

Blyth Town Forum - Showcase February 2020

The Blyth Town Forum held a second consultation event in February 2020. This involved a second Showcase event in an empty retail unit in Westgate House on Waterloo Road, a schools consultation, a 1-2-1 consultation with 50 town centre businesses and an online survey. We asked you about our plans for the application to the Future High Street Fund in July 2020. These were:

You gave us lots of extremely useful feedback summarised in the table below:

Priority Projects	Residents	Businesses	School Children
General comments	Need to feel safer* Agree change is needed More and varied shops	Need to feel safer* Agree change is needed Improved outdoor spaces	Need to feel safer* Agree change is needed More opportunity for play & recreation Improved walking & cycling routes
1) Market Place	Support for a covered market and for better landscaping & seating	Support for improved car parking on Waterloo Road Concerns any 'new build' food outlet would create competition with existing businesses	Support for a new building offering play & recreation and / or cafe, restaurant
2) Westgate House upper floors	Support for bringing the upper floors back into use in some way Concerns over HMOs and parking	Support for a residential option on the upper floors Concerns over HMOs and lack of parking	Support for bringing the upper floors back into use in some way
3) Bus Station	Support for redevelopment in some form Concerns over relocation of the bus stops to Market Place	Support for an arts /culture venue	Support for redevelopment (eg food & drink)
4) Bus Depot	Support for an HE / FE building linked to the Port / renewables, or a leisure option	Support for an HE / FE facility related to renewables opportunities	Support sheltered accommodation
5) Keel Row Car Park	Lukewarm support for accommodation / hotel	Support for accommodation (but not short-term) Concern about type of clientele, and loss of parking	Support for a bar / restaurant
6 & 7) Bridge Street above shops	Lukewarm support for a residential option	Strong support for a residential option	Support for a homeless shelter
8 & 9) Pedestrian / Cycle	Supportive of all suggested improvements	Supportive of all suggested improvements	Supportive of all suggested improvements

*Need to feel safer - whilst not directly addressed in the surveys the issue of crime, anti-social behaviour (often drug-related), homelessness and the lack of appropriate social care interventions is a strong theme from each cohort.