



Collaborative Town Centre Health Check Programme



Tipperary Town Business Surveys

September 2021



An Roinn Sláinte
Department of Health



Tionscadal Éireann
Project Ireland
2040



Background & Contents

This research was conducted on behalf of the Heritage Council and Tipperary Town Chamber as part of the Collaborative Town Centre Health Check Programme. Undertaking Business Surveys in town centres is Step 4 in the overall 15-Step CTCHC 'process'. The CTCHC Programme is included in the Programme for Government published in June 2020

Data has been collected in order to fully understand the current attitudes and opinions on several different aspects of Tipperary Town and historic town centre.

The CTCHC Programme designed the business survey questionnaire with input from Tipperary Town Chamber, Tipperary Town Revitalisation Taskforce and Tipperary County Council.

A total of n=61 Tipperary Town businesses took part in the survey.

Fieldwork ran between the 7th – 18th June 2021

- 01** Tipperary Town – Impressions
- 02** Tourism and Amenities
- 03** Covid-19 Impact on Business & Future Planning
- 04** e-Commerce and Social Media
- 05** Traffic Management
- 06** Building Premises
- 07** Tipperary Town Chamber

Summary of Key Findings -1



Tipperary Town Impressions

1. Businesses in Tipperary Town see retail as the main attraction of the town, with 34% citing shopping as the main reason people would come to town.
2. Service excellence in shops, safety, and the quality of cafés and restaurants are recognised as strengths of the town by most businesses.
3. Businesses do however recognise that Tipperary Town has several issues that need to be addressed. 1 in 3 think of traffic as their first impressions of the town (34%), while dereliction, vacancy and business closures also feature prominently in top of mind associations.
4. Moreover, reducing traffic, increased investment and re-purposing derelict buildings are identified as priority areas for improvement.
5. Almost all (95%) businesses rate Tipperary Town's traffic flow as poorly, with a strong majority also citing general ease of getting around (70%) as an issue for the town.
6. Lack of areas to congregate (64%) or parks and green place (61%) also stood out as areas businesses think the town can improve on.

Tourism and Amenities

7. Eating out or visiting the Excel Centre are the top two attractions for tourists to Tipperary Town. Outdoor activities such as walking trails, the hills of Tipp and the Glen of Aherlow also feature prominently.
8. 28% of businesses would be willing to participate in organising events to attract people into the town centre. Music festivals (38%) and street performance (34%) festivals are among the most popular choices.
9. In terms of amenities, just over half of businesses believe the town lacks sufficient amenities for families in Tipperary Town. 42% want more family activities, whereas 74% would like to see more playgrounds.

Summary of Key Findings -2



Covid-19 Impact on Business and Future Planning

10. Covid-19 hit many businesses in Tipperary Town hard, with 4 out of 5 experiencing a drop in turnover. For 3 in 10 businesses revenues dropped by more than 50%.
11. Despite the difficulties from covid, businesses in Tipp are largely optimistic about the future, with more than half believing trading will increase in the next two years, fuelled by increased consumer spending.
12. In terms of future investment plans, businesses are planning to put their money in several different areas, including existing premises, diversifying, IT and more personnel.
13. 6 in 10 businesses in Tipperary Town express an interest in training opportunities, including marketing (41%), customer service (41%) and E-commerce (26%).

E-Commerce & Social Media

14. Two thirds of businesses in Tipperary Town are set up with a website. Only 36% of businesses with a website use it to sell purchases.
15. Facebook is the most popular social media channel, used by 75% of businesses. Instagram is the next most popular (43%), followed by Twitter (25%).

Business Premises

16. Two-thirds of businesses in Tipperary Town currently own their premises. 97% of businesses are satisfied with their current premises.

Summary of Key Findings -3



Traffic & Parking

- 17. Two-thirds of Tipp business feel that traffic is hurting business in the town, and the vast majority are interested in taking steps to minimise the impact on the town. 95% believe the situation can be improved.
- 18. Strong support for the by-pass of the town, with 85% of businesses in favour of an N24 diversion.
- 19. 44% are supportive of a local public bus operating from 8am to 10pm daily and 74% are in favour of a pedestrian priority trail.
- 20. Parking measures are also areas where most businesses would like to see change. Two-thirds support 2-hour free parking, and as many as 85% support low cost parking for staff on the outskirts of the town.





01

Tipperary Town – Impressions



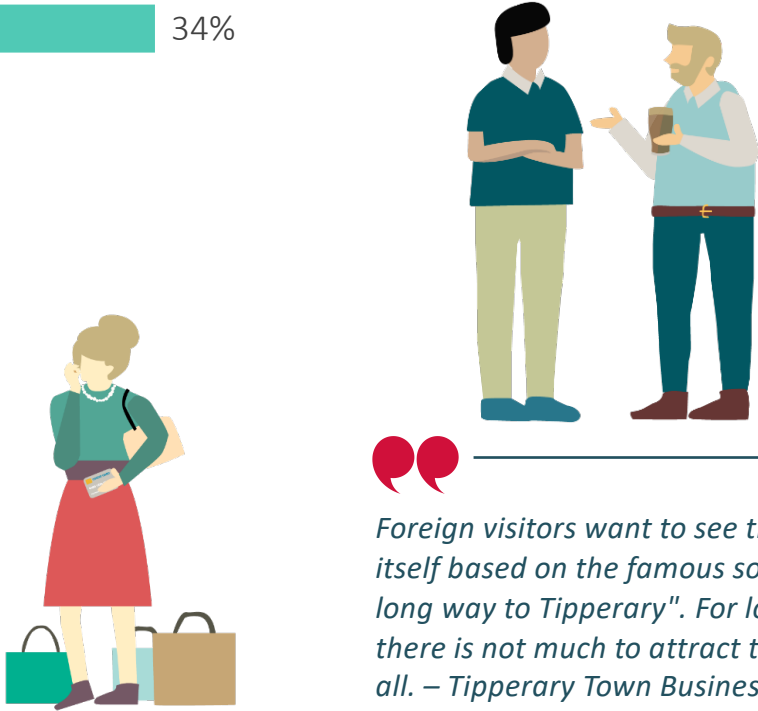
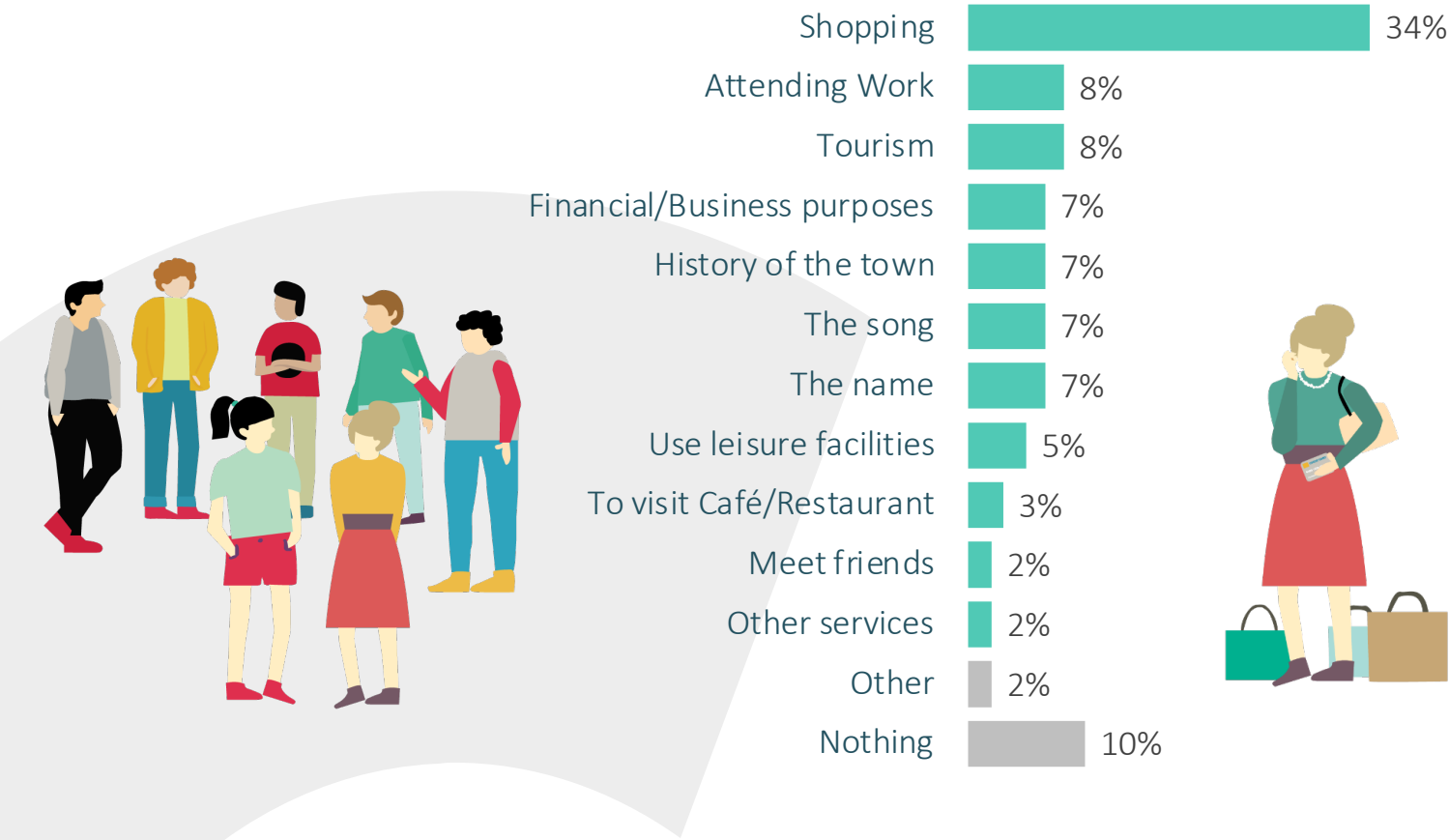
Tipperary Town's strength is in its service standards in shops and a feeling of being safe during the day and its good Cafés/Restaurants.

Traffic, vacancy rates, dereliction, and lack of tourism are core concerns for the town.

Shopping in seen as Tipperary Town’s primary attraction for visitorsC

10% of businesses think the Town Centre has no attractions at all.

Main Attractions in Tipperary Town

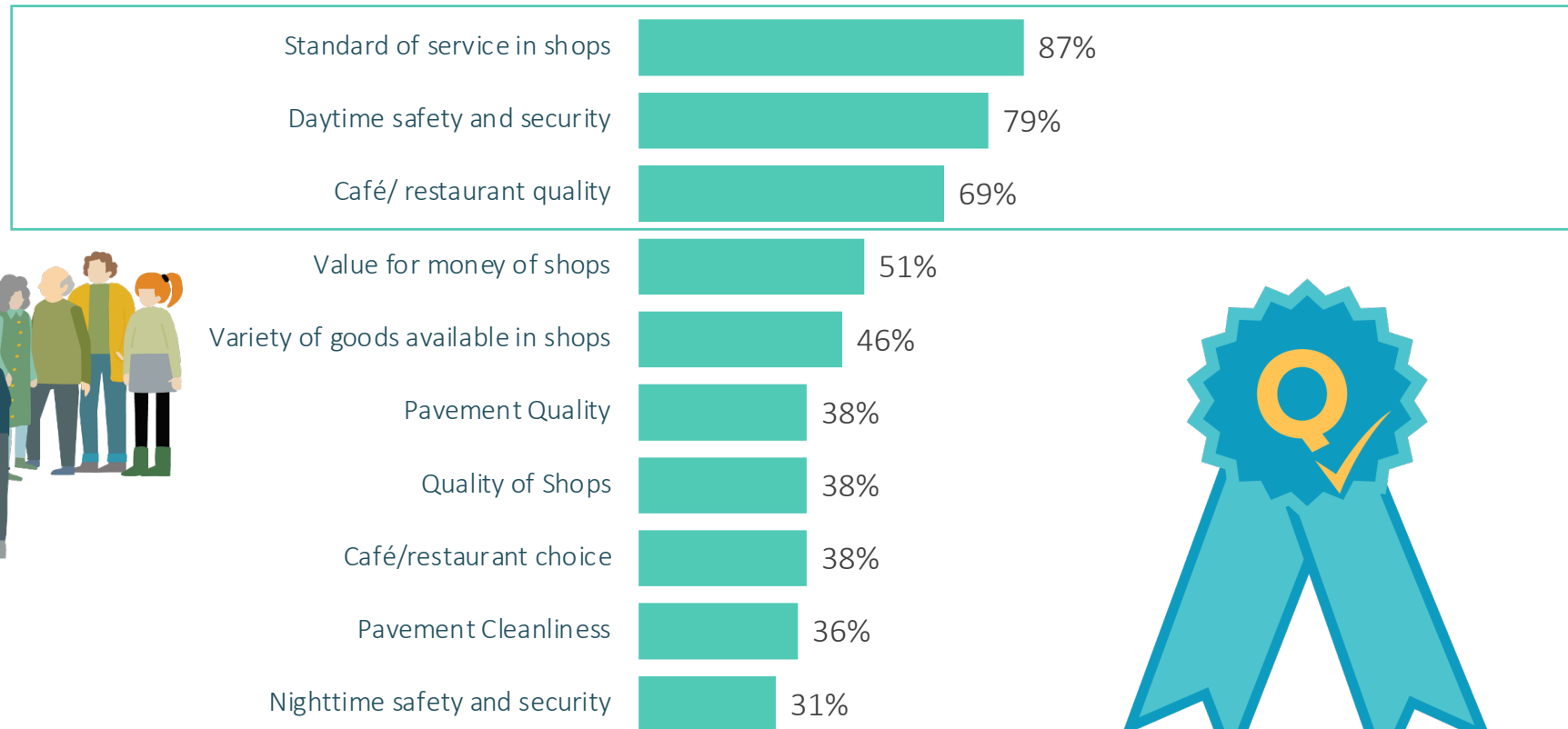


Foreign visitors want to see the town itself based on the famous song "It's a long way to Tipperary". For locals there is not much to attract them at all. – Tipperary Town Business Owner

Service excellence, safety, and quality of hospitality are key strengths

Both value for money in shops, and range of goods also feature but only half the sample in agreement with these.

Where does Tipperary Town do Well? (Net: Good/Very Good)

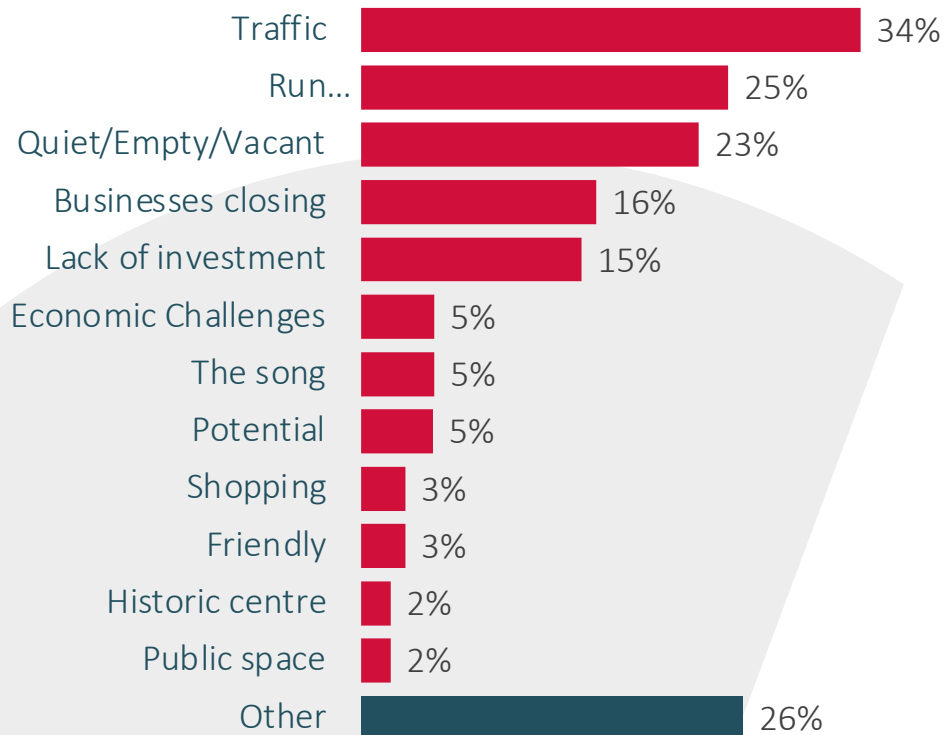


1 in 3 associate Tipperary Town with traffic congestion



Vacant buildings, closing businesses and lack of investment are all also seen as serious challenges

Top of mind associations with Tipperary Town



Heavily Congested Traffic, Not a lot of business going on, lots of properties for sale. Past planning has made shopping centres on the outskirts of the town.



Closed shops and businesses closed due to lack of industry and investment in the town. 20 years ago, it was made a satellite town, IDA pulled out and people go to work elsewhere.



Very busy with traffic, lack of on street parking and empty shop units



Empty shops, not a lot of activity within that area as local businesses closed down and units are vacant

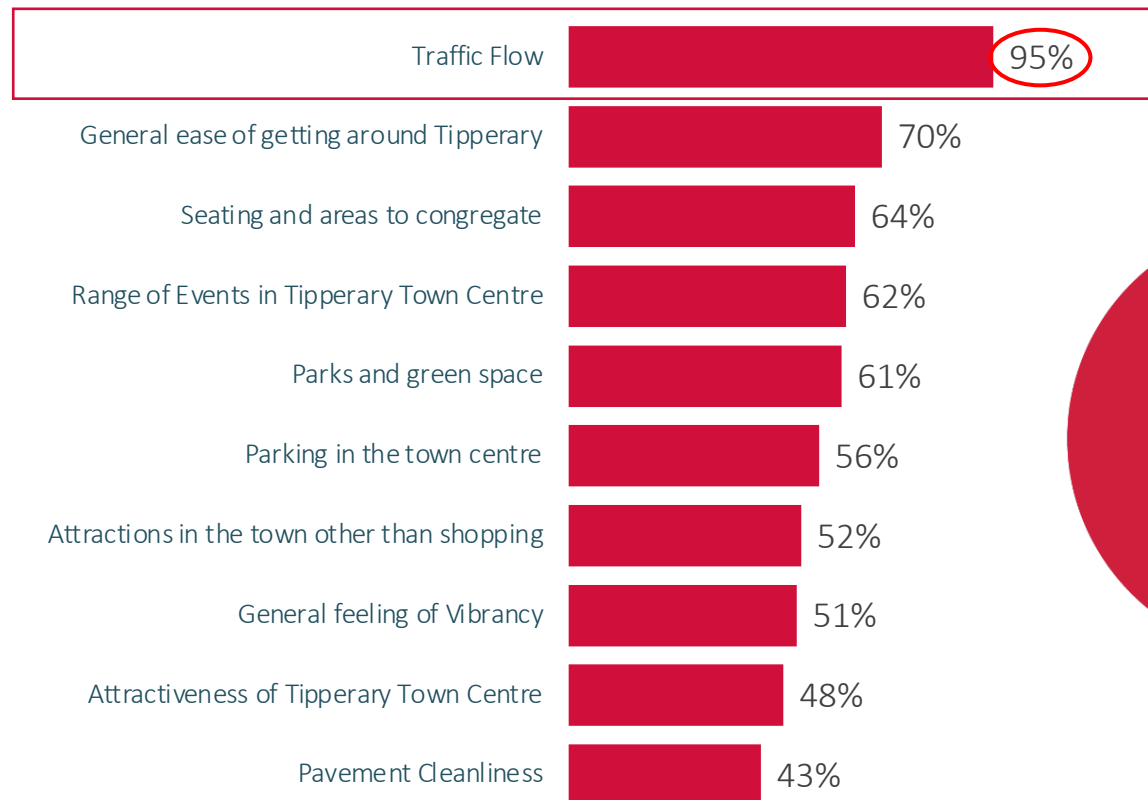


Business premises closed, a need to regenerate the business in the centre of the town.

Whilst traffic flow stands out as the greatest area for improvement

General ease of getting around, areas to congregate, parks/green spaces and events are also areas where businesses think we can improve

Where can we improve? (Net: Poor/Very Poor)

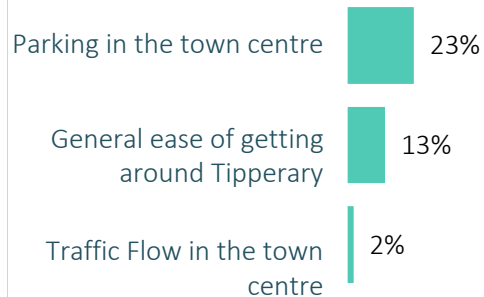


Traffic, Attractiveness and Tourism have higher dissatisfaction than Satisfaction – these are the town’s core issues.



Satisfaction/Dissatisfaction with Various Aspects of Tipperary Town Centre - I

Traffic & Ease of Movement



Attractiveness



Tourism

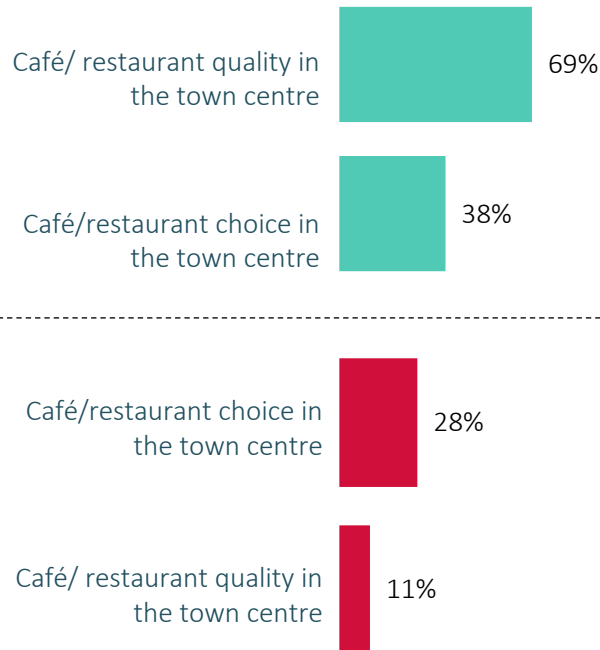


Café Culture, Safety and Shopping – Satisfaction higher than Dissatisfaction

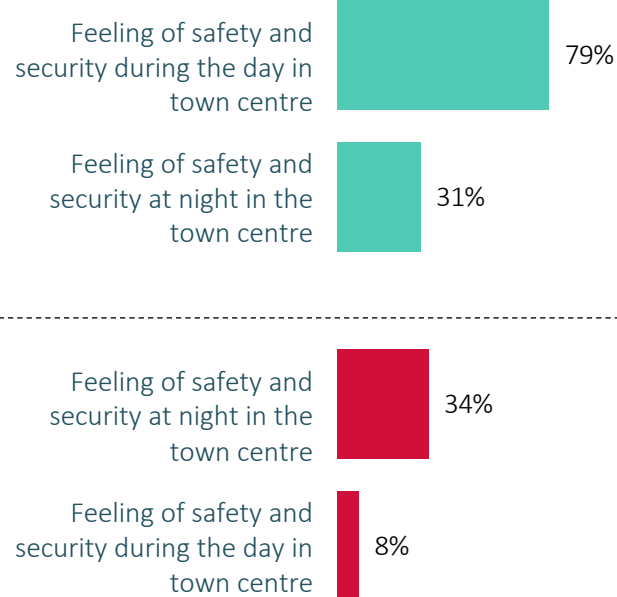


Satisfaction/Dissatisfaction with Various Aspects of Tipperary Town Centre - II

Cafés/Restaurants



Security/Safety



Shopping



Reducing traffic and increasing investment are key improvements suggested

Helping to revitalise derelict buildings, create a better range of shops, and bypassing the town are also seen as important improvements

What Improvements would you make to Tipperary Town Centre?



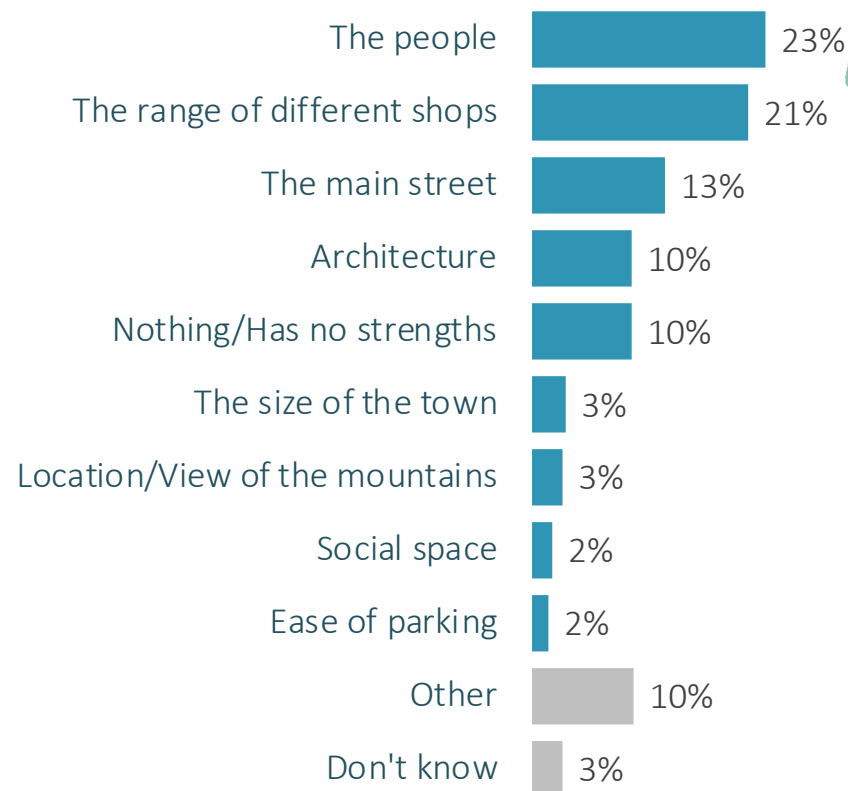
Q7. What improvements would you make to Tipperary Town Centre?

Base: All Tipperary Town Businesses (n=61)

The people of the Town and the range of shops are seen as strengths

Ease of parking and spaces for socialising are seen as poor.

Main Strength of Town Centre?



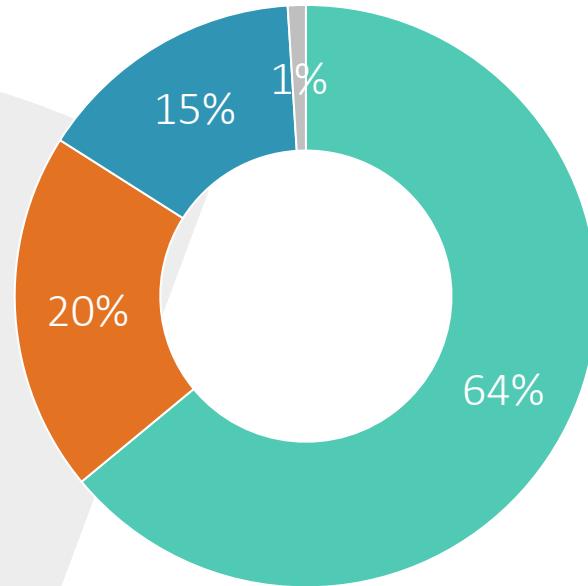
Q4 What do you think is the main strength of Tipperary Town Centre?

Base: All Tipperary Town Businesses (n=61)

Two-thirds think Limerick City is Tipperary Town's greatest competitor

Other competitors include Clonmel and Cashel

Main Competitor of Tipperary Town



■ Limerick
■ Clonmel
■ Cashel
■ Other



02

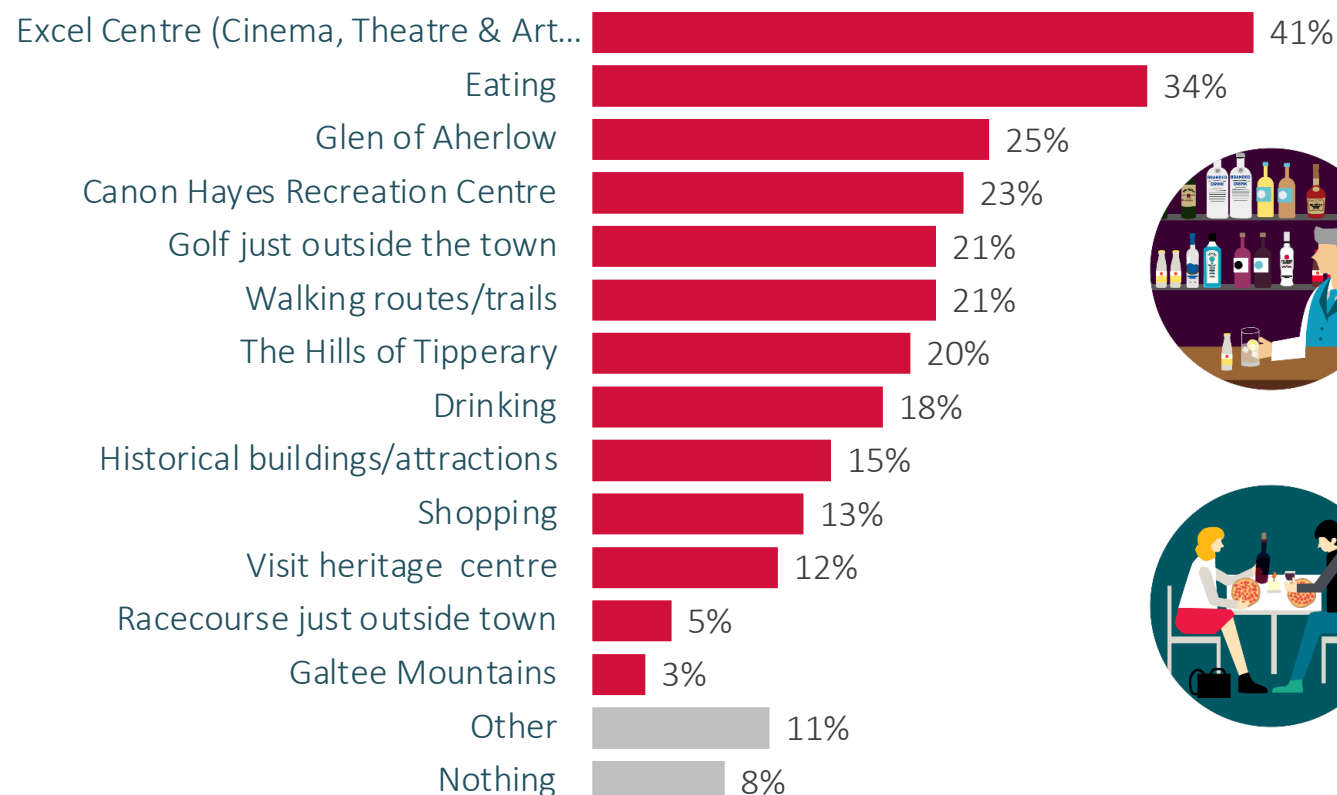
Tourism and Amenities

Festivals are seen as a good opportunity to bring people into the town. Businesses do also recognise a clear lack of family friendly amenities, such as parks or playgrounds

Eating and visiting the Excel Centre are what local businesses would advise visitors to do most

Other attractions nearby are the Glen of Aherlow, Canon Hayes Recreation Centre, as well as local Golf and walking routes.

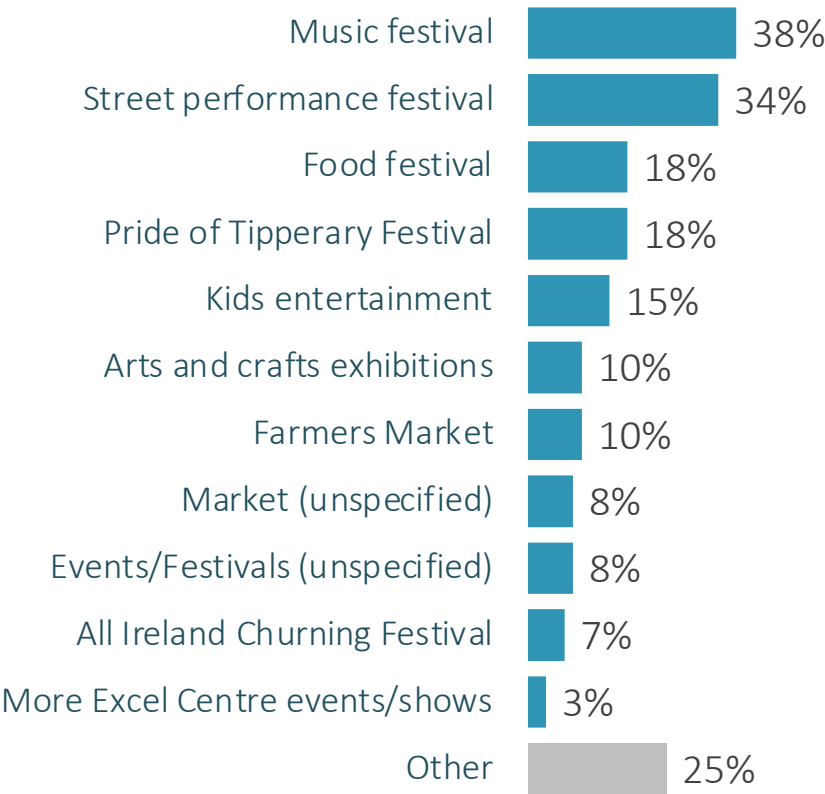
Top Attractions in Tipperary Town



Music or street performance is the favoured way to attract visitors

Other frequent mentions are a food festival, and the Pride of Tipperary Festival.

What events do people want to see in Tipperary Town?



Traditional festival with activities, it has slipped in recent years, there used to be a lot of people in the town when it was on.



The Excel theatre is completely under utilised. There needs to be decent playgrounds. There should be open space events for teenagers.



Open air activities like Tipperary Pride Festival; Music Concert; A long way to Tipperary Festival



Busking competition event. St Patricks Day festival. Pubs play bowls and darts competition, pedestrianise the street in part for activities. Square dancing.



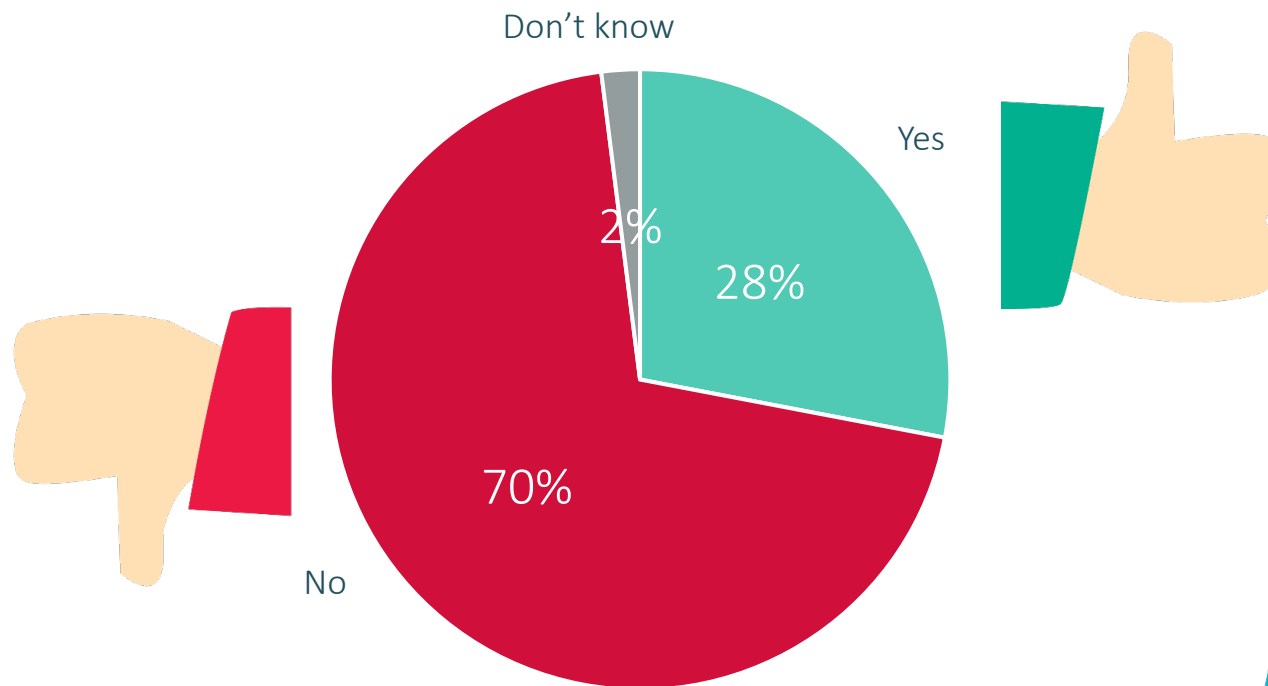
Events the whole town are involved in e.g. Pride of Tipperary, Heritage 100 years of Tipperary; Carnival.

Just over a quarter would participate in organising events



Despite many believing that the range of events at present is poor in Tipperary Town, most would not be interested in helping to organise more events to attract people to the town.

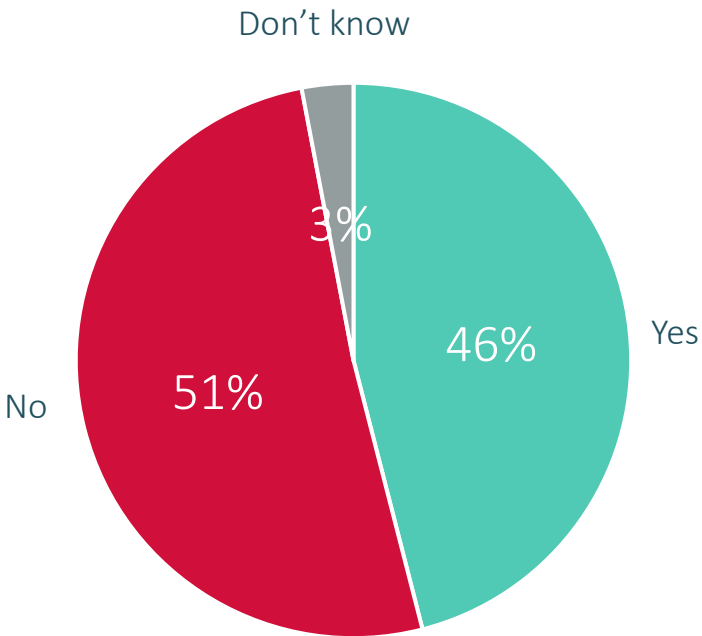
Willingness to participate in events to attract people to Tipperary Town?



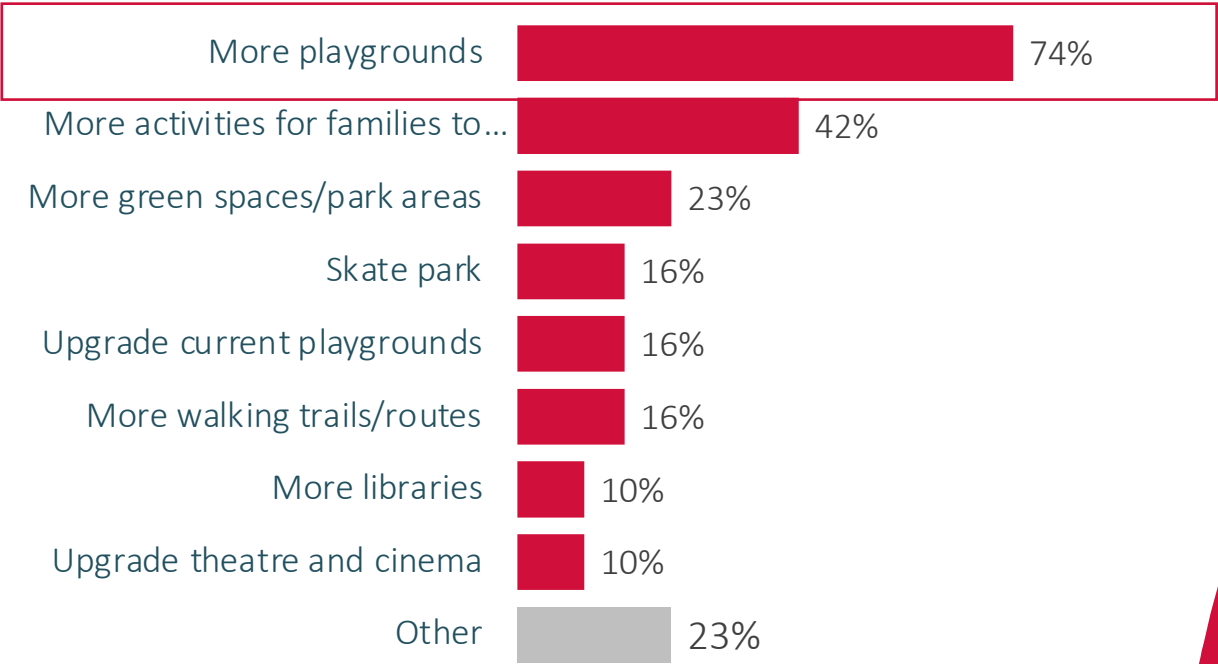
Just over half think the town lacks sufficient amenities for families

Playgrounds and more family activities are the most common amenities people think the town lacks.

Is there sufficient amenities in Tipperary Town for families?



What amenities would you like to see?



03

Covid-19 Impact on Business & Future Planning

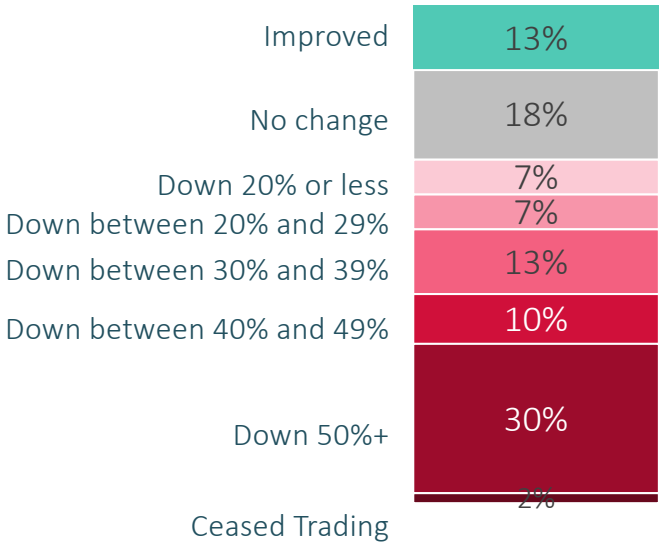
The vast majority of Tipperary Town business experienced poor business performance through Covid, however most are optimistic about the future with increased consumer spend expected

4 out of 5 businesses have seen declining turnover during COVID

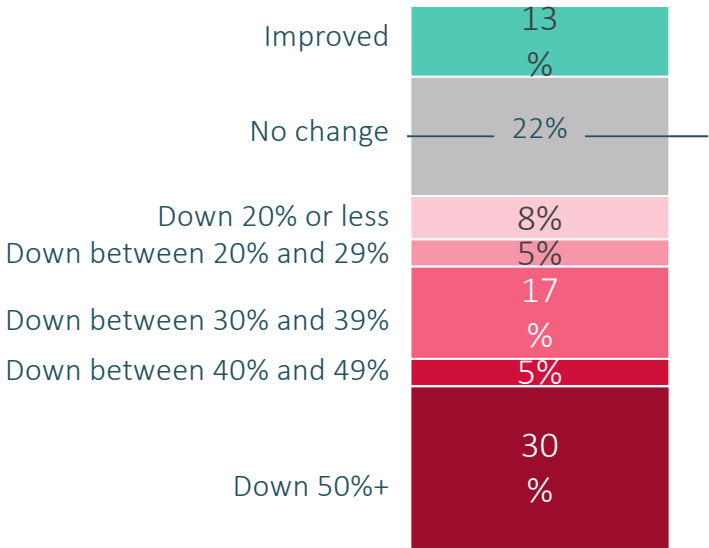
For almost three out of ten businesses, this has meant a decline in turnover and profitability of more than 50%.

Impact on Turnover and Profitability of Business

Impact on Turnover



Impact on Profitability

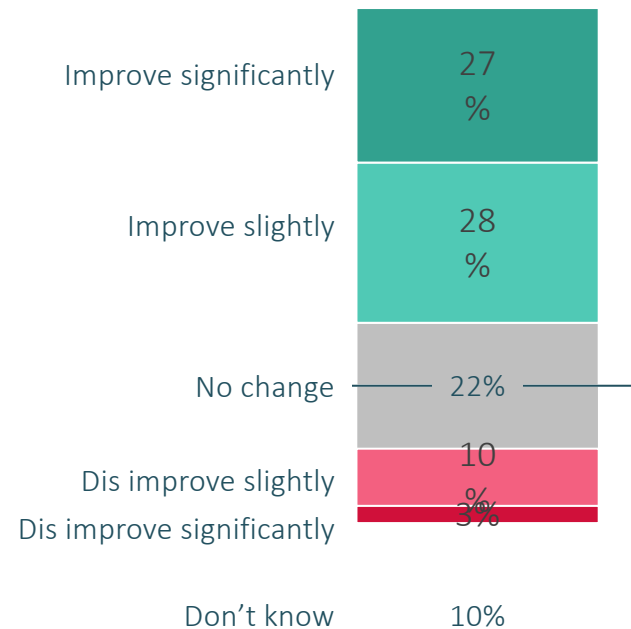


Despite COVID difficulties, business owners remain optimistic

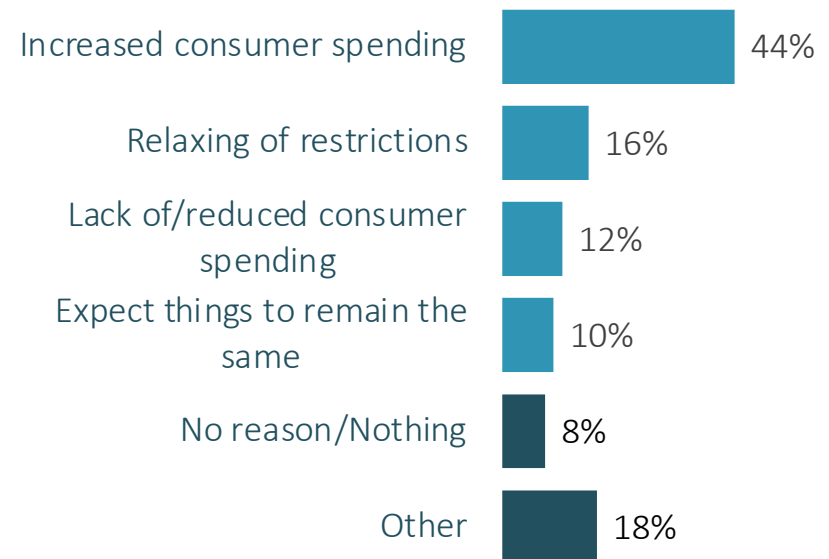


More than half believe that their trading will improve over the next two years, while only one in eight think that it will get worse. Increased consumer spending is the largest driver of optimism.

Expectations for trading next two years



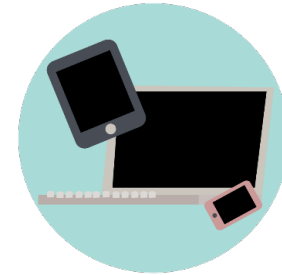
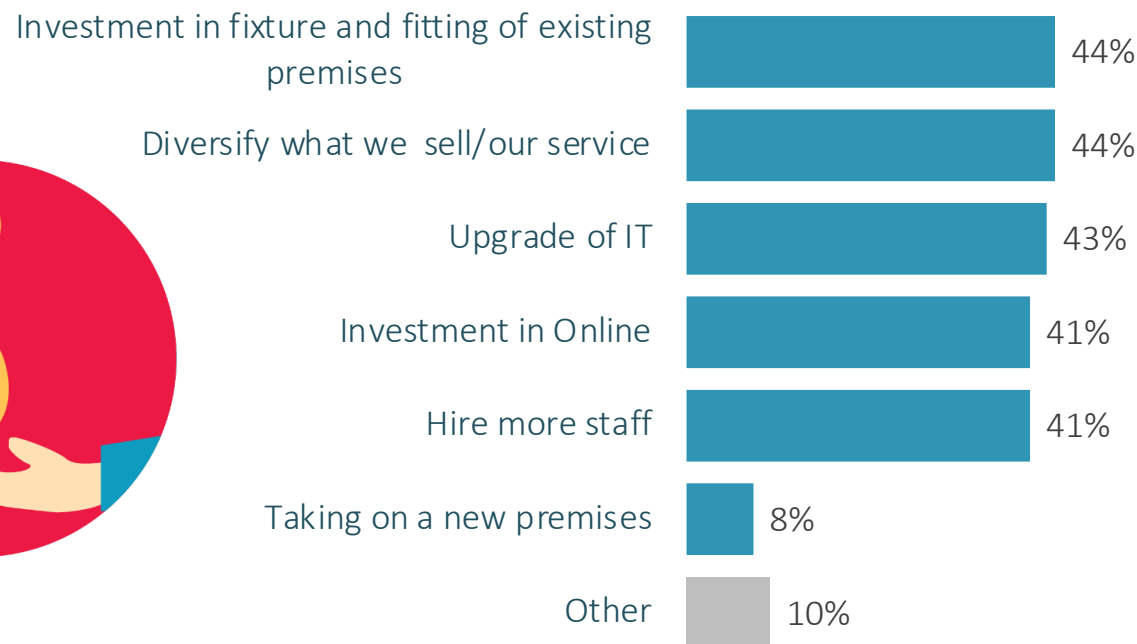
Main Reason For change of opinion



Businesses have a variety of investment plans for the future



Investment Plans



Six in ten have some interest in pursuing training opportunities



Of these opportunities, marketing/digital marketing training and customer service training are the most popular, with four in ten saying they have an interest in pursuing these.

Interest in training opportunities



Marketing / Digital Marketing



41%

Customer Service



41%

E-Commerce / Selling Online



26%

Other



15%

None of these



41%





04

e-Commerce & Social Media

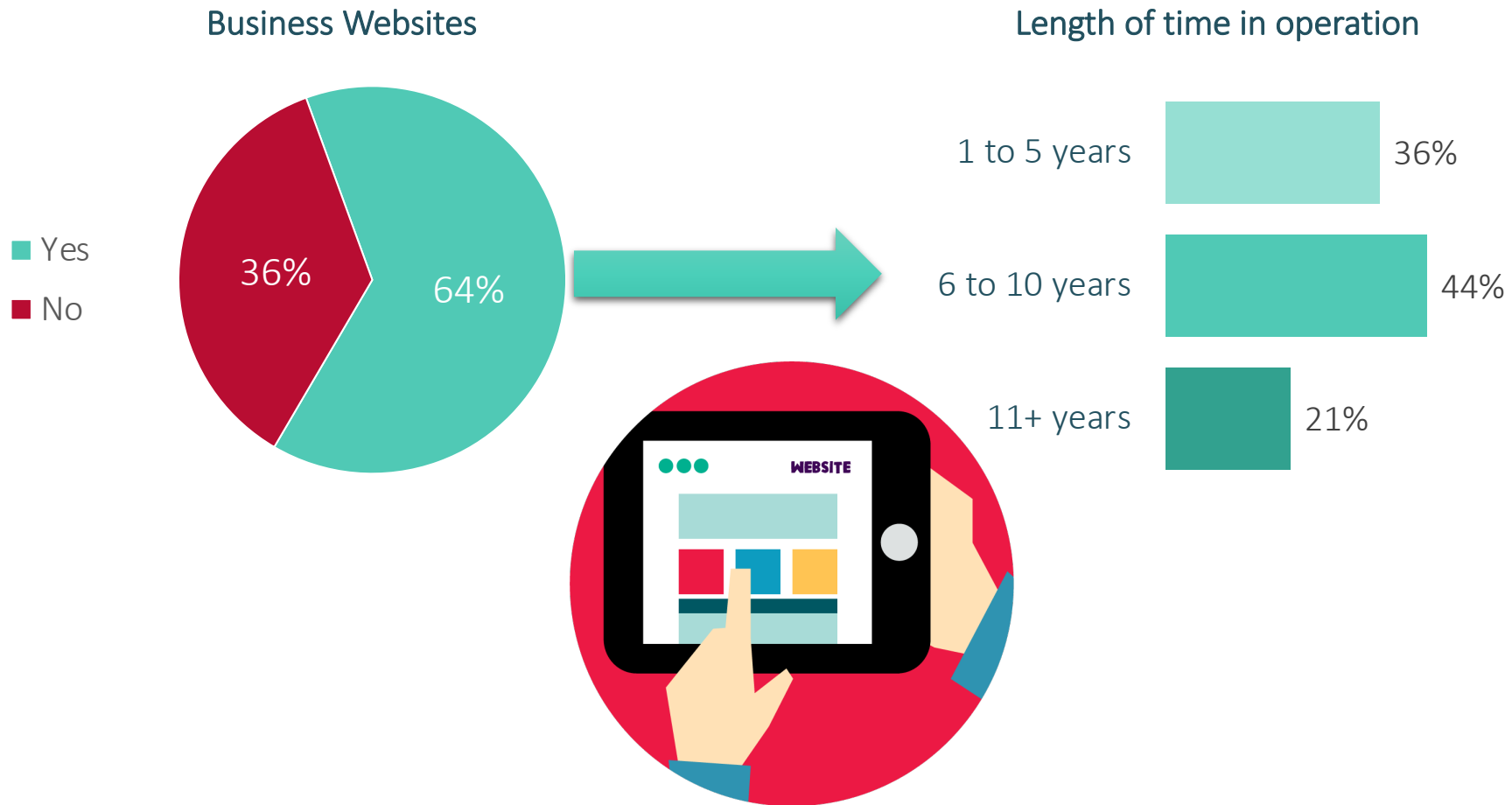


Most Tipperary Town Businesses have an online presence. However 1 in 3 have not got a website. Activity on social media is higher, with Facebook being the most popular channel

Almost two-thirds have a website for their business

The majority of these have been active for at least 6 to 10 years.

Business Websites



More than a third of business websites facilitate online sales

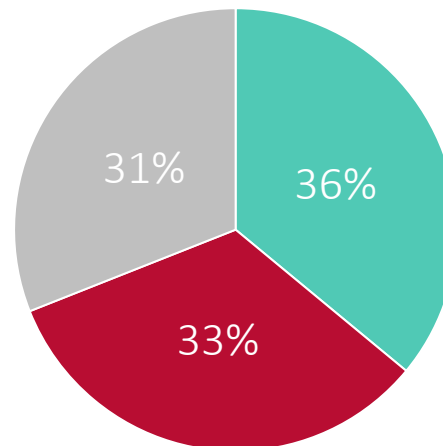


A similar number do not provide sales on their websites.

E-Commerce

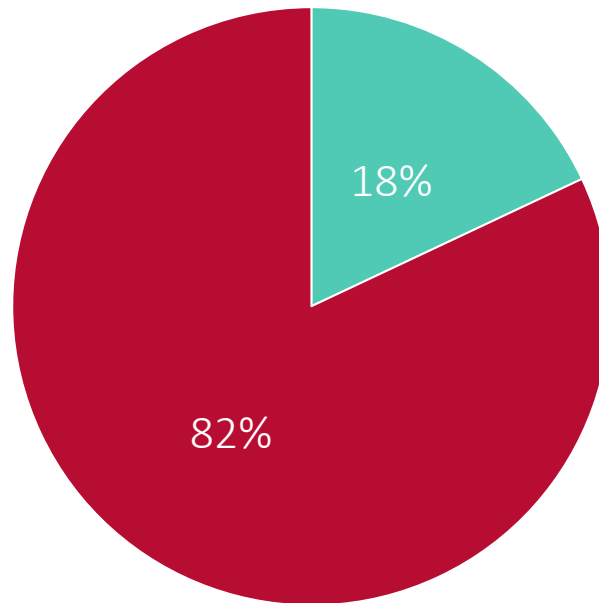
Website facilitate purchases?

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable to my business



Less than 1 in 6 have availed of the local enterprise website grant

Local Enterprise office grant for website?



■ Yes
■ No

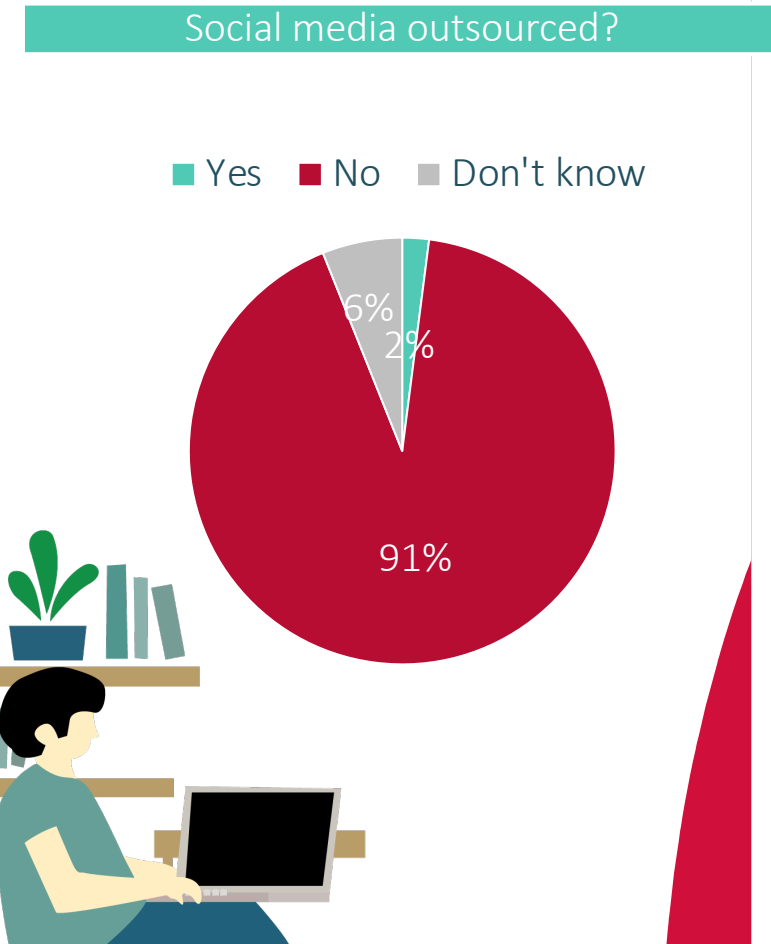
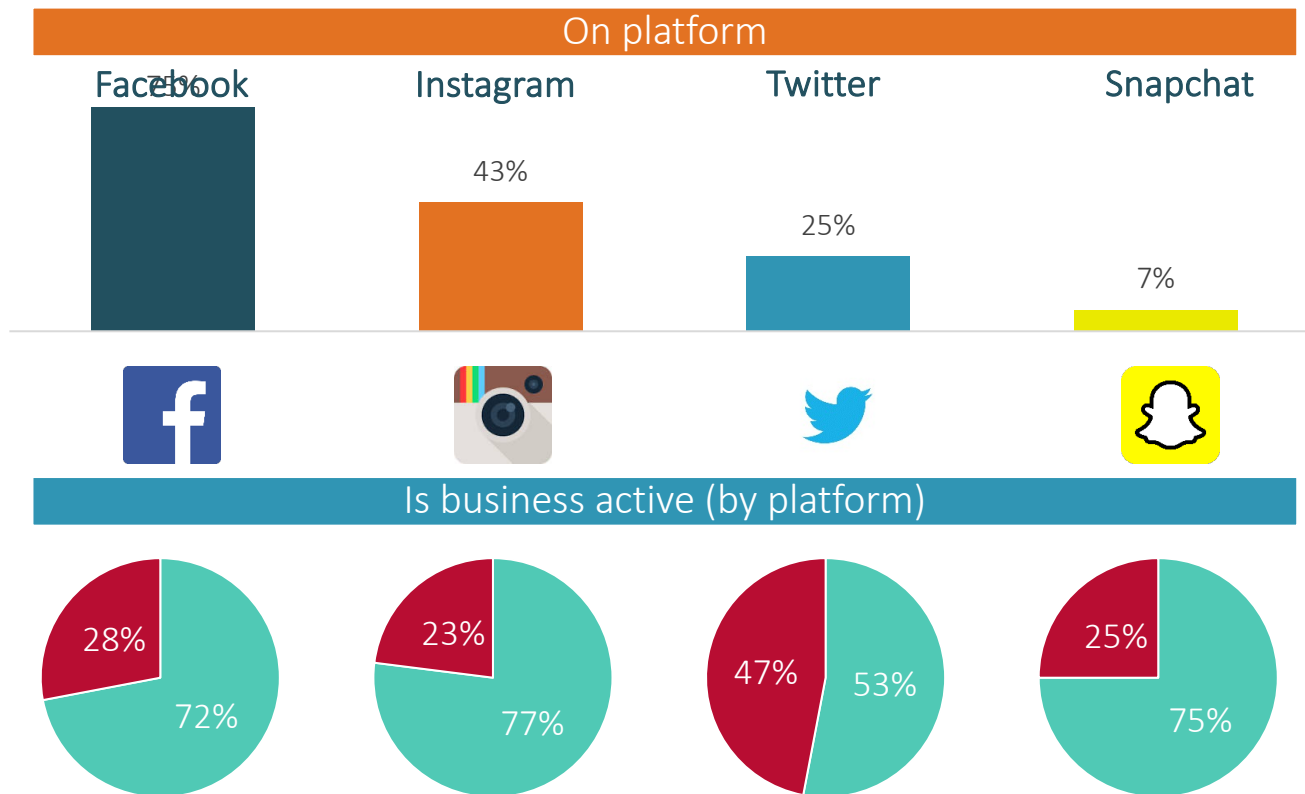


Three in four businesses have a presence on Facebook



Other common social media platforms are Instagram and Twitter. The overwhelming majority operate their social media presence by themselves rather than outsourcing.

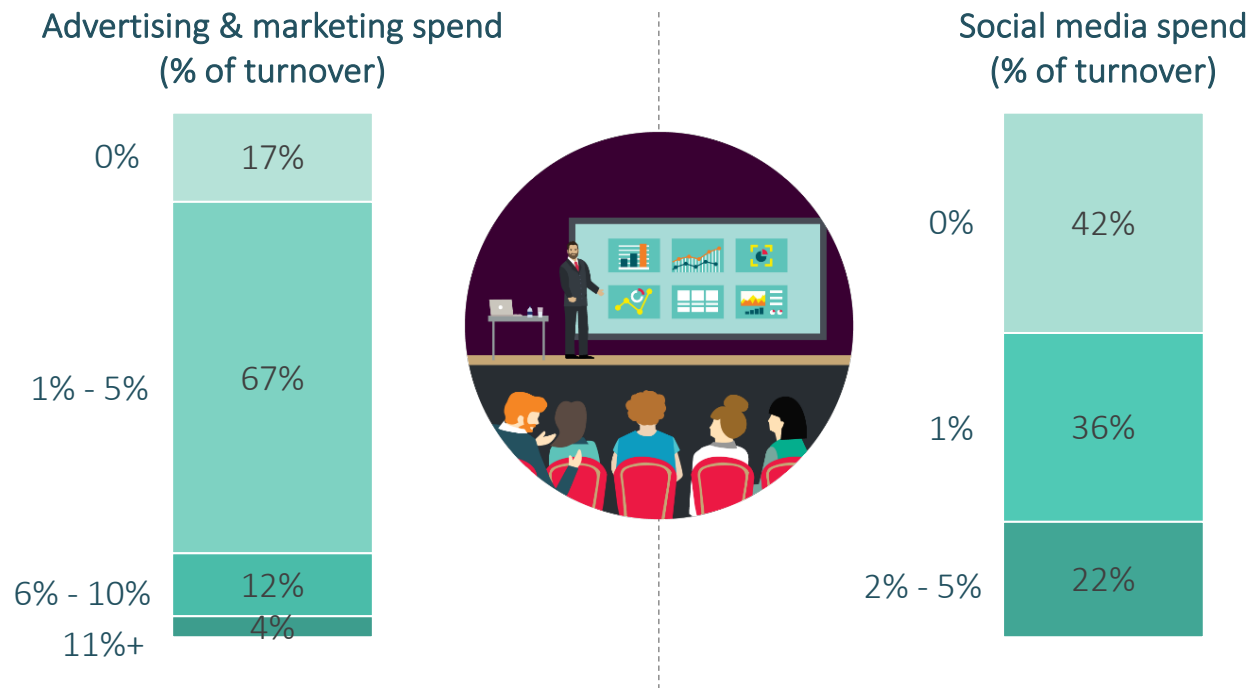
Social Media



Most businesses spend 1-5% of turnover on advertising & marketing

42% of businesses have a 0% share of turnover spend on social media

Marketing & Social Media Spend



05

Traffic Management

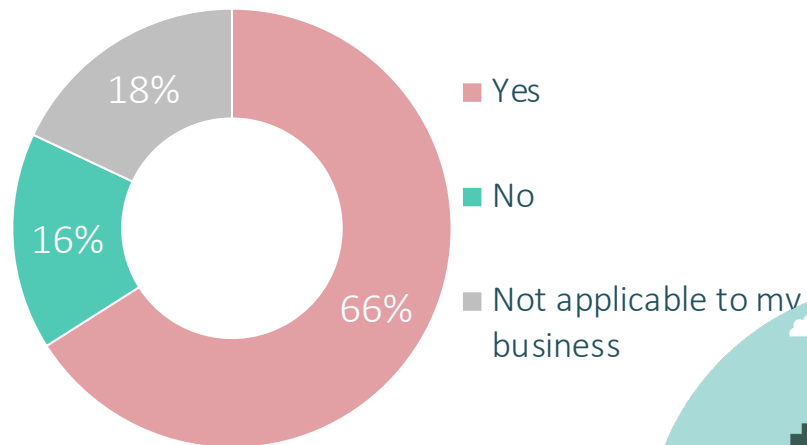
Traffic is recognised as hurting business in Tipperary Town, and most support interventions to prevent it including parking initiatives, the N24 bypass, and pedestrian priority areas.

Traffic in the town is a major issue 4 in 5 support N24 diversion

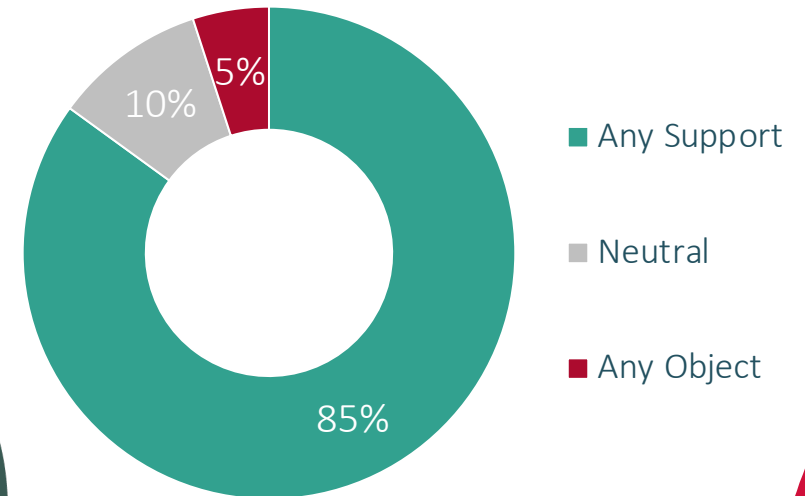


Overall, two-thirds of businesses believe that the volume of traffic in the town centre is harmful to their business with significant support for N24 diversion.

Is traffic hurting business in Tipperary Town?



Support/Object N24 diversion



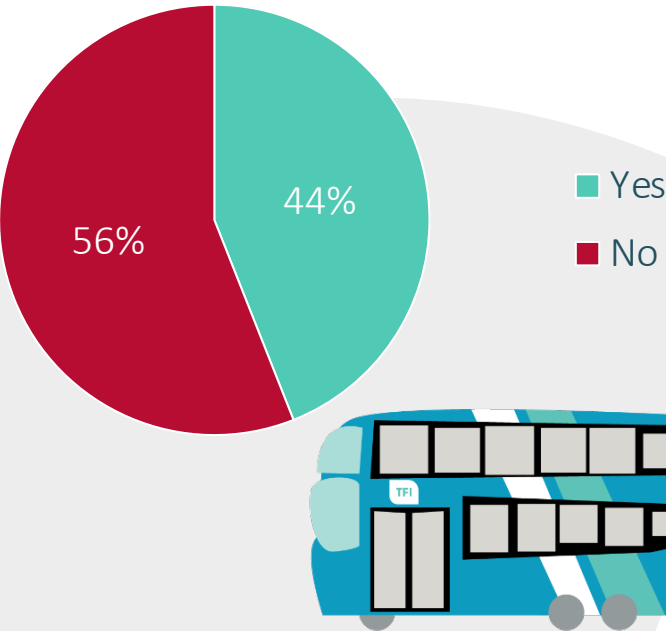
A significant minority would use a local public bus service



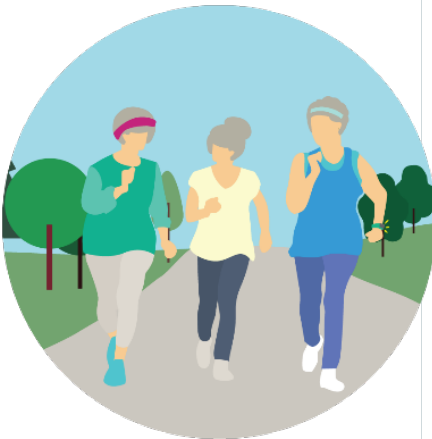
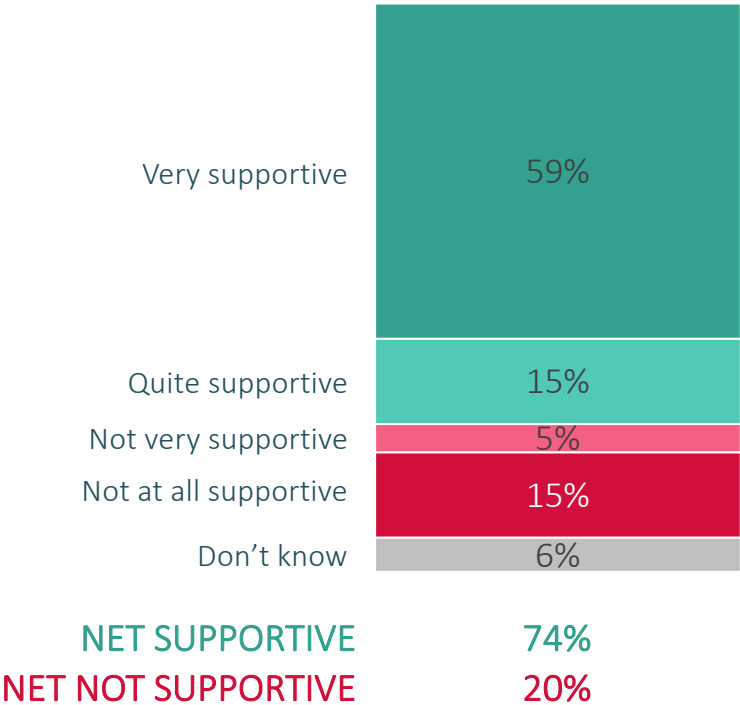
Three of out four are either very or quite supportive of a pedestrian priority trail

Reducing Traffic in Tipperary Town

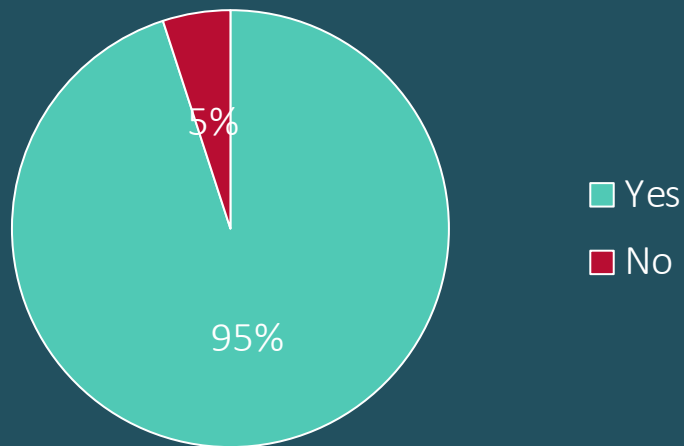
Support for Local Public Bus



Support for Pedestrian Priority Trail



The overwhelming majority believe the traffic situation can be improved



Firstly bypass due to the volume of traffic, maybe a one-way system so that the amount of traffic at any one time is reduced.



The council bought a space which will be 300 car park spaces which could be set up as low-cost parking



The current traffic lights system are a big problem, they are not operating as efficiently as they could be. When they're broken the traffic jams stop completely.



Less traffic, by pass it would benefit greatly. Lots of HGV traffic here as we are on the main route from the West of Ireland to Rosslare, anything going to Rosslare port has to go through here to get there.



Build a ring round or a by pass around the centre, whichever comes first, whichever is the quickest to build to get the pollution out of town.

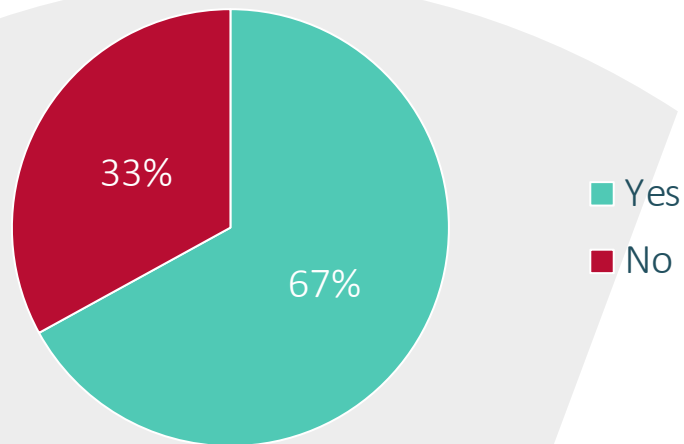
Two-thirds believe that free parking would help their business



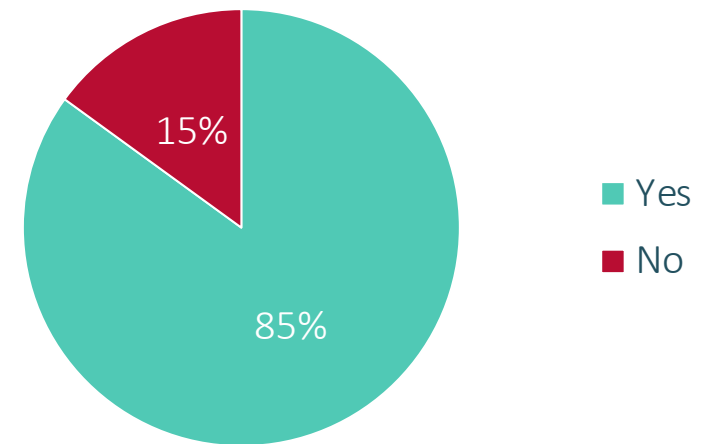
Low cost, all day parking for staff gets even stronger support from Tipperary Town businesses, more than four out of five businesses being in favour.

Parking in Tipperary Town

Support for 2-hour free parking



Support for Low cost, all day parking for staff



A variety of staff parking solutions are common for businesses



Four in ten businesses use on street parking near their business. A further four in ten have parking available on their premises, while a third of businesses use a nearby car park

Where do staff usually park?

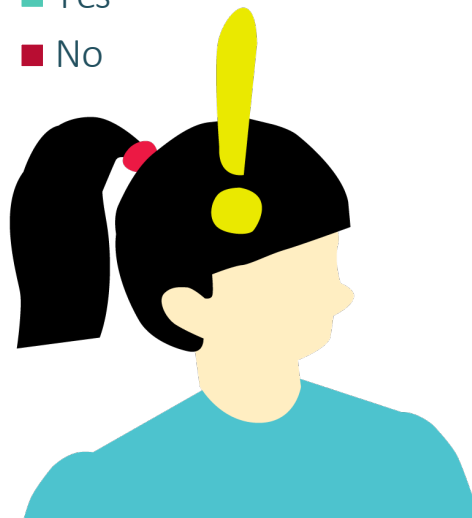
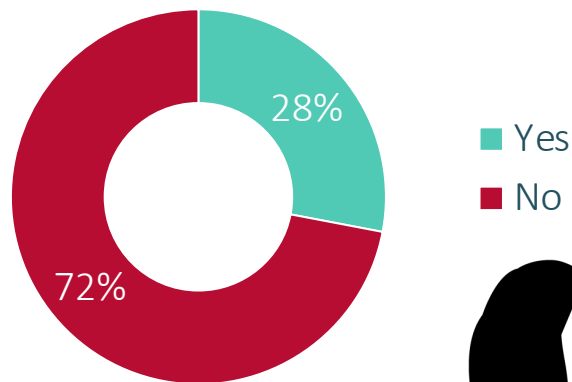


Less than a third of businesses are aware of Tipp Energy Agency

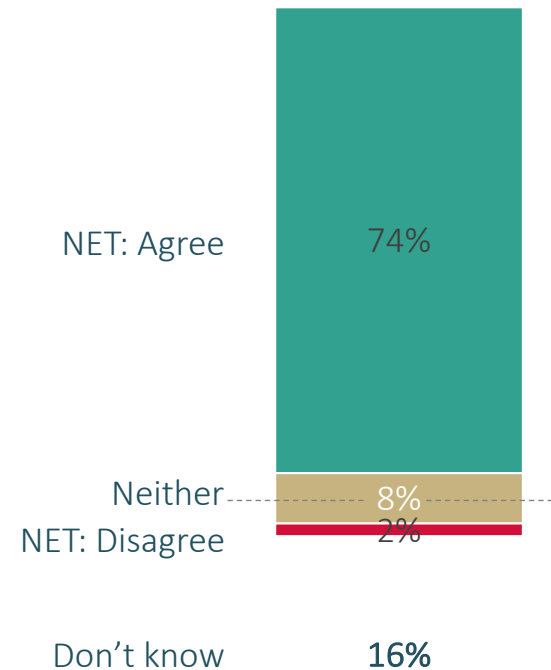


However, the overwhelming majority are supportive of TEA's efforts to transition Tipperary and beyond to a low carbon society.

Awareness of Tipp Energy Agency



Support for Tipp Energy Agency



06

Business Premises

Two-thirds of Tipperary Town Business premises are owner-occupied, with the vast majority currently happy with their location

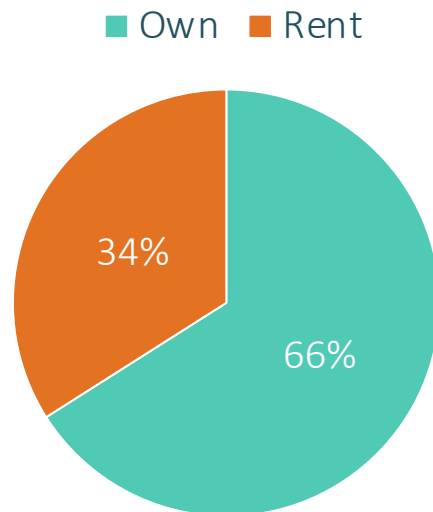
Two-thirds of businesses own their own premises



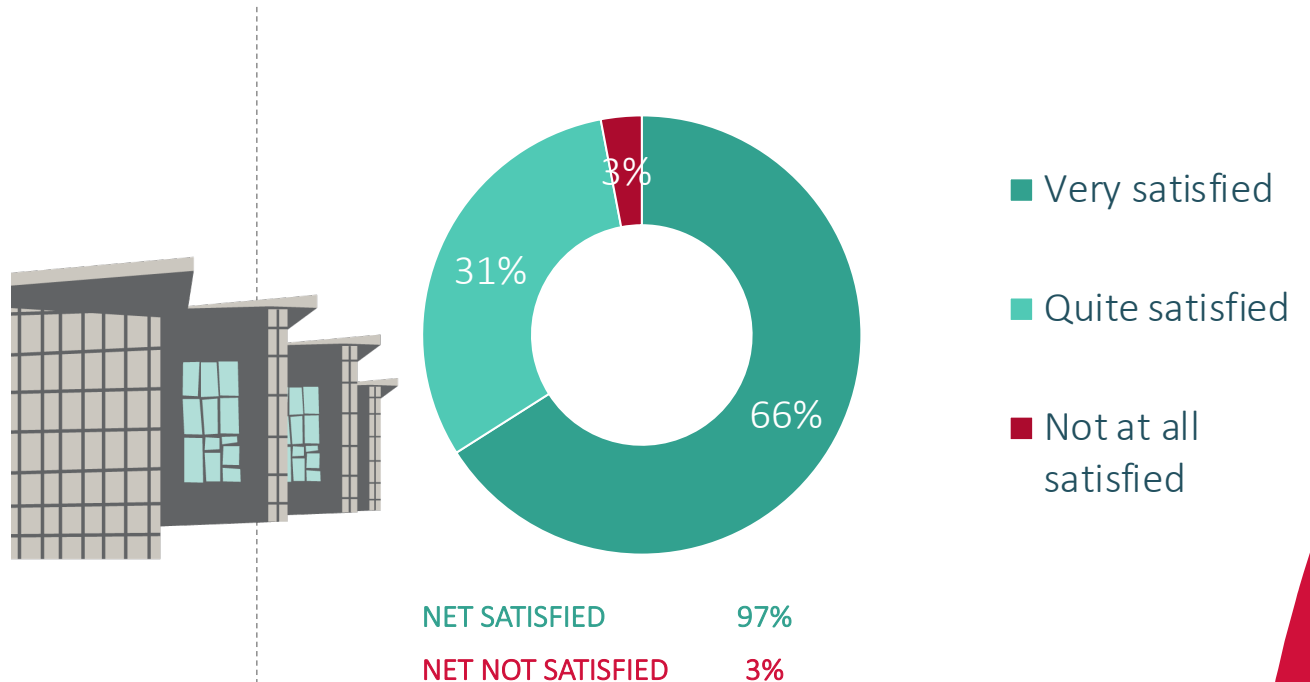
The overwhelming majority are satisfied with their own premises, with only 3% saying they are not at all satisfied.

Business premises

Own or rent current premises?



Satisfied with current premises?



07. Tipperary Town Chamber

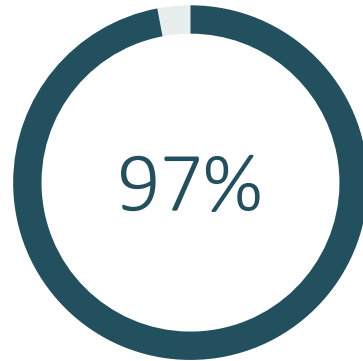
The vast majority of Tipperary Town businesses would be willing to contribute to cooperative marketing strategy to help improve Tipperary Town Centre

Almost all businesses are aware of Tipperary Town Chamber

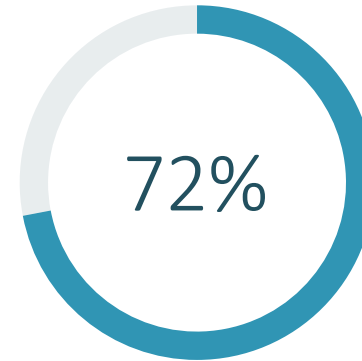


A strong majority (more than seven in ten) would be willing to contribute to a cooperative strategy marketing fund in order to help promote the town for business.

Tipperary Town Chamber



Aware of Tipperary Town Chamber



Willing to contribute to a cooperative strategy marketing fund



Main Findings



1

Tipperary town needs to play on its strengths of shopping and good café/restaurants and recognise the big impact traffic congestion is having on the historic town centre. Investment is needed to turn things around...

2

Making better use of the Excel Centre, festivals ranging from music to food or street performances are seen as a good opportunity to bring people into the town. We should advertise the town as a base to explore surrounding area.

3

Despite many believing that the range of events at present is poor in Tipperary Town, most would not be interested in helping to organise more events to attract people to the town, however, there is overwhelming support for a cooperative strategy marketing fund amongst businesses surveyed in Tipperary Town.

4

Most Tipperary Town Businesses have an online presence, however 1 in 3 have not got a website. Moreover, take up of the LEO website fund is low. Strategic marketing will help raise marketing for what is available to help businesses.

5

Traffic is recognised as hurting business in Tipperary Town, and most support interventions to prevent it including parking initiatives, the N24 bypass, and pedestrian priority areas.

6

Businesses recognise the need for quality designed areas for families and other groups to congregate, and vast majority support the building of playgrounds, green spaces or similar amenities.

Appendix

Project Team



Ali Harvey
The Heritage Council

- / Founder and Co-ordinator of CTCHC Programme
- / Podcaster – Putting Town Centres First
- / Founder and Co-ordinator of newly-established Irish Towns Diaspora Network (ITDN)
- / Qualified Spatial Planner and Project Manager with a background in economics and urban development
- / Twenty-three years' experience of project managing planning and regeneration programmes and projects in Ireland (both private and public sectors);
- / Author of the Community-led Village Design Statements Toolkit, 2012;
- / Founding Co-ordinator of the Irish Walled Towns Network (IWTN) in 2005.
- / Member of EirGrid's National Advisory Group (NAG) - nominated by EirGrid's Planning Unit.



Annemarie Ryan Shiner
Tipp County Council

- / Independent councillor for Tipp County Council and local business woman.
- / Founding member of grass roots community activist group March4tipp
- / A member of Tipperary Town Revitalisation Task Force, Tipperary Town CTCHC, March4tipp Tipperary Town Chamber and Light Up The Plan Committee.
- / Annemarie is a passionate advocate of community collaboration in the local decision making process and also advocates for place making and regeneration through community consensus.
- / Over twenty years working in Event Management with a history in delivering large scale events nationally and internationally.



Rita Fenton
Tipp Chamber of Commerce

- / Vice Chairperson of Tipperary Chamber of Commerce & Project Manager of Tipperary Town Enhancement Group
- / Local Business owner of Rita's Flowers.
- / A native of Co. Limerick, Rita lived and worked for many years in Tipperary. She opened a second shop there in 2018.
- / Rita attributes her success to customer loyalty, self belief and hard work.
- / Rita's first love is music and is well known in music circles. She is well known for her positive, determined attitude with a very strong attitude to self belief and work ethics.
- / Her personal life took a dramatic change in 2012 following an accident which she refers to 'as life changing not life ending' which left her with a permanent disability and limited mobility. However, though her personal workload has been greatly reduced she manages her business on a daily basis, tailoring it around her new disability.



Michael Begley
Tipperary County Council

- / Michael joined the Tipperary Town Revitalisation Task Force as Programme Manager from his role as Business Advisor in the Local Enterprise Office Tipperary where he had worked since 2018,
- / Rural Development Programme (LEADER) Officer & Coordinator for South Tipperary Development Company from 2011-2018, where he oversaw work on a great number of projects and initiatives in Tipperary Town and beyond.
- / Michael, who is a graduate of Galway Mayo Institute of Technology and University College Cork hails from Dingle, Co. Kerry, and relocated to Tipperary in 2011.



Bryan Cox
RED C Research & Marketing Director

- / Bryan has 15 years experience in market research.
- / Bryan has a honours degree in Marketing from Dublin City University
- / Bryan has worked in RED C for the past 13 years and has vast experience in a qualitative and quantitative capacity
- / Bryan is the Research project Director on consumer surveys for the ongoing Heritage Council Collaborative Town Centre Health Check Research Project.



THANK YOU



www.redcresearch.ie

REDC