IPSWICH VISION

THE CONNECTED TOWN CONSULTATION

BUSINESS SURVEY

27TH SEPTEMBER 2021

Dave Muller and Luke Winter
Ipswich Central and All About Ipswich

Contents

1. CONTEXT

This survey targeted businesses primarily but not entirely in the Business Improvement District. The data was either collected by the Rangers or through email and was completed either by the owner or a senior manager. Businesses selected their sector from the list of four which were provided.

The main question was derived from the on-line/street survey and asked for twelve ‘aspects’ better stated as ‘facilities’ to be graded as very important, important, or not important. Businesses were then asked to rank the top three.

The actual question asked was...

The aim of this short survey is to ask you, as a representative of a business, what would encourage more people to live in or to make better use of the town centre.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

From a survey of 183 businesses, the quantitative data which can be considered robust highlighted the importance of:

- Better Retail
- Digital connectivity
- Entertainment
- Hospitality

as key factors in a Connected Town. In addition, the qualitative findings reinforced the need for:

- Green Amenities

which included pedestrianisation and outdoor facilities.

A strong theme emerging from the qualitative data was the need to address:

- Anti -Social Behaviour and Crime.

There was a considerable strength of feeling around this topic along with the need to undertake a continuous positive

- Digital Promotion Campaign.

Finally, there were several comments on:

- Car Parking Costs
- Business Rates
- Empty Units

There are seven clear themes emerging from a business perspective which the Vision Board can prioritise and consider in delivering the connected Town. These findings now need to be set alongside the consumer perspective.

3. FINDINGS

2.1 Respondents

Figure 1 shows the total number of respondents by sector. Appendix 1 shows the responses to each aspect graded by importance.

Business Sector

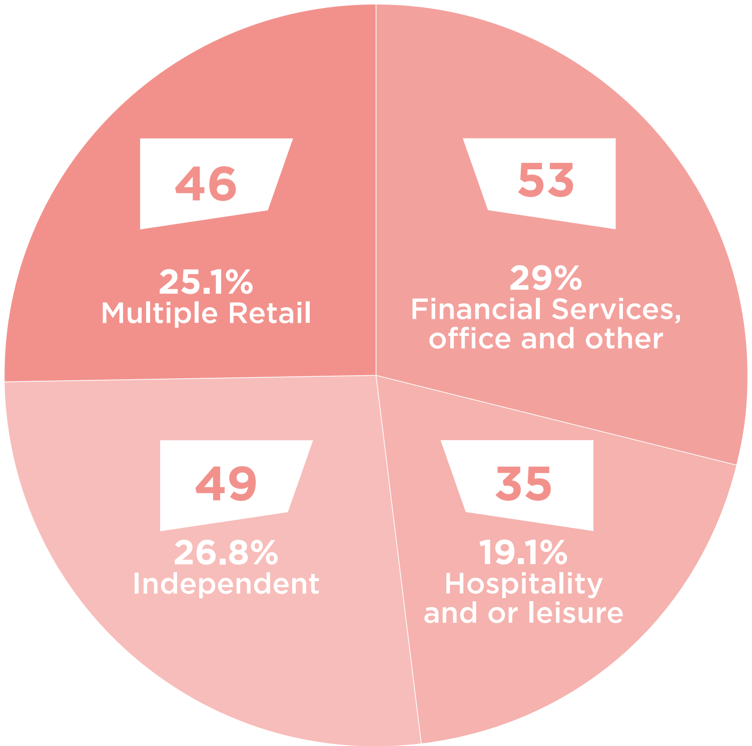

Figure 1: Sectors

2.2 Aspects Graded as Very Important and Less Important

Taking 65% of respondents as a cut-off point in grading for 'Very Important' four facilities stand out:

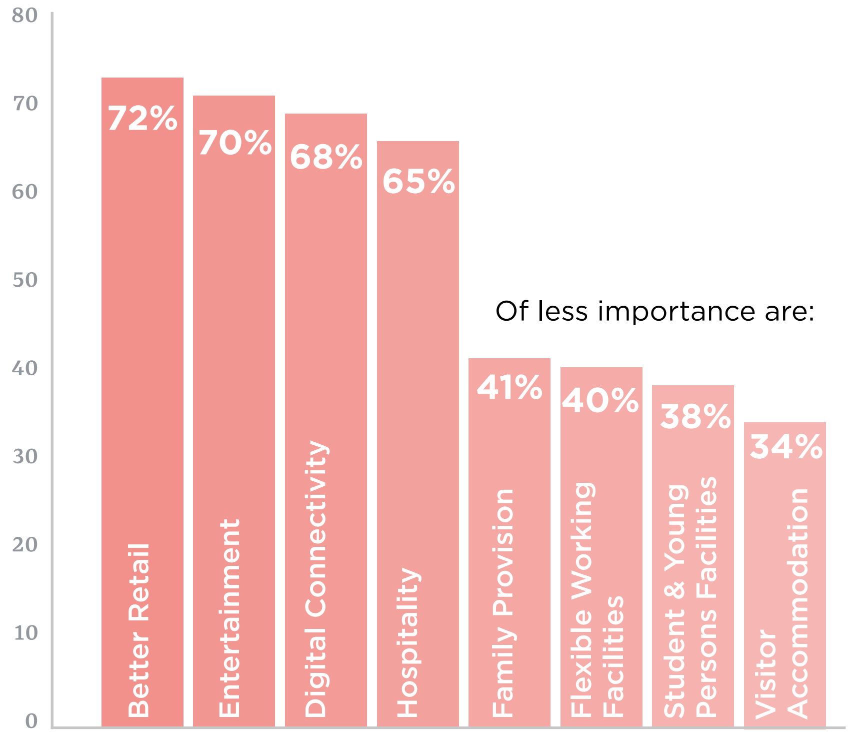

Figure 2: Aspects Graded as Very Important of Less Important

Unsurprisingly given the sample 'Better Retail', 'Entertainment' along with 'Hospitality'are rated very important as is 'Digital Connectivity'.

2.3 Aspects Graded As Very Important and Important Combined

Appendix 2 shows the raw data. All score reasonably high with 83% being the lowest. However, taking 90% cut off six facilities emerge:

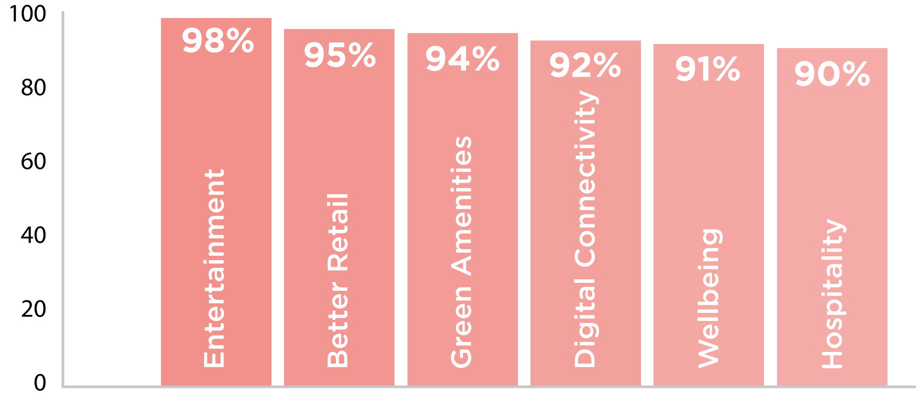

Figure 3: Very Important and Important Combined

In addition to those rated highest, for being Very Important 'Green Amenities' emerges as does 'Wellbeing'. The two might be seen as linked.

2.4 Business Sector Analysis by those Aspects Rated Very important

The raw data is included as Appendix 3. Although the samples are relatively small, the findings do represent significant sectors within the town.

2.4.1 Financial Services, Office and Other

Taking 70% as the cut-off the following shows the response of 53 Businesses.

A - Digital connectivity	87%	46/53
E - Hospitality	75%	40/53
D - Better Retail	70%	37/53
G - Entertainment	70%	37/53

Digital Connectivity is clearly critical for this sector although the findings are very similar to those of the full sample.

2.4.2 Hospitality and Leisure

Out of the 35 there are 20 from hospitality and 15 from entertainment. The top two clearly reflect this:

E Hospitality	71%	25/35
G - Entertainment	66%	23/35

However closely clustered together are:

H - Green Amenities	57%	20/35
A - Digital Connectivity	54%	19/35
D - Better Retail	51%	18/35
I - Improved Transport Facilities	51%	18/35
L - Wellbeing	51%	18/35

2.4.3 Independent

This is a sample of 49 with very few hospitality and leisure. Taking a cut off as over 60% the findings are:

G - Entertainment	71%	35/49
D - Better Retail	69%	34/49
A - Digital Connectivity	63%	31/49
E - Hospitality	63%	31/49

These findings reflect an emerging pattern

2.4.4 Multiple Retail

From this sample of 46 and taking a cut off as over 60% three emerge strongly:

D - Better Retail	93%	29/46
E - Entertainment	72%	29/46
A - Digital	63%	29/46

It is worth noting that this sector identified health facilities which stands out from the other responses:

K - Healthy living	59%	27/46

Otherwise, as expected, retail stands out.

4. QUALITATIVE DATA

Each Business representative was invited to comment. These tended to be short statements although more than one issue was raised by several participants. This data is very high level and just a snapshot of issues and opportunities. However, it could be used to form the basis for future surveys and focus groups.

3.1 Analysis

This was undertaken simply by counting the number of times an issue was mentioned and grouping them into categories. The data was not robust enough to warrant further content analysis or measures of reliability. An indicative listing is shown in Appendix 4.

As Better Retail, Entertainment, Digital and Hospitality emerged strongly from the quantitative data illustrative quotes will be used to draw out issues not highlighted or included.

These are Green Amenities (often mentioned in the main survey), Parking Costs, Empty Units, Anti-Social Behaviour, Business Rates and Digital Promotion and Marketing (linked to Digital Connectivity).

3.2 Green Amenities, Pedestrianisation, Outdoor Facilities

Although not an absolute priority for Businesses, the need to make the town more attractive through outside amenities is clearly important.

As noted:

'There is not a great deal of green life in the town e.g flowers, plants. The Town needs to look pretty and enticing for people to come' *(Multiple Retail)*

and there is need for

'More pedestrianised areas and al-fresco dining to attract more people' *(Hospitality and Leisure)*

3.3 Parking Costs

This is clearly seen as an issue despite recent incentives to encourage greater footfall. As pointed out there is a perceived need for

'Cheaper parking for employees commuting'
(Financial Services, Office)

3.4 Empty Units

This emerged as a major issue with a need to
'Fill the empty units with more retail, shops and bars'
(Hospitality/Leisure)

and/or

'Allow change of use for most of the empty properties from retail to living accommodation' *(Independent)*

3.5 Anti-Social Behaviours

This was commented on very forcibly by a wide range of businesses.

As noted, there is a need to

'Disrupt the anti-social behaviour in the Town as this is preventing people coming... they don't feel safe enough to come into town' *(Multiple Retail)*

and for

'More visible police checks. Security and anti-social behaviour are a concern. Street Rangers do a great job but a sizeable area to cover' *(Hospitality and Leisure*)

This is clearly a major issue.

3.6 Business Rates

This may well be a recurring theme as noted by a number of businesses.

'Lower Business Rates' *(Financial Services, office and other)*

and

'Business Rates need to be reduced' *(Multiple Retail)*

There were no specific quotes on how Business Rates were impacting or the implication of lower rates.

3.7 Digital Promotion and Marketing

There was a strong view that more could be done to market the town and to

'promote the positive things in Ipswich as lots of negativity from locals' *(Independent)*

with maybe

'a video of local businesses telling their story as to what they think is great about Ipswich' *(Hospitality/ Leisure)*

5. BUSINESS GROUPS

As part of the consultation discussions took place with three Business Groups.

4.1 We are Ipswich

- A wide-ranging discussion took place with three members. From an 'arts' perspective four themes emerged.
- The need to promote more widely the cultural offering and to expand the audience.
- The need for a major cultural attraction along with installed art, the latter being always accessible.
- The opportunities to build on and celebrate the heritage of the town.
- The opportunity to make Ipswich not only the cultural centre in the East of England but to be the 'Gateway to the Arts' for the area.
- Given the importance attached to 'Entertainment' in the quantitative survey these themes offer a steer for the Action Plan.

4.2 All About Ipswich (Destination Management Organisation)

The draft report was discussed at a Board meeting. The main issue raised was the need to tackle and to reduce crime. This reinforces the qualitative data from businesses.

4.3 Locus Board (Ipswich Central)

The draft report was discussed at a Board meeting. Informal discussion following the meeting reinforced the importance of entertainment linked to 'greening' and outdoor facilities.

APPENDIX 1

Responses by 'Aspect' and Importance

ASPECTS	Very Important		Important		Not Important		Total
	No	%	No	%	No	%	
(a) Digital Connectivity (e.g. wi-fi, 5G, gigabit broadband etc)	125	68.3	44	24.0	14	7.7	183
[b) Visitor accommodation (e.g. from B&Bs to a 5-star hotel etc)]	63	34.4	89	48.6	31	16.9	183
[c) Student and young persons' facilities (e.g. halls of residence, youth centres, youth hostels etc)]	69	37.7	86	47.0	28	15.3	183
[d) Better retail (e.g. centralised click & collect, food hall etc)]	132	72.1	41	23.0	9	4.9	183
[e) Hospitality (e.g. more and different bars, restaurants, and cafes)]	118	64.5	47	25.7	18	9.8	183
(f) Flexible working facilities (including creative studios)	73	39.9	79	43.2	31	16.9	183
(g) Entertainment (e.g. arts, theatre, music venue, public events, street entertainment etc)	128	69.9	52	28.4	3	1.6	183
(h) Green amenities (e.g. pedestrianisation, green spaces and gardens, allotments etc)	105	57.4	67	36.6	11	6.0	183
(i) Improved transport facilities (e.g. buses, taxis)	92	50.3	68	37.2	23	12.6	183
(j) Family provision (e.g. child play areas, nurseries, schools)	75	41.0	86	47.0	22	12.0	183
(k) Healthy living (e.g. health centre, clinic, doctors, dentists etc)	85	46.4	74	40.4	24	13.1	183
(l) Wellbeing (e.g. outdoor sports areas/gyms, walking/cycling routes etc)	95	51.9	72	39.3	16	8.7	183

APPENDIX 2

Responses by ‘Aspect’ Combining Very Important and Important

ASPECTS	Very Important and Important	
	No.	%
(a) Digital Connectivity (e.g. wi-fi, 5G, gigabit broadband etc)	169	92
[b) Visitor accommodation (e.g. from B&Bs to a 5-star hotel etc)]	152	83
[c) Student and young persons’ facilities (e.g. halls of residence, youth centres, youth hostels etc)]	155	85
[d) Better retail (e.g. centralised click & collect, food hall etc)]	174	94
[e) Hospitality (e.g. more and different bars, restaurants, and cafes)]	165	90
[f) Flexible working facilities (including creative studios)	152	83
(g) Entertainment (e.g. arts, theatre, music venue, public events, street entertainment etc)	180	98
(h) Green amenities (e.g. pedestrianisation, green spaces and gardens, allotments etc)	172	94
(i) Improved transport facilities (e.g. buses, taxis)	160	87
(j) Family provision (e.g. child play areas, nurseries, schools)	161	88
(k) Healthy living (e.g. health centre, clinic, doctors, dentists etc)	159	87
(l) Wellbeing (e.g. outdoor sports areas/gyms, walking/cycling routes etc)	167	91

APPENDIX 3

Importance by Business Sector - Total number of respondents was 183.

ASPECTS	Financial Services, Office & Other							Hospitality and or Leisure						
	Very Important		Important		Not Important			Very Important		Important		Not Important		
	No.	% of total respondents	No.	% of total respondents	No.	% of total respondents	Total	No.	% of total respondents	No.	% of total respondents	No.	% of total respondents	Total
(a) Digital Connectivity (e.g. wi-fi, 5G, gigabit broadband etc)	46	25.1	6	3.3	1	0.5	53	19	10.4	13	7.1	3	1.6	35
[b) Visitor accommodation (e.g. from B&Bs to a 5-star hotel etc)]	14	7.7	32	17.5	7	3.8	53	15	8.2	14	7.7	6	3.3	35
[c) Student and young persons' facilities (e.g. halls of residence, youth centres, youth hostels etc)]	12	6.6	33	18.0	8	4.4	53	15	8.2	16	8.7	4	2.2	35
[d) Better retail (e.g. centralised click & collect, food hall etc)]	37	20.2	12	6.6	4	2.2	53	18	9.8	14	7.7	3	1.6	35
[e) **Ho**spitality (e.g. more and different bars, restaurants, and cafes)]	40	21.9	11	6.0	2	1.1	53	25	13.7	5	2.7	5	2.7	35
(f) Flexible working facilities (including creative studios)	18	9.8	25	13.7	10	5.5	53	12	6.6	19	10.4	4	2.2	35
(g) Entertainment (e.g. arts, theatre, music venue, public events, street entertainment etc)	37	20.2	16	8.7	0	0.0	53	23	12.6	12	6.6	0	0.0	35
(h) Green amenities (e.g. pedestrianisation, green spaces and gardens, allotments etc)	31	16.9	20	10.9	2	1.1	53	20	10.9	13	7.1	2	1.1	35
(i) Improved transport facilities (e.g. buses, taxis)	25	13.7	24	13.1	4	2.2	53	18	9.8	9	4.9	8	4.4	35
(j) Family provision (e.g. child play areas, nurseries, schools)	15	8.2	34	18.6	4	2.2	53	14	7.7	15	8.2	6	3.3	35
(k) Healthy living (e.g. health centre, clinic, doctors, dentists etc)	21	11.5	25	13.7	7	3.8	53	15	8.2	16	8.7	4	2.2	35
(l) Wellbeing (e.g. outdoor sports areas/gyms, walking/cycling routes etc)	34	18.6	18	9.8	1	0.5	53	18	9.8	14	7.7	3	1.6	35

APPENDIX 3 (CONTINUED)

Importance by Business Sector - Total number of respondents was 183.

ASPECTS	Independent							Multiple Retail						
	Very Important		Important		Not Important			Very Important		Important		Not Important		
	No.	% of total respondents	No.	% of total respondents	No.	% of total respondents	Total	No.	% of total respondents	No.	% of total respondents	No.	% of total respondents	Total
(a) Digital Connectivity (e.g. wi-fi, 5G, gigabit broadband etc)	31	16.9	11	6.0	7	3.8	49	29	15.8	14	7.7	3	1.6	46
[b) Visitor accommodation (e.g. from B&Bs to a 5-star hotel etc)]	21	11.5	18	9.8	10	5.5	49	13	7.1	25	13.7	8	4.4	46
[c) Student and young persons' facilities (e.g. halls of residence, youth centres, youth hostels etc)]	18	9.8	20	10.9	11	6.0	49	24	13.1	17	9.3	5	2.7	46
[d) Better retail (e.g. centralised click & collect, food hall etc)]	34	18.6	13	7.1	2	1.1	49	43	23.5	3	1.6	0	0.0	46
[e) **Ho**spitality (e.g. more and different bars, restaurants, and cafes)]	31	16. 9	15	8.2	3	1.6	49	22	12.0	16	8.7	8	4.4	46
(f) Flexible working facilities (including creative studios)	25	13.7	18	9.8	6	3.3	49	18	9.8	17	9.3	11	6.0	46
(g) Entertainment (e.g. arts, theatre, music venue, public events, street entertainment etc)	35	19.1	13	7.1	1	0.5	49	33	18.0	11	6.0	2	1.1	46
(h) Green amenities (e.g. pedestrianisation, green spaces and gardens, allotments etc)	28	15.3	18	9.8	3	1.6	49	26	14.2	16	8.7	4	2.2	46
(i) Improved transport facilities (e.g. buses, taxis)	23	12.6	21	11.5	5	2.7	49	26	14.2	14	7.7	6	3.3	46
(j) Family provision (e.g. child play areas, nurseries, schools)	21	11.5	20	10.9	8	4.4	49	25	13.7	17	9.3	4	2.2	46
(k) Healthy living (e.g. health centre, clinic, doctors, dentists etc)	22	12.0	21	11.5	6	3.3	49	27	14.8	12	6.6	7	3.8	46
(l) Wellbeing (e.g. outdoor sports areas/gyms, walking/cycling routes etc)	22	12.0	11	12.0	5	2.7	49	21	11.5	18	9.8	7	3.8	46

APPENDIX 4

Listing of Issues Raised and Number of Times Mentioned

ISSUE	Number
Green amenities, pedestrianisation and outdoor facilities	33
Parking Costs	32
Empty Units	26
Retail (especially independent)	26
Anti-social behaviour	24
Events, Culture and Entertainment	18
Business Rates (reduce)	16
Promotion and Marketing (digital)	16
Transport (especially evening)	8
Youth Facilities	5
Connectivity to Waterfrontt	5
Flexible Workspaces	5
Residential Accommodation	4
Music Venue	2
Condensed High Street	2
Employment	1
Night-time economy	1
Education	1
Cycle Routes	1