**Share Your Views 2019: Brierley Hill Town Centre**

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

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

- Never: 6
- Rarely: 19
- Sometimes: 9
- Often: 7
- Very Often: 2

*Data source: Dudley people's panel survey 2019
produced by Intelligence Team, Dudley MBC*

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

![Bar chart showing reasons for visiting Brierley Hill town centre]

- To go shopping: 25
- To run errands: 25
- To work: 11
- I don't use this town centre: 9
- To access healthcare: 7
- To access healthcare: 2
- To access healthcare: 2
- To access healthcare: 2
- To live: 1

*Other reason was:-
Food/ Takeaway food

*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 Brierley Hill town centre more often?

43 responses were received. 121 comments were extracted and grouped into themes which are detailed below.

**Shops**

41 comments (34%) 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 shops, charity shops and takeaways and that more people would be attracted into town if there were more branches of major retailers. Below are some examples of these comments
  - “Need a range of better quality shops.”
  - “trying to attract valuable retail shops, coffee shops and restaurants.”
  - “Encourage nicer shops into the High Street, places where you can buy decent goods.”
  - “More 'high street' shops/banks and less takeaways.”

- People who would like to see more variety in the types of shop and more independent retailers.
  - “More specialised shops”
  - “Nice boutique shops”
  - “Better selection of shops”

**Cleanliness, maintenance and general appearance**

28 comments (23%) 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.
  - “The current street scene (shop fronts etc.) is dire, there are a few shop owners that try really hard with the appearance of their shop front but the majority look uninviting and dirty”
  - “Feels very washed out, grubby and stuck in the 70's”
  - “It feels very run down, takeaways leave mess around the area and has very little to attract anyone to want to visit the high street.”

- Others related to general maintenance of items such as paving slabs, signs litter bins etc.
  - “Better looking properties upgrading run down buildings”
  - “If it was less dilapidated.”
  - “It has the potential to be a lovely old shopping area but needs smartening up”

- There were also suggestions to improve the appearance and atmosphere of the town centre
  - “Brighter cleaner more colourful street view. Outdoor market a couple of times per week.”
  - “Pedestrianised high street”
  - “A more attractive atmosphere - better quality shops, cafes, flowers, trees.”
Safety & Policing

19 comments (16%) 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.

- “I used to go but now feels quite threatening and derelict”
- “It is a no go area, it is ok in day but at night it is very scary”
- “More police presence on the high street and need to do more to tackle anti social behaviour”

Entertainment and Leisure

- 9 comments (7%) related to entertainment and leisure opportunities in the town centre. Most of these related to the lack of entertainment and leisure facilities.
  - “Very little family entertainment in the area (swimming baths was closed bowling was closed).”
  - “bring back bowling or other recreation.”
  - “I miss Brierley Hill Leisure Centre greatly, it was a fantastic hub for the community with great facilities for exercise.”

Parking

8 comments (7%) related to parking. The majority of comments relating to parking suggested that more people would be encouraged into the town centre if parking was more accessible and safer.

- “better nearer parking to the centre.”
- “safe environment, safe parking”
- “More organised/defined street parking may help”

Merry Hill Shopping Centre

There were 8 (7%) comments specifically mentioning the Merry Hill shopping centre and the impact this has on the number of people using Brierley Hill Town Centre. These included some suggestions that stronger links should be made between the two areas, to attract more footfall to Brierley Hill.

- “with Merry Hill on its doorstep it will always struggle because it doesn’t offer anything that MH doesn’t and parking is free and it is a more pleasant place to shop.”
- “Footfall in Brierley hill is worse than Dudley, most opt to go to Merry Hill”
- “Why go to Brierley Hill when you have Merry Hill!”
- “Brierley Hill currently offers the type of shopping you wouldn't really go to Merry Hill for”
- “there are no shops etc that I would go out of my way to go to Brierley Hill for. Especially as Merry Hill is around the corner.”
- “My local bank is in Merry Hill”
- “Need a better link with Merry Hill”
- “Maybe work with Intu to develop the High Street and tie it more closely with Merry Hill”

Other themes

Other things which would encourage more people to visit the town centre are:-
• Restaurants & Cafes
  o “Nice quality family restaurants/coffee shops”
  o “more inviting coffee shops and family friendly pubs.”
  o “family food places to eat”

• Traffic & travel
  o “Pedestrianize the High Street”
  o “Less traffic through the town”
  o “The area would benefit from improved pedestrian access around the area.”

• Family Friendly
  o “The environment needs to be more family friendly, as the high street is very busy
this is not necessarily a good place for mothers/children to meet and participate in
any activities.”
  o “Nice quality family restaurants/coffee shops”
  o “Family friendly environment/ activities.”

Q: Suggest what information the Panel should hear

Most of the comments in answer to this question repeated the themes in the previous question. A few were suggestions for information sources and groups to be consulted, as shown below:-

• Local businesses to gather their views
  o “The panel should hear view points from the shop owners”

• Local residents from a range of age groups and cultures
  o “Community perspective, including family a wide ranging perspective from families
    who live in the local area.”
  o “Ensure children and young people's voices, views and opinions are heard”

• Shoppers
  o “view points from shoppers”
  o “Listen to the people who used to shop in Brierley Hill but now find it an unsafe
    place to be”

• Elected members and the panel should gather information from their own experience.
  o “I would urge members of the panel to individually walk the High Street after dark.
    This would help to highlight the safety fears residents have.”
  o “Perhaps a councillor should walk through the town at night as see exactly how it is
    and then report back honestly.”
  o Panel need to walk around Brierley Hill and see how many empty shops there are
    and how much traffic passes through the town.

• Liaise with Merry Hill Shopping Centre
  o “Link Brierley Hill to Merry Hill and make it into one large EXPERIENCE. The old and
    the new but trading and working as one. With linked transport and walkways,
    maybe even use the Metro to link the two with no cost to passengers for the short
    hop.”
  o “I believe the intu merry hill team should be apart of discussions as they have taken
    away business from all town centres within Dudley.”