

Bury St. Edmunds

2019 Town Benchmarking Report

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Executive Summary

GENERAL

Increasing and Higher Average Spend

- 55% of town centre users spent more than £20.01 on a normal visit to Bury St Edmunds town centre which is higher than all the previous Benchmarking evaluations. The Bury St Edmunds figure is also 15% higher than the National Large Towns average.

Longer than Average Stay

- 46% of respondents stayed in the town centre for 2-4 hours, 27% higher than the National Large Towns average.

Comparison Shopping

- 27% of Town Centre Users visited Bury St. Edmunds for 'Comparison Shopping', 17% higher than the National average.

Leisure Offer

- 23% of Town Centre Users normally travelled for 'Leisure' which is also higher than the National Large Towns average. (12%)

Regular Visitors

- As in previous evaluations the majority of town centre users visited Bury St Edmunds at least once a week. (72%)

Travel by Car

- As in previous evaluations the majority (63%) of town centre users travel to Bury St. Edmunds by Car.

Car Parking

- Overall 12% of the car parking spaces were vacant on the Market Day audit, which is 19% lower than the National Large Towns average. Longitudinally, the 2019 Bury St. Edmunds car parking vacancy figure is the lowest recorded in the town centre. In terms of the Non-Market Day count, 28% of car parking was vacant, a 6% decrease on the National Large Towns average and the lowest recorded in Bury St. Edmunds.
- 55% of respondents had travelled to the town centre on a Tuesday afternoon/evening since the introduction of 'free from 3 car parking', the highest figure since 2015.
- 87% of respondents stated that they were supportive of the "Pay on Exit" trial in the St Andrews Street North car park.
- 79% of Town Centre Users would you like to see the introduction of a "Pay on Exit" scheme in more car parks throughout Bury St. Edmunds.

POSITIVE

Visit Recommended

- 98% of Town Centre Users would recommend a visit to Bury St. Edmunds, 30% higher than the National Large Towns figure.

Cafes/ Restaurants

- As in 2018 a large proportion of Town Centre Users reported that 'Cafes/ Restaurants' (80%) were a positive aspect of Bury St. Edmunds, a 47% increase on the National Large Towns average.

Physical Appearance

- 'Physical Appearance' (71%) and 'Cleanliness' (55%) were classed as positive aspects of the town centre markedly higher than the National Large Towns figures.

Retail

- 'Markets' (61%) and 'Retail Offer' (58%) were classed as positive aspects of the town centre noticeably higher than the National Large Towns averages.

Room for Improvement

Car Parking

- 34% of Town Centre Users rated 'Car Parking' as a negative aspect of Bury St. Edmunds.
- 'Cheaper Car Parking' was a key theme to emerge from the qualitative comments.

Public Toilets

- As in previous evaluations 'Public Toilets' (36%) was classed as a negative aspect of Bury St. Edmunds town centre, a 24% increase on the National Small Towns average.

Retail Offer

- A key theme from the qualitative comments was that improvements to the 'Variety of Retail Offer' were needed.