

Levelling-Up Bolsover

Consultation summary and responses

Background:

Bolsover District Council is putting together a bid for Levelling up Funding covering Bolsover Town Centre; the proposal focusses on three interconnected projects to facilitate the regeneration and repurposing of the high street, and creating a diverse centre.

A summary of the three projects are as follows:

Project 1 – Two infrastructure projects are being developed; once delivered, these will create the catalyst for a vibrant town centre.

1a. Redevelopment of the former Co-op food store to create a new Cultural Centre that includes:

- Independent small cinema (nearest is 9 miles away);
- Theatre and live performance space;
- Gallery (nearest is 7 miles away);
- Exhibition space (nearest is 7 miles away);
- Food and drinks court (nearest is 9 miles away)
- An artisan and producers centre

The land and property at 11 Town End (owned by council and currently rented out) will be integrated into the project plan for the new cultural centre

The acquisition of 4 Town End (the Former Fulton Foods store) is also being considered, to integrate with the cultural centre and provide additional space for the artisan and producers centre.

1b. Refurbishment of Oxcroft House: Supporting the cultural asset, Oxcroft House will be repurposed to provide office accommodation to encourage business start-ups and early stage growth SMEs.

Project 2 – Public realm improvements: There are two elements to this project, as follows:

2a. Public realm improvements will create an inviting and connected streetscape to link Bolsover Castle with the town and vice versa. This includes the upgrading and uplifting of the public realm across the town's main pedestrian thoroughfare. New pedestrian signage will further galvanise the route.

2b. The shop front improvement scheme will enhance the presentation of the retail offer. It will include, but is not limited to: improvements to the building's façade (including replacement or repair to windows, render, stonework/masonry, doors);

signage and building presentation (cleaning, repainting); as well as improved accessibility.

Project 3 – Improved digital connectivity: In order to fully equip the town for the future and to take full advantage of the Internet-of-things (IoT), this project will support digital technology by upgrading the network to 5G. This will enable real-time digital CCTV to monitor the town centre in order to ensure the anti-social behaviour is addressed but more importantly it will enable digital infrastructure such as Blue Mesh which, through IoT will enable real time booking of car parking spaces thus reducing the emissions from cars in the town. This will also enable business to use this technology to take advantage of smart products and services.

Methodology:

The funding bid requires extensive public support and input into projects being put forward, and to address this, the Council has taken a dual approach:

- Marketing agency Creative Five was appointed to consult with businesses (face to face) in Bolsover Town Centre, with a view to understanding their priorities for the town centre. A summary of responses is presented within this report.
- A public consultation event was planned for the 11 July 2022 3pm-7pm at The Assembly Rooms, Bolsover. Invitations were sent out through emails and social media posts to capture the interest of local people. The MPs office as well as local councillors were proactive in spreading the invitation in the local community.

The aim of the consultations were:

- To understand, capture and develop the projects based on the distinctiveness of Bolsover town centre, and needs of local residents, businesses and visitors.
- To enable more local residents to view and review initial ideas and help us further develop priorities, and establish local needs and demand.

Public consultation event, 11th July:

This was arranged as a walk-in session. On the day our proposed schemes were on display for people to refer to and feed their opinion.

The consultation responses were arranged according to the 3 questions being asked on the day:

- What's good about Bolsover Town Centre?
- What can be improved?
- Project ideas to improve the town centre, visually, functionally and in terms of its offer

Around 50 people attended the event, and were keen to share their thoughts and ideas. All ideas were captured on post it notes; these are appended (Appendix 1 – 3)

In terms of positive feedback for Bolsover Town centre, the heritage and historic charm and character featured as the most popular feedback on the day. People also welcomed the new craft and food and drink businesses that have recently opened in Bolsover, which demonstrates a clear need for these type of businesses.

The consultees also unanimously welcomed the idea of the redevelopment of the former Co-op site although the intended use for the site was debated between a cultural facility and a leisure complex. In that context, improved public realm to link the new cultural facility with the existing cultural offer (The Castle) was welcomed.

Free parking is a big positive for the town centre in terms of bringing visitors, however it was acknowledged that the spaces were often used by car sharers and park and ride users, which did not bring any benefit to the town. See Appendix 1 for further info.

In terms of things that were not working well or could be improved, the biggest issues appear to be the lack of accessible toilets for visitors; lack of a diversity of leisure activities for young people, including swimming pools; lack of adequate town centre parking (this links back to long stay users); desire to see longer opening hours for shops (this links back to diversification of the local economy to expand the night time economy and expand on the current cultural and heritage offer); security concerns, and the lack of police presence in town was were raised and traffic control in town centre with cars driving through pedestrian areas seem to be an area of concern. See Appendix 2 for further info.

In terms of project ideas being brought forward, the redevelopment of the Co-op in context of expanding the cultural and heritage offer for the town centre was welcomed by all; the importance of accessible toilets was reinforced throughout the consultation; in addition to the cultural offer, there appears to be a strong need for a leisure offer; ideas to enhance the visitor destination through heritage trails, visitor interpretation, regular markets were also discussed; See Appendix 3 for further info.

Face to face business consultations and town centre survey June – July 22:

Marketing agency Creative Five was appointed to undertake a series of business engagement (including 1-2-1) and consultation meetings with all businesses across the town centre to inform the development of the public realm and shop front improvements being proposed through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and the Levelling Up Bid. The businesses were asked to participate in a survey which was also completed by attendees at the public consultation event held on 11 July. See Appendix 4 for survey results.

The key findings from 1-2-1 engagement with businesses was:

- Most businesses felt that Bolsover needs significant investment. They feel it is run down, unloved and in need of renovation. On a positive note, every business questioned feels it has a huge amount of potential.

- One of the biggest issues is the lack of footfall, particularly throughout the day with many commenting on how quiet it is. The issue of public toilets also came up on every occasion as a major problem in attracting visitors to the town.
- Shop variety was also of some concern with many feeling that there was way too much emphasis on fast food outlets all offering the same food choices. Many businesses would like to see more variation to make the town a more interesting place to visit.
- Whilst most businesses are struggling at the minute, their general attitude toward making Bolsover a destination for tourism was met with real optimism.
- Most were excited about the possibility of creating a flow through the town, incorporating new tourism venues/attractions. However, some of the business that are located outside the centre feel a little left out and find it hard to direct footfall their way.
- Communication between major local attractions to direct people into the town was brought up, as many felt that this just isn't happening.
- In general, businesses felt that investment in local buildings would help make Bolsover a more attractive place to visit, particularly ones that could leverage/link the historic history of the town. This should then help bring in more visitors and a wider variety of retail suppliers.
- Interestingly, most business owners in the town appeared to have very little knowledge of the town's history, its people, the buildings and its past and present economy.

The key findings from the analysis of the surveys was:

- A large proportion use the town centre for shopping and thought that heritage plays a huge part in how people feel about the town, the success of the local economy, shopping and tourism.
- In terms of what work they would like to see if funding was available, improvements to paving and lighting, repairs and reinstatement of historic details, repairs to buildings, vacant shops brought back into use and themed market and event space were mentioned by over 80% of participants.
- It was good to see that participants think the town is friendly, historic and has potential. However, they also feel that is unloved, disjointed, shabby and tired.
- When asked about negative events that have happened in the town centre over the 10 years, the main response was pubs and shops closing and more specifically the closure of the Co-op. A large proportion of the positives were the events that are held in the town centre including Bolsover in Bloom, Lantern Parade, Food and Drink Fair and Artisan Markets.
- In order for people to use the town centre more frequently they would like public toilets, more parking, a police presence, a better market, more restaurants and a leisure facility.

- Participants thought that investment in the town centre would make both businesses and residents feel valued. They thought that footfall would increase, there would be a sense of pride, businesses would have a sense of security and the town would be a cleaner, safer place where visitors would be more inclined to stay longer.

Next Steps:

The Economic Growth team at Bolsover District Council truly appreciates the input into the bidding process; Our thanks go out to everyone that took the time to attend the consultation event and/or filled out survey questionnaires; the feedback has been invaluable in terms of helping shape our Levelling-Up bid for Bolsover.

The consultation responses will be made available on Councils website for viewing, and will be emailed out to all participants who provided contact details.

The outcome of the bid is expected in autumn 2022. This will determine future consultation with residents, retailers, property owners and community groups located within the town centre.

For further information or updates please contact the Economic Growth Team on regeneration@bolsover.gov.uk

Consultation responses: What's Good about the Town?

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Jul-22

Office. Sandstone architecture. Independent shops. Flower displays. Free parking. Small family businesses varying in what they sell. Brilliant new businesses – The Sanctuary and Old Bolsover Yard. Town square continued development is excellent. Establishment of incubation centre is good. Like the use of Fultons as a Heritage Centre. Good Co-op development but useful to incorporate a car park.

Appendix 2:

Consultation responses: What Needs Changing?

Needs to be more cycle and pedestrian friendly; How can we promote healthy living for everyone when there are no activities locally?; Some buildings have fallen into disrepair; Potholes; More recycling bins needed; Need more leisure facilities – e.g. swimming pool; Public toilets; Shops/ cafes staying open later; No toilets; No swimming baths; Poor leisure facilities (cinema etc.) public toilets; Car park by Church Street needs building on; Town Hall



Square – make into Housing; Toilets; Car parking; Under 11s Saturday Club; Police Station with Accessibility – not closed during daylight hours; More police in town; Transport services to surrounding towns and villages especially for disabled adults; Better bus service for Bolsover people. Change existing route to No1 to Lawson Road and down Sandhills; Inconsiderate renovations of pavements + roadways not in keeping with conservation area; Used cheap tarmac instead of using sandstone paving especially on the bus stops in the Market Place; Better bus services to serve more outlying areas e.g. Bentinck to bring them into Bolsover; Health & Wellbeing – leisure space, culture, swimming pool, spaces for children and teenagers; Better connection from Castle to Town; Better transport facilities; No toilets; English Heritage to be encouraged to participate more in town events; Castle Lane yellow lines need extending to prevent cars parking on the only path up the hill; Encourage the wildlife back – Morrisons saw off a bat colony, owls and falcons. More green space; The main council offices need to be back in Bolsover; Shop fronts need painting; Bigger and better litter bins; Cotton Street traffic problems; Vehicles driving down Cotton Street pedestrian area. Bollards should be placed at the top by Post Office allowing access to legitimate users, Traders etc.; Back of regular parking enforcement especially on pavements near and adjacent to fast food outlets; Not a fountain, but water jets – play area in Town Square; Co-op into a leisure centre, gym, soft play, badminton, squash. Safeguard parking spaces to rear. Provide public toilets; Paving (different paving stones – need to match); Better public transport – Clowne, Creswell, Barlborough,

Staveley, especially for disabled adults; More bins; No leisure facilities; Bowling alley; No leisure facilities; Swimming baths needed; Swimming baths – Health + Leisure; Permanent place for youth club/ community centre; More facilities for young teenagers, table tennis, pool, snooker – not having to go into the pubs; Public toilets; Public toilets; Stop thinking of Bolsover as an ex mining town & think of it as a tourist trap; Information signage for visitors as the town is a tourist destination; Toilets much needed!!! ; Public toilets; More social activities for the community e.g. fireworks display; Lack of public toilets; Bolsover town centre, e.g. bus stops etc. needs tidying up to match the “improved” shopfronts proposed; Very useful to include Stratton Gardens + adjacent woodland in Levelling Up funding; A new police station, a visible police presence; Shop front improvement; Derbyshire education school buildings has toilets to adopt for the town; Poor/ temporary road repairs/ curb stone. Patchy use of tarmac; Better signage to facilities; Walk through the Back Hills often ignored; Public toilets; Better CCTV; Facilities for teenagers – BMX track, Swimming Pool, cinema or similar (leisure facilities); Make Bolsover a destination; People come to the castle and leave; The town has nothing to keep people here; Betting shops and fast food need to be replaced by culture! ; Public toilets/ community toilet scheme; Lack of public transport to Sheffield, Worksop, Mansfield etc. Community transport; More leisure facilities E.g. Bowling Alley; Improved CCTV in the centre needed; Some buildings such as the antiques centre needs to be smartened up, especially as it’s in a conservation area; Bring back firework display – this brought so many people to our town – bring it back!! ; More bins; Soft play facilities for young children; Skateboard park, Town Square development, OBTC, when are these to be completed? ; Oxcroft House redeveloped for social housing; Proper public toilets; The cracked, slippery, unfit for purpose paving; The road in front of Farm foods badly needs re-surfacing; No leisure facilities; A town centre manager or staff of town council to really engage with local people about what is required; More trees; Priorities people/ pedestrian routes are awful; Respect and value the heritage – loss of Sherwood Lodge green space for empty shops appalling; Aspiration! ; More green space with amenities; Walkways from the car park to go in the direction of Cavendish Walk. They are losing potential trade; parking: need 3 hour limit for free parking. Presently all day parking and car sharing makes it impossible for local people to park and shop locally. Traders and local people suffer because of this; Govt subsidies to DCC for bus transport make it difficult for some people from outlying villages to travel/ shop in the town. The subsidies need to be reinstated as a basic for “levelling up”! ; Surfacing/ bus stops/ kerb etc. to be reinstated with materials sympathetic to the town centre buildings & to reflect an area of conservation.; Suggestion: - OBTC/ BDC/DCC/ Bolsover Civic Society / Traders org. joint working party to work on these ideas before grant submission; Permanent bollards to prevent all the paved areas restored as part of a BDC bid 5 years ago being broken. Many of these are now beyond repair. Scheme almost needs to start again – maintenance has not happened! ; Transport linear – quicker connections to Chesterfield and Sheffield.

Appendix 3:

Consultation responses: Ideas to Improve?



Cinema, Craft centre with activities, play centre, more than pubs, swimming pool, cinema, bowling alley, 6th form for Bolsover School, car parking solution, charging for car parks for long stay, Convert Blue Bell public house into a tourist pub, cinema, swimming pool, information boards about Bolsover history, recycling bins, wider advertising of markets, toilets, community food hub, Leisure centre, swimming pool, gym, green area, café, pop-up shops, food hall, sort pavements, pot holes, toilets, pop-up police shops, road markings near The Bull, public event for activity providers to tell people what they do, tourist routes with maps, local artwork on display, schools to make street art, pop-up shops in empty units, more fiver fest events, more billboards advertising local events, green spaces, public art, sculpture place, train station, White Swan developments needs finishing, more police, look beyond Bolsover, don't write things off before they start, be adventurous, ambitious, artist studios, encourage artists to work in Bolsover,

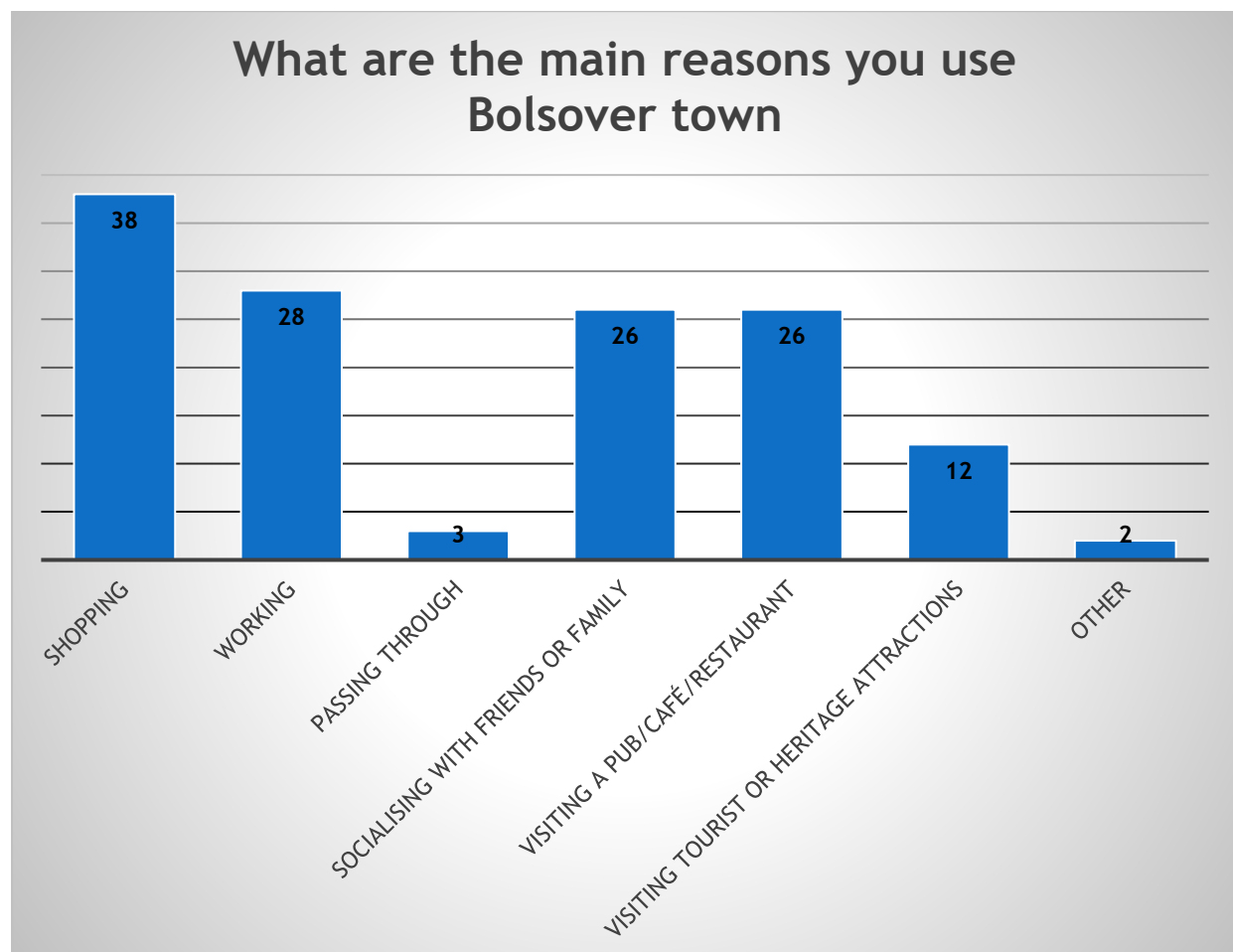
Connect with English Heritage, culture pass, bus to other local destinations, more police, leisure spaces, cinema swimming pool, spaces for teenagers – look at Matlock, location for teenagers to meet safely, skate park, non-alcohol venues, arts festival, cinema, social gathering, business incubation spaces for young people, use empty shops, toilets, toilets, toilets, toilets, toilets, connect buses with trains, more buses, cycle routes, pedestrian routes, permanent flags between buildings, police presence, more parking especially for events, re-lay all the paving, kids play, climbing wall soft play, tourist/heritage centre using one of the vacant sites, cinema, Wirksworth, raising pillar traffic control in centre, Belper independent cinema, Raise ambitions of young people make them feel valued and that they have a future here, Bolsover to Bolsover is not enough, look after the town centre, clean up rubbish make it somewhere you want to go, some kind of commemoration of the mining heritage, show kids how to cook cheaply, police station, more police on the beat, outdoor gym to help the Bolsover obesity crisis, improved landscaping like you get in French villages, Improved CCTV, Community food hub, grants for improvements for buildings used for tourism, toilets, Coalite ground needs something for local football teams toilets changing rooms, picnic area, soft play like Staveley with climbing wall, leisure facilities, properly run gyms with collaboration with NHS, splash pool in the park, new police station, enhancing far top left hand corner of Hornscroft Park and where Matts Carpets is on Moor Lane, buses need to serve Station Road whole of a record time, better connection between Castle and town centre, connection between Castle and town centre has been lost, proper tourist route around town with improved pathways which are in disrepair at the moment, Entertainment and Leisure facilities, cinema theatre, BMX Truck, toilets, collaboration between health, social care and education, continue with and expanding Bolsover in Bloom, information boards need cleaning or replacing Back Hill needs looking at, stop traffic coming down Cotton Street for safety reasons, stop traffic coming down Cotton Street for safety reasons, expand artisan markets and market widely, re-route No 1 bus up Sandhill down Lawson Road, police station, proper youth club, single use toilets, police base, stop traffic on Cotton Street, more restaurants, more supermarkets, bus service from Bolsover through Bentinck, Stanfree, Shuttlewood and through to Clown, redevelop older buildings, Castle Street pedestrianised, market, outside seating for restaurants and cafes

Appendix 4:

Residents and retailer survey results

A survey was produced for Bolsover residents and retailers to gather their views and thoughts about the town centre. In total 48 surveys were completed, 24 by local residents at the consultation event held on 11 July and 24 via 1-2-1 interviews with town centre retailers. The retailers were asked two additional questions, the details of which are included in graphs 8 and 9.

GRAPH 1

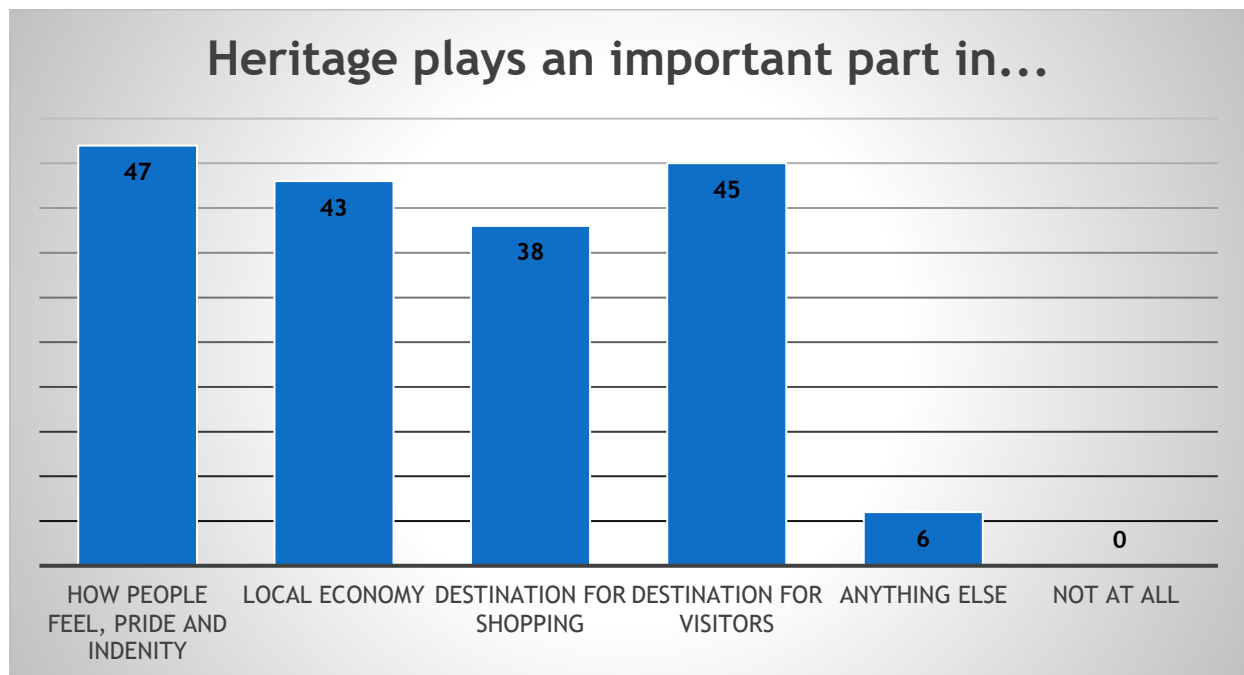


38 participants (79%) stated that the main reason for using the town centre was for shopping, 28, (58%) work in the town centre with 26, (54%) spending time socialising and visiting pubs, cafes and restaurants. It is understandable that only 25% visit tourist and heritage attractions as they either live or work in the town centre.

Other: 4%

- School
- Bolsover Drama Group

GRAPH 2

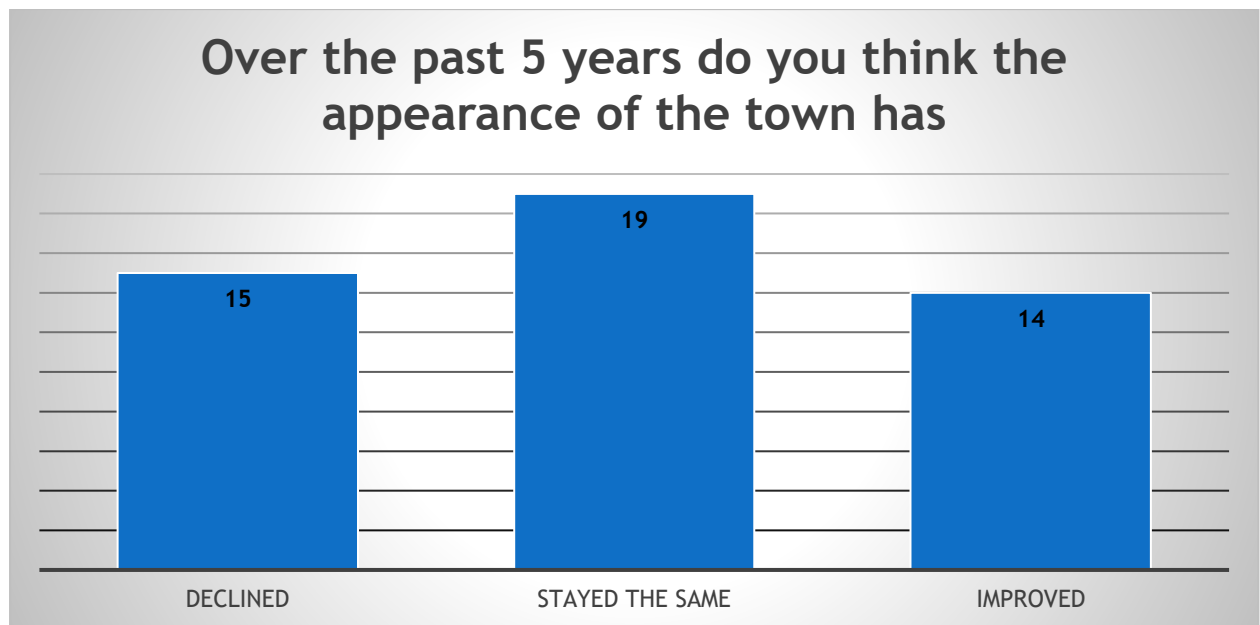


When asked what they thought Heritage played an important part in within their town centre, 98% of participants thought that it was important to how people feel, their pride and identity. 95% agreed that it was important as a destination for visitors, 90% important to the local economy and 79% thought it played an important part in a destination for shopping.

Anything else: 12.5%

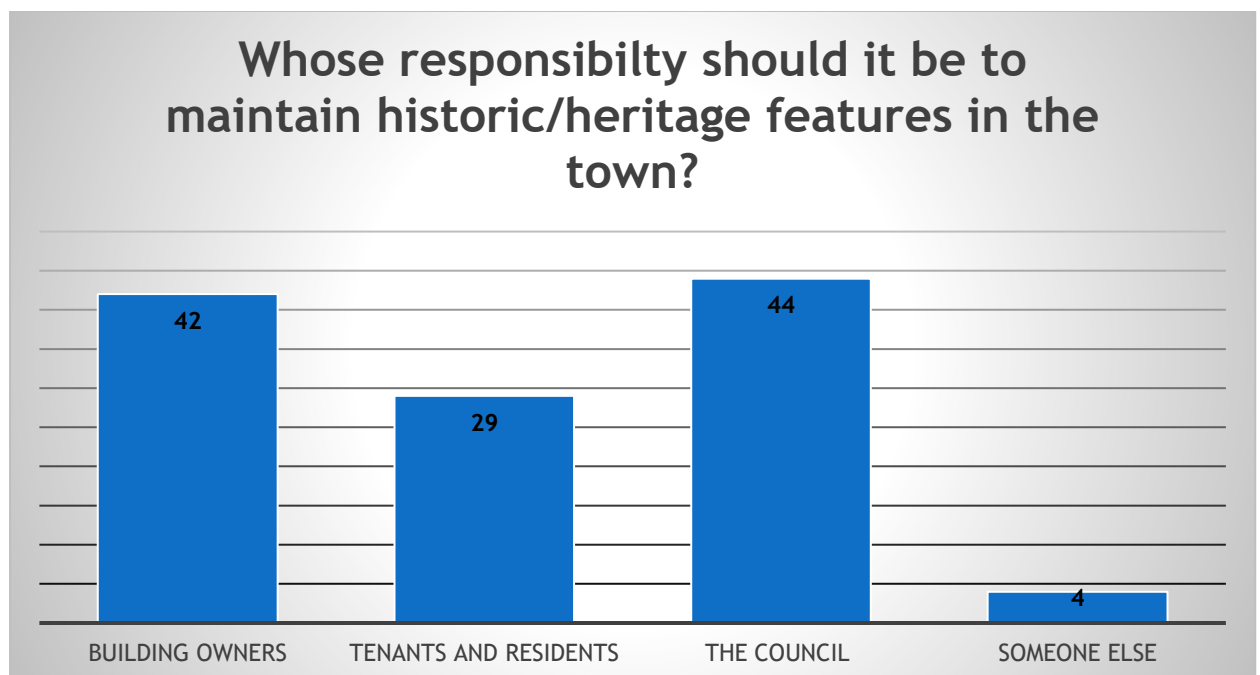
- It all needs improving
- Providing a focus for the centre
- Heritage is vital but we must look at social issues
- Total neglect
- Good toilets with disabled access
- Helps with civic pride in the town

GRAPH 3



The responses to the question above were split quite evenly. 40% thought that the appearance of the town had stayed the same, 31% thought it had declined with 29% thinking it had improved over the past 5 years.

GRAPH 4

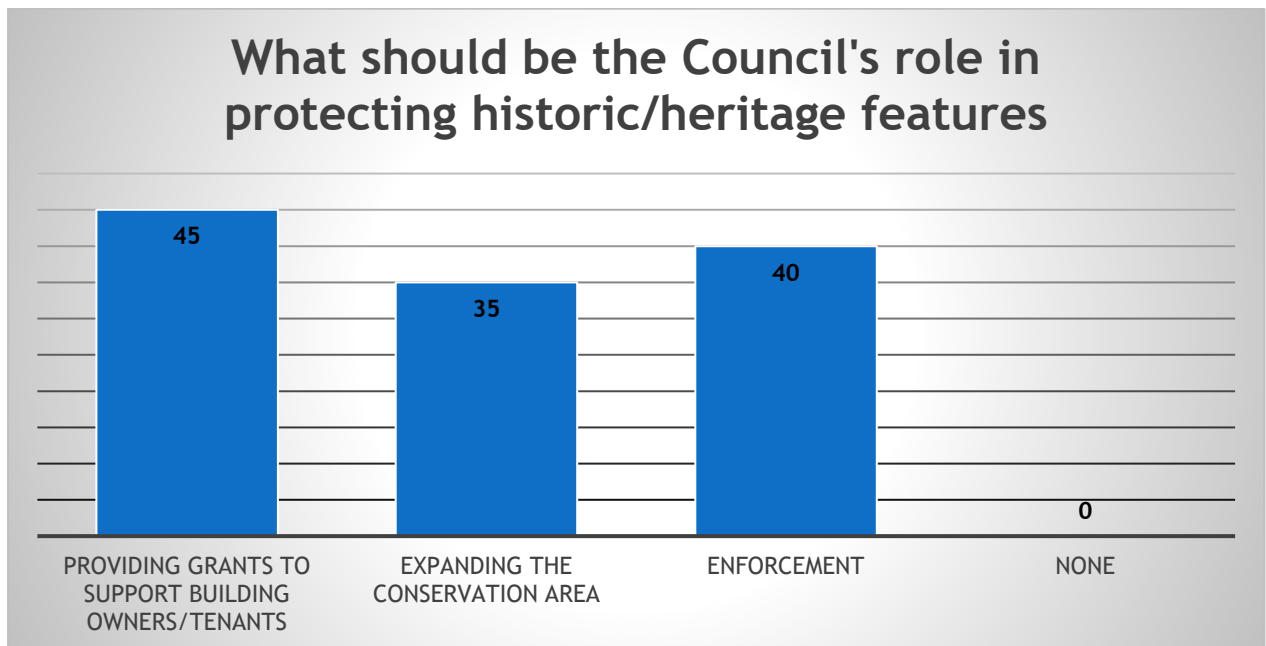


91% thought that it was up to the Council to maintain the historic/heritage features in the town, with 87.5% also putting emphasis on the building owners. 60% thought that tenants and residents also had a responsibility for the maintenance.

Someone else: 8%

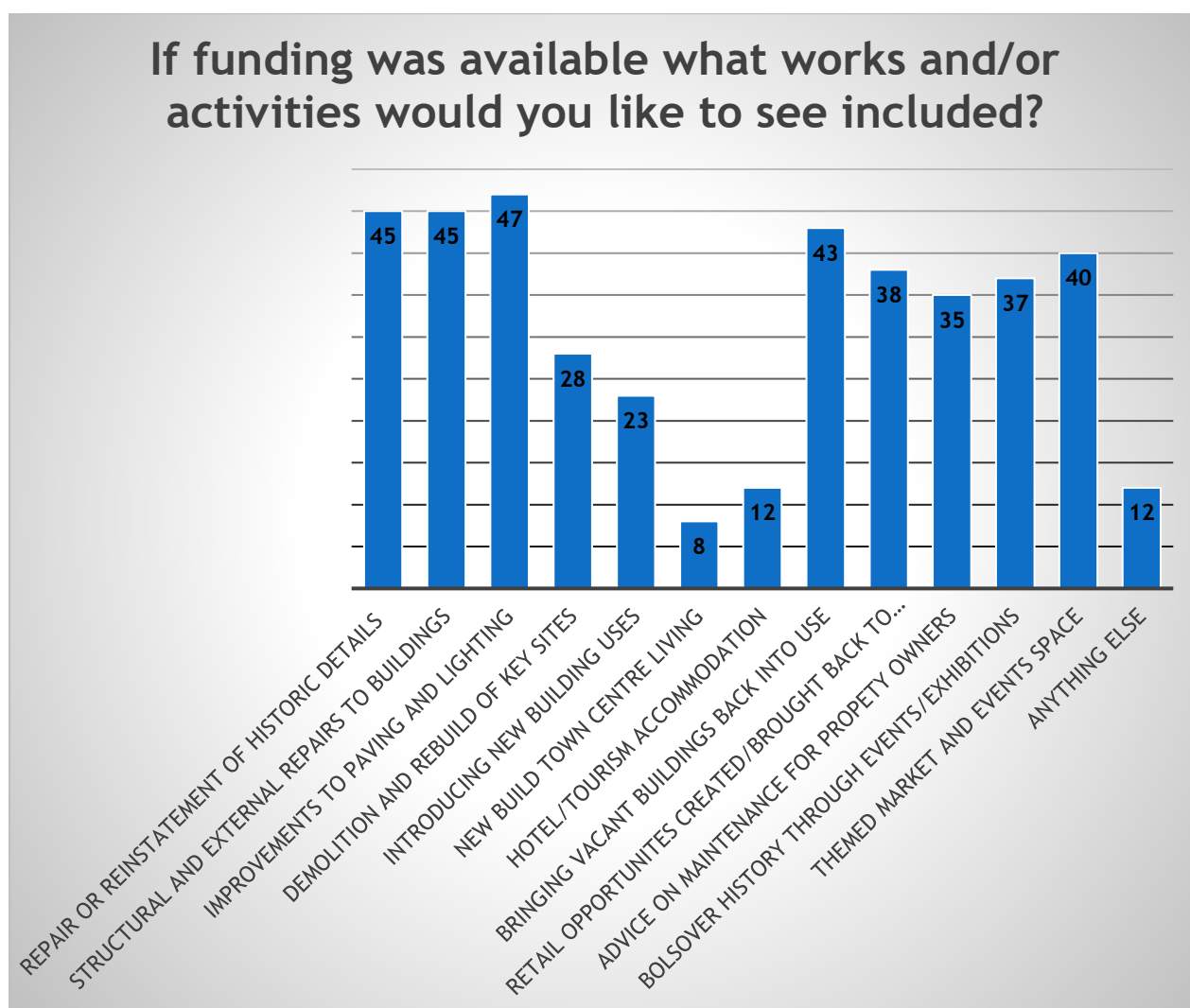
- English Heritage/Historic England x 3
- Bolsover Civic Society

GRAPH 5



94% of participants thought that the Council should be providing grants and support to building owners/tenants in order for them to protect historic/heritage features. However, 83% also thought that enforcement was the answer with 73% suggesting expanding the conservation area to protect them.

GRAPH 6

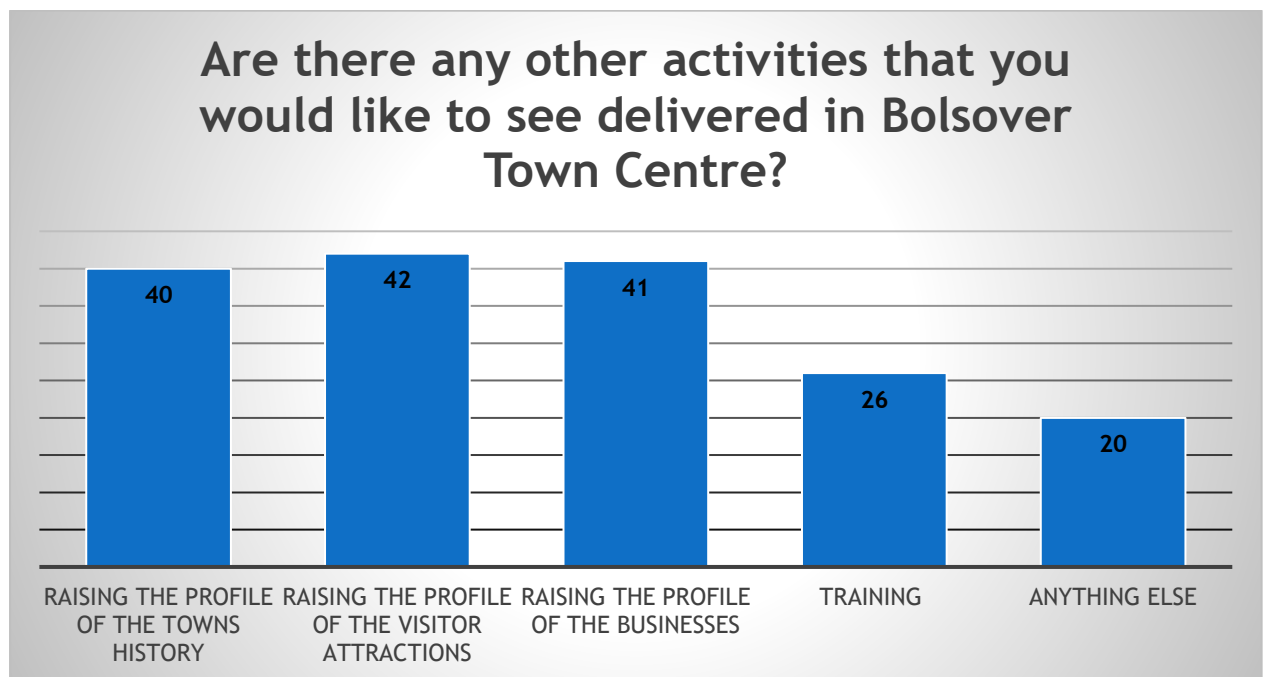


98% would like to see improvements paving and lighting. A high proportion of respondents want to see improvements/repairs to buildings, vacant buildings brought back into use and a themed market and events space. The least important was hotel/tourism accommodation, (25%) and new build town centre living, (16%).

Anything else: 25%

- Motor Cycle Parking
- More events
- Marketing through a website (retailers)
- Arts/activity building including a cinema, studios and theatre
- Mining museum
- Public toilets
- Event space, outdoor plays, musicals, art festivals
- A venue big enough for social occasions
- Indoor car boot
- Firework display and fun fair
- Community hub for use by young children's groups, advice centre
- Minimum 4G across the district and superfast broadband

GRAPH 7

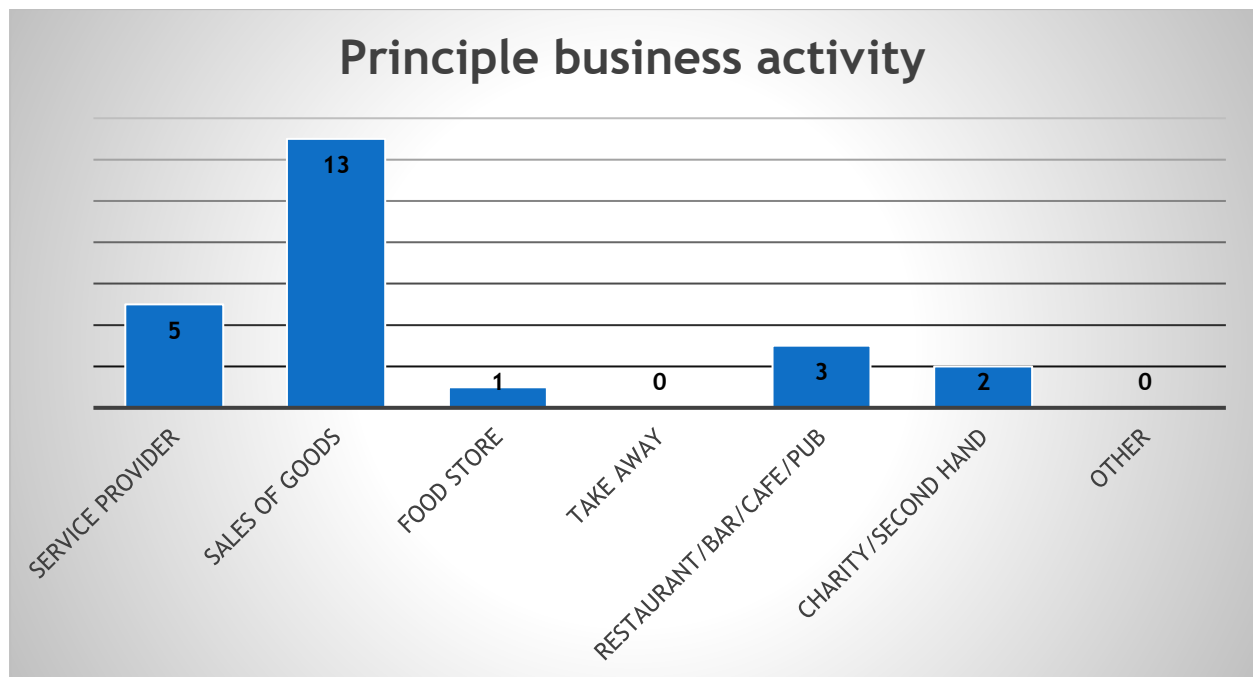


87.5% of participants would like to see the profile of visitor attractions raised with 85% wanting the profile of local businesses raising and 83% wanting the profile of the towns history raising. 54% would like to see training, this was mainly requested by the retailers.

Anything else: 41%

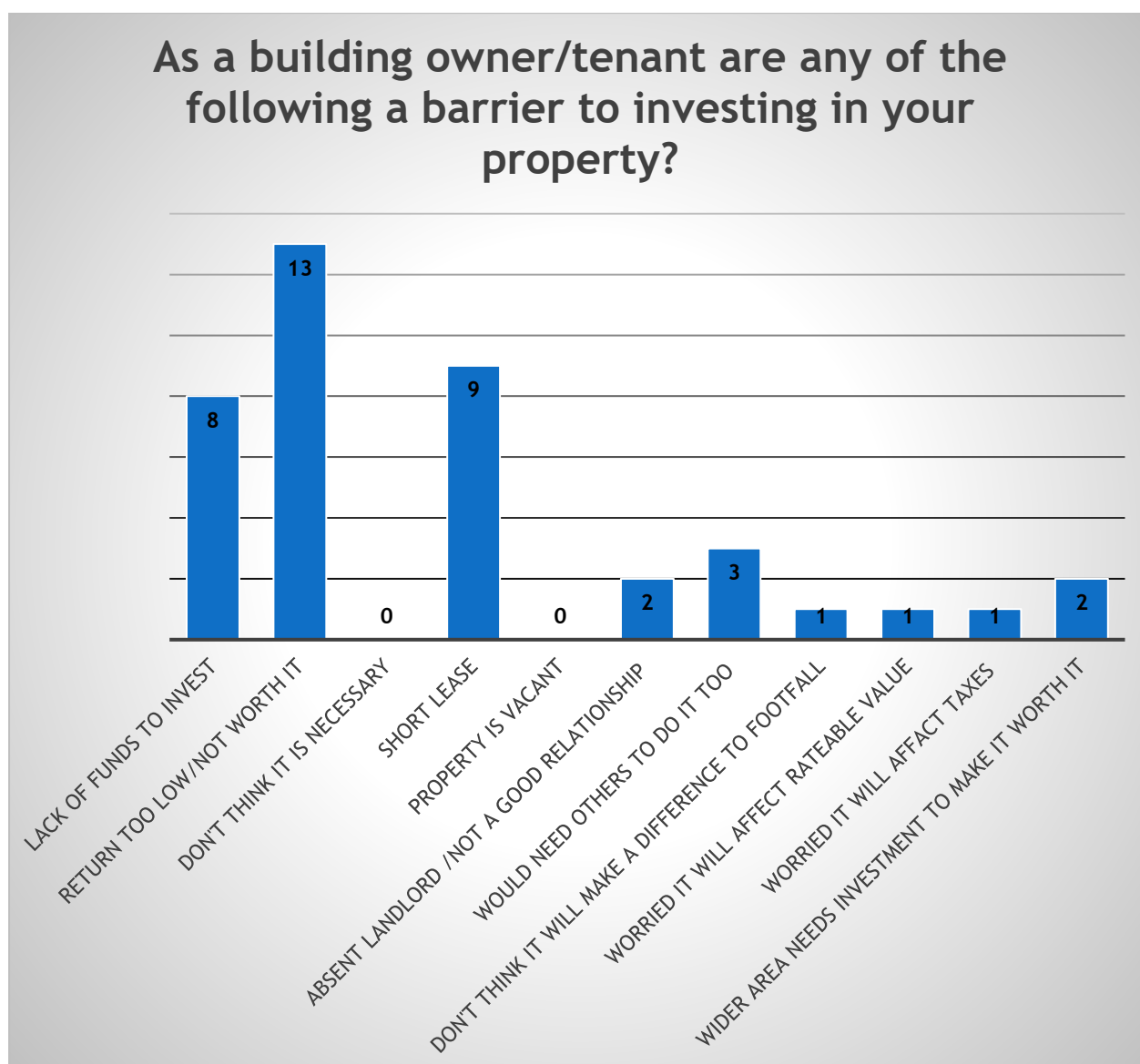
- Business Support x 2
- Sales and marketing x 7
- Website development x 3
- Trading on-line
- Cinema
- Swimming pool/health and fitness x 2
- Businesses having family days
- Hub for young people
- Encourage more outdoor eating, town square as a picnic area for visitors
- Activities for 2-12 year olds, soft play, climbing wall

GRAPH 8



Of the 24 retailers who participated in the survey, sales of goods was the main activity (54%), 21% were service providers, 13% a restaurant/café/pub, with 8% charity/second hand shop and 4% food store. None of the participants ran a take-away which is possibly due to the fact that the survey was undertaken in the day time when most take-away premises are closed.

GRAPH 9



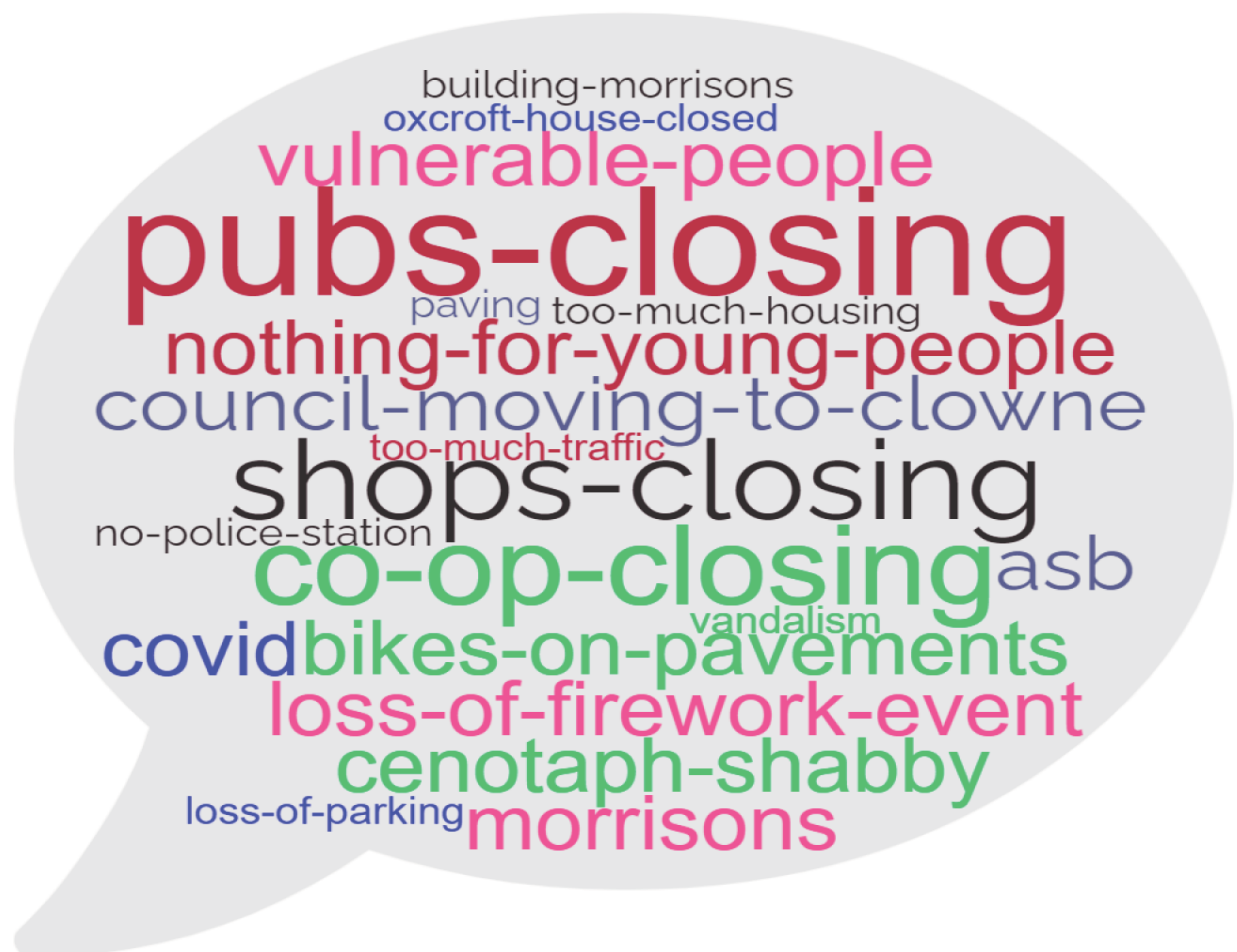
When asked about barriers to investing 54% of participants thought that the return would be too low or it wasn't worth it. 37.5% said only having a short lease put them off investing with 33% expressing a lack of funds to invest. No-one surveyed thought that investment wasn't necessary.

Participants were asked to list three words to best describe Bolsover Town Centre:



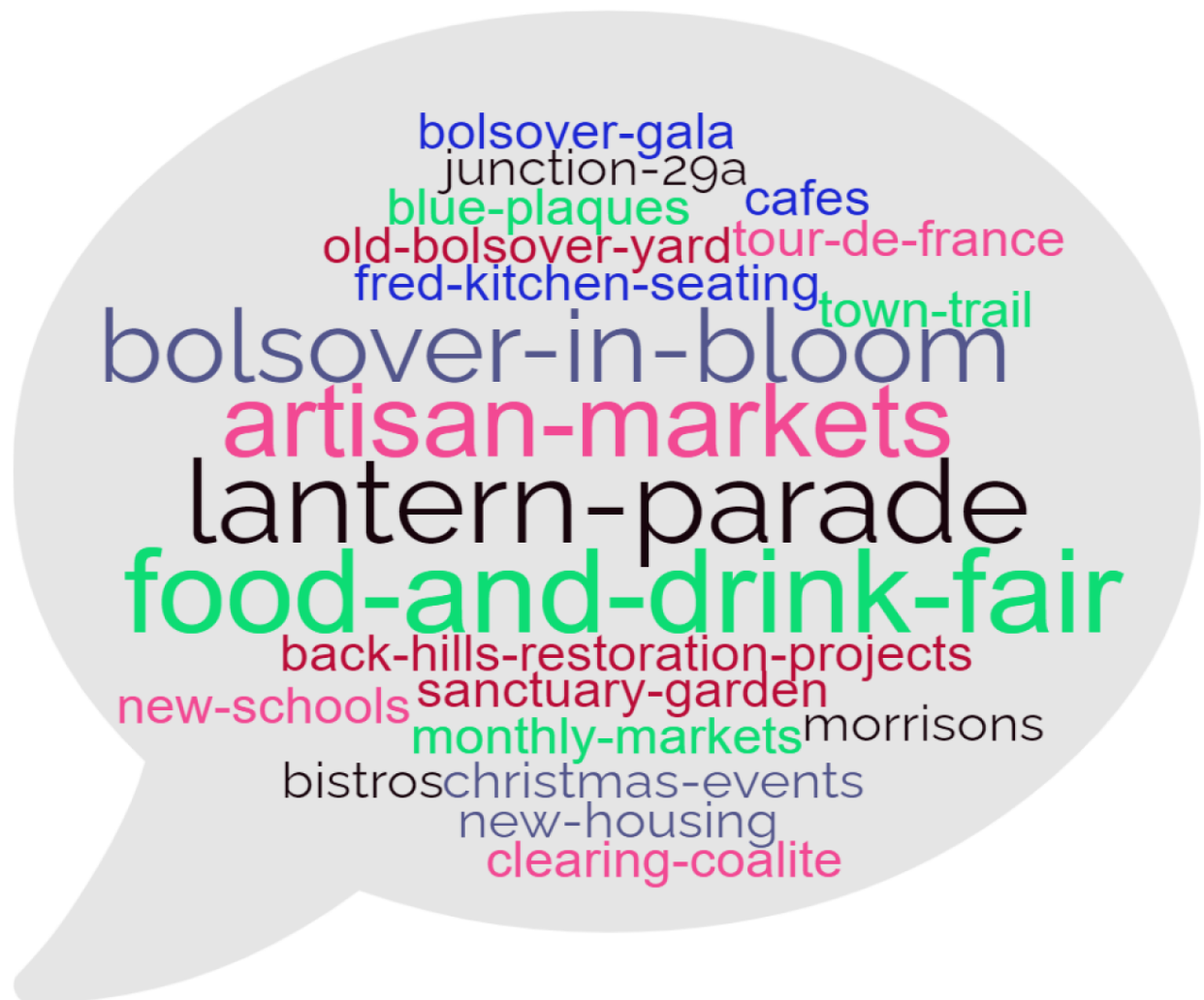
The word cloud above shows that the majority of words used to describe the town are positive. The town has potential, there is a sense of community, it is friendly, pretty, improving and historic. Some of the less positive words used include unloved, disjointed and tired.

Participants were asked to list key events in the last 10 years which they thought has impacted on Bolsover Town Centre?
Negative comments included:



This word cloud shows that people thought the most negative events which have taken place over the past 10 years has been the closure of shops (including the Co-op) closure of pubs and the opening of the new Morrisons store.

Positive comments included:



Participants thought that the most positive key events that have taken place over the past 10 years have been the Lantern Parade, Artisan Markets, Bolsover in Bloom and the Food and Drink Fair.

Participants were asked if there was anything that would encourage them to use Bolsover Town Centre more frequently:



In order to visit the town centre more frequently, things that participants most mentioned included public toilets, more parking, more independent shops and markets, a leisure facility, better infrastructure, more restaurants and a police presence.

Finally, participants were asked what it would mean to them if investment was made in Bolsover:



Participants said that they would feel valued if investment was made in the town centre. They believed that footfall would increase and that tourists would be more likely to remain in the town longer. Other views were that investment would be good for businesses, the town would be more attractive to tourists, cleaner and be a better place to work and live.