

GATESHEAD TOWN CENTRE  
**changing**  
FOR GOOD



**Gateshead Town Centre Regeneration Framework - Stage 1  
Public consultation exercise - March 2004**

# Report

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## **1 How to use this report**

- For a brief overview of how the consultation was carried out, and what the main findings are, refer to sections 3 and 7.
- To see more detail on who responded, the results of the survey and the most frequent comments arising from the 'open consultation', refer to sections 4,5 and 6.
- If you wish to view the full range of comments within any particular category, these are stored in the form of an Excel chart and can be obtained by contacting the authors of this report at Gateshead Council: Bryn Roberts - 0191 433 3453 and Sarah O'Neill - 0191 433 2826
- The survey information is stored in database form; therefore detailed analysis by specified category (e.g. gender, geographical area) can be carried out by request (contact Sarah O'Neill, as above)

## **2 Introduction**

It is a time of great change for Central Gateshead. The Quays is the focus for high profile arts, leisure, residential and hotel developments. Significant new residential development is taking place at St. James', Windmill Hills, Ochre Yards and, slightly further afield, Staithes South Bank. Phase 1 of the Baltic Business 'Quarter', which should ultimately create 5000-7000 jobs, is about to commence.

The town centre 'core', however, has remained relatively untouched. Proposed new retail development, which is key to broader regeneration of the town centre, has not, to date, come to fruition. Gateshead Council has joined up with One North East, English Partnerships and the English Cities Fund to form the Gateshead Town Centre Regeneration Partnership in order to take an alternative, pro-active approach to regeneration of the town centre core and surrounding area. The Partnership has commissioned a Regeneration Framework and Implementation Strategy and as part of the process a major public consultation exercise on Stage 1 has been carried out. This report provides a summary and analysis of the main findings.

It should also be noted that an extensive consultation exercise relating to the town centre was carried out in January 2003 when focus groups met at the Trinity Centre, High Street, and the findings are contained in the report 'Gateshead - A New Future'. The current exercise re-enforces a number of the key issues, which emerged from the focus groups in 2003.

## **3 How were the public involved?**

The programme of public consultation on the Stage 1 report started in March 2004 with an item in the Council News. Advertising and press releases were used to explain the process and direct people to the various consultation opportunities. In the week commencing 15 March 2004 a booklet containing a summary of the aims and objectives of the Partnership and a survey form was delivered to all households in Gateshead and businesses in the Town Centre. A website was created which provided an online version of the consultation document to a wider audience, and presented the opportunity to complete the survey on-line.

The closing date for the survey was 23 April 2004. In total 1125 responses were gained from a mailshot of 120,000 and from the website. Whilst this is less than a 1% return, it is considered that the sample size is large enough to give a reliable indication of public opinion. Findings are illustrated, with brief explanation, in 'sections 4 and 5'.

A staffed exhibition was sited in Trinity Square, Gateshead, from 15-19 March 2004. Un-staffed exhibitions were set up at the Central Library, Gateshead College and the Civic Centre, with booklets being distributed to other public buildings in the Borough. Freepost return postcards were also distributed, giving people the opportunity to record their views and post them back.

## Gateshead Town Centre – Changing for Good

Residents and businesses had the opportunity, through the above channels, to express their own views about the most important issues to be addressed and priorities for regeneration of the town centre. There were 56 recorded responses resulting from the above - the most frequent comments are illustrated below in 'section 6 – 'Open' Consultation.

The findings from the survey and the open consultation have been analysed together. This enables us to see which of the Partnership's broad objectives are the most important to people, where the public view is broadly in line with that of the Partnership, and where the public have priorities and objectives which differ from those of the Partnership. Please see the section 7 on page 28.

The feedback from the public consultation is part of a continuing process of developing the Framework and Implementation Strategy over the coming months.

## 4 Gateshead Town Centre Regeneration Survey – About You

Basic demographics were collected so that we get a view of the different groups of people responding to the survey form. In the following, the term 'Base' means the number of people who responded to the question.

Q1) Base = 1065

	Count	Percentage
Male	418	39.2
Female	647	60.8

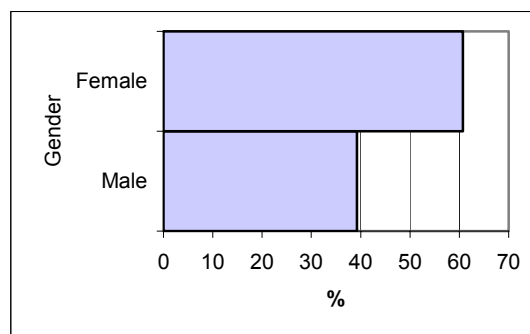


Figure 4.1

Q2) How old are you? Base = 1098

	Count	Percentage
Under 18	6	0.55
18-24	50	4.55
25-34	153	13.93
35-44	202	18.40
45-54	228	20.77
55-64	231	21.04
65-74	174	15.85
75-84	52	4.74
85+	2	0.18

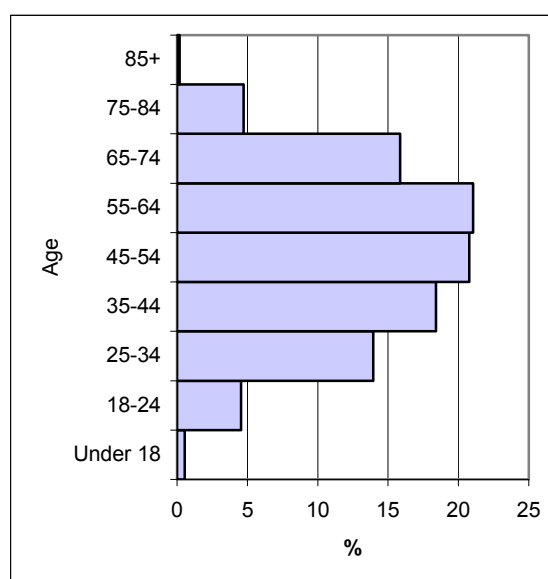


Figure 4.2

## Gateshead Town Centre – Changing for Good

Q3) What area of Gateshead do you live in? Base = 1034

Respondents were asked where their living area was. This enables us to see how the respondents are spread across the area and will enable us to identify any groups that are missing and should be consulted with. 50.1% of the respondents live within a 2 miles of Gateshead town centre, 48.7% live within other areas of Gateshead Borough and 1.2% live outside of the borough.

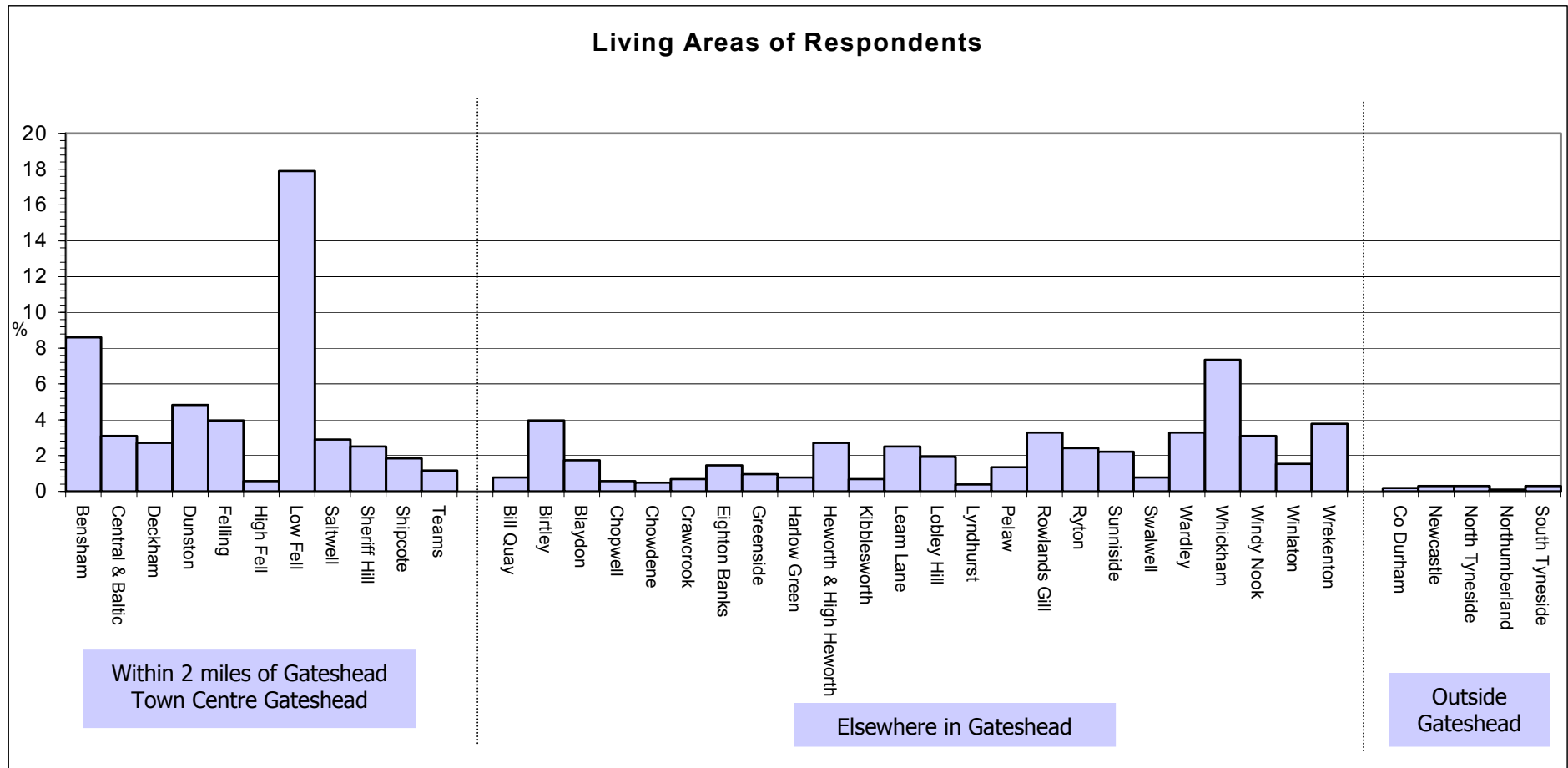


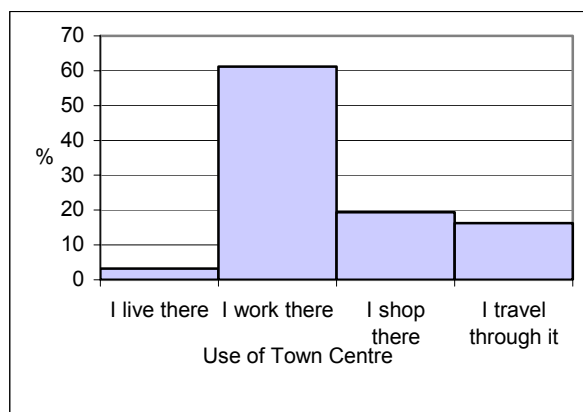
Figure 4.3

## Gateshead Town Centre – Changing for Good

### Q4) Currently use of the town centre?

Base = 875 Total Responses = 1079

	Count	Percentage
I live there	34	3.2
I work there	660	61.2
I shop there	209	19.4
I travel through it	176	16.3



**Figure 4.4**

Number of reasons recorded for using the town centre	Count	Percentage
No use recorded	250	22.2
One use recorded	698	62.0
Two uses Recorded	151	13.4
Three uses recorded	25	2.2
Four uses recorded	1	0.1
Total Responses	1125	

This table reports the number of different uses respondents reported. 62% of respondents used the town centre for one use only, whether this be to live, work or shop there or travel through it. 13% used the town centre for two different reasons.

It is important that the demographics are looked at so that gaps can be identified and particular groups can be targeted in future consultation if needed. This will help to ensure that the consultation process is inclusive and effective.

There was a difference in responses by gender with 60% of responses from females and only 40% from males. It is apparent that the views of those aged under 25 or 75 and over may be missing. There were considerably fewer responses from these two groups. As the numbers are quite small it is difficult to comment on living areas of respondents. However, there is a big difference in current use of the town centre with over 60% of respondents working there currently. In comparison only 19% shop there and 3% live in the town centre. It appears that there is more interest in the town centre from people who work there than from people who live there.

In future consultation it is important that views are gained from the younger members of the population along with those over the age of 75. It may also be useful to more specifically target people who currently live in the town centre.

## 5 Gateshead Town Centre Regeneration Survey – Main Sections

Respondents were asked to rank a number of objectives and key issues in order of priority. For each objective the mode is shown, to identify the majority choice by respondents. The median is also shown - this is slightly different and tells us at what level 50% of the respondent's choices were above. E.g. Mode = 1 shows us that the majority of respondents ranked this objective as their top choice. Median = 2 shows us that 50% of respondents put this objective 2<sup>nd</sup> or above.

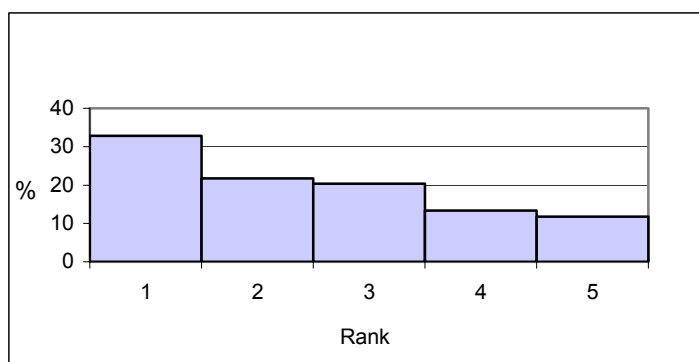
### 5.1 Main Objectives

There were five objectives in the first section covering a number of key issues. These ranged from the creation of a new heart for the town centre to housing and employment needs and transport. There was a slight overlap with some objectives to help us identify what residents wanted to achieve in an overall package for the town centre.

<b>A</b>	<b>Create a centre with its own special identity that fulfils all of Gateshead’s needs.</b>	<b>Respondents Priority 2</b>
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Base = 1086, Mode = 1, Median = 2

Rank	%
1	32.78
2	21.73
3	20.35
4	13.35
5	11.79



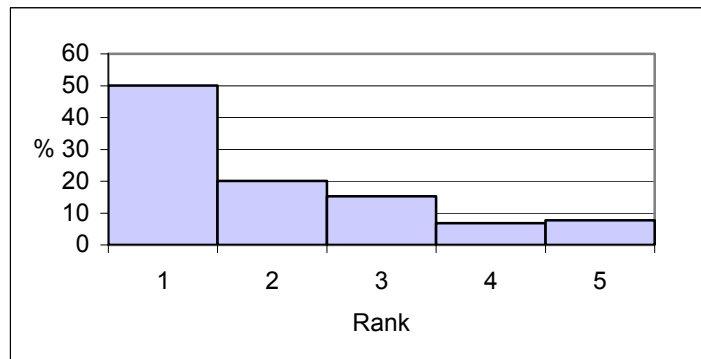
**Figure 5.1.1**

This is quite a broad objective and as a result is popular amongst respondents. Although 32% rate this as the most important priority, 25% put it either 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup>; this is probably due to the unspecific nature of the objective.

<b>B</b>	<b>Provide better shops and public spaces, along with more employment, housing, leisure and cultural activities.</b>	<b>Respondents Priority 1</b>
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Base = 1092, Mode = 1, Median = 1

Rank	%
1	50.09
2	20.05
3	15.29
4	6.87
5	7.69



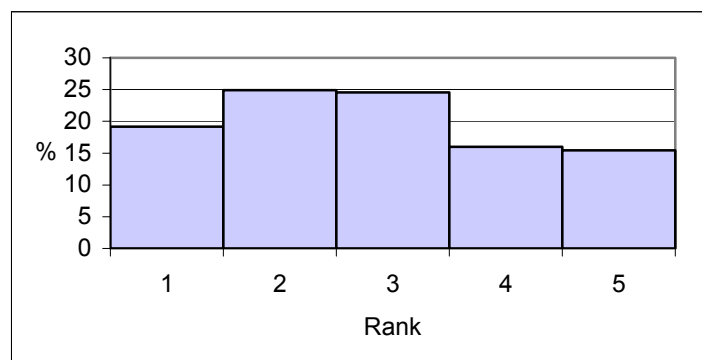
**Figure 5.1.2**

The provision of a mixed-use town centre that encompasses all aspects of life, from leisure to housing and employment, is covered by this objective and has shown up significantly as the most important objective to achieve. There are very few responses below 3<sup>rd</sup> place in this case showing us that there is an overall consensus regarding this objective.

<b>C</b>	<b>Create a lively and attractive public square to act as a new heart for the town centre.</b>	<b>Respondents Priority 3</b>
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Base = 1096, Mode = 2, Median = 3

Rank	%
1	19.16
2	24.91
3	24.54
4	15.97
5	15.42



**Figure 5.1.3**

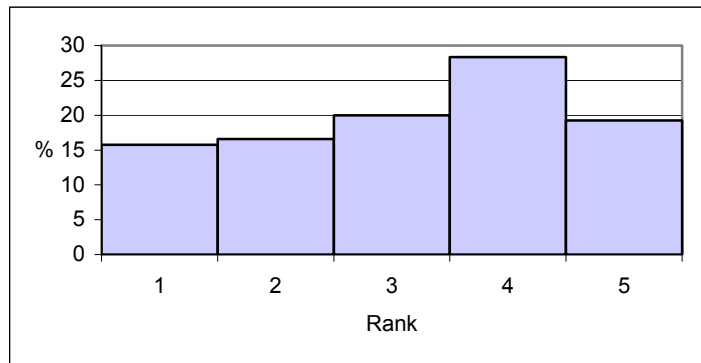
Responses to this objective show us that there are mixed opinions about the creation of a public square. There is no real majority choice with 24% rating this as 2<sup>nd</sup> most important and equally 24% placing it 3<sup>rd</sup>. Similarly 19% put this as their top priority but 15% put this 4<sup>th</sup> and 15% 5<sup>th</sup>. With a median of 3 we have at least 50% of responses at 3<sup>rd</sup> or above and likewise 50% placing it 3<sup>rd</sup> or below. So although some people think it is a good idea to create a focus in the town centre it is not the most important thing.

<b>D</b>	<b>Free the town centre from the isolation caused by busy roads, and reconnect it to surrounding areas.</b>	<b>Respondents Priority 4</b>
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Base = 1090, Mode = 4, Median = 3

Rank	%
1	15.78
2	16.61
3	20.00
4	28.35
5	19.27



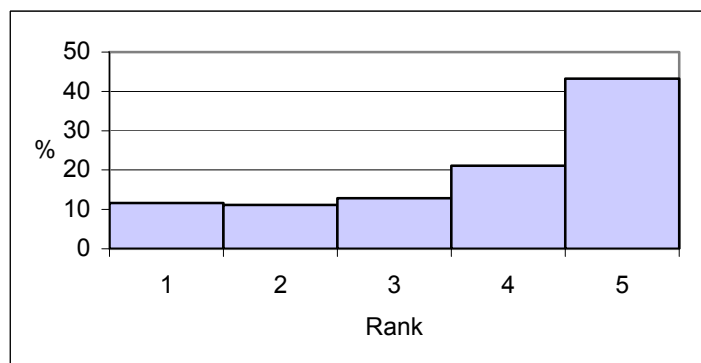
**Figure 5.1.4**

A small majority has ranked this objective as the 4<sup>th</sup> most important thing to achieve compared with the other objectives shown. 47% of responses are placed at rank 4 or 5. The feeling of respondents is that roads and accessibility are not more important than the services provided within the town centre.

<b>E</b>	<b>Continue improvement to public transport and pedestrian/cycle access.</b>	<b>Respondents Priority 5</b>
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Base = 1087, Mode = 5, Median = 4

Rank	%
1	11.68
2	11.13
3	12.88
4	21.07
5	43.24



**Figure 5.1.5**

A large majority has ranked the improvement of public transport and access as the least important objective. Only a small number of respondents thought that this was the most important objective to achieve.

**5.2**

**Shopping**

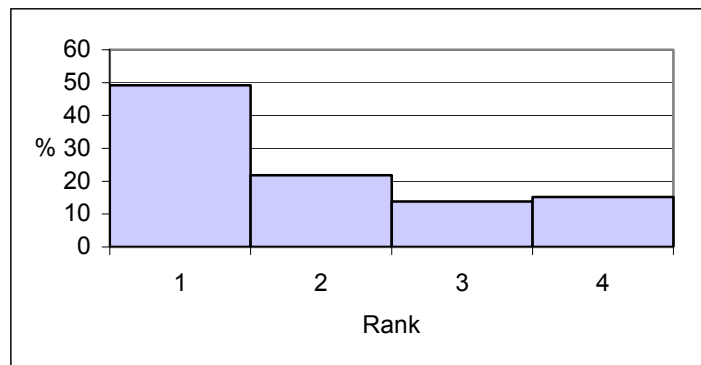
There were four objectives for respondents to look at regarding shopping in the town centre. The results are shown below.

<b>A</b>	<b>Create a new and unique shopping centre which complements Newcastle and the Metrocentre.</b>	<b>Respondents Priority 1</b>
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Base = 1073,

Mode = 1, Median = 2

Rank	%
1	49.21
2	21.81
3	13.79
4	15.19



**Figure 5.2.1**

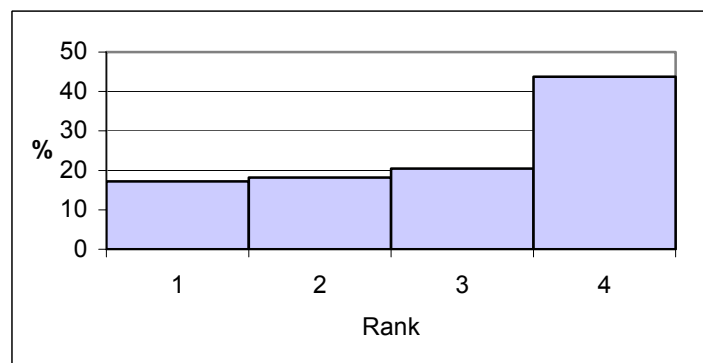
It is quite clear that shopping is a big concern within the town centre. Just fewer than 50% of respondents have chosen the creation of a new and unique shopping centre as the most important priority. Respondents show a willingness to use the town centre rather than travel to surrounding shopping centres if shopping facilities are provided.

<b>B</b>	<b>Keep the market, but make it more dynamic and 'theatrical'</b>	<b>Respondents Priority 4</b>
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Base = 1065,

Mode = 4, Median = 3

Rank	%
1	17.18
2	18.22
3	20.47
4	43.76



**Figure 5.2.2**

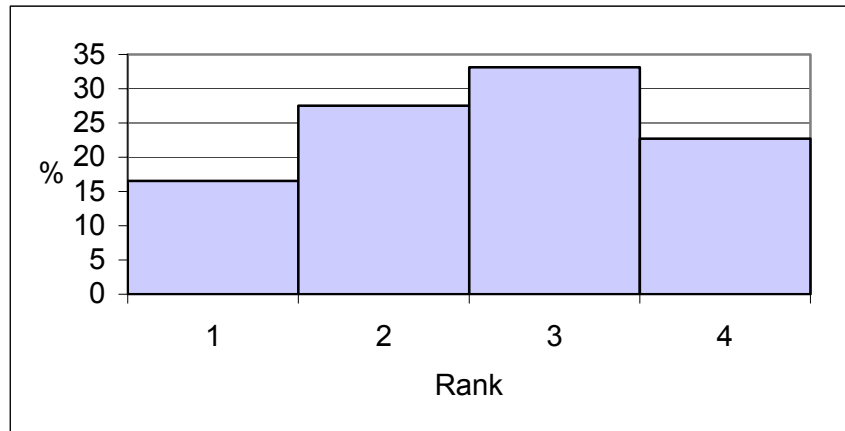
This objective is rated below all the other shopping objectives. This may be because the other objectives are broader and more comprehensive than this one or because people associate the market with the current building.

<b>C</b>	<b>Attract shoppers from a much wider area whilst also providing for the shopping needs of local people.</b>	<b>Respondents Priority 3</b>
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Base = 1083,

Mode = 3, Median = 3

Rank	%
1	16.53
2	27.52
3	33.15
4	22.71



**Figure 5.2.3**

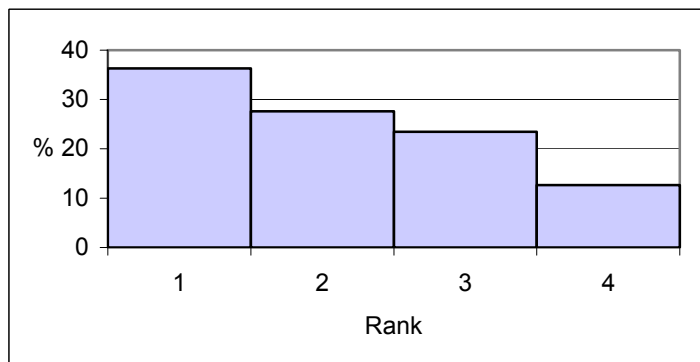
The thought of attracting shoppers from a much wider area is not of great importance to respondents although opinions are to some extent spread out across the ranks. This may be because most responses came from town centre workers or people living locally. 55% of respondents put this as their 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> most important objective.

<b>D</b>	<b>Regenerate all shopping areas, including the retail 'core'.</b>	<b>Respondents Priority 2</b>
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Base = 1080,

Mode = 1, Median = 2

Rank	%
1	36.30
2	27.59
3	23.43
4	12.69



**Figure 5.2.4**

This is an important objective to achieve, with 63% of respondents choosing this as most important or 2<sup>nd</sup> most important to them.

### 5.3

**Employment**

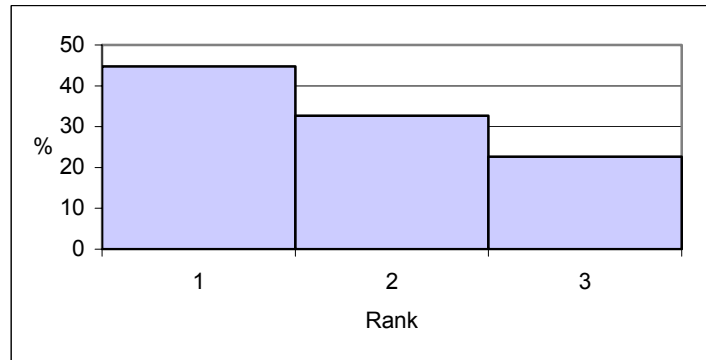
Respondents were asked to rank three employment objectives.

<b>A</b>	<b>Create new jobs in the town centre, as well as at the new Baltic Business Quarter.</b>	<b>Respondents Priority 1</b>
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Base = 1078,

Mode = 1, Median = 2

Rank	%
1	44.71
2	32.65
3	22.63



**Figure 5.6**

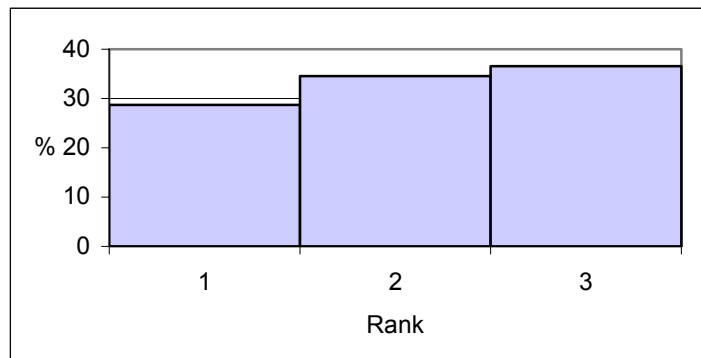
There is a definite opinion that new jobs should be created in the town centre as 77% of respondents have ranked this as the most important or 2<sup>nd</sup> most important objective. Overall this means the objective was ranked as the most important in this section.

<b>B</b>	<b>Retain and attract more people to Gateshead, especially young people.</b>	<b>Respondents Priority 3</b>
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Base = 1069,

Mode = 3, Median = 2

Rank	%
1	28.72
2	34.52
3	36.58



**Figure 5.3.2**

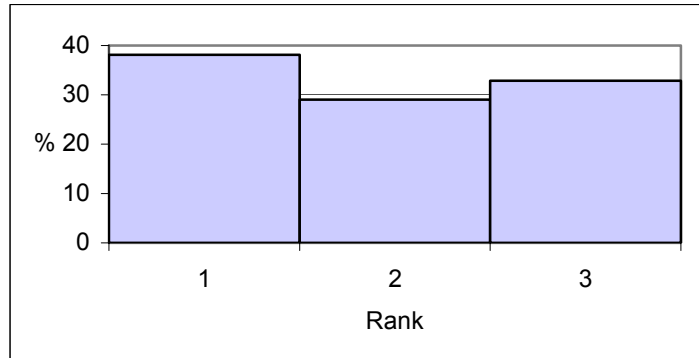
Opinions are less clear regarding the aim to attract more people to Gateshead, especially young people. It may be that respondents have been focusing on the attraction of young people rather than thinking in terms of employment opportunities. 36% placed this as the least important objective.

<b>C</b>	<b>Attract new uses into older buildings.</b>	<b>Respondents Priority 2</b>
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Base = 1071,

Mode = 1, Median = 2

Rank	%
1	38.10
2	29.04
3	32.87



**Figure 5.3.3**

The attraction of new uses into older buildings was ranked overall as the 2<sup>nd</sup> most important objective. Feelings were spread quite evenly across respondents. 38% thought this was the most important objective, conversely 33% thought it was the least important objective.

## 5.4

**Housing**

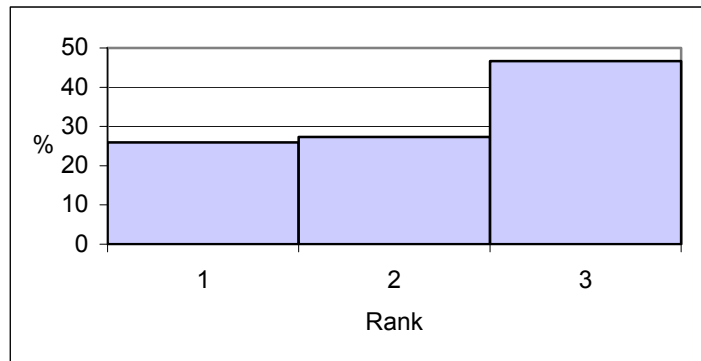
Housing is an important aspect within any town centre. Three objectives were suggested, for respondents to consider.

<b>A</b>	<b>Introduce substantial new housing opportunities in the town centre</b>	<b>Respondents Priority 3</b>
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Base = 1057,

Mode = 3, Median = 2

Rank	%
1	25.92
2	27.34
3	46.64



**Figure 5.4.1**

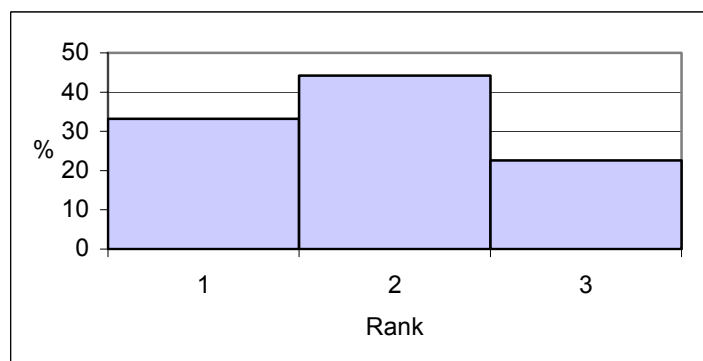
The feeling of respondents is that this is the least important objective with regards to housing. Nearly 50% ranked new housing opportunities in the town centre 3<sup>rd</sup> with the remaining responses evenly spread across 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>.

<b>B</b>	<b>Create a wide range of homes, including family accommodation</b>	<b>Respondents Priority Equal 1st</b>
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Base = 1057,

Mode = 2, Median = 2

Rank	%
1	33.21
2	44.18
3	22.61



**Figure 5.4.2**

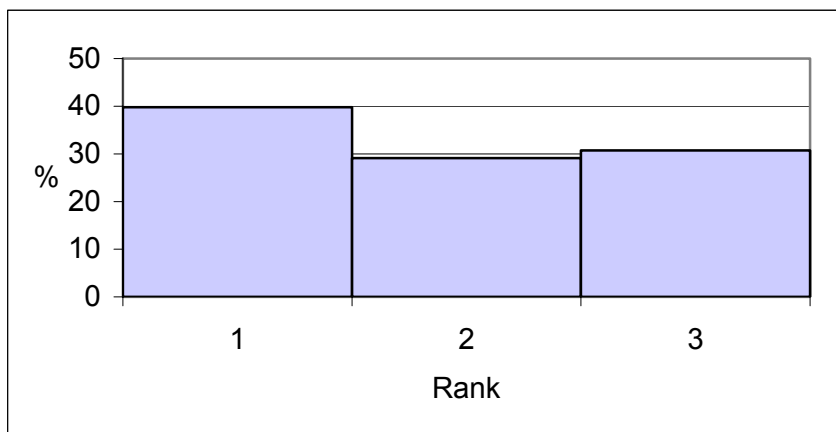
There was no overall preference with regards to the remaining objectives. Respondents views were split between the two hence they have been placed as equally important. 77% of respondents feel that the creation of a wide range of homes, including family accommodation is either the most important or 2<sup>nd</sup> most important objective.

<b>C</b>	<b>Relate new housing to provision of schools and community facilities</b>	<b>Respondents Priority Equal 1st</b>
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Base = 1060,

Mode = 1, Median = 2

Rank	%
1	39.81
2	29.15
3	30.75



**Figure 5.4.3**

As previously stated the aim to relate new housing to provision of schools and community facilities was viewed as very important. This is possibly an extension to the previous objective 'to create a wide range of homes, including family accommodation' and could explain why both have been viewed as most important.

## 5.5

**Transport and Accessibility**

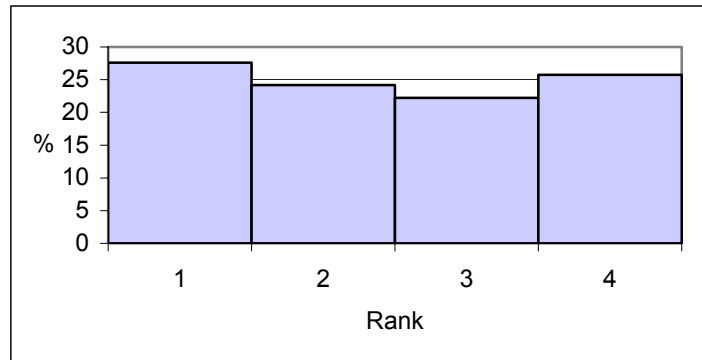
A town centre should be accessible by all means of transport. Respondents were given four objectives and asked to rank them in order of importance. The four objectives covered a number of transport options.

<b>A</b>	<b>Significantly reduce the impact of through traffic.</b>	<b>Respondents Priority 3</b>
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Base = 1072

Mode = 1, Median = 2

Rank	%
1	27.61
2	24.16
3	22.20
4	25.75



**Figure 5.5.1**

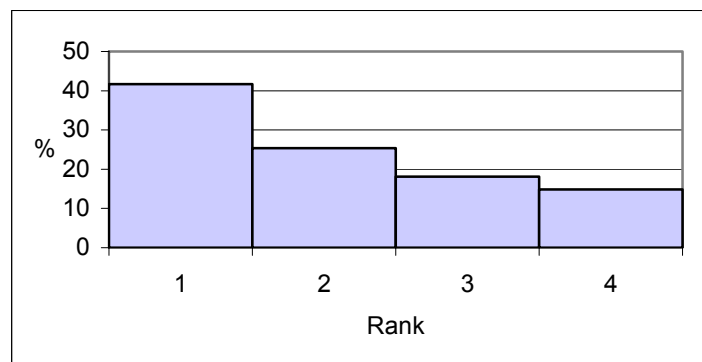
The above bar chart shows clearly how evenly spread respondents have ranked this objective. There is no immediate consensus on the aim to reduce the impact of through traffic in the town centre.

<b>B</b>	<b>Create links which serve, rather than by-pass Gateshead.</b>	<b>Respondents Priority 1</b>
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Base = 1070

Mode = 1, Median = 2

Rank	%
1	41.68
2	25.33
3	18.13
4	14.86



**Figure 5.5.2**

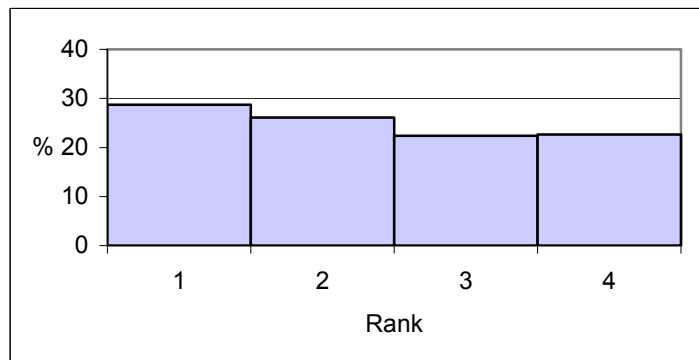
With 66% of respondents ranking this as 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> most important objective, the creation of links which serve Gateshead rather than by-pass it is the most important transport and accessibility objective.

<b>C</b>	<b>Create safe, convenient and attractive pedestrian and cycle routes between the town centre and Gateshead Quays, Baltic Business Quarter and other new developments</b>	<b>Respondents Priority 2</b>
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Base = 1069

Mode = 1, Median = 2

Rank	%
1	28.72
2	26.10
3	22.36
4	22.64



**Figure 5.5.3**

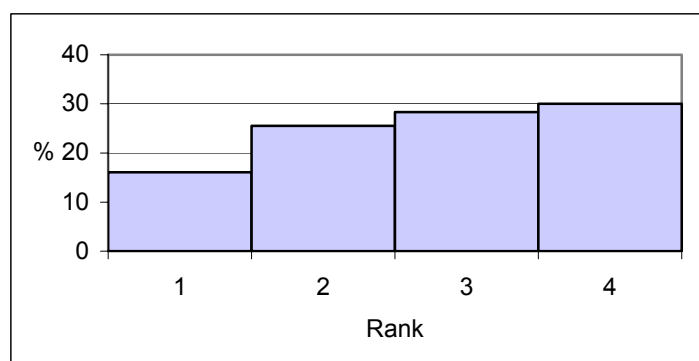
Overall, the creation of safe and convenient routes for pedestrians and cyclists between the town centre and adjacent areas is the 2<sup>nd</sup> most important objective. However, there is not a majority opinion with this as a significant number of respondents have ranked this as 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> most important objective.

<b>D</b>	<b>Create better pedestrian links from existing homes to the town centre and transport interchange.</b>	<b>Respondents Priority 4</b>
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Base = 1070

Mode = 4, Median = 3

Rank	%
1	16.07
2	25.51
3	28.32
4	30.00



**Figure 5.5.4**

The creation of better pedestrian links from existing homes to the town centre is of least importance with 58% ranking this as 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup>. Very few respondents thought this was the most important objective.

## 5.6

**Social, Cultural and Leisure**

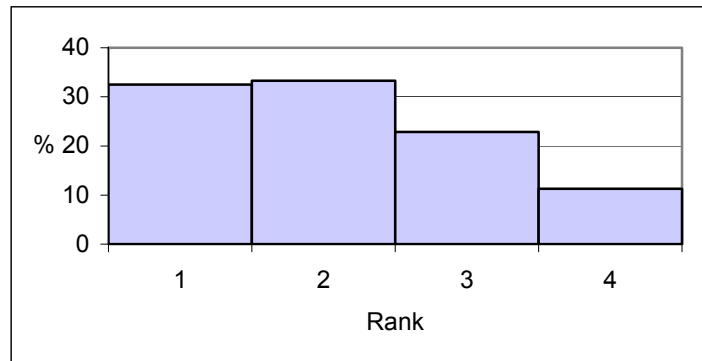
The four objectives shown for social use cover a range of areas, from leisure activities during the day to provision of evening activities such as a cinema and restaurants.

<b>A</b>	<b>Create more leisure and cultural attractions in the town centre</b>	<b>Respondents Priority 1</b>
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Base = 1078

Mode = 2, Median = 2

Rank	%
1	32.47
2	33.30
3	22.82
4	11.32



**Figure 5.6.1**

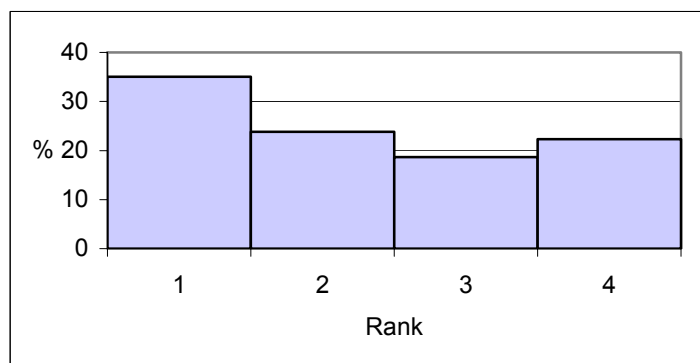
It is clear that the majority of respondents feel that the creation of more leisure and cultural attractions is the most important objective. Two thirds of respondents ranked this as their most important or 2<sup>nd</sup> most important objective.

<b>B</b>	<b>Consider the scope for attracting a town centre cinema or theatre, and other night-time uses</b>	<b>Respondents Priority 2</b>
----------	---	-------------------------------

Base = 1071

Mode = 1, Median = 2

Rank	%
1	35.01
2	23.81
3	18.67
4	22.32



**Figure 5.6.2**

When talking about more specific attractions the opinions are less obvious. 55% of respondents ranked a cinema or theatre as the most important or 2<sup>nd</sup> most important objective. However, 22% thought it was of least importance.

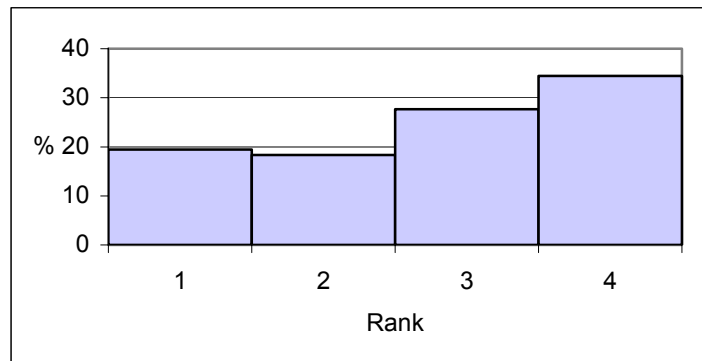
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<b>C</b>	<b>Improve community facilities in the town centre</b>	<b>Respondents Priority 4</b>
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Base = 1074

Mode = 4, Median = 3

Rank	%
1	19.46
2	18.34
3	27.65
4	34.45



**Figure 5.6.3**

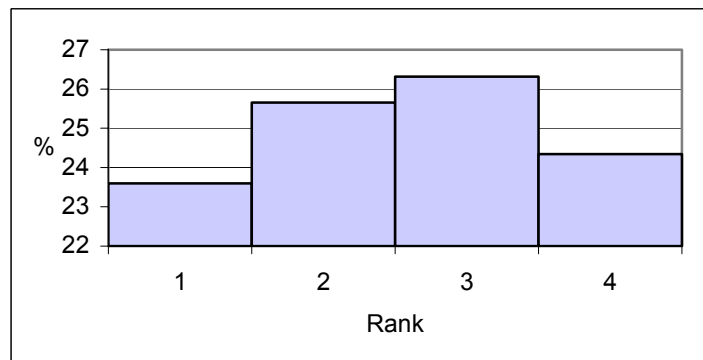
In terms of social, culture and leisure provision within the town centre, the improvement of community facilities is given the lowest priority. 62% ranked this either 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> most important making this the least important objective.

<b>D</b>	<b>Provide for leisure and culture in the design of new open spaces as well as buildings</b>	<b>Respondents Priority 3</b>
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Base = 1068

Mode = 3, Median = 3

Rank	%
1	23.60
2	25.66
3	26.31
4	24.34



**Figure 5.6.4**

This objective supports the responses in the main objectives with regards to open spaces. There is no consensus as to how important it is to provide for leisure and culture in the design of new open spaces. In comparison to other objectives this is overall ranked as 3<sup>rd</sup> most important.

## **6 'Open' Consultation**

The opportunity was also provided for the public to express their own opinions about the town centre and priorities for regeneration. 1540 comments were gathered from section 7 of the survey form (both in paper form and online) which asked people to list and rank any other priorities of theirs for the town centre, which had not been listed elsewhere on the survey form. 366 other comments were collected from the staffed exhibition in Trinity Square, by post card, e-mail and from record of telephone discussions with Council officers. A total of 1,906 comments were gathered in this way.

Comments were analysed and put into categories, which as closely as possible, match the categories in the survey form. Repeat comments, with roughly similar wording, were grouped together. Comments and their frequency were recorded on tables under each category.

This methodology allows us to see which overall issues (categories) are of greatest concern to the public (fig 6.1), the main overall priorities of the public (fig 6.2) and the main priorities within each category (figs. 6.3.1 to 6.3.7). In some cases comments re-enforce the main objectives as identified in the Stage 1 report and in other cases we can see that respondents have other priorities which may not have been specifically identified in the report and survey form. This should not be surprising as 81% of the comments gathered were in response to section 7 on the survey (any other priorities).

### **6.1**

**Number of comments in each category of the 'open consultation'**

Figure 6.1 illustrates which of the various overall issues are of most concern to people. The aim was to group comments in subject areas as used in the survey. Where comments did not fall into a specific category they were grouped under 'General Comments'. This was the most popular category with many comments on issues of physical appearance. Alongside this there are a high number of comments on environmental issues. Transport is also an important issue. It is maybe surprising that 'Shopping' has a relatively low number of comments compared with the 'top two'.

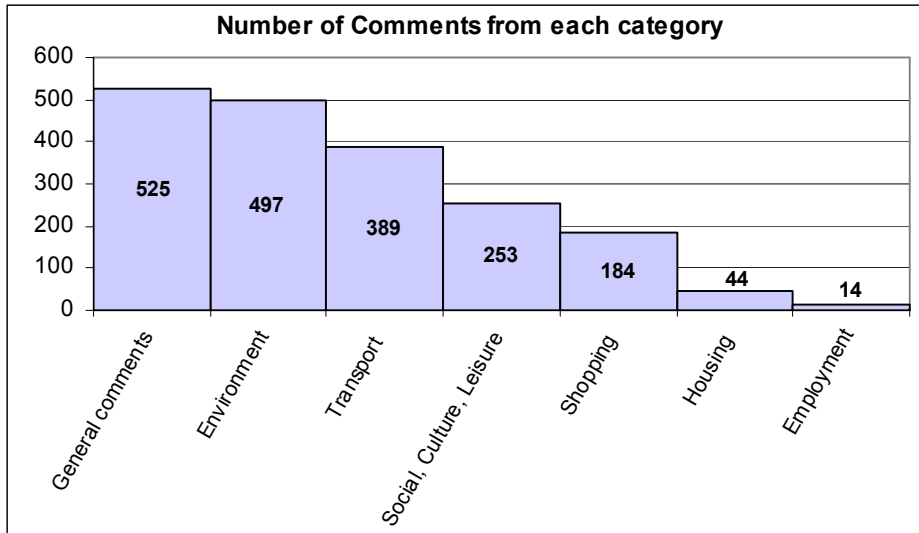


Figure 6.1

**6.2 Top ten comments in the open consultation**

Figure 6.2 shows the most common comments over all categories in the open consultation. It shows clearly that the main issues which concern the public are safety and security, the provision of good quality car parking, the demolition of perceived 'eyesores' and clean and attractive streets and spaces.

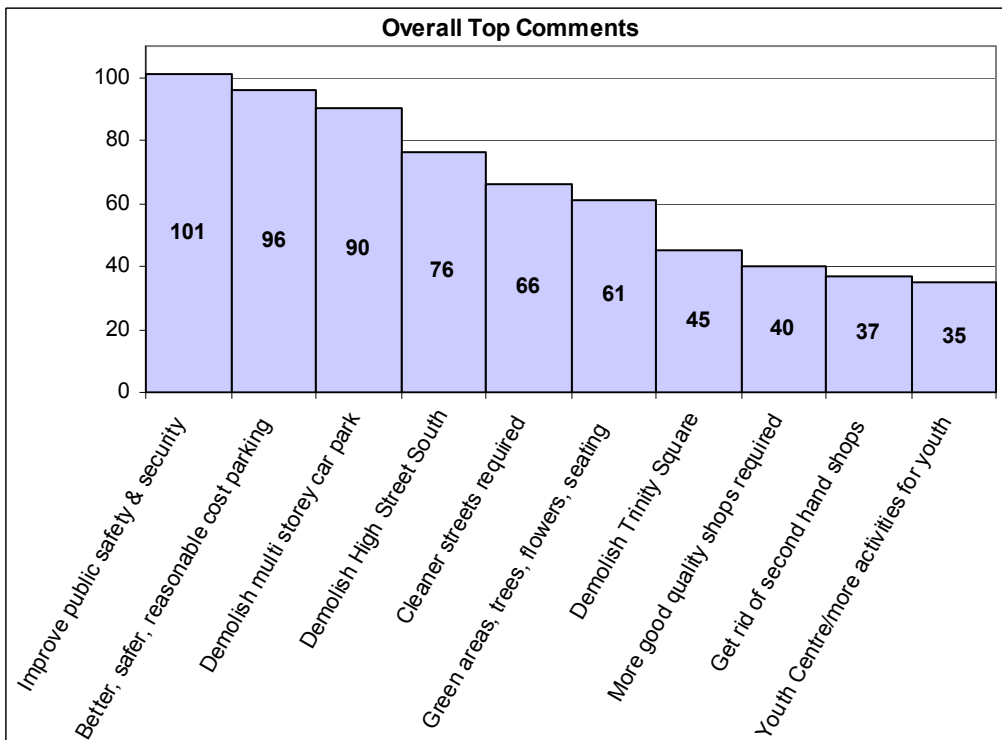
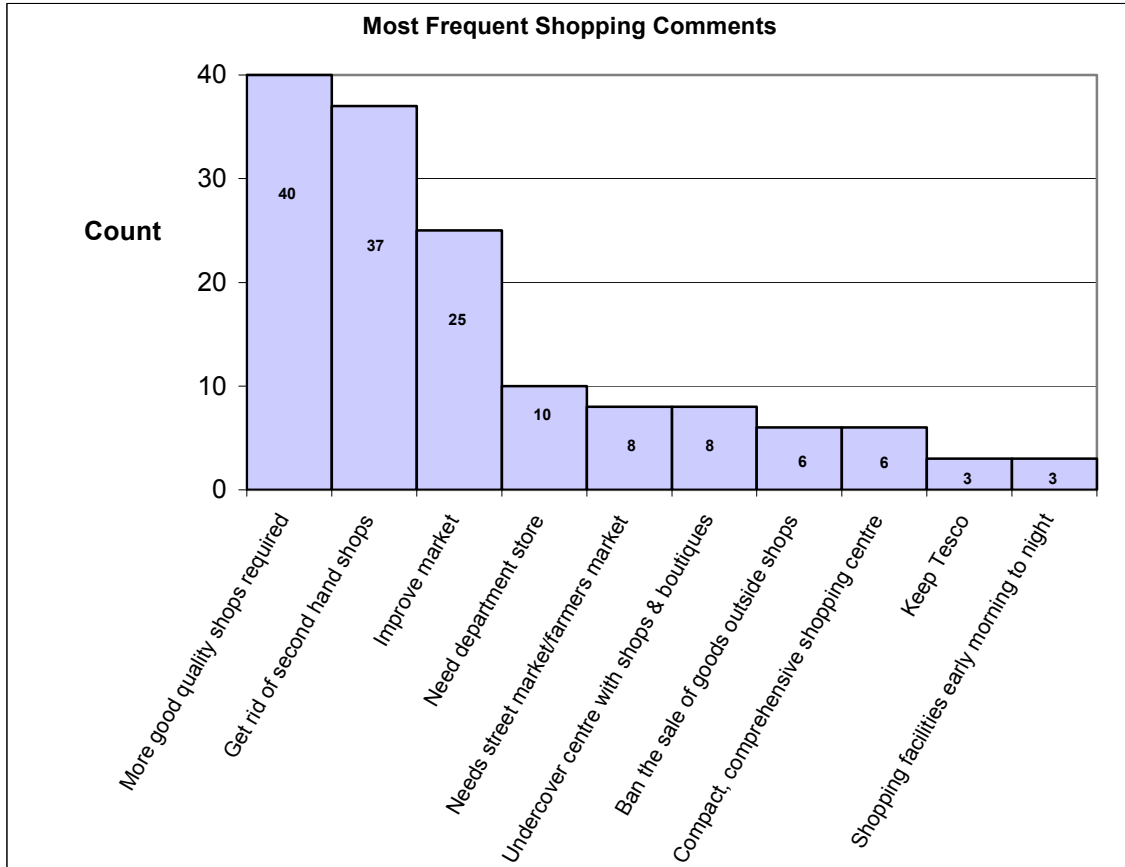
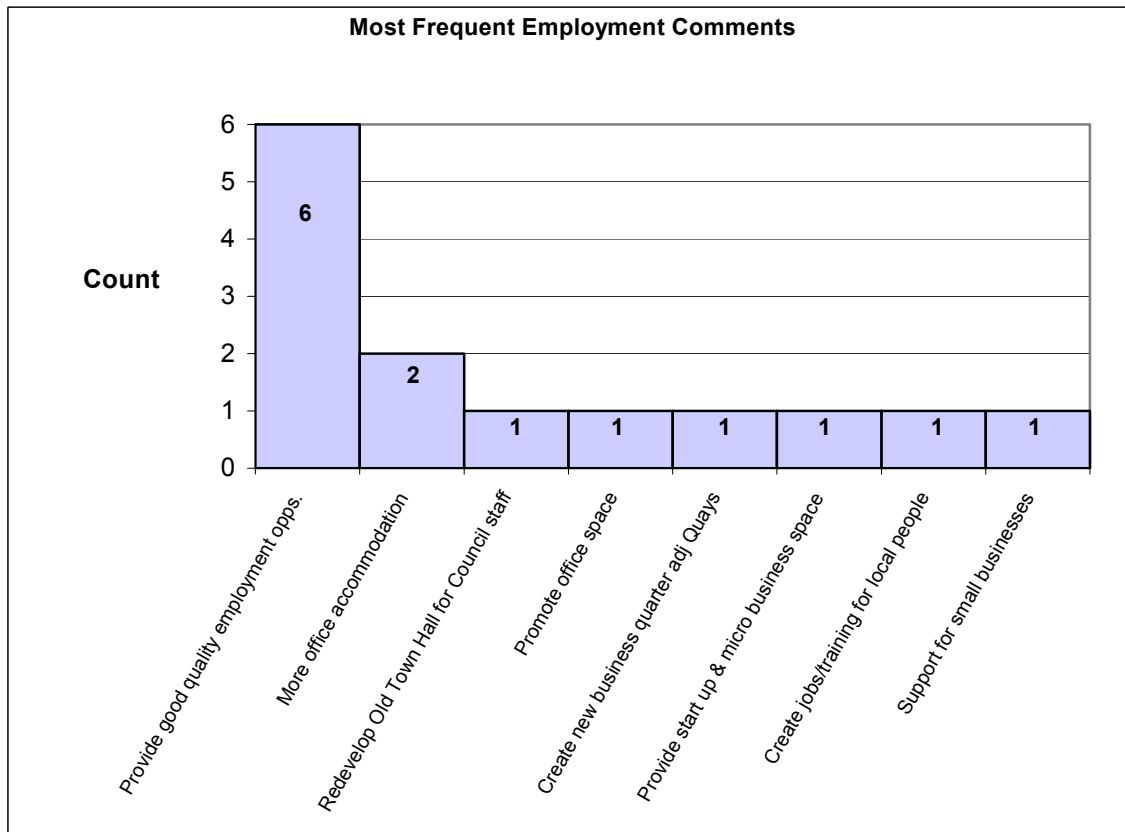


Figure 6.2

**6.3 Most frequent comments in each individual section**



**Figure 6.3.1**



**Figure 6.3.2**

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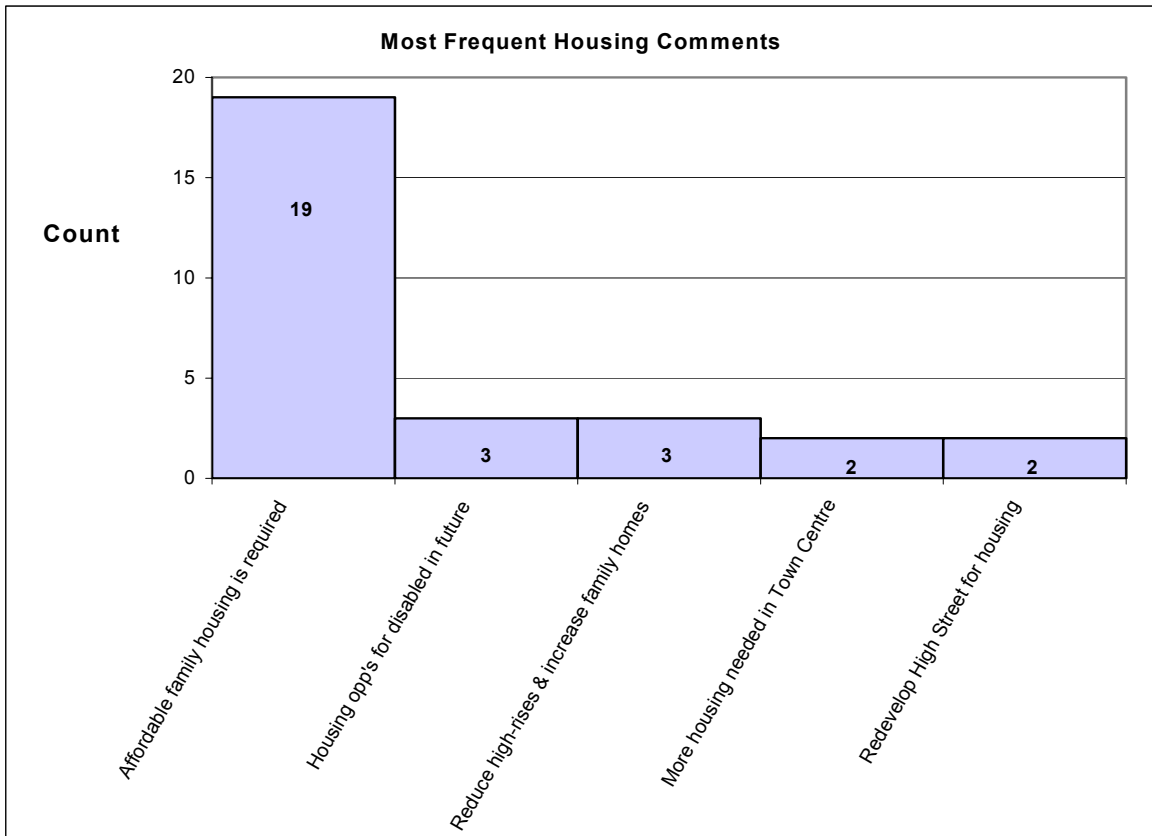


Figure 6.3.3

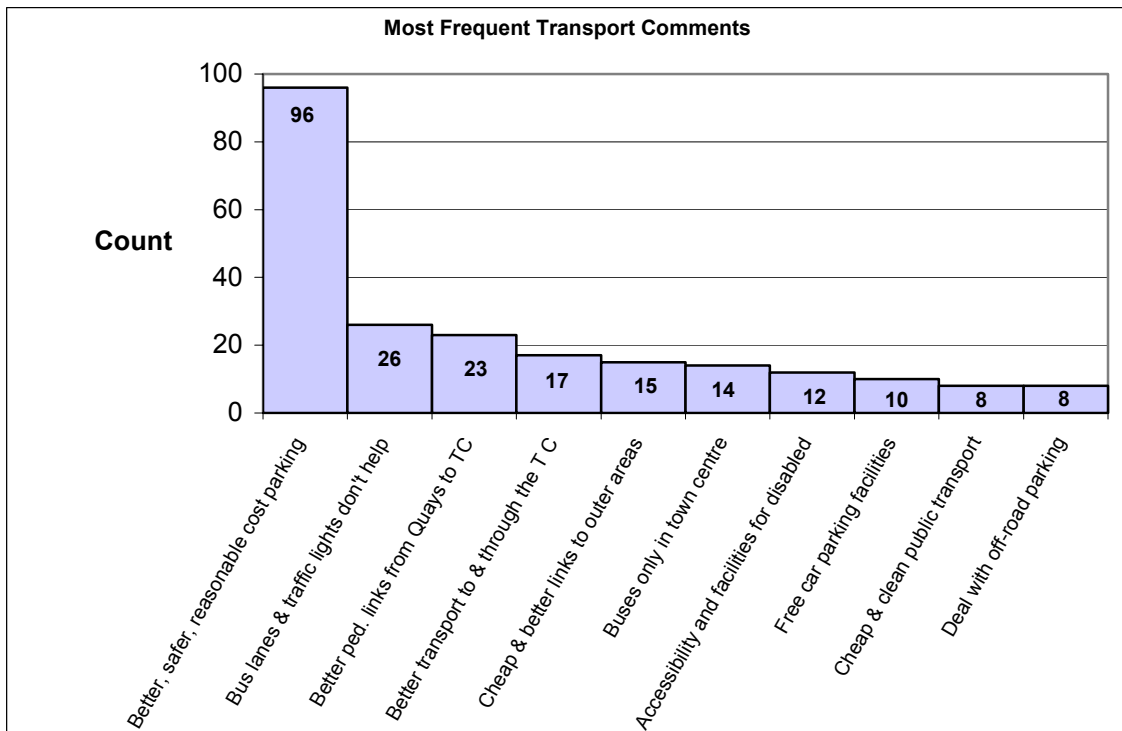


Figure 6.3.4

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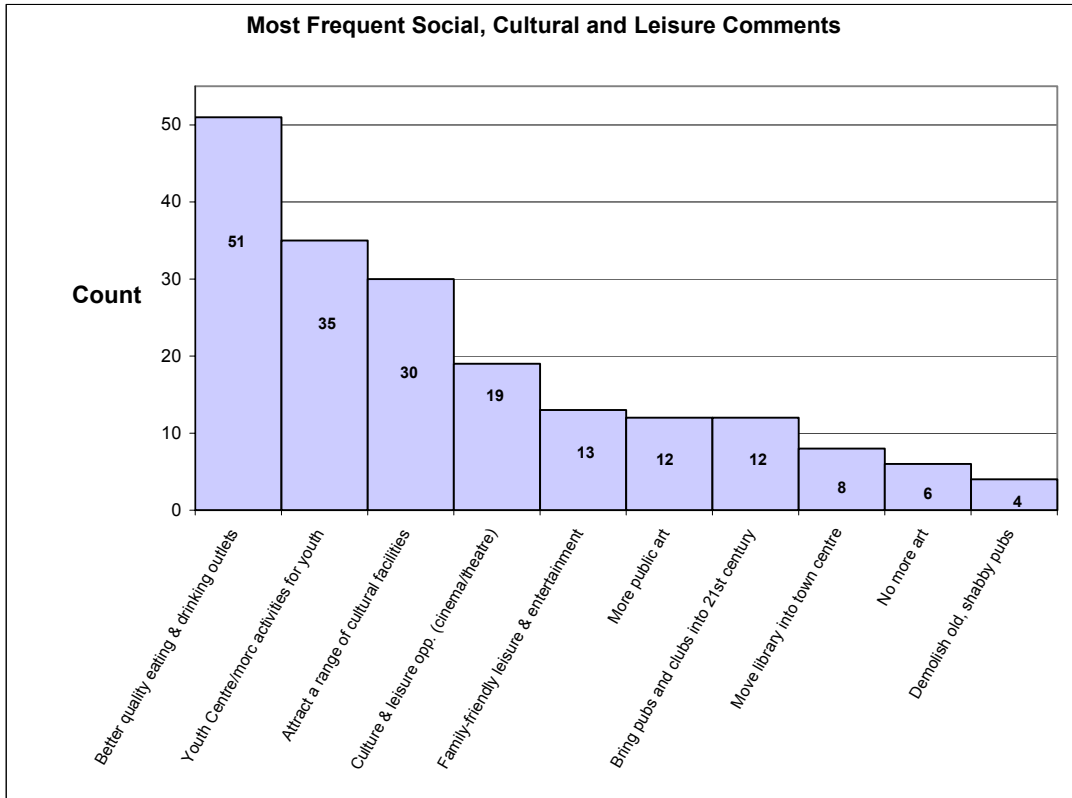


Figure 6.3.5

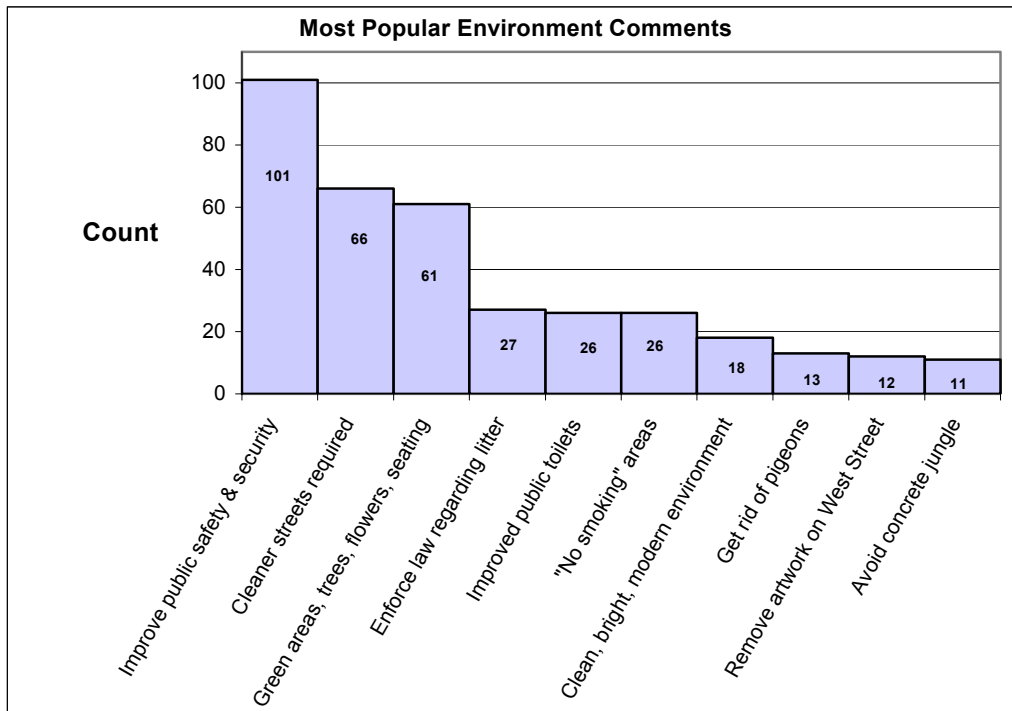
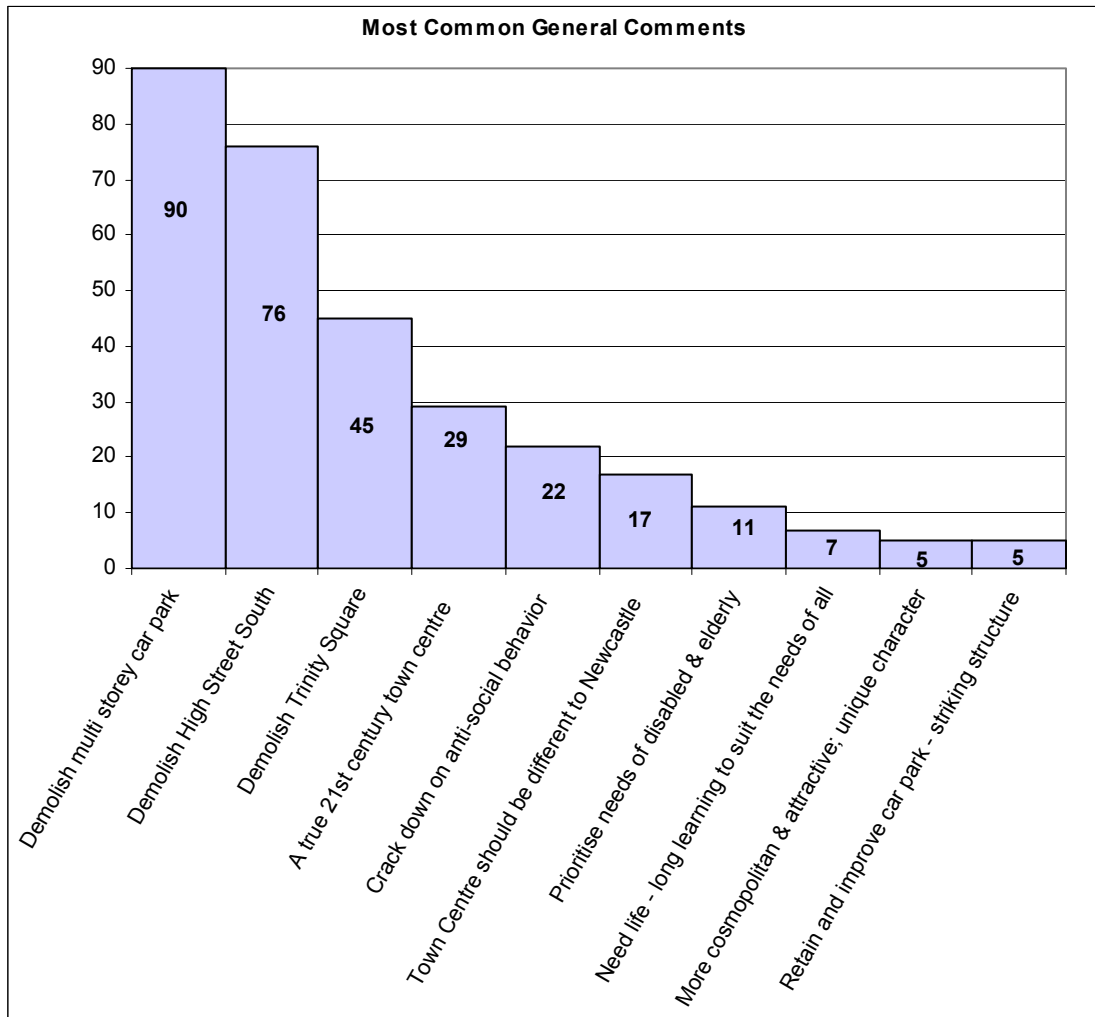


Figure 6.3.6

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**Figure 6.3.7**

## **7 Summary of Findings**

This section combines a summary of the results of the survey and the most frequent comments made in the 'open' consultation.

### **7.1 Main Objectives**

In the survey response on the main objectives it seems that service provision is of prime importance. The top objective is 'provide better shops and public spaces along with more employment, housing, leisure and cultural facilities', followed by 'create a centre with its own special identity that fulfils all of Gateshead's needs'. The creation of a new heart for the town centre and, lastly, transport issues seem to be of the less importance (although in the open consultation there were a large number of comments on transport issues). This result is maybe not surprising, as the preferred objective is very comprehensive and easily understandable to the public.

The public's highest priorities in the "open consultation" are more specific and relate to demolition of perceived eyesores in the Town Centre i.e. the multi-storey car park, High Street South and Trinity Square. Other important objectives - creation of a true 21st century town centre/different to Newcastle are very much in line with the Partnership aim to 'create a centre with it's own special identity'.

### **7.2 Shopping**

The top priority of survey respondents is 'create a new and unique shopping centre which complements Newcastle and the Metrocentre', followed by 'regenerate all shopping areas as well as the retail core'. The objective 'attract shoppers from a much wider area, whilst also providing for the shopping needs of local people' is of less importance to respondents possibly because most respondents either live close to, or work in the town centre. Of least importance is 'keep the market, but make it more dynamic and theatrical'; nearly 45% of respondents put this as their bottom objective.

The above is borne out by the open consultation where 'more good quality shops' and 'get rid of second-hand shops' are the top two comments. 'Improve the market' is the third most common comment.

### **7.3 Employment**

Responses were spread out across the three objectives more evenly and opinion didn't appear to be as strong as in other sections. The top priority for respondents is to 'create new jobs in the town centre, as well as at the new Baltic Business Quarter', followed by 'attract new uses to older buildings'. 'Retain and attract more people to Gateshead, especially young people' was the least important objective.

The 'Employment' category had the fewest comments in the open consultation, with the aim to 'provide good quality employment opportunities' being the most common response. It can be seen, then, that the broad aim of creating more jobs in the town centre has popular support, rather than employment in specific sectors or age groups.

### **7.4 Housing**

There was mixed opinion regarding the housing priorities with two of the objectives being placed equally important i.e. 'create a wide range of homes, including family accommodation' and 'relate new housing to the provision of schools and community facilities'. The objective to 'introduce new housing opportunities in the town centre' was not rated as highly, possibly because of it's non-specific nature.

In the open consultation, 'Affordable family housing is required' was by far the most frequent comment on this subject.

### **7.5 Transport and Accessibility**

Opinions regarding Transport objectives appear to be fairly evenly spread in the survey response. The clear priority was 'create links which serve rather than by-pass Gateshead'. The objectives 'create safe, convenient and attractive pedestrian and cycle routes between the town centre and Gateshead Quays, Baltic Business Quarter and other new developments' and 'significantly reduce the impact of through traffic' were a close 2nd and 3rd respectively. The objective to 'create better pedestrian links from existing homes to the town centre and transport interchange' was given lowest priority.

In the open consultation, there were a large number of comments on transport issues. The needs and opinions of car users are prominent, with the requirement for 'better, safer parking at a reasonable cost' being by far the most frequent response. The second most frequent comment 'bus lanes and traffic lights don't help' is a response to recent changes in traffic circulation (incomplete at the time of the consultation), though this is closely followed by the comment 'better pedestrian links from the Town Centre to the Quays are required'.

### **7.6 Social, Cultural and Leisure**

The top priority of respondents is 'create more leisure and cultural attractions in the town centre', closely followed by 'consider the scope for attracting a town centre cinema or theatre, and other night-time uses'. The more limited aim 'provide for culture and leisure in the design of new open spaces as well as buildings' is given lower priority, and the improvement of community facilities in the town centre is of least importance to respondents.

In the open consultation the most common response was 'attract better quality eating and drinking outlets' with a lesser number saying 'bring pubs and clubs into the 21st century'. There was also an emphasis on the need for family and youth facilities, and the attraction of a cinema or theatre, as suggested in the survey, was also a popular aim.

### **7.7 Environment**

There was no specific category for 'Environment' in the survey, although the 'Main Objective' of 'create a lively and attractive public square' is essentially an environmental aim. In open consultation however, the town centre 'environment' is of major concern to the public and attracted more comments than any category, other than 'General comments'. Safety and security issues have been included in this category, and the comment 'improve public safety and security' is the most common comment not only in this category but also in the entire 'open consultation' response. The quality of public space is also very important to people; 'cleaner streets are required' and 'green areas, trees, flowers, seating' are prominent comments within this category, followed by 'enforce law over litter' and 'improved public toilets'.

These comments emphasise the importance of not only designing a good quality public realm in the first place, but also addressing safety and security issues and ensuring improved management and maintenance of public space.