

**NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM'S REPORT TO THE**  
**CABINET**

**Date 5 June 2019**

1. **REPORT TITLE** Newcastle-under-Lyme Town Centre Market
- Submitted by:** Markets and Regeneration Officer
- Portfolio:** Portfolio Holder - Finance and Efficiency
- Ward(s) affected:** Town directly (and wider Borough indirectly)

**Purpose of the Report**

To update Members on progress with the review of the management and operation of the market in Newcastle town centre and seek authority to progress actions arising so far as a result of the review.

**Recommendations**

- a) That authority be delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Portfolio Holder to progress with officers and other interested parties a programme of market improvement arising from the National Association of British Market Authorities' review of Newcastle-under-Lyme market.

**Reasons**

To revitalise the market function in Newcastle-under-Lyme town centre and contribute to delivery of the Council's Healthy High Street programme of work.

1. **Background**

- 1.1 At its meeting of November 2018 Cabinet resolved to review the management and operation of the market in Newcastle town centre in co-operation with local interested parties. It additionally resolved to seek the views of the Economic Development and Enterprise Committee as a part of the review. A range of review activity has been undertaken, and key elements of the consultation are now complete. These are detailed further below.
- 1.2 A consultation with the general public was conducted by the Council's Communications Team in co-operation with members of the Council's Market Team (Appendix 1). This attempted to reach both people who shop in the market currently and also those who use the town centre but do not shop on the market. For those who shop on the market the consultation asked what was valued about the market and also what could be improved. For those who do not shop on the market it asked why this was the case and what might attract them as market shoppers. The consultation closed in February 2019.
- 1.3 Consultation with market traders was completed with the support of the National Association of British Market Authorities (NABMA) who attended the market in February to conduct semi-structured interview with a number of market traders.

1.4 The findings of the public consultation were considered at the March 2019 Economic Development and Enterprise Scrutiny Committee and a number of proposals were made by this committee which have been considered in the programme of work going forward.

2. **Issues**

2.1 The market is considered to be an integral part of the town centre offer and contributes to the overall retail experience for local people and visitors to enjoy. The market has however declined in recent years with a number of vacant stalls dominating the southern end of the market.

2.2 At its April 2019 meeting Cabinet considered a programme for the regeneration and economic growth of Newcastle-under-Lyme town centre. This report proposed a Healthy High Street programme of work which included re-invigorating the market through preparation of an action plan with the Market Traders and the BID. The actions proposed in this report support the Health High Streets programme of work.

2.3 Newcastle's town centre has suffered economically, alongside most town centres across the UK, driven by changing shopping habits, and the migration of major foot-fall generating stores to out of town locations. Town centres have, historically, weathered many economic changes, evolving and refocussing to meet emerging needs. As Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council prepares to support Newcastle town centre through the latest challenges, it is timely to consider the role of the market in that regeneration.

2.4 Newcastle's market has declined over a number of years, with vacant stalls now dominating the southern end of the market. The market has been a feature of the town for centuries, and remains important both culturally and economically, albeit that it is not currently fulfilling its economic role and potential. Recent national research shows:

- Markets positively impact on town centres. Markets can generate footfall increases of around 25% for town centres on market days;
- Markets increase retail sales, with significant numbers (55%-71%) of market visitor's spending money in other shops.
- Markets increase town centre resilience. Resilient towns respond and adapt to change by representing more flexible and adaptable retail space, markets can respond quickly, satisfying the current trend for an increased convenience offer.

2.5 These findings assume a strong, vibrant market, with a modern offer relevant to the rest of the town. Whilst the NABMA report crisply summarises the issues, there is a further driver for this decline which needs to be taken into account in shaping the response by the Council and by other stakeholders such as traders, and the BID. To date, the Council has managed the market with a "Property" focus – a series of small parcels of real estate to be individually rented. To effect a turnaround in the fortunes of the market, and secure the best impact of the market on the fortunes of the high street, the market needs to be managed as a whole, with its mix of products effectively curated, rather than regarded in isolation.

2.6 Key themes emerging from the consultation programme and market review, include:

- i) The need to concentrate the market to create a vibrant space. This responds to feedback that the market is too spread out and lacks a sense of vibrancy.

- a) Options to address this include reducing the number of fixed market stalls to create a smaller market site and remove the visual impact of empty stalls, or concentrating the market more around the Guildhall by relocation of some stalls to this higher footfall area. Additionally a reduction in the number of market trading days could be considered to concentrate activity around fewer trading days.
  - ii) The need to attract new traders to the market and diversify the market offer. This responds to feedback from the public consultation that a wider range of commodities would be welcome and also support for event style markets to vary the town centre offer.
    - a) To respond to this the Council needs to implement a range of actions to attract more traders to the market through:
      - a. incentives to try trading and also by supporting new and growing businesses to ensure that they are economically sustainable.
      - b. Targeting specific product lines not currently represented on the Market
      - c. Exploring periodic event style markets delivered through partners and external providers
    - iii) Encourage trader loyalty and support successful trading. This recognises that the Council has some work to do in modernising and improving its market management policies and in re-shaping the existing relationship with traders whilst working to encourage new traders to the market. This element of work could include:
      - a) moving to cashless forms of payment for traders;
      - b) updating the market regulations and daily licence terms for traders.
      - c) Support to develop the next generation of traders, developing trader skills, and providing access to relevant forms of training such as social media.
  - iv) Bring about a step change in the promotion and marketing of the market, as a destination and event;
- 2.7 Implementing a raft of changes across the market will need to be undertaken sensitively, and in consultation with existing traders and operators. This paper sets out a framework of priority areas for action, and seeks delegated authority for the Chief Executive and Portfolio Holder to engage in such consultation and to introduce operating changes as necessary.
3. **Options Considered** (if any)
- 3.1 The Council has the option to continue to manage the market as it does now but it is apparent that the current mode of operation for the market has been unable to stabilise or improve its performance. In the longer term then continuing to run the market on the current basis would not be the recommended option.
  - 3.2 Taking action to implement changes to the management and operation of the market supports delivery of the Healthy High Street programme of work agreed by Cabinet in April 2019 and enables the Council to respond to the results of the review and consultation on the operation of the market that has been undertaken in recent months.
4. **Proposal**
- 4.1 That authority be delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Portfolio Holder to progress with officers and other interested parties a programme of market improvement

arising from the National Association of British Market Authorities' review of Newcastle-under-Lyme market.

5. **Reasons for Preferred Solution**

- 5.1 To enable timely delivery of a programme to revitalise the market in Newcastle-under-Lyme town centre.
- 5.2 To support delivery of the Health High Street programme of work.

6. **Outcomes Linked to Sustainable Community Strategy and Corporate Priorities**

- 6.1 It is considered that the future management, operation and success of Newcastle Market contributes to the following priorities in the Council plan 2018-22:
  - a) Local Services that Work for Local People
  - b) A Town Centre for All

7. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

- 7.1 The Borough has an ancient Charter right to operate a market within Newcastle but no statutory obligation to run one. The ancient right is supported by the Council's adoption of the provisions within Part III of the Food Act 1984.

8. **Equality Impact Assessment**

- 8.1 There is no identified equality issues as the proposed improvement of the market is intended to benefit all customers. It could be considered that by retaining a street market in Newcastle town centre the Council is retaining a highly accessible form of retail in the town centre.

9. **Financial and Resource Implications**

- 9.1 The programme of work will be substantially undertaken within the existing staffing and financial resources of the Council from a range of service areas.
- 9.2 The Council has previously established as a part of its 2019-20 budget a Growth Fund, of which the market was one of the identified action areas. Subject to appropriate approval some elements of the market revitalisation programme will be funded from this budget.

10. **Major Risks**

- 10.1 The major risk at this stage is that if no action is taken to improve the performance of the town centre market then it will continue to face challenges and decline.
- 10.2 Any significant risks identified as a result of the market review will be recorded in the Council's Corporate Risk Register.

11. **Sustainability and Climate Change Implications**

- 11.1 Markets remain a sustainable retail option. In particular Newcastle market operates in a town centre location that is accessible by public transport and is within easy walking distance

of a number of residential areas. The fresh produce on offer on the market uses less packaging than is commonly used by larger retailers and so offers consumers a less plastic intensive shipping option. The market supports a number of local businesses operated by residents from the North Staffordshire area.

12. **Key Decision Information**

12.1 This is not a key decision item. The town centre market is in the Town Ward however market customers will be drawn from a wider area of the Borough.

13. **Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions**

13.1 7 November 2018 Cabinet

13.2 14 March 2019 Economy, Environment and Place Scrutiny Committee

13.3 24 April 2019 Cabinet

14. **List of Appendices**

14.1 None

15. **Background Papers**

15.2 Newcastle-under-Lyme NAMBA Healthcheck



## **Newcastle market survey**



[Background](#)

[Headline findings](#)

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[Age profile](#)

[Customer insight data](#)

[Analysis](#)

## Background

- 287 questionnaires were submitted between 19 December 2018 and 1 February 2019.
- Responses have been received from every ward except for Talke and Butt Lane.
  - 30 responses from Stoke-on-Trent

## Headline findings

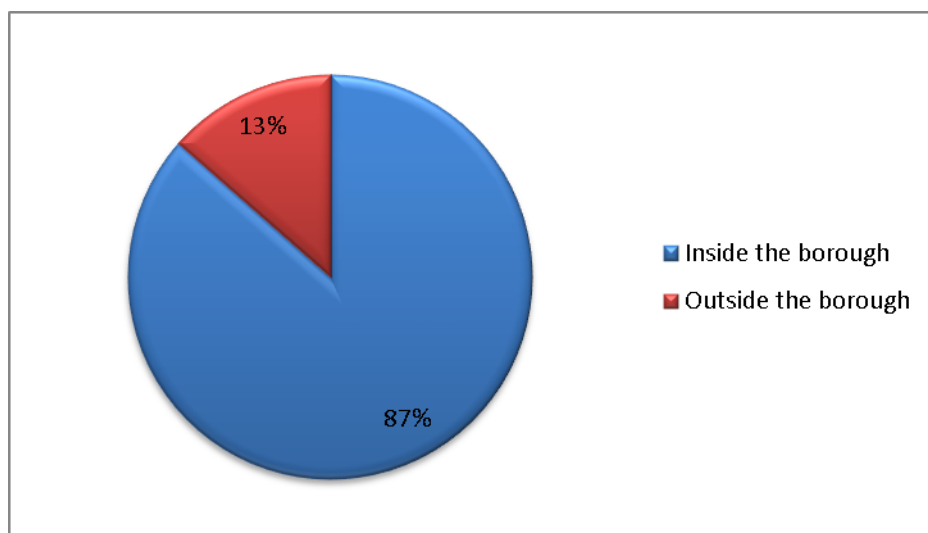
- 59 per cent aged over 50
- 56 per cent shopped at least several times a week
- Food, plants/flowers and bric-a-brac the most popular stalls
- Saturday and Friday the most popular days, followed by Monday
- 87 per cent think the market is in the right location
- Farmers market and general market seem welcoming
  - Antique and bric-a-brac markets not seen as welcoming
- 57 per cent feel the market is too spread out.
  - 64 per cent would look more if they were clustered more closely together
- Themed markets would be popular
  - In particular food, craft and continental
- 42 per cent would visit more if the general market was on fewer days
- 86 per cent who don't shop on the market did so in the past
  - 44 per cent shop on other markets – Leek and Hanley the most popular
- 94 per cent would shop more if they were offering something special
  - Food was the most popular response
- 56 per cent would shop more if card payment was accepted



## Location of respondents

Respondents were asked to provide their home postcode – 252 did provide some sort of answer, but unfortunately 43 only put ST5 (40) or ST7 (3). For the purposes of this analysis they have been classed as being in the borough as almost all such postcodes are (though ST7 can cover the Cheshire East towns/villages of Alsager, Rode Heath and Scholar Green).

So 87 per cent of respondents were from the borough, with the remaining 13 per cent from outside – almost completely from Stoke-on-Trent.



There was a reasonable geographical spread – 20 of the borough’s 21 wards were represented (all except Talke & Butt Lane), with quite a high number from neighbouring Stoke-on-Trent. It will be of little surprise to see that the most common ward for respondents was Town, where the market is based, with relatively few from wards in the north of the borough like Kidsgrove & Ravenscliffe and Newchapel & Mow Cop or the south such as Loggerheads and Maer & Whitmore.

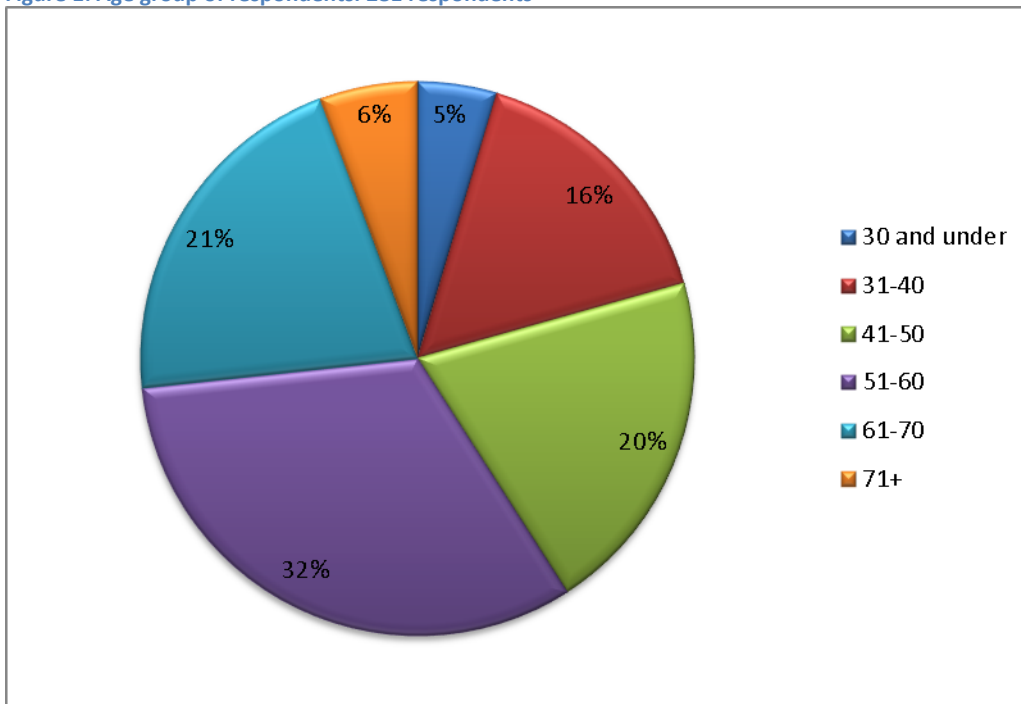
Table 1: Responses by Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough ward or non-borough area. 248 respondents

<b>Audley</b>	9	<b>Newchapel &amp; Mow Cop</b>	2
<b>Bradwell</b>	11	<b>Silverdale</b>	5
<b>Clayton</b>	7	<b>Thistleberry</b>	16
<b>Crackley &amp; Red Street</b>	2	<b>Town</b>	25
<b>Cross Heath</b>	13	<b>Westbury Park &amp; Northwood</b>	12
<b>Holditch &amp; Chesterton</b>	9	<b>Westlands</b>	19
<b>Keele</b>	3	<b>Wolstanton</b>	10
<b>Kidsgrove &amp; Ravenscliffe</b>	1	<b>Unspecified ST5</b>	40
<b>Knutton</b>	5	<b>Unspecified ST7</b>	3
<b>Loggerheads</b>	2	<b>Stoke-on-Trent</b>	30
<b>Madeley &amp; Betley</b>	6	<b>Endon</b>	1
<b>Maer &amp; Whitmore</b>	3	<b>Macclesfield</b>	1
<b>May Bank</b>	15	<b>Preston</b>	1

### Age profile of respondents

281 respondents said which age group they were in and this shows that 59 per cent were aged 51 and above. 21 per cent were aged 40 and below, but only 5 per cent were aged 30 and below.

Figure 1: Age group of respondents. 281 respondents



## Customer insight data

Experian's Mosaic data suggests that the sample of respondents are largely representative of the borough's population. One group that is massively under-represented is group M, which contains fairly deprived families, normally with young children. Also under-represented is group A, which contains affluent (often retired) rural residents. Over-represented particularly are group N, made up of mostly pensioners who are struggling financially.

Table 2: Socioeconomic groups based on the postcode of 191 respondents

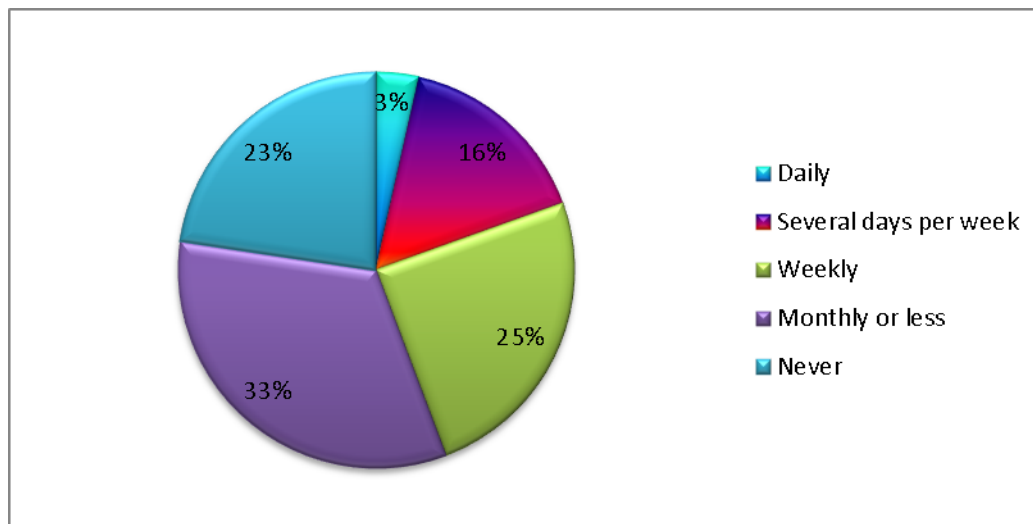
Group name and brief description	% of respondents	% of households
A-Country Living – Well-off residents in rural locations	1.6	5.5
B-Prestige Positions – Upmarket families in large homes	4.2	4.3
City Prosperity – very high-earners	0.0	0.0
D-Domestic Success – Thriving families concerned with careers and their children	6.8	5.4
E-Suburban Stability – Mature suburb-dwellers in mid-range housing	10.5	9.3
F-Senior Security – Elderly people enjoying a comfortable retirement	13.6	13.6
G-Rural Reality – Village communities in inexpensive homes	4.2	4.1
H-Aspiring Homemakers – Younger households in housing priced within their means	13.1	11.1
I-Urban Cohesion – Settled urban communities	1.6	0.2
J-Rental Hubs – Well-educated young renters	2.1	2.5
K-Modest Traditions – Mature homeowners enjoying stable lifestyles	12.0	11.0
L-Transient Renters – Single people, privately renting low-value houses for the short-term	11.0	9.6
M-Family Basics – Families with limited resources struggling to make ends meet	1.6	9.0
N-Vintage Value – Elderly residents relying on support for financial or practical help	11.0	8.8
O- Municipal Challenge – Urban renters in social housing facing many challenges	6.8	5.8

## Analysis of data

### Q1) How often do you shop on Newcastle-under-Lyme market?

Nearly half of respondents (45 per cent) shopped on the market weekly or more often, with just over half (55 per cent) only shopping monthly or not at all.

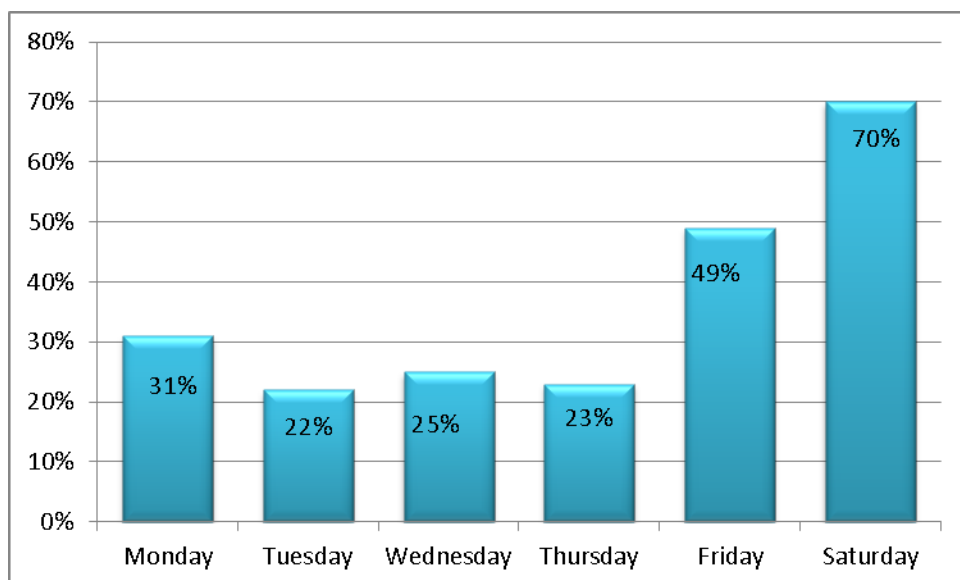
Figure 2: Are you satisfied with the weekly frequency of the service? 287 respondents



### Q2) On which days do you shop?

Friday, and especially Saturday, were the most popular days – Friday attracted around double the visitors from Tuesday to Thursday, and Saturday attracted around triple.

Figure 3: On which days do you shop? 287 respondents



Please rate the markets that you shop at in order of preference.

There seems to have been some mis-understanding about how to answer this question, with several respondents rating more than one market as their number one choice. But giving each day an average score from all respondents shows the following order of preference (the scores are kept in to show how much more popular the top few were than the bottom two – you might expect the scores to be closer to one to seven than they are, but as several respondents gave a choice of 1 to more than one option, and most did not give grades to those markets they did not shop on, this explains the lower numbers):

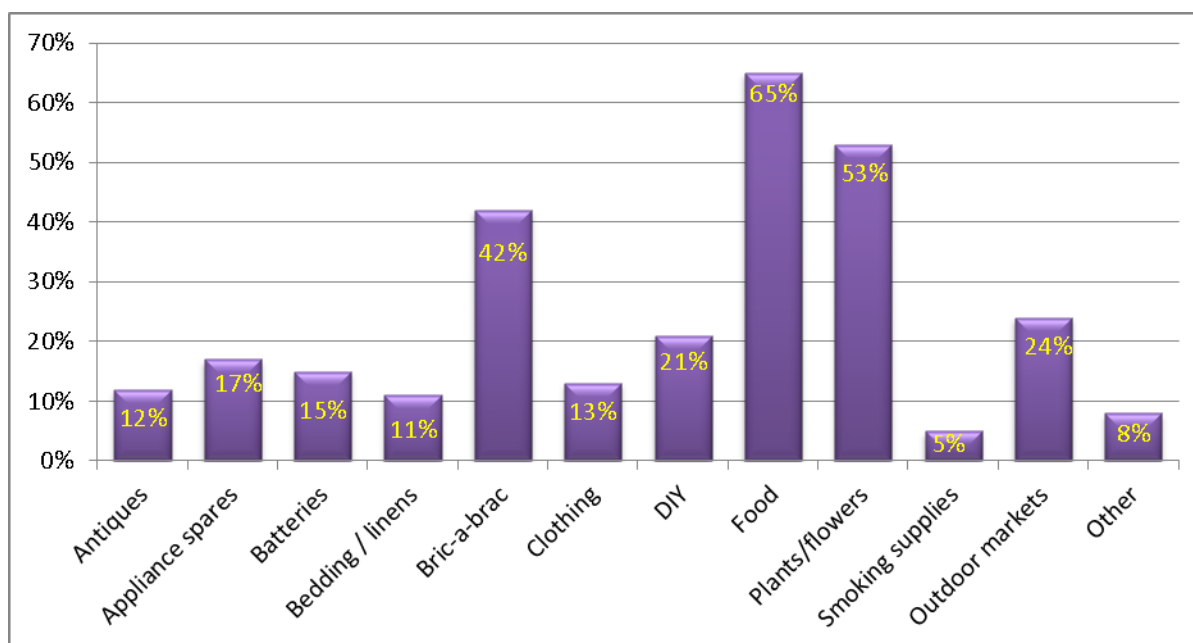
- Friday farmers (average score of 2.50)
- Saturday 2.52
- Friday general 2.7
- Monday 2.8
- Wednesday 3.1
- Tuesday 3.8
- Thursday 4.0

### Which stalls do you buy from?

Three stalls were comfortably the most popular:

- Food (65 per cent)
- Plants/flowers (53 per cent)
- Bric-a-brac (42 per cent)

Figure 4: Which stalls do you buy from? 220 respondents



Respondents were also given the chance to say which 'other' stalls they bought from:

- Art Books
- Arts and crafts (2)
- Bryn McDonald
- Coffee stall
- Eggs (2)
- Fish man
- Pet

- Records and CDs (2)
- Toiletries and household goods
- Tool man
- Vacuum Cleaner bags

**What else would you like to see on Newcastle-under-Lyme market?**

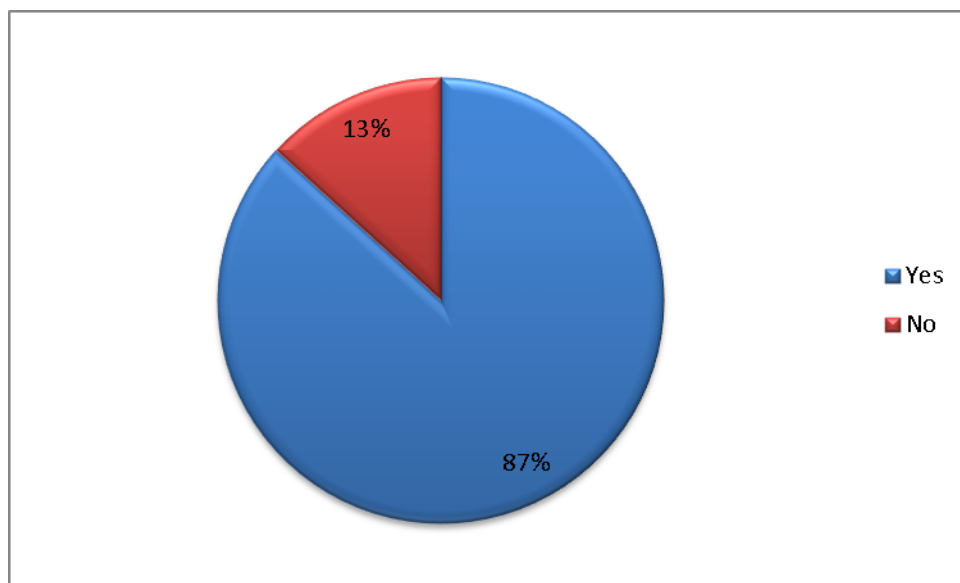
106 comments were left, with three key themes:

- More stalls/wider variety 39 respondents
- Food (artisan, eggs, vegetables) 32
- Clothes 6

**Do you think that the market is in the right place in the town centre?**

A clear majority (87 per cent) did think that the market was indeed in the right place.

Figure 5: Do you think that the market is in the right place in the town centre? 219 respondents



From the 13 per cent who did not think it was in the right place, some suggestions came through:

- Around the Guildhall 13 responses
- Ironmarket 8 responses
- The old Sainsbury's/Ryecroft 3 responses

**Does the market feel welcoming when you walk around it?**

There was a significant difference in responses here – whereas more people answered negatively than positively for the antique market and the bric-a-brac market, responses for the general market and, especially, the farmers market, were far more positive.

Table 3: Does the market feel welcoming when you walk around it? 182 respondents

	Yes	No	Don't know
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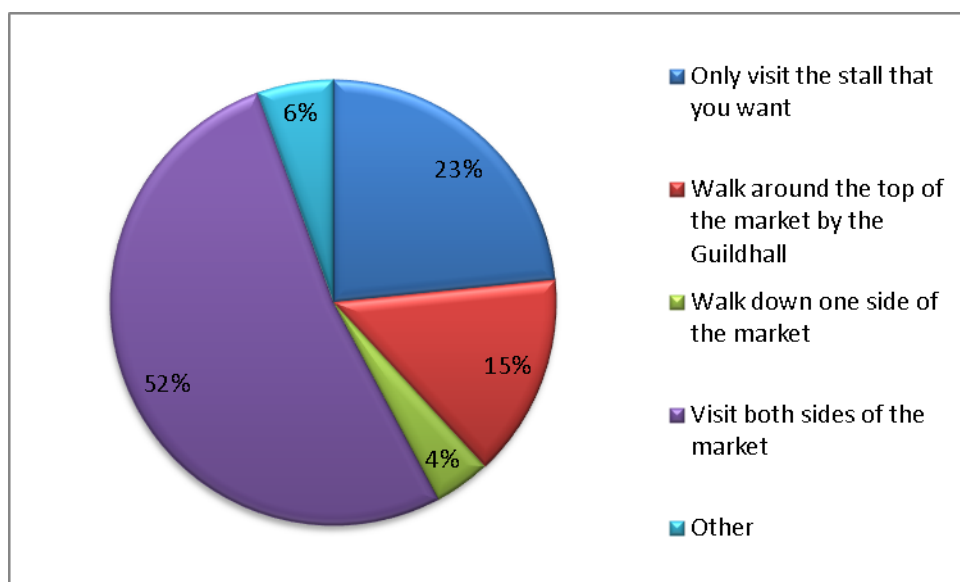
<b>Antique market</b>	37%	39%	23%
<b>Bric-a-brac market</b>	36%	40%	25%
<b>General market</b>	58%	34%	9%
<b>Farmers market</b>	69%	18%	14%

### When you visit the market do you....

Respondents were asked what they did when they visited the market.

- Slightly more than half (52 per cent) said that they visited both sides of the market
- Around one-quarter (23 per cent) only visited the stall that they wanted
- 15 per cent walked around the top of the market, by the Guildhall
- Four per cent walked down one side of the market
- The remaining six per cent chose 'other' and their comments are listed here
  - Varies depending on where else I'm going.
  - The market has been ruined because some fool at the council decided to change the layout of the market. The market stalls have always been back to back so why did you think it would be a good idea to separate them?
  - I usually visit all the stalls when it's the antique or bric-a-brac markets, otherwise just go to the stall I want.
  - There are so few stalls these days I never bother looking. I remember when the market was the 'go to' place for fabric, haberdashery, men's shirts, fruit and veg. Everything looks second rate these days.
  - I aim for stalls I know but also take a look around.
  - would browse if there were more stalls
  - Visit stalls I want on general market. Walk around all on Tues & Thurs market.
  - No stalls left to walk around
  - Would visit more stalls if they were there and need to stay til at least 3:30pm
  - Depends on time of year e.g. look for Xmas wreaths on visits to stalls in December.
  - Newcastle is not welcoming nothing worth a visit for

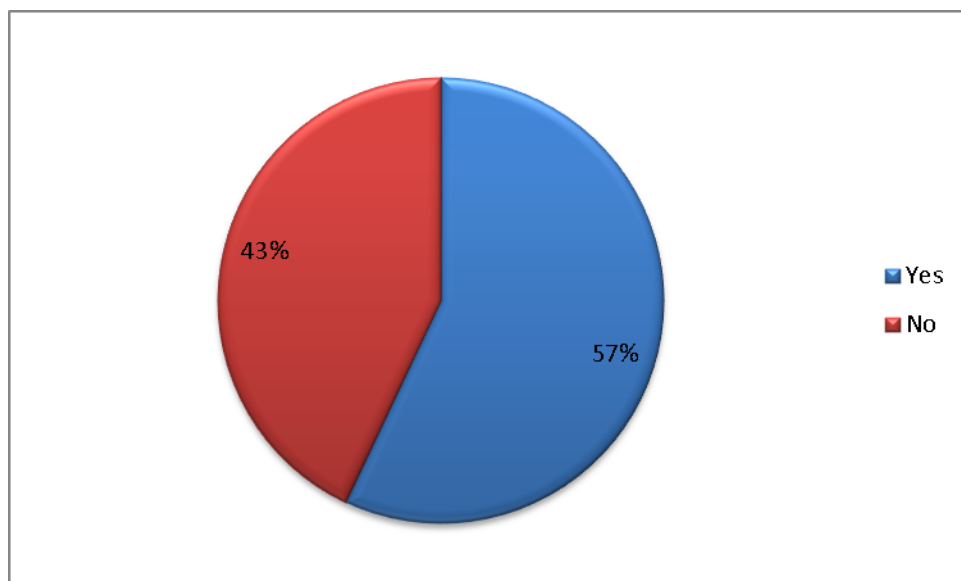
Figure 6: When you visit the market do you.... 218 respondents



### Do you feel that the stalls are too spread out?

Nearly three-fifths of respondents (57 per cent) thought that the stalls were too spread out, with the remaining 43 per cent thinking that they were not.

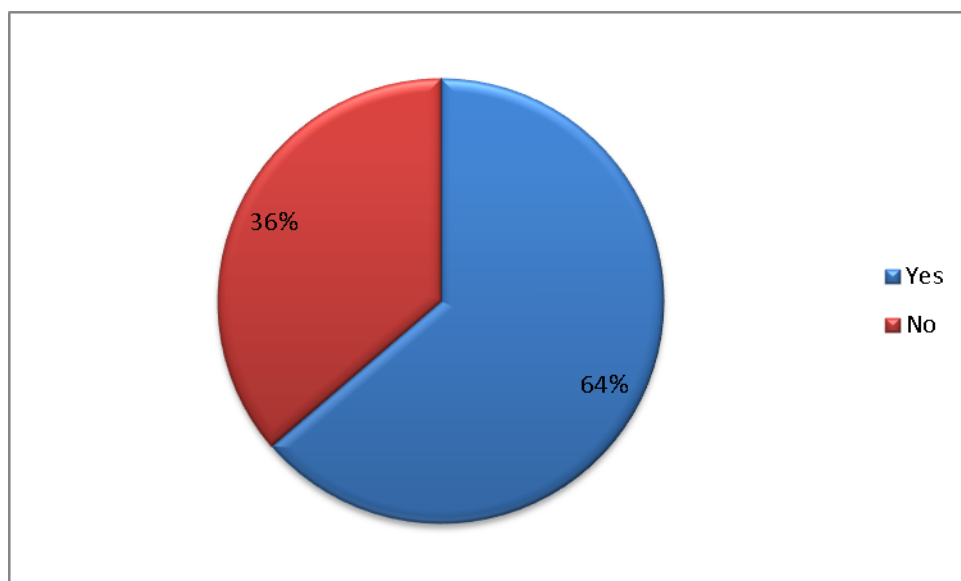
Figure 7: Do you feel that the stalls are too spread out? 221 respondents



### Would you be likely to look at more of the stalls if they were clustered more closely together?

Almost two-thirds of respondents said that they would be likely to look at more stalls, with a little over one-third (36 per cent) saying that they would not.

Figure 8: Would you be likely to look at more of the stalls if they were clustered more closely together? 215 respondents

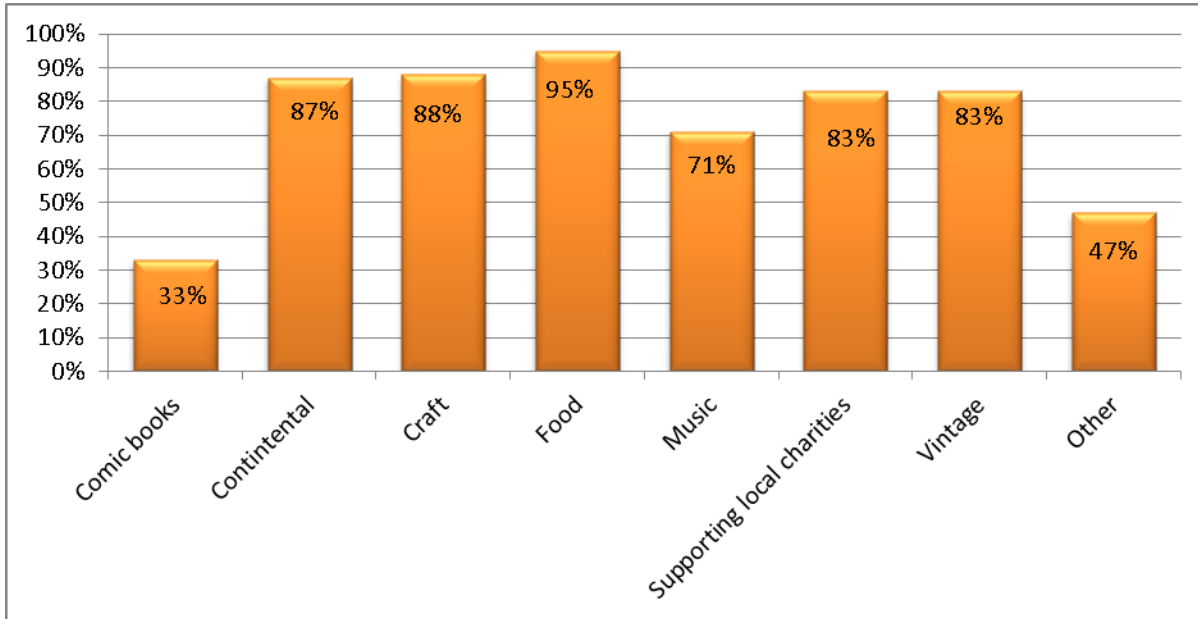


### If occasional themed markets were held in the town centre would you be likely to visit these?



Most of the ideas seemed to be popular – with the exception of comic books where only one in three respondents seemed keen. Five options were chosen by more than 80 per cent, as the following chart shows.

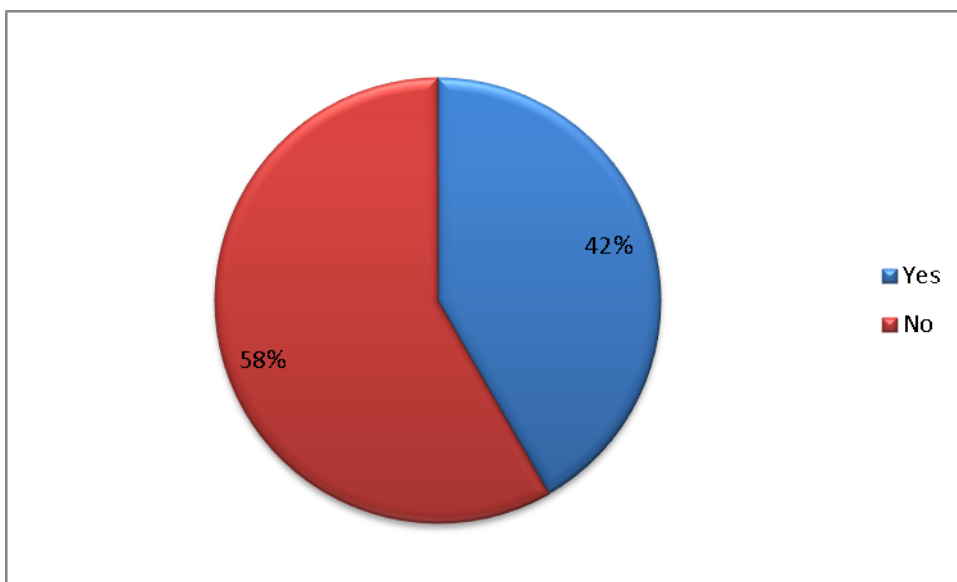
Figure 9: If occasional themed markets were held in the town centre would you be likely to visit these? 195 respondents



**If the general market was held on fewer days a week would you be more likely to visit the town on a market day?**

42 per cent of respondents said that they would be more likely, with 58 per cent therefore saying that they would not.

Figure 10: If the general market was held on fewer days a week would you be more likely to visit the town on a market day? 211 respondents

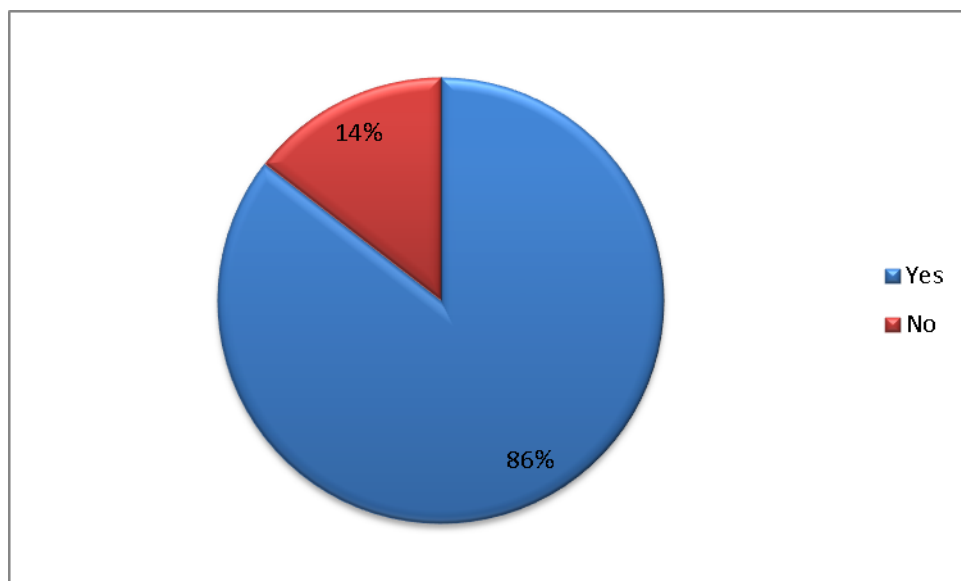


There was then a section of questions aimed at respondents who no longer visited the market.

### Have you shopped on Newcastle market in the past?

A clear majority (86 per cent) had done so, with the remaining 14 per cent saying that they had not.

Figure 11: Have you shopped on Newcastle market in the past? 69 respondents



A follow-up question then asked why they don't shop at the market anymore and several comments were left. There were a few key themes:

- Nothing that appeals to me / poor quality products 25 responses
- Not enough stalls 14
- Poor selection of other shops nearby / unattractive town 6
- Inconvenient times 4

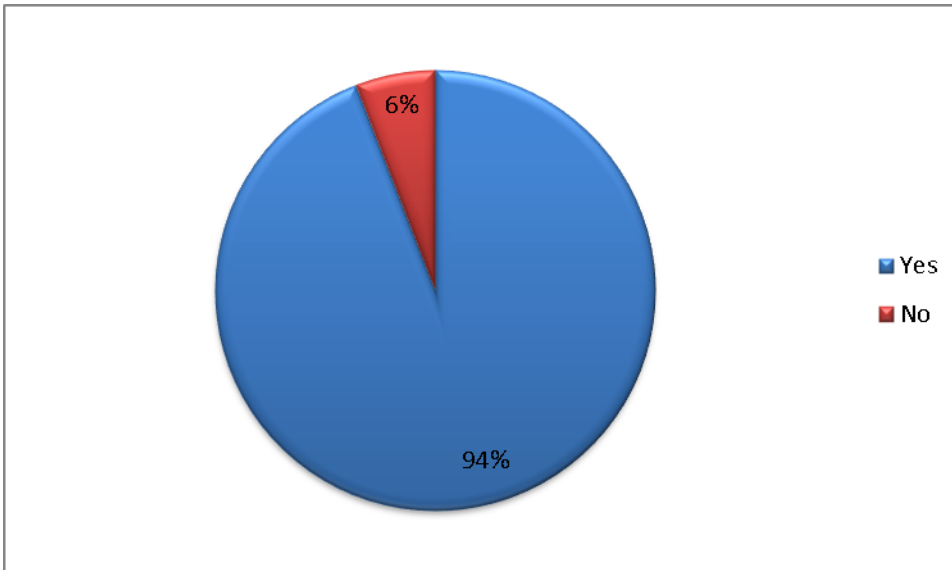
### Do you shop on other markets?

- Just over half (56 per cent) said that they did not
- 44 per cent said that they did (the following were chosen by more than one)
  - Hanley 7
  - Leek 7
  - Famers markets 3
  - Macclesfield 3
  - Nantwich 3
  - Altrincham 2
  - Christmas markets 2
  - Sandbach 2
  - Shrewsbury 2
  - Stoke-upon-Trent 2
    - This might be of interest – 30 respondents were from Stoke-on-Trent and therefore visited Newcastle market, but only 9 said they visited the markets in Hanley or Stoke-upon-Trent
  - Stone 2

### Would you be more likely to shop on a market if you felt that it was offering something special or different?

There was a high level on enthusiasm here, with 94 per cent saying that they would be more likely and only six per cent saying they would not be.

Figure 12: Would you be more likely to shop on a market if you felt that it was offering something special or different? 68 respondents



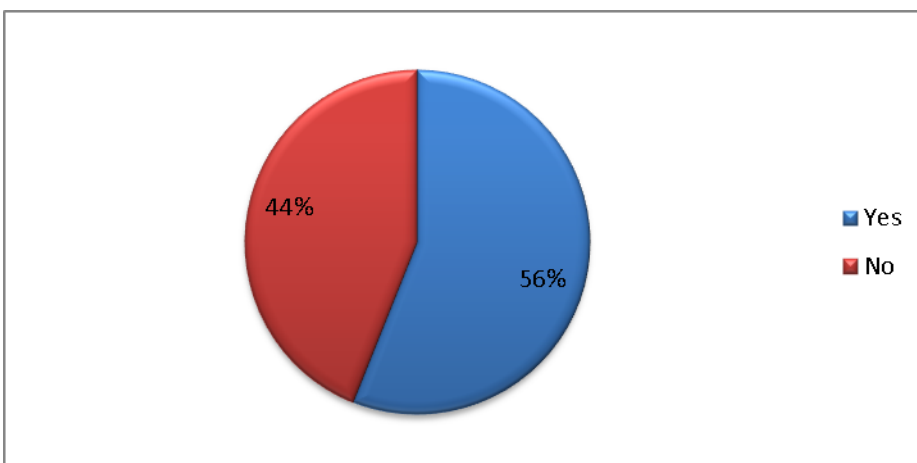
Respondents were asked to specify what would make them more likely to shop there and there were a few key themes

- Food/drink (artisan, local, specialist) 14 respondents
- Craft/handmade items 5 respondents
- More/different stalls 5 respondents
- Stalls where you can eat/drink 4 respondents

### Would you be more likely to shop on a market if you could pay by contactless / card?

This was quite a popular idea, with a majority of respondents (56 per cent) saying that they would be more likely to shop with this option.

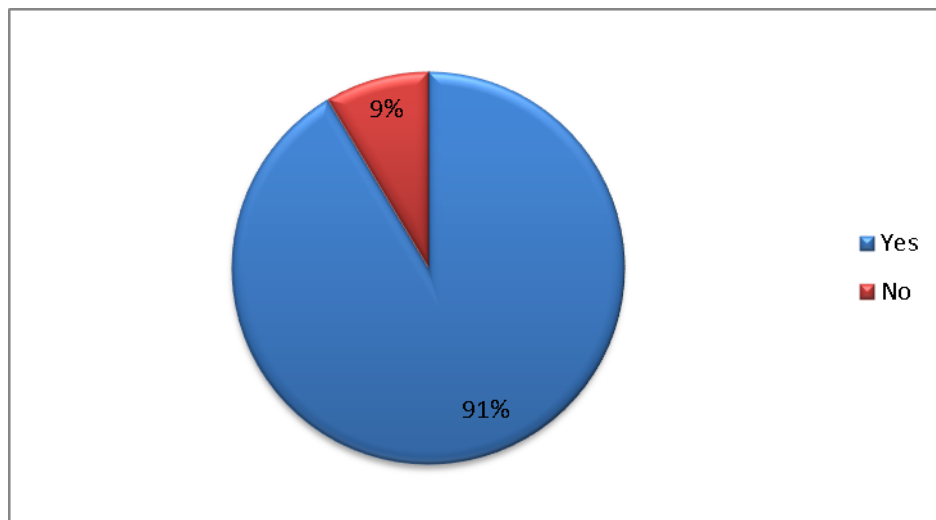
Figure 13: Would you be more likely to shop on a market if you could pay by contactless / card? 66 respondents



**If occasional themed markets were held in the town centre would you be more likely to visit these?**

Again, this idea was popular – 91 per cent of respondents said that they would be more likely.

Figure 14: If occasional themed markets were held in the town centre would you be more likely to visit these? 70 respondents



There was a lot of variance in the popularity of the suggested themed market, with food, craft and continental being far more popular than the rest:

Table 4: Which markets would you be likely to visit?

Type of market	% of respondents who were interested
Comic book	12%
Continental	65%
Craft	68%
Food	85%
Music	32%
Supporting local charities	32%
Vintage	50%
Other	10%

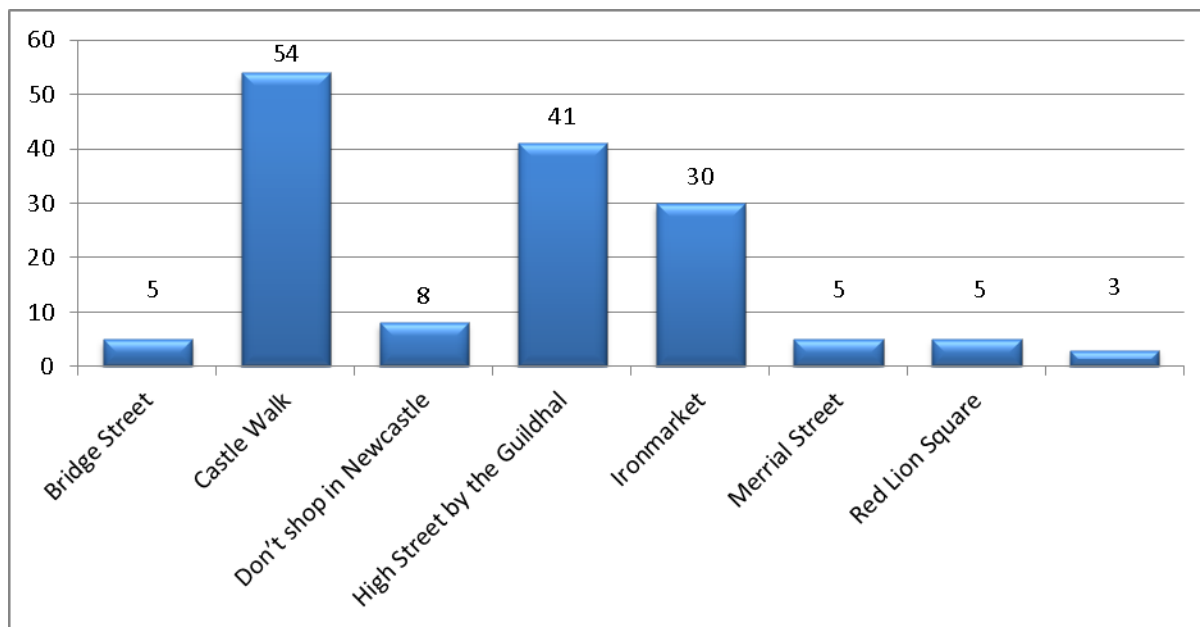
Respondents were asked to specify what they meant by other – due to the small number they are included as written here:

- various workshops, participant events
- Christmas markets
- Artisan food of all descriptions - bread, olives, free-range and outdoor-bred meat products.
- computer
- European Xmas market. My kids might like comics/music
- Regarding the charity stalls, I would prefer if the proceeds were kept local and not National
- Books
- I think you need to get the general market strong before you start jazzing it up.
- Baby. Home design (not craft or regular homewares). Art and artists.

### When you visit Newcastle town centre which are you most likely to visit:

Castle Walk, the High Street and Ironmarket were chosen significantly more than the other options. {note the last option which does not show up is *The bottom of High Street (below Hassell Street)*}

Figure 15: When you visit Newcastle town centre which are you most likely to visit:



### Are there any other comments that you would like to make on Newcastle Market?

This was an open comments box that elicited several responses which are themed below.

- Support for the idea of specialist markets in the town.
- The opening hours of the market not being convenient for people who work full time.
- A recognition that the market is facing the same challenges as other retail outlets due to the change in consumer shopping habits.
- The need to attract a variety of different traders linked to a desire to see different things on the market and a perception that some of the traders sell lower quality items.
- An appreciation for some of the stallholders who were considered to be helpful.
- Some comments made about the wider appeal of the town, transport and car parking which are not the focus of this survey.

