

## **Report Purpose:**

Town Centre Regeneration Working Group (TCRWG)

## **Author**

Town Clerk

## **Update**

The TCRWG consultations are completed and the highlighted results are attached over the page as follows:

- Common Themes from Consultation 17th May 2025
- Residents Online Survey
- Businesses Online Survey

The next step will to be create and draft an action plan.

## Face to Face Consultation May 2025

### **Retail and Town Centre Economy**

- **Empty/Vacant Units:** Numerous concerns about unattractive and unmaintained empty shops.
- **Landlords and Rents:** Calls to hold landlords accountable, reduce rents, and attract different businesses.
- **Retail Mix:** A lot of coffee shops; lack of retail variety; demand for alternative and independent retail.
- **Support for Independents:** Support for pop-ups, local makers, and incentives for small/start-up businesses.
- **Changing Retail Landscape:** Recognition that retail is shifting nationally—importance of experiences over traditional shops.

### **In-Town Living & Housing**

- **Affordable Housing:** Need for affordable, quality, and accessible housing in the town centre.
- **Repurposing Buildings:** Interest in converting commercial/empty units to residential or community spaces.
- **Integrated Living & Transport:** Desire to live near facilities and transport links; reduced need for cars.

### **Macclesfield Identity & Branding**

- **Town Brand:** Strong desire to develop a unique identity (e.g. “Silk Town”, heritage focus).
- **Pride & Promotion:** Calls to better promote the town’s assets (heritage, creatives, experiences).
- **Marketing & Communication:** Improved digital presence, social media, signage, and visibility of events/information.

### **Culture, Events & Experiences**

- **More Events:** Festivals, art, music, and intergenerational activities requested throughout the year.
- **Better Event Communication:** Events need clearer communication and more inclusive promotion.
- **Cultural Spine/Heritage:** Support for a cultural “spine” or strategy that links events and heritage together.
- **Non-Retail Activities:** Strong interest in interactive spaces (escape rooms, art, student-led cafés).

### **Appearance, Cleanliness & Public Realm**

- **Tidy Town:** Calls to clean graffiti, manage bins, dog fouling, and repaint railings.
- **Murals and Planters:** Murals praised, planters welcomed.

- **Neglected Areas:** Particular concern around Chestergate, Sunderland St, and near the station.
- **Street Furniture & Accessibility:** Need for more seating, better paving, and accessible public spaces.
- **Green Spaces:** Call for more green spaces in the town centre or in car parks.

## **Transport, Access & Parking**

- **Public Transport Gaps:** Poor evening/Sunday services; inaccessible routes for some estates.
- **Parking:** Confusion about charges; requests for 1–2 hours free, especially to support town centre use.
- **Cycling/Walking:** Interest in active travel, but concerns about safety and infrastructure gaps.
- **Accessibility:** Pavements, bus stops, and disabled parking all noted as barriers to town access.

## **Community & Inclusivity**

- **Community Spaces:** Need for inclusive spaces for arts, leisure, young people, and events.
- **Youth Provision:** More activities for teens and families; events during school holidays.
- **Inclusive Planning:** Accessibility for disabled people, integration of diverse age groups and backgrounds.

## **Governance, BID & Communication**

- **BID Support (With Conditions):** General support for a Business Improvement District, but concerns about cost, inclusivity, and clarity of remit.
- **Coordination & Collaboration:** Need to break down silos between stakeholders and coordinate efforts.
- **Better Communication with Authorities:** Calls for transparency, visible responsible officers, and easier channels to give feedback or share ideas

**49 people in attendance. All Macclesfield residents or business owners. All above age 18.**

## Macclesfield Town Centre Resident Survey 2025

### Overview

The Resident Survey gathered responses from 132 participants, representing a mix of long-term residents, newer residents, and visitors. The survey provides insight into how the town centre is currently perceived, levels of connection to the town, and priorities for future improvement.

Scores	Value
	132
How would you rate the cleanliness of Macclesfield Town Centre? (1=very poor, 5=excellent)	3.16
How would you rate the safety and security of Macclesfield Town Centre? (1=very poor, 5=excellent)	3.32
How would you rate the public transport access of Macclesfield Town Centre? (1=very poor, 5=excellent)	2.81
How would you rate the pedestrian accessibility of Macclesfield Town Centre? (1=very poor, 5=excellent)	3.49
How would you rate the attractiveness (plants, fairy light etc) of Macclesfield Town Centre? (1=very poor, 5=excellent)	3.33
How would you rate the range and quality of events in Macclesfield Town Centre? (1=very poor, 5=excellent)	3.18

### Key Findings

Most respondents have lived in Macclesfield for over five years, with a significant proportion residing in the town for ten years or more. This indicates that feedback is largely informed by long-term experience of change in the town centre.

### Sense of Welcome and Connection

Feelings about the town centre are mixed. While some residents feel very or somewhat connected, a notable number reported feeling not connected or that the town centre is not welcoming. This highlights the need for stronger community engagement and more inclusive, welcoming spaces.

### What Residents Value Most

Residents value Macclesfield's natural setting and views, its historic character, and the presence of independent businesses and cafés. These are seen as key strengths to be protected and enhanced.

### Key Challenges Identified

The most frequently raised concerns relate to empty and run-down buildings, poor-quality public realm, and a lack of major anchor retailers. Vacant properties and visual appearance are seen as having a strong negative impact on perceptions of the town centre.

**What Would Improve Connection**

Residents want more events and activities, better use of vacant buildings, improved public spaces, and a stronger town centre identity to encourage people to visit and stay longer.

## Macclesfield Town Centre Regeneration Business Survey

**Survey stats:** 16 town centre businesses

**Purpose:** To understand current pressures, priorities, and views on future improvement

### 1. Positives and Strengths Identified by Businesses

- Strong commitment from long-established businesses: With 75% of respondents trading for over 5 years, there is a stable core of experienced businesses invested in the town centre's future.
- Broad support for improvement initiatives: A majority support proactive measures such as enhanced marketing (56%) and environmental improvements (62%), showing willingness to engage with regeneration efforts.
- Conditional support for collective action: 56% of respondents support the principle of a Business Improvement District (BID), indicating openness to collaboration if benefits are clear and fairly delivered.
- Positive tone in qualitative feedback: Several comments praise recent efforts and acknowledge progress, even where concerns remain.
- Positive feedback on events: While events are not seen as a sole solution, businesses recognise their value when well-run. 38% support more events and festivals, and written comments reference the benefits of markets and organised activities in increasing footfall, vibrancy, and town centre profile.

**Implication:** There is a solid foundation of goodwill and engagement to build upon, provided future actions are visible, practical, and responsive to business concerns.

### 2. Who Responded

- 75% of respondents have been trading 5+ years
- 12% have been operating 1–5 years

**Implication:** Feedback is dominated by long-established businesses with long-term experience of town centre change and decline.

### 3. Key Pressures on Businesses

The most commonly cited challenges were:

- Low consumer spending – 50%
- Town centre appearance / cleanliness – 50%
- Ongoing competition from online retail and nearby centres (strongly reflected in written comments)

**Implication:** Businesses feel the issue is not only footfall, but the quality of the environment and the level of spend once visitors arrive.

### 4. Top Priorities for Improvement

Businesses were clear about where effort should be focused:

- Improved town centre appearance – 62% (cleanliness, public realm, greenery, shopfronts)
- Marketing and promotion of the town – 56%
- More events and festivals – 38%

**Implication:** Visual improvement and promotion are seen as the foundations for wider regeneration.

### **5. Events: Important**

Only 6% selected lack of events as a current problem, however, 38% support more events as a future priority

Implication: Businesses support events, but only when supported by strong promotion, good management, and an attractive town centre.

### **6. Views on a Business Improvement District (BID)**

56% support the introduction of a BID

38% do not support a BID

Written comments show conditional support, with concerns around:

- Value for money
- Governance and transparency –
- Fairness for small independent businesses

Implication: There is no automatic mandate; any BID proposal will need clear benefits, strong communication, and trust-building.

### **7. Overall Message from Businesses**

Businesses are broadly supportive of change but want:

- Visible improvements to cleanliness and appearance –
- Better coordination and promotion of the town –
- Practical, deliverable actions rather than high-level strategy