

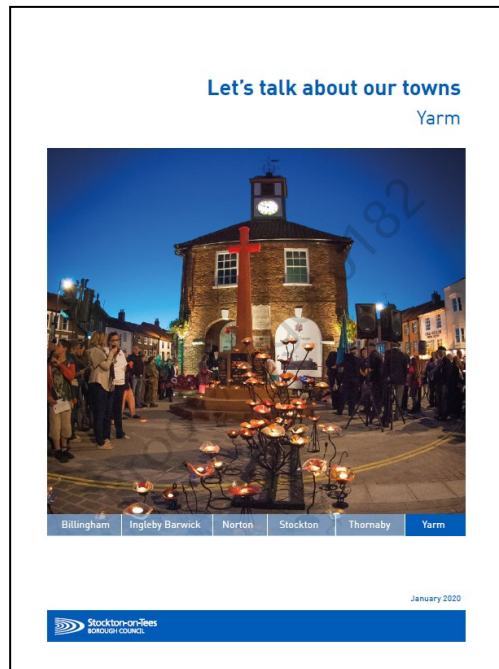


Let's talk about our towns

Yarm High Street Consultation Results Summary

Yarm Consultation

In early January 2020, Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council began a consultation about the future of town centres and high streets in Billingham, Ingleby Barwick, Norton, Thornaby and Yarm.



The consultation lasted for 6 weeks and sought people’s views on the future of the five centres in the Borough, to identify what is important to the users of the town centre and to inform future priorities for intervention.

There were five different ‘Let’s talk about our towns’ documents – for Billingham, Ingleby Barwick, Norton, Thornaby and Yarm – complete with questionnaires. Online surveys were created for responses, as well as face-to-face sessions held in each of the five centres.

The consultation was promoted widely on Social Media, and in each of the centres via a printed questionnaire for those without internet access. All responses were added together, giving a total sample size for each as follows:

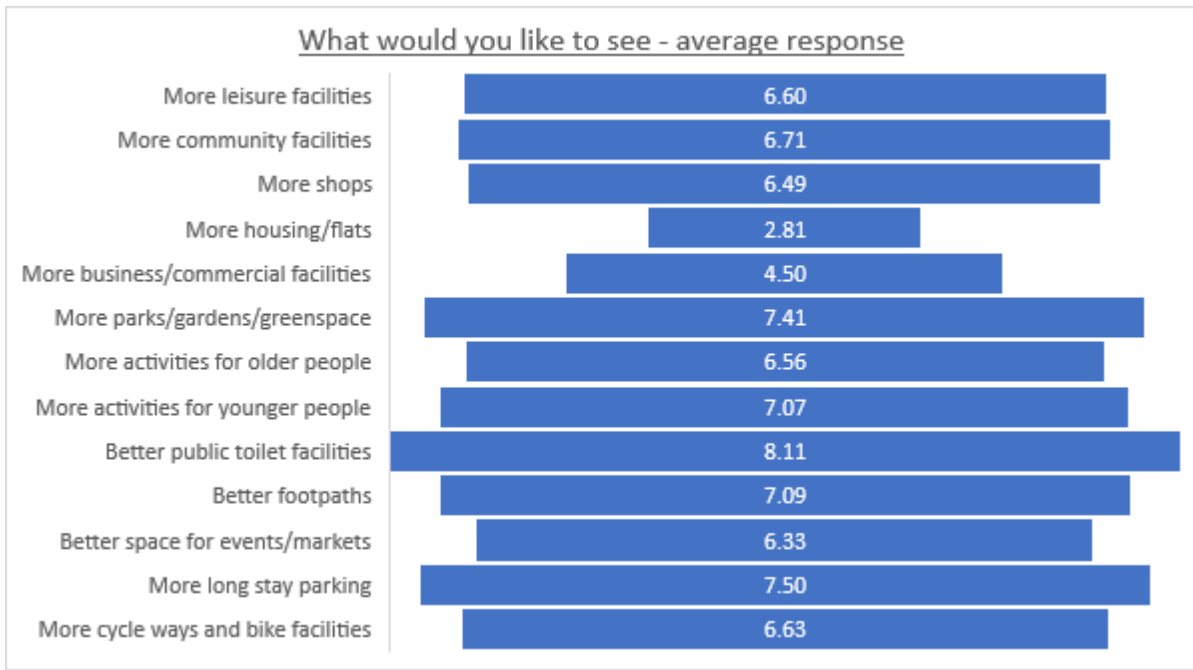
Billingham Town Centre	311 responses
Ingleby Barwick Town Centre	462 responses
Norton Town Centre	285 responses
Thornaby Town Centre	349 responses
Yarm Town Centre	208 responses
TOTAL	1,615 responses

This summary presents findings from the Yarm consultation, exploring what the priorities ought to be for the centre and how we could work alongside the owners to bring about change that will help ensure its long-term vitality and popularity.

Here is the summary of findings from this consultation:

Most respondents answered positively when asked about more facilities on a scale from 1 (not at all) and 10 (would most like).

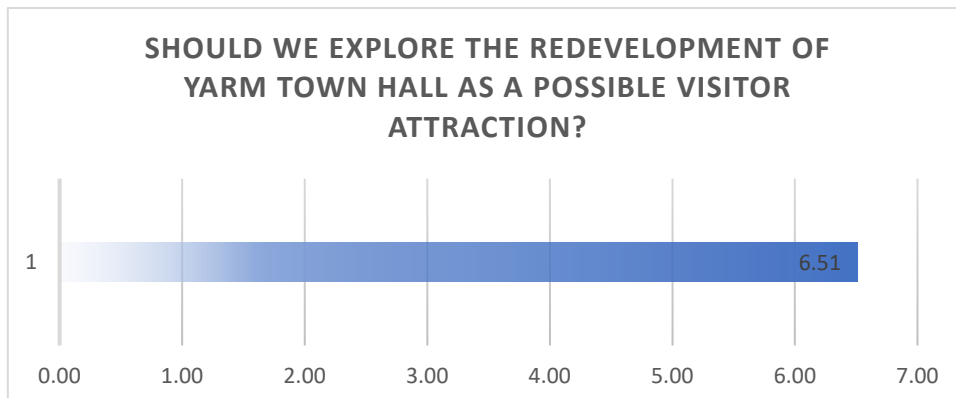
Specific aspects attracted the following ratings:



Better public toilet facilities scored particularly highly along with improvements to long stay parking and more greenspaces.

There was little desire for more housing, business and commercial facilities as part of any development.

In addition, respondents were specifically asked a question on the redevelopment of Yarm Town Hall, attracting the following ratings:



Most respondents offered additional general comments on the consultation (there was a total of 406 comments across the survey) and the following themes emerged:

Please comment if you'd like to add any more things you'd like to see:

- There was a broad range of comments here, covering retail, events and leisure. The most popular theme by far concerned the issues around parking with the following suggestions:
 - *"We would like to see a long stay car park for the staff who work in the town and for visitors who want to stay more than 3 hours"*
 - *"Provide a large car park"*
 - *"Free parking for 2 hours"*
 - *"Long stay parking must be a priority"*
 - *"Long stay parking is woeful for both customers and businesses who don't open for 9am and aren't able to grab one of the handful of spaces. The no return within 3hrs is an unnecessary frustration to all"*
- Other suggestions included:
 - *"Community and family friendly events. Ferias like in Spain, markets, themed events to engage all ages. Bring the community back to Yarm instead of expensive shops"*
 - *"More trees and wildflowers planted and left alone"*
 - *"Public toilets are a disgrace"*
 - *"More variety of local shops"*
 - *"More independent, local businesses"*

When thinking about Yarm High Street, can you suggest up to three priority areas where you'd most like to see change?

- Again, the issues around parking dominated the comments in this section.
 - *"There is one single priority issue that Yarm needs resolving. Parking!"*
 - *"Parking, Parking, Parking"*
- Also, suggestions to improve the current toilet facilities.
 - *"A welcoming, modern public toilet. Current location is excellent, condition is awful"*
 - *"There needs to be toilets which are clean and tidy"*
 - *"The public toilets are disgusting"*
- Many acknowledged the current retail offer is good and the need to attract/support shops and businesses.

- *“Fewer shop closures, better kept wharf area”*
- *“Reduce the rates so that local businesses can compete with the internet. Give new businesses incentives to start up. Educate the young more on how to set up a business”*
- *“Better shops, I go to Northallerton/ Darlington to get better shops”*
- *“Lower rents and rates to enable businesses to flourish. Retain a supermarket”*
- Ideas to improve and develop links from the High Street to the river as well as the former Campbells Garage site also featured in this section.
 - *“Better linking up of the river and countryside walks to the high street”*
 - *“Tidy up the former Campbells site at the end of Bentley Wynd - would make a lovely park/garden”*

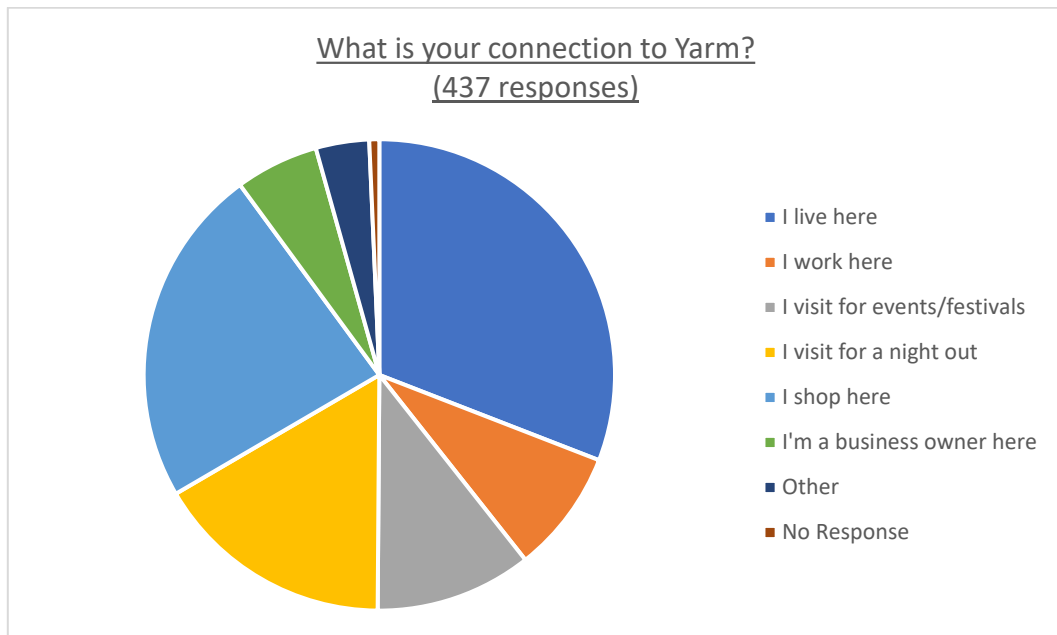
And finally, is there anything else you'd like to tell us? Please use the box below to share any thoughts, ideas or plans you'd like to be considered.

- There was again strong support to resolve traffic and parking issues along with improvements to the toilets – although some concerns were raised about the location of developments.
 - *“Please stop building car parks in the centre of the town. You will destroy the essence of the place”*
 - *“Yarm is a beautiful town and we must keep it that way, not spoil it by adding more and more public car parking, thereby creating more air pollution and removing more and more of the precious green areas left”*
 - *“Removing the green area to accommodate a car park has obvious detrimental environmental and ecological impacts”*
- In addition, several suggestions to attract more / better shops.
 - *“Less empty shops with attractive business rates for start-ups”*
 - *“Do more to attract small niche shops to town just like we had before”*
 - *“The high street needs investment to attract more independent shops - a proper butcher, fruit shop etc.”*
- Several suggestions to develop links to the river and events also featured.
 - *“Use and development of the river and surrounding area to improve leisure offering”*
 - *“More local community events like Yarm Gala etc. especially in the summer to make use of the river”*

- *“More use of the High Street and river for events – e.g. open air music, regatta etc.”*
- Finally, some concerns were raised about over development of Yarm.
 - *“Leave Yarm alone, it is thriving, busy, much used and does NOT need changing”*
 - *“Our beautiful unique High Street needs to be cared for, protected & improved!”*
 - *“Protect and improve existing 'green spaces”*

Profile of responses

- 65% of respondents live in Yarm, with most offering more than one response when asked ‘What is your connection to Yarm?’ Almost half of respondents (49%) also use Yarm for shopping.
- 90% of responses came from people visiting ‘within the last week’



- All age groups were represented in the consultation, although those ‘under 16’ represented less than 1% of the sample. Those aged 41-65 saw the most responses, accounting for more than half (55%) of the sample.

