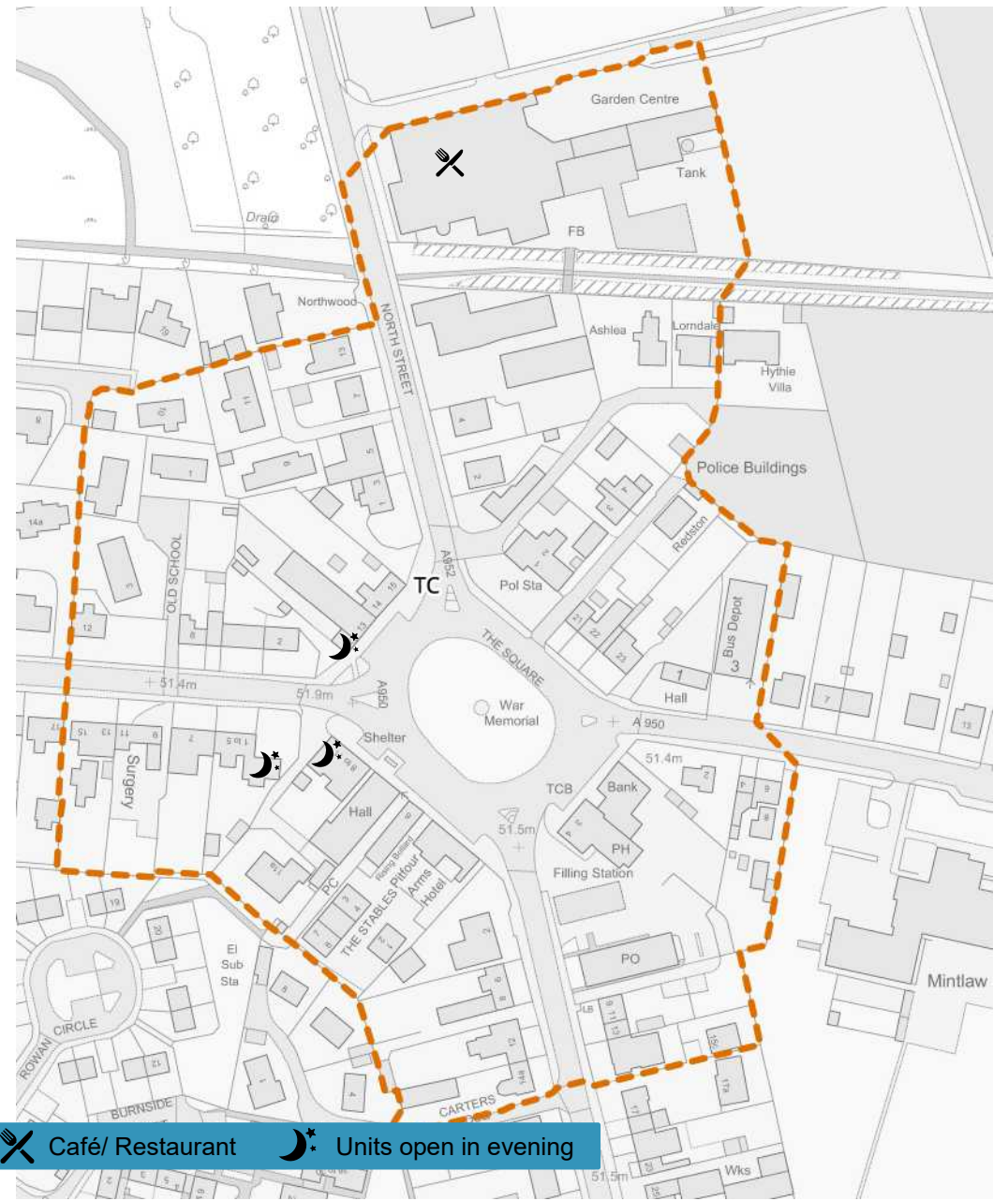


Observations: Within the town centre there is only one café, which is within the Happy Plant Garden Centre. However, the topic of café choice and quality was ranked within the top five rated topics of all topics rated through the community survey.

Conversely, the topic of evening vibrancy was ranked within the bottom five of all topics in both the community and business survey.



Image: The Square.



🍴 Café/ Restaurant 🌙 Units open in evening

FACILITIES & AMENITIES: CULTURAL AND LEISURE OUTLETS, PUBLIC AND OTHER SERVICES AND FARMERS MARKET

Observations: There are only a limited number of outlets and services within Mintlaw Town Centre, with two public services (Mintlaw Public Hall and the Police Station), an ATM machine and a defibrillator unit. Although there are no leisure or cultural services within the town centre boundary there are a number of services that are just outwith including the MACABI centre.

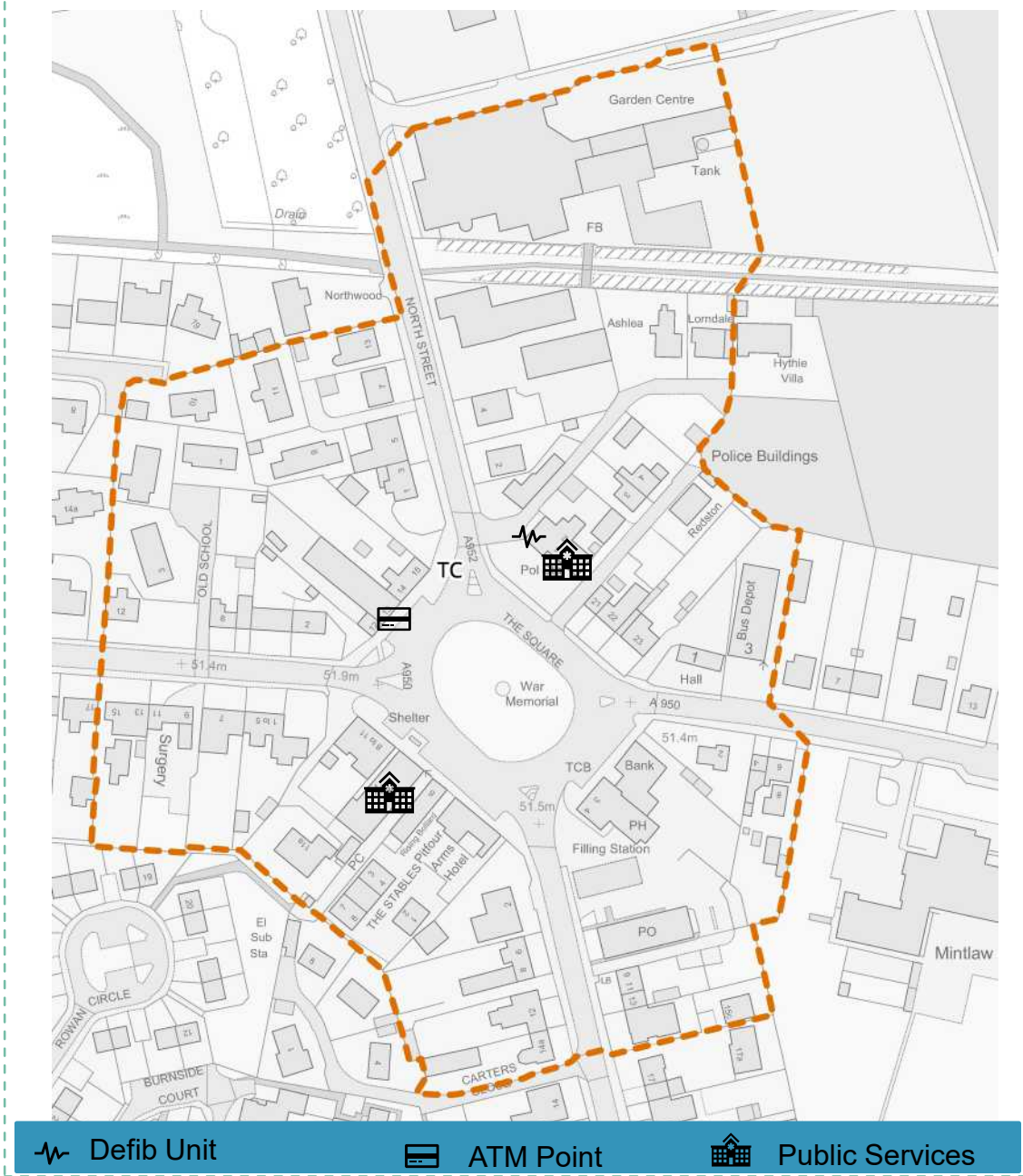
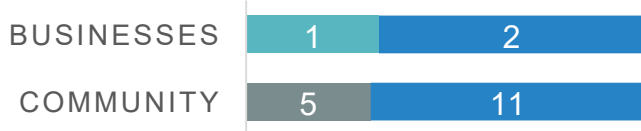
There are a mix of ratings received in relation to the Farmers Market within Mintlaw. However, it should be noted that the Farmers Market is not located within the town centre boundary.



Image: The Square.

HOW WOULD YOU RATE: THE MARKET?

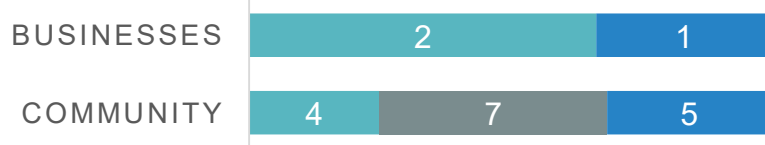
■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor



FACILITIES & AMENITIES: COMMUNITY AND VISITOR SATISFACTION

HOW WOULD YOU RATE: VALUE FOR MONEY?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor



Town Centre Offer:

56%

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

Business and Community Survey, September 2022

Observations: The standard of service within the shops was ranked within the top five out of all the topics surveyed within the community survey.

Whereas, the topics of variety of goods and value for money received more mixed ratings, with only 4 respondents rating the variety of goods available as good.

HOW WOULD YOU RATE: VARIETY OF GOODS AVAILABLE?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor



HOW WOULD YOU RATE: STANDARD OF SERVICE IN SHOPS?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor



Image: The Square.



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

720

Jan-Dec 2021

FACILITIES & AMENITIES: ONLINE SHOPPING/ CONNECTIVITY

Online Offering

100% of businesses surveyed have online presence

100% of businesses surveyed sell online

31% of the community surveyed said they are more likely to shop online rather than going into the town centre for the same item

Business and Community Survey, September 2022

“Availability and the cost of the project depends on whether I buy locally or online.”

“Don’t do shopping online.”

“I try to shop locally.”

“Convenient if I can buy it in Mintlaw then I will rather than waiting for it to arrive from buying online.”

Business and Community Survey, September 2022

Observations: Within the survey there was a mix of responses to the questions about shopping online. Just over two thirds of respondents noted that they would rather shop local than buying online.

Whilst others noted that availability, convenience, pricing and variety of goods were the main reasons for online shopping.



Image: North Street.

Mobile Coverage in Mintlaw Town Centre:

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

✓ Good coverage
 ○ You may experience problems
 ✗ No coverage
 5G AREA
 Some 5G availability

Broadband Coverage in Mintlaw Town Centre:

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

Observations: Mobile coverage within Mintlaw Town Centre is very strong with all of the top networks being able to be connected to at a 4G level and then one network being connected to be connected at a 5G level.

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.

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

Observations: The employment picture shows a varied mix of sectors in the town centre, with retail accounting for the largest portion of the jobs and the remaining sectors giving a variety of employment opportunities at differing skill levels. The claimant count rate rose in 2020, but the numbers are now dropping slightly, albeit still above the pre-pandemic levels. The claimant count rate for Mintlaw town centre remains higher than the wider area average. The household income is much lower than the median income for Buchan and Aberdeenshire.

Settlement Type:
Accessible Rural
 (Areas with a population of less than 3,000 people and within a drive time of 30 minutes to a Settlements of 10,000 or more)
 Scottish Government's Urban Rural Classification, 8-fold

Median Household Income 2021
Town Centre Data Zone*
£23,981

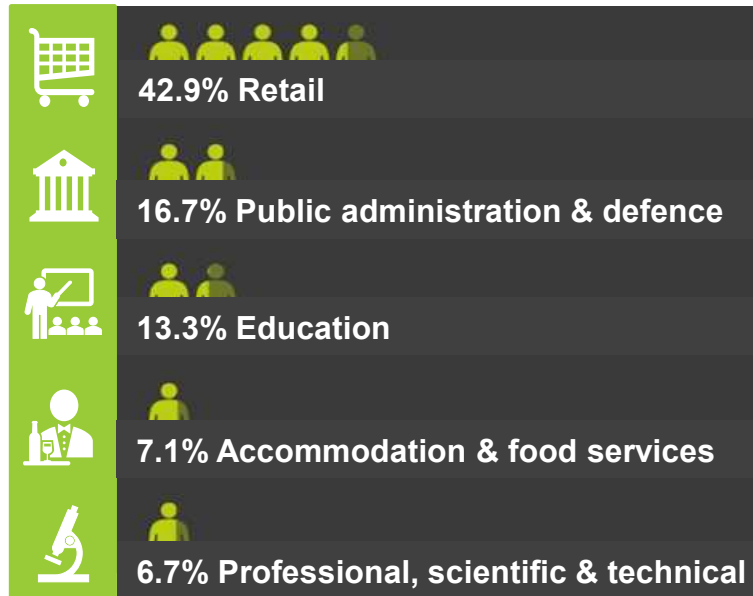
£31,874 Buchan; £36,889 Aberdeenshire

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

WORK & LOCAL ECONOMY

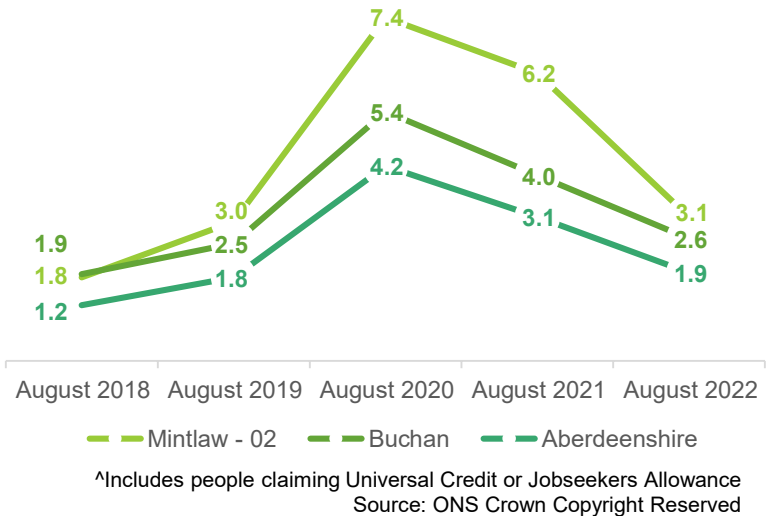


Top 5 Employment Sectors 2021 Mintlaw Town Centre Data Zone*



Source: Business Register and Employment Survey 2021

CLAIMANT COUNT RATE^ (%)

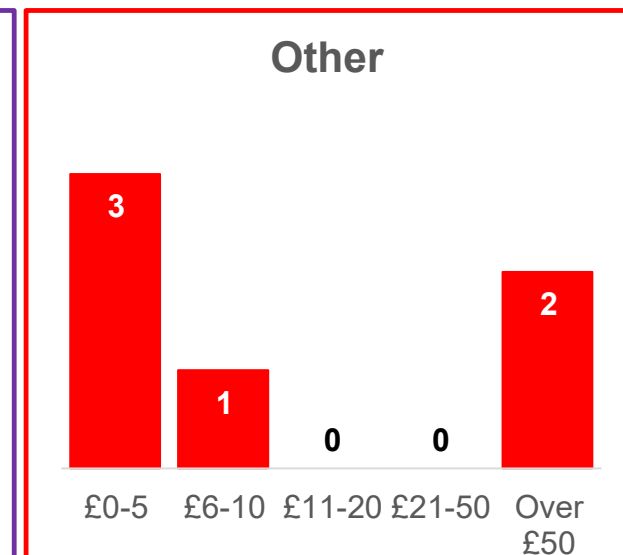
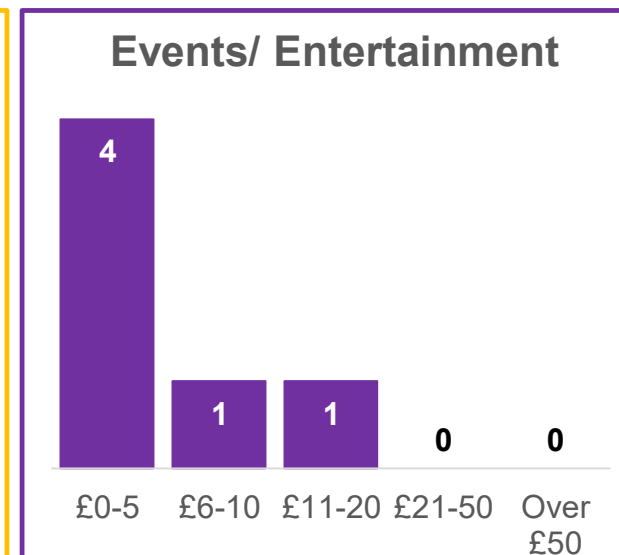
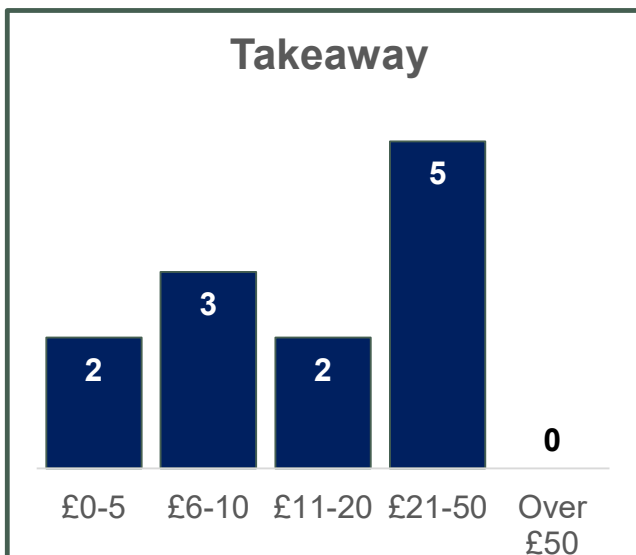
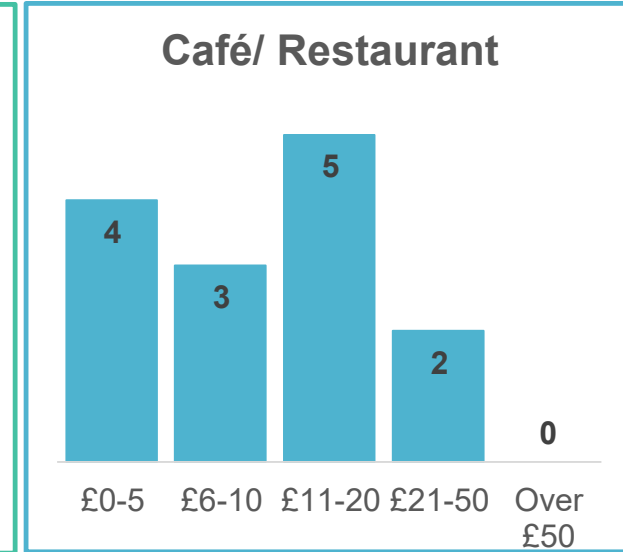


Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2020
Town Centre Data Zone*:
36-40% most deprived in Scotland

* The data zone (S01007058) that makes up the majority of the town centre.

WORK & LOCAL ECONOMY: AVERAGE CONSUMER SPEND 2022

Observations: The graphs show an interesting spend profile in the town centre, with food shopping accounting for the biggest expenditure by visitors. Other shopping was spread out across the price brackets indicating that people are visiting for a wide variety of different items. Takeaways seem to typically be in the higher end of the price spectrum. There is very little spend on Events/ Entertainment highlighting the lack of opportunities in this area, picked up elsewhere in the health check.



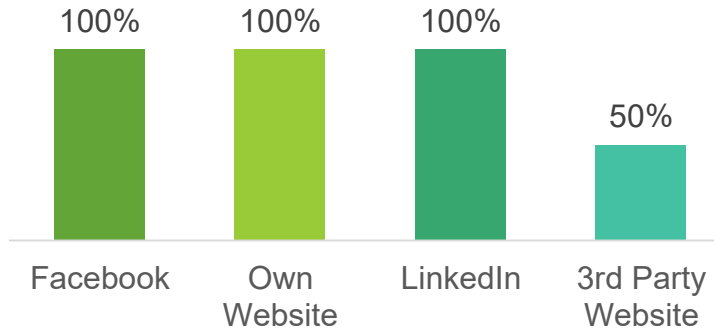
WORK & LOCAL ECONOMY: BUSINESS SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS 2022

Observations: Only 3 businesses responded to the survey, although did not answer all the survey questions. They provided a generally positive outlook for the town with businesses highlighting that turnover has increased over the past five years. These businesses were somewhat confident about the future, and are looking to expand or grow although there are no proposed changes to opening hours at this time. Businesses are making good use of online marketing tools.

- 100%** of business owners surveyed were **established** businesses in the town centre
- 100%** of business owners surveyed were **Independent** businesses
- 100%** of business owners surveyed were **somewhat confident** about future business performance in Mintlaw
- 100%** of business owners surveyed are looking to **grow** or **expand** in the next five years

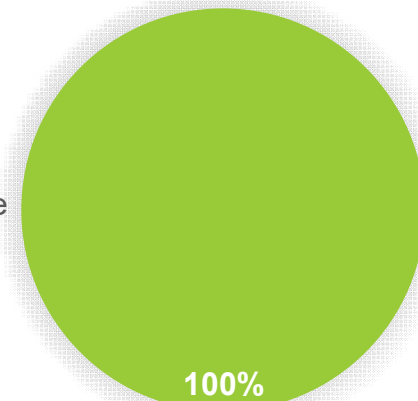
“It depends what you see as the town centre, the immediate centre has reasonable variety of businesses but no real cafes. Zanres and Simpsons are both just out with but are great facilities, bowling club also nearby. The likes of Coop takes business away from the immediate centre but it is great for the overall village as it provides choice that the other shops don't, as does Harbro.”

Top Online Marketing Tools Used



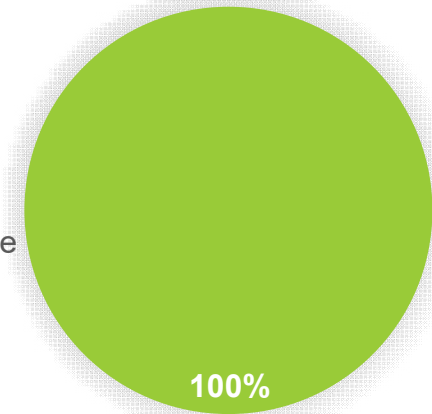
Has employment at your premises changed in the past five years?

- Increased
- Stayed the Same
- Decreased



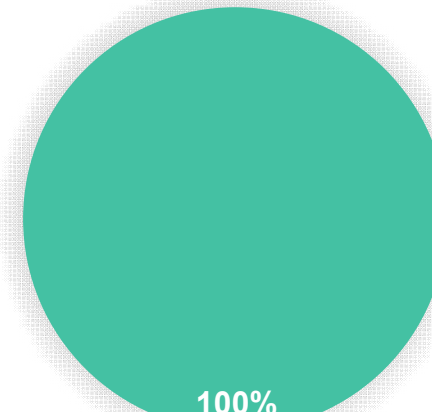
How has turnover at your premises changed in the past five years?

- Increased
- Stayed the Same
- Decreased



Are you looking on making a change to your opening hours over the next year?

- Unsure
- Yes - Decrease
- Yes - Increase
- No



WORK & LOCAL ECONOMY: PROPERTY

Observations: There are two large, empty premises which are having a negative effect on the town centre and these were commented on in the surveys. There was only one application submitted in the town centre boundary over the past year relating to any businesses. Of the three businesses who answered this survey question, they rent all their premises. The town centre is generally a mix of independent businesses and includes the Happy Plant Garden Centre. There are several other businesses to the south of the town, however these are excluded from the town centre boundary. With new housing developments in the settlement, it will be interesting to see if the town centre benefits from increased investment and whether new occupiers of the two large vacant buildings come forward to add to the offering within the town centre.

“More choice for entertainment and leisure venues for all ages. Greater variety of shops and cafes and possibly a supermarket.”

“Would be great if the vacant properties were purchased and put into use again, to add to the vibrancy of the area. (This would of course depend upon purchasers coming forward.)”

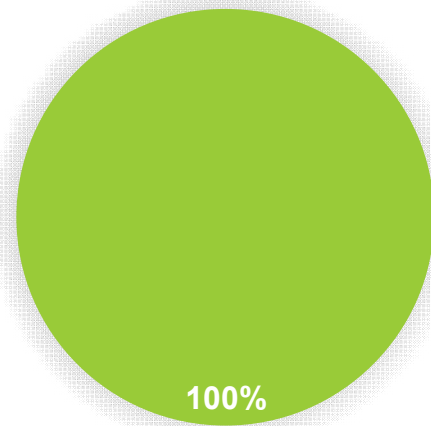
“Encourage sale and reopen hotel/pub.”

“We have a large derelict building that has been empty for 20 years plus and is an eyesore.”

“It's obviously a busy cross roads with plenty of visibility for businesses, but we hope the Pitfour and Garret can reopen or as new businesses soon, as they are business locations.”

Business and Community Survey, September 2022

Do you rent or own your premises?



■ Rent ■ Own



100% of business respondents said they were planning to invest in their premises in the next 5 years.

Planning Applications:

Within the town centre nine planning applications were approved between August 2021 – August 2022. Of note were:

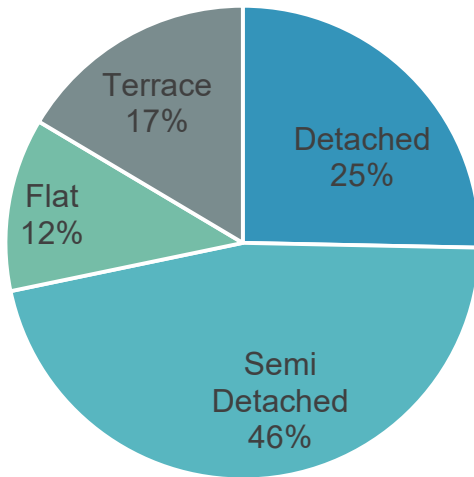
- Erection of signage.

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 semi-detached properties.

Of these dwelling types within the town centre the main tenure are properties which are either owned outright or owned with a mortgage as these make up 63% of the total.

Housing Profile and Population

The overall population total for Mintlaw in 2020 was 2,800 and it is estimated that approximately 114 people live within the town centre in 2022.

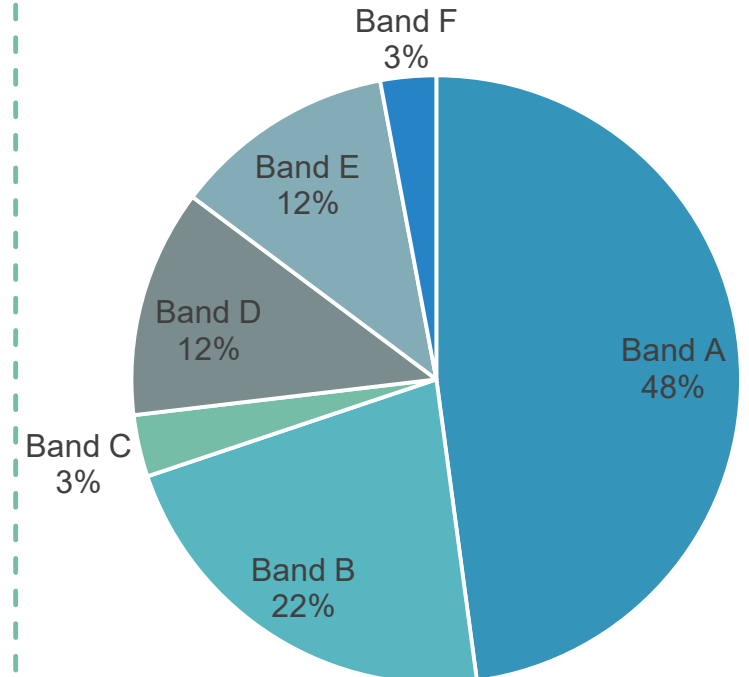
The average house price for dwellings within the town centre boundary in 2018 was £143,161.



Image: The Square.

In terms of Council Tax Bands (2021), Mintlaw Town Centre has dwellings in Bands A-F on the scale of the Council Tax Bands. There is a mix through all bands but just under half of properties are in Band A.

Council Tax Band



SOCIAL CONTACT



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: There is one venue that is available for social interaction in the town centre which is the Mintlaw Public Hall. The Public Hall is used for a number of different events by the community and is bookable for a variety of different activities.

The Public Hall is in a prominent location within the town centre, the building is in good condition and contributes positively to the overall feeling of the town centre.

Venue	Indoor / Outdoor	Opening Times
Mintlaw Public Hall	Indoor	Hall available for public hire. Varying opening hours.

HOW WOULD YOU RATE: RANGE OF EVENTS?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor

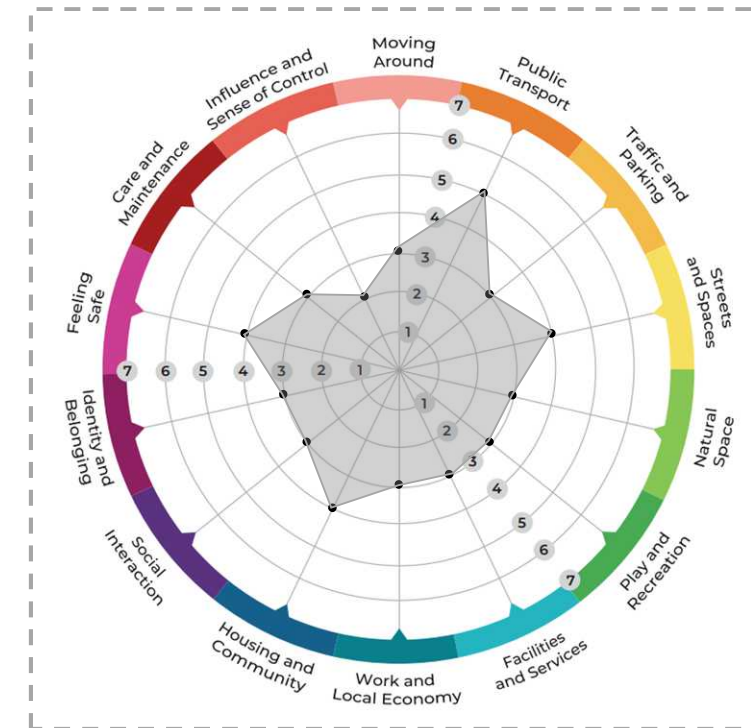
BUSINESSES



Image: Mintlaw Public Hall

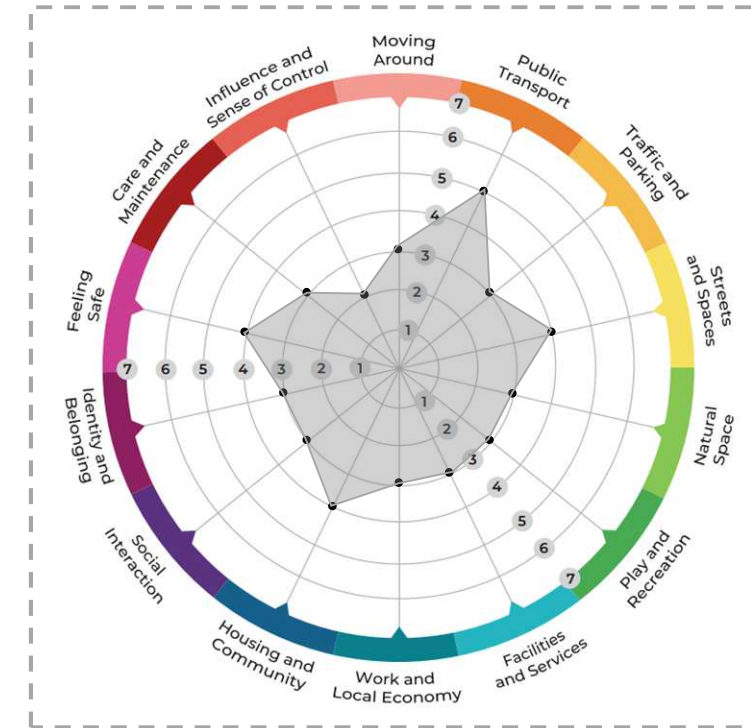
KEY CONSIDERATIONS & OPPORTUNITIES

Theme	Key Improvements
Identity and Belonging Rating: 3	Views towards the feel of the town centre were mixed, with strong negative and positive views. Some felt the town provided for their needs, whilst others considered a lack of facilities to support the community. Increasing the offering within the town centre, vacant units being brought back into a viable use would make a difference to the feel of the town.
Feeling Safe Rating: 4	Safety during the day was generally positive, however less positive ratings for safety during the evening. The concerns of safety related to the roads and pedestrians crossing the streets around the roundabouts. Consideration should be given to provision of crossing points to improve the feeling of pedestrian safety within the town centre.
Care and Maintenance Rating: 3	The overall perception of the care and maintenance of buildings within Mintlaw Town Centre was relatively good. However, interventions looking at improvement works to the vacant buildings would be welcomed by the local community.
Influence and Sense of Control Rating: 2	There are a limited number of groups supporting the town centre and distinct a lack of awareness of the groups that are in operation.
Moving Around Rating: 3	Moving around was generally rated as neutral or poor, likely linked to the difficulties raised in relation to the busy roads and pedestrian crossings. Improved signage to the Formartine and Buchan Way and promotion of active travel routes would be a welcomed addition. In addition, there are no cycle facilities within the town centre boundary which is a loss and exploration into addressing this matter would be considered appropriate.
Public Transport Rating: 5	There are several bus services provided to Aberdeen and Fraserburgh, in addition other towns/ areas. This is supplemented by a Dial-a-Bus service which could help where existing services do not meet the community needs. Compatibility of the bus stop location and traffic coming through the roundabout is perhaps difficult at times, however this would require significant intervention to be overcome.
Traffic and Parking Rating: 3	Traffic flow was a topic that was highly commented on through the survey with a number of comments received relating to the community aspirations to see safety improvements made due to the parking round the roundabout. A number of different measures of improvement were identified by the community.



KEY CONSIDERATIONS & OPPORTUNITIES (CONTINUED)

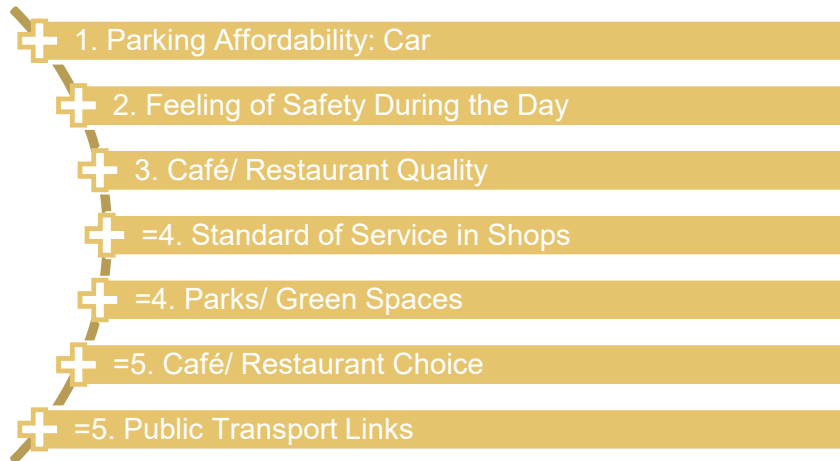
Theme	Key Improvements
Streets and Spaces Rating: 4	The topic received a mix of responses from the community and businesses with it being noted that there is a lack of seats. However, generally there were positive comments received relating to the attractiveness of the town although the vacant units detract from them but an improvement could be considered through an appropriate strategy.
Natural Space Rating: 3	The Formartine and Buchan Way which passes through the town centre provides an accessible route to natural spaces outwith the town centre and is an asset which could be enhanced through suitable signage and continued maintenance. The green space at the roundabout whilst provides a nice visual quality, does not provide useable green space within the town centre. Opportunities should be made to enhance planting and flowers within the town centre where possible.
Play and Recreation Rating: 3	There are no play and recreation facilities within the town centre boundary. However, there are several opportunities located within 1 mile of the town centre including the football ground.
Facilities and Amenities Rating: 3	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.
Work and Local Economy Rating: 3	There are a mix of employment sectors in the town centre, but almost half of this is retail. The income levels are much lower than the surrounding area and the claimant count higher. Opportunities to promote/ support existing and new businesses should be encouraged.
Housing and Community Rating: 4	There are a mix of house types within the town centre and this should continue to be monitored to ensure there are types and tenures of housing that would provide for all of the community.
Social Contact Rating: 3	There is one venue that is open within the town centre for the community to meet and is used for multiple uses. If any additional spaces opened allowing more choice this would improve this topic.



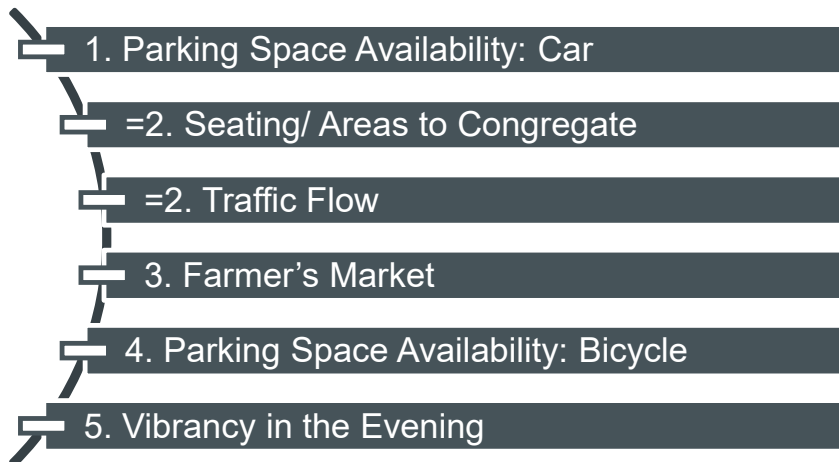
BUSINESS & COMMUNITY SURVEY RESPONSES: How Would You Rate? Top 5 Highest and Lowest Scoring Categories

Community

Top Highest Scoring Categories:

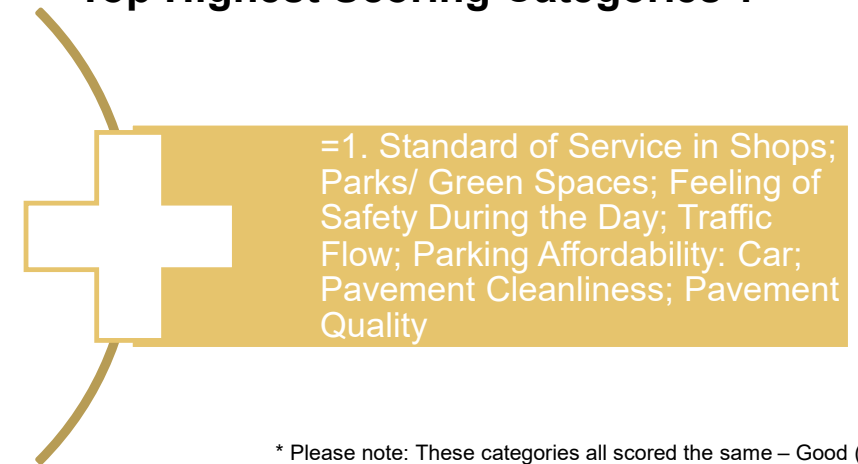


Top Lowest Scoring Categories:



Business

Top Highest Scoring Categories*:



* Please note: These categories all scored the same – Good (3)

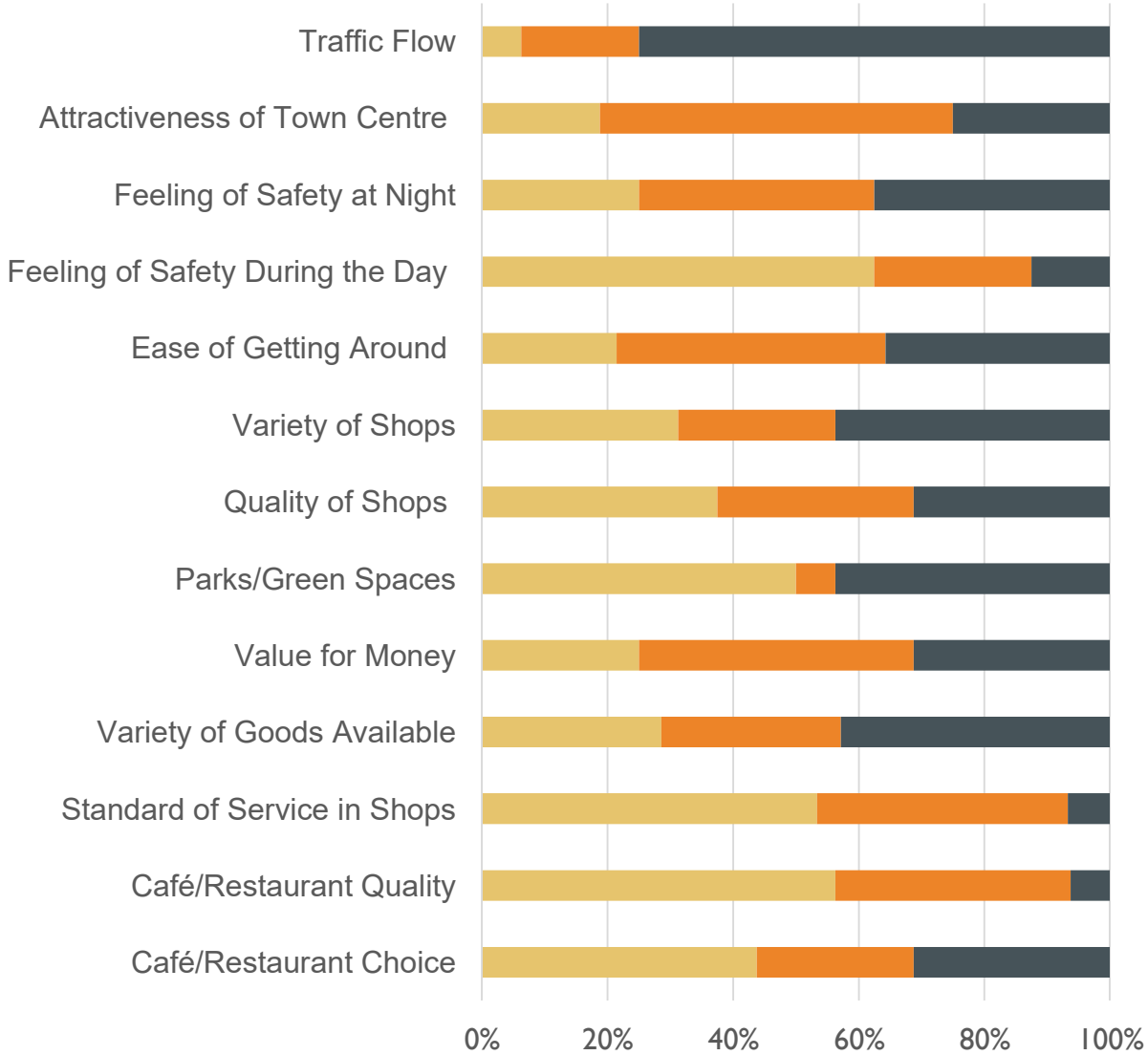
Top Lowest Scoring Categories*:



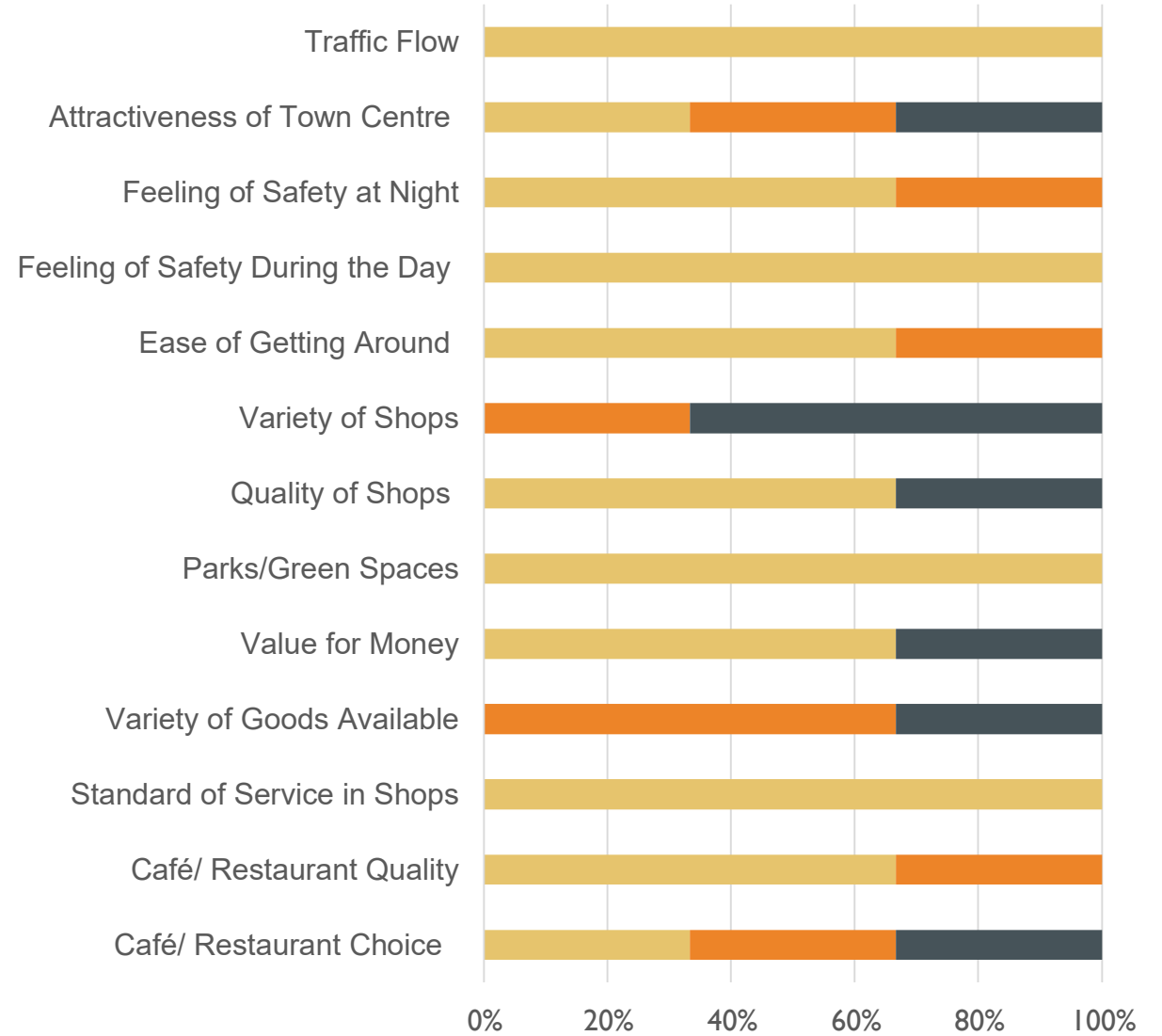
* Please note: These categories all scored the same – Poor (2)

BUSINESS & COMMUNITY SURVEY RESPONSES: How Would You Rate?

Community Responses:



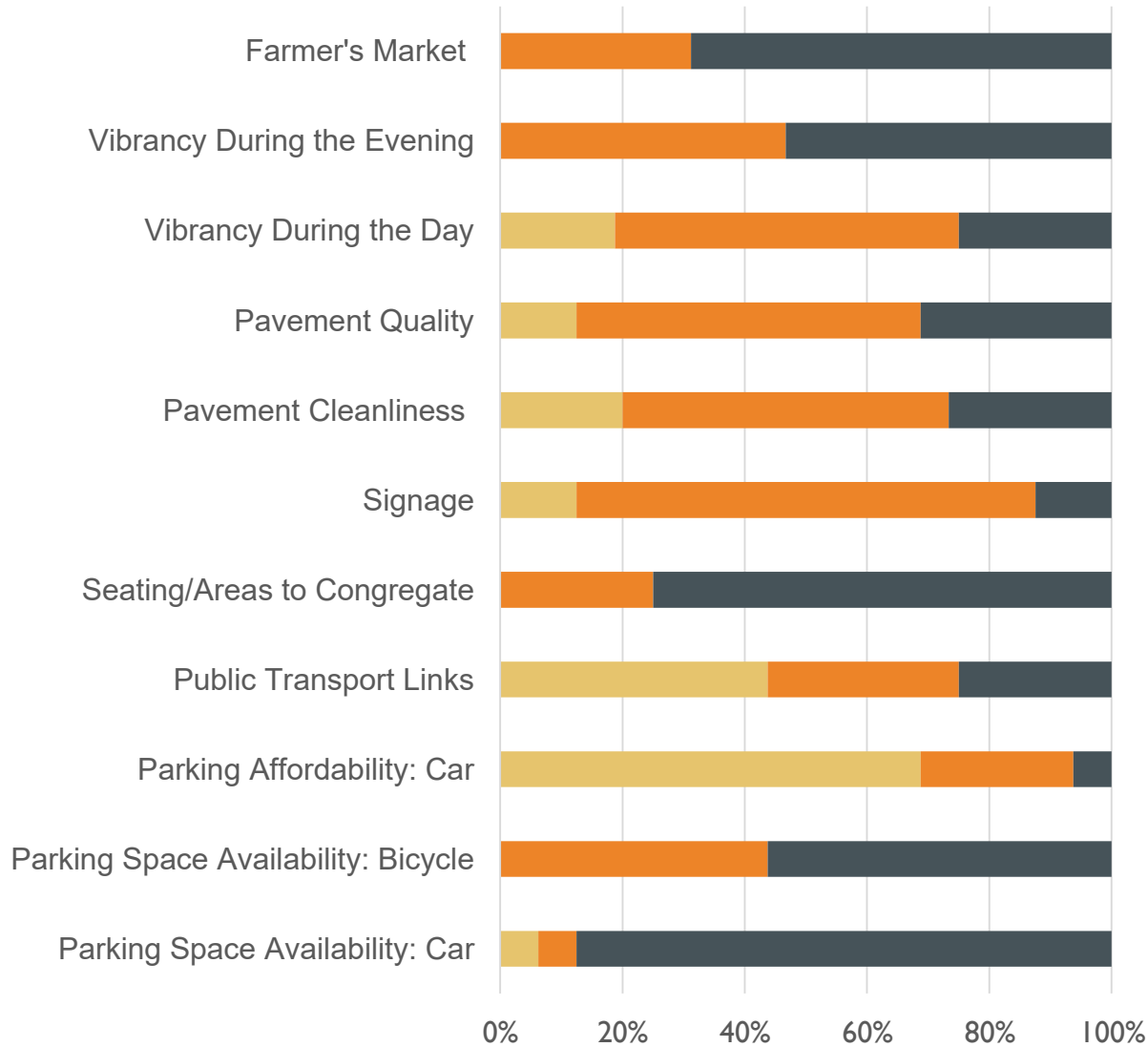
Business Responses:



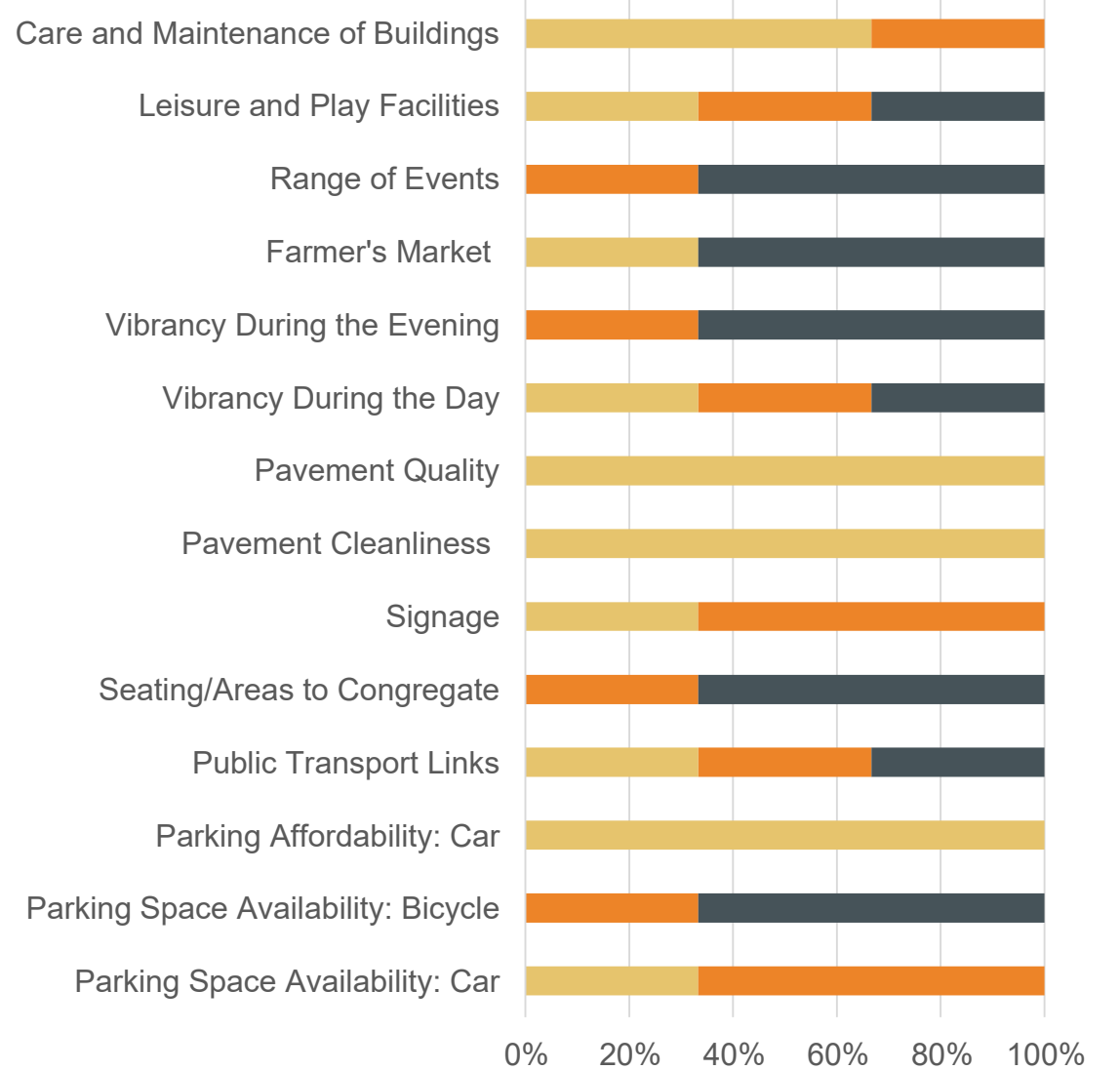
Good Neutral Poor

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

Community Responses*:



Business Responses:



*Please note: Categories Care and Maintenance of Buildings, Leisure and Play Facilities and Range of Events were not included in the Community Survey due to a technical error

Good Neutral Poor

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 2022 for their contributions to the project:

Business and Community:

Footfall Count Volunteers

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

Buchan 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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