

Batley - Our town centre



Batley – our town centre - 12th July to 9th August 2021

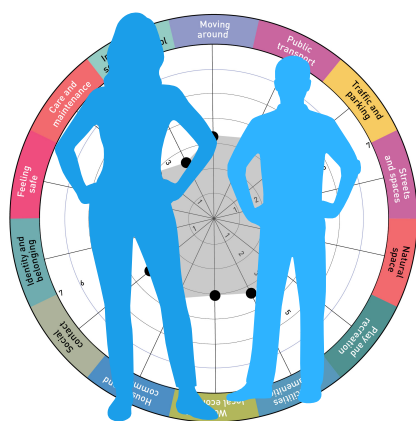
What we did

Batley ward councillors and Kirklees Council staff asked local people what they think of Batley town centre now, and what they'd like to see in the future. We used a tool called the "Place Standard" which encourages conversations about any place, using some simple questions. Working with local partners, we will use the results in planning how to invest in Batley town centre, to reflect local people's priorities.

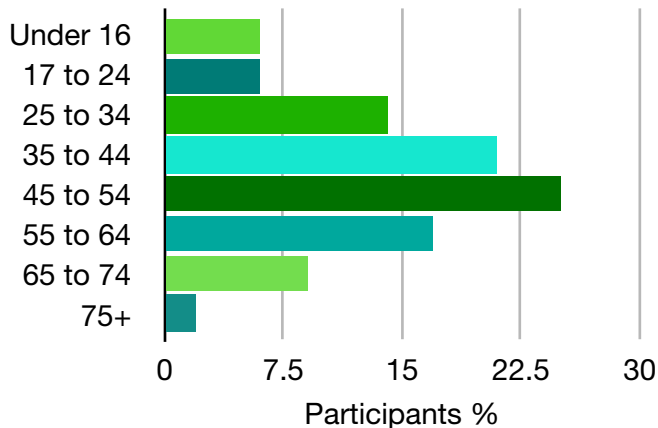
Who participated?

People who visit, work in or live in Batley town centre took part. Most people participated online, but there were also opportunities for face-to-face conversations with youth groups and individuals. We ran library drop-in sessions and a Friday market stall, where people could either talk through the questions or collect a paper copy of the questionnaire to complete. Each business in the town centre received an engagement pack. This included a letter, the full Place Standard questionnaire, a postage paid return envelope and web links. We used posters, banners, social media and digital communications to promote the activities more widely. Batley - our town centre was also featured in The Batley News.

253 citizens took part, each completing a Place Standard assessment.

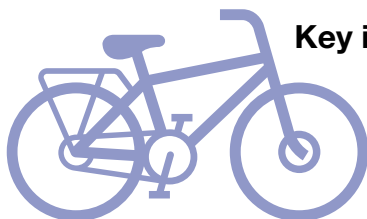


Female 57% Male 39%
Other / unknown 4%



What participants said

Moving around



Key issues: Lots of the people who commented about moving around in Batley town centre said there are not enough facilities for cycling. People mentioned having cycle paths, safe places to cross and being able to store equipment.



Lots of comments said that people don't feel safe to cycle on the roads.

A high number of comments were negative about parking in the town centre, as it prevents people from moving around the town centre easily. Areas of concern include parking on pavements, restricted parking areas (yellow lines) and double parking. Participants mentioned several roads in particular: Market Place, Commercial Street and Bradford Road. (For more information see the [Batley – Streets for People](#) map.)

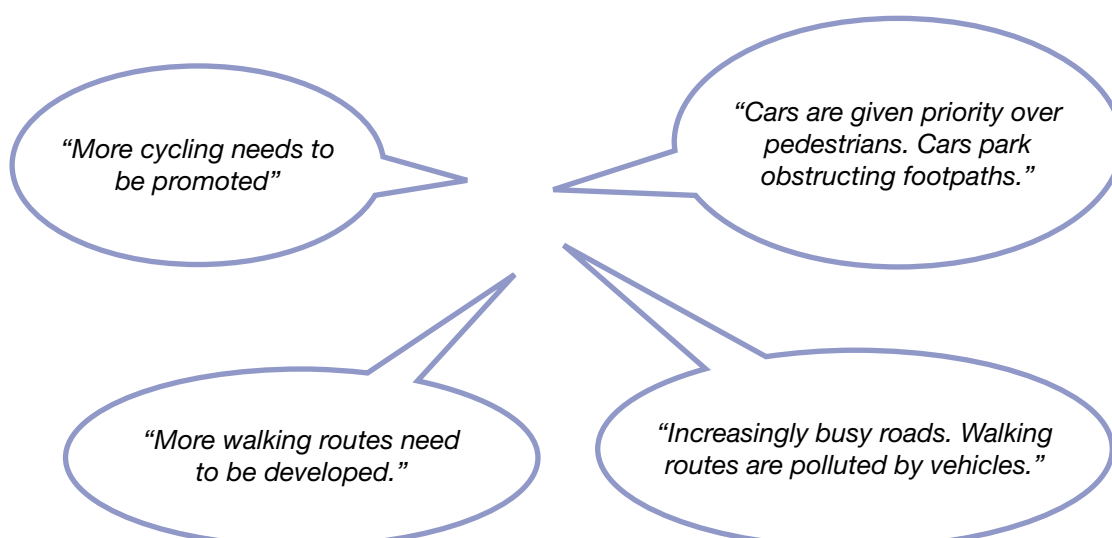
People are also concerned about the maintenance of footpaths and cycle path for accessing the town centre, over-hanging trees, vegetation, litter and damaged surfaces.

Other issues mentioned often include: speeding cars, people driving in an anti-social way, the condition of roads, footpaths and pavements, the volume of traffic on roads both in the town centre and feeding into the town centre, and several general safety concerns.

A smaller number of people said that crossing specific junctions and roads within the town centre is difficult, especially as some of the crossings do not have appropriate equipment.

Suggestions: Cycling needs to be promoted more. Lessons could be offered to those who don't know how to cycle. Developing more walking routes.

144 people commented on this theme.



Public transport



Key issues: People gave mixed feedback about bus services, but consistently said that bus routes do not meet the needs of local people. Participants mentioned services that have been removed and changes to the frequency of some bus routes. People made similar comments about train timetables.



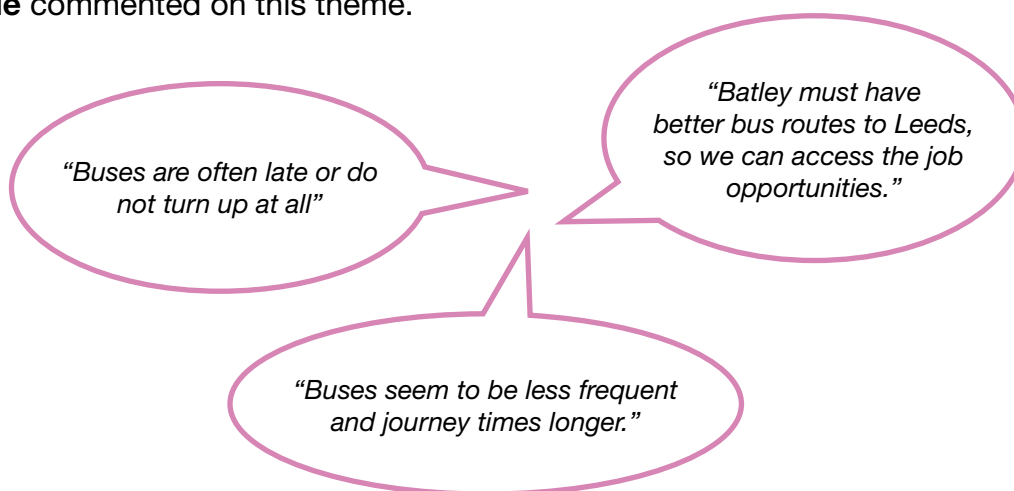
The next most common response was 'I don't use public transport', with people highlighting specific places and routes that don't meet their needs.

Lots of the people who commented said the cost of using public transport is too high, which limits social and employment opportunities for people. Several people compared this with the cost of using local taxi services.

Others comments from people who use public transport included issues such as poor time keeping, lack of a reliable service and a lack of facilities at both train and bus stations.

Suggestions: A bus service running from the town centre to the train station would make commuting to the larger cities much easier.

161 people commented on this theme.



Traffic and parking



Key issues: This theme received the highest number of comments from participants. Many people focused on inconsiderate parking, such as parking on yellow lines, double parking, vehicles blocking roads and parking on pavements. Some participants said that several of these parking issues are directly related to takeaways which are open in the evenings.



People gave mixed comments about formal parking, with people saying that there is a good range and that free parking is beneficial to Batley town centre. However, others said that there isn't enough long stay parking (possibly due to Covid testing), that spaces are tight and that there isn't enough suitable disabled parking.

There were comments regarding specific car parks having time limitations, and people said that this contributes to inconsiderate parking.

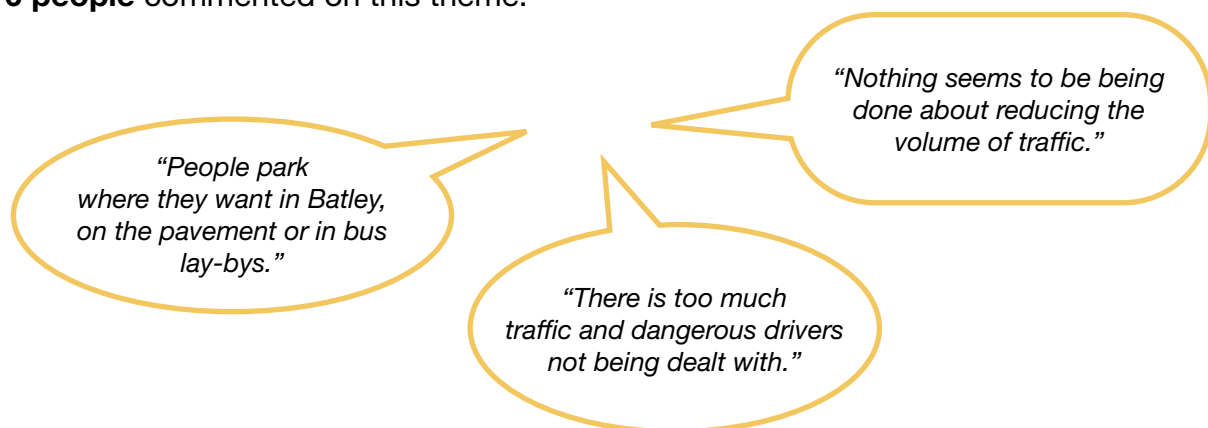
Other issues raised by participants include speeding and anti-social driving, with people commenting that the area is a racetrack at times. Participants identified several places as being a problem. You can see these on the [Batley – Streets for People](#) map.

Participants feel there is a lack of parking enforcement, with some saying they would like to see more enforcement, including the use of CCTV or speed cameras.

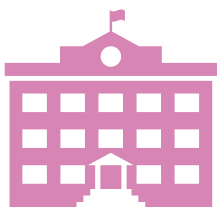
Other people said they would like to see some pedestrianised areas or a change in some of the road priorities.

Suggestions: Making the town centre better for pedestrians. Making Commercial Street pedestrian only from 6pm to 6am. Uber and delivery drivers to use the taxi lane behind Commercial Street. Stop people using pavements to park on when collecting food from takeaways, to reduce dangers for other road users. Better policing and on the spot fines for illegal or bad parking on Commercial Street and around schools. Keeping free parking in Batley town centre - this is a major asset. The option of using the market area for parking (especially as there aren't really market days, as such).

170 people commented on this theme.



Streets and spaces



Key issues: Participants made a wide range of comments on this theme. Lots of people spoke about the history of Batley town centre and its remarkable architecture. The most common issue is buildings that have fallen into disrepair or are no longer attractive. There were similar comments regarding empty shops.



Many of the people who commented talked about litter and fly tipping. People often linked this with takeaway rubbish and requested more litter bins and more street cleaning.

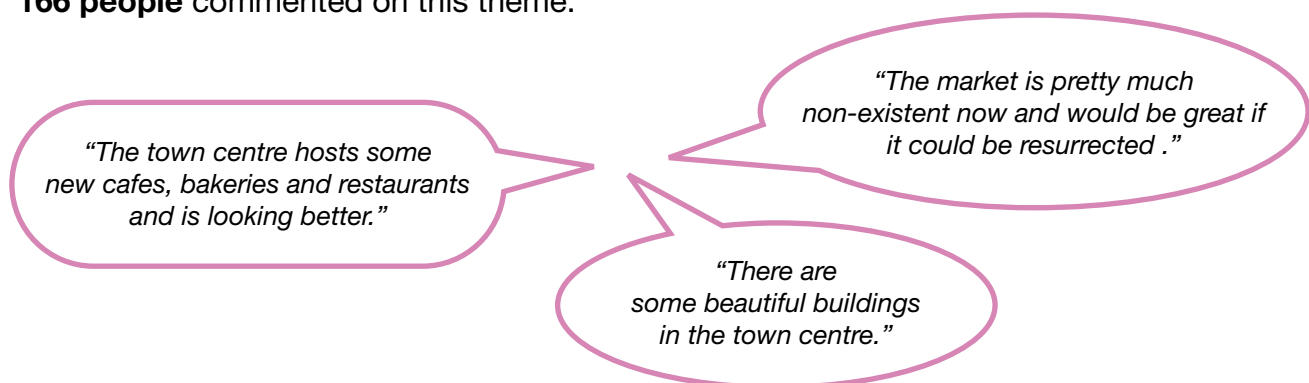
Lots of people feel that the town centre would be improved with more green spaces and that public spaces need to be maintained better. Several people suggested the town centre needs more recreation space, with areas for seating, outdoor events and activities.

Other people raised issues such as concerns about anti-social behaviour, drugs, dog fouling and cluttered pavements (for instance, stock kept on pavements or A boards).

More comments and information is available on the [Batley – Streets for People](#) map.

Suggestions: For Kirklees Council to be more forward thinking and progressive when it comes to Batley town centre (people feel that neighbouring towns like Morley, Ossett, Cleckheaton and Brighouse are all thriving). Introducing bistro cafes or micro pubs, along with nice office buildings to attract more businesses and with it more jobs. People want more greenery, flower beds and colour, not more shrubs. People clearly want more green space, better maintenance, more litter bins and improvements to safety for people of all ages in public spaces.

166 people commented on this theme.



Natural space



Key issues: Participants said they appreciate the natural space around Batley, with people commenting on various local parks (including Wilton Park, Batley Memorial Park, Oakwell, Jessops and Staincliffe). Lots of people who commented asked for better maintenance and investment in natural spaces, play areas and parks.



People feel that these spaces are currently unsafe. There were several comments from people who do not feel safe due to local anti-social behaviour, motorbikes and a general fear of crime.

People would like to see more green space within the town centre, with spaces for seating and outdoor activities.

Some people commented about litter, fly tipping and traffic issues, also about the valuable work of volunteers in keeping green spaces looking good.

Suggestions: There are a host of suggestions about having more green spaces, more variety of natural space, and that all aspects of the town need to be greened, with permanent planting, butterfly friendly. With no cars and underused buses swapped for smaller buses, the air quality will immediately improve. Along with more planting, trees and flowers, using spaces for more outdoor performances and shows for all ages, will create better use of space and places.

155 people commented on this theme.

"People race around on untaxed motorbikes and quad bikes."

"People throw litter on the ground and if people try to saying anything they intimidate you."

"I don't feel safe going to the town centre as there are groups of people hanging around."

Play and recreation



Key issues: People recognise that local play and recreation opportunities - including parks, sports centres, library, skate park and community lead provision - are available in Batley. However, participants also said there is currently a lack of maintenance and investment in these facilities.



People highlighted a need for more space in the town centre for activities of all ages, but also stressed the need for space for young people in particular.

Some people also commented on anti-social behaviour, vandalism, speeding and the fear of crime.

Suggestions: Using the marketplace in a more flexible way - running boxing, football or skateboarding sessions are some ideas shared, and more generally converting the market square to encourage play and recreation activity. Making better use of Market Square as a play area or more teen friendly area may encourage people into the town centre, allowing the possibility of a fun few minutes for children whilst shopping with their parents. In Memorial Park, swings and slides may encourage more family time in the town centre. More local fitness activities for older people would encourage those with low levels of physical activity to do more.

142 people commented on this theme.

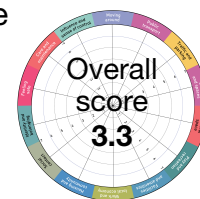
"Like most towns, more could be done to create spaces and opportunities for young people."

"There is no play area in the town centre."

Facilities and amenities



Key issues: Lots of people commented on the current range of shops within the town centre. People feel that the emergence of a so many takeaway businesses has changed the town centre in a negative way. Participants also shared some public health concerns related to this.



There were also some negative comments about the number of supermarkets and hair studios.

Many of the people who commented said the town centre needs more independent small businesses, including local butchers and greengrocers, also banks and mainstream high street brands. People feel that there could be opportunities for other local business such as crafts, gaming or technology.

There were many comments about public toilets. People identified that there is limited access from Commercial Street and around the marketplace to a public toilet. This restricted access is discouraging to people who visit the town centre.

People said clearly that it is difficult to access health services in Batley, with comments including difficulties seeing a doctor or accessing dental services.

People are concerned about the closure of the police station raised.

There were several positive comments regarding the library as a community space. People feel that more community space would be useful, with more planned community activities for all sections of the community. People suggested that it would be good to see some development of the general market and possibly some specialist markets.

People mentioned that the local infrastructure needs to be developed in line with the growing number of houses being built. As mentioned in other themes, people are concerned about safety and inconsiderate parking.

Suggestions: Need to diversify. Make better use of empty shops by putting up displays by local artists or using them as collaborative spaces for small business to support local enterprise. Give people a reason to visit Batley town centre, such as a French market or farmers market, even a fashion show or pedestrianising the precinct to hold a mini-football tournament. These activities should be supported by more practical aspects such as providing more recycling bins, public toilets, more benches and tables for people to use. More shops opening, rather than takeaways, would also be better.

156 people commented on this theme.

"I feel like we miss a local shop for everyday amenities."

"I like Batley for food shopping. It has the edge over its neighbour, Dewsbury."

Work and local economy



Key issues: Many people who commented on this theme said that there are local job opportunities for people. These jobs are in manufacturing, retail and the service industry. People see this as both positive and negative. There is limited opportunity for higher paying roles.



People said that traveling out of Batley for work is acceptable, especially if you are working in other fields of industry.

Some people talked about the closure of the Job Centre and how this can limit opportunity, saying they want to be able to access more community information.

Participants made several suggestions about having some type of support or incentive for people to open a business in Batley town centre, possibly looking at technology start-ups. Others suggested repurposing buildings to allow a broader range of business spaces. Alongside this, people want to see more training and apprenticeship programmes targeting the young population.

People who took part gave recognition for the work of local volunteers, and the skills that volunteering can offer to people in terms of employment opportunities and wellbeing.

Suggestions: Make better use of empty shops and buildings - allow small businesses to advertise in the windows, help start-ups and pop-up shops using the old Woolworths building, for instance. Encourage local crafters to showcase their work and have the town centre become a hub for the many creative folk in Batley, through support from Kirklees Council. Encourage local businesses to take on apprentices and work experience opportunities, creating an atmosphere of support and success, whilst also recognising the value of volunteering as a path to employment. More should be done to improve links with big cities such as Leeds, as there are limited work opportunities in Batley (there isn't a lot of varied industry).

138 people commented on this theme.

"Need to attract other businesses to Batley, IT and tech based."

"We need to invest in cheap office space to attract companies."

"We have a young and clever youth who can work in Batley. A lot go to work in Leeds in call centres, why can't they have that in Batley?"

"The village does not provide work to support the local economy."

Housing and community



Key issues: People made a broad range of comments about housing, with improved access to affordable homes being the most common. Suggestions include the need to replace social housing that has been sold off in previous years.



People mentioned the lack of maintenance and upkeep of community spaces. They talked about 'caring' for local spaces, which seems to suggest both the council and residents taking care.

People raised concerns about the cost of local rental properties.

There were some positive comments about the variety of quality homes, which meet peoples needs.

Participants highlighted their concerns about the development of housing and about protecting green spaces, indicating a preferred use of brownfield sites and the use of empty buildings as alternatives.

Other comments were about anti-social behaviour in communities and a lack of cohesion or neighbourliness. Several people said they are concerned about mixing of younger and older people in social housing, and how this has a negative impact on residents.

Suggestions: Protecting the greenbelt and green spaces from housing development is important - developing brownfield sites would be better. Housing developments for families should include affordable housing, and better travel links for getting into and out of town would help. Resurfacing some roads and more attention to keeping the streets clean. Upgrading current social housing and more council homes. A mix of this and private developments may dilute the the level of anti-social behaviour.

122 people commented on this theme

"Too many large properties being built and not enough smaller affordable houses."

"Home buyers can often find a selection of suitable properties. Renters don't always find it as easy."

"Making town centres liveable for all socio-economic groups would improve the quality of shops and services."

Social contact



Key issues: People who commented about social contact feel that developing community spaces and places is very important - along with making sure that people have access to these spaces. There is strong support for increasing community activities and events across all age groups. People also feel it's difficult to find out what's going on, suggesting that more local notice boards, for instance, might help.



People recognise the community spaces that are available, mentioning places such as Batley Park, Batley Library, Batley Town Hall, community centres, Tesco, Red Brick Mills, and Memorial Park. People said there's a need for access to better outdoor spaces (including green space), with seating and child friendly resources.

Participants often commented about feeling safe and the fear of anti-social behaviour.

People have mixed feelings about their ability to socialise, with some people feeling there have been a loss of social opportunities due to the closure of pubs and traditional cafés.

In contrast, several people commented on the number of new food places, and said that these offer places to socialise.

There were a few comments about the lack of community spirit, the effects of the pandemic and other local issues impacting on the community generally.

Suggestions: Create spaces for people to see and engage with others. More seating in the marketplace. Making the town centre safe and welcoming, considering people's needs. Creating a drop in centre for pensioners who need advice on various matters, or a community café where people could play chess or snakes and ladders, while chatting seated around communal tables. A real push on inclusion and finding common ground.

125 people commented on this theme

"We all need to start embracing our cultural difference with delight, not mudslinging."

"Communities often segregated from each other. This results in very few true community projects."

"There are no community cafes and no areas where community involvement is encouraged."

"I think what is on offer could be better publicised. There is plenty happening in Batley."

Identity and belonging



Key issues: Participants' comments reflect very strong feelings about a lack of cohesion and a real feeling of division across the community. People said that Batley has a long and strong heritage and history, that they are proud of being from Batley. People also have very strong feelings that the area has lost some of its tradition and identity, with recent issues reflecting very poorly on Batley. Participants feel that, from the outside, people's perception of Batley is poor.



People said that they would like to see more community events and opportunities, with work undertaken to present Batley in a more positive way.

People also reflected on a lack of investment and maintenance in the area. There were comments about Batley no longer feeling safe, with concerns regarding anti-social behaviour and low police numbers.

People feel that this is evidence of a lack of leadership, from the council and councillors.

Suggestions: More should be taught about Batley's heritage in local schools, so it is appreciated and not lost. Cleaning up Batley's exceptional architecture and preserving its buildings. Having events recognising Batley's multiculturalism and creating an identity people can be proud of. There is clearly an underlying pride in Batley that people don't want to lose. People want more activities that will help everyone to feel part of the community.

144 people commented on this theme.

"I think Batley needs to work on its identity to give people a reason to be proud."

"Its strengths of a multi-cultural town can also cause issues, but promoting harmonious events where people can mix and share, will help breed a positive belief."

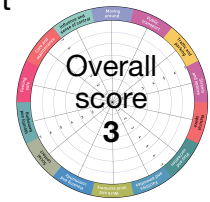
"We need to make it great, so everyone feels proud to come from Batley, to look after Batley to attract people and businesses."

Feeling safe



Key issues: It's clear that people are very concerned about feeling unsafe. This comes through very strongly in the comments about this theme, and feeling safe was mentioned in several of the other themes.

People clearly feel there is not enough police support in Batley, with issues mentioned including response to call times, never seeing police in the town centre and difficulty with reporting issues.



Lots of people who commented talked about a fear of crime in Batley, with people relating this to recently reported historic crimes and also social media stories.

As in other themes, many people commented about anti-social behaviour (including loud music) and issues with driving, including speeding, dangerous driving and parking issues.

Some people commented about groups congregating in the town centre, with some comments specifically about young people.

Several people raised concerns about drug dealing and usage..

Some participants commented on night-time safety, suggesting that the quality of lighting in the town centre contributes to people not feeling safe.

Some people specifically said that they do feel safe in Batley.

Suggestions: Improving street lighting to help people feel safer - once improved, this needs to be advertised properly to encourage more older people to leave their houses. Targeted lighting would help on some pathways, making them more accessible. Updating the town's CCTV system and increasing staffing using the system would enable a degree of live monitoring, which could also be advertised. Having more people living in the town centre also makes people feel safer.

162 people commented on this theme.

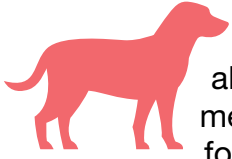
"There are too many groups of youths hanging around street corners and local shops."

"When walking I sometimes feel unsafe due to men who make me feel uncomfortable, especially after dark."

"The town centre can be unsafe on an evening due to local youth acting in an anti-social way."

"Generally feel safe, but there is a distinct lack of police in and around the town centre."

Care and maintenance



Key issues: People raised a wide variety of concerns about care and maintenance, many of which are also mentioned in other themes. Lots of people who commented focussed on litter and fly tipping in Batley. People feel there are not enough litter bins and there are few opportunities to recycle. Participants said there's a lack of investment from the council in the area. Some people feel there are different levels of maintenance in different parts of the community.



People are concerned about the empty shop spaces and buildings that suffer from a lack of ongoing maintenance. Some people shared wider concerns about general maintenance around the town centre and asked whether there is a programme of planned maintenance, to prevent areas becoming eyesores.

There were lots of comments about the condition of local roads and the number of potholes. It's difficult to identify whether these are about the town centre specifically or about the wider road network in and around Batley. Some people commented on the lack of maintenance of pavements and footpaths, with some specifically highlighting overgrown trees and weeds on the footpath network.

Suggestions: Making better use of the empty shops and buildings, as places for schools and for local groups to make displays. Some buildings not used for more than 20 years could be pulled down to make better use of the space or new buildings built for different purposes. Landlords should be held more accountable for their tenants' upkeep of buildings. Making sure buildings with smashed glass or trees growing out of them are repaired, so they make the town feel nicer.

136 people commented on this theme.

"Who wants to come to a town that feels uncared for and unloved?"

"Buildings, roads and pavements are in a poor state of repair. There's overhanging vegetation, litter and dog fouling ."

"Some people have the attitude of 'it's not mine, why should I care', someone else will clear it up."

Influence and sense of control



Key issues: Many participants said they feel that Kirklees Council and local councillors are not listening to local people's concerns and views. Some said that when people do try to act, there is little follow up or support to help them. People also feel that decisions have already been made, so there is no point trying to offer a view or share ideas.



Some people said that taking part in 'Batley - our town centre' is the first time they have had a voice or been asked to influence a decision. People feel they have limited opportunity to participate, and that there is not a clear process to make comments on local issues and receive feedback.

A small number of participants said they feel that the council puts more resources into Huddersfield, and makes too many decisions in Huddersfield.

People feel that there should be more opportunities locally to hold public meetings, possibly focus groups, with less focus on elections and more things at other times. Some participants said they hope that the new MP will make a difference.

Some people feel disconnected from the council and councillors, but participants made positive suggestions on how this could be improved.

Suggestions: Focus groups or local public meetings would help to better connect people in the area. People need to feel like they are being listened to locally and that not all decisions are taken by people who don't live in or know the area. Improving opportunities for local people to have a voice, take part in discussions and receive feedback on why decisions are being made.

131 people commented on this theme.

"No chance for people to have their say with the current council."

"There are some groups locally who love involvement and you can feel like you're making a difference, but a lot of things feel like they're out of our hands."

"People feel many decisions are made by non-local people, who do not live in the area and have no idea what it's like to live here."

"Who agrees what businesses can open locally? Lots of people complain about the amount of takeaways, but who allows them?"

Batley - our town centre score sheet

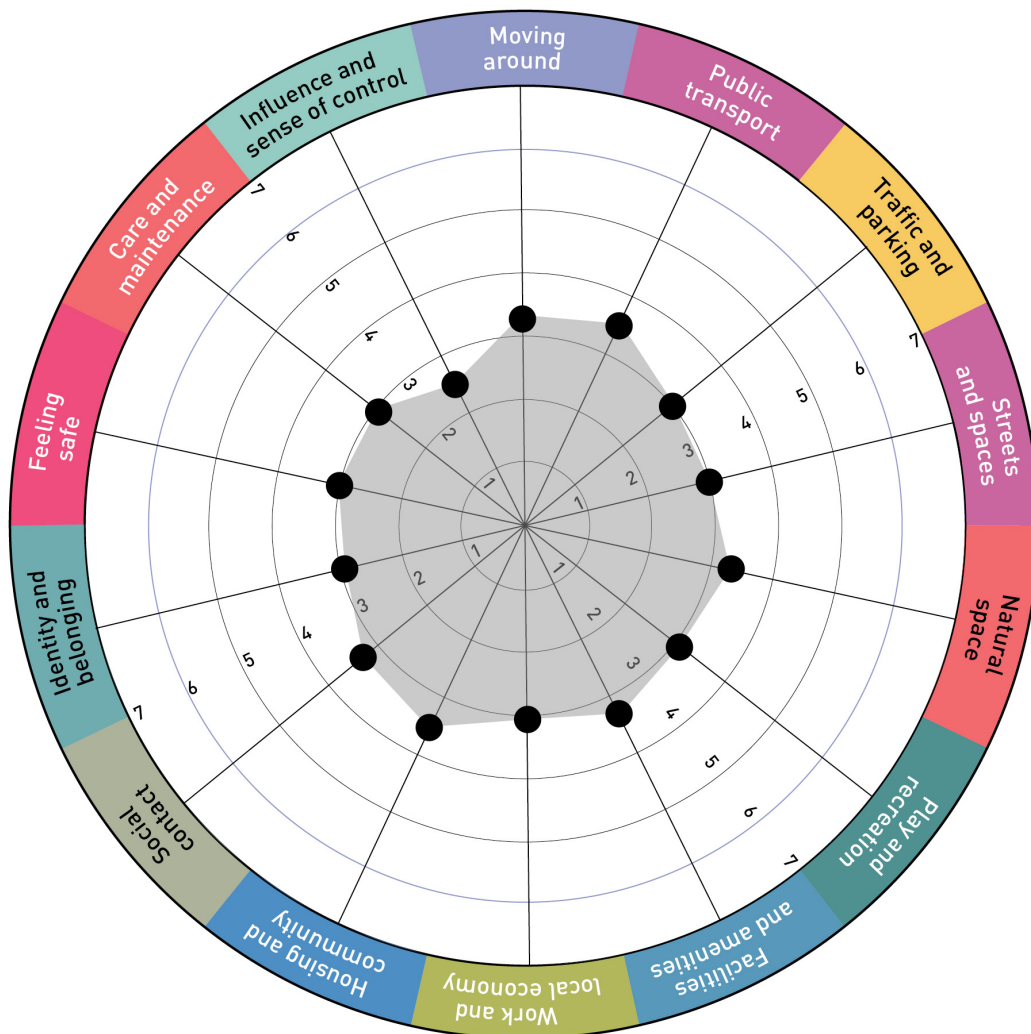
How people in Batley town centre scored their place, on a scale of 1 to 7, whilst talking about 14 different themes:

	Overall	Age 25 to 44	Age 45 to 64	Age 65 to 75+	Male	Female
Moving around	3.2	3	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2
Public transport	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.6	3.5	3.5
Traffic and parking	3	3	3.1	3	3.1	3
Streets and spaces	3	2.9	3	3	3	3
Natural space	3.3	3.1	3.3	3.2	3.2	3.2
Play and recreation	3.1	3	3.1	3.2	3.1	3.1
Facilities and amenities	3.3	3.2	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3
Work and local economy	3.1	3	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1
Housing and community	3.6	3.4	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6
Social contact	3.3	3.1	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3
Identity and belonging	2.9	2.7	2.9	2.8	2.9	2.8
Feeling safe	3	2.9	3	3	3	3.1
Care and maintenance	2.9	2.7	2.9	3	2.9	2.9
Influence and sense of control	2.5	2.4	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5

253 people participated in the 'Batley - our town centre' conversations, completing **253** assessments.

The overall scores are the **Mean average** of the **253** assessments.

Overall scores for Batley - our town centre



Housing and community	3.6
Public transport	3.5
Natural space	3.3
Facilities and amenities	3.3
Social contact	3.3
Moving around	3.2
Play and recreation	3.1

Work and local economy	3.1
Traffic and parking	3
Streets and spaces	3
Feeling safe	3
Identity and belonging	2.9
Care and maintenance	2.9
Influence and sense of control	2.5

Full data is available at:
www.HowGoodIsOurPlace.org.uk