



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

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UK Parliament



Putting People First: A New Future for Bishopbriggs Town Centre

We consulted with the people of Bishopbriggs to hear first-hand what they think of their town centre.

This document sets out their views, their voices and our recommendations.

November 2021



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Foreword

By Rona Mackay MSP

This consultation is a first of its kind for East Dunbartonshire and is putting your voices at the heart of our project. Harnessing the resources of two parliaments, with both Amy and I working collegiately for the benefit of our community, we hope to use your voice to ensure a bright, prosperous and revitalised future for Bishopbriggs.

COVID-19 has changed the dynamic of how our high streets operate. During the Scottish Parliament election of 2021, I pledged to put our high-streets first, ensuring we could build back stronger from the pandemic. I heard it loud and clear during the election; people wanted to see their community regenerated. I'm pleased that this report helps deliver on that election promise.

We are making clear recommendations to all stakeholders – East Dunbartonshire Council, the Scottish Government, the UK Government and external organisations – that our constituents' voices matter. The pandemic, correctly, transcends politics and this report reflects the collaborative, community spirit that exists within Strathkelvin and Bearsden. It's people, not politics, that will help us emerge from COVID-19 with a renewed sense of optimism and hope. Central to that was putting the views of our community front and centre, making sure they had a valued stake in Bishopbriggs.

Amy and I were certain that the community would respond in their droves. Through engaging with local community groups, door to door leafletting, digital advertisement, press coverage and targeted social media content, we've aimed to ensure this consultation best represents the views of those who live and work here.

Now begins the hard work of putting those words into action. This cannot be done alone and with the added challenges set by the pandemic, we have little time to lose. Both Amy and I are determined that these proposals – formed and designed by our constituents – will find a place in the future of our town. The people of Strathkelvin and Bearsden deserve nothing less.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rona Mackay". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letter 'R' being large and prominent.



Foreword

By Amy Callaghan MP

When I was first elected as East Dunbartonshire's MP in December of 2019, I pledged that I would always strive to champion the views of residents and ensure your voices are heard. Working collaboratively with Rona, I am proud to be able to present to constituents your collective views for the regeneration of Bishopbriggs town centre, which puts local voices at its heart.

By using our platforms to promote the views of residents, we hope that this consultation will kickstart a more prosperous, community led future for Bishopbriggs. These proposals do not come with any political baggage; they instead come directly from your own responses and views on how to revitalise the area.

Concerns over our high streets have been compounded in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic. You have made this clear to Rona and I. We have listened and now is the time to act.

If we are to rebuild our high streets effectively, then we must ensure local voices are at the centre of any changes. We as elected representatives have a duty to ensure that our constituents' voices are being heard by all stakeholders; and this report aims to do just that.

I am delighted by the level of responses we received to this consultation. By engaging directly at all levels of the community through local organisations, door to door leafletting, digital advertisement, and targeted social media, we have been able to create clear recommendations to those in charge of revitalising our community, while also ensuring people remain at the forefront of any plans.

Now, more than ever, it is essential that we work together to build a future which places our community first. While there is still much to be done, we trust this consultation will serve as the first step towards that goal.

Amy Callaghan

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Acknowledgements

Rona Mackay MSP and Amy Callaghan MP would like to thank all residents, local businesses, and visitors to Bishopbriggs.

The consultation and funding

Following discussions with local community groups and constituents we decided to obtain the views of Bishopbriggs residents and hear first-hand what they think of their town centre.

Questions in the consultation focused on how satisfied residents were overall with their town centre, what residents would like to see more of in Bishopbriggs, and what improvements should be focused on with any potential funding. There was also room for additional comments. We sincerely appreciate all those who took the time to clearly outline your own views and concerns about the future of our town.

The consultation was advertised and welcomed views from June 23rd until September 15th, capturing as wide a range of voices as possible. Adhering to COVID-19 regulations throughout this period, survey responses were achieved through online engagement with community groups, constituents, and stakeholders, in addition to targeted social media posts and digital advertisements. Mainstream and local press coverage was also achieved to highlight the need for responses from prospective visitors further afield.

As many will be aware, East Dunbartonshire Council has secured £34.88 million, as part of the City Deal project, through which funding will be made available for the regeneration of Bishopbriggs Town Centre. This provides significant scope for the Council to improve the town centre and take much needed action to modernise our community spaces. The programme outlined by the Council will see an integrated approach to improving infrastructure within East Dunbartonshire, with three main elements - Bishopbriggs Town Centre Regeneration, A Masterplan for Westerhill and delivery of Phase 5 of the Bishopbriggs Relief Road, and investment in improvements to the A803 Route Corridor.

With both the Scottish and UK Government providing the Glasgow City Region local authorities with £500 million each in grant funding through the Glasgow City Region Deal, we hope that this funding will be used in a meaningful way and bring about change that will directly impact our community for the better.

Our focus throughout this process has been on the regeneration of our town centre. We hope that the funding already outlined by the Council and their partners will allow them to implement some of the suggestions and ideas raised in this consultation. With the Council and other stakeholders sharing our common goal of enhancing the town centre for residents, businesses, and visitors by increasing footfall, boosting the local economy, and improving active travel, we trust that much of the feedback from our survey will prove useful and help achieve these aims.

We consulted, you said, we recommended

With almost 400 responses to the consultation, the feedback we received from residents of Bishopbriggs was tremendous. It is clear we all care deeply about the future of the town centre and a common theme from respondents was wanting to see local businesses flourish once again. There was also a clear collective desire for more green space to be made available, particularly to enable families to enjoy a day out in. We also share the desire for better transportation links to the town centre and improvements to active travel arrangements. Given we are amid a climate emergency, the need for alternative transport links and greener spaces is paramount and we are glad so many residents recognise the need to act in our fight against climate change.

We recommend that stakeholders with an interest in the town centre take careful note of the responses to this consultation. The voice of residents has been heard loud and clear, and there is a clear common theme amongst all responses: residents and visitors want Bishopbriggs to flourish and reach its full potential in line with its rich heritage, outstanding services, and excellent schools. We will be presenting our findings to all stakeholders and hope for constructive engagement regarding the views expressed in our consultation.

We consulted Both residents and stakeholders were asked their views on how satisfied they are with the town centre, what they would like to see more of in Bishopbriggs, and what improvements could be made with the introduction of any additional funding.

You said A common theme raised was the need to create a town centre which allows for local businesses to flourish. This means the introduction of greener spaces and areas for families to congregate, ensuring the centre is an attractive option for a day out not just for residents but for people from across East Dunbartonshire and Glasgow. There was also a clear common desire for better transport links to be implemented and improvements to active travel arrangements - encouraging more people into the centre that would not be able to get there otherwise.

We recommend From the responses, we have analysed that there are 5 key elements that town centre developments must focus on –

1. Prioritising people
2. Revitalising the high street
3. Enhancing public transport links
4. Improving outdoor leisure space
5. Upgrading green spaces and play parks

We now recommend that stakeholders take careful note of these responses and listen to the voices of the people. There is a shared desire to see Bishopbriggs reach its full potential and we hope that the responses collected will go some way to creating a town centre that residents can be proud of.

How satisfied are you with Bishopbriggs town centre?

Overall response: **Dissatisfied**



The total number of respondents for the consultation in full was 395.

The total number answering this multiple-choice question was 393 with 2 not answering.

- 351 respondents answered dissatisfied
- 36 respondents answered neither satisfied or dissatisfied
- 7 respondents answered satisfied.

Bishopbriggs has many green spaces, open areas and paths but much of the town has little to offer in the way of leisure and entertainment. The village is also lacking in retailers which is further worsening footfall and making the centre look more rundown.

”

Poor, lack of amenities, too many empty shops and nothing for younger kids to do. Play parks are incredibly poor compared to other areas of East Dunbartonshire.

”

The town is built for cars and there are very little viable places to sit and enjoy the town. Very uninviting for the population.

”

The parks are unsafe, and run down. Compared with other councils around the Glasgow area there isn't much outdoor areas for toddlers or children. Also no appeal for anyone outside of Bishopbriggs to visit.

”

Too many empty units in the town centre. Lack of local & independent businesses, main road far too busy especially with young families around.

”

The centre itself does not have a good selection of shops. There are plenty of restaurants, but it would be lovely to see more shops popping up. It'd be great to have a butchers as well. I also think the space above triangle is such a waste. Surely this could be used to serve the youth of our community? Perhaps some pool tables, and arcade machines with a cafe. Right now, there are so many empty units. Personally, I don't feel it's a place I'd go unless I was out for a meal.

”

What best describes you?

Overall response: **Residents of Bishopbriggs**



The total number of respondents for the consultation in full was 395.

The total number answering this multiple-choice question was 393 with 2 not answering.

- 376 respondents are residents of Bishopbriggs
- 188 respondents frequently shop or uses services in Bishopbriggs
- 92 respondents are potential customers who would like to shop in Bishopbriggs
- 33 respondents work in Bishopbriggs
- 16 respondents are business owners

A community activist keen to help foster positive change in my community

”

I visit Morrisons a lot, but really nothing else. If we had a butcher, baker etc. I'd like to use them!

”

I have lived in Bishopbriggs for over 50 years and am saddened and upset by its present state.

”

I mainly shop at the retail park due to car parking charges and lack of shops in the town centre. If we had a butchers/fishmonger/fruit & veg shop more people will come to the town and spend their money.

”

I am disabled (a wheelchair user and it is difficult for me to go anywhere other than Bishopbriggs as I don't have energy for public transport, but I cannot buy things like clothing and household items in Bishopbriggs.

”

Occasionally I used to bike/walk past Bishopbriggs centre in order to get to work, stopping commuting since Feb 2020. Not been into town centre since.

”

What main improvements do you think funding should be targeted towards?

Overall response: **High Street (on Kirkintilloch Road)**



The total number of respondents for the consultation in full was 395.

The total number answering this multiple-choice question was 392 with 3 not answering.

- 319 respondents answered High Street (on Kirkintilloch Road)
- 218 respondents answered parks and open spaces
- 111 respondents answered demolishing the old and replacing with new
- 96 respondents answered more transport infrastructure
- 33 respondents answered housing

Re-vamping the play park, walkway, cycle paths & perhaps a skate park. Utilise the river flowing through the park to make more of a feature. Extend at the back to allow more open spaces. More car parking.

”

Bishopbriggs business zones are not conducive to e.g. a farmers' market and there are more shop units than the town really needs which are spread around in a random way rather than with an attractive central area and periphery of places of interest.

”

The town centre would benefit from pedestrianised zones and reducing the road to single lane. the area is a bottleneck for traffic and is regularly abused by illegal parking. This would help shop owners in the area.

”

Cycling and greener forms of transport would be beneficial. Having a cycle network that is safe to use would be great. I know this all costs a lot of money and works have been ongoing to offer this to residents.

”

Getting from Bishopbriggs to the West End or Maryhill (or vice versa) can take over 1.5 hours by bus, despite it being a 20m drive. This is a trip I take frequently, and it is incredibly frustrating, particularly late at night. I can only imagine how it would feel for a young female to be out along in the darkness late at night due to how long transport has taken. Furthermore, how can we expect people to take public transport to save the planet when it takes so long? Train then subway is faster but over double the price and less flexible. Direct, fast links to the West End are needed

”

What would you like to see more of in Bishopbriggs?

Overall response: **Retailers**



The total number of respondents for the consultation in full was 395.

The total number answering this multiple-choice question was 392 with 3 not answering.

- 326 respondents answered retailers
- 224 respondents answered restaurants, cafes, or coffee shops
- 164 respondents answered leisure Facilities
- 74 respondents answered better transport
- 52 respondents answered other which included:
 - Improved cycling infrastructure, including bike racks
 - Improved play areas for children
 - Clean, safe outdoor and indoor community spaces
 - Live music venue
 - Additional schools and nurseries
 - Free football pitches
 - Monthly outdoor farmers market
 - Build a park and ride car park for Bishopbriggs train station
 - Build a cinema
- 28 respondents answered personal care
- 22 respondents answered barbers, hairdressers, or beauticians



We should be reclaiming the town for the people who live there, as opposed to the car park it currently is.

”

Independent specialist food shops e.g. bakers, cheese, fish. Something to attract young people into the centre, especially places for those not old enough to travel to town.

”

It would be good to have the town centre feeling like a village again so by having amenities such as a local butcher, fish monger etc.

”

More small businesses need to be encouraged to open in Bishopbriggs. The area at Cross Court has amazing potential to be full of little restaurants / cafes with the potential of outside seating which is really missing from the area. We also need some boutique type shops as there is definitely a market for it. People travel to the west end or Bearsden/Milngavie for them just now but we should have some that are accessible for the local people.

”

Cycle infrastructure is terrible, train service needs increased. More priority within Bishopbriggs for walking / wheeling, less for cars. Parking charges within car parks should be scrapped though.

”

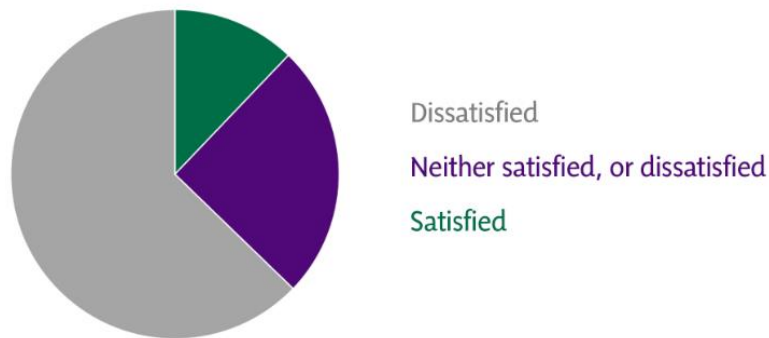
Cycle parking, more outside seating, information about the town like maps showing local parks and how to access near-by walking routes and recreational facilities. Better access for pedestrians and less traffic going through the town centre. Some outdoor space with informal play for children. Tree planting along the main road, in particular on approach from the south, which would enhance the character of the town and perhaps slow traffic speeds.

”



What is your opinion of parking in Bishopbriggs Town Centre?

Overall response: **Dissatisfied**



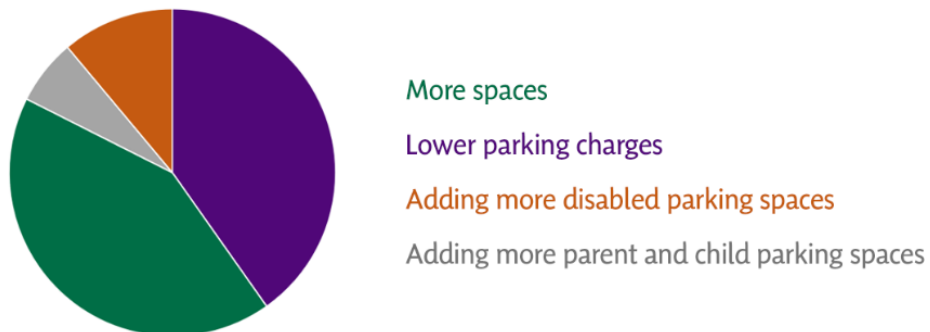
The total number of respondents for the consultation in full was 395.

The total number answering this multiple-choice question was 394 with 1 not answering.

- 248 respondents answered dissatisfied
- 99 respondents answered neither satisfied or dissatisfied
- 48 respondents answered satisfied.

What could improve parking in Bishopbriggs Town Centre?

Overall response: **More spaces**



The total number of respondents for the consultation in full was 395.

The total number answering this multiple-choice question was 342 with 53 not answering.

- 209 respondents answered lower parking charges
- 199 respondents answered more spaces
- 55 respondents answered adding more parent and child parking spaces
- 32 respondents answered adding more disabled parking spaces

The parking situation in the village is satisfactory. Focussing on better options for cyclists and public transport users should be a prioritised (i.e. places to safely store bikes as well as better cycle lanes.

”

More electric points and secure cycle storage.

”

Remove the new and unnecessary parking charges from Bishopbriggs park car park.

”

Do away with parking charges. Free for two hours.

”

Parking areas required for train station.

”

No charging for parking adjacent to a family park! So families have to pay to use the park if they have to take the car! I travel to Rouken Glen park often and Hogganfield Loch no charge to park there.

”

I don't think there is any need for more parking spaces in the town centre. We should be discouraging cars in the area and taking action on those who park illegally.

”

It is a disgrace that Bishopbriggs does not have a Park and Ride for the train.

”

Free parking will encourage people to use the available public transport links and reduce congestion in side streets.

”

Morrisons supermarket allows 3 hours free parking; the EDC car park at Bishopbriggs Park is low-cost and convenient. In order to deter unnecessary car journeys, a small fee to park seems reasonable. Commuting to Glasgow by train could be aided by a shuttle bus serving residential areas all around town. Perhaps some extra disabled parking spaces on the High Street could assist those in genuine need: removing one or two lanes from the five-lane carriageway could allow this, as has been done in other towns and cities. It would seem to me a backwards step to be looking to increase parking availability, given that Net Zero emissions are desired in the near future and Climate Emergency has finally been acknowledged by EDC. As a parent, I feel there are enough parent and child parking spaces at Morrisons if need be. More important for us as a family are safe, segregated cycling and walking routes and convenient sustainable ways of moving around town and beyond

”

Bishopbriggs Top 5

1. Prioritising People

It is clear from the responses that any developments must prioritise people. New and improved community spaces will be essential to make our town centre more desirable for residents and visitors to spend time in. Such measures would also no doubt have a positive impact on the local economy, as the increased footfall in the centre would lead to more customers for local businesses.

This can be accomplished by introducing improvements to active travel arrangements, connecting the town centre with existing and new community spaces in the surrounding area and to install centre amenities such as flower beds and water features. There must also be careful consideration about how to alleviate congestion in the centre via alternative parking arrangements to make Bishopbriggs more accessible for pedestrians. Given we are in a climate emergency, we must also prepare for the future and actively invest in electric charging points for residents who will eventually invest in eco-friendly vehicles.

2. Revitalising the High Street

As we chart our economic recovery from COVID-19, it is imperative that Bishopbriggs High Street is an attractive option for prospective local enterprises. As highlighted by the consultation, improving and refurbishing the existing retail units in the centre would be an important step in this process.

3. Enhancing Public Transport

Throughout this consultation residents have requested improved transport links in Bishopbriggs. Given our collective fight against climate change, it is so important that our town centre is accessible via as many means of transport as possible. With the train station already at the heart of the centre, more must be done to improve bus service routes in the local area and introduce arrangements for active travel initiatives.

4. Improving Outdoor Leisure Space

In other East Dunbartonshire town centres, such as Milngavie, there is a host of outside seating options for visitors. By contrast, Bishopbriggs has next to no outdoor public space available in the centre for either businesses to expand their premises or the public to meet. This must change with any regeneration of the town centre, and we must ensure that more open public space is introduced for the community to congregate.

5. Upgrade Green Spaces and Play Parks

It is vitally important that children have safe and appropriate areas to play. If we want more people to spend time in Bishopbriggs, then we must invest in upgrading our play parks so that children and families actively want to visit the town centre. Furthermore, the creation of greener community spaces – particularly in areas around the town centre - would allow for more activities and initiatives to take place in Bishopbriggs.

Ensuring that any changes align with the 2010 Equality Act and are safe for the visually impaired.

Conclusion

If there is one certainty from this survey, it is that residents and the wider community care deeply about the future of Bishopbriggs Town Centre. Both of us share your desire to see Bishopbriggs realise its full potential and firmly believe that residents and visitors deserve a centre they can be proud of.

The constructive feedback we have received from all participants has been overwhelming and we sincerely appreciate this level of response. By working together as a community, we can help ensure that any regeneration of Bishopbriggs Town Centre puts the views of residents and stakeholders first.

For years now we have been hearing from residents that the town centre has been underutilized and failed to reach its potential. As many respondents highlight, other town centres across East Dunbartonshire such as Milngavie, Kirkintilloch and Bearsden are more attractive for individuals and families to spend time in due to the amenities and spaces available in the centre.

More must be done if our town centre is to be a similar attraction and, thanks to the level of detailed responses received, we are now able to clearly outline what exactly residents and potential visitors wish to see in a new look Bishopbriggs.

While it is impossible to assure the introduction of more independently owned businesses, it is possible to make the centre more attractive for these enterprises and give them a better chance to flourish.

If the top five improvements identified in this consultation are the focus of new developments in the centre, then it stands to reason that such measures would increase footfall in Bishopbriggs and, as a result, boost the local economy.

Similarly, the introduction of better transport links would allow for visitors even further afield and negate the need for more cars in the town where there is limited parking availability. Currently, transport links and active travel arrangements in Bishopbriggs could be greatly improved. Given the climate emergency, investing in transport links is essential to meeting our net-zero targets and we must ensure that there are multiple ways in which people can access Bishopbriggs.

Any development must also ensure that more community spaces are introduced to the centre. There is a clear desire from all respondents to see things like better outdoor seating arrangements, upgraded play parks, and more open spaces. Making the most of the space available will be essential if we want to build a brighter community and ensure Bishopbriggs is a place where people from across East Dunbartonshire and Glasgow want to visit. On this note, modernising the centre will be key to ensuring it reaches its full potential; and improvements to existing retail units must be part of any plans to improve the centre in order to attract new businesses to the area.

There is no doubt we have a long way to go before many of these suggestions can be realised; but make no mistake this is an important first step in our collective goal to improve our town centre. With the local authority beginning its redevelopment plans, hearing the voices of those who care most about Bishopbriggs is vital. We trust the suggestions outlined in this survey will help ensure local voices remain at the heart of Bishopbriggs' future. Together, we can make these long overdue improvements to our centre a reality.

Thank you again to everyone who took the time to respond to this survey. Your constructive feedback will allow us to use our platforms to help ensure your voices are being heard – and we hope those with overall responsibility for our town's future will listen.

Putting People First: A New Future for Bishopbriggs Town Centre

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