

Creating a 'Forward Framework' for Saxmundham town centre

Chris Wade, Director
aka @man about towns



Creating a 'Forward Framework'



Revitalising Saxmundham town centre

*East Suffolk Council working with the People & Places Partnership
in association with Saxmundham Town Council
and Saxmundham Neighbourhood Planning Steering Group.*



**Saxmundham
Town Council**



National resources



Revitalising town centres

A handbook for council leadership



Case studies

Town centre checklist

Success Factors

FOUNDATION	
Evidence and objectives	Has a baseline survey of issues been completed, aims defined, objectives, scope and long-term monitoring of impacts agreed?
FUNCTION	
Parking, travel and access	Is an integrated and customer-focused parking, travel, and access strategy in place?
Planning and property	Are there robust town-centre-first policies, master-planning, priorities within and between towns and has work been coordinated with town centre businesses and landlords?
Streetscape and public realm	Has a funding strategy and ongoing, prioritised streetscape and public realm improvement plan been agreed with an understanding of 'connected value'?
Business support	Is there tailored training/mentoring and a strategy to enhance the quality and distinctiveness of retail, services, hospitality and leisure businesses based on current provision, trends and knowledge of competing centres?
Place branding and marketing	Is there a clear understanding of the town brand with pooled budgets and a creative, collective marketing campaign?
Digital technology and data	Is there an ongoing assessment of digital infrastructure and skills with an investment plan and approach for the collective use of data in marketing and monitoring the town centre?
FORM	
Governance and influence	Is there an appropriate structure, membership and credibility to coordinate local stakeholder activity and influence cross-departmental or other strategic partnerships?
FOLK	
Community engagement and coordination	Is there strong public, private and community engagement with active and coordinated involvement in planning and delivery that extends to community assets development and is backed by a clear communications plan?
Roles and capacity	Are there an effective chair, suitably skilled board, employment of necessary staff, effective management of trained volunteers and clear lines for joint working with other stakeholder groups?
FUNDING	
Finances and investment	Is there an organisation with robust financial procedures and strategy agreed for diverse and sustainable fund raising and income to support a town centre? Is it 'run as a business' with inter-relationships understood and investment secured?
FORWARD PLANNING	
Strategy and plans	Is there a well-defined 'forward framework' comprising an overarching vision/strategy, a rolling organisational business plan and a parallel action plan coordinating delivery on the ground?



First steps to recovery (video)

First steps to recovery

Understanding changing perceptions & practices



Re-opening town centres



Understanding town trends

Gathering evidence

- survey
- analysis

Creating partnerships

- engaging
- organising

Turning around towns

- planning
- delivery
- influence

Gathering & sharing evidence

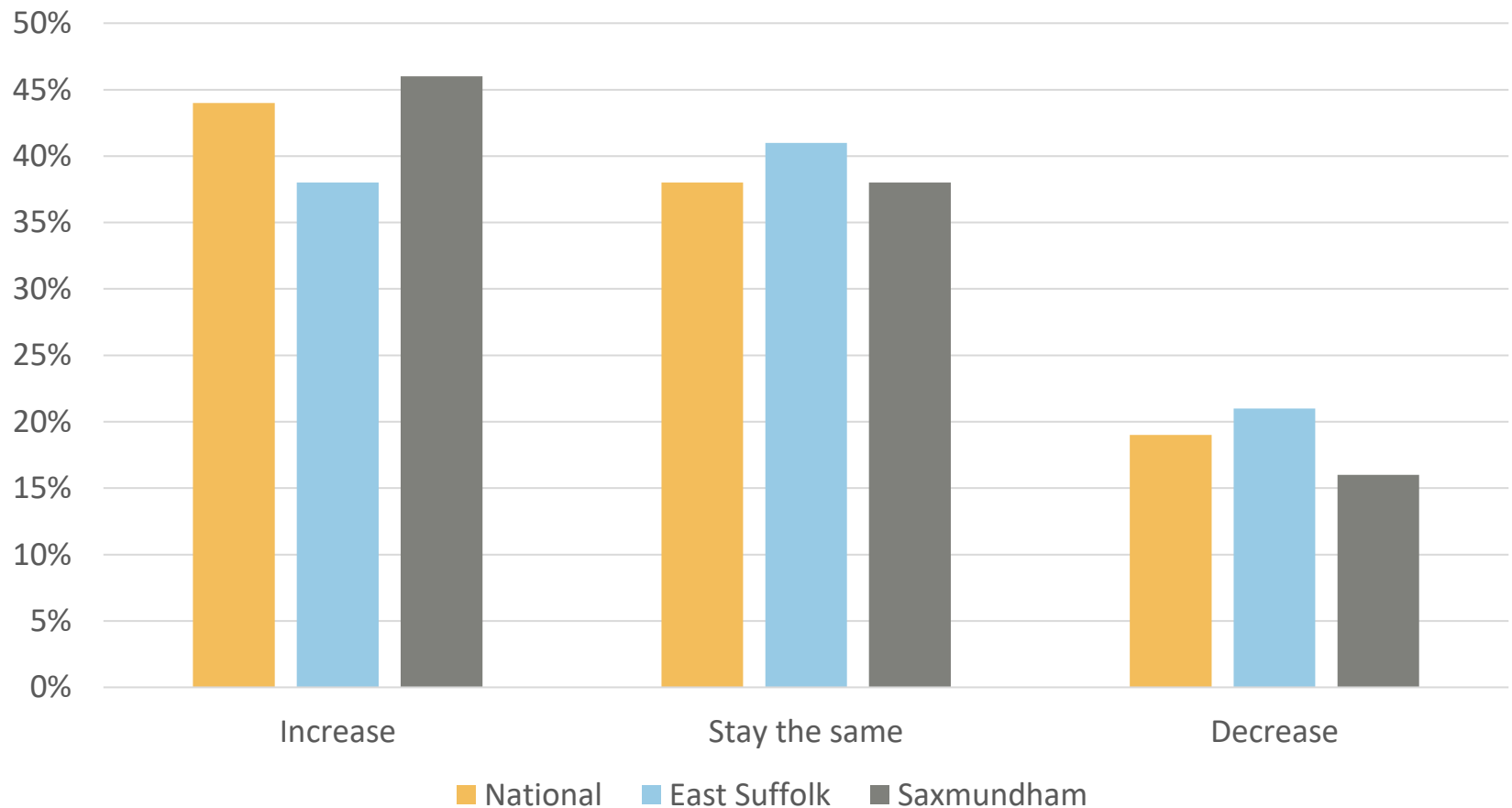
Baseline survey

- Stakeholder engagement
- 12 key performance indicators (KPIs)
- Town centre metrics
- Business confidence
- User's (on-street & on-line)
- Digital development
- 3000 town centre users
- 600 businesses
- Detailed & summary reports
- East Suffolk comparisons

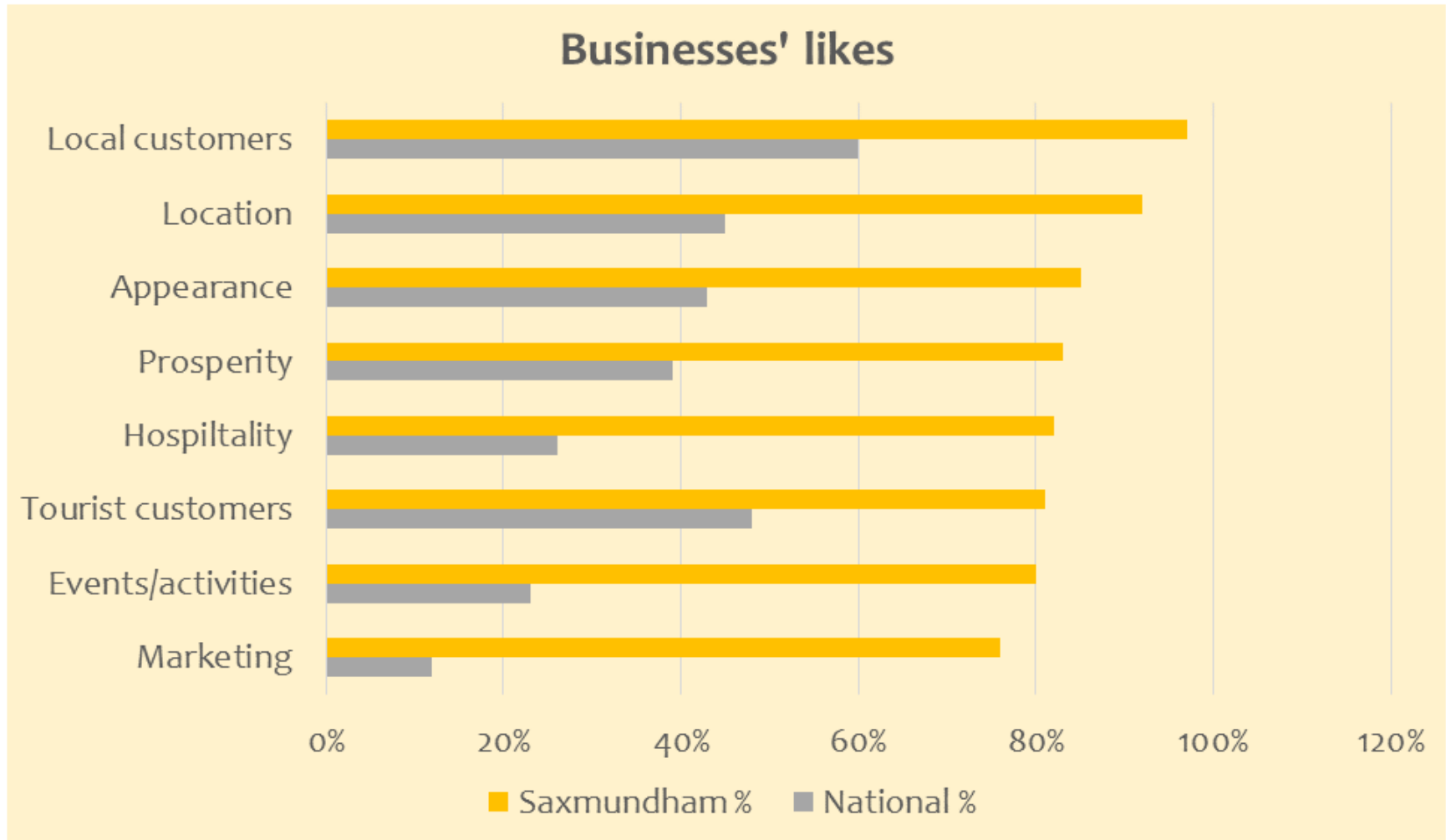


Turning-around turnover

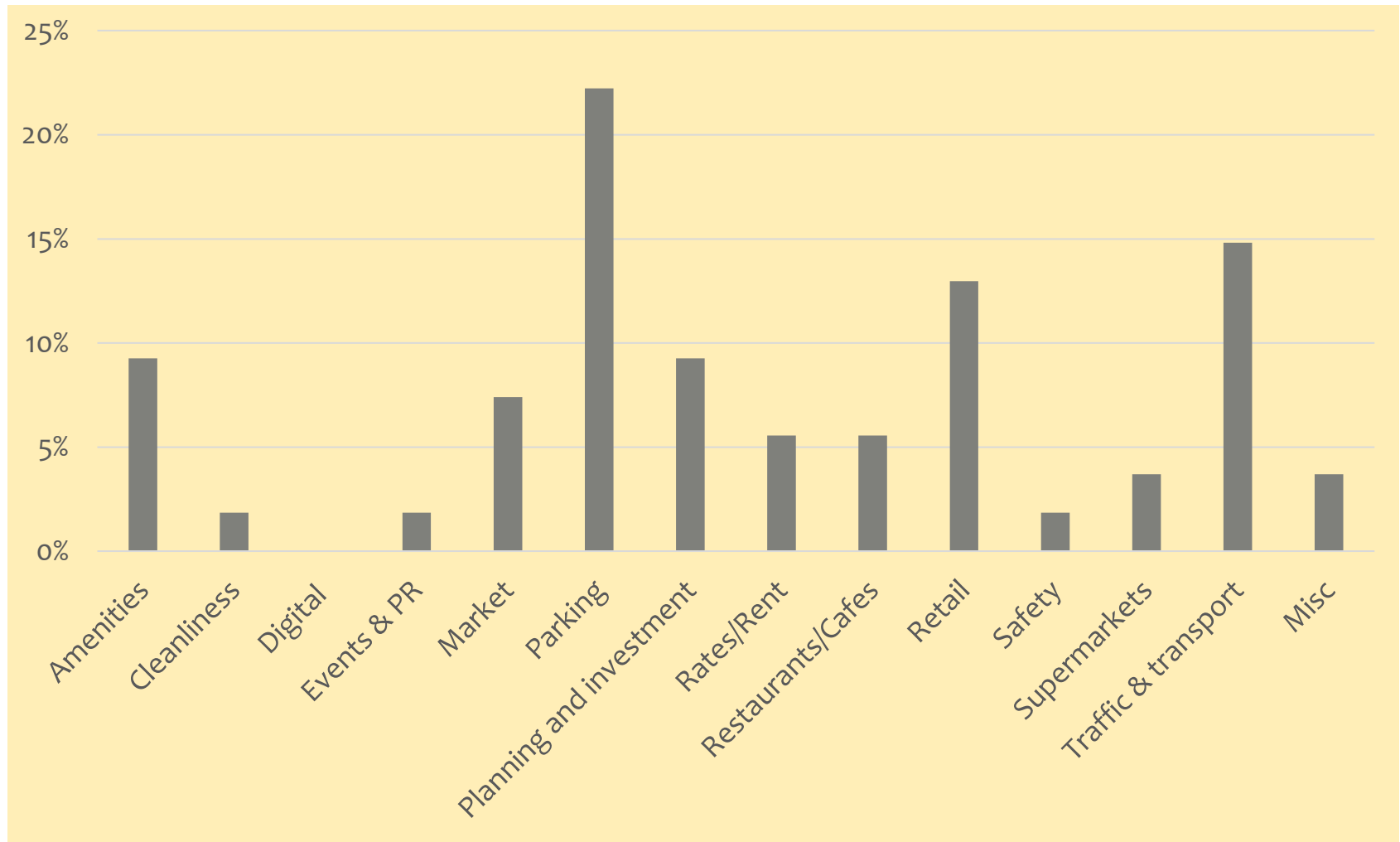
Projected change in turnover next 12 months for businesses



Businesses' likes

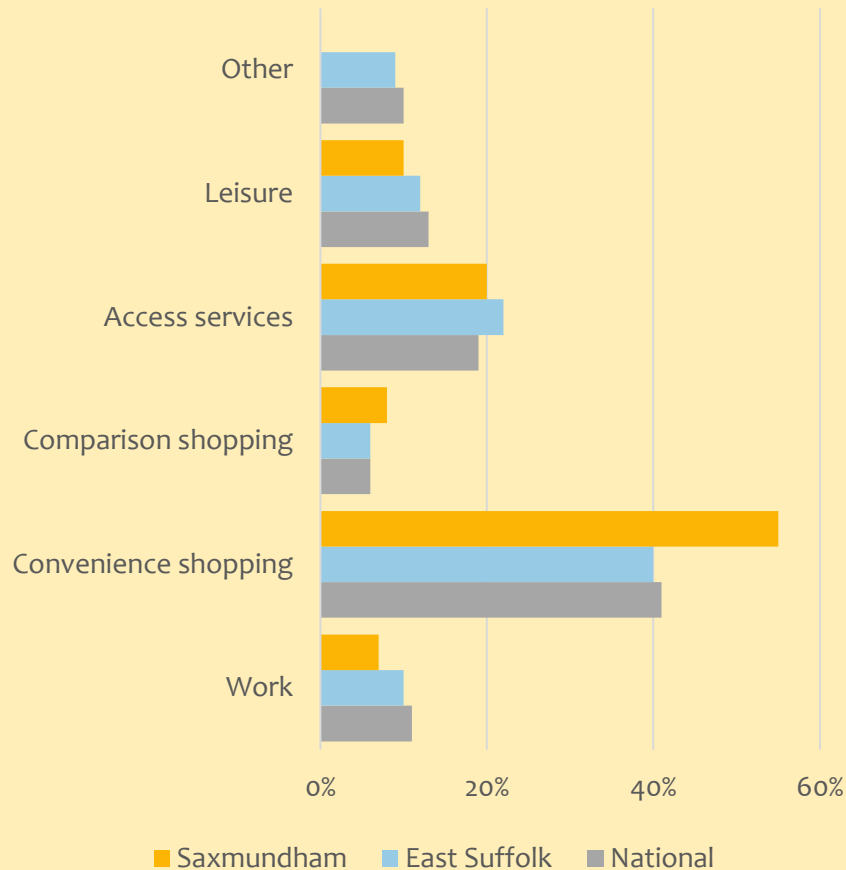


Businesses' priorities

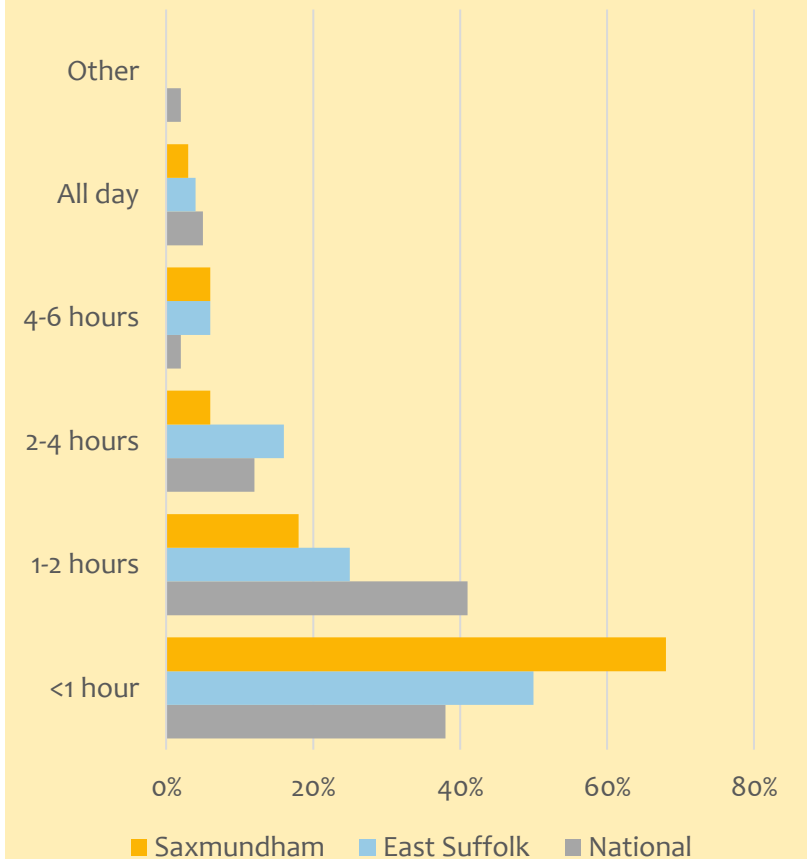


Understanding customers

Main Purpose of Visit

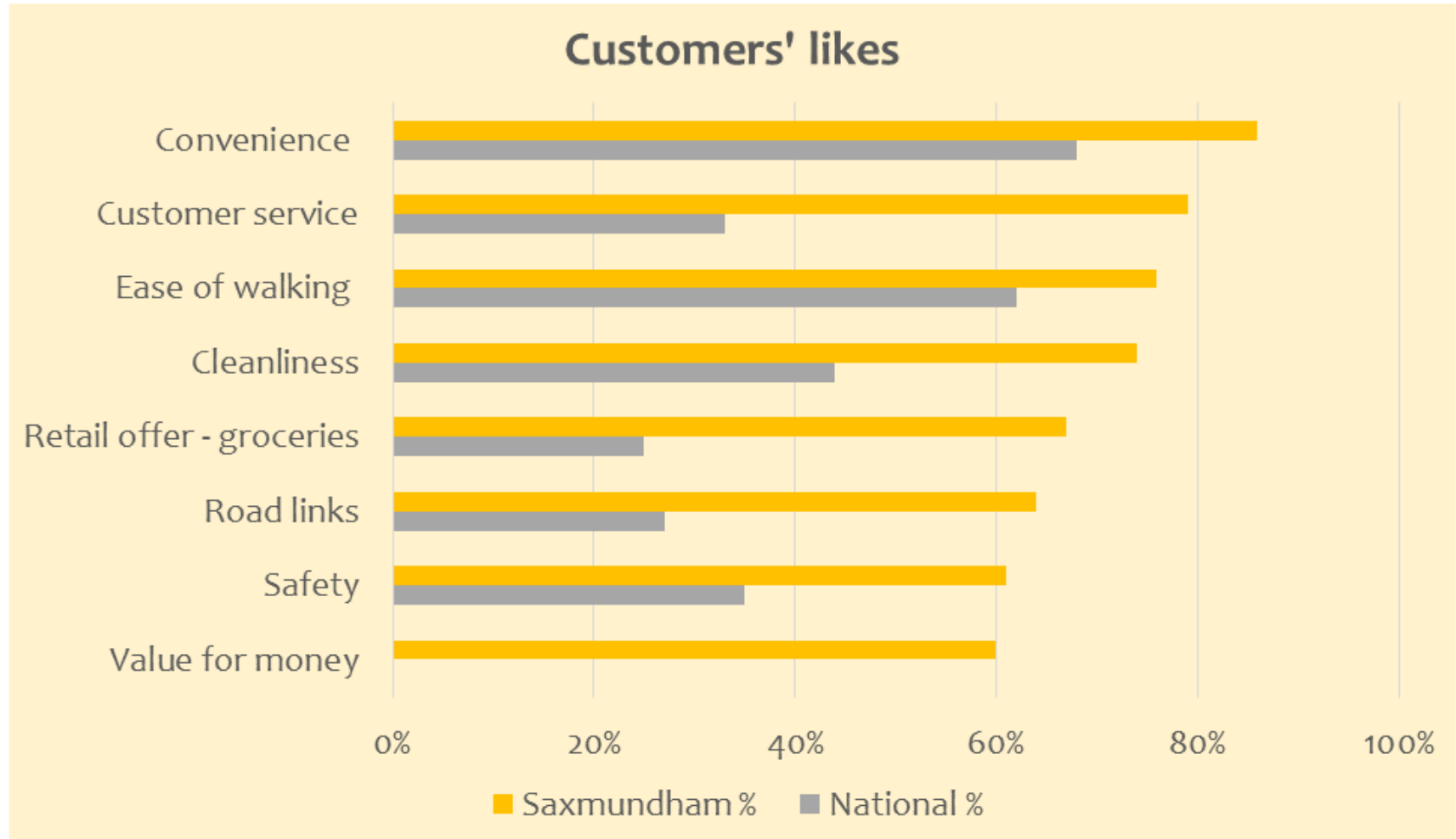


Duration of Visit



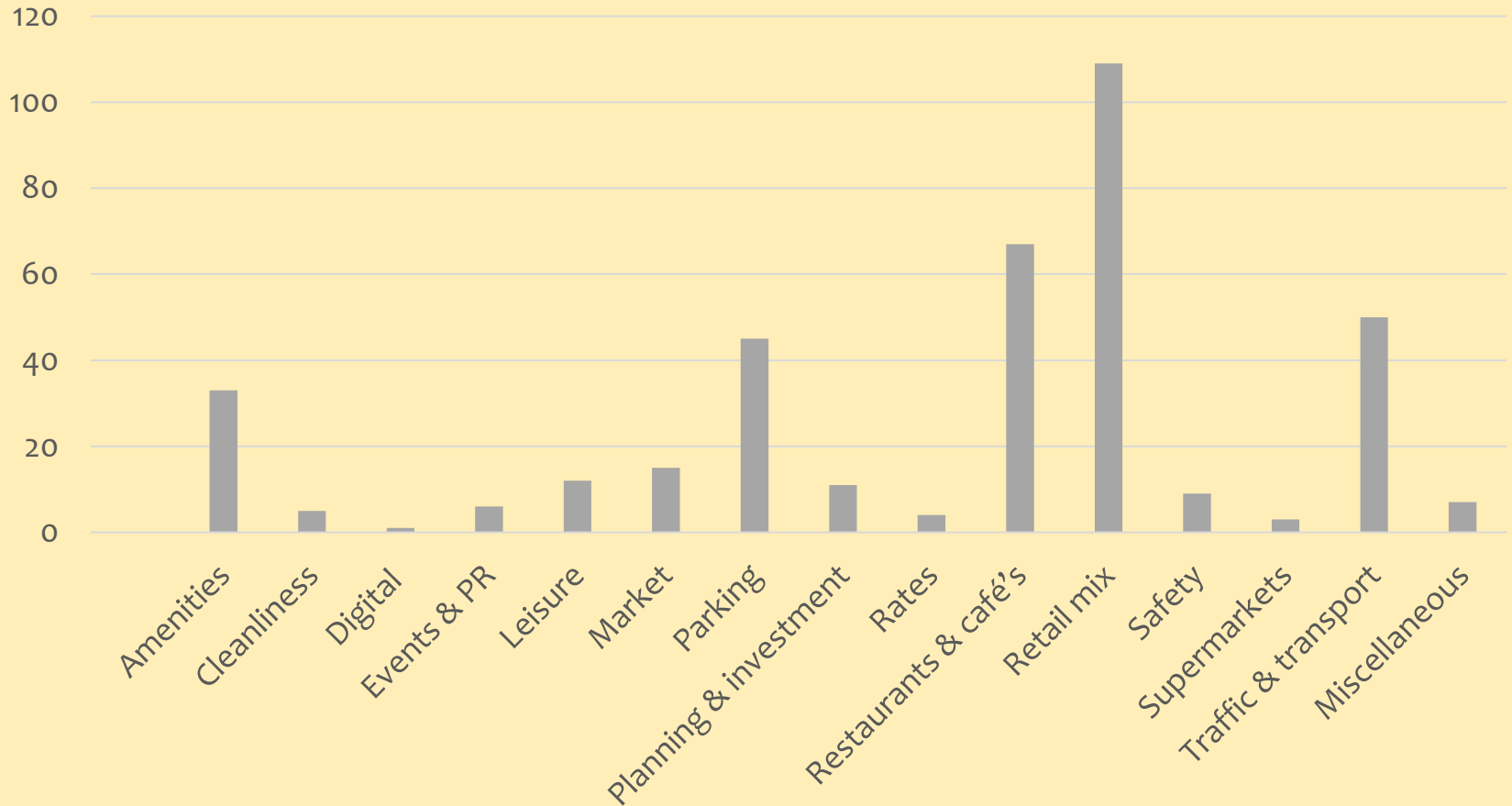


Customers' likes

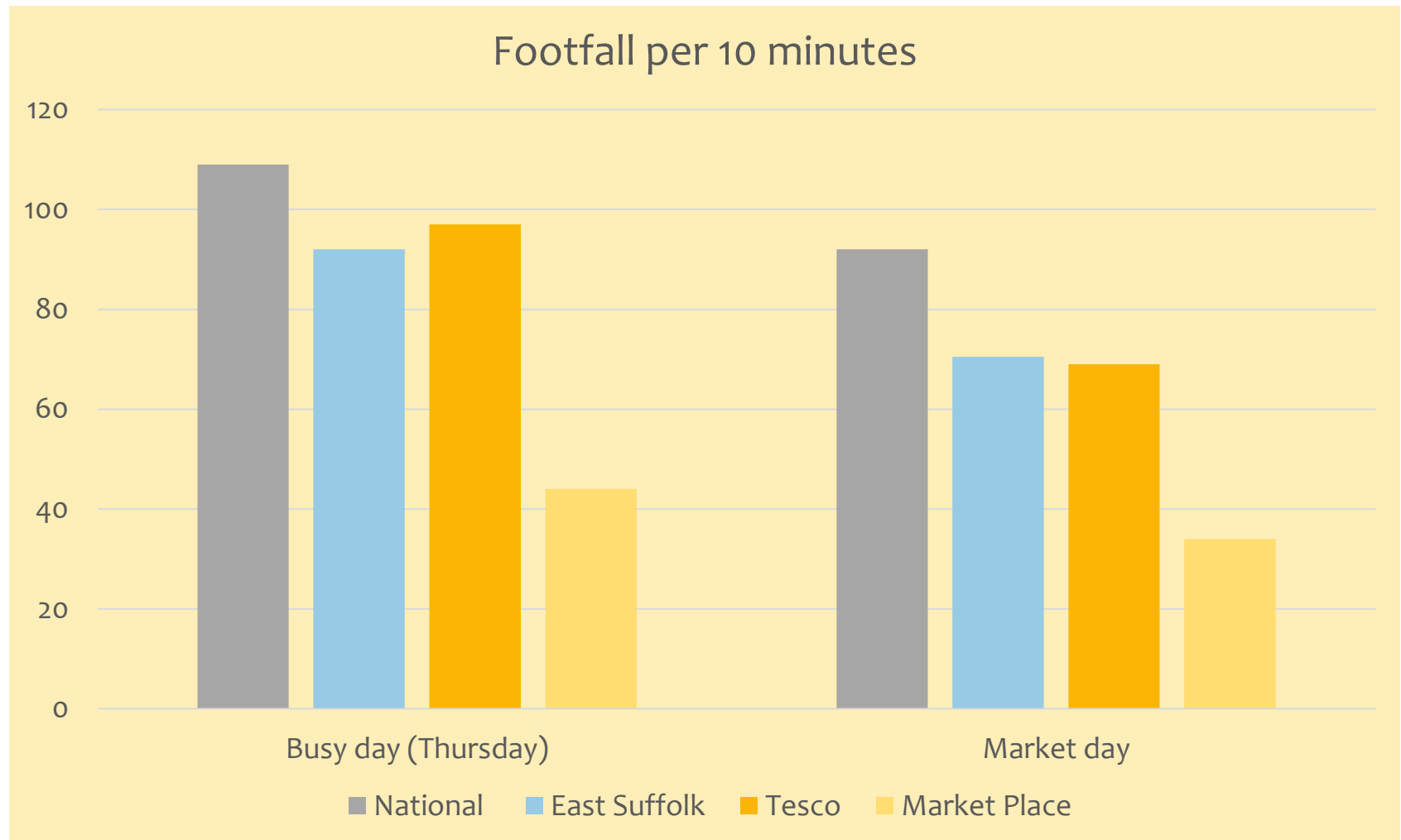


Customers' priorities

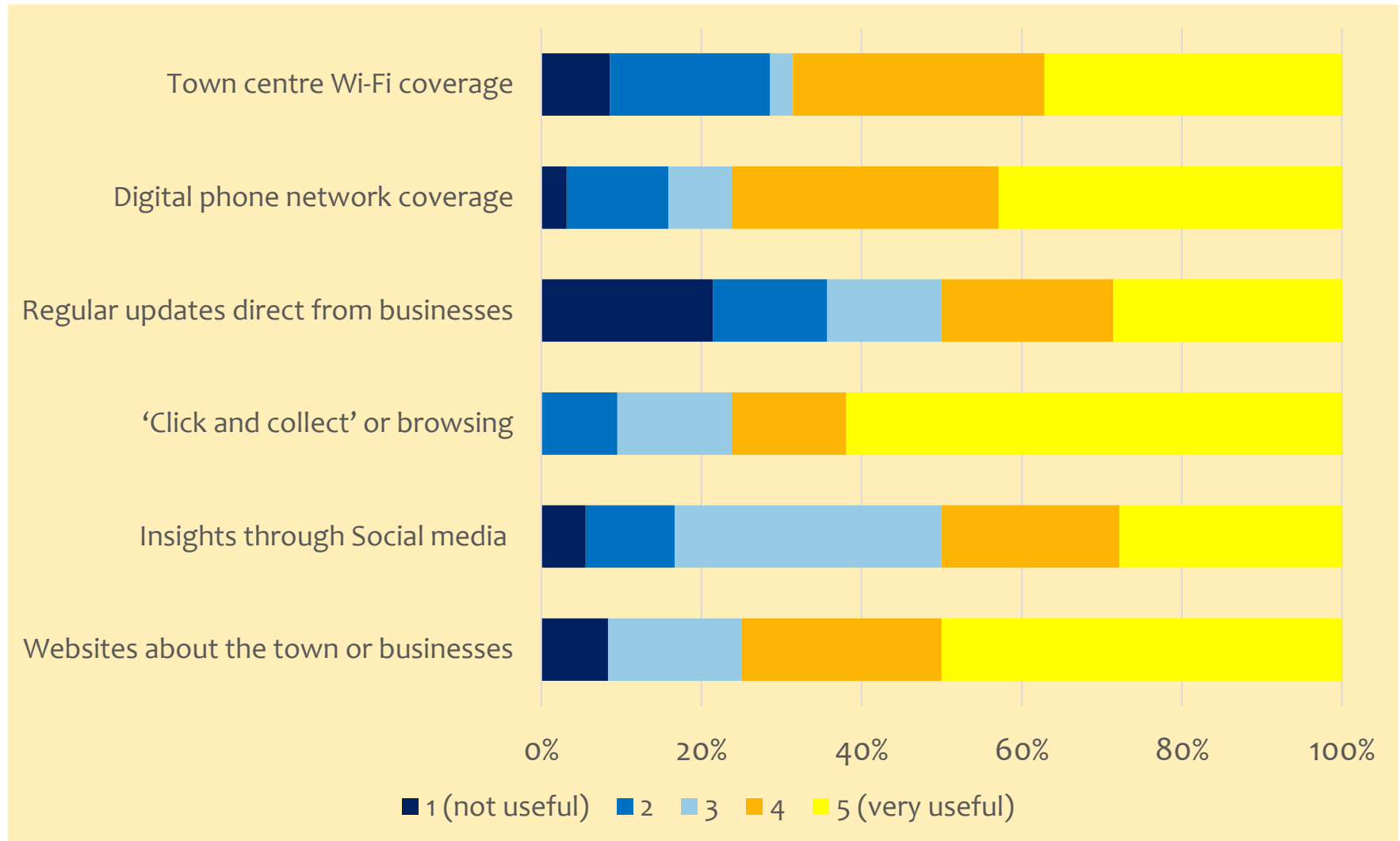
Customer priorities for improving Saxmundham



Falling footfall

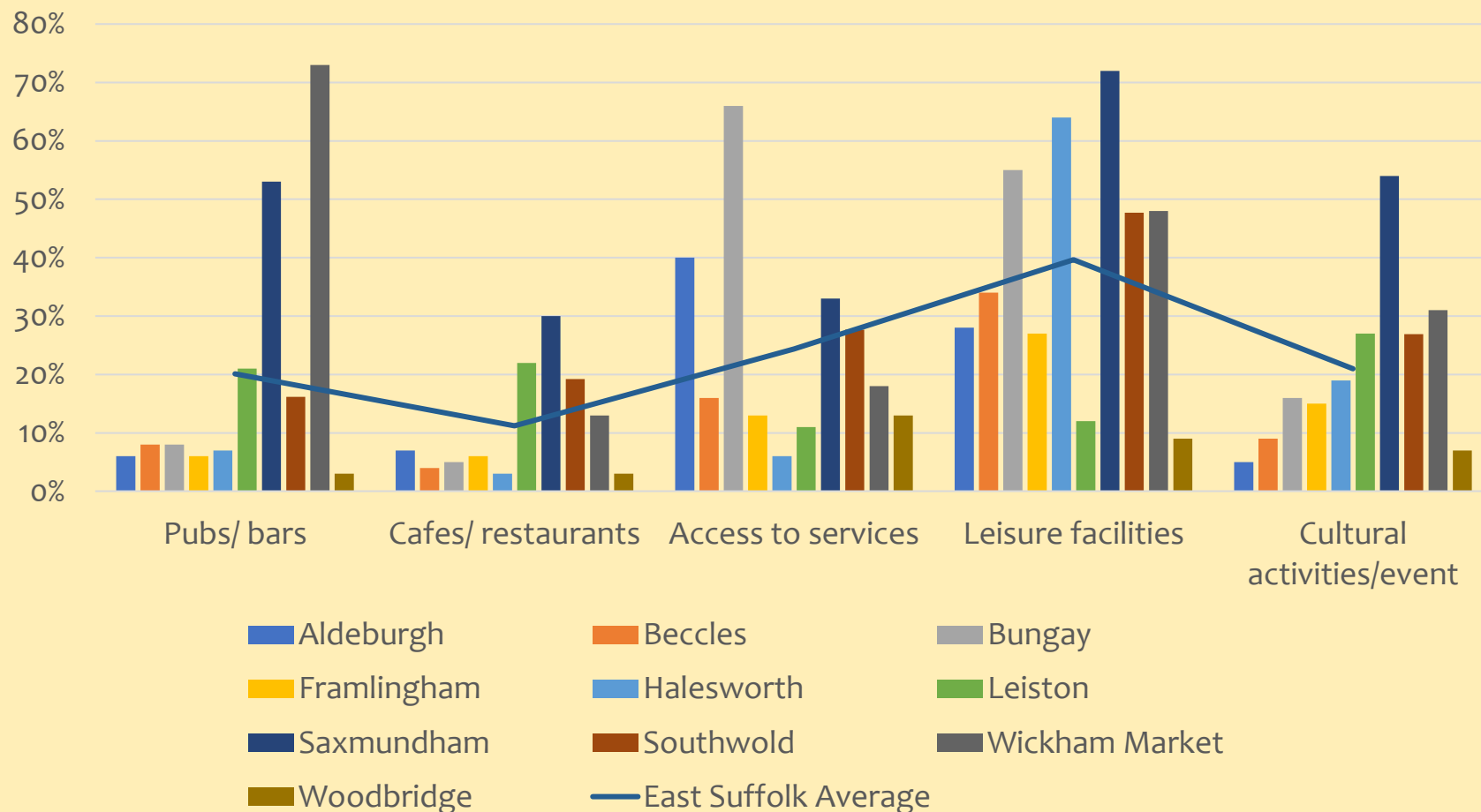


Developing digital (customers)



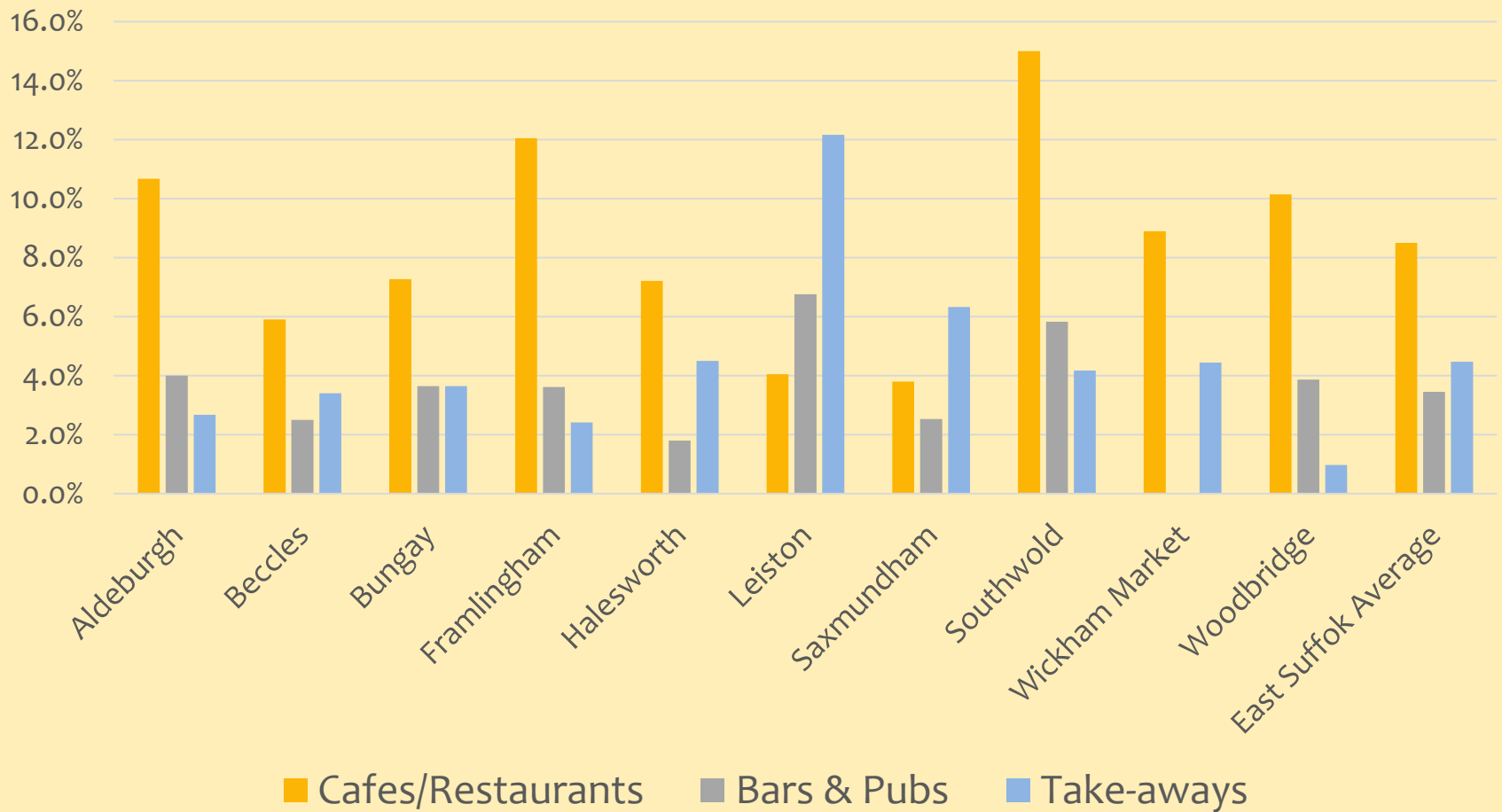
An East Suffolk perspective

Customers' Negative Perceptions (Services)

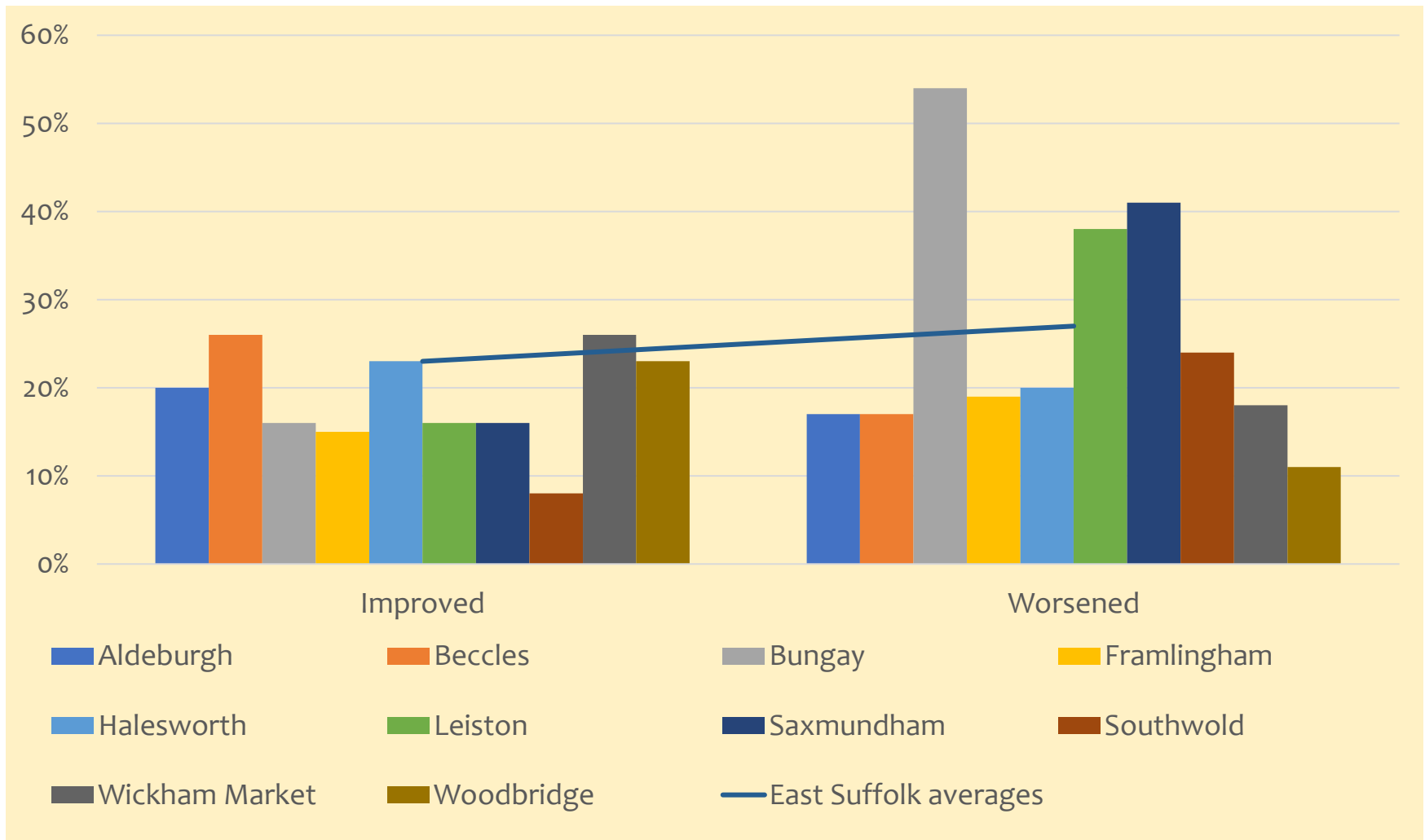


Pausing for food & drink

Proportion of Food & Drink Businesses



Customers' changing experience



Creating partnerships

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Creating partnerships

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Turning around towns

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- delivery
- influence



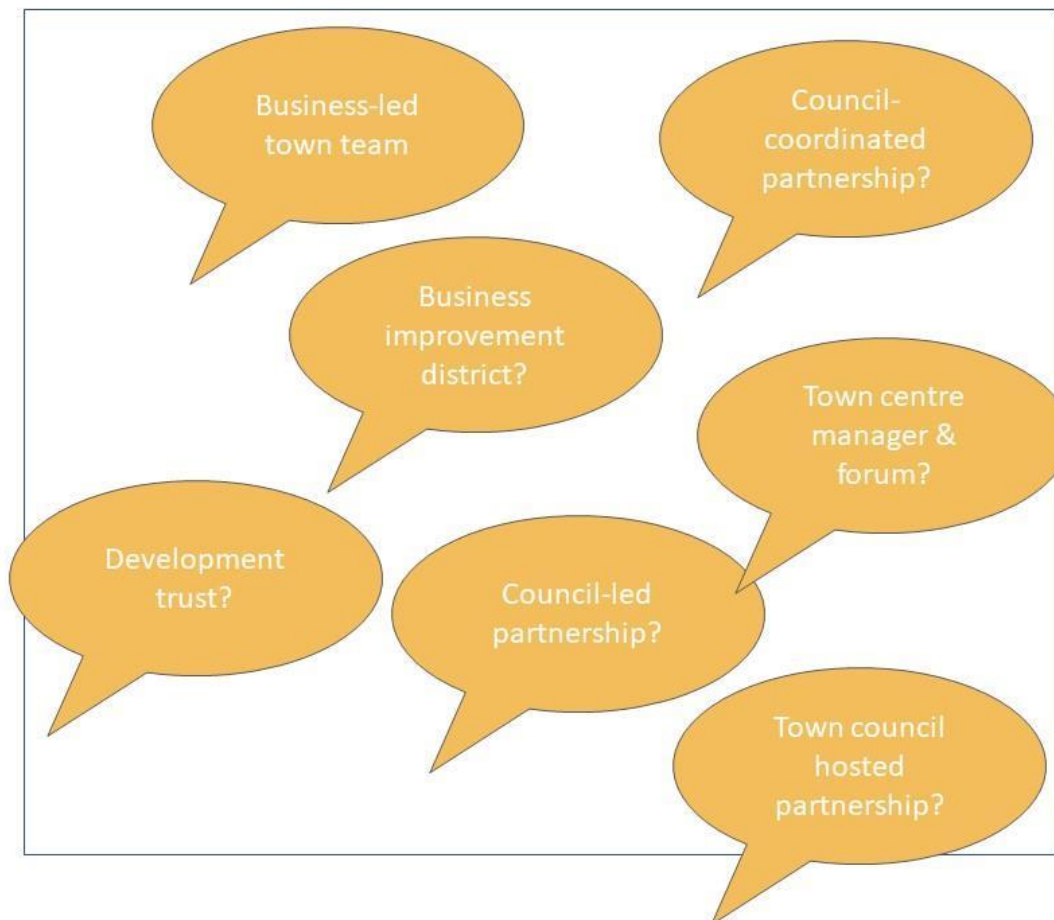
From evidence to engagement

Building a 'town team'

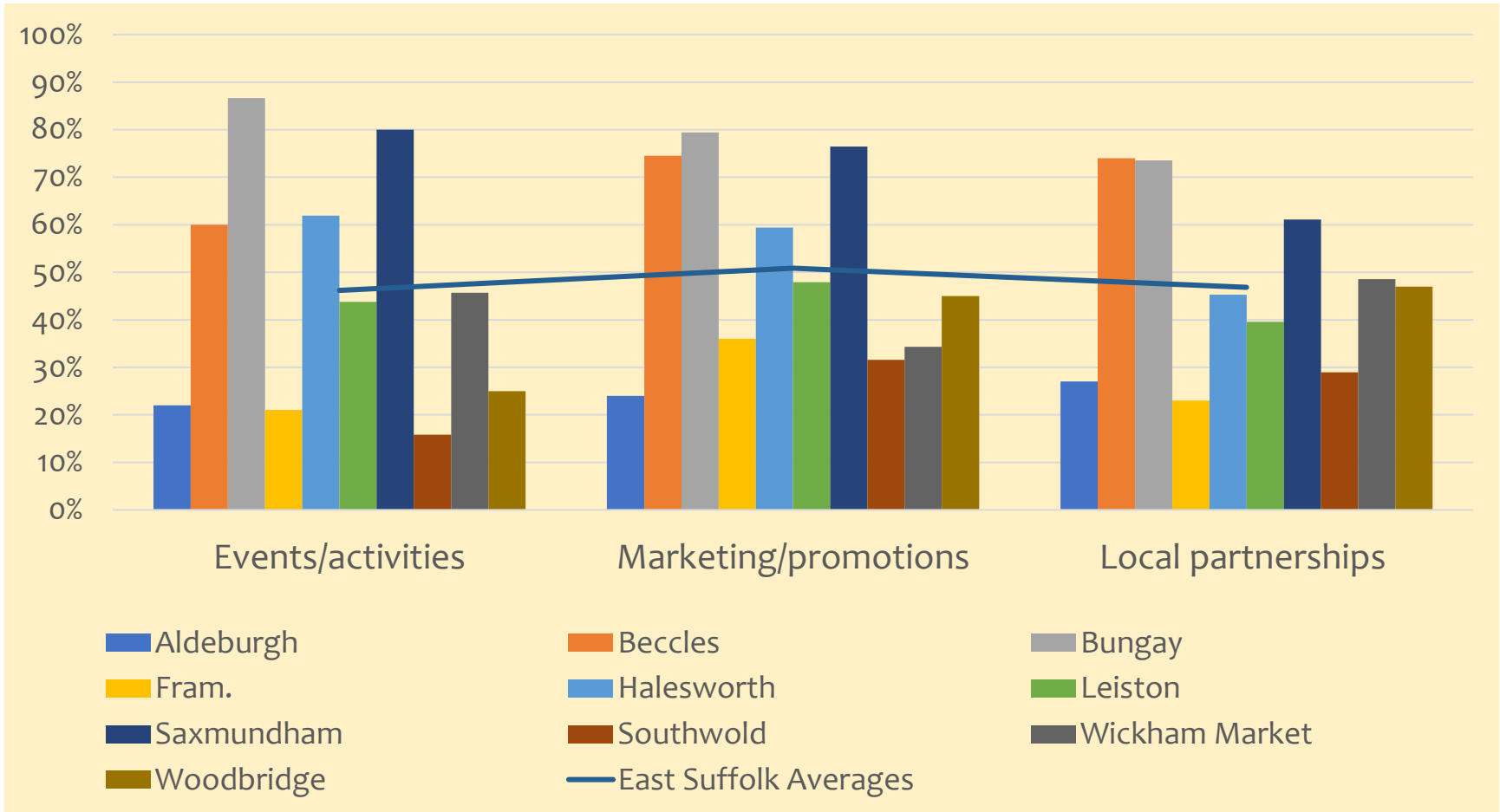
- Raise awareness of survey
- Organise any volunteers
- Publish findings
- Arrange stakeholder events
- Create working groups
- Develop projects to meet needs
- Produce action plan
- Establish team/partnership

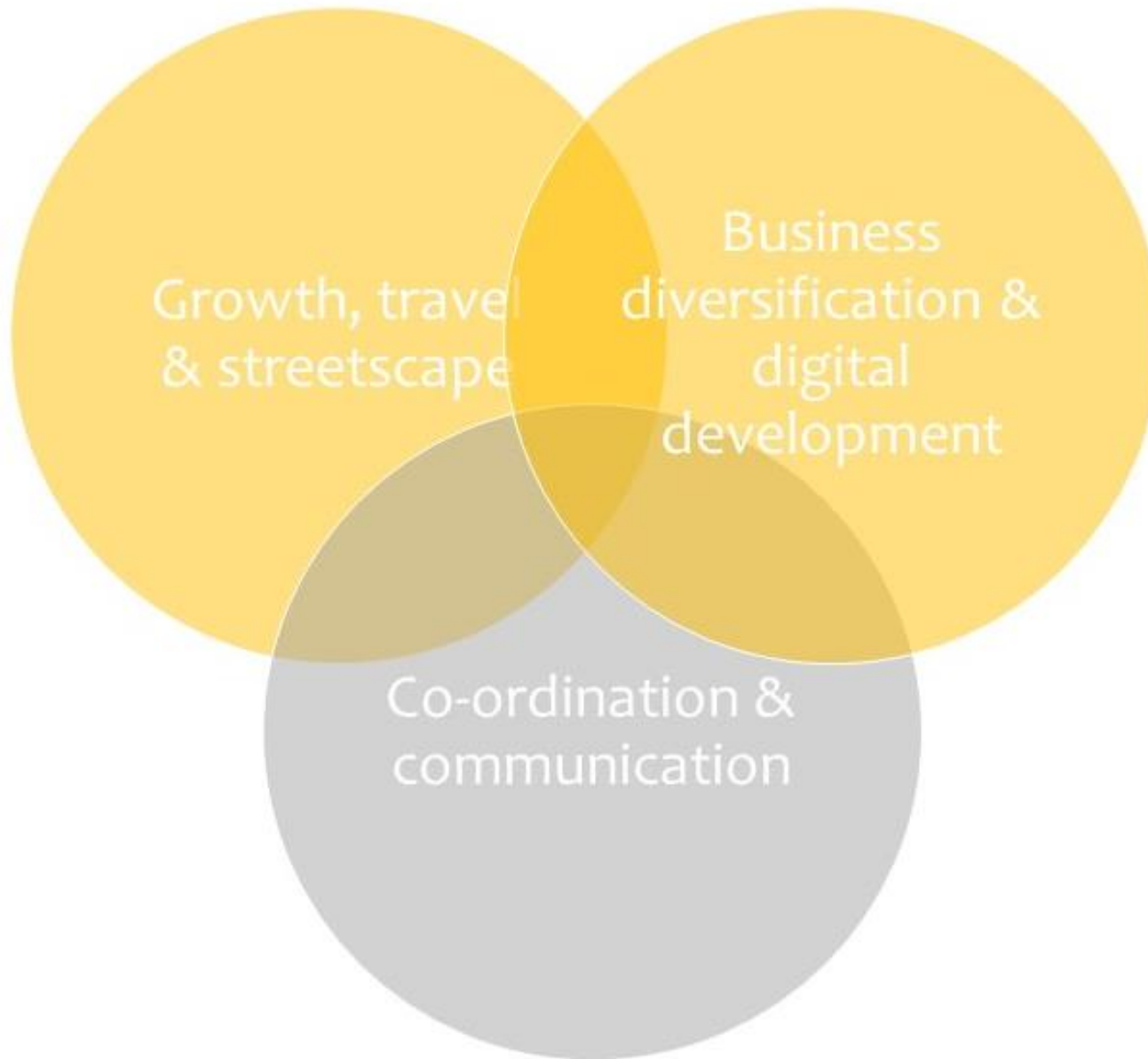


‘how’ to get
organised &
deliver:
folk, form,
finances &
forward
framework



Businesses' positive perceptions (partnership & promotion)





Putting a
partnership
in place

Turning around towns

Gathering evidence

- survey
- analysis

Creating partnerships

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Turning around towns

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- influence



From understanding to action: Southwold's Forward Framework



Multiples-v-independents
Parking-charges
Traffic-restrictions
Business-rates/rent
Parking-quality/quantity

Multiples-v-independents
Parking-enforcement
Business-rates/rent
Dog-do's/don'ts
Traffic-restrictions
Second-homes
Housing-shortage
Public-transport
Leisure-facilities
Hospitality
Parking-quality/quantity



Creating a 'Forward Framework'

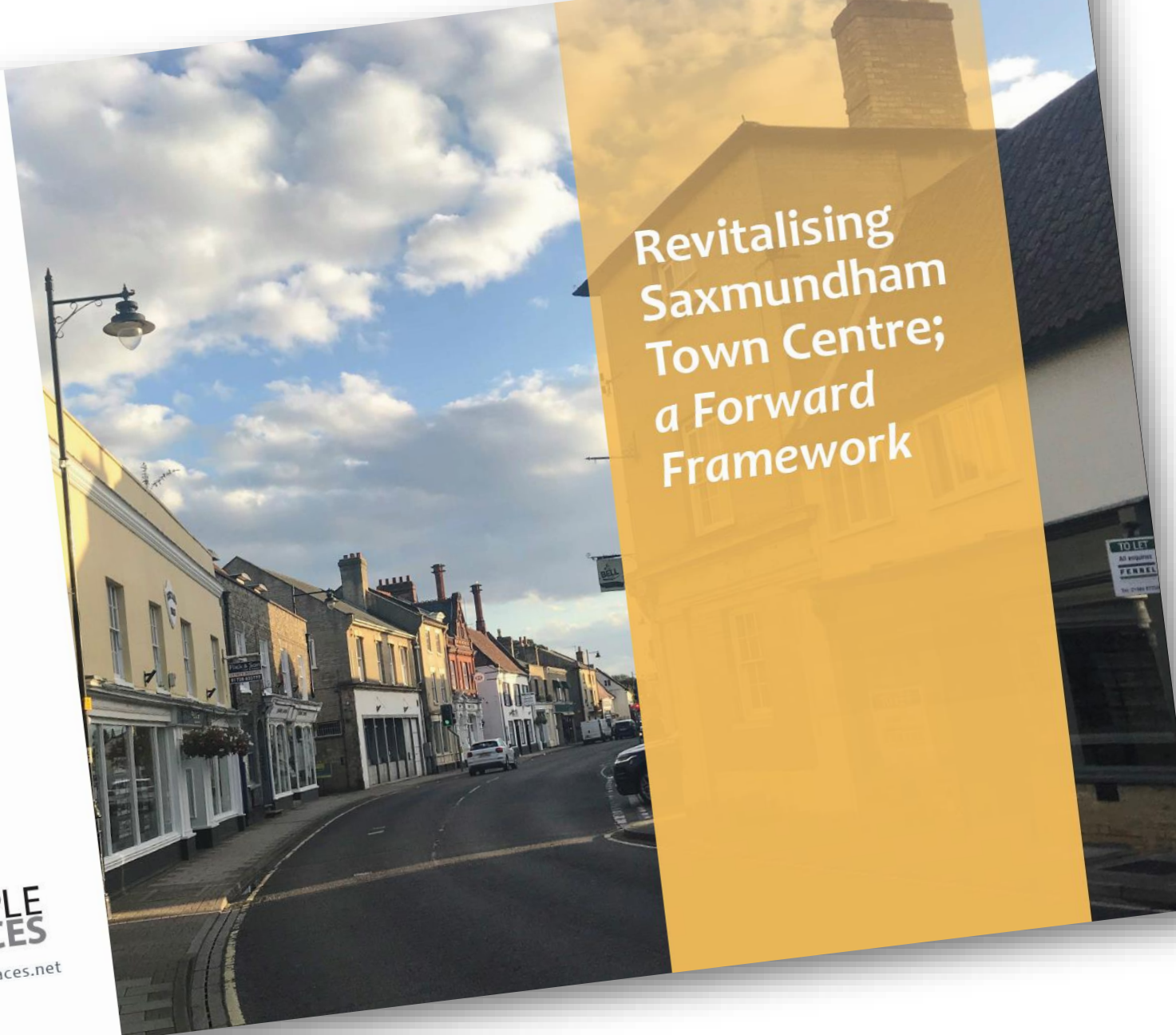




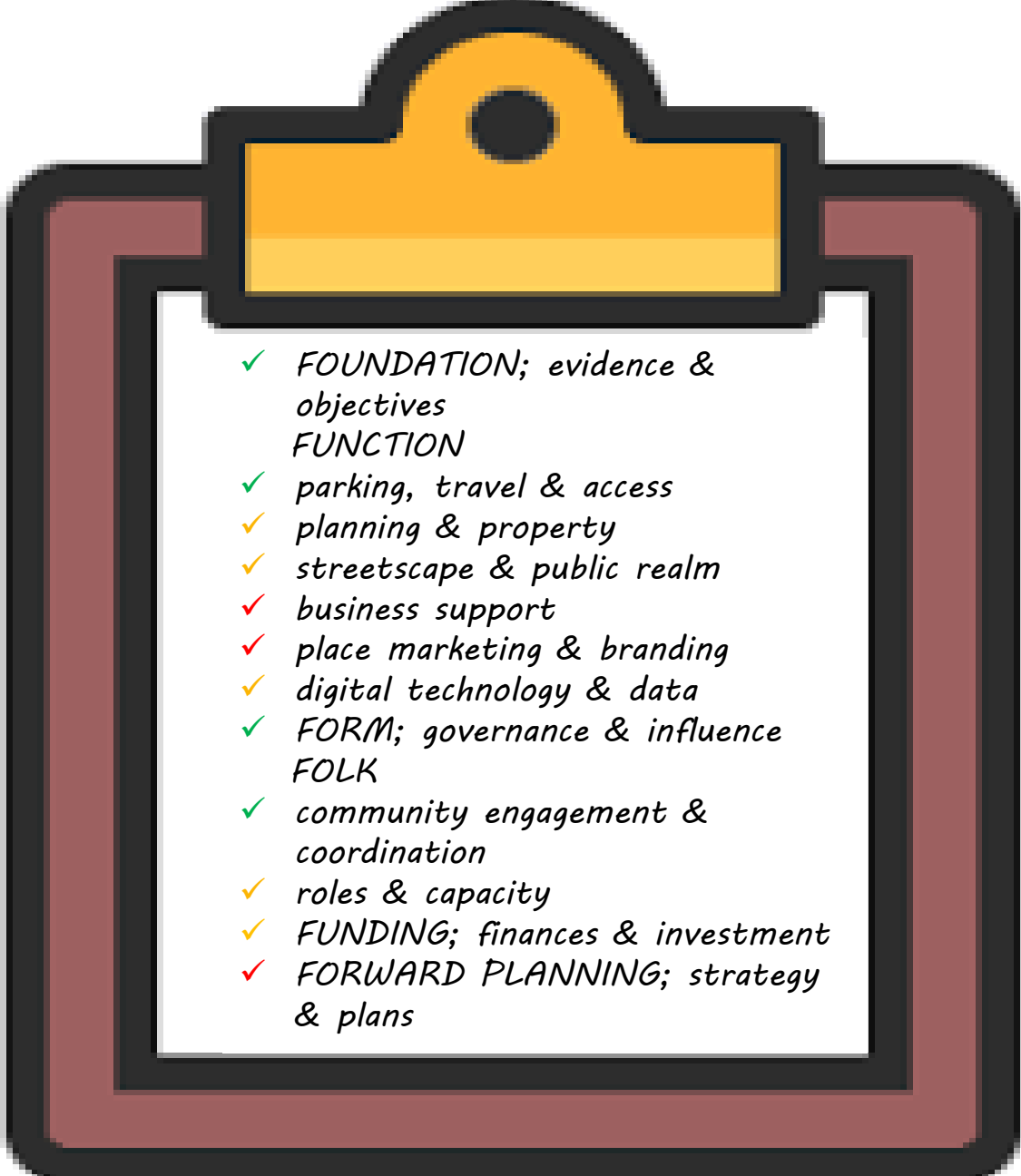
**Saxmundham
Town Council**

**& PEOPLE
PLACES**
www.people-places.net

Revitalising Saxmundham Town Centre; a Forward Framework



Reviewing your town's checklist

- 
- ✓ *FOUNDATION; evidence & objectives*
 - FUNCTION*
 - ✓ *parking, travel & access*
 - ✓ *planning & property*
 - ✓ *streetscape & public realm*
 - ✓ *business support*
 - ✓ *place marketing & branding*
 - ✓ *digital technology & data*
 - ✓ *FORM; governance & influence*
 - FOLK*
 - ✓ *community engagement & coordination*
 - ✓ *roles & capacity*
 - ✓ *FUNDING; finances & investment*
 - ✓ *FORWARD PLANNING; strategy & plans*





Managing traffic & parking

More flexible parking & enhanced traffic management were high priorities for both businesses & customers for improving access to the town centre.



Boosting town centre foot-flow

Footfall in Saxmundham Market Place is around 40% of national benchmarks and 50% or less of that of outside the Tesco supermarket, even on market days.



Creating a positive identity

A high proportion of customers in Saxmundham (42%) considered their experience had worsened recently & only 60% would recommend a visit.



Encouraging shoppers to linger

Whilst 73% of customers come to town more than once a week, 55% are there for grocery shopping & 68% stay for less than one hour.



Combination of opportunities

8

Saxmundham town centre

Planning & early progress

Perhaps, more than any other East Suffolk town, Saxmundham has the potential to benefit from effective long-term planning and early progress in boosting its existing appeal. This will involve a combination of pursuing locally adapted policies through the Neighbourhood Plan and promoting town centre trips to residents and supermarket shoppers.

Physical improvement

The Saxmundham Neighbourhood Plan supplements a robust district-wide, town-centre-first approach with long-term local policies for boosting a “lively, thriving” town centre through well-sited new homes, sustainable travel infrastructure, community services, modern sports facilities & a cultural hub.

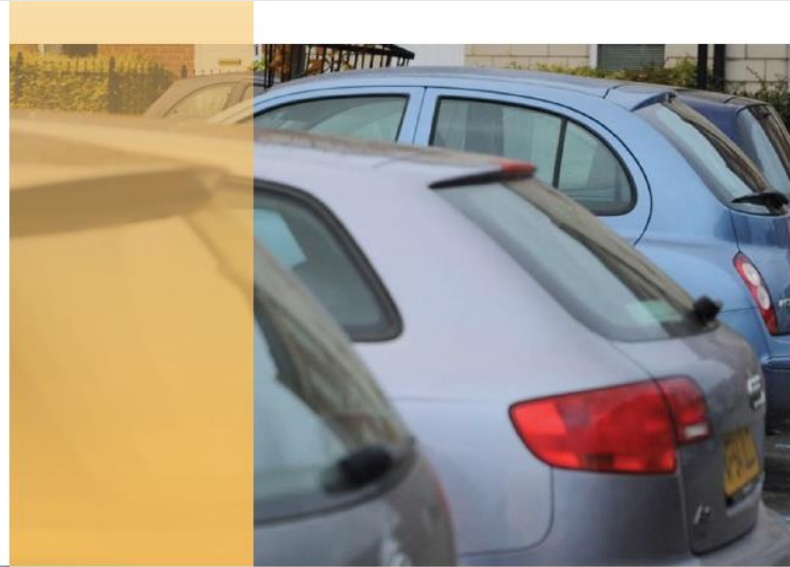
Promoting the place

Saxmundham has the appealing, though under-exploited combination of an attractive, historic centre and two central supermarkets. As the Neighbourhood Plan recognises, the challenge is to draw the many attracted by the supermarkets, to make the short journey to enjoy the independent offer of the own centre.



Participating in district-wide work

Work to improve Saxmundham town centre will benefit from being part of the wider East Suffolk Towns Initiative (ESTI). As well as providing initial support for planned projects in Saxmundham, it could fund cost-saving collaboration with neighbouring towns. It will also enable links to the parallel district-wide parking review and Smart Towns



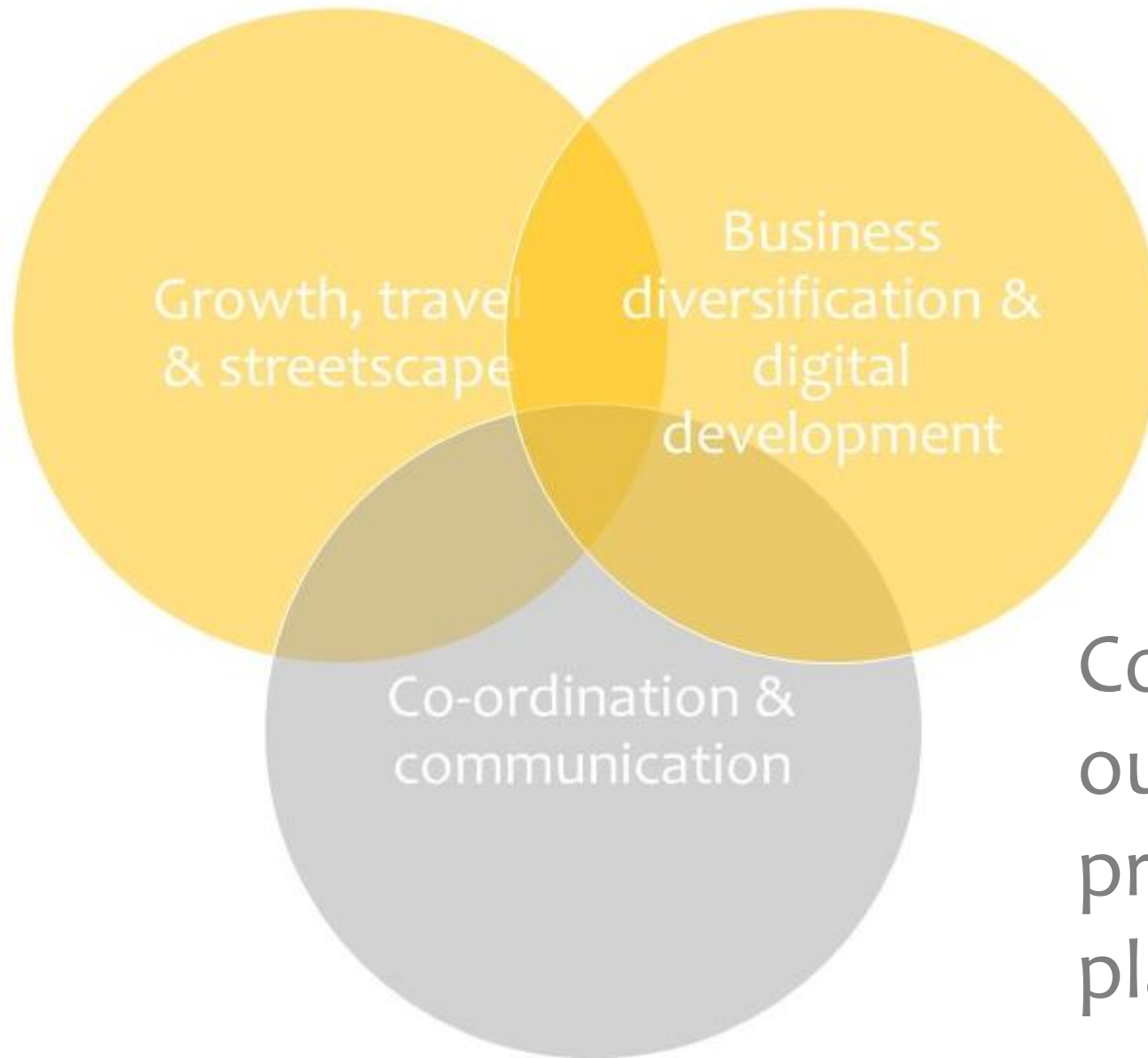
Smart Towns project

After being piloted in Framlingham, the East Suffolk Smart Towns project is being rolled-out to other towns across the district. It offers investment in digital infrastructure and skills.

Town parking review

Roll-out of the district-wide Parking Review will benefit town centre customers and businesses through simplified tariffs, new payment technology and smart monitoring of usage.





Coordinated &
outcome-led
project
planning

More accessible & appealing to move around: Planning & property; parking, travel & access; streetscape & public realm.

- ✓ Flexible parking & traffic management high priorities for businesses & customers
- ✓ Neighbourhood Plan positive policies for accommodating up to 800 new & boosting a “lively, thriving” town centre
- ✓ Customers positive about convenience (86%), cleanliness (74%) & ease of walking (76%)
- ✓ Footfall in the Market Place is about <50% of supermarkets

➤ **Next steps** >>>> **outcomes** >>>> **measures of success**



Diversification & digital

‘Softer’ business diversification & skills development: Place branding & marketing; business support; digital technology & data

- ✓ Capacity for additional hospitality business to encourage linked trips from supermarkets & increased dwell times
- ✓ 42% of users considered their experience had worsened in recent years & only 60% would recommend a visit.
- ✓ Saxmundham is one of most negatively perceived East Suffolk towns for services including cultural & hospitality
- ✓ Customers’ overwhelming priorities is diversifying businesses
- ✓ 43% of businesses and 50% of customers see improved promotion through social media updates as an early priority

➤ **Next steps** >>>>> **outcomes** >>>>> **measures of success**



Delivering joined-up solutions

Creating a 'can-do' attitude with measurable change

Delivering successful town centre change is a long-term venture involving vision, ambition, a broad approach and coordinated delivery amongst local partners. Here are some suggested building blocks of successful action planning focused on measurable targets for tracking change. It is vital for local partners to keep focused on such targets.

It can be done!

Creating easy routes into town

Targets: Plan for increased trips on foot & by bike to town centre from new & existing homes, whilst providing flexible parking that meets needs. Reduce the priority customers & businesses give to improving the local traffic management.



Increasing the Sax appeal

Target: Improved business performance & confidence expressed in future surveys; increasingly positive perceptions of Saxmundham's identity that boosts users' recorded satisfaction & increases visits.



Making it natural to move around

Targets: Increase positive sentiments about convenience, cleanliness & ease of walking around plus improve perceptions of appearance. Boost foot-flow in town centre towards levels at supermarkets.



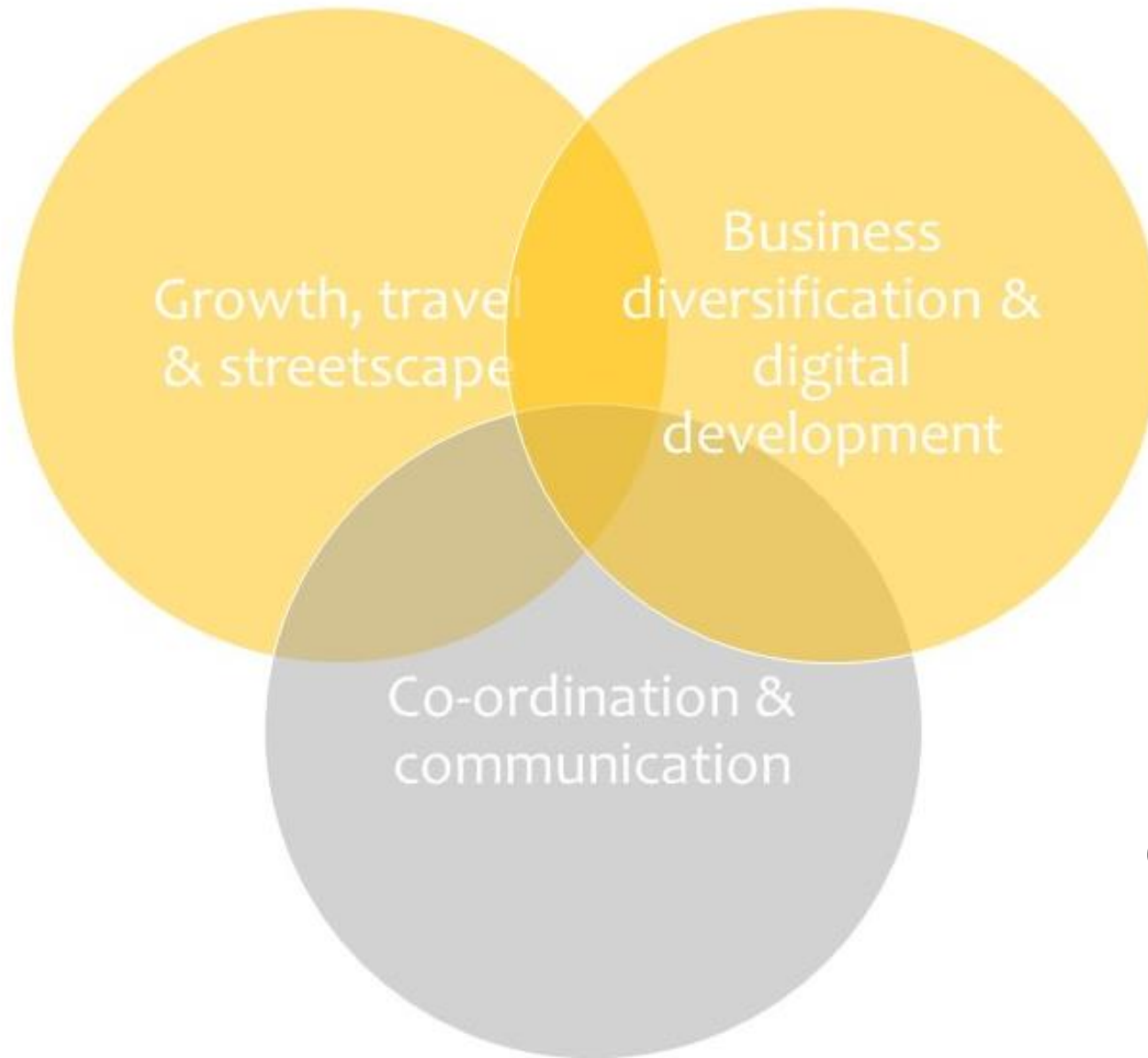
Promoting the possibility to dwell

Target: Increase shoppers' dwell times & loyalty in ways that boost foot-flow & satisfaction with offer a well as contributing to increased business performance & confidence.



Creating a 'Forward Framework' & PEOPLE PLACES





Putting a
partnership
& projects
in place