

Scrutiny Review of Welcoming and Safe Town Centres – Billingham Town Council

From Billingham Town Council's perspective, what are the main issues regarding Billingham town centre safety and what has the Town Council done to address these (including any impact)?

The main issue for Billingham town centre is antisocial behaviour and vandalism from younger people. Another issue is shop lifting however, because this happens in the shops, this does not directly affect the people walking through the centre.

The Town Council does not address these issues, if anything is reported to us, we pass the information over to the town centre management.

What is the Town Council's relationship with SBC like – is this enabling / inhibiting progress on making Billingham town centre more welcoming / safe (please provide any examples)?

The Town Council invites the Stockton Borough Council Ward Councillors for Billingham to its Full Council meetings, to give updates on what is happening in the individual wards. There are also 5 members of the Town Council who are Stockton Borough Councillors.

The Town Council is made aware of consultations etc, however we also find out a lot of information from local residents and social media.

What feedback is the Town Council receiving from residents / businesses in terms of the Billingham town centre environment?

Residents have expressed concerns that the town centre feels unwelcoming and lacks safety, with a general perception of it been dull and grey.

There is a strong desire for a greater variety of shops, including independent retailers which could offer a unique shopping experience distinct from typical high street offerings to attract out of town visitors.

They would also like an improvement to the quality of the buildings, making the town centre more visually appealing, and advocate for reinstating the flats above the shops to increase activity in the area.

No car parking charges to encourage more visitors and boost local businesses.

More of a leisure offer to boost nighttime/weekend activity, especially with having the Forum next to the site.

Against the redevelopment of the existing town centre site for housing.

What should be the future priorities in making Billingham town centre as welcoming and safe as possible?

Extra security presence, especially on an evening. Good lighting. More of a leisure offer, places for people to eat etc on an evening increasing the nighttime economy and activity. Making the town centre more visually appealing. More people around, a busier town centre could possibly mean less antisocial behaviour.