

Understanding opportunities for tourism development in Knaresborough

A survey of past visitors, potential visitors & local residents

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56 Degree Insight Ltd

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1. Executive summary



Potential visitors and residents rate Knaresborough highly

- An initial set of questions asked respondents to evaluate their knowledge and opinions of Knaresborough in comparison to a number of other towns/ cities in Yorkshire.
- Locals are very positive about their own town rating Knaresborough more highly as a place to visit than any of the other towns. Harrogate is a close second while other towns and York receive a somewhat lower rating.
- The vast majority of non-residents also give Knaresborough a rating of good (54%) or excellent (21%), making it the 3rd most highly rated town out of the list of 10.
- However, Harrogate and York receive a higher rating (37% and 55% Excellent respectively). Similarly, while almost half of the non-residents surveyed expressed interest in visiting Knaresborough in future (46% very likely) they were more likely to expect to visit Harrogate or York (51% and 63% very likely respectively).

While residents enjoy spending leisure time in Knaresborough and are largely very supportive of tourism, many are concerned about the impacts on road congestion and parking

- The majority of locals have enjoyed visiting the town's main attractions (with a few notable omissions such as the Courthouse Museum which 2 in 5 had never been to) and the majority stated that their favourite activities in the town included riverside walks and visiting the town's shops.
- For residents key strengths of the town are the opportunities for walks, the independent shops, friendly and welcoming community, history and the town's unique character.
- However locals are also concerned about a number of areas especially the number of empty shops and run down nature of parts of the town centre, traffic and parking issues. The ease of getting between the castle top and riverside is also rated poorly as well as the lack of indoor activities to do when the weather is poor.
- Reflecting these opinions, while over 90% of residents see tourism as an overall positive for the town they are concerned that visitors add to traffic congestion issues and can create a lack of available parking for local people.

There is significant potential to attract repeat and new visitors to Knaresborough

- Knaresborough's key attractions are well known amongst both previous visitors and those who know the town but have not visited before.
- Amongst non-residents, spontaneous associations with the town are most often related to Mother Shipton's Cave, the viaduct, the castle and the river.
- Furthermore while low awareness is a barrier for some who have not previously visited, after reading a description of the town and viewing some of images of its key attractions, the majority of both previous and potential future visitors expressed a high level of interest in visiting the town for a day trip or overnight break.
- Groups most likely to consider a day visit were more likely to live in Yorkshire and be in older age groups.
- People living in other parts of the North of England and Midlands, younger age groups and families were more likely than average to consider visiting for a short break or holiday.

- The factors attracting potential visitors to the town reflect the strengths also identified by locals. These include the well known attractions and historic sites, natural beauty, expectations to be able to take part in family friendly and interesting activities and, for day visitors, the easy access via good road and public transport links.
- The positive experiences of those who have recently visited the town reinforce these findings with the highest ratings obtained for the riverside walks, historic sites, friendly and welcoming local people, independent shops, range of places to eat and drink and market identified as particular strengths.

However, many visitors share the concerns about parking, traffic and connectivity raised by locals

- A number of aspects relating to transport and connectivity within the town received less positive ratings from recent visitors. Specifically concerns raised or rated less positively included parking availability, parking costs and the ease of getting between the castle top and riverside. Also, reflecting the views of local people, activities which can be undertaken indoors also received a lower than average rating amongst recent visitors.

Potential ideas for the future of Knaresborough received varied responses, especially from locals where opinions are polarised

- While ideas relating to increasing the range of independent shops and general improvements to the town centre received widespread support from both locals and previous/potential visitors, the response to other ideas involving larger scale developments varied somewhat.
- Most notably, ideas for an electric land train or cliff lift were much more popular amongst potential visitors than amongst residents where views were varied.
- Although both local residents and visitors are aware of the current challenges caused by traffic in the town centre, lack of parking and connectivity between the castle top and riverside, a significant percentage of locals have concerns that the ideas for an electric land train or cliff lift could have a negative impact on the look and feel of the town.
- Common specific concerns from local people are that a land train would increase congestion as it would be 'competing' with traffic or be inappropriate in the streets of a historic town with such a 'quaint' character.
- Concerns over the cliff lift concept are stronger with some suggesting it would be an 'ugly eye sore', negatively impacting upon the town's character and detracting from the natural beauty and historic charm which makes the town attractive. Others express concerns that a development of this scale would be unfeasible due to the costs involved, likelihood of planning difficulties and levels of opposition from some parties.
- Given this divided local opinion it is clear that further in-depth consultation and discussion is required with local people to find solutions which achieve the right balance between providing a solution to connectivity issues and achieving the town's full tourism potential without negatively impacting upon the assets which make Knaresborough unique in the first place.

2. Background, Methodology and Sample



An online methodology was used to gather data from three key stakeholder groups – Knaresborough residents, recent visitors and potential visitors. Complimentary approaches were used to survey these audiences resulting in a large and robust overall sample of around 800 respondents

Two approaches were used to undertake the survey:

RECENT AND POTENTIAL VISITORS TO KNARESBOROUGH:

- An online survey was created and a consumer panel used as the basis of finding respondents who met certain criteria:
 - Non-rejectors of domestic breaks, holidays and day trips
 - Either previously visited in last 3 years or would seriously consider a visit to Knaresborough in the next 3 years
 - All respondents lived in Yorkshire, the North East, North West or the East Midlands.
- In the initial selection for the survey, samples were demographically representative in terms of age, gender and social grade within these areas.
- Questionnaires were scripted and hosted online.
- The survey took around 15 minutes to complete on average.
- Fieldwork took place during January 2024. A total of 500 interviews were completed.

RESIDENTS:

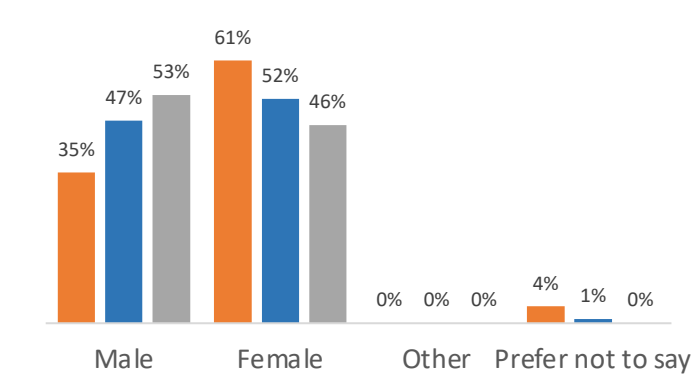
- The same questionnaire – which had separate sections for residents, visitors and potential visitors to complete – was used for this element.
- An ‘open survey link’ was provided to the client to distribute by a variety of online channels
- This survey was also ‘live’ during January 2024.
- Some 299 surveys were completed.

Overall, across the two approaches, 799 interviews were completed providing a comprehensive and robust basis for the analysis of each of the key sub groups – Knaresborough residents (n=215), previous recent visitors (n=436) and potential visitors (n=80)

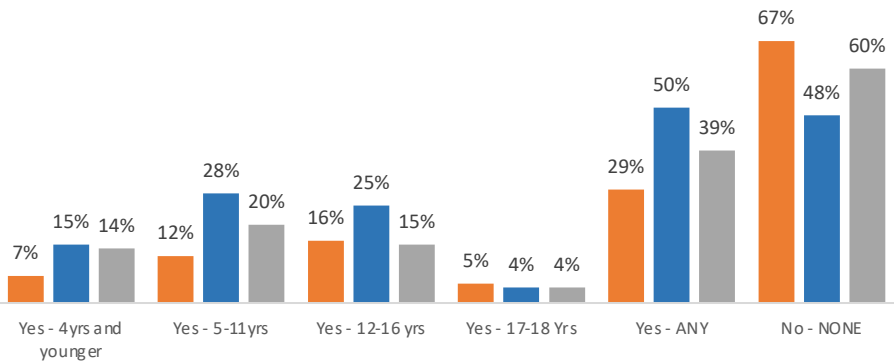


Across all segments, the largest proportion of respondents were in the more affluent ABC1 social grades. Previous visitors were especially likely to be aged under 45 and have children in their household whereas the majority of potential visitors and residents did not have children at home

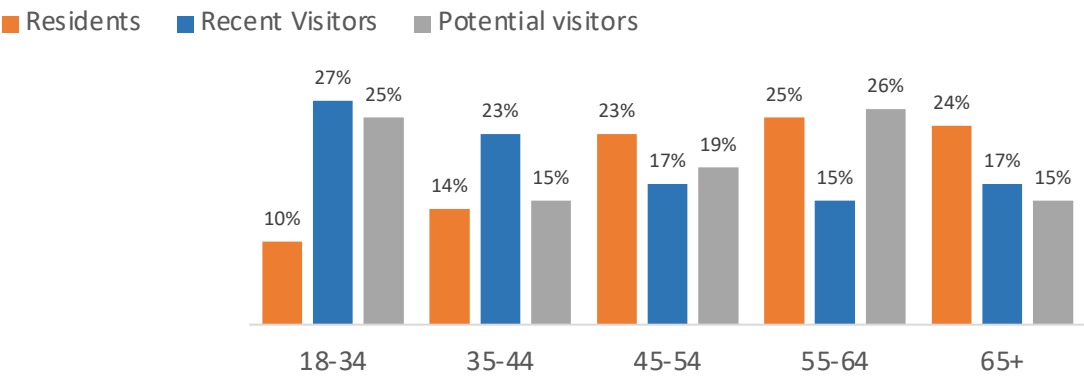
GENDER



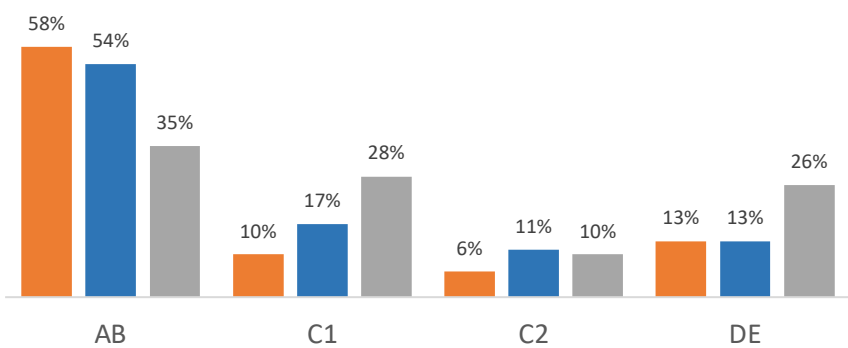
CHILDREN IN HOUSEHOLD



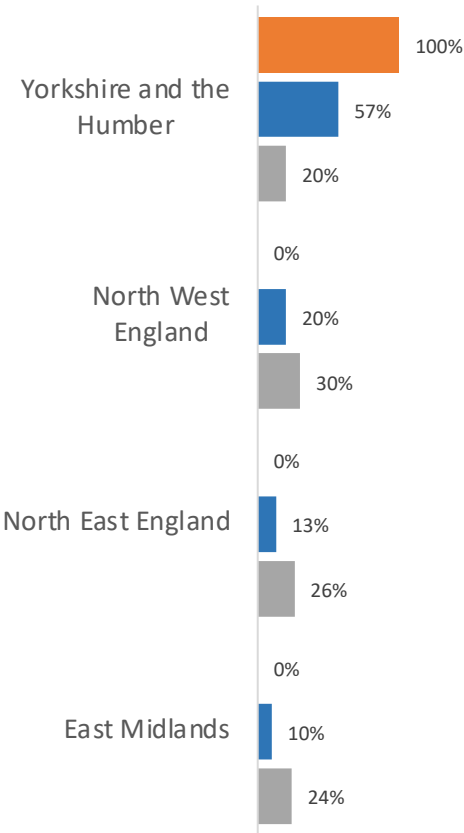
AGE



SOCIAL CLASS



AREA OF RESIDENCE



3. Knaresborough's competitive position

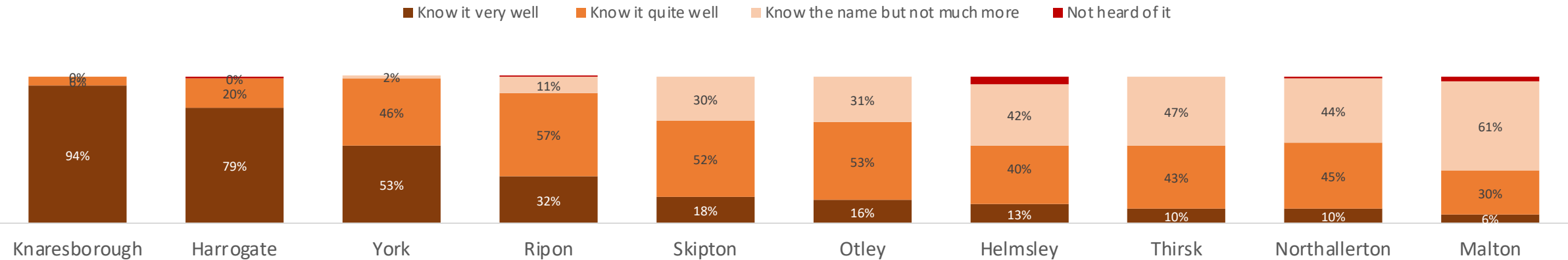


Knaresborough's Competitive Position

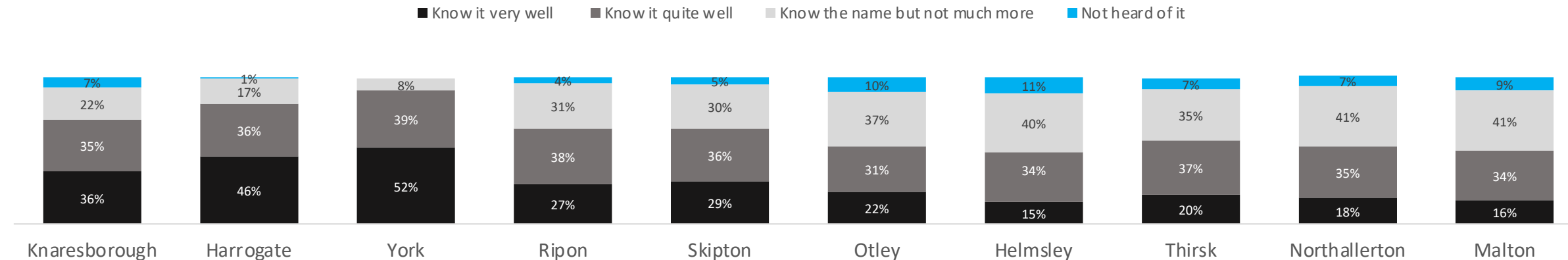
As would be expected, the vast majority of Knaresborough residents stated that they know Knaresborough and Harrogate very well while knowledge amongst non-residents was lower. Non-visitors were likely to have a greater knowledge of both York and Harrogate than Knaresborough

AWARENESS

Knaresborough residents



Non-residents

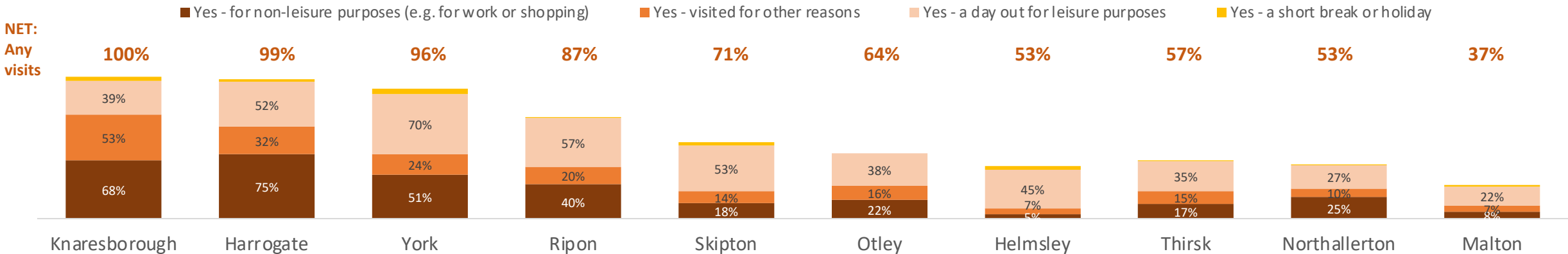


Knaresborough's Competitive Position

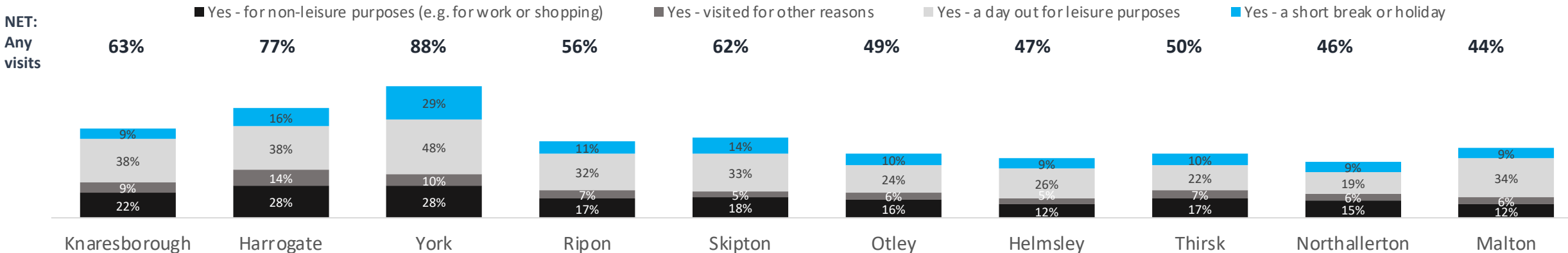
The vast majority of Knaresborough residents have visited Harrogate, York and Ripon. However amongst non-residents Knaresborough was the 3rd most visited of the towns asked about, lower than York and Harrogate and equal with Skipton

VISITS TAKEN IN LAST 3 YEARS

Knaresborough residents



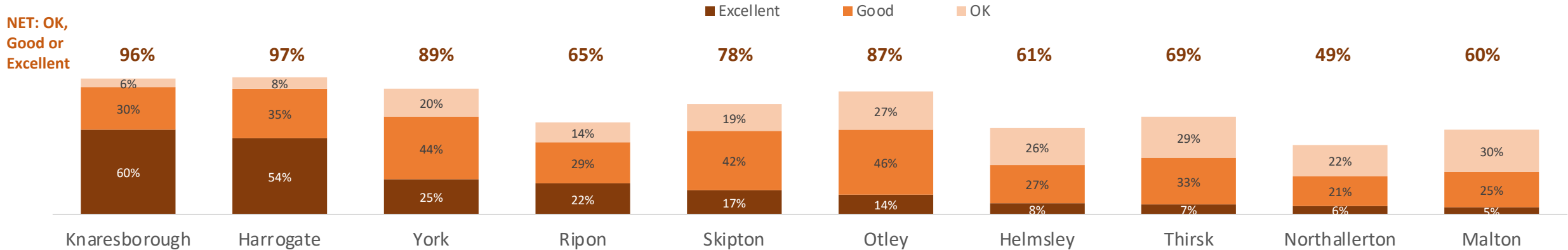
Non-residents



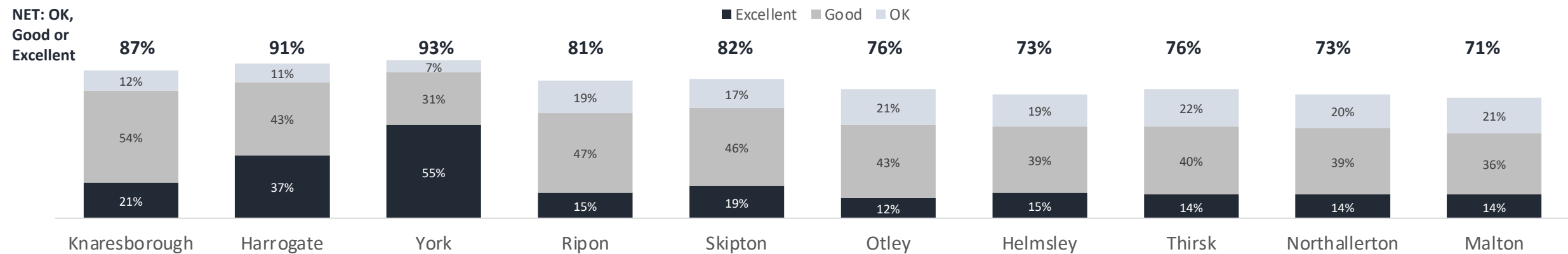
Knaresborough's residents were generally very positive about the town, rating it more highly as a place to visit than any of the other towns included. However, non-residents provided York with the highest rating while Knaresborough was 3rd highest

RATING AS PLACES TO VISIT (TOP 3 OPTIONS SHOWN)

Knaresborough residents



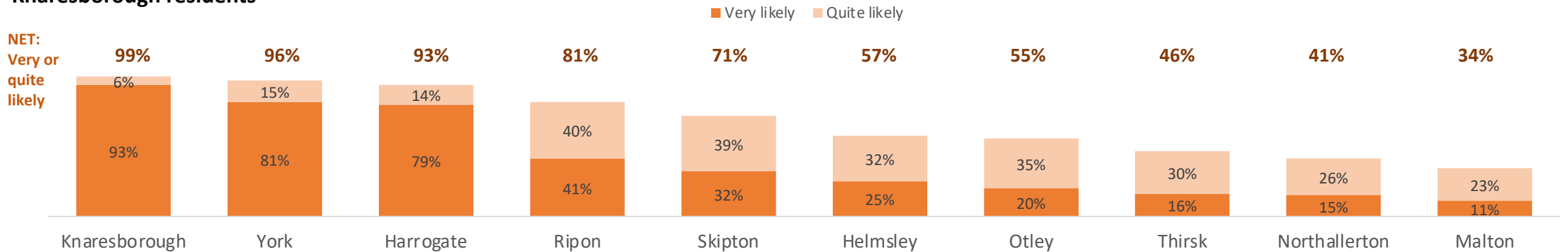
Non-residents



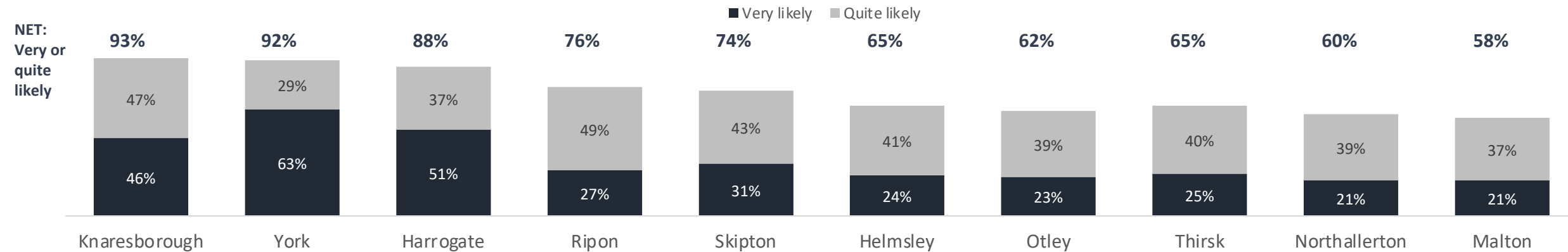
While nearly all residents expected to visit Knaresborough town centre, York and Harrogate, fewer than half expected to go to Thirsk, Northallerton or Malton. Overall, 93% of non-residents were likely to go to Knaresborough (note this reflected the criteria for taking part in the survey) but a higher share stated that they were 'very likely' to visit Harrogate or York

EXPECTATIONS FOR FUTURE VISITS IN NEXT 2 TO 3 YEARS (TOP 3 OPTIONS SHOWN)

Knaresborough residents



Non-residents



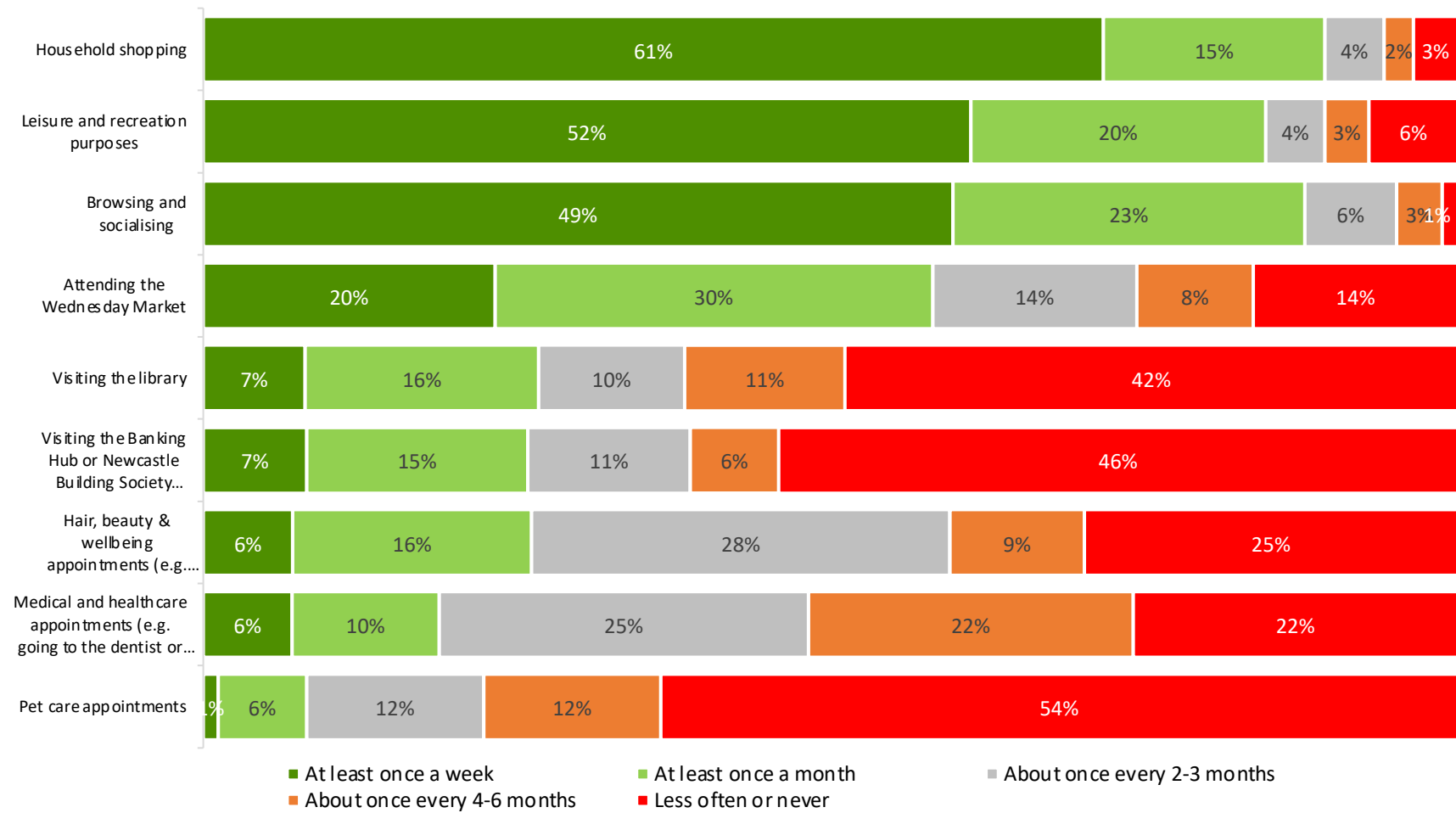
4. Resident behaviours and opinions



Resident behaviours and opinions

While the majority of residents regularly visit the town centre for household shopping, leisure and recreation and for general browsing or socialising and around half visit the market once a month or more often, visits for other purposes tend to be undertaken much less often or never. The vast majority had visited the town centre within the last week

How often tend to visit Knaresborough for following reasons...

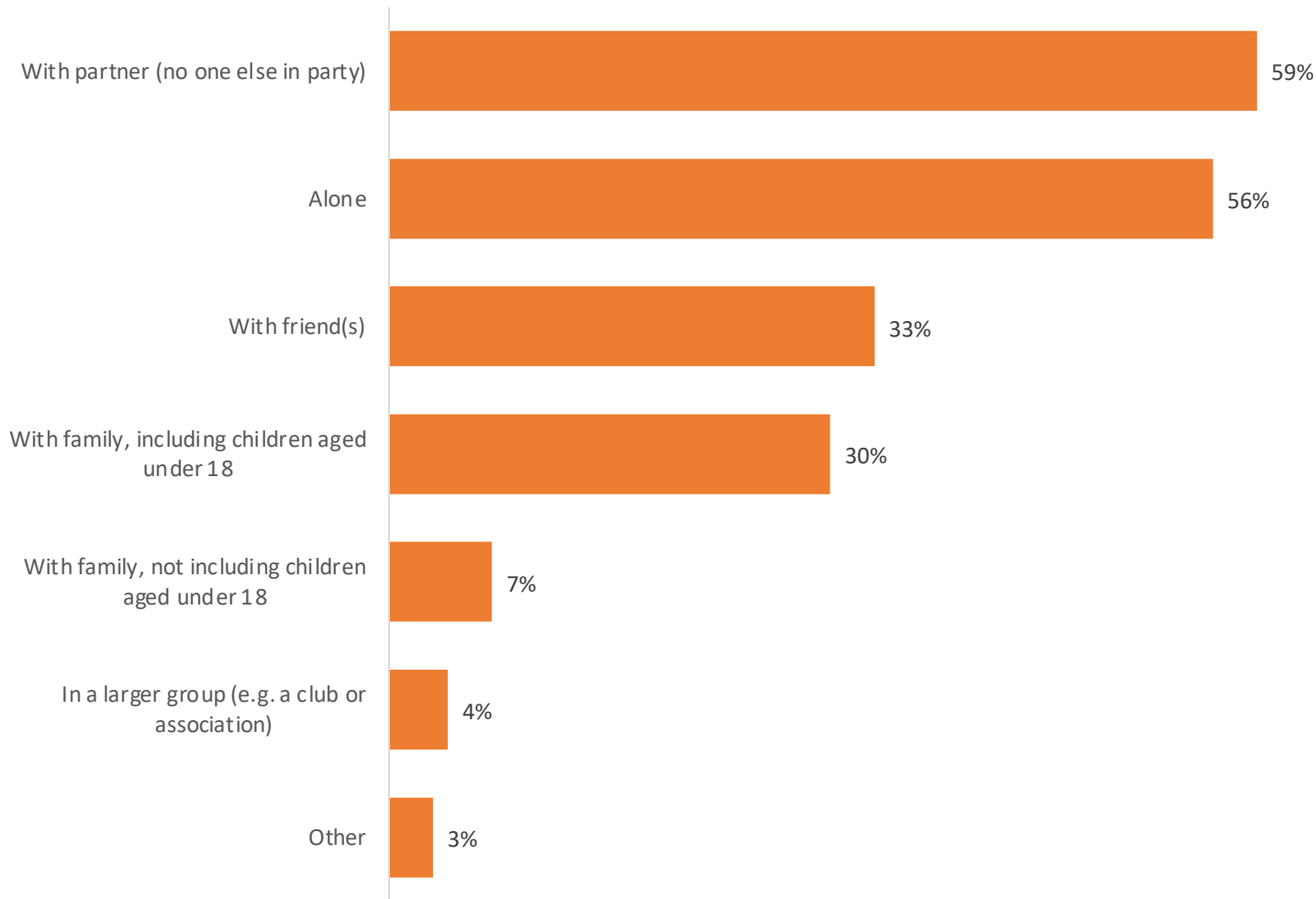


Last visit to town centre:

- 90% within the last week (84% aged 18-44, 89% aged 45-64, 96% aged 65+)
- 8% within the last month
- 1% longer ago

Residents visit the town centre with a mix of different group compositions, most often just with their partner or alone while around a third normally visit with children. The older age profile of respondents to the residents survey should be borne in mind when using these results

Who normally visit Knaresborough town centre with

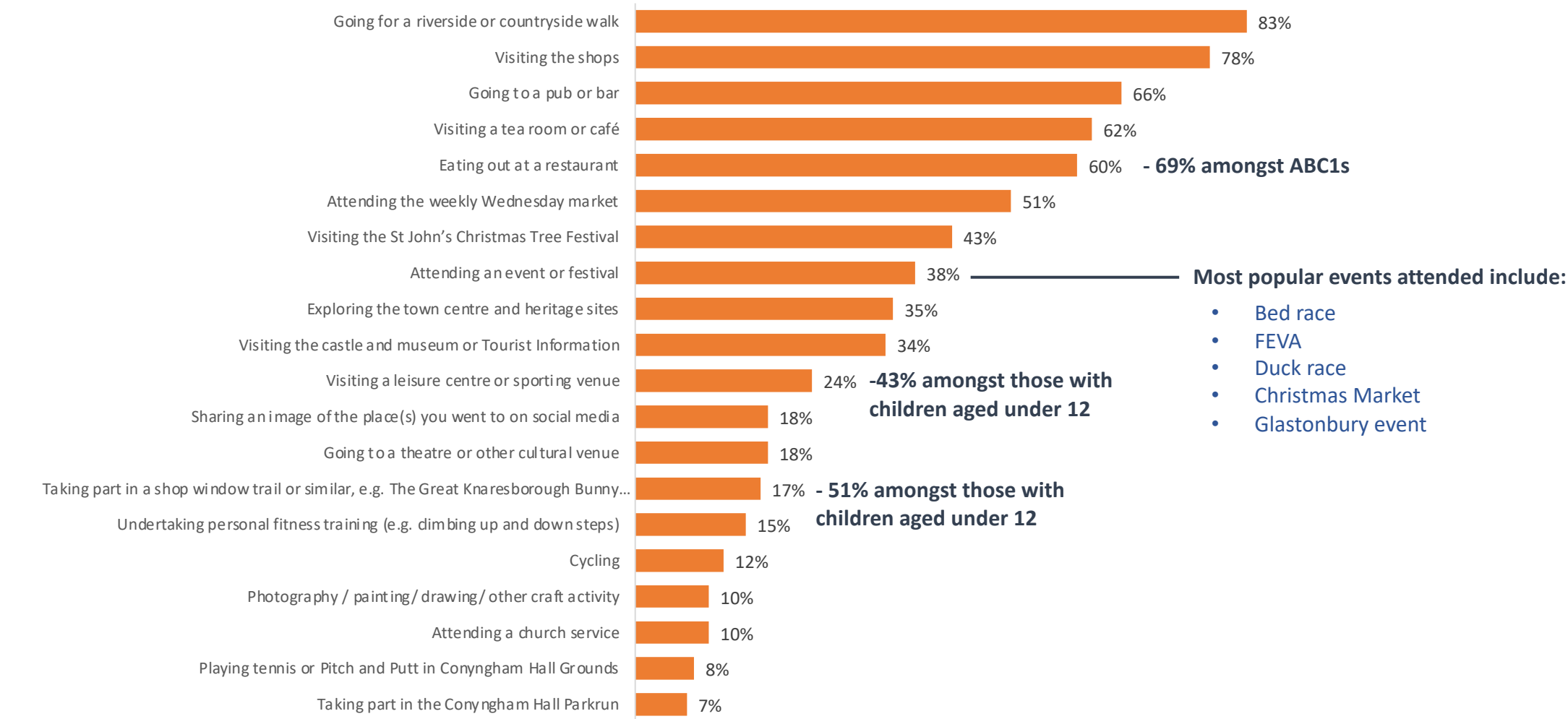


- **4% of residents regularly use a wheelchair or mobility scooter**
- **5% of residents regularly use a pram or pushchair when walking places**

Base = 351 Telford & Wrekin residents

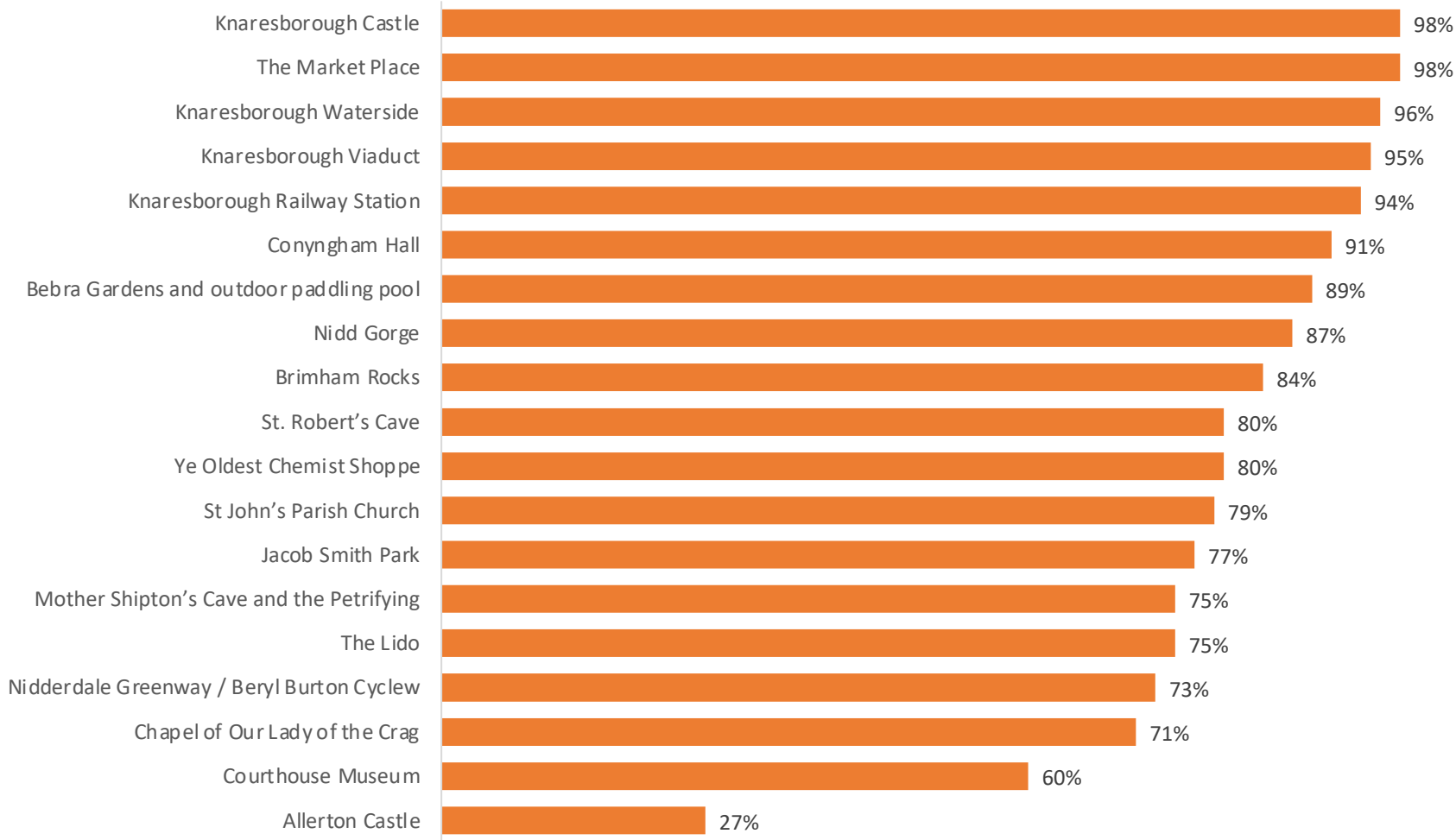
Most residents stated that their favourite activities included riverside and countryside walks, visits to shops, going to pubs and bars and eating out in restaurants. Favourite activities varied to some extent by lifestage and social grade

Favourite activities to do on leisure visits to Knaresborough



As might be expected, a number of Knaresborough’s best known attractions had been visited by nearly all of the residents surveyed. However, a significant minority of residents had not visited a number of the places listed

Places in and around Knaresborough ever visited



Asked to type in the aspects of the town they particularly liked, a number of key strengths were described in detail including the strong community, independent businesses in the town centre and both natural and heritage assets

Aspects of the town residents particularly like

- 1. Friendly Community:** Many responses highlight the friendliness of the people in Knaresborough, indicating a strong sense of community and welcoming atmosphere.
- 2. Independent Shops and Cafes:** The presence of independent shops, cafes, and restaurants is frequently mentioned, showcasing a preference for unique, local businesses over chains.
- 3. Riverside Walks and Areas:** The riverside is a recurring theme, with many enjoying the walks, views, and cafes along the river.
- 4. Castle Views and Area:** The castle and its surroundings are highly appreciated for their beauty, history, and the views they offer.
- 5. Market and Local Events:** Events such as the market day, bed race, and Christmas market are popular, suggesting a lively local culture and opportunities for community gathering.
- 6. Historical and Natural Beauty:** The history of Knaresborough, alongside its natural beauty, including the countryside walks and parks, is valued by residents.
- 7. Compact and Accessible Town:** The town's compactness, making it easy to get around and explore everything by foot, is appreciated.
- 8. Pubs, Bars, and Dining:** The variety and quality of pubs, bars, and dining options receive positive mentions, indicating a vibrant social and dining scene.
- 9. Community Events and Amenities:** Community events, amenities, and the general social side of the town, including cafes and eateries, are important to residents.
- 10. Unique Character and Quaintness:** The character, quaintness, and unique aspects of the town, such as its architecture, independent businesses, and scenic spots like Conyngham Hall and Waterside, are cherished.

Together these points suggest that the residents value a tight-knit community vibe, local businesses, scenic beauty, and a rich cultural and social life.

"Market day and the Bed Race are highlights of the year, bringing the community together in celebration."

"Riverside walks and cafes are my favourite, offering beautiful views and a peaceful atmosphere."

"The view from the castle is breathtaking, and the area around it is full of history and beauty."

"Community events throughout the year provide entertainment and a sense of belonging, enhancing the town's amenities."

"The history of Knaresborough, combined with its natural beauty, makes it a special place to live and visit."

"Its compact size means everything is accessible on foot, making it easy to explore and enjoy."

"The friendly people and the welcoming atmosphere make this town unique."

"Love the variety of independent shops and cafes offering unique experiences and products."

"The variety of pubs, bars, and dining options ensures there's always a great place to meet friends and relax."

"The quaint streets, unique architecture, and character of the town set it apart from anywhere else."



However, when asked to name what they disliked about the town centre, points raised included empty shop units, run down buildings and traffic and parking issues

Aspects of the town centre residents particularly dislike

1. Empty Shops and Run-down Buildings: Many responses highlight the issue of empty shops and buildings not being used, particularly towards the bottom end of the town and on the high street.

2. Traffic and Parking Issues: Concerns about the A59 traffic, abundance of cars in the market place and high street, and difficulty parking are frequently mentioned.

3. Poor Maintenance and Cleanliness: Respondents dislike the dirty appearance of some areas, citing a lack of regular cleaning and maintenance, including public spaces and amenities.

4. Lack of Variety in Shops: There's dissatisfaction with the current mix of shops, with calls for more good clothing shops and a better selection of retail offerings.

5. Safety and Accessibility Issues: Issues with pedestrian safety, particularly at zebra crossings and due to congested streets with cars and lorries, are a concern. There's also mention of the town being difficult to navigate for those with disabilities or prams.

6. Bus Station Layout and Public Transport: Complaints about the bus station layout being too busy, not having enough pavement space, and overall public transport connectivity being poor.

7. Neglect of Public Spaces: Neglect of public spaces like Bebra Gardens, redundant footpaths around Castle Top, and general disrepair are mentioned as detracting from the town's appeal.

8. High Street Appearance: The high street is described as looking scruffy, shoddy, and low rent by some, with a desire for a tidier and more attractive main shopping area.

9. Social Issues: Concerns over antisocial behaviour in certain areas, especially around the castle area and bus shelters, as well as issues with litter and dog fouling.

10. Lack of Activities for Young People: A lack of things to do for younger residents, leading to them loitering around certain areas like the bus station, is highlighted as a problem.

"A lot of shops are closed and buildings not used on high street, which really detracts from the town's charm and vibrancy."

"The amount of traffic on the roads and the struggle to find parking makes visiting the high street less enjoyable. Standstill traffic also worsens air quality."

"The town centre can sometimes appear dirty as it's not cleaned regularly, contributing to a neglected feel in some areas."

"Could do with better shops to offer a mix of independent and more modern options. Some shop fronts look run down, needing more investment."

"Difficulty crossing streets safely due to cars not respecting zebra crossings and the town not being very accessible for those with disabilities."

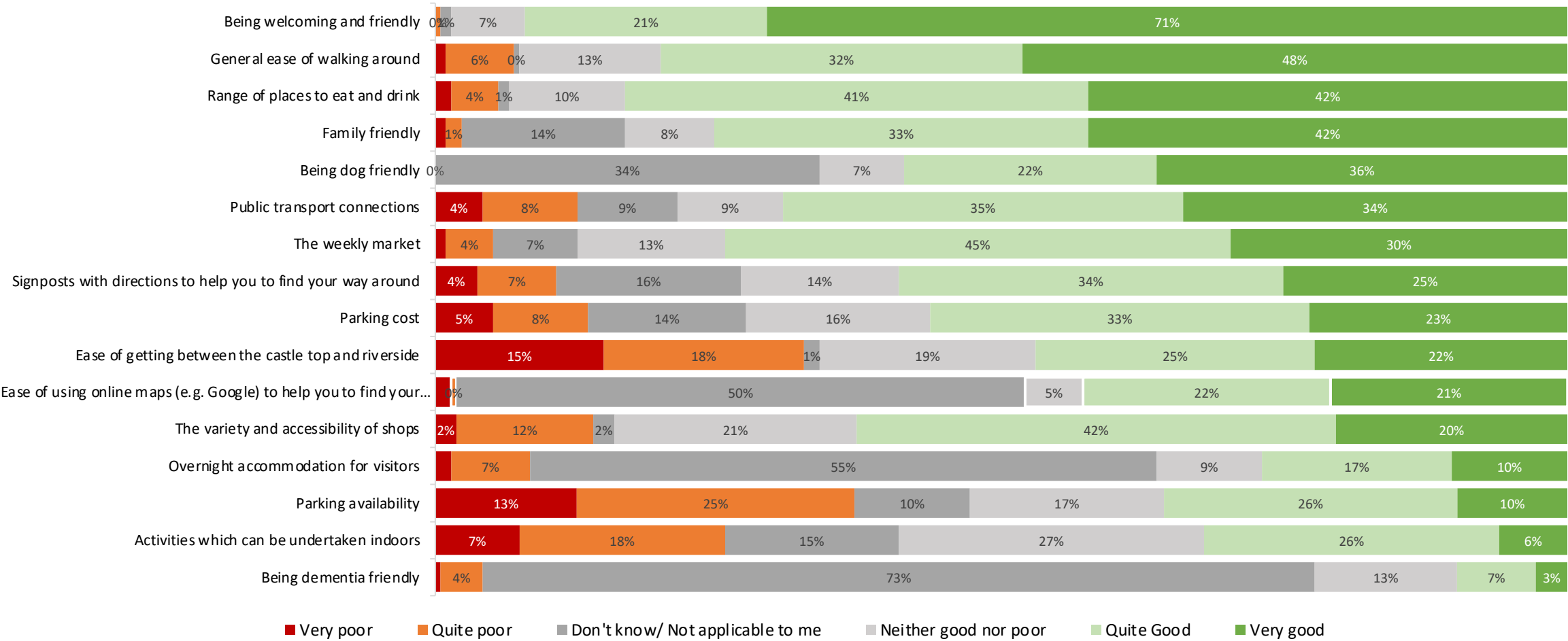
"The bus station layout is too busy and chaotic, making it hard to navigate, and the public transport options are not sufficient."

"Neglect of Knaresborough House and other public spaces like Bebra Gardens shows a lack of care for our communal areas."



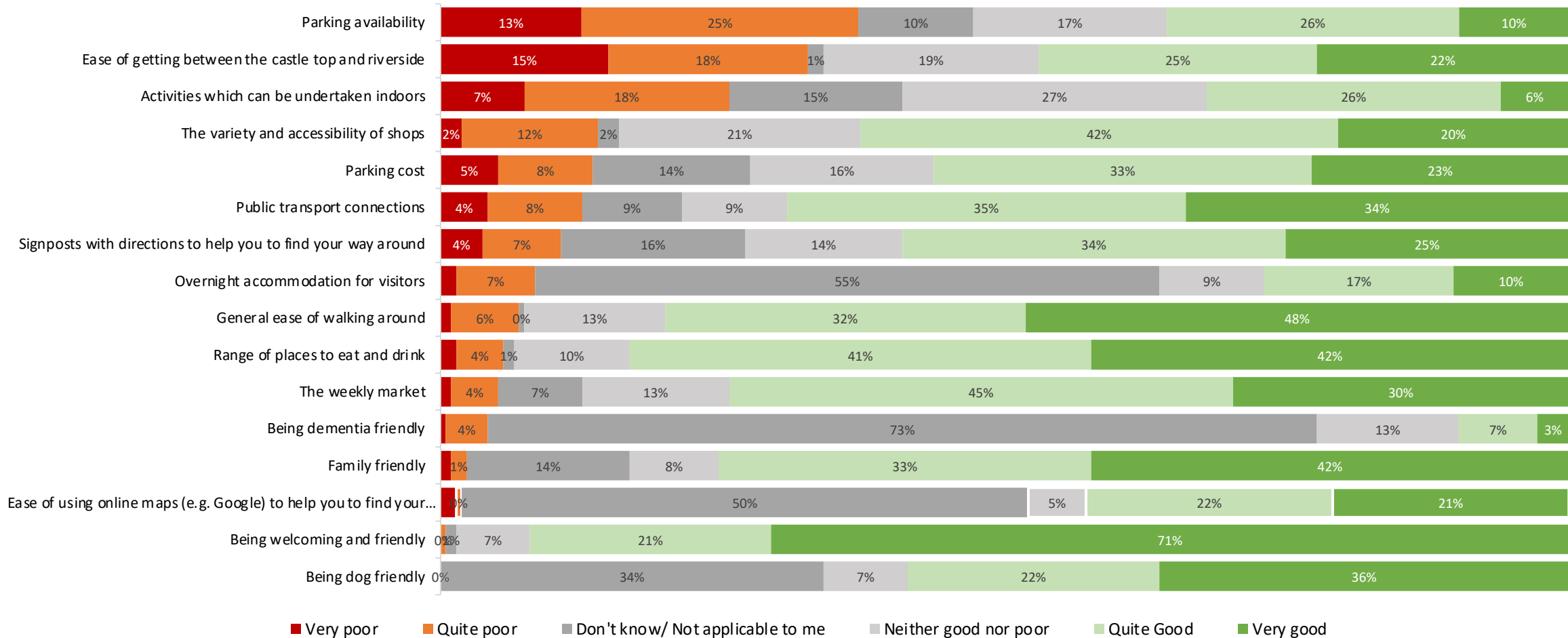
Asked to rate a number of aspects of the town, the strongest area by far related to people being welcoming and friendly. Predominantly positive ratings were also provided in relation to the general ease of walking around, the range of places to eat and drink and being both family and dog friendly

How do you rate the following aspects of the town? (Ranked by % 'Very Good')



However, the most negative ratings were provided in relation to parking availability, the ease of getting between the castle top and riverside, indoor activities and the variety and accessibility of shops

How do you rate the following aspects of the town? (Ranked by % 'Very Poor' or 'Quite Poor')



When presented with a range of potential benefits relating to tourism in the area, there was a high degree of positivity and support amongst residents. In particular, residents were likely to feel proud to show off the town when they host friends and family

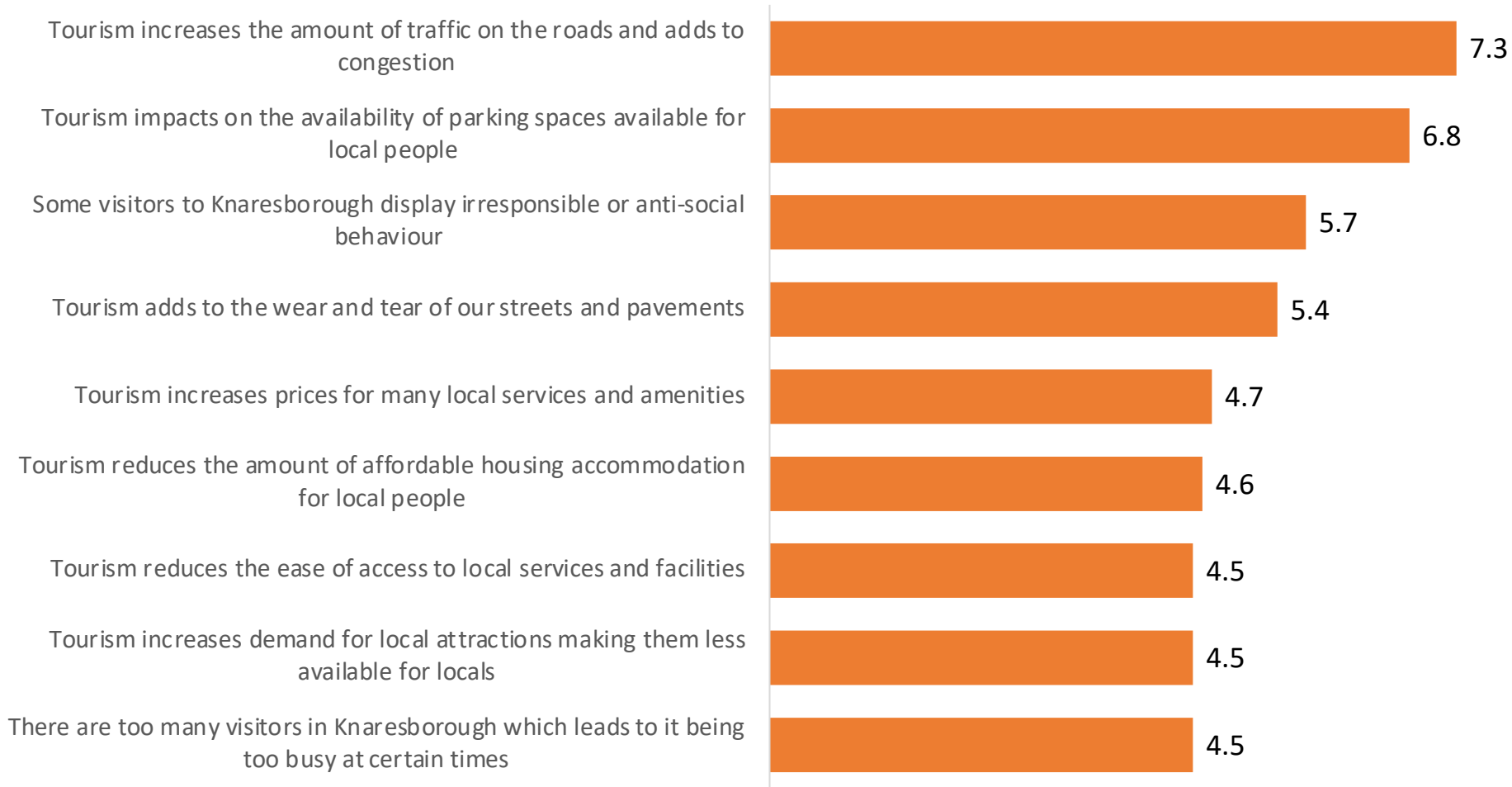
Perceived benefits of tourism to Knaresborough (levels of agreement – score out of 10)



Resident behaviours and opinions

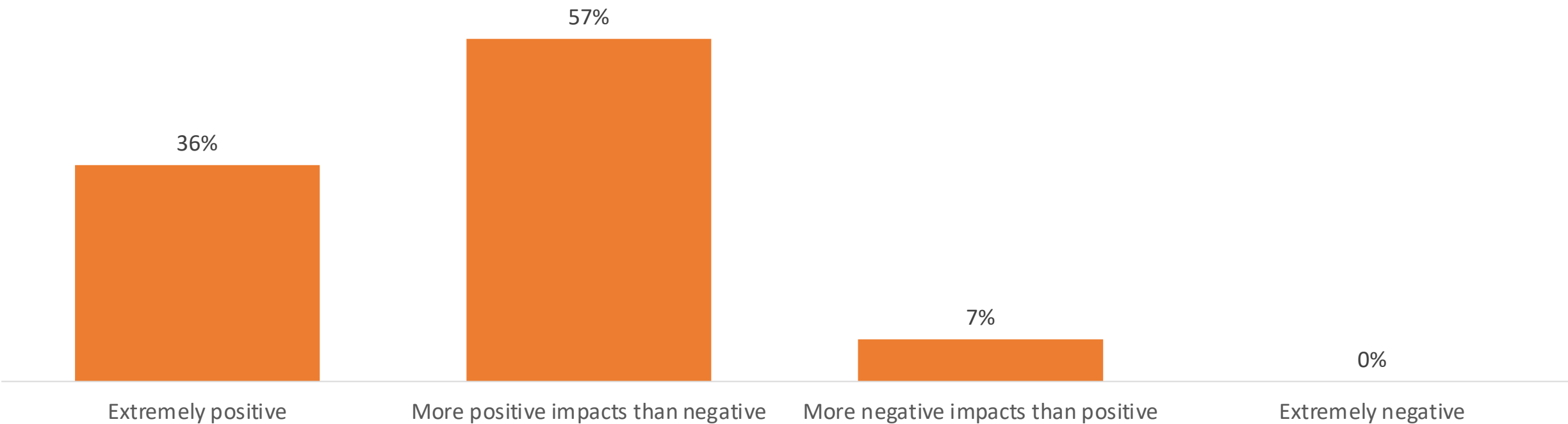
The disadvantages of tourism are also recognised by some residents, but levels of agreement are lower than for the benefits. Two disadvantages received the highest levels of agreement – tourism increasing traffic congestion and limiting parking spaces available to locals. Generally however, the benefits of tourism outweigh the disadvantages in the eyes of most residents.

Perceived disadvantages of tourism to Knaresborough (levels of agreement – score out of 10)



The reaction to the attitude statements on the previous two charts suggested that the benefits of tourism outweigh the disadvantages in the eyes of most residents, and this is borne out when residents were asked directly if the impacts were more positive or more negative. Some 93% described tourism as more positive than negative to the area – only 7% described it on balance as more negative.

Impacts of tourism in Knaresborough in the eyes of residents

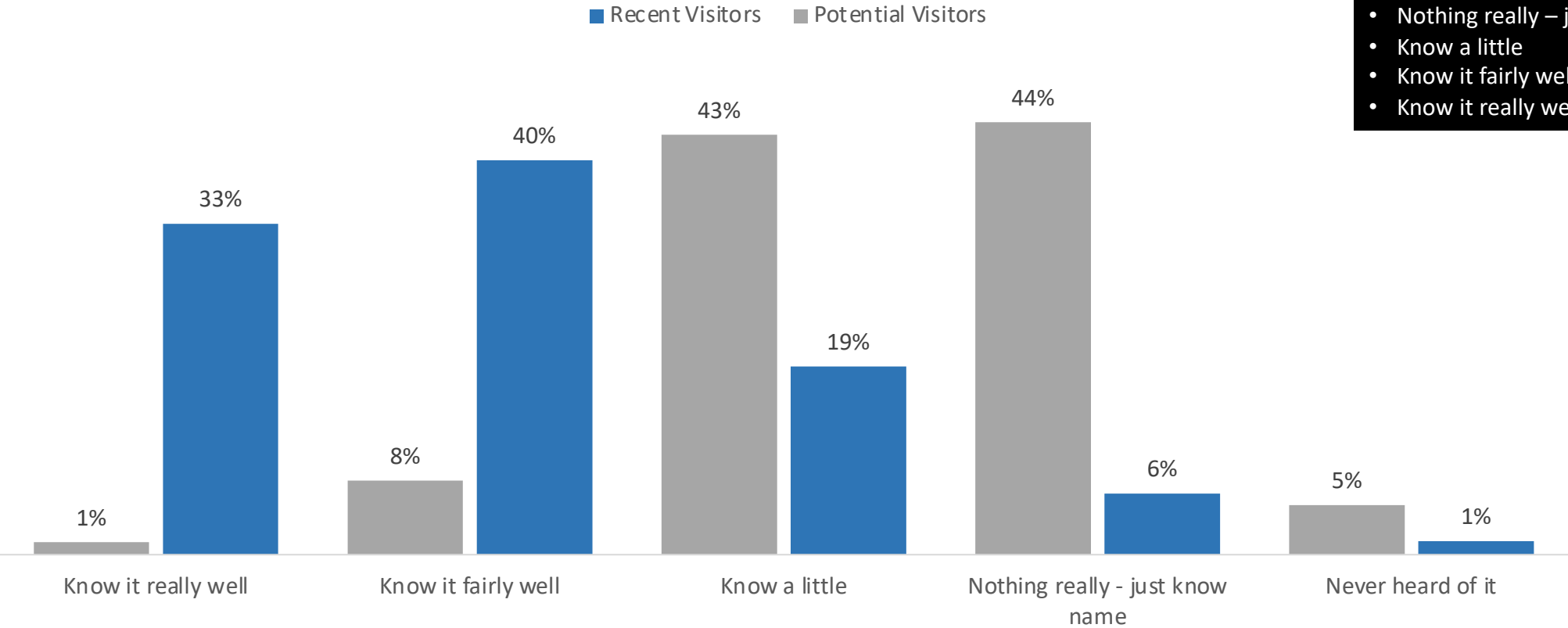


5. Awareness and perceptions
of Knaresborough amongst
previous and potential
visitors



While most recent visitors to Knaresborough stated that they know the town really or fairly well most potential visitors know little or nothing other than the name

Levels of Knowledge of Knaresborough



Levels of Knowledge: All non-residents

- Never heard of it 3%
- Nothing really – just know name 14%
- Know a little 25%
- Know it fairly well 32%
- Know it really well 26%

Respondents were asked to type in what came to mind when they thought of Knaresborough. Both recent and potential visitors were likely to name attractions with visitors giving the most detail while potential visitors were more likely to have more general expectations

Spontaneous perceptions

AMONGST VISITORS...

Almost entirely positive associations from those who visited:

- **Mother Shipton's Cave:** Frequently mentioned as a key attraction
- **The Viaduct:** Recognised for its picturesque quality and as an iconic feature of the town.
- **River Nidd and Riverside Walks:** Praised for its beauty and the recreational opportunities it provides, such as boating and leisurely walks.
- **Castle:** Knaresborough Castle seen as a central historical site.
- **Beautiful Scenery and Natural Beauty:** The overall natural landscape and scenic views are highly valued.
- **Historic and Quaint Town:** The town's historical aspects and quaintness are appreciated.
- **Independent Shops and Cafes:** The variety of independent shops and cafes contributes to the town's appeal.
- **Tourist and Family-friendly Atmosphere:** Recognised as a tourist attraction and appreciated for its family-friendly vibe.
- **Relaxing and Scenic Atmosphere:** Many visitors find Knaresborough to be a relaxing place with a scenic environment, perfect for unwinding.
- **Accessibility and Proximity to Leeds and York:** The town's location, being close to Leeds and York, is appreciated for its convenience and accessibility.

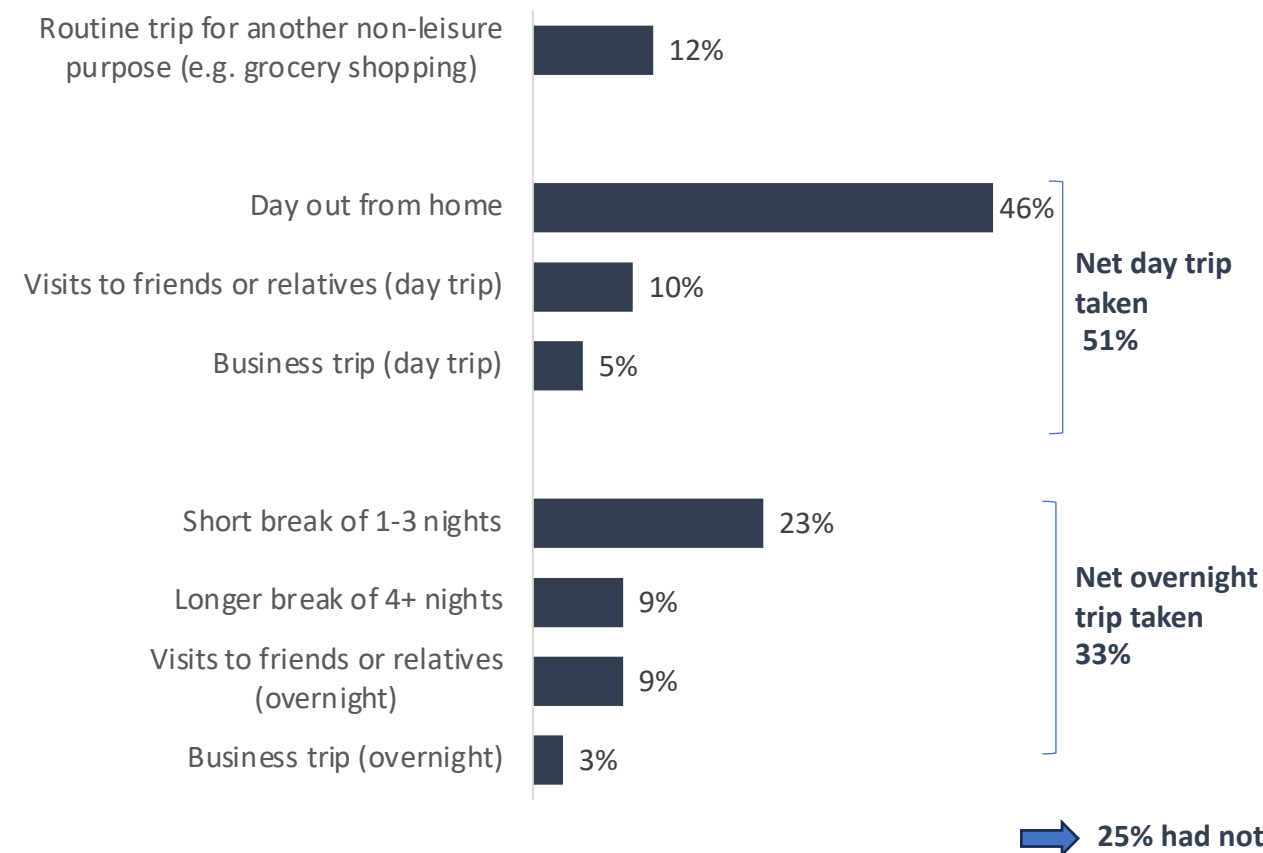
AMONGST POTENTIAL VISITORS...

Some state they just know the name or that they don't know much but otherwise very positive and reflective of some of the comments from recent visitors:

- **Mother Shipton's Cave:** Frequently mentioned, indicating its strong presence in the public perception as a key attraction of Knaresborough.
- **The River Nidd and Boating:** The river and activities associated with it, such as boating, are commonly noted, reflecting the natural beauty and recreational opportunities available.
- **Castle:** Knaresborough Castle is another prominent association, highlighting the town's rich historical heritage.
- **Scenery and Picturesque Setting:** The beautiful and picturesque scenery of Knaresborough, including its riverside setting, is a common association, suggesting an appreciation for the town's natural environment.
- **Yorkshire and its Countryside:** The broader context of Yorkshire and its countryside, with Knaresborough being characterised as a quaint, attractive, and typical Yorkshire town, shows the regional identity as a significant aspect of how people perceive the town.

Overall around half of non residents surveyed had visited Knaresborough on a day trip during the last 3 years while around a third had visited on an overnight trip. Most of those who had visited did so in the last year

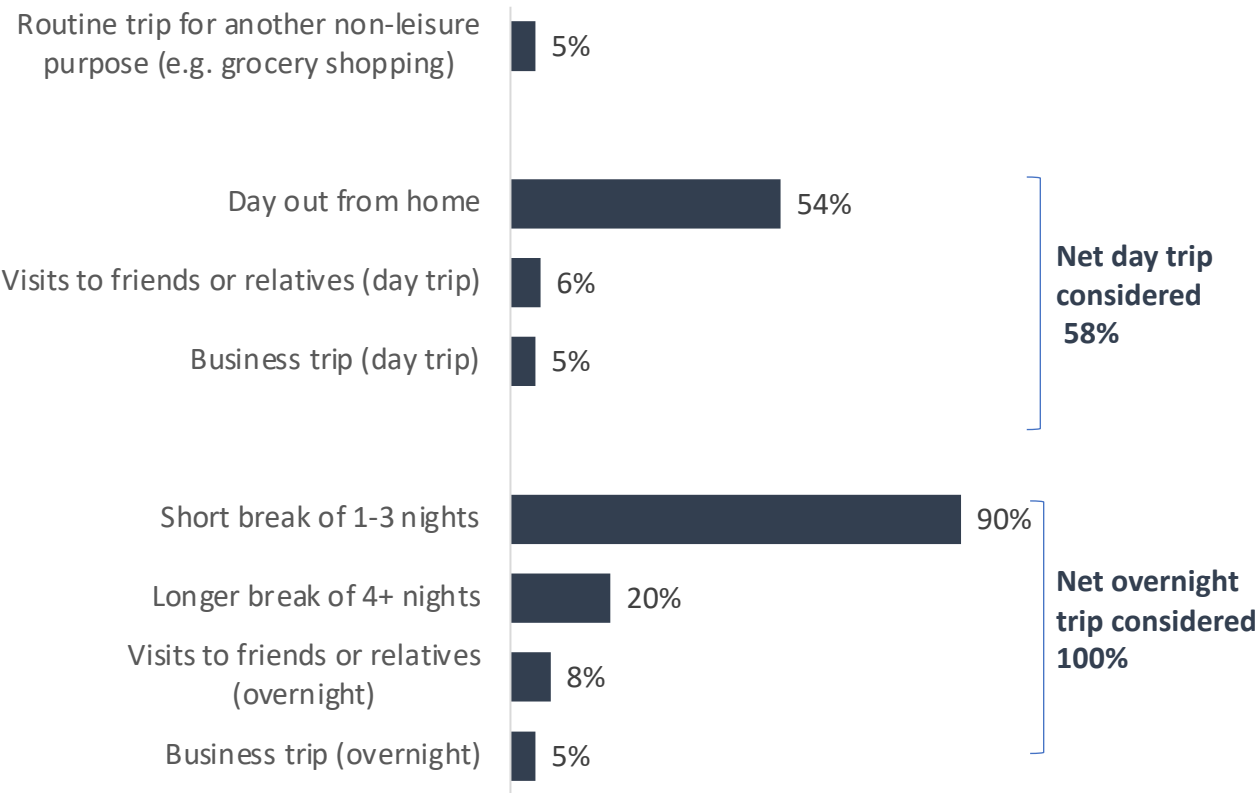
Types of visits taken in last 3 years (amongst non-residents)



When last visited:	
• Within the last month	25%
• Within the last 6 months	31%
• Within the last year	20%
• Within the last 2-3 years	24%

When those who had not visited were asked about the types of visits they would consider taking, all would consider an overnight trip (mainly a short break) while around 3 in 5 would consider a day out

Types of visits would consider taking in the future (amongst potential future visitors in next 2 years)



Awareness and perceptions of Knaresborough amongst previous and potential visitors

All non-resident respondents were then provided with a description of what Knaresborough has to offer visitors and asked how likely they would be to consider visiting given this information. The majority provided a positive response - most notably half stated that they were ‘very likely’ to consider taking a day visit

Quietly embracing a towering craggy bluff overlooking the river Nidd, the charming town of Knaresborough beckons visitors with its rich history, majestic charm and outstanding natural beauty.

Frequent buses link it to the neighbouring spa town of Harrogate, while Knaresborough’s uniquely positioned railway station offers convenient connections to Leeds and York, which provides an easy escape from traffic woes.

Knaresborough's eccentric reputation harks back to legendary residents like St Robert the hermit, Mother Shipton the renowned prophetess and Blind Jack Metcalf the illustrious road builder.

Wandering through the town centre reveals a wide range of period architecture, housing a diverse array of independent businesses promising surprises at every turn. Exploring the castle and parish church immerses visitors in medieval royalty's footsteps, a history marked by substantial investments and subsequent devastation during the civil war, yet the castle endures as part of the King's estate.

Far below on Waterside, a leisurely walk alongside the river feels akin to a stroll on the Yorkshire Riviera.

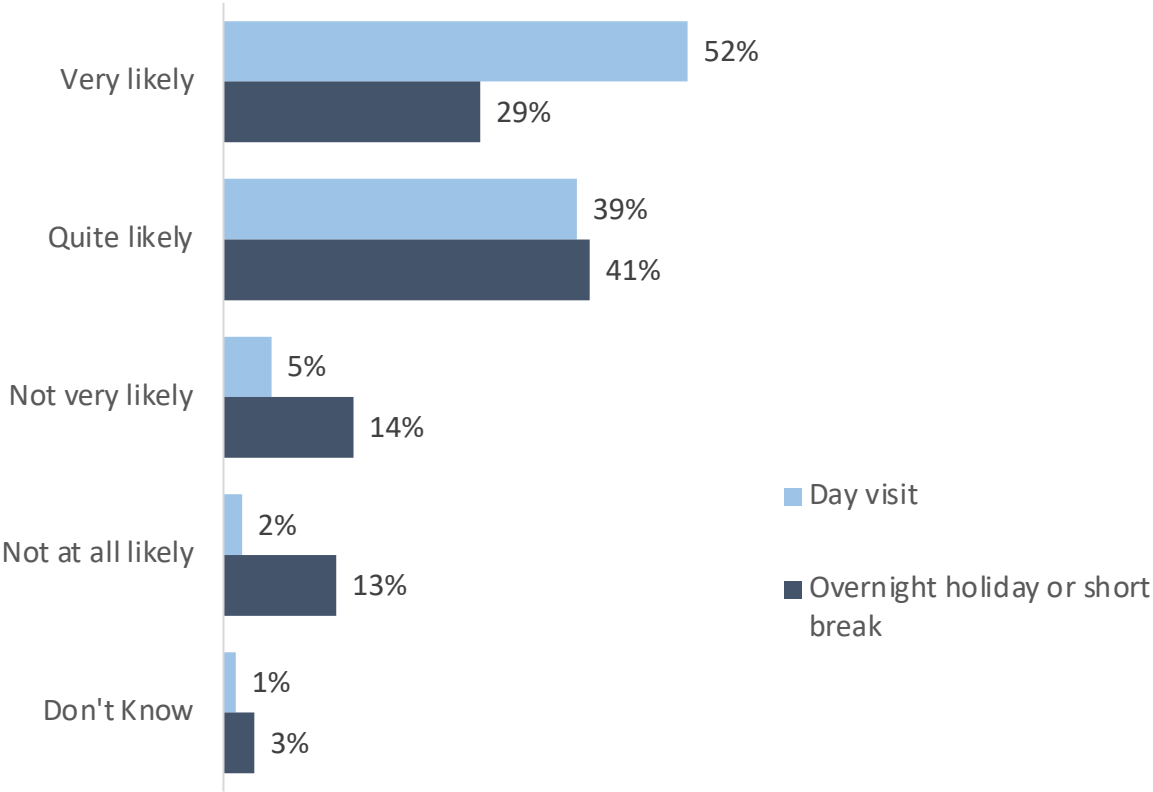
The nearby rural areas encourage an active lifestyle with year-round river walks, cycle paths, and nature trails. Sandy beach inlets by the river offer perfect locations for picnics and dog walks.

Whether you're on the quest for adventure or in search of tranquility, Knaresborough offers a variety of accommodations, including elegant country house hotels, historic inns, charming cottages, modern B&Bs, and caravan campsites, catering to diverse preferences.

Immerse yourself in this picturesque town, where history, nature, and quirkiness converge in perfect harmony.

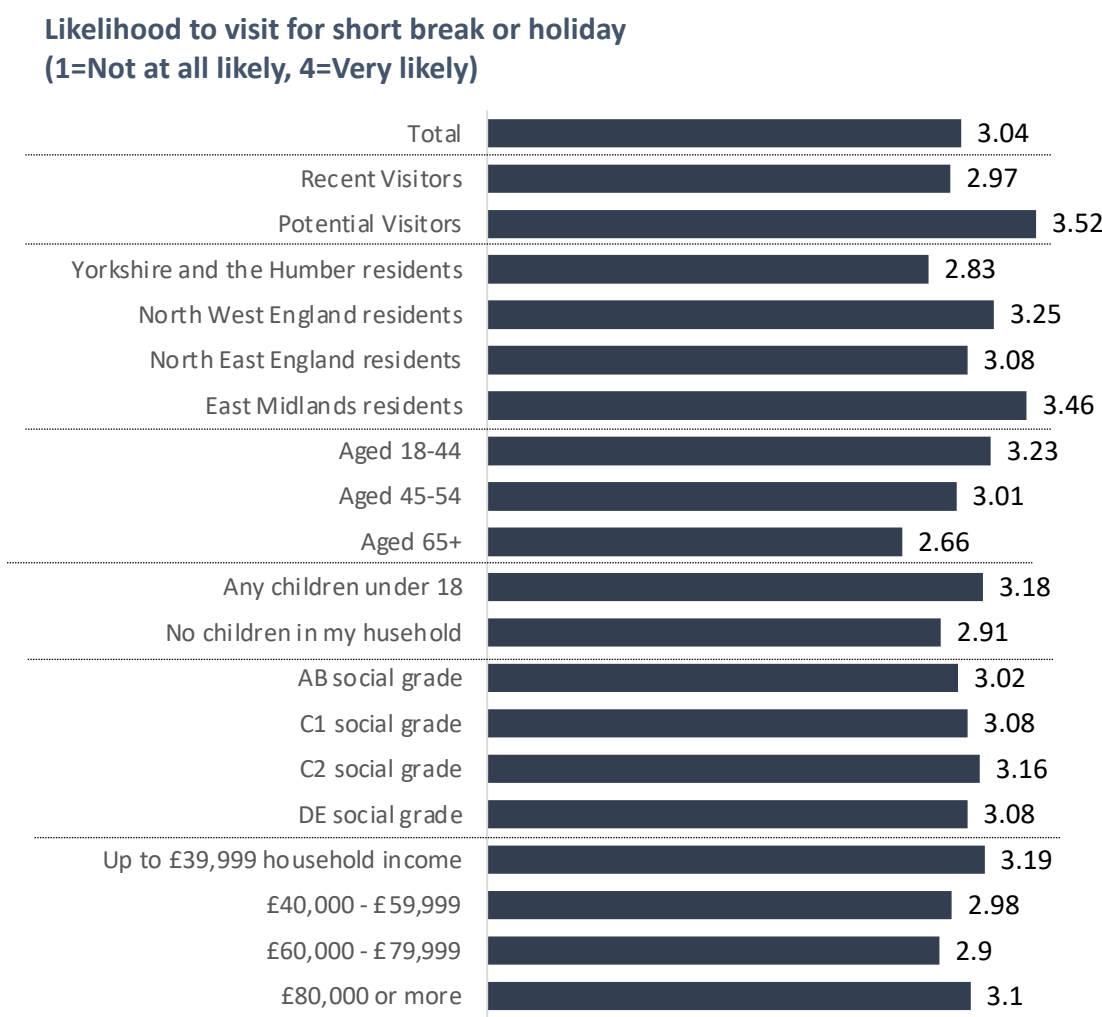
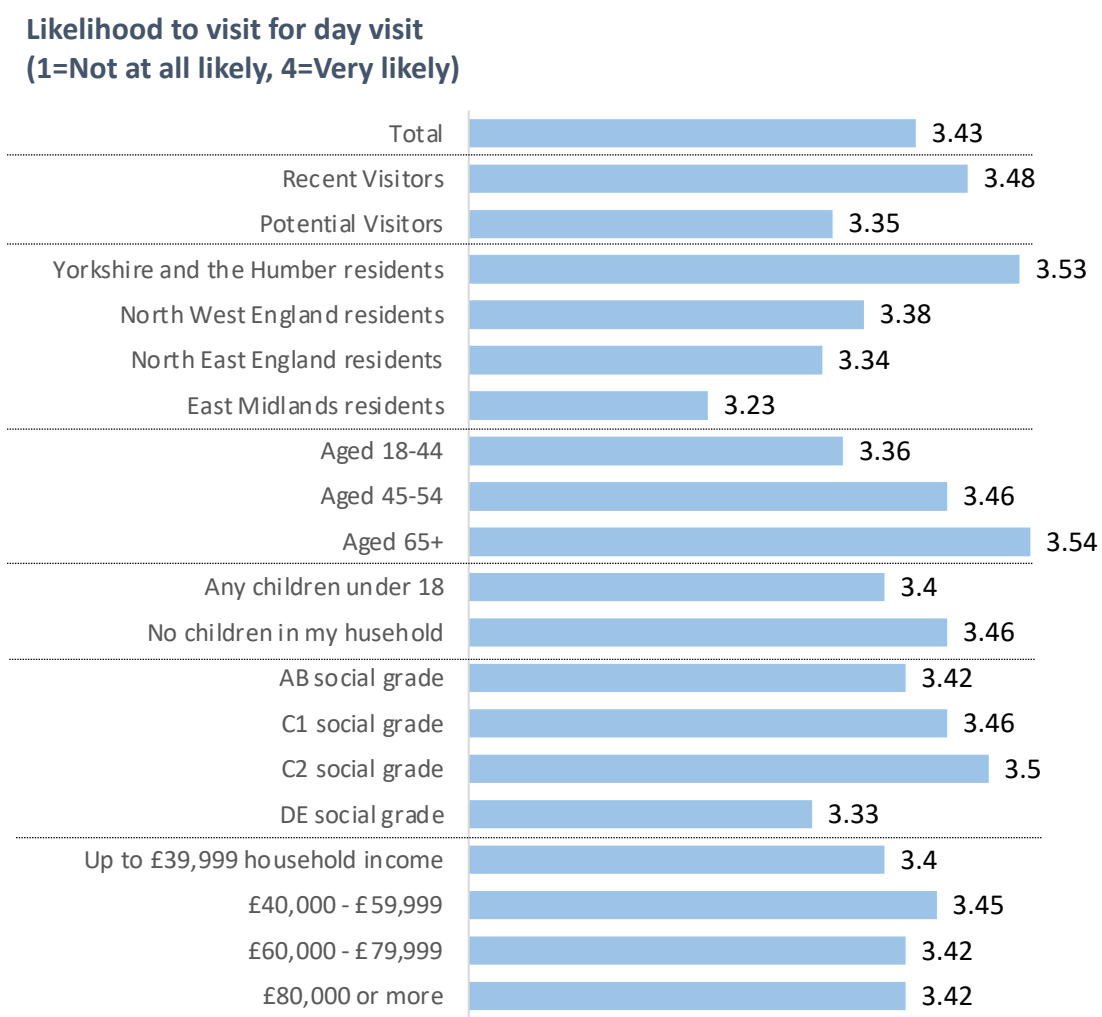


Based on this description of what Knaresborough has to offer as a destination, how likely would you now be to consider visiting for either days out from home or overnight breaks and holidays?



Awareness and perceptions of Knaresborough amongst previous and potential visitors

Groups most likely to consider a day visit were more likely to live in Yorkshire and be in older age groups while those living further afield, younger age groups and families were more likely than average to consider visiting for a short break or holiday



Asked to type in why they were likely to consider Knaresborough, responses most often related to the area's attractions and activities and also its easy to reach location. Some referenced the desire to visit a new place while others wanted to return to the town as they'd had previous positive experiences of

The majority state that they are likely to visit for an overnight trip and/or a day trip.

The most common reasons given were:

Attractions and Historical Sites: Many are drawn to Knaresborough's rich history, including its castle, Mother Shipton's Cave, and the iconic viaduct. The town's historical and cultural attractions are significant motivators.

Natural Beauty and Scenic Views: The picturesque nature of the town, especially its riverside settings, scenery, and opportunities for walks, appeals to many. The beauty of the Yorkshire countryside and quaint surroundings also adds to its allure.

Family-friendly and Varied Activities: The presence of family-friendly attractions and a variety of activities to engage in, such as boating on the river and exploring castles, makes Knaresborough an appealing destination for visitors of all ages.

Proximity and Accessibility: For some, the ease of getting to Knaresborough, whether due to its location near major cities like York and Leeds or through good public transport links, makes it a convenient day-trip destination.

Peaceful and Relaxing Environment: The town is perceived as a peaceful and relaxing place to visit, ideal for those looking to escape the hustle and bustle of daily life and enjoy a leisurely pace.

Interest in Exploring New Places: There's a general interest in exploring and discovering new places, with Knaresborough offering a mix of attractions, scenery, and history that appeals to those looking for a unique and enriching experience.

Previous Positive Experiences: Those who have visited Knaresborough before recall their enjoyable experiences, making them likely to revisit to explore more or relive their memories.

"We are looking to do more UK breaks this year for financial reasons and love Knaresborough."

"It sounds like a lovely place to visit with lots of things we like to do there."

"It sounds like there's even more than what I had heard about."

"Perfect escape with the family, we have relatives in Newcastle and Scotland so its on route."

"It is definitely somewhere we'd love to visit as a family, my children love exploring castles so would be a chance to tick one off our list."

"Knaresborough has lots to offer. I'm looking to visit in the very near future as it's a while since I have been. Because of the access to Harrogate and other areas, I would also look at taking a break here."

"It reminded me how much I love Knaresborough."

"Sounds ideal for a short break with my family. I visited Mother Shipton's cave many years ago when I was a child. My parents told me it was a very nice day out. I would like to go again."

"It sounds like a beautiful place to take walks and learn kore about the history with it historical places."

"Sounds like a really interesting place to visit, I will more than likely go."

"I have visited a number over the years for business and leisure but would like to go back and spend some more time there. It is a unique town and location with a strong history. I can't think why I haven't been more often."

"It's easily accessible from where I live and a lovely place to visit with lots to do."

"Having been there before, the description is accurate. It sounds like a very nice and interesting place. Enough there and around for an over night break."

While far fewer stated that they were unlikely to visit, the most common reasons given were the location being too close to visit for an overnight trip, cost concerns, worries about the lack of activities for them and a general preference for other destinations

27% are unlikely to visit for an overnight trip and 7% are unlikely to visit for day trip.

The most common reasons given were:

Proximity and Accessibility: many live close enough to Knaresborough that they do not see the need for an overnight stay.

“Too far from where we live. But we have friends and family in Leeds, and from there it is easy to get to Knaresborough.”

“Would really be looking for lovely fun food places to try - nice restaurants etc. This makes the town sound lovely but perhaps for an older demographic....”

Cost Considerations: The expense associated with an overnight stay is mentioned as a deterrent, especially when Knaresborough is easily reachable for a day trip.

“Because it does look nice but too small to go over for a day trip.”

“I remember staying in Knaresborough for a short break in my childhood and it was very enjoyable. However in other - and very frequent - holidays in the Harrogate/Ripon area, we tended to stay near to Harrogate and tour from there.”

Perception of Limited Activities: Some feel that there might not be enough to do in Knaresborough to warrant an overnight stay. This includes concerns about the town's size and the variety of activities, especially for younger visitors.

“Good for a day out, but would not stay there longer.”

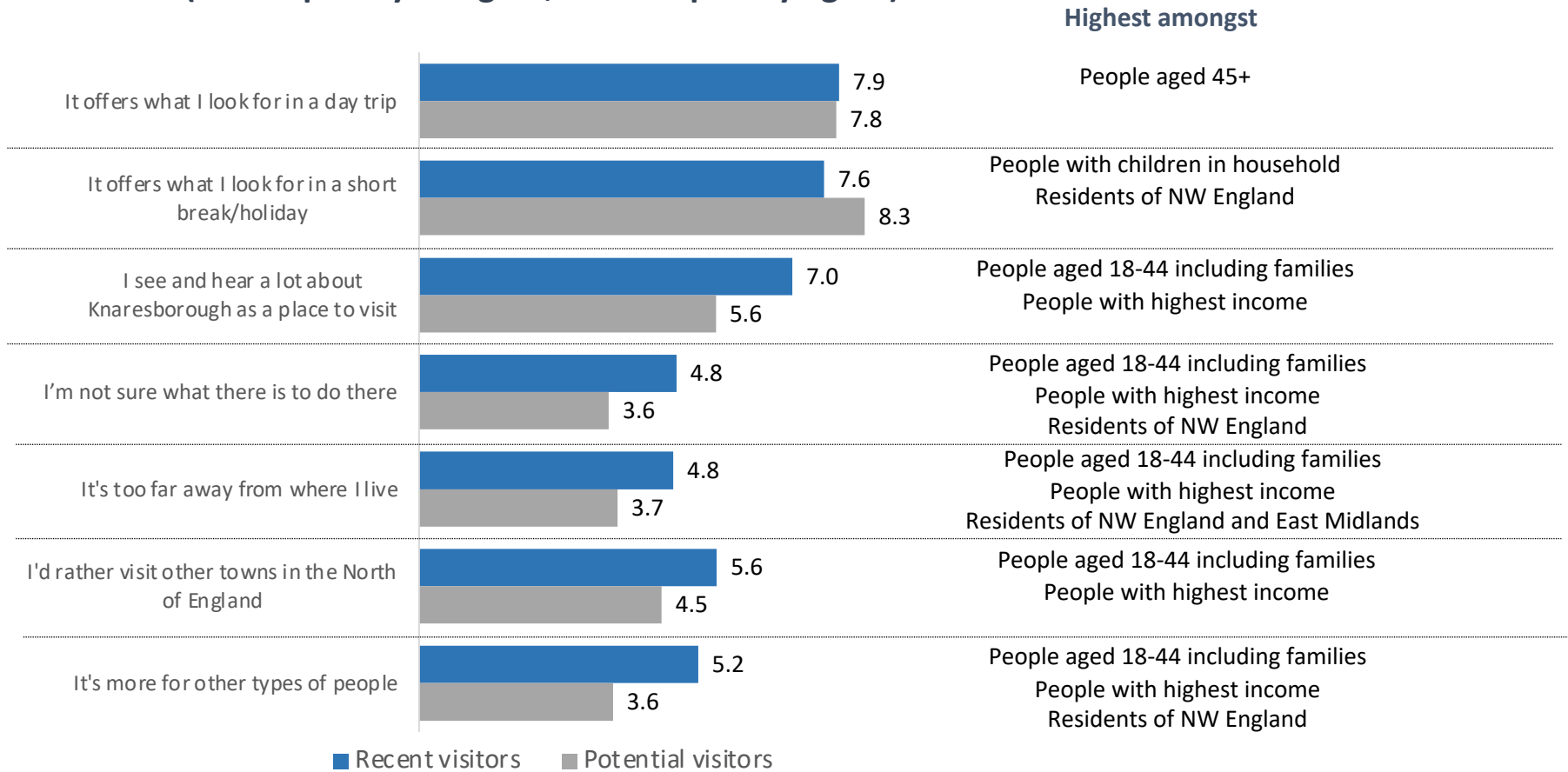
“It’s a place that is easy to access from home and also a place that I can do everything I want to in one day.”

Preference for Other Locations: A preference for staying overnight in other places, such as York, due to a wider range of activities, accommodation, or because they have established holidaying habits elsewhere.

“As a day out it would be nice to re visit Knaresborough. For an over night stay I would be more likely to choose York or somewhere else. Knaresborough is nice and pretty but it is not too big and not worth an over night stay when we live close by.”

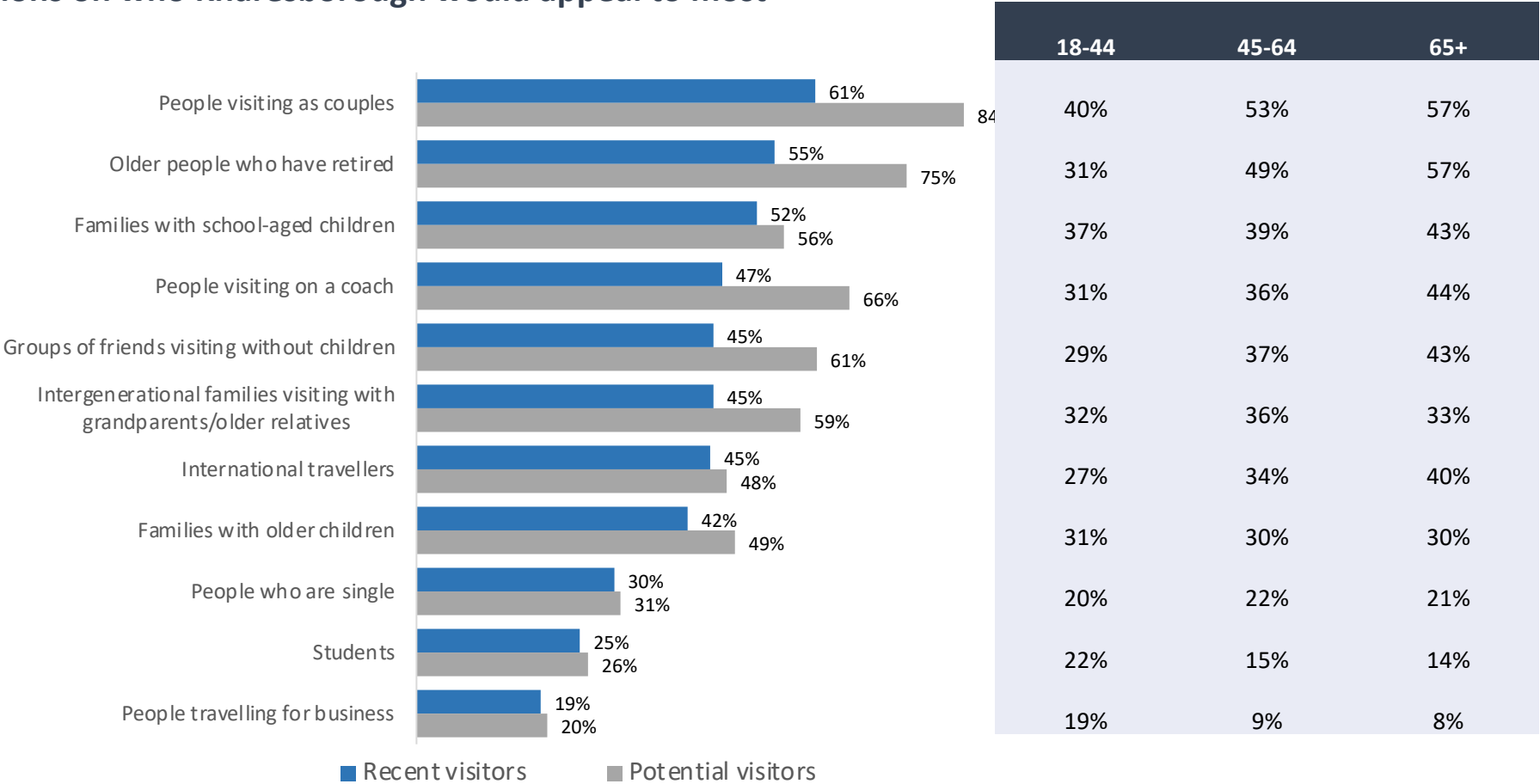
Amongst recent visitors, levels of agreement were highest in relation to Knaresborough offering what they are looking for in a day trip while potential visitors were particularly likely to agree that it offered what they want for a short break or holiday. Recent visitors were also more likely to agree with the other statements, possibly a reflection of their greater knowledge of the town

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements that other people have made about Knaresborough as a destination (1=Completely disagree, 10=Completely agree)



Both recent visitors and potential visitors were most likely to think that Knaresborough would appeal to people visiting as couple and older people who have retired but less likely to select families, people who are single, students or people travelling for business

Perceptions on who Knaresborough would appeal to most

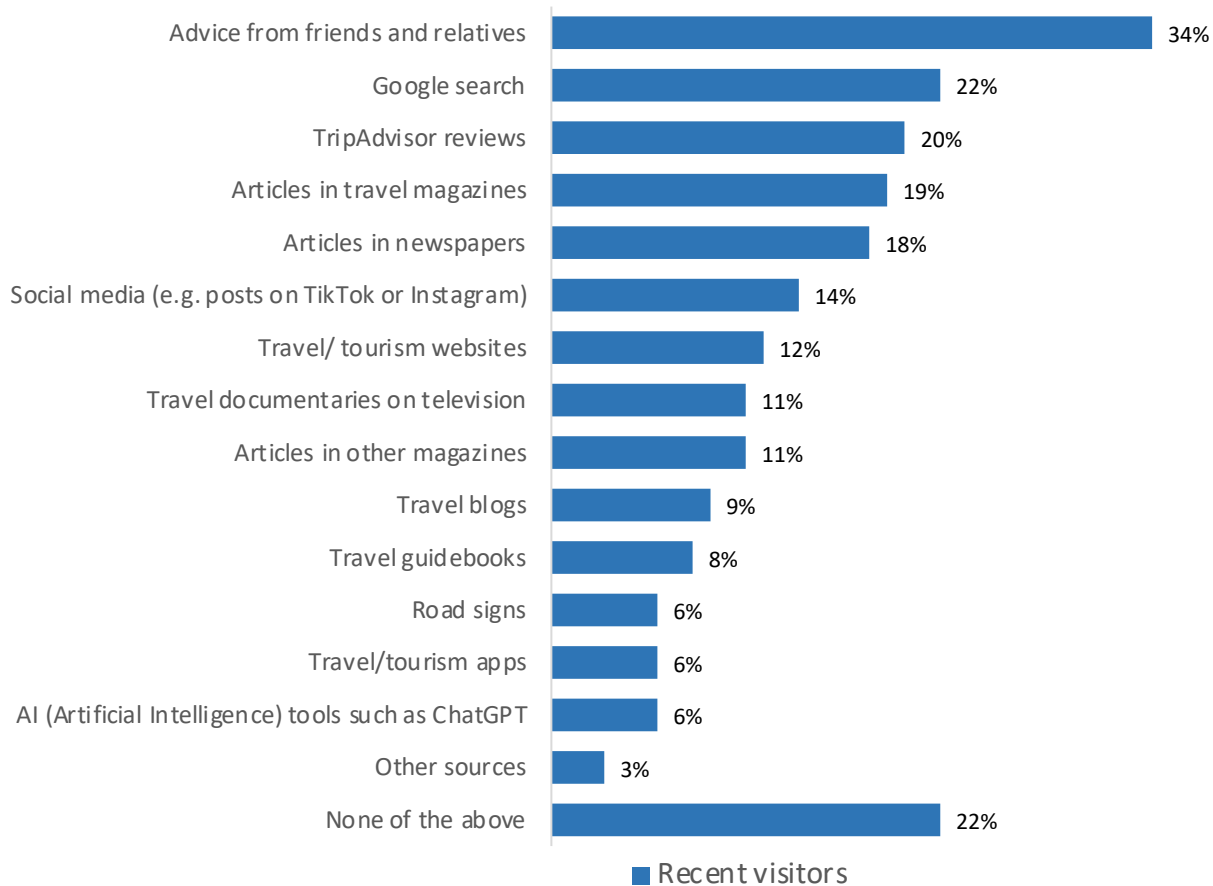


6. Visit profiles amongst previous and potential visitors



While around a fifth did not use any sources, the most common sources of inspiration and information when planning a visit were advice from friends and relatives, Google searches and TripAdvisor reviews. Overall, 6% used AI tools but this increased to around 1 in 10 of those aged 18 to 44

Sources used to inspire and plan most recent visit(s) to Knaresborough

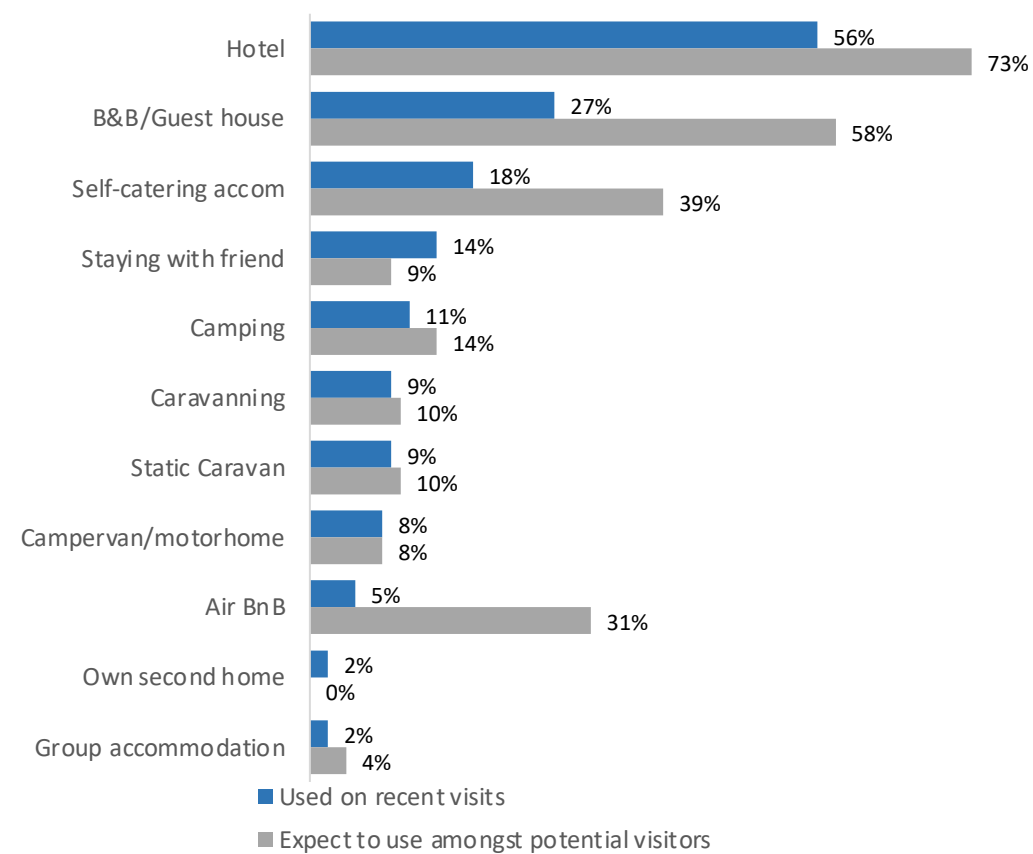


18-44	45+
36%	32%
20%	25%
25%	14%
34%	6%
28%	8%
21%	8%
12%	12%
16%	6%
18%	4%
16%	3%
13%	4%
5%	7%
7%	4%
11%	0%
0%	7%
9%	34%

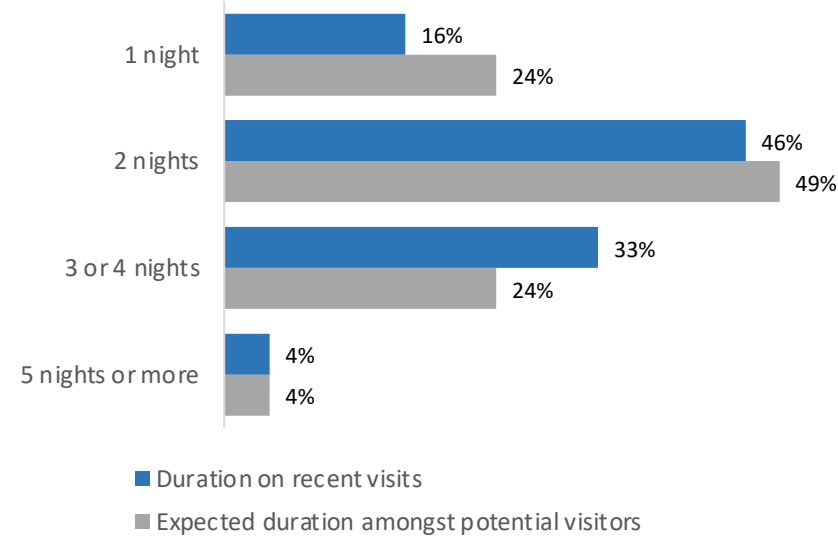
Visit profiles amongst previous and potential visitors

The profile of types of accommodation and duration of visits were broadly similar amongst both those who reported on recent visits they had taken and those commenting on the likely details of a future visit. Potential visitors were more likely to select a wider range of possible accommodation types, including a large share stating that they would be open to using Air BnB

Overnight visits – accommodation type



Overnight visits – duration of visit

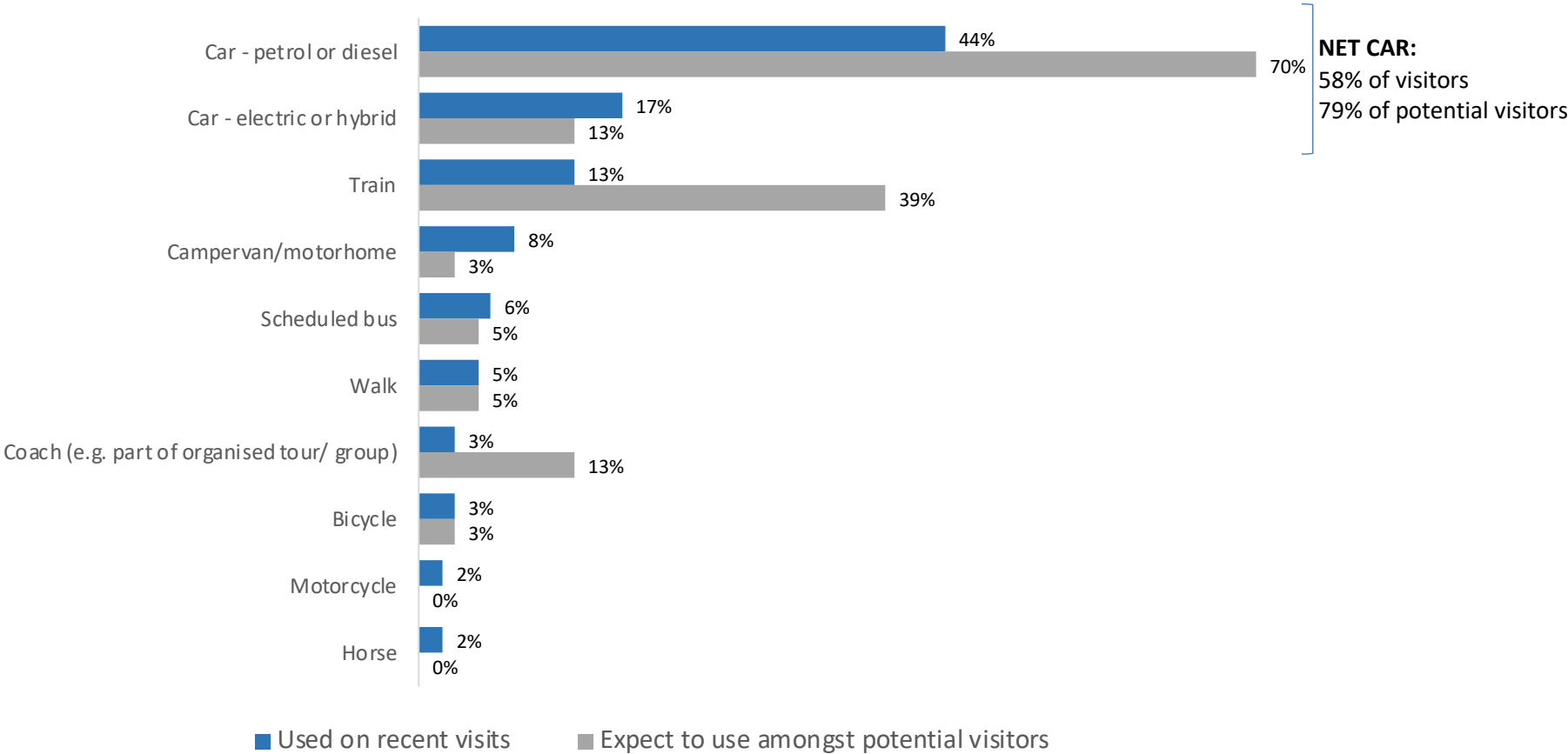


Overnight visits – where stayed

In Knaresborough town centre	44%
Elsewhere in Knaresborough (e.g. on outskirts)	35%
In Harrogate	21%
In York	18%
In Leeds	10%
Somewhere else	3%

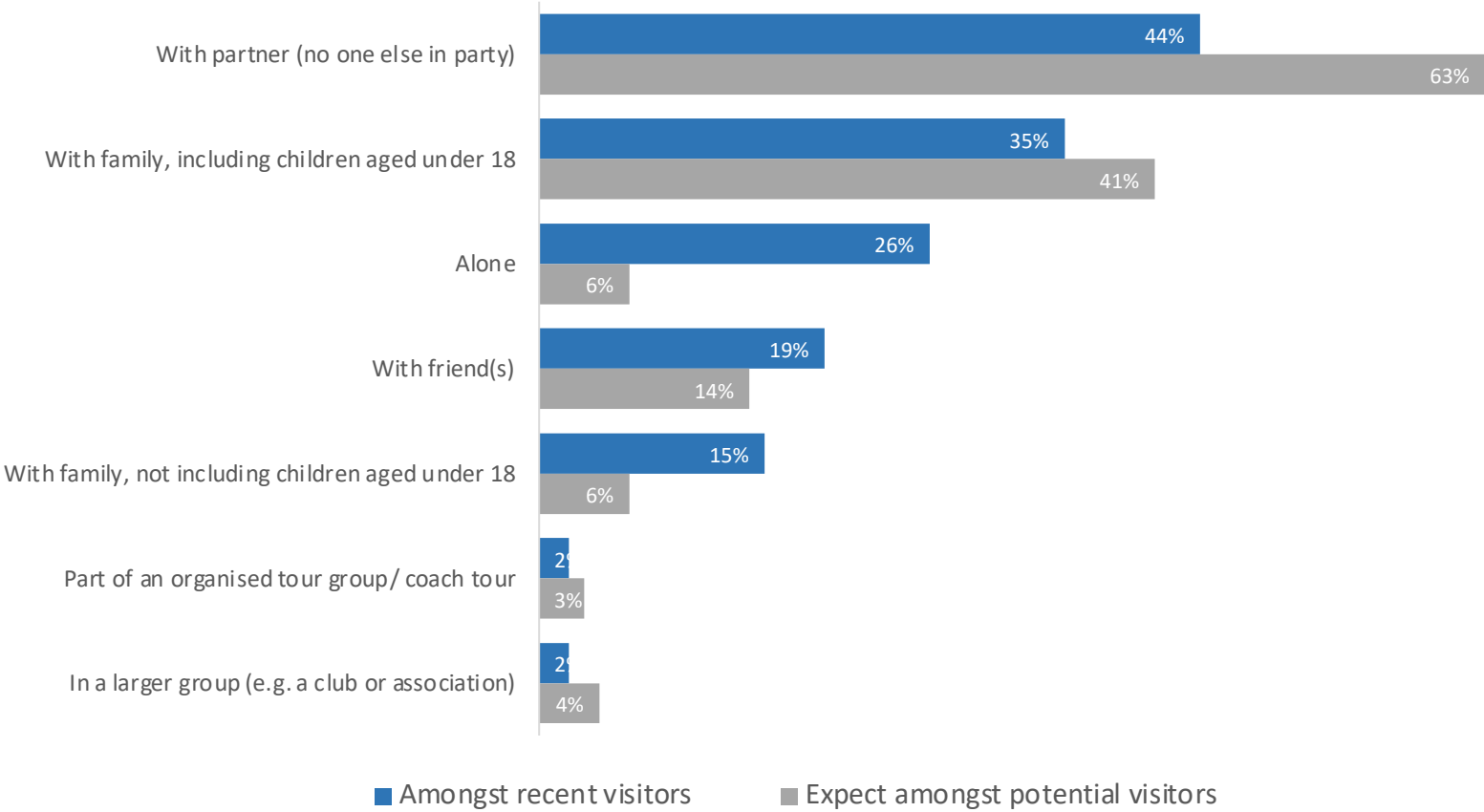
Car was the most common transport choice amongst both those who reported on recent visits taken and those commenting on the likely details of a future visit. The large percentage of potential visitors selecting train suggests high levels of demand for this mode of transport

Transport to Knaresborough



While the party composition of those who had recently visited Knaresborough was fairly varied, potential visitors predominantly expected to visit with their partner and/or with family including children

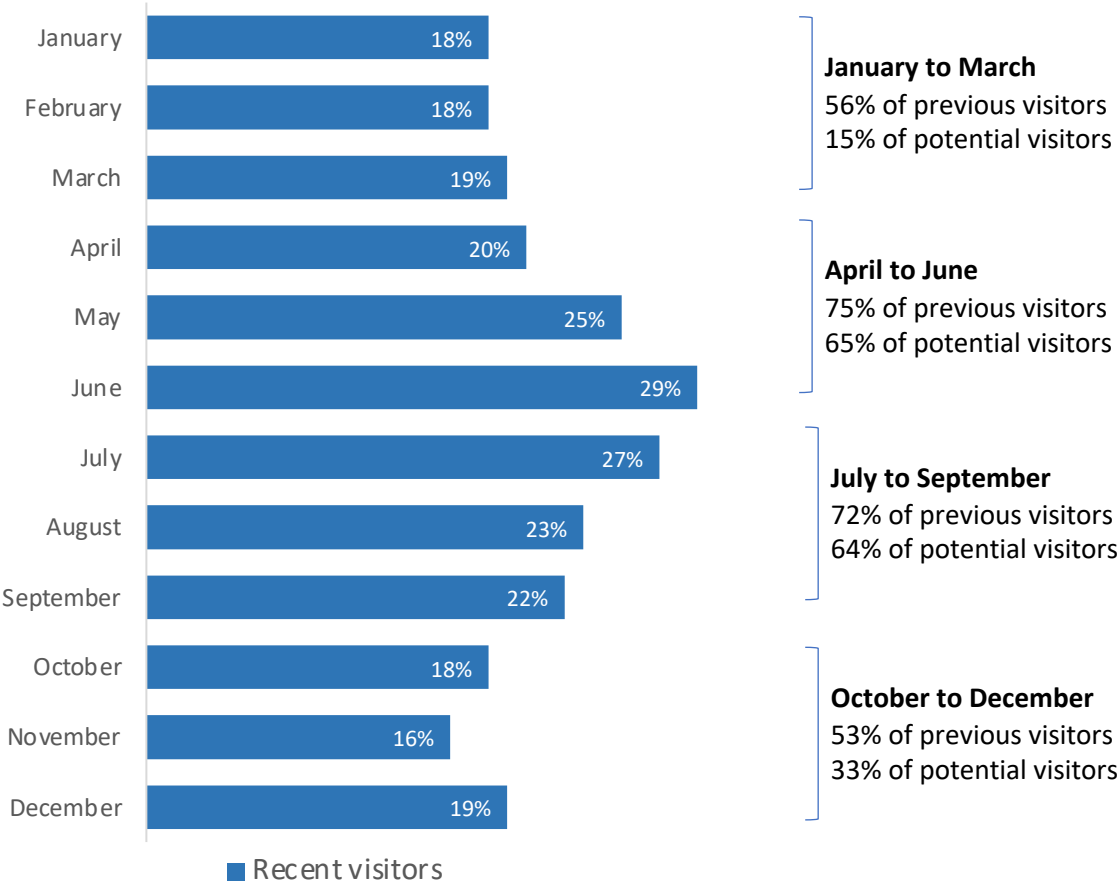
Party composition



Visit profiles amongst previous and potential visitors

The timings of visits taken were fairly well distributed across the year, albeit with a peak in the main summer months. In contrast, potential visitors were much more likely to expect to visit between April and September than in other quarters

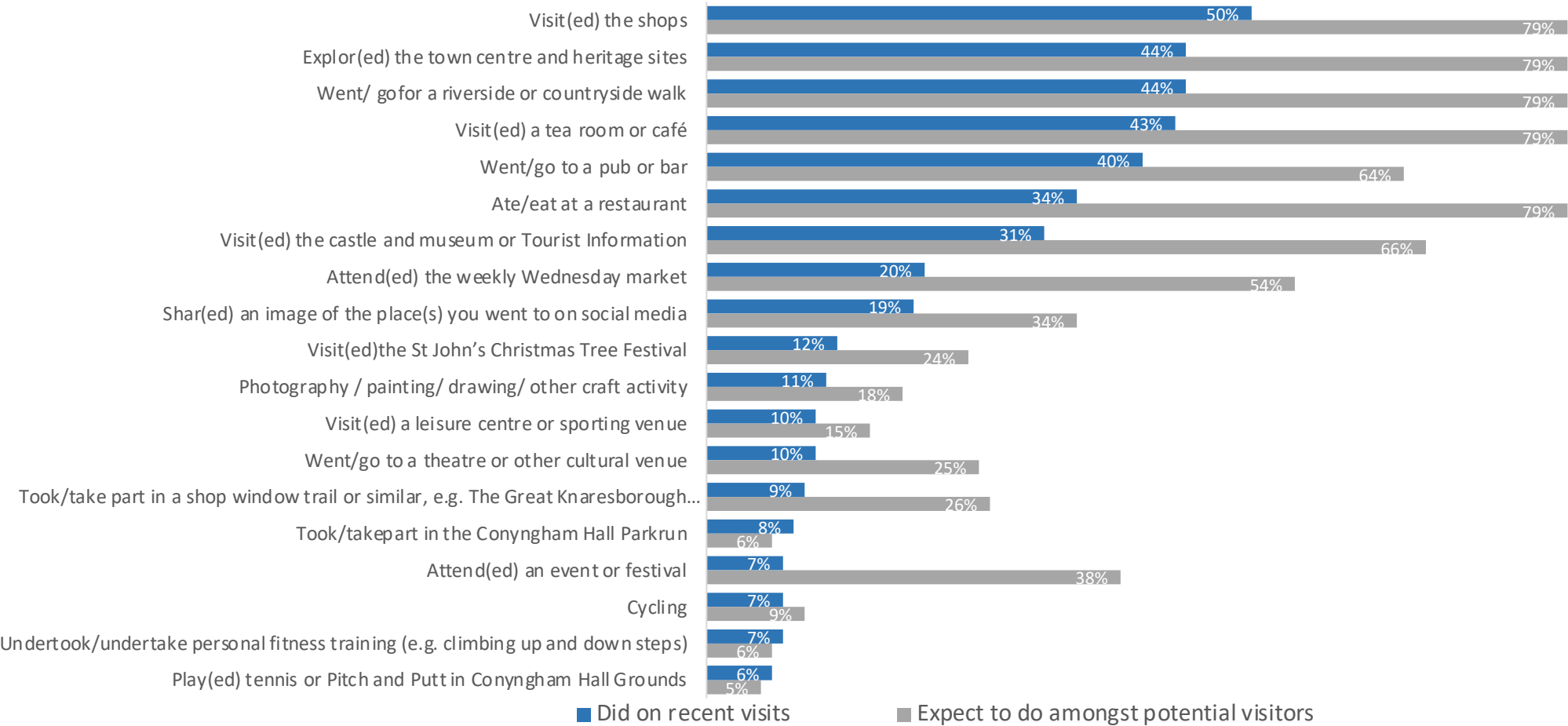
Timing of visit



Visit profiles amongst previous and potential visitors

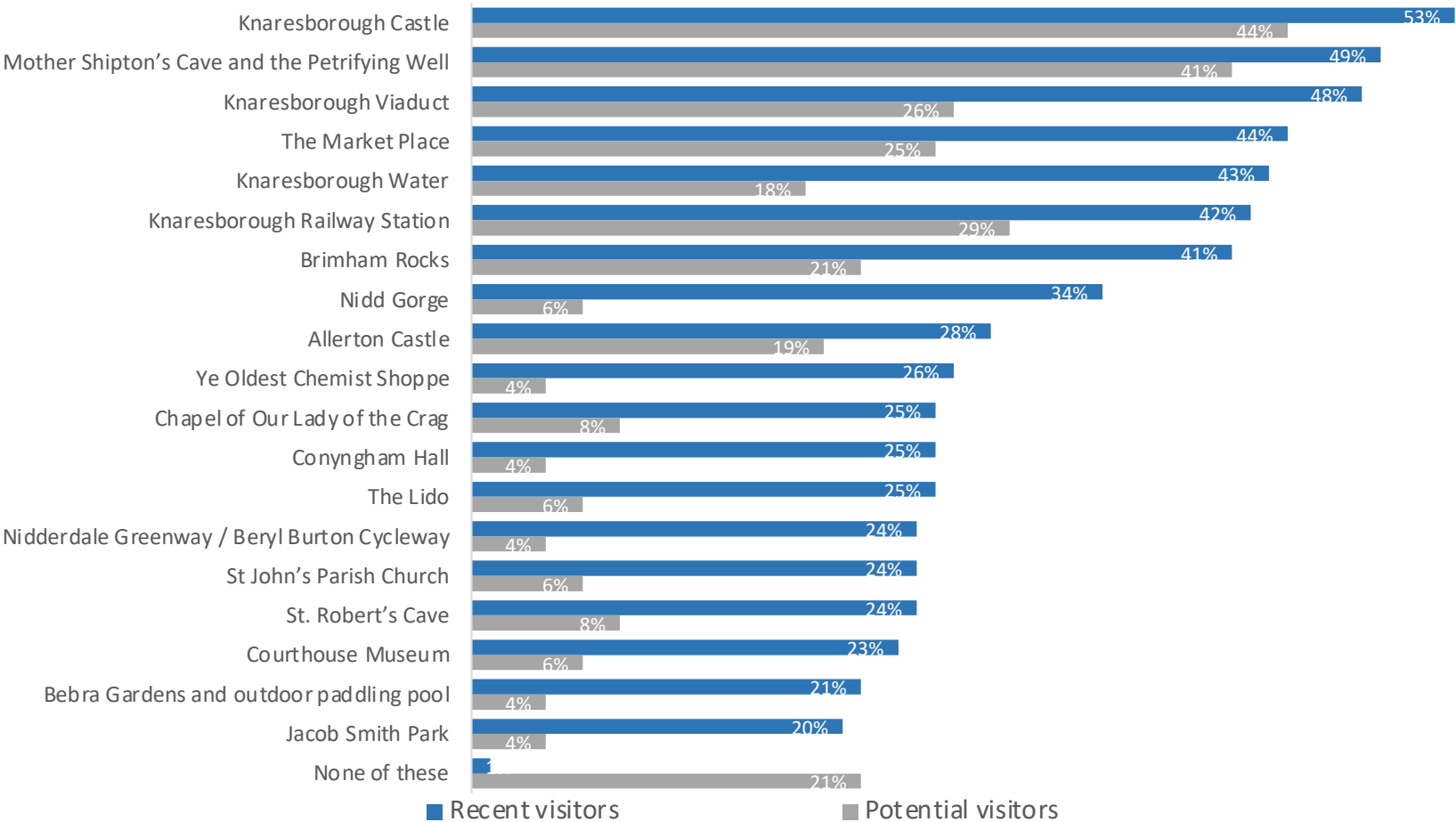
The most commonly undertaken activities amongst those who had visited Knaresborough in the last 3 years were visiting shops, exploring the town centre, going for a riverside or country walk and visiting a tea room, café or pub. Most potential visitors also stated that they would like to undertake these activities and demand to eat out, visit the castle and attend the market was also very high

Activities



As might be expected awareness of Knaresborough’s attractions was much higher amongst recent visitors than potential visitors. The best known attractions by some margin amongst potential visitors were the castle and Mother Shipton’s Cave

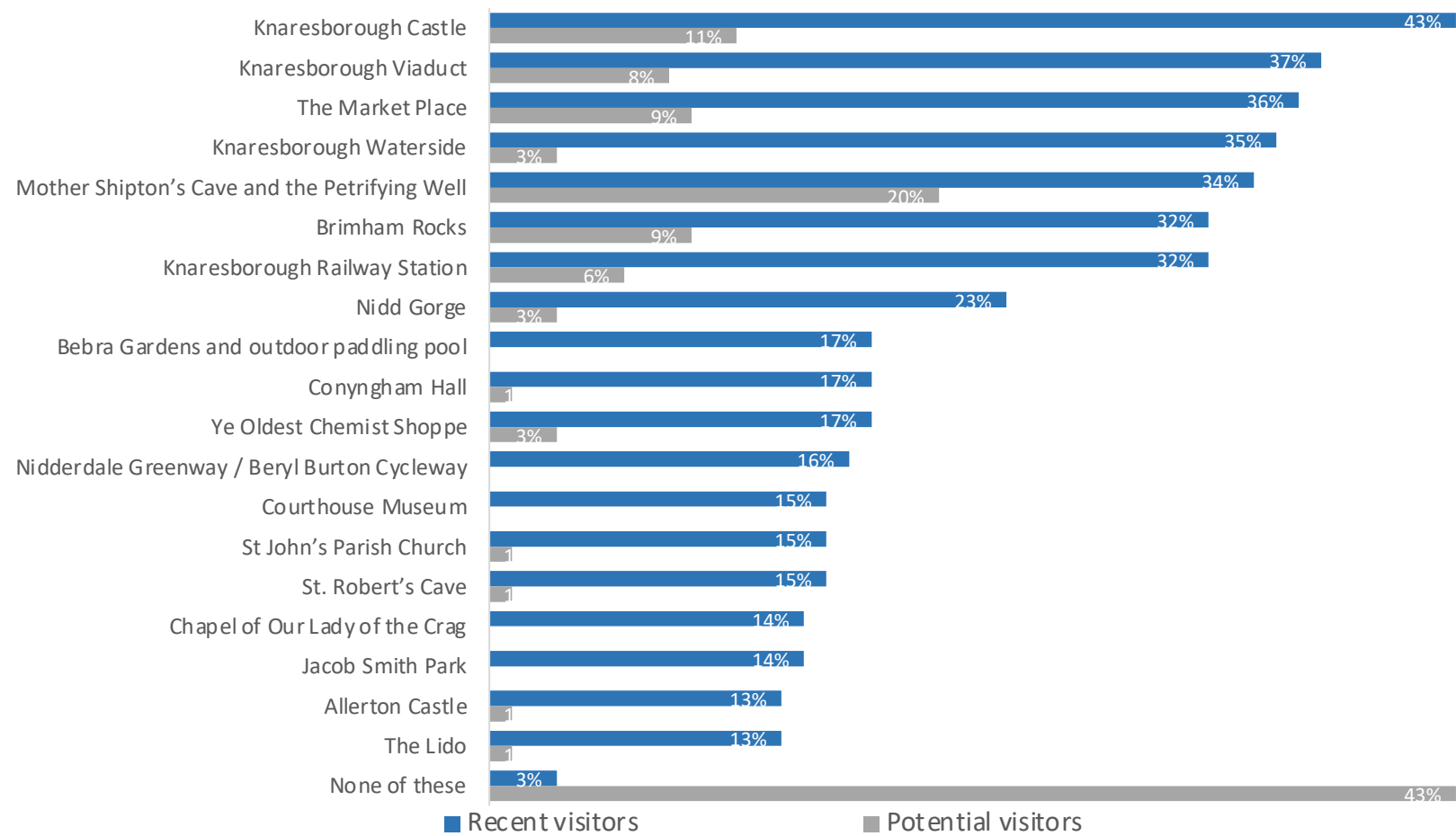
Awareness of attractions



Visit profiles amongst previous and potential visitors

Similarly, recent visitors were more likely to have visited a number of the town’s attractions while, in contrast, around two in five potential visitors had never visited any of those listed

Visits to attractions (ever visited)



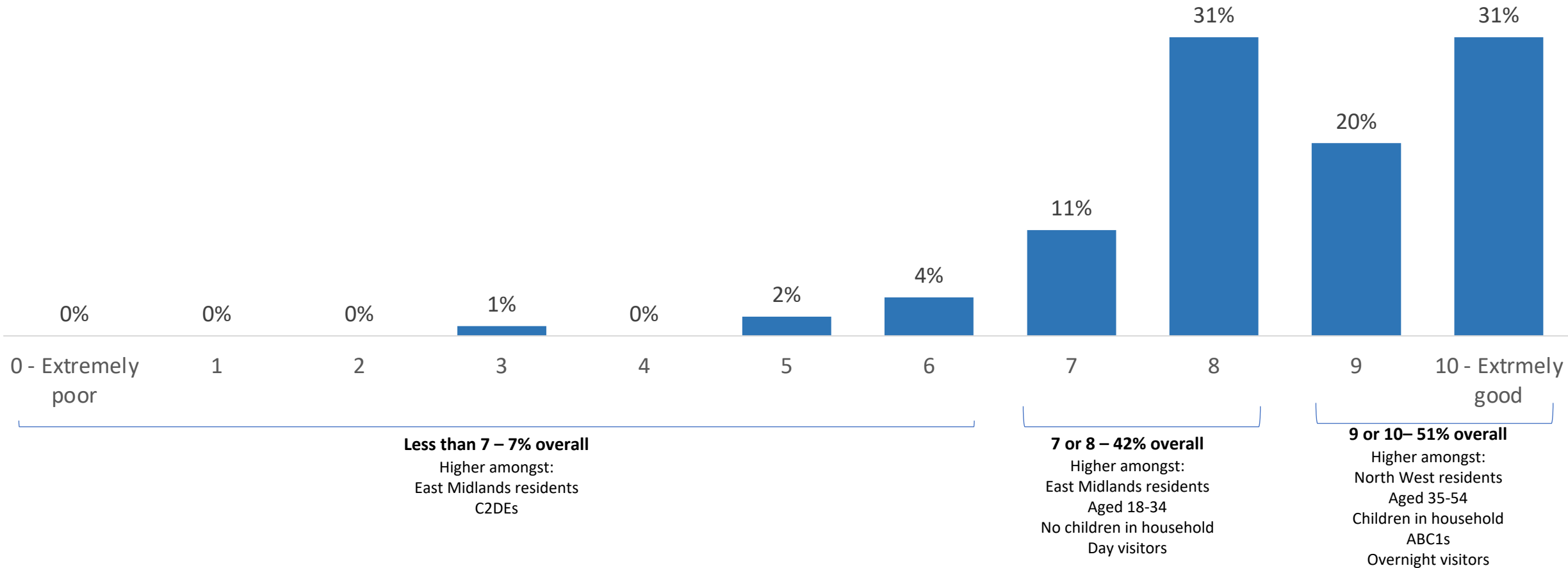
7. Visitor satisfaction



Visitor satisfaction

The vast majority of recent visitors to Knaresborough provide the town with a very positive rating. Satisfaction was particularly high amongst overnight visitors, families and those in more affluent social grades

Overall rating of Knaresborough as a place to visit based on recent experiences



Asked to type in the aspects of the town they particularly liked, recent visitors refenced the riverside walks, history, shops and cafes and markets and were positive about to overall ambiance

Aspects of the town recent visitors particularly like

Based on the survey responses provided, the top 10 areas that visitors to Knaresborough like most about the town are:

- 1. Riverside Walks:** Many respondents appreciated the scenic walks along the river, highlighting the beauty and serenity of these areas.
- 2. Historic Charm:** The town's history, including its castle, viaduct, and heritage sites, was frequently mentioned, reflecting a deep appreciation for Knaresborough's rich past.
- 3. Scenery and Views:** The overall scenery, including views from the castle towards the railway viaduct and the natural beauty surrounding the town, was a significant draw for visitors.
- 4. Friendly Atmosphere:** The friendliness of the local people and the welcoming community vibe of Knaresborough were important aspects of the visitor experience.
- 5. Independent Shops and Cafes:** The presence of unique, independent shops and cafes added to the town's charm and appeal, offering visitors a distinct shopping and dining experience.
- 6. Market Place:** The market and its vibrant atmosphere were highlights for many, providing a focal point for community interaction and commerce.
- 7. Heritage and Culture:** Beyond specific sites, the overall heritage and culture of Knaresborough, including its traditions and events, were valued by visitors.
- 8. Architecture:** The architectural beauty of the town, from its historic buildings to quaint homes, was admired by many respondents.
- 9. Clean and Well-Maintained Environment:** Visitors appreciated the cleanliness and maintenance of the town, contributing to a pleasant overall experience.
- 10. Accessibility and Compactness:** The ease of navigating the town, with its compact layout and accessibility of attractions, made it easy for visitors to explore and enjoy Knaresborough's offerings.

"Exploring the ruined castle and the views towards the railway viaduct."

"Love the river and bridges."

"It's timeless charm and friendliness."

"Walking routes, town centre."

"The old style of it, how picturesque it is.."

"Open Gardens, scenic views, guided tour of castle, interesting history and artefacts."

"Choice of cafes and bars. Tranquil settings - Waterside and Castle Grounds. Stunning views. Unspoilt nature/gardens.."

"Loved the market and when the weather is good love the walk round the castle and river"

"Friendly people, easy bus access to and from Harrogate. Good to see a new bar/restaurant open.."

"Quirky shops and lots of places to visit."



While many visitors could not name any specific dislikes, those who did most often mentioned issues around parking, traffic and getting around the town given the terrain

Aspects of the town recent visitors particularly dislike

- 1. Parking Difficulties:** Many visitors express frustration with finding adequate parking, noting it as a significant issue. This concern highlights the need for improved parking availability or management, especially during busy periods.
- 2. Terrain:** The hilly nature of Knaresborough presents challenges for some visitors, particularly those with mobility issues or families with young children. This feedback suggests a desire for easier access around the town's steep areas.
- 3. Litter Concerns:** A number of responses indicate dissatisfaction with cleanliness in some parts of the town, specifically mentioning litter. This points to a need for better maintenance and cleanliness to enhance the overall visitor experience.
- 4. Traffic Congestion:** Traffic congestion is noted as detracting from the enjoyment of Knaresborough, with busy streets and delays causing frustration for visitors. This theme underscores the impact of vehicular traffic on the town's appeal.
- 5. Accessibility Between Key Attractions:** Specifically, the steps between the waterside and the castle are mentioned as a barrier, indicating a need for improved accessibility between major attractions to accommodate all visitors, including those with limited mobility.

"Parking in the town centre is limited.."

"The steep walk up from the Waterside."

"The traffic within the main street in Knaresborough that goes past the bus station, it was virtually a standstill for at least 30 mins in the middle of the day on a weekday."

"All the steps between the town and river side."

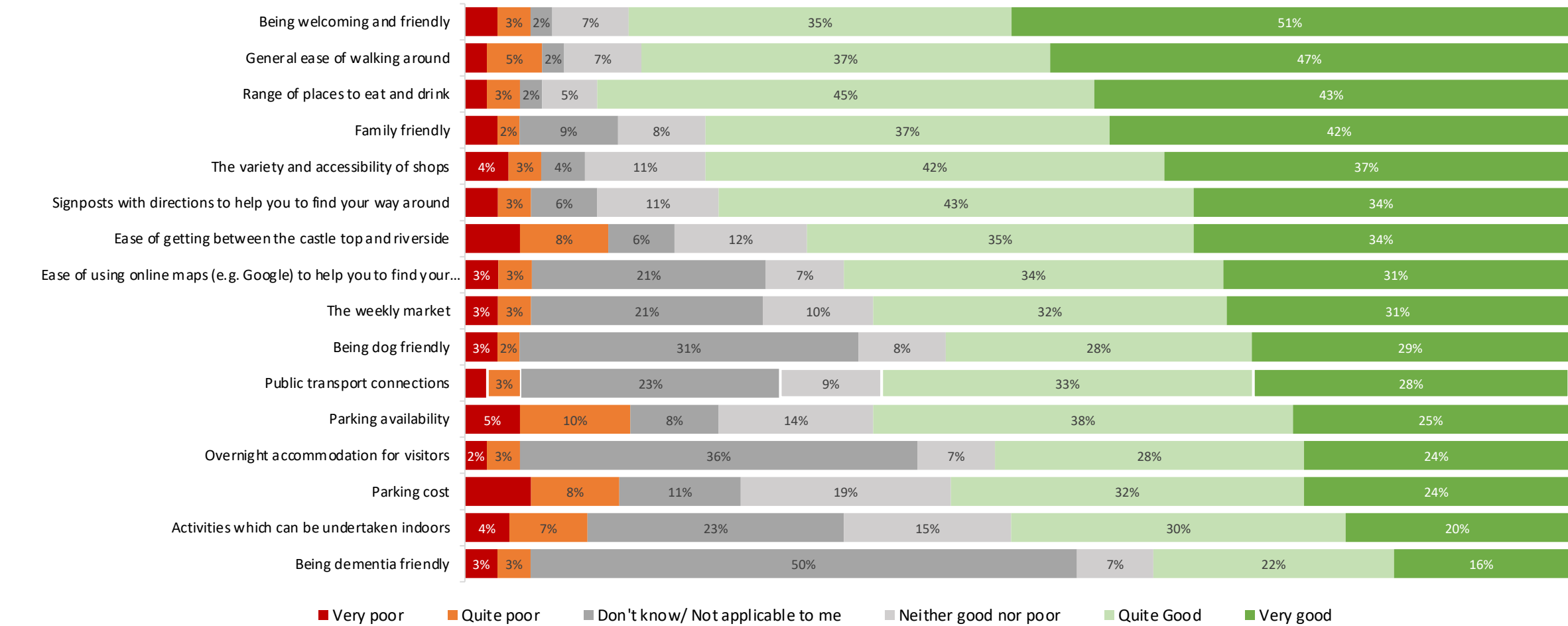
"The lack of access for disabled people to get down to the Waterside from the castle and lack of Disabled parking."

"Was disappointed by litter."



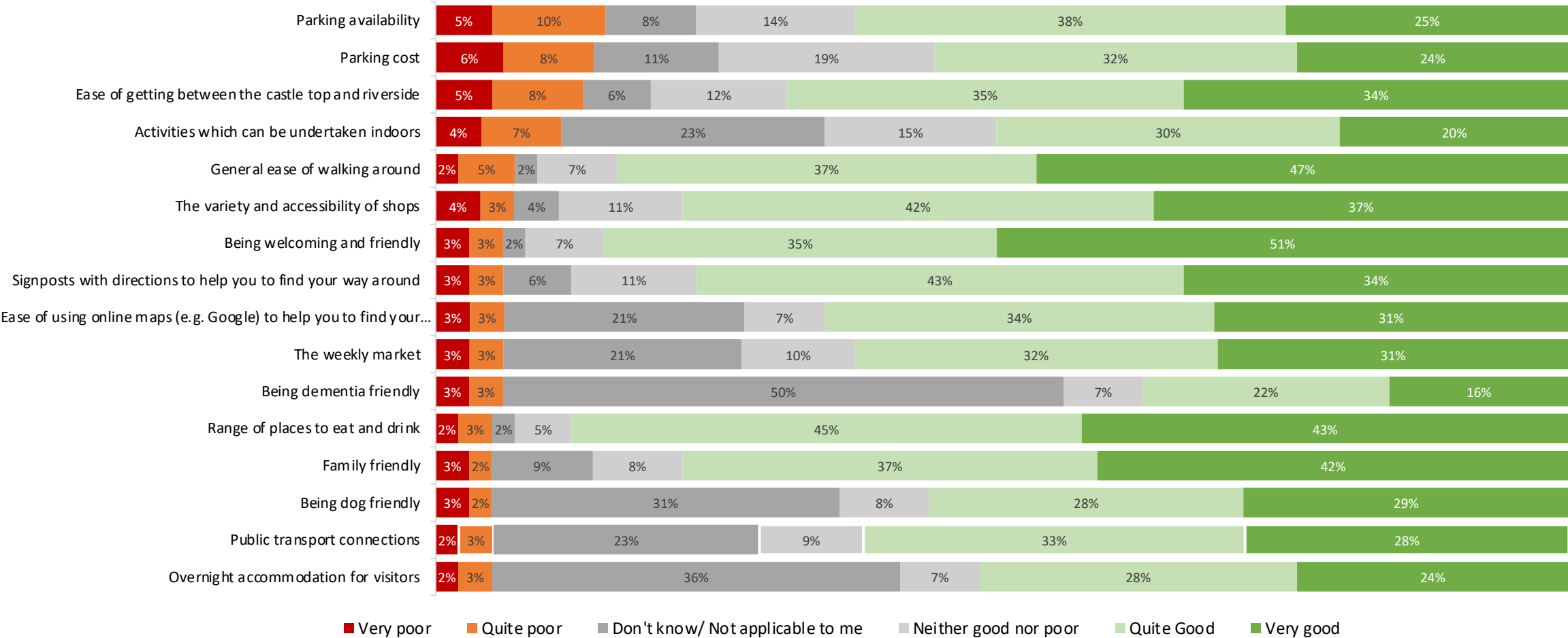
Asked to provide a rating of a number of aspects of the town, recent visitors provided predominantly very positive ratings for the welcome, general ease of getting around, places to eat and drink and being family friendly

How do you rate the following aspects of the town? (Ranked by % 'Very Good')



In contrast ,the areas receiving the highest percentages of negative ratings from recent visitors related to parking, ease of getting between the castle top and riverside and activities which can be undertaken indoors

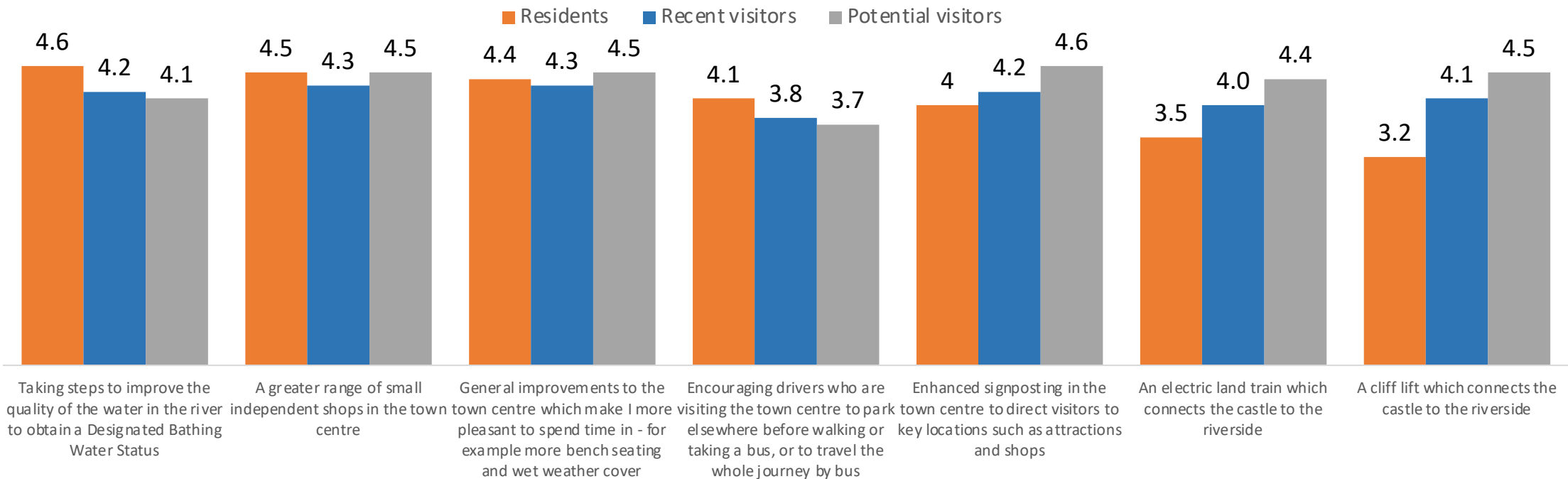
How do you rate the following aspects of the town? (Ranked by % 'Very poor' or 'Quite poor')



8. Testing ideas for development



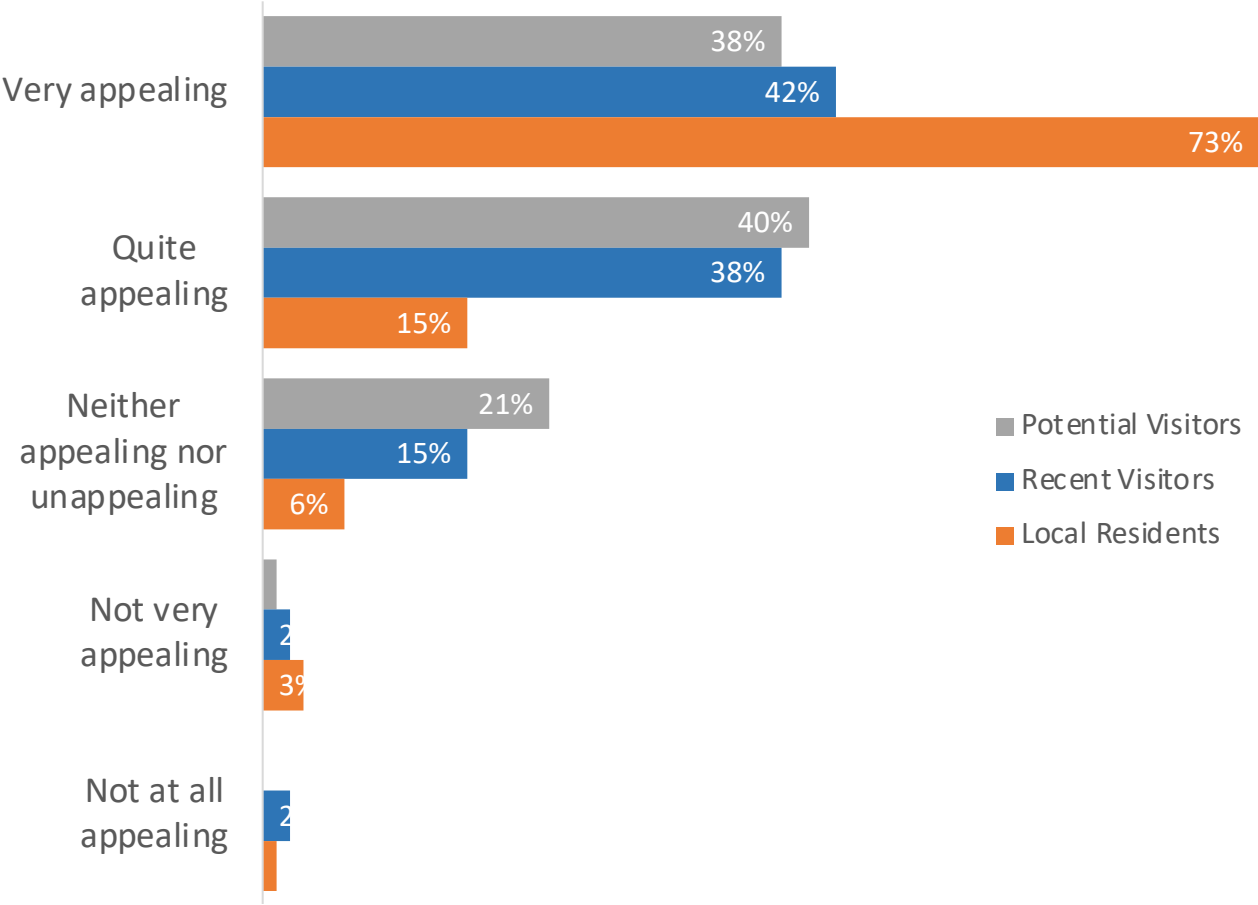
While ideas relating to increasing the range of independent shops and general improvements to the town centre received widespread support, the response to other ideas varied somewhat. Most notably ideas for an electric land train or cliff lift were somewhat more popular amongst potential visitors than amongst residents where views were much more varied



Ranking (1=Highest appeal, 7=Lowest appeal)

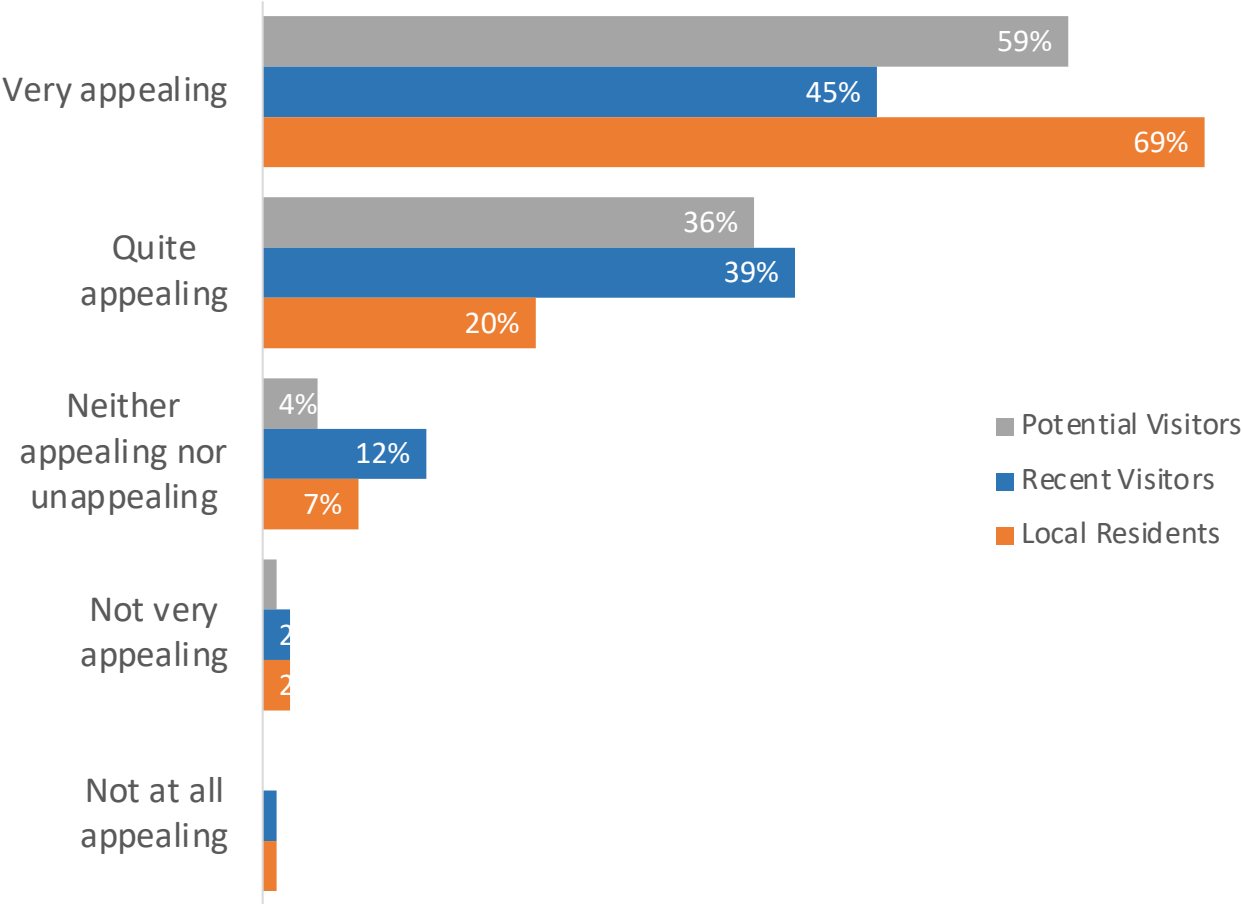
Residents	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Recent visitors	3=	1=	1=	7	3=	6	5
Potential visitors	6	2=	2=	1	7	5	2=

Taking steps to improve the
quality of the water in the river
to obtain a Designated Bathing
Water Status



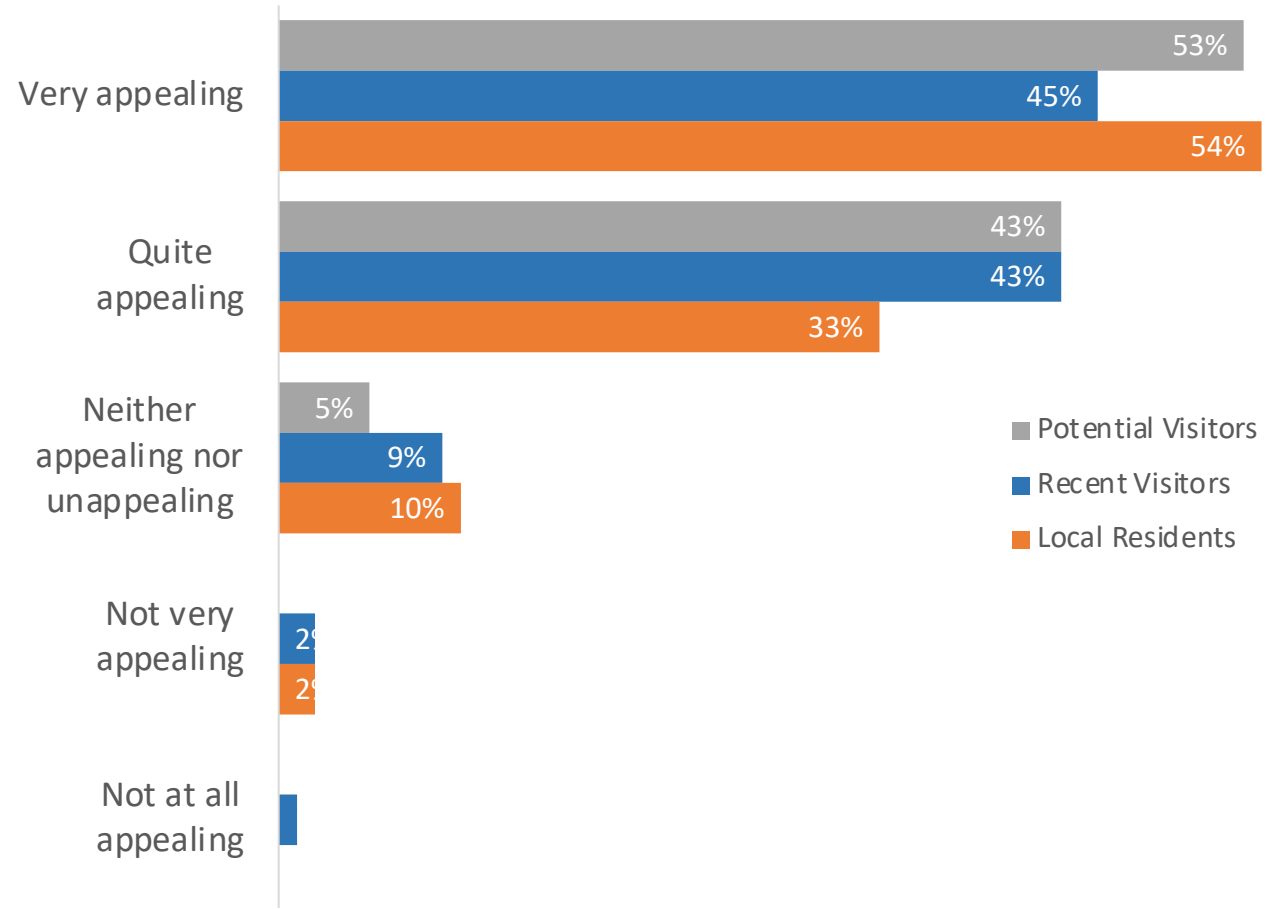
In general higher amongst:
Yorkshire residents
People aged 45+

A greater range of small independent shops in the town centre



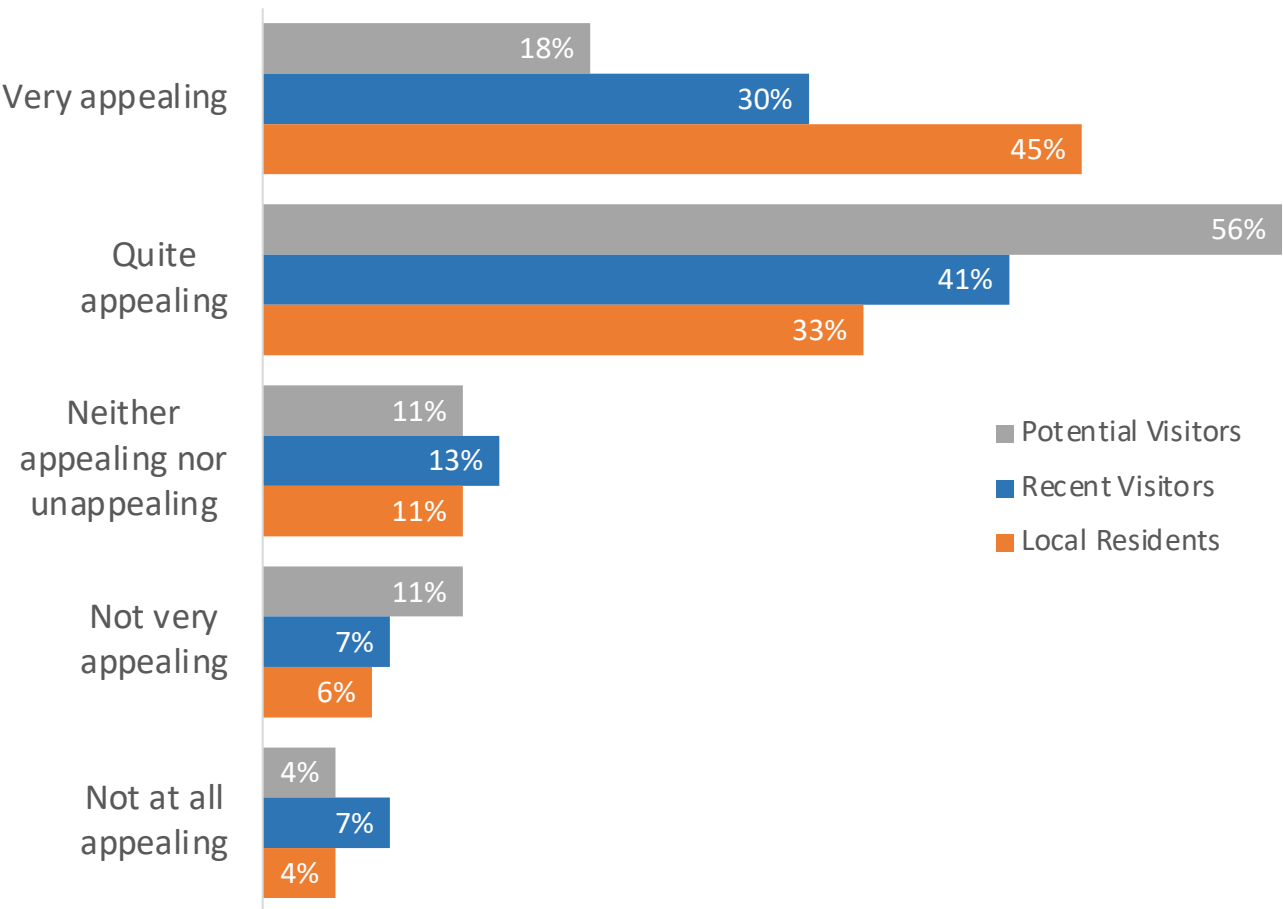
In general higher amongst:
Yorkshire residents
People aged 45+
People with no children at home
ABC1 social grades

General improvements to the town centre which make it more pleasant to spend time in - for example more bench seating and wet weather cover



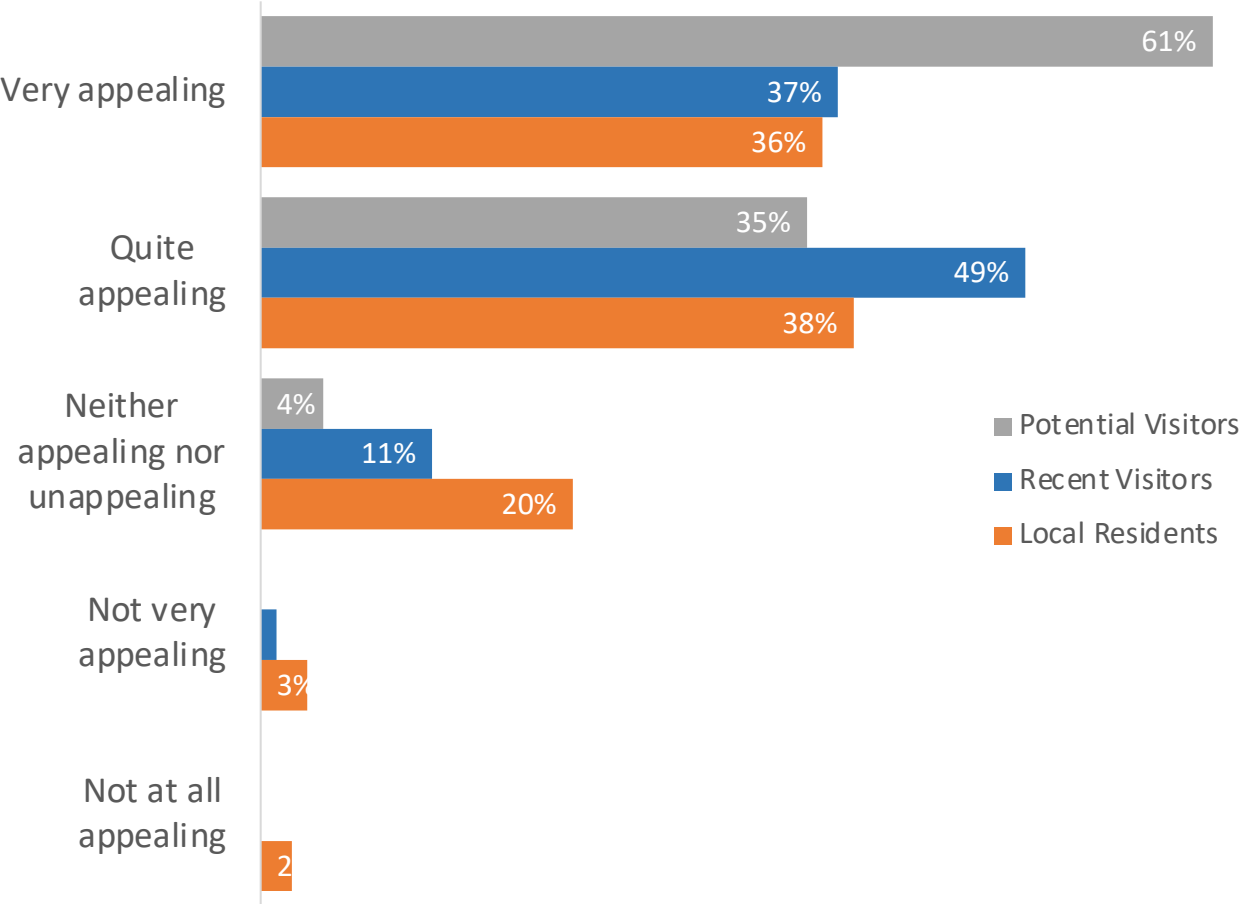
In general higher amongst:
Yorkshire residents
People aged 45+
People with no children at home
C2DE social grades

Encouraging drivers who are visiting the town centre to park elsewhere before walking or taking a bus, or to travel the whole journey by bus



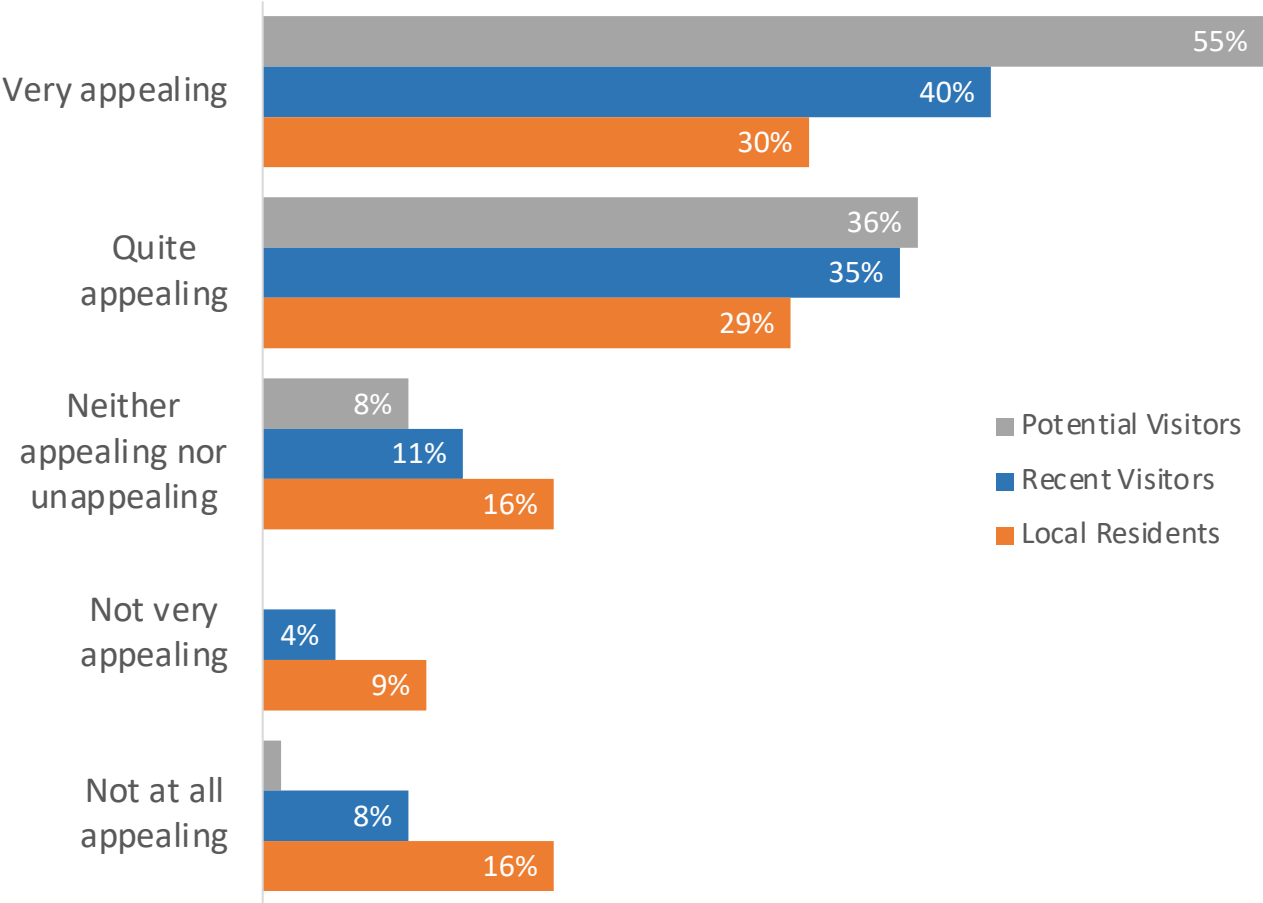
In general higher amongst:
People with children in household
People aged under 45
AB social grades/ highest income bands
People who use a pram/pushchair

Enhanced signposting in the town centre, to direct visitors to key locations such as attractions and shops



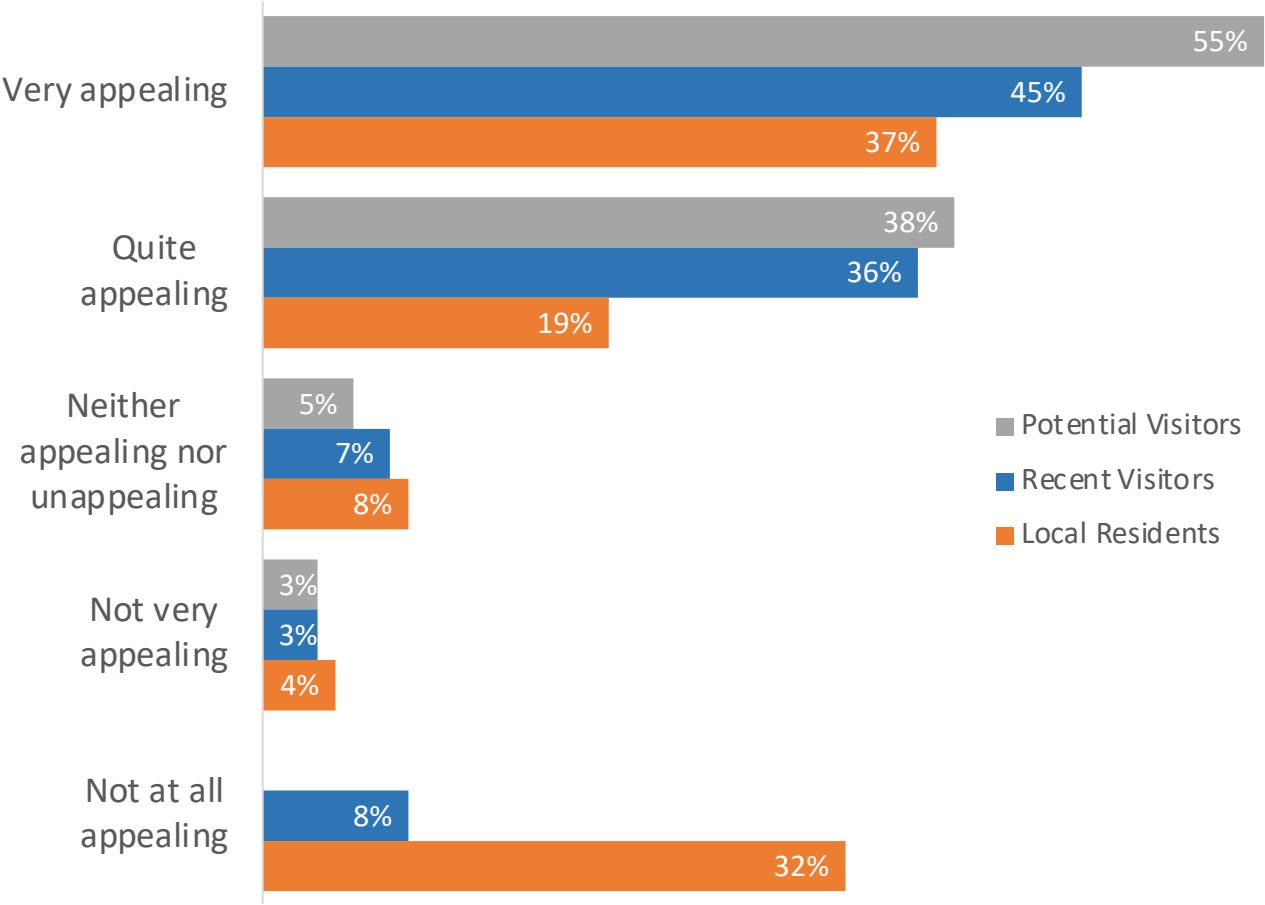
In general higher amongst:
People aged 45+
People with no children in household
Those in lower income bands

An electric land train which connects the castle to the riverside



In general higher amongst:
Residents of East Midlands and NW England
People with children aged under 18
People who use a wheelchair, mobility scooter, pram or pushchair

A cliff lift which connects the
castle to the riverside



In general higher amongst:
Residents of East Midlands
People in highest income brackets
People who use a wheelchair,
mobility scooter, pram or
pushchair

Asked to provide further comments on the ideas they had rated, a number of key themes were raised:



The main themes in the survey responses that supported the developments presented included:

Improved Accessibility: Many are in favour of developments like the cliff lift or land train to improve accessibility between key areas of the town, such as the castle and the riverside. This support is often tied to the benefits for individuals with mobility issues, elderly visitors, and families with young children, emphasising inclusivity and ease of access.

Environmental Enhancements: There is strong support for initiatives aimed at improving the environmental health of the town, particularly in terms of water quality in the River Nidd. Respondents see these efforts as crucial for public health, recreational use of the river, and overall environmental sustainability.

Traffic and Parking Solution: Support for reducing traffic congestion in the town centre and providing alternative parking solutions like park and ride services reflects a desire to make the town more pedestrian-friendly and reduce the carbon footprint. This theme is closely linked to enhancing the visitor experience and supporting local businesses by making the town more accessible.

Economic and Local Business Support: There is enthusiasm for developments that could bolster the local economy and support independent shops. Respondents express a desire for a vibrant town centre that attracts both tourists and locals, suggesting that a diverse range of shops and attractions could stimulate economic growth.



The main themes in the survey responses where people expressed concerns or opposed the developments presented included:

Impact on Town's Character and Aesthetics: A significant concern among respondents is that certain developments, particularly the cliff lift, could negatively impact the town's historical and natural aesthetics.

Environmental and Safety Concerns: Some respondents worry about the environmental impact of the proposed developments, including potential harm to local wildlife and natural habitats.

Traffic and Congestion: While some developments aim to reduce traffic in the town centre, there's concern that initiatives like a land train could actually increase congestion, especially if not carefully planned and executed.

Cost and Economic Feasibility: Concerns about the economic cost of the developments are prevalent, with some questioning the financial feasibility and the prioritisation of funds.

Scepticism About Implementation and Maintenance: Some respondents express scepticism about the practical implementation of the proposed developments, including doubts about long-term maintenance and the potential for projects to become neglected or fall into disrepair, thereby wasting resources and detracting from the town's appeal.

Asked to provide further comments on potential areas of improvements, a wide range of topics were raised including increasing the range of activities to do, enhancing the night time economy, more promotion of local businesses and improvement to marketing of the town to visitors

A number of key themes were raised:

"Increase cultural and community activities. A museum that embraces all of Knaresborough's history, not just a courtroom, would be beneficial."

"Cleaner town, Improve litter picking. More benches and picnic tables in the centre, high street, castle yard, and riverside."

"Things for visitors to do between 5 and 6 pm, especially visitors with young children. Also, maybe light up the viaduct and parts of the castle at night-time."

"A park & ride for Harrogate & Knaresborough would be hugely beneficial for local people by reducing traffic in the town. Locate the parking at Flaxby off the A1, then run buses directly to Harrogate (returning to Flaxby via Knaresborough) and a bus to Harrogate via Knaresborough (i.e., the reverse route)."

"More attraction for families to enjoy, as there's not much for kids. More to do for older children; it's a long way to go for not much to occupy them."

"More independent shops and a feeling of community in the market square. Encourage more small, artisan shops to open."

"Connecting waterside with the town centre would be transformative. A cliff lift (PLEASE!!) and increased disabled parking."

"Put more updated information online, including hiking, jogging routes, etc. 'Come to Knaresborough' website for easy access to all tourist information."



Any questions? A follow-up discussion?

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