



FUTURE HIGH STREETS FUND TROWBRIDGE

Summary report on the 2022 Trowbridge High Street Engagement Survey



HM Government

Wiltshire Council

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Part 1. Introduction and objectives

The Trowbridge High Street public engagement process provided an opportunity for stakeholders and residents to learn more about the overall programme aims and objectives as well as the concepts for each of the projects.

The survey, conducted over a two-week period from 27 January to 11 February 2022, was an early opportunity to ask questions and seek feedback to help shape the future delivery of the proposed programme of investment for Trowbridge.

415
RESPONSES

348
ONLINE

58
ON PAPER

9
BY EMAIL

This survey was part of that process. By the engagement period close date of 11 February, 308 of those said they were residents.

Written by an independent research agency, IDA, this report summarises the main survey findings, which in tabular form have been analysed in full, cross-profiled by relationship with Trowbridge and survey source. The tabulations analyse every question in the survey, on an anonymous basis, showing aggregated numbers giving each answer and percentages based on those responding to each question, plus a % not answered. Where questions have free-text answers, the verbatim answers have been read and coded into groups for quantified analysis. However, verbatim comments for paper and email responses were not entered and so were not coded or analysed or reported on here. The analysis is done in accordance with the MRS Code of Conduct on respondent anonymity, and under the rules of the Data Protection Act. Individuals are not identified in the analysis or the data so GDPR does not apply.

Future High Streets funded projects



2. Summary

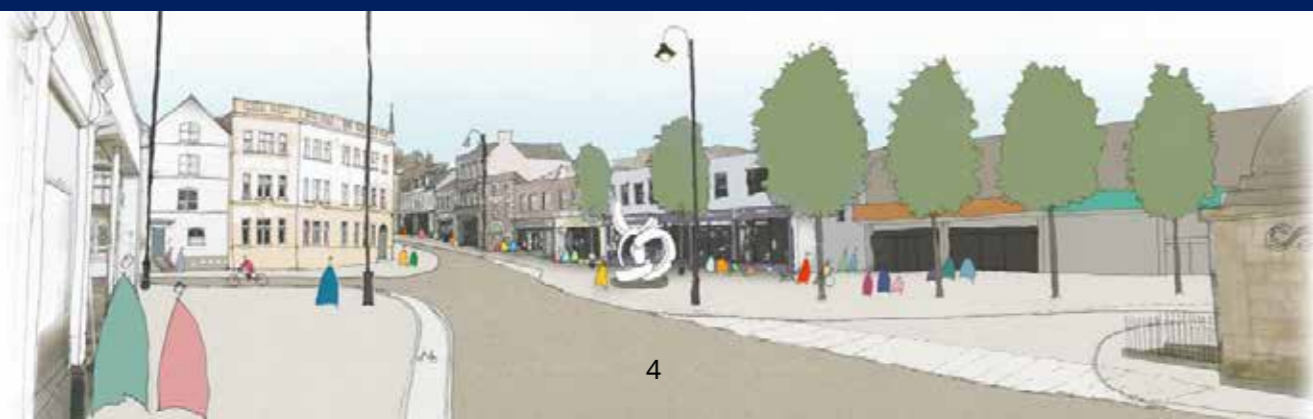
The survey provides an insight into the opinions of some of the Trowbridge residents and stakeholders, but it is not known how representative the survey sample is of the actual population or group. 308 respondents

say they are residents, compared against a population of 33,000, which would provide overall 95% confidence limits of c. $\pm 6\%$ points if the sample selection had been random.

Transport and access

Most said they reach the town centre by car or by walking. Just over half said they have issues accessing the town centre, mentioning traffic, parking, crossings, uneven pavements, and a lack of good cycle paths. The most likely improvements to encourage people to travel more sustainably into the town centre would be (in order): 'Improvements to footways', 'Improved pedestrian/cycle crossings', 'Improved street lighting', and 'improving cycle facilities', followed

by improvements to bus services. Asked to rate various characteristics in the town centre, satisfaction is highest in respect of having adequate parking provision and having a comfortable noise level. Satisfaction is lowest in respect of the suggestion that the town has a comprehensive offer, feeling safe, having good quality public realm, and being an attractive place to spend time. More people disagree than agree with the proposition that there are enough special events/markets.



Improvements

To improve the daytime experience of Trowbridge town centre, the most frequent suggestions relate to having more shops, a wider range of shops, more places to eat, a cleaner environment with less litter, more green spaces and trees, and a need to feel safer.

To improve the experience of Trowbridge town centre by night, the most frequent suggestions relate to having more places to eat and a wider range, concerns about feeling safe, better street lighting, and having more events or music.

The Trowbridge Trail

The proposals for a Trowbridge Trail are well received. Nearly two thirds of those answering the question said that it was a good/excellent idea, 11% feeling that it would encourage tourism. 12% gave a negative answer.



River Biss Corridor

A strong majority, 79% of those answering the question, thought the proposals were a good/excellent idea. 9% commented on the wildlife/nature/environmental aspects and 9% suggested keeping it clean and having more litter bins. 8% commented on making sure it was safe. 6% gave negative views.



Town Hall

Asked how the offer from the Town Hall venue could be improved, there was a wide range of answers, particularly having more live events, music, theatre. 13% suggested good spaces for hire, 7% mentioned parent/baby classes, 7% mentioned disability access, and 5% suggested having a café or restaurant. 7% gave negative answers, and 9% feel it would be a waste of money, other things being more important.



Satisfaction with current facilities/offering

Overall, the highest level of satisfaction with current facilities in the town centre is in respect of 'personal services' (e.g. salons, travel, banks). There are reasonably good levels of satisfaction with food shops (49% satisfied), culture and recreation (e.g. cinema and gym) (45% satisfied) and restaurants, cafes and takeaways (42% satisfied, although 34% are dissatisfied). Satisfaction is significantly lower in respect of evening leisure (e.g. bars, pubs, clubs) and other retail outlets.

Asked to say what types of shops, services or cafes and restaurants they would like/need

in the town centre, the most frequently made suggestion was 'Independent/private owned shops', and 'clothing shops', then 'restaurants, including ethnic', more 'cafes/bars/bistros', and particular food stores such as bakers, butchers, fishmongers. Some, but fewer than 10%, suggested a delicatessen or craft shops.

Most respondents engage with any shops, businesses or leisure facilities digitally, mostly through websites, followed by Facebook and Instagram. A few use Google Marketplace, and fewer still use Snapchat for this purpose.

The most frequently made suggestion for businesses or services to enhance Trowbridge town centre was some sort of leisure activity, a leisure centre or family activities, followed by clothing shops (general or specific, such as Primark), followed by food shops such as bakers, butchers, fishmongers, and 'Independent' shops. Cafes/bars/bistros/

Other comments/suggestions

The last question in the survey asks respondents if they have any other ideas for how Trowbridge town centre could be improved. The most frequently mentioned ideas were (in order):

- events, music, activities, things to do, in the centre, parks, the Town Hall
- the appearance and design of the town centre, such as smartening shop fronts and repairing/maintenance old buildings, making the centre more attractive
- improvements to green spaces and more planting
- making it easier to walk around, linking different parts, more pedestrian areas
- cleaning up litter and having more litter bins

restaurant were also recommended. The favourite things about Trowbridge town centre are seen as the park, followed by the historic buildings, ease of access/walking around the pedestrian area, the cinema, then the coffee shops/cafes, some specific shops such as M&S, and the green spaces/river area.

- a better range and variety of shops, independents
- improving a feeling of safety: more police, remove/house the homeless, ASB concerns, generally make it feel safer, especially at night
- other specific suggestions, although mentioned by fewer than 10% of those answering the question, included traffic management, filling the empty shops, having lower business rates/rents to encourage new businesses, improved/more cafes, pubs and restaurants, places to sit outside, development of the Bowyers and Innox Mills sites, and more/cleaner toilets.

3. Methodology and respondent profile

This engagement process was initially planned as a series of in-person events (it was to include a launch and staffed public exhibitions) as well as an online survey. However, due to Covid, the in-person events were cancelled, and the engagement was planned as a series of online events as well as unstaffed displays comprising namely:

- A live virtual event, which included a presentation run through as well as a Q&A session, held on Thursday 27 January 2022.
- A small display about the Future High Streets Fund in the reception areas of the Town Hall, Civic Centre and County Hall, between 28 January – 11 February 2022, including hard copies of the presentation and surveys (together with a receptacle for completed surveys).

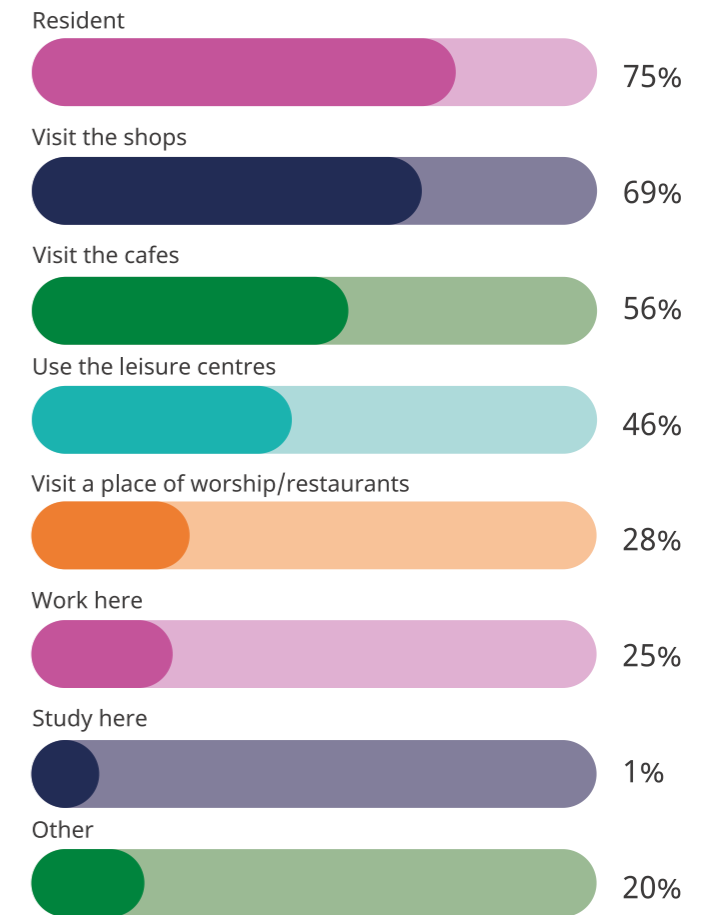
- Online survey and presentation between 28 January – 11 February 2022.
- Social media and press releases about the development plans.

The presentations describe several proposed developments in Trowbridge town centre, these being government funded schemes through The Future High Streets Fund. They are detailed at <https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/fhsf-trowbridge>.

By the time the engagement period closed 415 people had completed the survey. These results are summarised overleaf and within the tables attached.

Asked what their relationship is with Trowbridge town centre, three quarters of respondents said they are residents, whilst two thirds visit the shops, just over half visit cafes, just under half use the leisure facilities, and a little over a quarter ticked the answer box 'visit a place of worship/restaurants' – it is not known which.

Relationship with Trowbridge town centre



FUTURE HIGH STREETS FUND TROWBRIDGE

Public/Stakeholder Engagement January - February 2022

In 2021 Wiltshire Council was successful in securing £16.347 million of Central Government funding to develop several projects in Trowbridge town centre. We are now seeking your views and ideas on the emerging work.

Find out how you can get involved here.

Engagement survey

- Your comments are important to us; the feedback gathered will help shape these projects.
- Please have a look at the presentation and complete the survey found next to this banner and drop it into the box.
- Alternatively scan the QR code on this banner or contact Wiltshire Council's Customer Services on 0300 456 0100 to request a different format.
- All responses to be received by 5pm on 11 February 2022.
- You are also invited to an online public meeting on 31 January at 6pm.

For details on how to join please visit www.wiltshire.gov.uk/fhsf-trowbridge or email us at: FHSF@wiltshire.gov.uk

Give us your views

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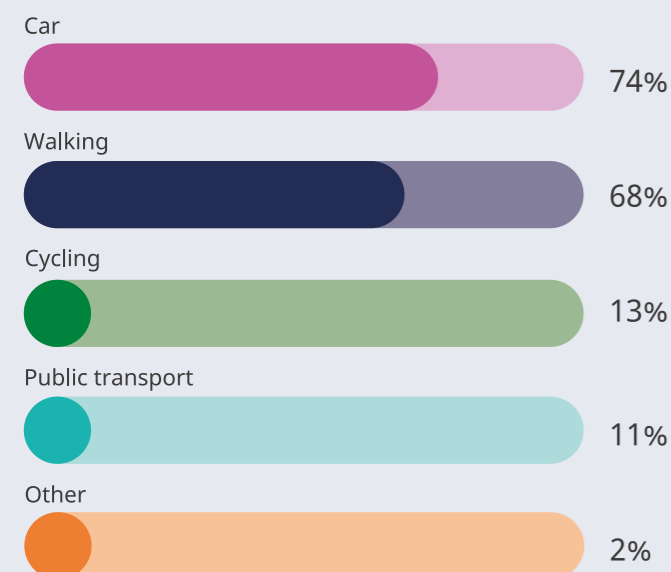
Help us shape these projects by completing the survey!

4. Main findings

4.1 Transport and access

Nearly three quarters of respondents said they usually reach Trowbridge town centre by car, although the proportion who say they walk in is also quite high: 68%. The choice may depend on the purpose of the visit, the time they have, and needing to carry anything. 13% say they usually cycle, 11% say they usually use public transport.

How do you usually reach Trowbridge town centre

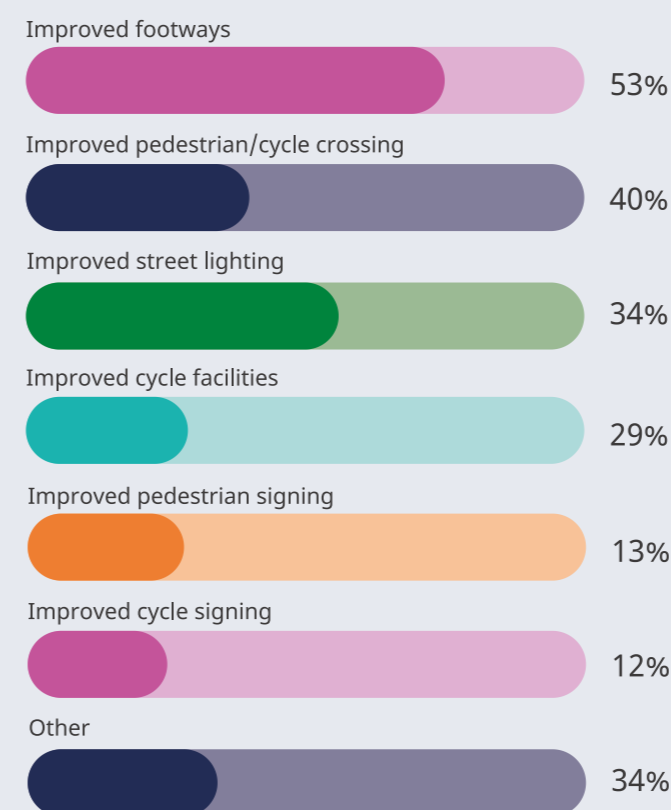


Just over half (56%) of respondents said they have issues accessing Trowbridge town centre – the most frequently mentioned issues were: traffic, road crossings, parking, pavements being uneven or littered, and a lack of good cycle paths or cycle parking.

Respondents are most likely to visit the town centre weekly (40%) or daily (26%). One in ten said 'just at the weekends', the remaining 24% of those answering the survey visit fortnightly or less often. Asked what time of day they usually visit, a multiple-choice question, 56% said 'Morning – before noon', 40% said 'Early afternoon, 12-3pm', and 8% said 'Late afternoon, 3-6pm'. One person said they usually visited the town centre in the evenings, after 6pm.

The most likely improvements to encourage people to travel more sustainably into the town centre would be: 'Improvements to footways' (mentioned by 53% of those answering the question), 'Improved pedestrian/cycle crossings' (40%), and 'Improved street lighting' (34%). 29% mentioned improving cycle facilities. These aspects are fairly evenly mentioned across the different types of respondents and their relationship with Trowbridge town centre, although paper-based respondents are more likely than others to say 'Improved pedestrian/cycle crossing'.

Encourage more sustainable travel to town centre



Looking at the 'Other answers' given, based on those answering the question, the most frequently mentioned spontaneous improvement suggested related to improving bus services, making them more frequent or cheaper. All of the other suggestions were mentioned by very few.



4.2 Improvements

Respondents were asked to comment spontaneously on what they thought could be improved in Trowbridge town centre by day. More than half (58%) of those answering the question mentioned better shops and places to eat. A quarter mentioned a need for a cleaner environment with less litter,

17% suggested green spaces with more trees, and 10% mentioned ASB and a need to feel safer. 16% mentioned a wide range of other things such as 'more to do', 'fewer empty units', a 'better design with parts more joined up' and 'one centre', 'pedestrianisation'.



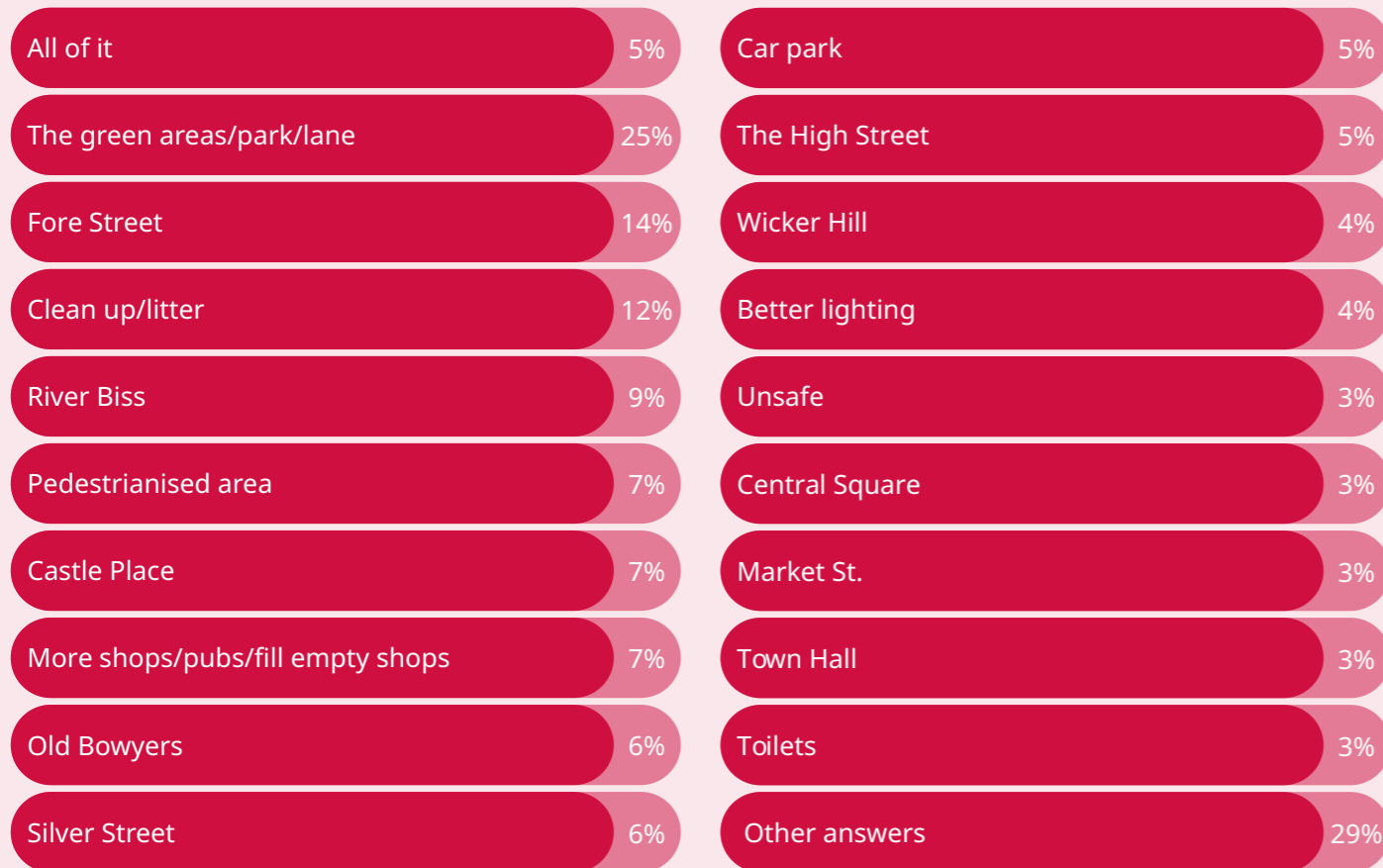
Asked to comment spontaneously on what could improve the experience of Trowbridge town centre by night, having more and better places to eat was the most frequently made suggestion, closely followed by making it feel safer and then by improvements to the lighting. A further 16% of those answering the

question suggested entertainment, and 15% suggested a greater police presence. 'Other answers' included 'better cycling provision', 'better design/layout/appearance', 'toilets', 'better/independent shops', and 'access/roads/buses'.



Another open question asked respondents if there are any areas of public space in the town centre they would like to see improved, and how. 71% made at least one suggestion, but covering a wide range of locations. 25% of those answering the question mentioned the green areas/park, 14% mentioned Fore

Street, and 12% made general comments about litter. 9% mentioned the River Biss. The 'Other answers' cover a wide range of specific responses, each mentioned by fewer than 1%, including Wetherspoons, library, cycling, station, old market, traffic, pavements, and canal/waterways.



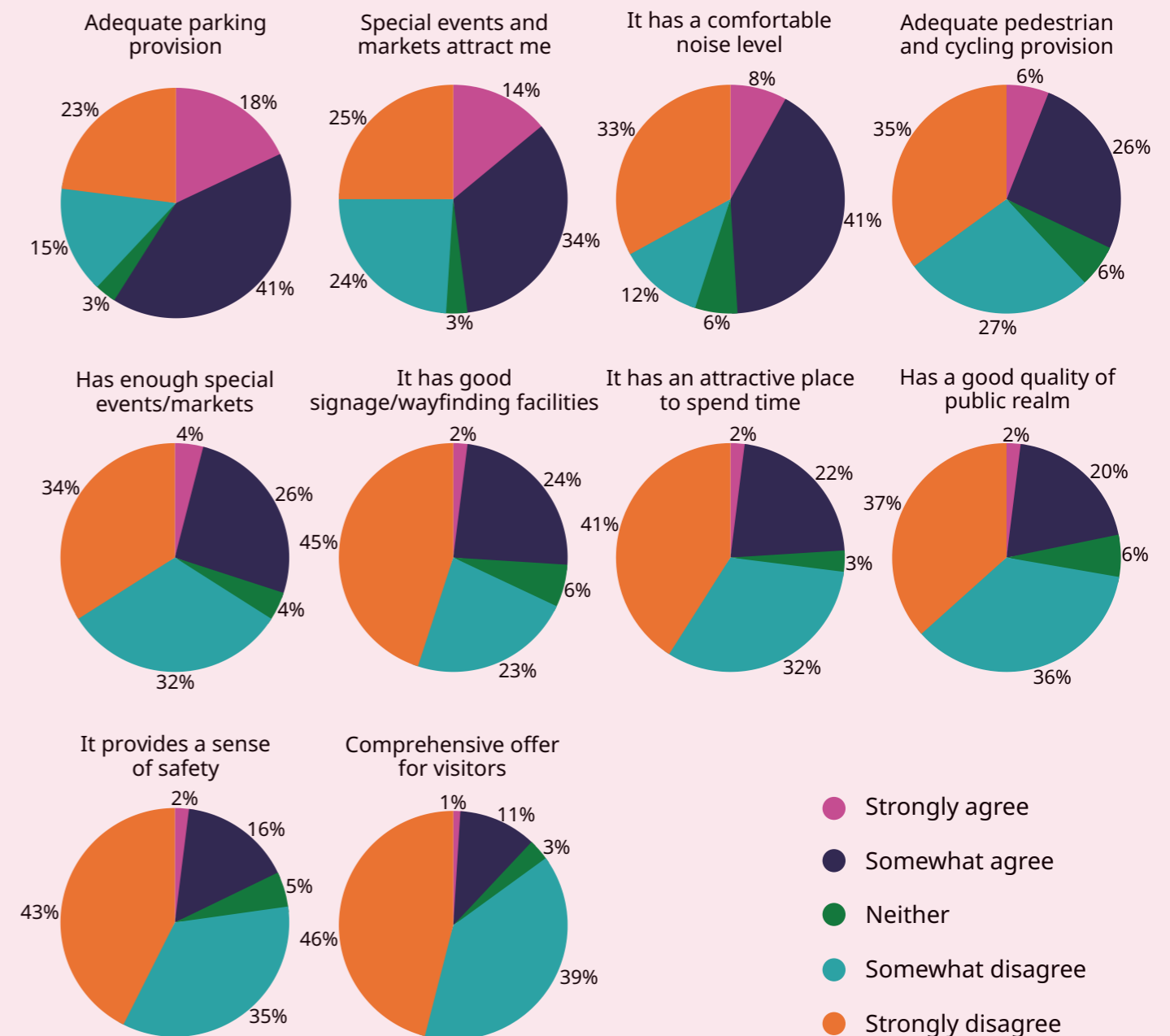
More generally, respondents were asked to rate statements about various aspects of the existing town centre, on an agreement scale of 1 (Strongly agree) to 5 (Strongly disagree). The highest levels of agreement, satisfaction, are in respect of having 'adequate parking provision' (59% of those answering the question agree – highest, 68%, among

paper respondents), and 'the special events and markets attract me to spend time' (48% agree), although two thirds disagree with the proposition that 'there are enough special events and occasional markets'. 49% feel that the town centre has a comfortable noise level, 45% disagree.

Aspects with much lower levels of satisfaction are 'providing a comprehensive offer for visitors' (85% of those answering the question disagree – lowest, 62%, among paper respondents), providing 'a sense of safety' (78% disagree – again, significantly lower, 41%, among paper respondents), being an attractive place to spend time (73% disagree, also much lower, 47%, among paper respondents), and having a good quality of public realm (pavements, lighting, street furniture and planting) – although these are different issues (73% overall disagree).

See the charts below.

Agreement about town centre characteristics



4.3 Trowbridge Trail

The proposals for a Trowbridge Trail were well received. Nearly two thirds (60%) of those answering the question simply said that it was a good/excellent idea, whilst some (11%

of those answering the question) mentioned that it would encourage tourism. 12% gave a negative answer.

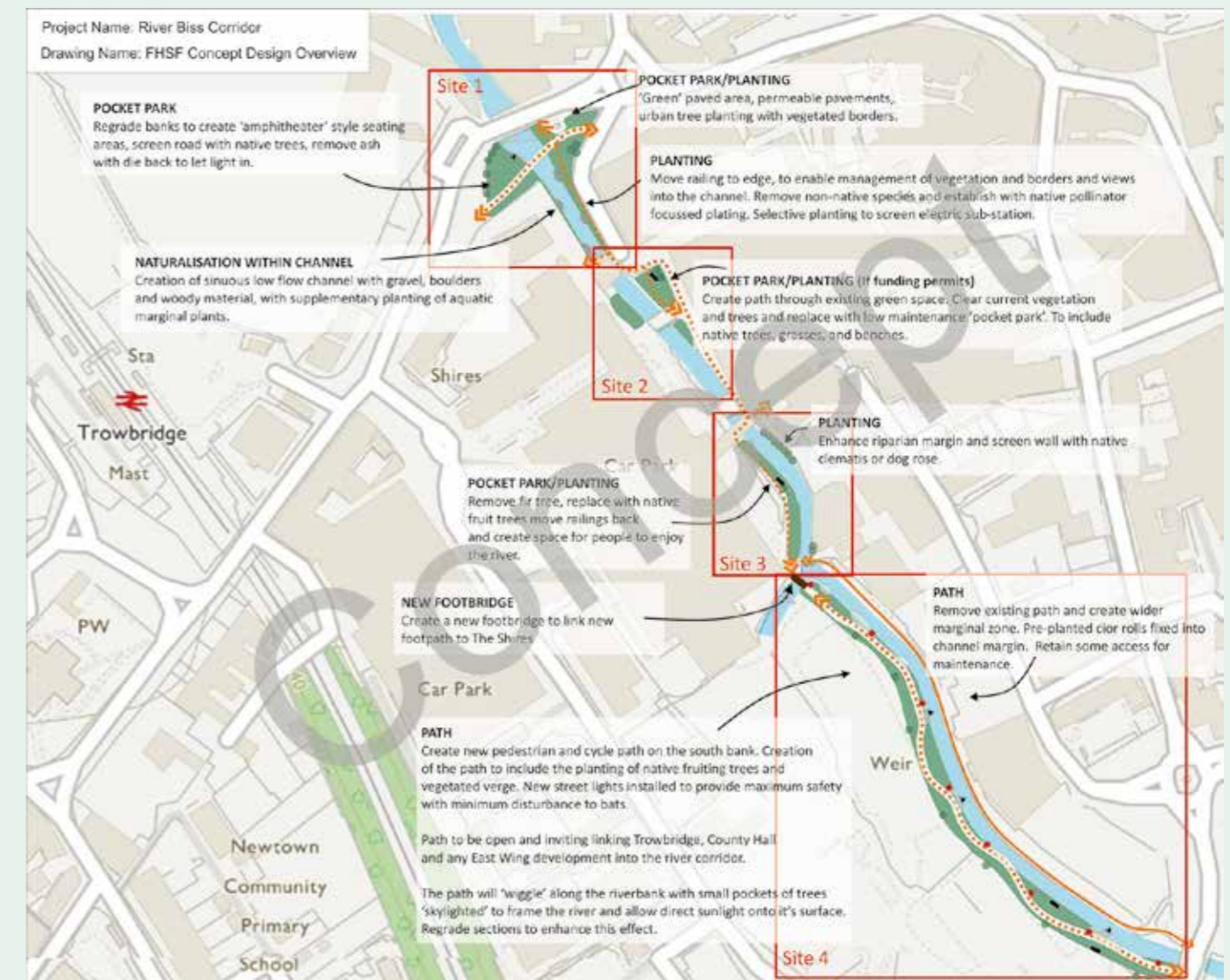
Proposed 'Trowbridge Trail'



4.4 River Biss Corridor

Asked what they thought of the proposed improvements to the River Biss Corridor, 69% answered the question. Of those providing an answer, a strong majority, 79%, thought it was a good/excellent idea. 9% commented on the wildlife/nature/environmental aspects

and 9% suggested keeping it clean and having more litter bins. 8% commented on making sure it was safe. 6% gave negative views, and a further 3% feeling that it was a waste of money, other things being more important.



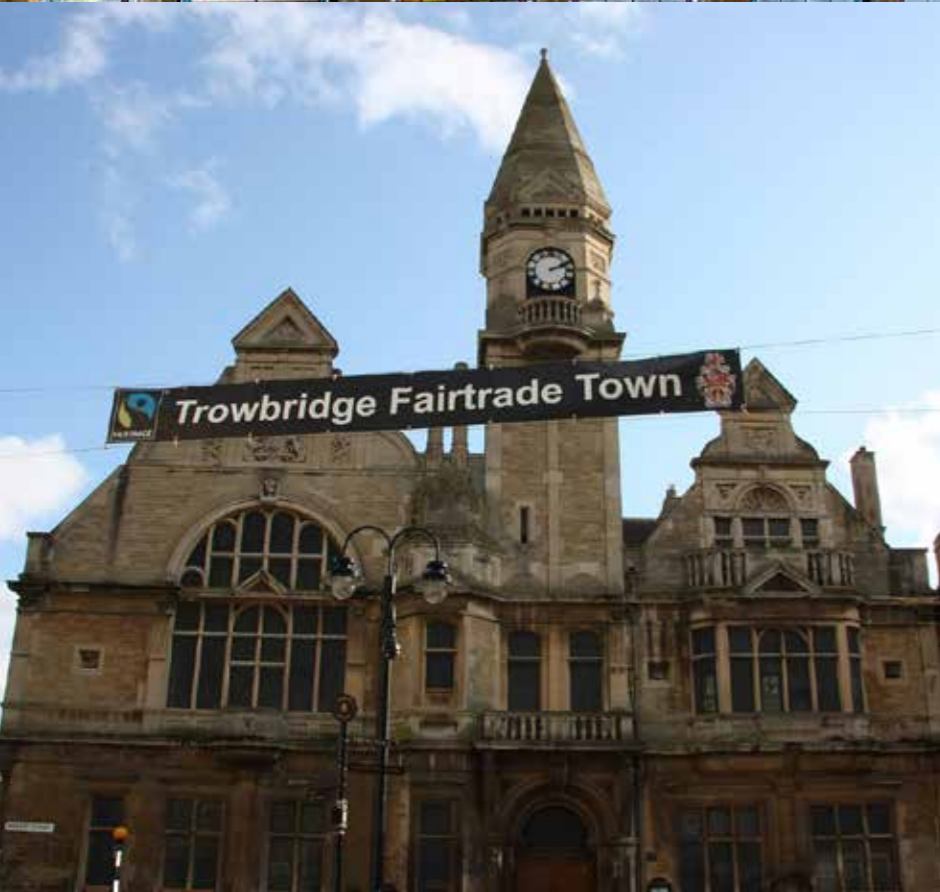
4.5 The Town Hall

Respondents were asked to say in their own words how the offer from the Town Hall venue could be improved, work better for them.

There was a wide range of answers. Just over a quarter of those answering the question (just over a third of respondents did not give an answer) suggested more live events, music, theatre. 13% suggested good spaces

for hire, 7% mentioned parent/baby classes, 7% mentioned disability access, and 5% suggested having a café or restaurant.

7% gave negative answers, and 9% feel it would be a waste of money, other things being more important.



4.6 Satisfaction with current facilities in Trowbridge town centre

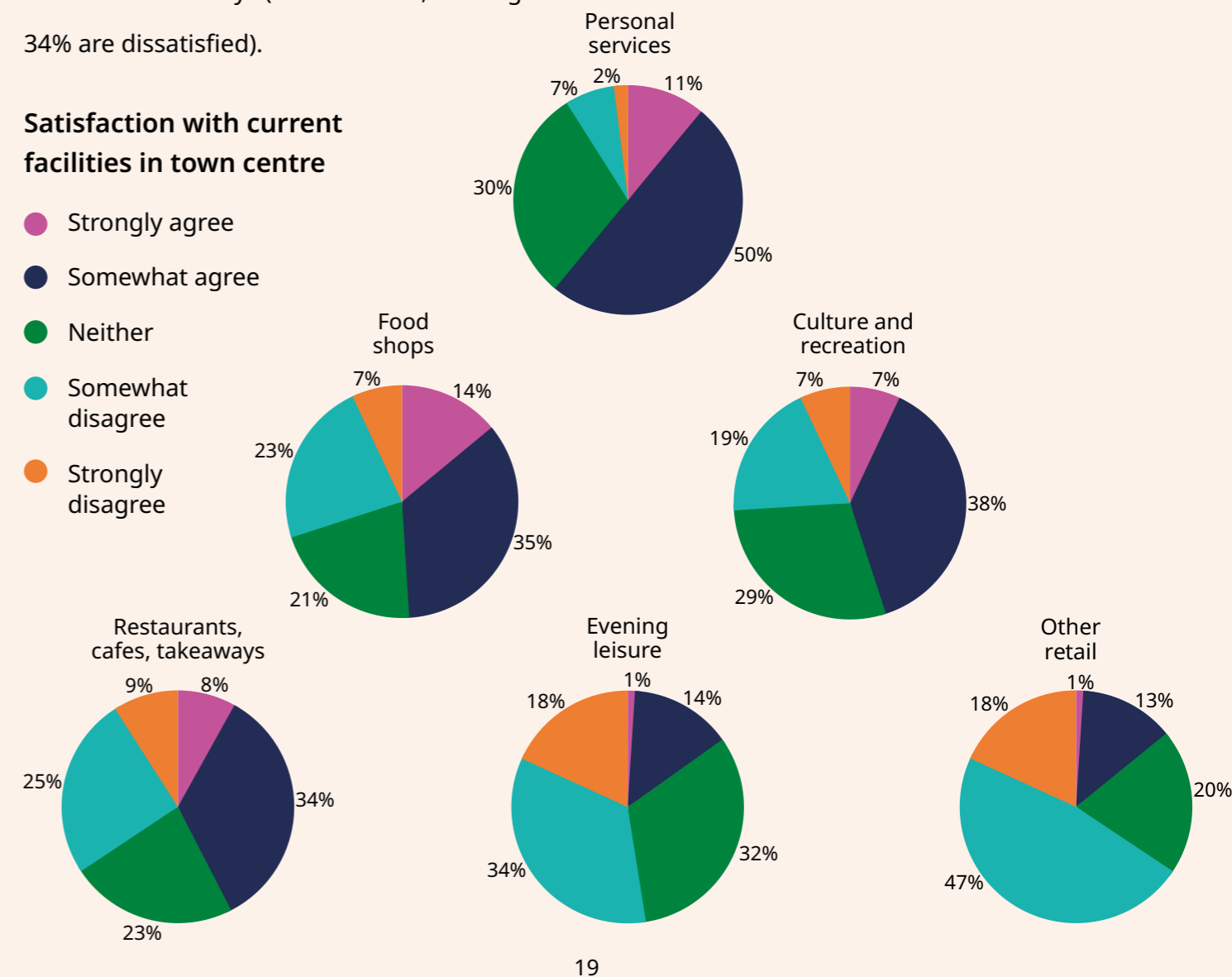
The highest level of satisfaction with current facilities in the town centre is in respect of 'personal services' (e.g. salons, travel, banks) – 61% of those answering the question said that they were satisfied, 9% expressed dissatisfaction. There are reasonably good levels of satisfaction with food shops (49% satisfied), culture and recreation (e.g. cinema and gym) (45% satisfied) and restaurants, cafes and takeaways (42% satisfied, although 34% are dissatisfied).

Satisfaction is significantly lower in respect of evening leisure (e.g. bars, pubs, clubs) and other retail outlets.

In respect of levels of satisfaction with current facilities, there are no significant differences between the groupings of relationship with the town centre or by survey source.

Satisfaction with current facilities in town centre

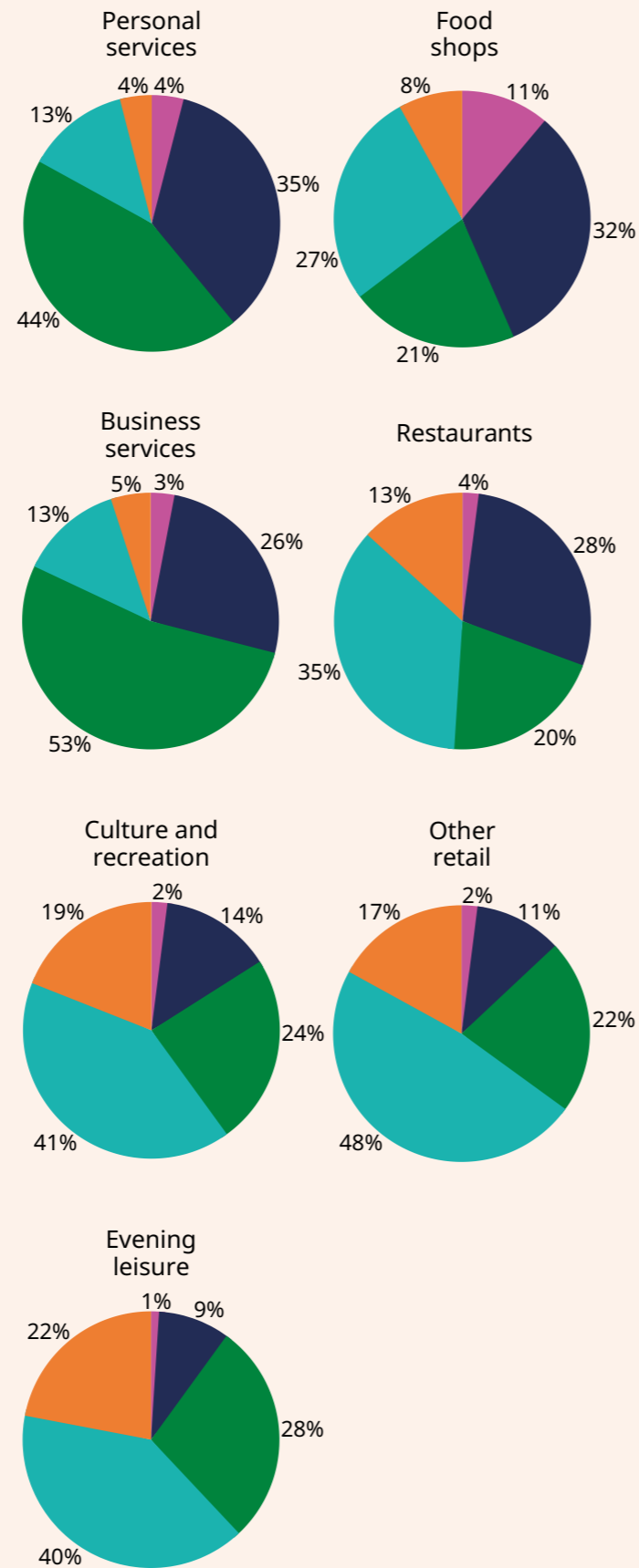
- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree



Asked to say what types of shops, services or cafes and restaurants they would like/ need in the town centre, just over a quarter, 28%, did not answer. The most frequently made suggestion was 'Independent/private owned shops', 31% of those answering the question, and 'clothing shops' (also 31%), then 'restaurants, including ethnic' (21%), more 'cafes/bars/bistros' (23%), and particular food stores such as bakers, butchers, fishmongers (17%). 6% suggested a delicatessen, and 6% suggested craft shops. Other suggestions are at the 5% level or lower.

Respondents were then asked what they thought of the mix of businesses, shops and services in the town centre - this is very similar to the previous question asking what people think about current facilities and gives similar results: satisfaction is shown as highest in respect of personal services and food shops, and lowest on evening leisure and 'Other retail'. Most people were unable to comment on 'Business services'.

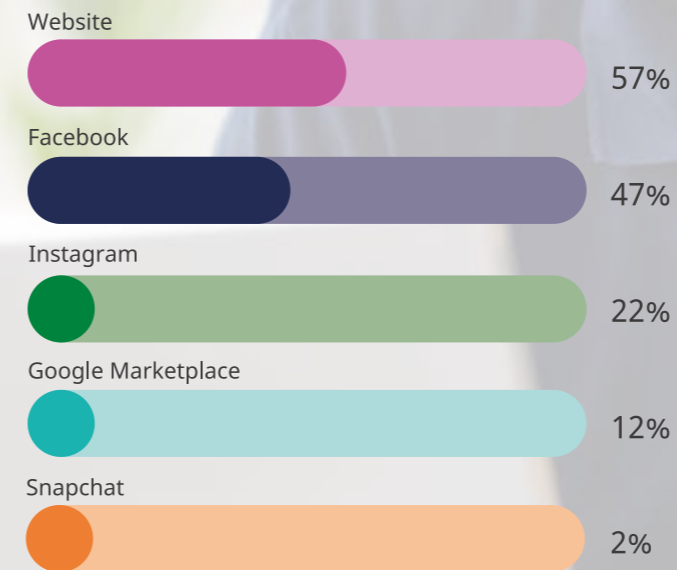
What do you think about the town centre mix of?



Asked if they engage digitally with any shops, businesses or leisure facilities, more than half (57%) said they use a website, nearly half (47%) use Facebook, and 22% use Instagram. 12% use Google Marketplace and 2% use Snapchat.

However, it is not possible to tell if these are local shops or businesses or leisure facilities, nor which digital media is used for which of those three.

Engage digitally with shops/ businesses/leisure facilities



The survey then asks respondents to say in their own words if there are any specific businesses or services that would enhance the town centre. Nearly half, 43%, did not answer the question at all, and 5% of those who did answer said 'No'. The most frequently made suggestion was some sort of leisure activity, a leisure centre or family activities, mentioned by 17% of those answering the question.

Clothing shops (general or specific, such as Primark) were mentioned by 16%, followed by food shops such as bakers, butchers, fishmongers (14%), and 'Independent' shops (also 14%). Cafes/bars/bistros were recommended by 11%, and a further 9% recommended restaurants. 7% mentioned music or entertainment events.

The favourite things about Trowbridge town centre to the respondents



4.7 Other comments/suggestions

Finally, respondents were asked if they had any other ideas for how Trowbridge town centre could be improved. More than a third (35%) did not provide an answer. Of the 271 people who did answer, the answer range is very wide and varied, as is always the case with this type of 'catch-all' question.

The most frequently mentioned ideas for improving the town centre were:

- events, music, activities, things to do, in the centre, parks, the Town Hall, suggested by 22% of those answering the question
- the appearance and design of the town centre, such as smartening shop fronts and repairing/maintenance old buildings, making the centre more attractive, suggested by 21%
- improvements to green spaces and more planting (16%)
- access – making it easier to walk around, linking different parts, joined up, more pedestrian areas (14%)

- litter and litter bins (13%)
- better range and variety of shops, independents (11%)
- aspects of safety: more police, remove/house the homeless, ASB, generally make it feel safer, especially at night (11%)
- other specific suggestions were all mentioned by less than 10% of those answering, including traffic management, fill the empty shops, lower business rates/rents to encourage new businesses, improve/more cafes, pubs and restaurants, places to sit outside, development of the Bowyers and Innox Mills sites, and more/cleaner toilets.

The 17% grouped into 'Other answers' covers a very wide range, all below 3% of respondents, but in particular things such as better lighting, improved signage around the town, promoting activities, 'should be like Frome', and things to encourage cycling.

The most frequently mentioned ideas for improving the town centre



5. Next steps

This engagement event was intended as an early opportunity to find out more information about the funded Trowbridge Future High Street Projects, as well as providing the Future High Streets Fund (FHSF) team with comments on the issues and opportunities faced by the town centre, in order to inform potential future interventions.

As the FHSF projects develop, there will be further opportunities for your input on a project by project basis. The timing and nature of each event will be informed by each project and its programme and could involve for example a formal 6-week public consultation or further “informal” engagement events occurring in 2022 and/or 2023. We will be updating the website <https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/fhsf-trowbridge> as projects advance and also will follow up with press releases.

In the meantime if you have a query, or wish to discuss any of the projects in more detail, please email: FHSF@wiltshire.gov.uk.