Share Your Views 2019: Dudley Town Centre

**Q: How often do you usually go into Dudley town centre?**

![Bar chart showing frequency of visits to Dudley town centre]

*Other reasons include:-
For lunch
small bespoke shops
Banks
charity shops
walk & look around
To take an elderly friend

**Q: What do you go into Dudley town centre for?**

![Bar chart showing reasons for visits to Dudley town centre]

*Other reasons include:-
For lunch
small bespoke shops
Banks
charity shops
walk & look around
To take an elderly friend

**data source:** Dudley people’s panel survey 2019
produced by Intelligence Team, Dudley MBC
Q: What would encourage you, your family and future family to go into and enjoy Dudley town centre more often?

81 responses were received. 214 comments were extracted and grouped into themes which are detailed below.

**Shops**

74 comments (35%) related to shops in the town centre. These comments were split into two fairly equal groups:

- Those concerned with the quality of shops available in the town centre, particularly that there are too many discount and charity shops and that more people would be attracted into town if there were more branches of major retailers. Below are some examples of these comments
  - “There are no major retailer in the town centre if there were then it would encourage more visits”
  - “There is nothing worth going to Dudley town centre for other than work purposes. Poor quality shops, too many charity shops”
  - “more bigger brand stores”
  - “it would encourage us as a family to use Dudley town more if there was more high street shops in the town”

- People who would like to see more variety in the types of shop and more independent retailers.
  - “A wider variety of shops, particularly small independents rather than chains”
  - “More independent shops, supporting local business entrepreneurs. Offering individual / creative goods and services.”
  - “I do go into the town centre often but would like a wider selection of shops that would really help the town and stop people going further out for their shopping”

**Entertainment and Leisure**

31 comments (14%) related to entertainment and leisure opportunities in the town centre. These were further split into the following categories:

- Most of these said that they would like to see more events in the town centre, such as street events and themed markets.
  - “Events, like: Beer Festival; Food Festival.”
  - “The recent Heritage Day was fantastic. We had a wonderful day out and would do something like this again.”
  - “More special market day events like food festivals, themed market days, farmer’s market days - ‘flea market’ type days - brings character back to the town and makes it a destination for something different.”

- Others said that they would like more live entertainment venues and improvements in the pubs in the town centre.
“More quality evening entertainment venues”
“more pubs and live music entertainment venues around the area”
“if there were a few more venues in the town centre for evening entertainment.”
“Better quality pubs/wine bars & eateries”

**Cleanliness, maintenance and general appearance**

27 comments (13%) related to cleanliness, maintenance and general appearance in the town centre. These were further split into categories:-

- A number of comments related to the cleanliness of the town centre, including increasing the frequency of street cleaning and cleaning buildings.
  - “for the town centre to look and feel cleaner and tidier”
  - “The Town Centre is dirty, and needs daily deep cleaning! “
  - “Currently the building all look tired and dirty, clean up of the fronts of the business, upper storeys as well as shop fronts would make the site look more appealing and less ‘down at heel’.”
- Others related to general maintenance of items such as paving slabs, signs litter bins etc.
  - “It would help if the new slabs that were only installed a few years ago were looked after and not all over the place. Some are loose or the mortar around them has worn away.”
  - “there are some fantastic buildings in Dudley but they aren't well maintained and this detracts from the appeal of the town centre”
  - “no overgrown trees, paths cleared. Alley’s cleaned up - they stink - urine littered alleys.”
- There were also suggestions to improve the appearance and atmosphere of the town centre.
  - “beautiful flowers in the summer, buskers might even enliven it.”
  - “give the town centre more of an individual/unique feel in terms of lampposts (lighting), litter bins, seating, signage, floral tributes/hanging baskets(sponsored)”
  - Paint murals on the empty shops. Especially at the top of the town by Argos, that area looks so tired”

**Safety & Policing**

21 comments (10%) related to how safe people feel when visiting the town centre. Most of these said that it does not feel a safe place to be, especially at night and that there are not enough police officers visible.

- “more police about. I personally don’t feel safe when I go to Dudley town centre”
- “currently do not feel safe in the Town Centre after dusk.”
- “Parts of the town centre, particularly up towards Argos, give the impression of being 'unsafe'. Making it look smarter would also make it feel less threatening.”
- “a feeling of safety (an actual police presence instead of an empty building and a station in a different town)”

**Parking**
18 comments (8%) related to parking. These were split into two main categories, cost and accessibility.

- The majority of comments relating to parking suggested that more people would be encouraged into the town centre if parking was free or lower cost.
  - “All day free parking. Dudley is losing out on customers due to this.”
  - “Parking the same price as Merry Hill Shopping Centre”
  - “Reduced car parking fees”
- Other comments about parking related to the accessibility of spaces
  - “Parking was a nightmare and I was dropped off and picked up”
  - “More disabled parking close to amenities”
  - “Better signage to find parking places, disabled parking bays in more locations”

**Heritage and Attractions**

There were 16 (8%) comments mentioning the heritage and attractions available in Dudley. The general theme is that Dudley has a rich history and many things to attract visitors, but that these were not being taken full advantage of.

- “I think Dudley Town Centre could be charming. There is so much history and places of interest around Dudley that Dudley town centre should be the focus for that but instead everything keeps drawing away from it (the museum for example, lovely building, just needed some tlc but now moved out of the town centre)”
- “We have a historical market town, with superb attractions on our doorstep. I often stand by top church and look down the high street towards the castle and think what a shame. It would be great to see a wealth of different shops to encourage people who visit the local attractions into the town centre to spend money there too.”
- “More focus on towns heritage”

**Cafes & Restaurants**

10 comments (5%) related to cafes and restaurants in the town centre. These comments were mostly saying that more high quality eating places are needed in the town, especially in the evening.

- “More choice of independent restaurants”
- “More to do in an evening - especially places to eat which aren’t takeaways”
- “Decent places to eat and drink in the evening.”
- “More recognizable places to eat - there are no chain restaurants for evening meals etc. in the town centre itself.”

**Other themes**

Other things which would encourage more people to visit the town centre are:-

- Reducing homelessness and rough sleeping
Address the homeless situation....Is there anything they can do to help these people?

There are people sleeping rough and begging.... was asked for money and I felt very intimidated.

Traffic & travel

The metro being extended to create a direct link to the town centre and beyond

Roads congested especially at peak times with one way systems making travel into town and leaving town difficult

Strategic areas set as Red Routes to reduce congestion (e.g. by Top Church)

“more efficient public transport.”

Family Friendly

“Family friendly environment/ activities”

“if there were modern stores that was friendly towards people with family also more healthy places to eat also toilets that was open went needed”

“More for young people to do, particularly teenagers”

Q: Suggest what information the Panel should hear

Three quarters of the comments in answer to this question repeated the themes in the previous question. The other quarter were suggestions for information sources and groups to be consulted, as shown below:-

Other local authorities and areas where there has been successful regeneration of town centres

Visit and talk to people who have regenerated other town centres across the country.”

gather information from people at other locations such as Merry Hill, Castlegate complex, gornal village and see why those thriving areas are more appealing than the ‘town centres’.

Local businesses to gather their views

Viewpoints from local businesses

Info from local businesses

Local residents from a range of age groups and cultures

“the panel should hear view from people from all ages and all cultural”

“Ensure children and young people's voices, views and opinions are heard.”

Charity organisations

“Info from charity organisations that support the vulnerable people of Dudley.”

Elected members and council staff should gather information from their own experience.

“Get the cllr's to go into the Town and try to shop.”

“Aren't there supposed to be experts/business analysts who are paid to know what the issues are and how to solve them, particularly with the change in shopping trends and customer expectations.”