

Tranent Planning for Real© Findings



**Community Learning &
Development Services**

December 2011

Tranent Planning for Real©

Tranent Town Centre Strategy 2011

Throughout October and November 2011 East Lothian Council's Community Learning and Development Services have been consulting with people living and working across the Tranent area about their ideas, concerns and aspirations for the future of Tranent High St. This has been carried out by local residents, workers and visitors taking part in a Planning for Real© exercise and short surveys.

What is Planning for Real?

The first step of the consultation was to build a large-scale 3D map of the town centre with volunteers helping with this process. Volunteers were also needed to be part of a group to help consult with the local community – using the map as a focal point – on a strategy for the development of Tranent town centre.

Thanks to Windygoul and Sanderson's Wynd primary schools for their help with the map making.

The 3D map of Tranent High Street was used to consult with local people about improvements they would like to see in the town centre and engage with local people about how they currently use the town centre facilities and what they would like to be able to do there.

The key questions posed were:

- 'What could be done to make Tranent High St a better place to be?'
- What's good?
- What's not?
- And what needs to be improved to make it an even better place to live and work?



The context – Why this? Why now?

East Lothian Council is preparing Town Centre Strategies for each of its six main towns. These strategies are intended to provide a co-ordinated framework for action and investment in the town centres and to retain and develop their individual identities. East Lothian Council is taking the opportunity to consult members of the public and community groups now on what they would like to see happening in Tranent town centre from July 2012, including the Civic Square. The consultation is being led by East Lothian Council's Community Learning and Development Services. The Planning for Real consultation is one way of making sure that the views and ideas of local residents of all ages, and those working in and visiting the Town centre become part of the future Tranent Town centre strategy.

Councillor Ruth Currie, Cabinet Member for Community Wellbeing, said:

"I was delighted to hear that the response to our Tranent community consultation into the future of Civic Square was so positive. With the changes taking place in Tranent, such as, the

Housing Office and Library moving to the new building in Winton Place gives the Council the opportunity to do something different with the Civic Square site. Clearly, we want to listen to the ideas that local people have and I am very pleased that so many people were interested in contributing to this exercise and help make a real difference to the town."

How it works in practice

During the consultation exercise, the model is surrounded by 'suggestion' cards or flags, which have pictures as well as words. There are a range of different sets of cards produced as part of the Planning for Real© pack. For the Tranent consultation the cards focussed on the highlighted aspects of the environment, community safety, health, crime & safety, community facilities, traffic & transport and work, training & local economy.

Members of the public select cards, or write their own, and place these on the model to show what their needs are, and where there are issues. People can put down anything they choose – (even if we think it may not be practical) – and nothing can be removed from the map without being documented.

People were also asked to fill in a short survey about how they currently use the Town Centre.

What has taken place?

The 3-D town Tranent High St map was on display for:

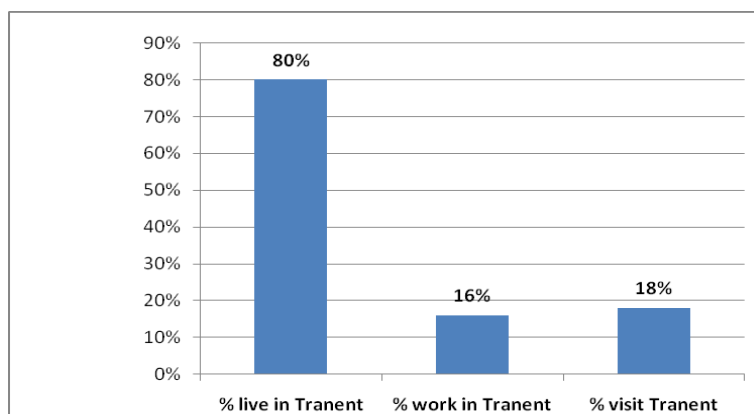
- 3 days at Tranent Library
- An evening at Recharge
- A morning at Tranent Day Centre
- An evening for Tranent and Elphinstone Community Council at the Tranent Day Centre
- A Monday late afternoon at the Loch Centre
- A Thursday late afternoon at Co-op Supermarket

Consultation has also taken place with local schools:

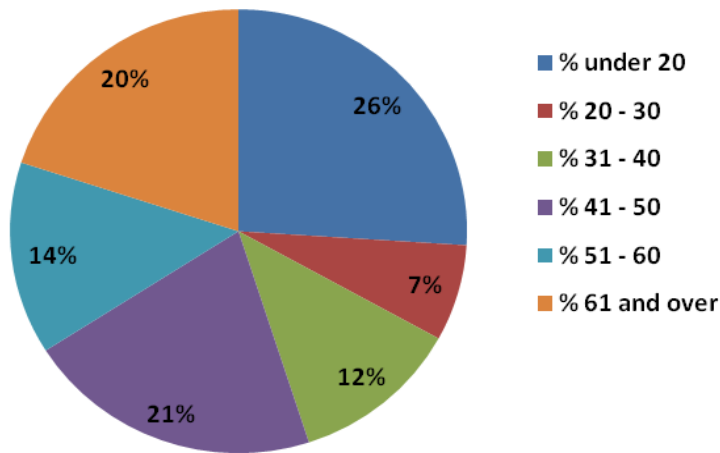
- Macmerry primary
- A week at Ross High School to engage with the whole school
- Ross High School Student Council



244 people have taken part in the consultation with the majority of those living in the EH33 postcode area of Tranent. Over 80% of people who took part in the survey live in Tranent.

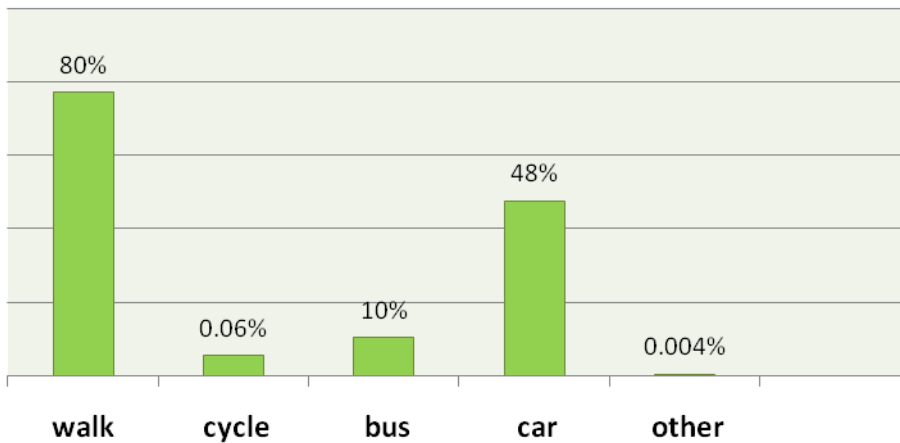


Ages of participants



There were a mix of ages taking part in the survey and Planning for Real© exercise, with the majority of those taking part being under 20 years, 41 – 50 years or 61 and over.

How do you access the High Street?

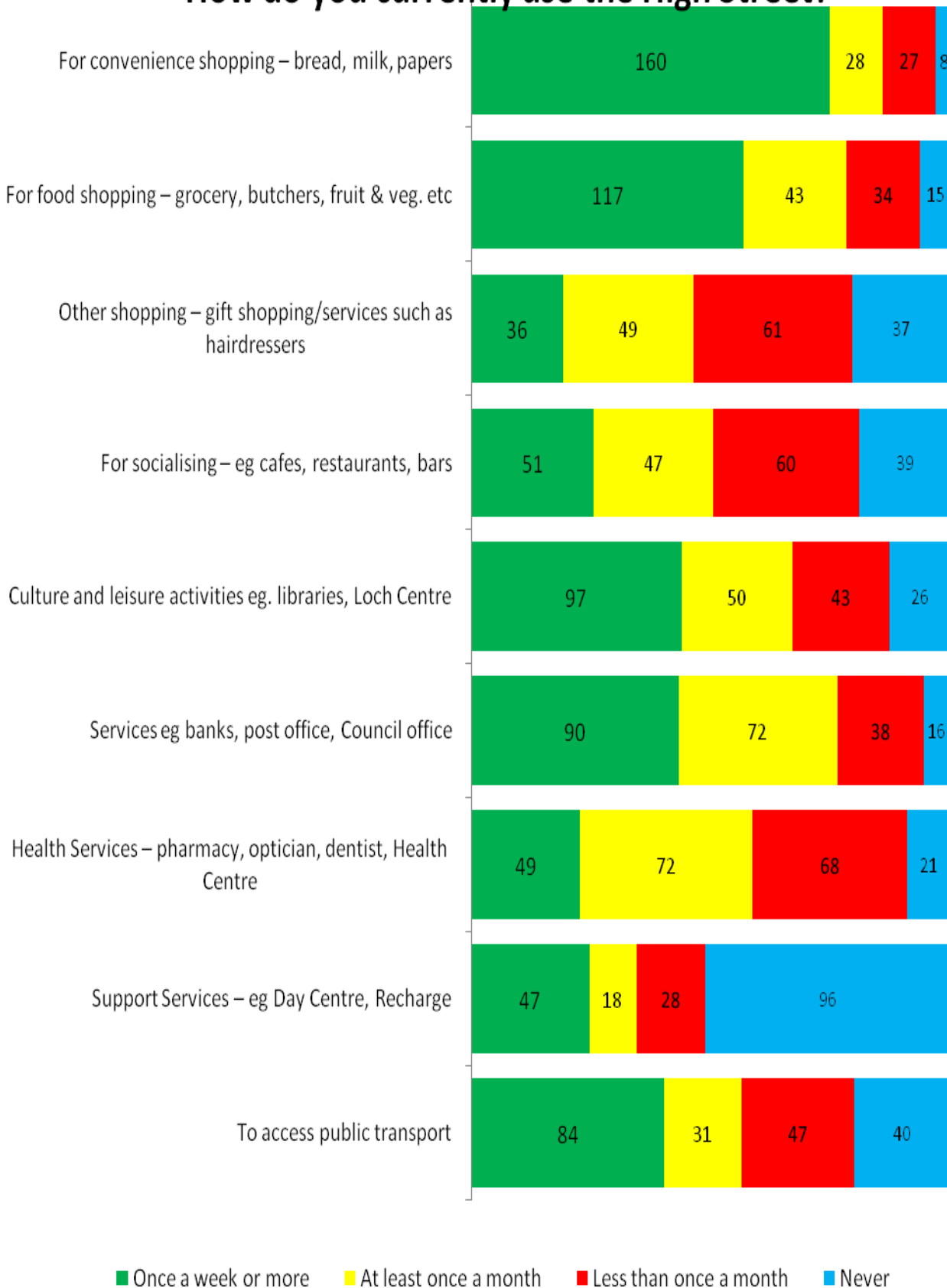


People taking part were also asked how they access the High Street, the majority 80% walk with 48% taking the car.

How are local residents currently using the High St?

- ❖ Almost half of the respondents visit the High Street on a daily basis with 92% using the High St on a daily and / or weekly basis.
- ❖ 66% of the people completing the question report using the High Street at least once a week for convenience shopping.
- ❖ At least 50% of people report using the High Street for food and convenience shopping once a week or more.
- ❖ Approximately 40% of people use culture and leisure activities e.g. library, Loch Centre once a week or more.
- ❖ Again almost 40% use services e.g. banks, post office, council offices once a week or more.
- ❖ More people visit health related services on a monthly basis i.e. 34% compared to weekly 23%.

How do you currently use the High Street?

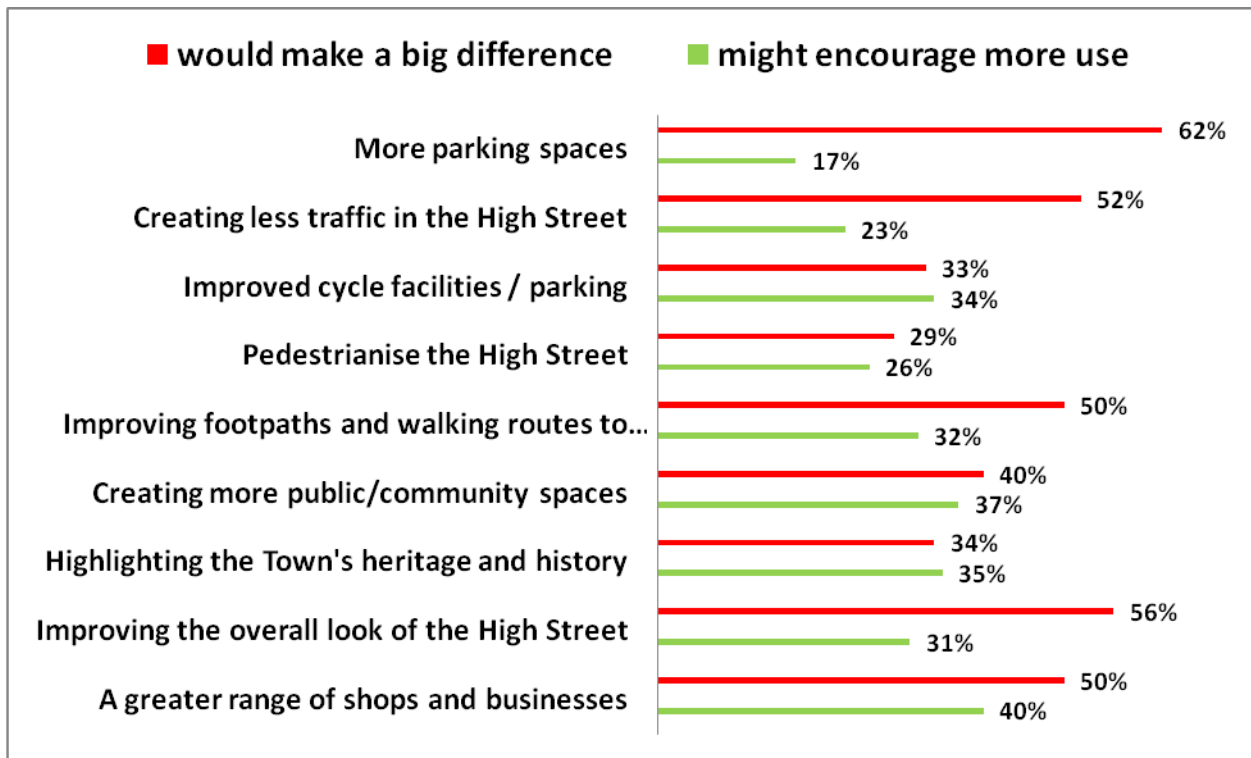


NB. (This information is displayed as the number of responses and not as a percentage)

What would make a difference to the High St?

Information from the surveys highlights the main areas of concern for local residents:

- ❖ More parking spaces were reported as making the biggest difference to accessing the High Street.
- ❖ Creating less traffic in the High Street was also considered to be of importance to local residents.
- ❖ The High St was felt to be in need of a 'makeover' – in general to improve the overall look of the High Street e.g. painting shops and buildings. This would have a huge impact on the overall appearance of the High Street.
- ❖ Another area for improvement is the footpaths and walking routes to the town. 80% of people taking part in this exercise reported walking to the High Street, walking routes are important to local people.
- ❖ An increased range and diversity of shops people felt would improve their use of the High St and attract new users to the area.



Other comments from the surveys related to specific town centre improvements include:

“Junction of Church Street and Bridge Street is a traffic hazard to pedestrians as well as to traffic. Either need to remove unnecessary traffic (somehow) or put up traffic lights – or both”

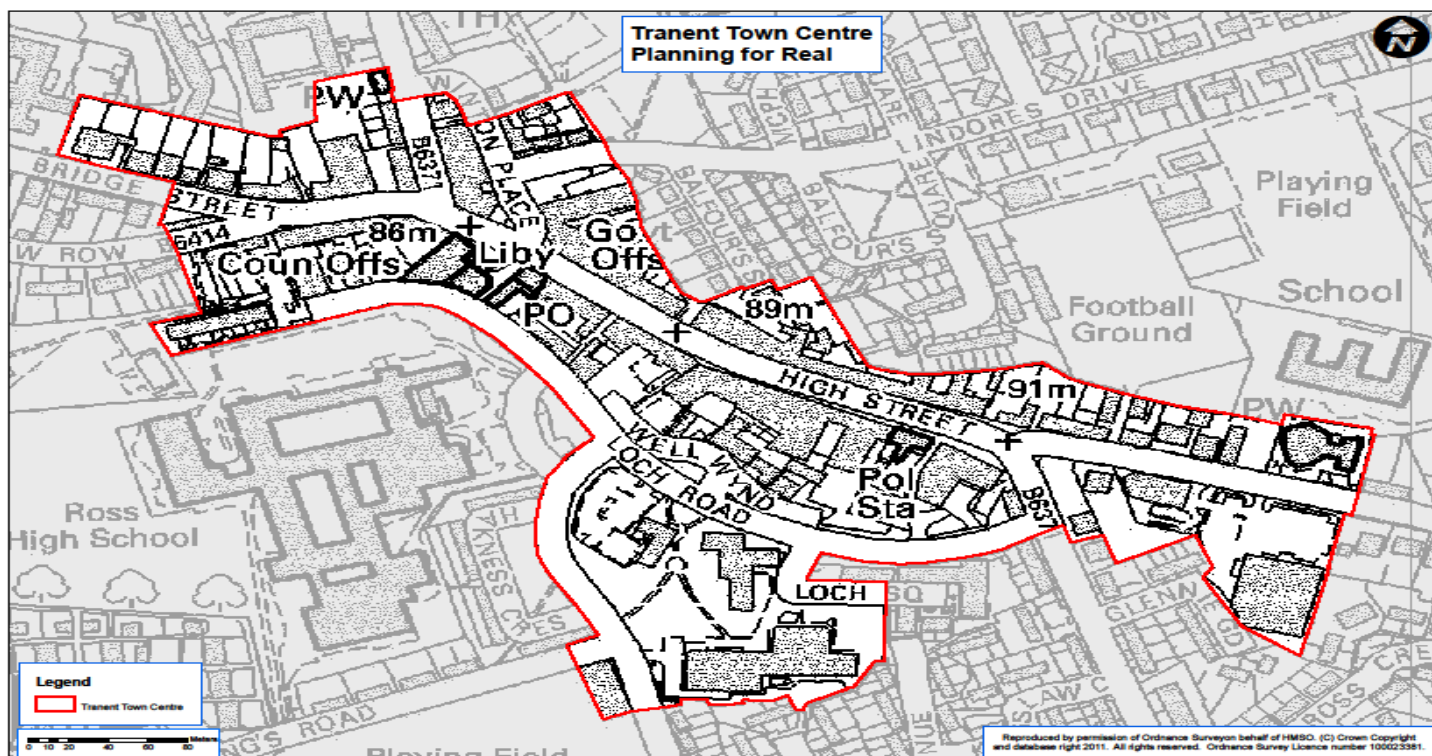
“Pavements on High Street seem to be frequently cracked and loose, very much a trip hazard. Is this because of poor workmanship, the street cleaning motor or both? Best to tarmac the entire pavement”.

“The kerb at the High Street, North side (outside Dunfermline Building Society – Gregg’s area) this is a trip hazard as well, though it does stop traffic parking on the pavement. Suggest painting it a visible colour such as white or yellow”.

“It seems to me that there are serious and obvious hazards which the council should have been dealing with already”.

“The nature of life at Tranent these days is that the Town Centre is almost as busy in the evening as it is during the day”

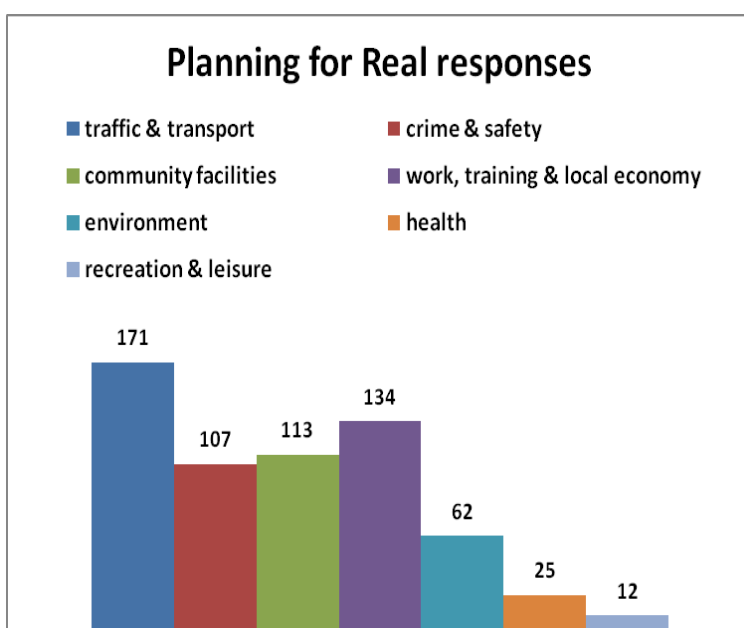
Tranent Town Centre Planning for Real© designated area for consultation.



Planning for Real© information

Information was gathered and categorised into the following headings i.e. traffic & transport, crime & safety, community facilities, work, training & local economy, environment, health and recreation & leisure.

A total of 624 flags / comments were collated from the Planning for Real© exercises relating to the town centre.



Traffic and Transport (171 comments)



right of way at the roundabout.

- The High Street also needs to be reviewed in terms of the positioning and number of traffic lights. General traffic and pedestrian management needs examined to improve the flow of traffic and safe crossing points for pedestrians. Comments include the



introduction of one way systems, loading bays for deliveries behind the flats and pedestrian drop crossings at Church Street and Civic Square.

- Parking is an issue. There are too few spaces for disabled and parent / child parking. Currently drivers are parking dangerously on the High Street. Comments range from needing more parking spaces on the High Street, introducing parking schemes, 20 minute parking restrictions to pedestrianising the High Street. This is supported by the results from the survey.
- Volume and speed of traffic causes problems in Tranent High Street. The majority of people suggest lowering the speed limit to 20mph. Creating less traffic again was reported in the survey as making a big difference to the High Street.
- Other issues raised included traffic safety rails needed outside closed Cross Keys, no parking bollards from the PO to Haddington Road, introducing a community minibus, cycle racks and lanes at Loch Centre, High Street and Civic Square and improving the bus service especially to Macmerry.

The main areas for concern are parking and traffic management including crossings.

- The area within Tranent giving most cause for concern is the roundabout at Church Street. Suggestions were about needing a crossing and / or traffic lights to replace the existing roundabout. People find it is difficult to cross there especially to the Day Centre. Comments also indicated that drivers didn't know who has

Crime & Safety (107 comments)

- Issues focussed on the fear of crime and feeling unsafe.
- At lunchtime people are afraid to go to the High Street. Other concerns were about the amount of litter dropped at this time. This issue is raised under Environment too.
- At night issues seem to be the number of young people hanging about, residents feeling unsafe and the level of night noise and rowdiness.
- Drug dealing is reported as an issue in various locations within Tranent.

People want to see

- Improved lighting at the back of Recharge, near the Co-op, Haddington Road at St Martin's, Civic Square, Health centre and various lanes / vennels.



- More police – foot patrols in the High Street near Civic Square and library.
- Community wardens at lunchtime to control litter dropping.
- Safety – more protective fences, traffic safety rails and rails round the war memorial.

Other reported issues include drinking, litter, graffiti, vandalism and illegal dumping.

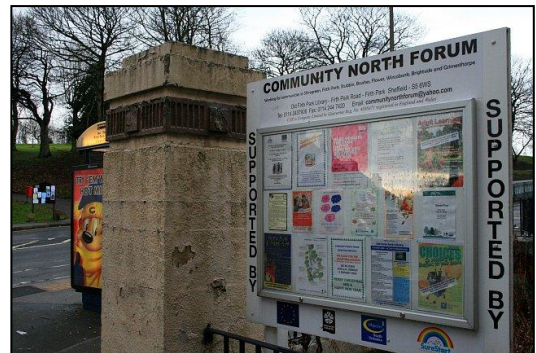
Work, training and local economy – (134 comments)

- Shops – people are not happy with the local shops and feel there could be greater variety. In particular cafes with soft play areas, clothes shops, book shop and a shoe shop. This is supported by the survey findings of having a greater range of shops and businesses that would make a big difference to the High Street.
- Another supermarket was considered important to the local area.
- People also felt there should be business grants and more support for local businesses as this also provided local jobs.
- Training – internet training, more vocational training for 13 – 16 year olds, training information and opportunities needed and more support for people seeking work.

People felt there were too many bookmakers – 12, takeaways – 26 and too many pubs – 11.

Community facilities – (113 comments)

- People felt there should be a youth facility including a youth shelter suggested locations were Civic square & Church Street.
- Recharge should be open more in the evenings.
- There should be more child facilities like soft play.
- Youth provision needed at the Loch Centre. There seems to be an issue with young people accessing the Loch Centre and that more activities are needed there e.g. summer club, day trips, drop in centre, homework club.
- Interest in developing a Youth theatre in the local area.
- Local information – comments indicate the need for a community newsletter, notice board or local information point. People also felt they should make more of the history of Tranent. Again there is a level of interest in highlighting the Town's heritage and history from the survey.
- A volunteer centre, advice and money shop, money advice bureau and credit union needed in the local area.
- Public art and an area for community events required.
- There was interest in a craft group for women, an art club for children or an arts & crafts club either at Recharge or the Loch Centre.
- Some people felt there were good clubs and facilities already but need to highlight them. There was a feeling that Tranent was often portrayed negatively and that the focus should be on more positive aspects of the town.



Recreation and leisure – (12 comments)

Suggestions included

- A snooker centre
- Discos at lunchtime at the Civic Square or Recharge
- More activities similar to Meadowmill at the Loch Centre
- more leisure facilities for 12 year olds e.g. exercise classes
- A cinema and a bowling alley.

Environment - (62 comments)



- Dog mess is reported as an issue at various locations in Tranent e.g. High Street, Church Street, EL substation, Haddington Road at St Martin's.
- Suggestion to introduce dog poop bins again at various locations
- The amount of litter dropped at lunchtime in the High Street area is reported as an issue.
- Suggestions to have more litter bins in the High Street, and Civic Square with litter wardens & community wardens present at lunchtimes.
- Improvements to the area include seating areas, flowerbeds, allotments and a community garden. The High Street needs a focal point with suggestions of attractive seating near the new library.
- Demolish buildings that are considered unsafe or unsightly e.g. Civic centre, Coral bookmakers, housing office, old Masonic hall, and building next to baby shop
- Improve shops / building fronts by painting e.g. High street including The Hub, Recharge/ Day Centre, Old Crown building and the Loch Centre. This is supported by the results from the survey about improving the overall look of the High Street area.
- Other issues included the illegal dumping at the side and back of St Martins.
- Suggestions were to have a recycling facility at this location.

Health (25 comments)

- Health centre to link up with Dewar House (8)
- Dedicated parking space.
- Healthy eating encouraged at schools, support for parents, more health shops and healthy eating option in the High Street.

What the children thought at Macmerry Primary School.

An adapted Planning for Real© exercise was carried out at Macmerry Primary school. The children were asked similar questions.

“What is good about Tranent? “

The children thought there were plenty of things that were good about Tranent. The main ones are listed below:

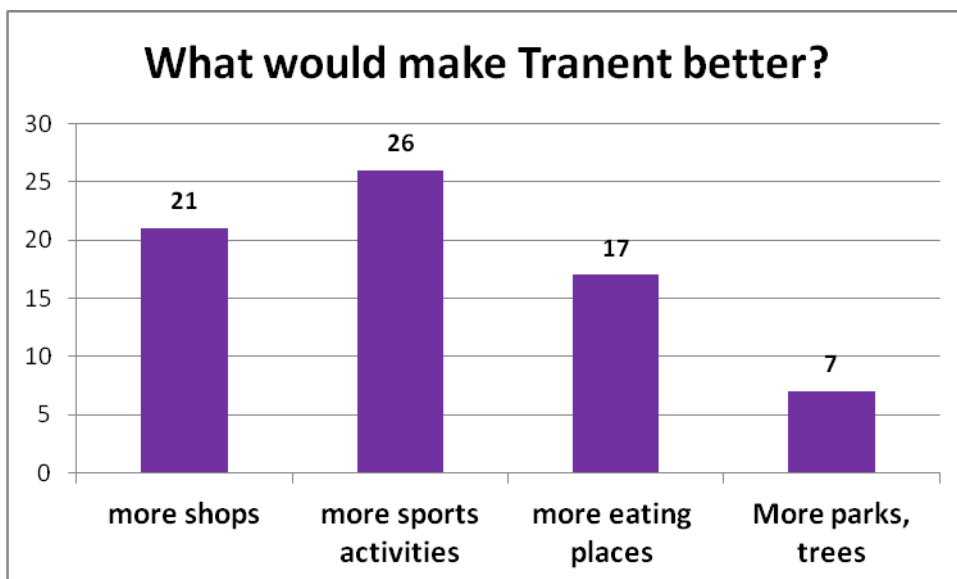
- Good variety of shops including food shops
- Sports and activity clubs e.g. Loch centre, park, rugby and football
- Education – school and library
- Tranent is accessible and safe with family and relatives living there.



The children were also asked “What would make Tranent a better place?”

From their 1st choice responses:

- 21 children would like to see more shops including Primark, ice – cream, toy shops and sweet shops.
- 26 children would like there to be more sports and activities in the local area including a cinema.
- 17 children would like there to be more eating places e.g. McDonalds.
- 7 children would like the Environment to be better by having more parks, trees and flowers.



Conclusions

There are a number of issues identified and suggestions to improve the local area contained within the report. The main issues are listed below:

- The main concerns identified are traffic and transport including parking, traffic management issues and crossings. These issues are particularly highlighted at the top of Church Street and the High Street. The volume and speed of traffic causes problems. Creating less traffic and having more parking spaces was reported as making a big difference to the High Street.**
- People are not happy with the local shops and would like to see a greater variety and range of shops and businesses in the High Street.**
- Improving shops and building fronts by painting would improve the overall look in the High Street.**
- Improved lighting, more litter bins, dog poop bins are suggestions to help with the identified issues of feeling unsafe, litter dropping and the amount of dog mess.**
- More police foot patrols and litter / community wardens' presence would assist with issues at lunchtime and at night with issues of drug dealing, night noise and rowdiness.**
- Improving footpaths and walking routes to the town centre with improvements to seating areas, flowerbeds and a community garden.**
- A range and variety of community groups and facilities are suggested including a community notice board and highlighting the Town's heritage and history. People would like to highlight the number of good clubs and facilities already operating in the local area. There is a feeling that Tranent was often portrayed negatively and the focus should be on more positive aspects of the town.**