

Vision King's Lynn Consultation February 2019

The consultation took place from 4th February – 25th February. During this time, a number of activities were delivered to consult and engage to create interest, to generate responses, and to engender support for the project. This included an online survey, two drop-in sessions, attendance at two youth clubs, and engagement with key partners. The response rate was **752 responses**.

Key Findings

Based on all the feedback, we found that:

- People predominantly use the town to fulfil retail needs rather than for an experience.
- People want retail quality and choice, open shops, and particularly they want independent retailers.
- People want to feel that they have better access to the town and a parking offer which reflects the cost/benefit.
- People want a thriving, inspiring, safe town that makes them feel good, and which is inclusive for all.
- People want a town that makes the most of its attributes – its heritage, its layout, its friendly people – and which maximises its potential.

We are now in the process of developing a strategic vision for the town centre based on the feedback.

Key Findings : Question Breakdown

1. What brings you into King's Lynn town centre?

- Shopping remains the predominant purpose for visiting the town centre, and this is driven by necessity.
- Work is the next main purpose for being in the town centre.
- The bank is mentioned as a purpose frequently.
- Entertainment and socialising is mentioned less which indicates that the town's purpose is perceived as retail rather than experiential.
- Favoured high street brands are competitively priced retailers (Primark, T K Maxx) or trusted brands (M & S, Debenhams).
- Independent names mentioned are more varied between traditional and more newly established.
- The 'necessity' of shopping in town is mentioned several times.

'Just mundane shopping and then its quick as possible as no ambience to enhance the shopping trip.'

'Shopping for food and basic supplies, meeting friends for meals or drinks, showing visitors the historic town centre.'

'Shops that aren't available on the industrial estate such as Wilko.'

2. What would you like to see more of in King's Lynn town centre?

- People want better quality and choice of open shops: they want to see fewer empty shops. They particularly want independent shops and a town centre which makes it easy for small retailers to trade.
- Of importance too are quality high street brands.
- There is aspiration for a market(s) and reference frequently to a historic connection around this with the Tuesday Market Place and King's Lynn as a 'market town'.
- People want better access to the town. This relates to parking and perceived cost/benefit – current fees are not perceived as aligning with the offer.
- People want to feel safe in the town centre.
- People want an inclusive town centre which has an offer for everyone. In particular, more 'family friendly.' There is also a sense that people want a community offer in the town centre.
- People would like to see improvements to the environmental offer in the landscaping and public realm.
- There was feedback about a better night time entertainment and leisure offer and a desire for an after shops closing economy.
- There was some feedback about a better arts offer.

'It used to be nice popping into town and doing some shopping. I could spend nearly all day there. Now I would rather drive to Norwich.'

'There aren't things for me to do'.

'The present offer is the same as any other provincial town.'

3. For you, what two words best describe King's Lynn town centre?

- People used more than twice as many negative words as positive words to describe King's Lynn town centre.
- The positive terms used to describe King's Lynn were historic/historical, history, potential and friendly. This underlines that the town centre has a powerful association with its heritage. 'Potential' reinforces that people see that there is scope for King's Lynn to change. The use of 'friendly' is notable too.
- The town centre has a significant image problem which perpetuates amongst people.
- The most quoted words were:
 1. Historic
 2. Empty
 3. Potential
 4. Tired
 5. Run(down)

6. Dull
7. Boring
8. Shops
9. Historical
10. Cheap

'The old buildings are lovely but the shopping facilities and parking charges are reason why people avoid the town'.

'Historical but some parts of the centre are a bit soulless.'

'Historic and characterful and full of interest and potential, but dead in the evenings.'

4. What do you think makes King's Lynn town centre special?

- The heritage is clearly the most significant aspect of King's Lynn that people perceive as being what makes the town centre special. The history and the architecture is clearly a great source of pride for people. However, even though the heritage is clearly the town's biggest strength, this does not always correlate to usage, particularly amongst and as a selling point for local people.
- For many people, there is nothing which they find special about the town centre.
- The 'friendly' people and sense of community were highlighted as a positive.
- People like the connectivity that the town centre offers as it covers a compact area.
- The many activities were also cited as an aspect which make the town special.
- People feel that the town centre has potential and scope to be special.
- The river and quayside were also quoted as an appealing characteristic of King's Lynn.

'It's a history book that you can walk through with the buildings and roads providing us with a time line of where we have come to.'

'There is nothing special about King's Lynn these days.'

'The way you can walk around in a complete circle and see all the shops'.

5. What would make you use King's Lynn town centre in future?

- People want a better retail offer. They want quality, varied, independent, open shops alongside high street brands.
- Parking is viewed as a barrier because of the cost/benefit perception.
- People would like to have access to market/s and potentially an undercover mall/market.
- They want to feel safe.
- They want more entertainment and more use of the town centre after hours.
- They want a family friendly and inclusive town, which provides opportunity for community interaction.
- They would like to see greater use of and connection with the river and quayside.

- There was some feedback around an enhanced arts and culture offer.

'Further development of leisure being introduced alongside stores. Family entertainment and physical experiences.'

'I don't mind paying to park if worth it.'

'I probably would come in more of an evening if there was a vibrant riverside'.