

**CITY CENTRE AREA ACTION PLAN
ISSUES AND OPTIONS PAPER CONSULTATION**

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC RESPONSES TO QUESTIONNAIRE

Approximately 2,500 questionnaires were produced and distributed. The responses below are taken from questionnaires completed and returned.

2 different questionnaires were used: a general questionnaire and a questionnaire designed specifically for young people.

GENERAL QUESTIONNAIRE

453 respondents (includes some young people)

- Gender: 201 Male & 247 Female
- Disabilities: 22% said they had a long standing illness, disability or infirmity, of which 20% said the illness or disability limited their activities
- Ethnicity: 85% White British, 15% BME (highest percentages of Chinese and Bangladeshi respondents)
- 18% were filled in by members of LGBT communities

Respondents to the general questionnaire were asked what they used the city centre for:

83%* shopping
58% leisure e.g. cinema
53% socialising e.g. pubs & clubs
46% accessing services e.g. banks
36% working/business
19% live in the centre
16% education
9% other
2% religious activities

Better public transport service (13%), alternative leisure offer (12%) and more shops (11%) were the most important incentives for people to use the city centre more.

Housing

- 19% of questionnaire respondents live in the city centre
- Most respondents felt that a mix of housing types and tenures is necessary for the City centre and would help to create sustainable communities
- 31% of questionnaire respondents felt that family housing should be prioritised but the majority of those consulted considered the city centre unsuitable for families as it doesn't have the infrastructure, space and amenity requirements for families.
- 57% of respondents felt that affordable homes of different types should be provided in the centre, followed by housing for single people or couples (53%) and students (35%).
- "Homes for Life" should be provided, which are easily adaptable for those whose requirements change and accessible for people with disabilities. This view was shared by a number of those consulted.
- 68% of young people consulted felt that the city centre was not somewhere they would like to live.

- Housing proposals should enhance the historic environment and bring unused and Listed buildings back into use.

Retail

- Respondents generally thought the range of shops on offer was adequate; 56% said the existing shops met all their needs, 36% said they did not.
- Many respondents felt that food shopping in the centre was inadequate and expensive. When asked what additional shops were needed in the city centre, 18 % said more supermarkets and food shops are needed.
- Most respondents felt strongly that we need a more diverse range of offer, including specialist and independent boutiques (23%) and high-end department stores such as Harvey Nichols and Selfridges (10%).
- 2% wanted to see a greater range of cheaper shops.
- Some BME respondents would like to see Asian food and fashion shops in the centre and were interested in initiatives to encourage more diverse and independent shops into the centre.
- Those respondents with disabilities and those who felt that congestion and expensive parking fees were prohibitive to shopping in the city centre found shopping at the Metro Centre more accessible than the City centre.
- There was a general acknowledgement that we do need to extend the range of shops on offer, especially independent shops and some felt the shopping area needs to expand if we are to compete with the accessibility and free parking on offer at the Metro centre.
- However, some stakeholders emphasised the need for new shopping developments, for example Pilgrim street, to be phased in, in order to protect the existing shopping core, especially since Eldon Square is currently undergoing a significant expansion.

Transport

- 50% of respondents used the bus as their main method of transport into the city centre, followed by car (30%) and metro.
- 47% of respondents felt pedestrianising more city centre areas was the priority as long as people do not have to walk longer distances to their destination.
- 26% felt that there should be dedicated space for cyclists in the city centre.
- 61% of respondents felt that the main priority for improving transport and access in the city centre was more public transport routes at certain times, particularly at night. Later running services were seen as essential to encourage more people to use the city centre as long as they felt safe.
- Safety on public transport and at taxi ranks in the evening was of universal concern, but articulated particularly by BME respondents, many of whom felt unsafe using the City centre and public transport in the evening.
- More transport routes to the West End, particularly metro links and park n ride schemes to the West End.
- Accessibility on public transport was a major concern of those with sensory and physical disabilities, especially the need for more wheelchair space on buses and electronic announcements and screens indicating bus stops.
- 33% said there should be more car parking in the city centre. Congestion and high parking fees were the most frequent complaints of car drivers.
- Stakeholders with an interest in the designation of the Inner Ring road highlighted the importance of reducing non-essential traffic in the centre,

whilst maintaining direct bus routes through the city, which in itself encourages people to use public transport rather than the private car.

Leisure, Culture, Tourism

- 44% of respondents would like to see more cultural attractions such as museums, theatres & galleries
- 42% would like more family-orientated activities.
- 40% would like to see a new major tourist attraction, like the Discovery Quarter
- 38% would like more leisure facilities for young people and 37% would like more leisure facilities for older people.
- 67% of young people who responded to the young persons questionnaire (those aged 25 and under) used the city centre for meeting friends and there is a lack of meeting places and facilities to meet this demand. 75% of young people said they use the city centre at night time
- The most frequent general response to this topic concerned the evening economy and the need for a broader range of attractions and activities other than just drinking-based activities. When asked how the city centre could appeal to a wider range of people at night, 32% of respondents said the city centre needs to be safer, 28% said alternative entertainment, 17% said anti-social behaviour needs to be reduced, 13% said there should be fewer bars, pubs & clubs, and 11% said later running transport.
- More emphasis on promoting local culture and leisure, more sports facilities and later opening hours for shops, cinemas and cafes were all suggested as ways to redress the balance between “City of culture” and Newcastle as a “party city”.
- The potential of the river could be harnessed for sporting and tourist activities such as river transport.
- With regards to a regional convention centre and casino situated in the city centre, there were many views but a general acknowledgement that diversification of the current tourism facilities, including business tourism is needed.

Conservation, Archaeology, Design & Open Space

- 71% of respondents felt that new design should complement existing buildings
- 70% felt we need more green space in the city centre. Some felt there was a conflict of interest between young people and older people using public spaces.
- Young people in particular felt that more green space was needed (65%) and more open space for pedestrians (41%). There was an acknowledgement among respondents in discussion forum, particularly BME workshop, that there is a need for more areas in the city centre where children and young people can meet up.
- Respondents with physical & sensory disabilities and older people felt that street furniture, cafes extending onto the pavement and steep slopes were obstructive to pedestrians and that there is a need for guidelines on what is and isn't acceptable. A lack of accessible public toilets, particularly out of hours, was also an issue.
- There is a need for a coherent approach to street design and maintenance as well as signage in the city.

- Public art should be well planned and reflect the diversity of the people living in Newcastle
- Many of those consulted felt that disused buildings in the city centre should be refurbished and reused, as housing... There was support for the establishment of a local list of buildings of local interest.
- Improved linkages between city centre and west end
- Biodiversity and environmental interests should be considered within this topic.

Economy

- From a list of four options, 59% of questionnaire respondents thought that more tourist attractions was the priority in order to improve the local economy. Some people thought that Newcastle doesn't do enough to maximise on tourism potential and that we need to be more creative. 52% considered there should be more support for small businesses to set up in the city, 46% thought we should do more to encourage graduates to stay in the region, and 29% thought we needed more business developments.
- BME respondents felt that there is not enough of the right kind of employment and leisure facilities to attract BME residents to the city centre. More of these would encourage more people into the city and boost the economy, as well as the diversity of offer. China Town is seen as a successful example of the economic potential of specific multi-cultural areas within a city centre.
- Extended opening hours for shops and leisure could help boost economy.
- Training and employment opportunities for local residents should be linked up to new developments
- Transport links up west road and better linkages between the city centre, through the Discovery Quarter.
- The extent to which the development of the evening economy is considered within the CCAAP is not clear

Community Safety

Although this was not a topic at the outset, there were many comments related to the safety of the city centre and the perception that at certain times and for certain communities it was not safe:

- When asked how the city centre can appeal to a wider range of people at night, 32% of respondents said a safer environment, 17% said reduce the anti-social behaviour, 9% said more police or street wardens in the streets, 3% said safer public transport and 2% said a safer LGBT scene.
- 5% of those consulted said they did not use the city centre because they did not feel safe
- 3% of those consulted said they would use the city centre more if there was a safer environment
- BME: in workshops, BME residents of Newcastle said that using public transport after a certain time, especially the Metro, was unsafe or felt intimidating at certain locations. Many felt that walking around the city centre after 5 or 6pm was unsafe, due to the potential risk of abuse or anti-social behaviour.
- Many respondents in discussion groups felt that the evening economy emphasis on drinking made the city centre an intimidating place to be in the evening and that more could be done to attract a wider range of activities and

people. Taxi ranks were also perceived to be unsafe due to the risk of anti-social behaviour.

Discovery Quarter

- 65% of respondents think new leisure developments would help to regenerate the Discovery Quarter, 58% think improved transport and pedestrian links are necessary, 45% think housing should be included, and 35% consider business use would regenerate the area.
- In discussion forums, improved transport links through this area between city centre and West End was a regular consideration.
- ONE considers Science City to be central to its plans for the economic development of Newcastle and the North east. The requirements of the creative industries, which are important to the economic success and image of the city and region, should be represented within the CCAAP.
- Developers and stakeholders with an interest in DQ area and their representatives have specific concerns relating to their interests.

East Pilgrim Street

- 70% of respondents to the questionnaire felt that the top end of Pilgrim street should be pedestrianised, although some were keen to know what would happen to the bus route and whether this would affect access to the city centre
- 24% of respondents thought the top end of Pilgrim Street should not be pedestrianised
- When asked what uses should be promoted to help regenerate the Pilgrim street area around the Old Odeon, 66% said leisure, 55% retail, 36% housing, including student accommodation, and 22% office and business.
- The success of any development in this area is seen to be dependent upon good pedestrian access. However any change in transport movement in the area must take into account accessibility, especially for people with mobility problems.
- English Heritage feel there is a need to understand how many of the buildings on the site came to be vacant or underused and make sure the root causes of the problem are tackled. They feel also that regeneration of this area should respect existing routes and urban blocks.
- Nexus have some concern over how buses would be accommodated if Pilgrim street were to be pedestrianised

* All figures in percentages are taken from the 453 respondents who filled in questionnaires. Some of these questions were open-ended and some had tick boxes. Other comments are based on discussion forums with minority and interest groups.

YOUNG PERSONS QUESTIONNAIRE

97 respondents to young person's questionnaire

- Gender: 45 male & 47 female
- Disabilities: 7% had a disability
- Ethnicity: 77% White British, 18% ethnic minority, 4% white other

1. Is the City centre somewhere you would like to live?

Yes	26%
No	68%

2. Do the existing shops in the city centre meet all your needs?

Yes	80%
No	15%

3. What mode of transport do you usually use for the main part of your journey into the city centre?

Bus	55%
Metro	26%
Train	1%
Car	6%
Walk	5%
Cycle	3%
Don't Travel	1%
Other	27%

4. How would you improve transport & access to the city centre?

More pedestrianised areas	25%
More car parking	32%
More dedicated space for cyclists	16%
Improved road networks	21%
More public transport	57%
Improved public transport routes	50%

5. What do you use the city centre for?

I live in the Centre	6%
Shopping	94%
Working/business	10%
Education	14%
Accessing services e.g. Banks	28%
Leisure e.g. Cinema	65%
Socialising e.g. pubs/clubs	50%
Meeting friends	67%
Other	4%

6. What types of leisure activity would you like to see more of in the city centre?

Cultural e.g. museums/galleries	52%
More open spaces to meet friends	44%
Major visitor attraction	25%
Health & sporting facilities	38%
None	15%

Other 2%

7. Do you use the city centre in the evening or night time?

Yes 75%

No 21%

8. Do you feel safe in the city centre?

Yes 71%

No 24%

9. What would make the city centre environment better?

Preserve the historic buildings 35%

More open spaces for pedestrians 41%

More public art 18%

More green space 65%

High quality modern architecture 19%

Other 5%