

# Let's talk about Crewe

## Survey findings

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Prepared for Crewe Town Council.  
Shared with Crewe Brand Steering Group and Crewe Shadow Board

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## 1 | Introduction

This report presents the results from the public survey the consultancy team ([Creative Tourist Consults](#) and [Hemingway Design](#)) developed, administered, and analysed as part of the ongoing consultation aimed at reviewing and developing the Crewe Place Brand. Its main aim was to collect the thoughts, opinions, and views which different segments of people hold about Crewe.

The survey is part of work being undertaken by Crewe Town Council, South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce and Cheshire East Council.

### 1.1 | Aims

The aim of the survey was to find out what is in people's minds when they think about Crewe and how their perceptions affect how they view and rate the city for a number of different factors.

It's purpose was to inform the Crewe narrative, identify the cornerstones of the narrative and values, understand challenges, set direction and establish a baseline against which changes in perception can be measured in the future.

### 1.2 | Distribution

Respondents were invited to participate in the survey from 21 November to 16 December 2019.

For accessibility purposes, the survey was produced in English and Polish, using the same questions in both languages.

Responses to the Polish survey have been independently translated and the results merged into the following document.

To facilitate distribution, the online survey was shared via the partners own digital and social media channels.

To encourage participation from target audiences without ready access to digital technology, paper versions of the survey in both languages were made available. The paper responses have been merged into the following results.

### 1.3 | Analysis & reporting

1,362 people completed the survey (online and paper), generating a rich-data set.

This report sets out key findings, including from cross tabulations, which were used to look for pattern breakers, to see which segments differ from the general norms.

The majority of verbatim responses to open-ended questions (esp. question 14, see section 2) are analysed separately to inform the narrative storytelling.

## 2 | Questions

Below is a full list of the questions, as sent out in the survey.

It is worth noting that we had 10 respondents aged 14 years or younger. Following the age question, they were routed to the end of the survey, this means they only answered questions 1 and 2.

Full lists of multiple choice answers are listed with findings in sections 3 and 4.

**Q1** - Please tell us the first 3 words that spring to mind when you think about Crewe.

**Q2** - What is your relationship with Crewe?

**Q3** - Please tell us how old you are.

**Q4** - How would you describe your gender?

**Q5** - From these images, which 3 images do you think best describe the spirit/character of Crewe?

**Q6** - Would you like to tell us why you think these three images best describe the spirit/character of Crewe?

**Q7** - Drawing on your own perceptions of Crewe, tell us how you think it rates for its...

**Q8** - Which 3 of the following statements describing Crewe do you most agree with?

**Q9** - How would you describe your employment circumstances?

**Q10** - How would you describe your ethnicity?

**Q11** - Do you currently live in the UK?

NB: respondents that replied 'No' to Q11 were routed to Q13. We had a total of 8 international respondents.

**Q12** - If yes, what is your postcode?

**Q13** - If no, what country do you currently primarily live in?

**Q14** - And finally, if you wish to then please take a moment to share anything you feel passionate about in relation to Crewe, or think people should know about it. We would love to hear it.

**Q15** - Would you like to be kept informed about the Crewe place brand work?

### 3 | Demographics

The first section provides information related to **respondent demographics**, including age, gender, employment status, location, ethnicity, and their relationship to Crewe.

**National comparator statistics** ('Nat Comp' column in the tables below) were added where appropriate, however, it is important to recognise that the purpose of this survey was not to create a nationally representative census.

Instead, the aim was to collect a statistically significant number of responses from **key population segments and stakeholder groups**. There have also been a number of workshops to fill gaps in representation from harder to reach segments of the population.

The majority of respondents were residents of Crewe in full- or part-time employment, but the survey also reached various other population segments that might have a **unique** perception of Crewe, such as former residents, visitors, students, retirees, and business owners.

Looking at the different demographic groups in more detail, the survey was completed by people of all **age groups**.

The slightly skewed **gender** distribution (55.6% of respondents identified as female) is not unusual in online surveys - past research has found gender influences survey participation, with women more likely to respond.

78% of respondents were either employed or self-employed. Given that these figures closely mirror the average UK **employment** rate (ONS, January 2019), this survey is broadly representative of wider national employment trends in this regard.

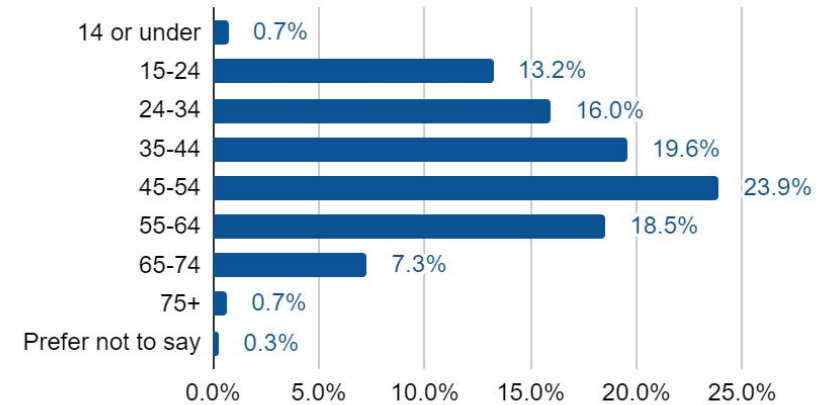
Location-wise this survey mainly targeted people in and around Crewe, which is reflected in **geodemographics**: 43% of respondents were Crewe residents, 37% from wider Cheshire East, and 18% from the rest of the UK.

Regarding **ethnicity**, the great majority of respondents identified as White British (90%), which is broadly representative, given that census data suggests that 93% of Crewe and Nantwich's population identify as White British ([Guardian, 2011](#)).

### 3.1 | Age

Age	%	Count	Nat comp
14 or under	0.7%	10	
15-24	13.2%	180	<a href="#">13%</a>
24-34	16.0%	217	<a href="#">13%</a>
35-44	19.6%	266	<a href="#">14%</a>
45-54	23.9%	325	<a href="#">14%</a>
55-64	18.5%	252	<a href="#">12%</a>
65-74	7.3%	99	<a href="#">9%</a>
75+	0.7%	9	<a href="#">9%</a>
Prefer not to say	0.3%	4	<a href="#">8%</a>
		<b>1362</b>	

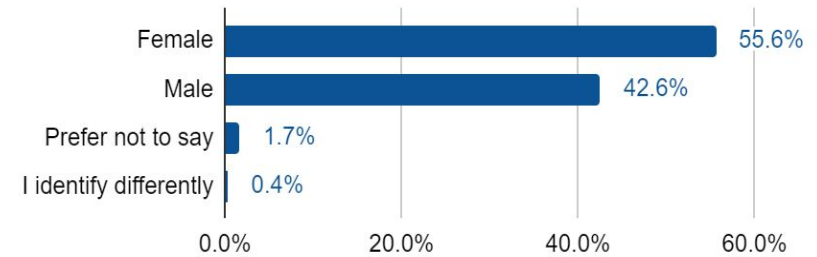
Age



### 3.2 | Gender

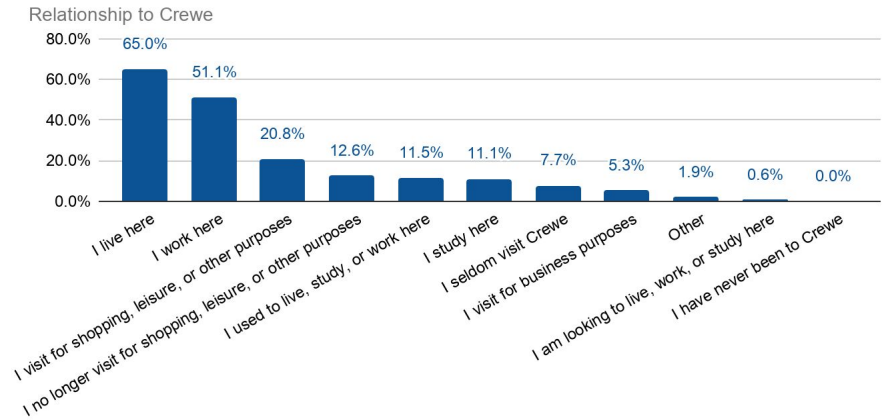
Gender	%	Count	Nat comp
Female	55.6%	750	<a href="#">51%</a>
Male	42.6%	574	<a href="#">49%</a>
Prefer not to say	1.7%	23	
I identify differently	0.4%	5	
		<b>1352</b>	

Gender



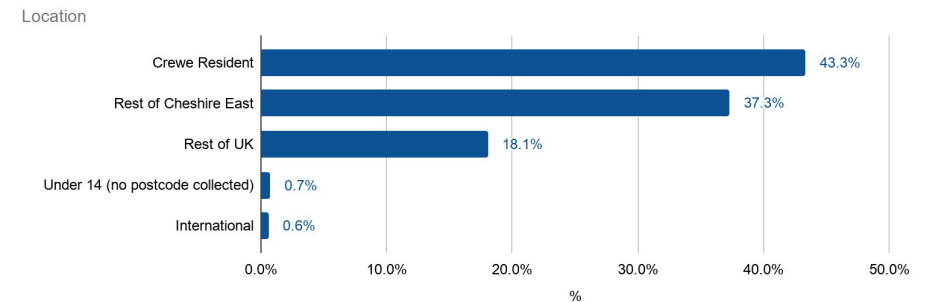
### 3.3 | Relationship to Crewe

Relationship to Crewe	%	Count
I live here	65.0%	884
I work here	51.1%	695
I visit for shopping, leisure, or other purposes	20.8%	282
I no longer visit for shopping, leisure, or other purposes	12.6%	171
I used to live, study, or work here	11.5%	156
I study here	11.1%	151
I seldom visit Crewe	7.7%	105
I visit for business purposes	5.3%	72
Other	1.9%	26
I am looking to live, work, or study here	0.6%	8
I have never been to Crewe	0.0%	0



### 3.4 | Location

Location	%	Count
Crewe Resident	43.3%	590
Rest of Cheshire East	37.3%	508
Rest of UK	18.1%	246
Under 14 (no postcode collected)	0.7%	10
International	0.6%	8



### 3.4.1 | Location mapping of UK respondents



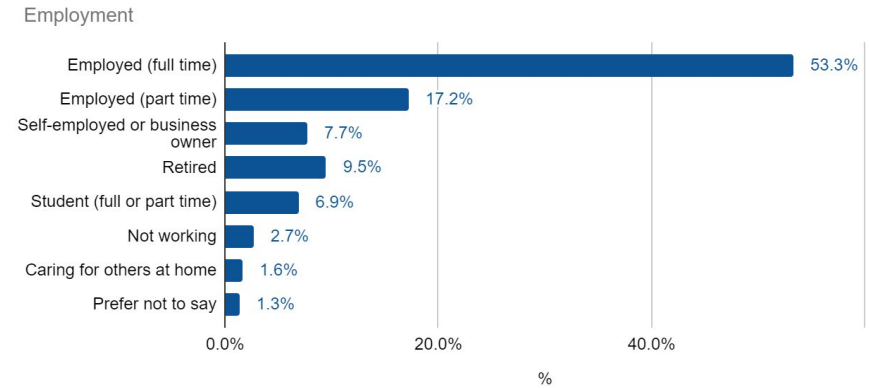
### 3.4.2 | International respondents: countries of residence

- Australia
- Canada
- Finland
- Netherlands
- Oman
- Spain

Although the numbers are too small to report on

### 3.5 | Employment

Employment	%	Count	Nat comp
Employed (full time)	53.3%	719	<u>~76%</u>
Employed (part time)	17.2%	232	
Self-employed or business owner	7.7%	104	
Retired	9.5%	128	-
Student (full or part time)	6.9%	93	-
Not working	2.7%	36	~ 4%
Caring for others at home	1.6%	22	-
Prefer not to say	1.3%	18	-
		<b>1,352</b>	



### 3.6 | Ethnicity

Ethnicity	%	Count	Nat comp
White British (English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish)	90.4%	1220	<a href="#">87%</a>
White (Any other white background)	3.5%	47	
White (Irish)	1.4%	19	
White (Gypsy or Irish Traveller)	0.1%	1	
Mixed (White & Black Caribbean)	0.4%	5	<a href="#">13%</a>
Mixed (White & Asian)	0.4%	5	
Mixed (Any other mixed / multiple ethnic background)	0.3%	4	
Asian / Asian British (Indian)	0.2%	3	
Asian / Asian British (Pakistani)	0.2%	3	
Black / Black British (African)	0.1%	2	
Mixed (White & Black African)	0.1%	1	
Any other ethnic group	0.1%	2	
Asian / Asian British (Any other Asian background)	0.1%	1	
Asian / Asian British (Bangladeshi)	0.1%	2	
Arab	0.0%	0	
Asian / Asian British (Chinese)	0.0%	0	
Black / Black British (Caribbean)	0.0%	0	
Black / Black British (Any other Black / African / Caribbean background)	0.0%	0	

## 4 | Perception

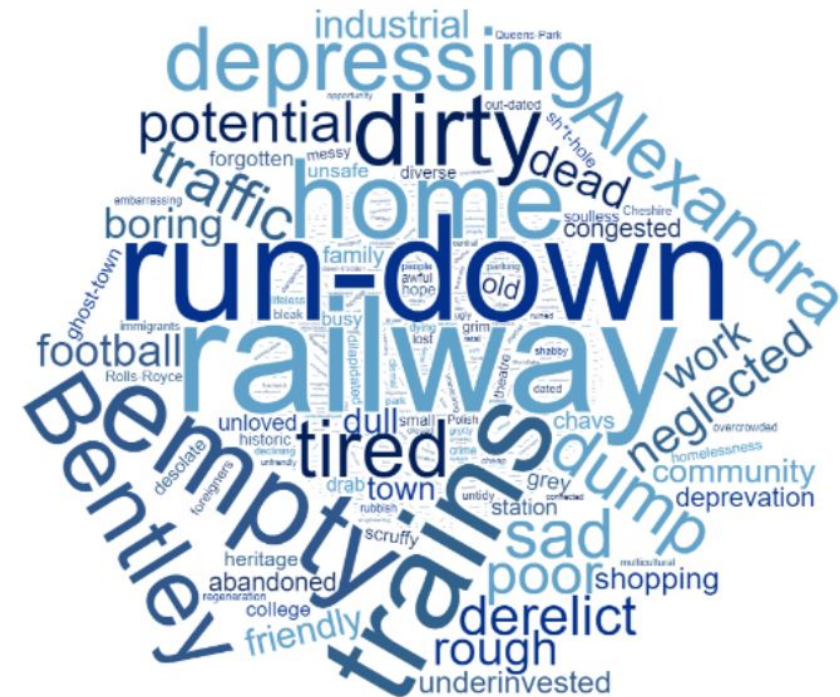
This section includes highlight figures related to **respondents' perception of Crewe**.

The tables and figures presented summarise responses across all demographics and other identified population segments, but do not include verbatim responses to open-ended questions, as they are analysed separately to inform the narrative.

#### 4.1 | Most common associations

**Q.** Please tell us the first 3 words that spring to mind when you think about Crewe.

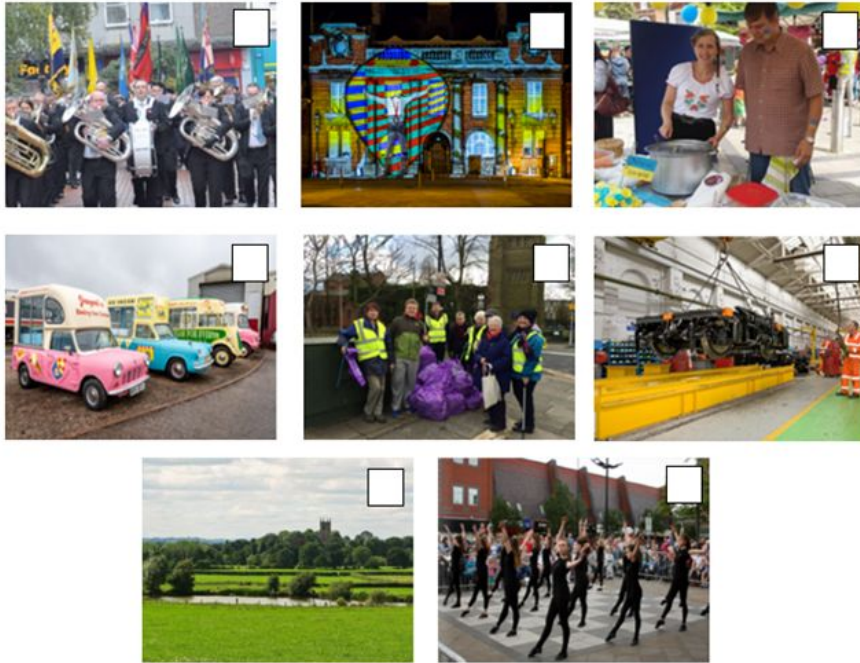
Top 10 Words	
Count	Word
269	railway
194	run-down
183	trains
160	empty
157	home
98	dirty
97	Bentley
90	depressing
78	tired
71	Alexandra



**Key message:** Whilst **railway** is the most dominant association overall, we cannot avoid the fact that the overriding aggregated perceptions of Crewe are negative. 5 of the top 10 associations are negative and the word cloud is populated with similarly negative terms. Alexandra and Bentley are the two most recognised brands.

## 4.2 | Photo elicitation

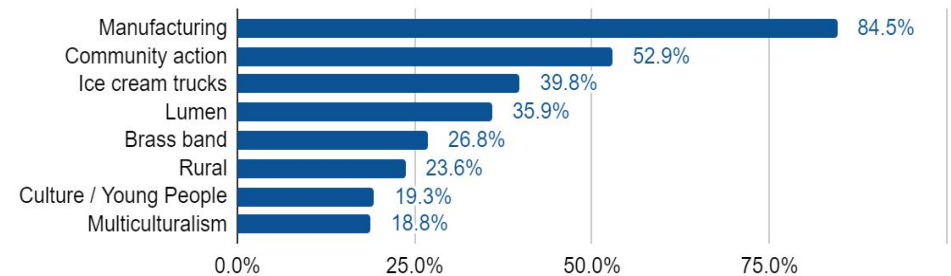
**Q.** From these images, which 3 images do you think best describe the spirit/character of Crewe?



From top left to lower right corner: Brass band, Lumen, multiculturalism, ice cream trucks, community action, manufacturing, rural, culture/young people. Images selected are indicative of different aspects of Crewe. They aren't comprehensive - but they can be interpreted in many ways. There is purposely no image of Crewe Station / trains or Crewe Alexandra as we anticipated that these would rank highly as core associations and wanted to look for other things.

Images	%	Count
Large manufacturing & engineering	84.5%	1140
Community action	52.9%	713
Innovative business (Ice cream trucks)	39.8%	537
Special events (Lumen)	35.9%	484
Tradition (Brass band)	26.8%	362
Rural	23.6%	319
Culture / Young People / participation	19.3%	260
Multiculturalism	18.8%	253

Images



#### 4.2.1 | Photo elicitation: Cross-tab insights

Cross tabulations show the relationships between two or more survey questions.

The top 3 image choices were remarkably consistent across all segments, with the only significant variances by age and gender.

##### Differences by age & gender

Looking at the top 3 images selected, the 'manufacturing' picture was the most popular choice across all age and gender segments, although with 87% the 35-44 year olds were 12% more likely to select it in comparison to those under 25.

The image representing 'community action' was the second most popular choice across all age and gender segments, however, the 'ice cream trucks' did not come in third across all groups: Participants under 25 preferred the 'Brass band' image, female respondents 'Lumen'.

##### Differences by employment circumstances, relationship to Crewe, and location

For the most part, the top 3 image choices did not vary significantly across the remaining cross-tab segments.

However, for students the image of 'culture / young people' came in third, and for Crewe residents 'Lumen', rather than the 'ice cream trucks'.

It is worth flagging that in the verbatim comments relating to this question, a significant number took the opportunity to say that none of these images represent Crewe because they are all too positive.



Crewe is an industrial town built for the railways and automotive manufacturing. The skilled people of Crewe are proud of their heritage and are a hard-working population.  
*M, 35-44, Rest of UK*



I feel there is a community spirit in Crewe and there are some who want to help and improve things.  
*F, 15-24, Cheshire East*



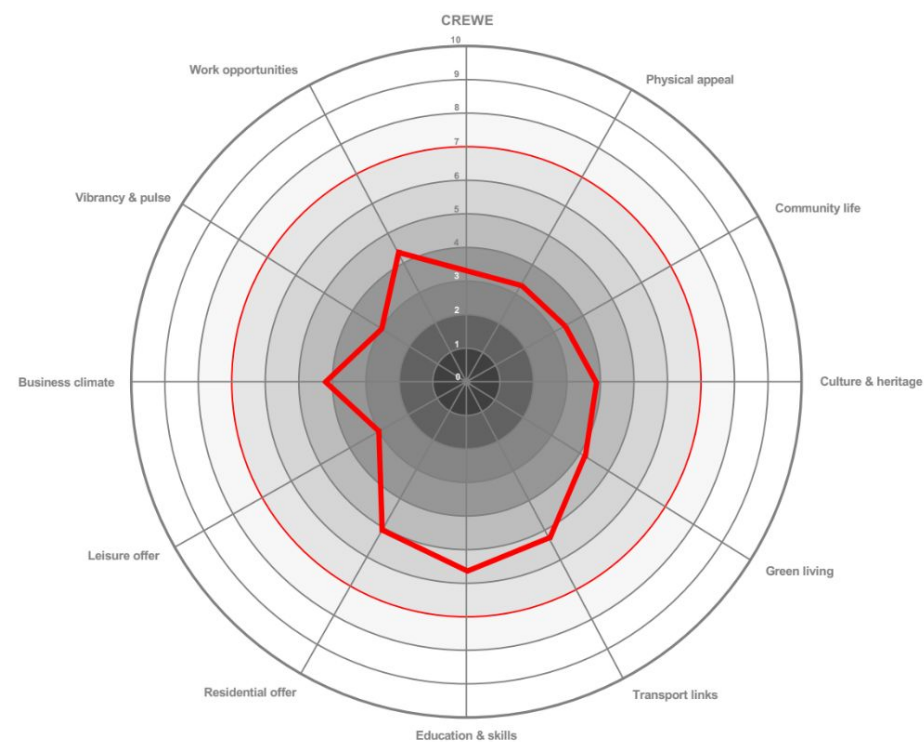
It is the home of the ice cream van.  
*F, 35-44, Crewe Resident*

### 4.3 | Ratings

**Q.** Drawing on your own perceptions of Crewe, tell us how you think it rates for its...

Ratings	Average rating
Education & skills	5.7
Transport links	5.3
Residential offer	5.1
Work opportunities	4.4
Community life	4.4
Business climate	4.3
Green living	4.2
Culture & heritage	3.9
Physical appeal	3.3
Vibrancy & pulse	3
Leisure offer	3

**Key message:** A place where people feel positively is one which scores 7 or more for its key attributes. For Crewe the strongest ratings are for delivery in relation to education and skills, and transport. Despite a strong cultural/leisure offer (and plenty of positive individual citations in the verbatim comments), the collective story or value of recent investment is not punching through.



### 4.3.1 | Ratings: Cross-tab insights

We found noteworthy differences (generally % changes of 0.4 or higher in comparison to survey average) in how certain demographic and behavioural segments rated Crewe across a range of categories.

#### Differences by age & gender

**The youngest surveyed demographic** were more likely to rate Crewe higher than average in several areas, especially its leisure offer (4.2 to the 3 average) and transport links (5.9 to 5.3). They tended to rate Crewe lower for its business climate (3.8 to 4.3) and community life (4.0 to 4.4).

**Mid tier as well as older demographics** rated Crewe higher than average for its community life (4.7+ to the 4.4 average), but lower than average for its transport links (4.8+ to 5.3).

We did not find significant differences by gender, except for male respondents rating Crewe's business climate higher (4.6) than female respondents (4.0).

#### Differences by relationship to Crewe

Of the 1,362 respondents, 508 were from Cheshire East, 131 (26%) of which stated they visit Crewe for shopping, leisure, or other purposes. 247 (49%) of the Cheshire East respondents work in Crewe. Of the 590 Crewe residents 332 (56%) also work in Crewe.

**Leisure visitors** rated Crewe higher than average across all categories, especially its leisure offer (3.8 to 3.0).

Those **studying in Crewe** rated it especially high for education & skills (6.4 to the 5.7 average) as well as its leisure offer (4.2 to 3).

#### Differences by employment circumstances

The majority of respondents were in **part- or full-time employment**, rating close to the overall average across all categories.

**Self-employed respondents and business owners** rated Crewe higher than average on transport links (5.7 to the average 5.3), business climate (5.0 to 4.3), vibrancy & pulse (3.4 to 3.0), work opportunities (4.8 to 4.4), and its residential offer (5.6 to 5.1).

Of all employment segments, those **caring at home for others** tended to rate Crewe lowest across all featured categories.

**Retired** respondents rated lower on transport links (4.9 to the 5.9 average) and residential offer (4.8 to 5.4).

Respondents currently **not in work** rated Crewe higher on its physical appeal (4.0 to the 3.3 average), transport links (5.9 to 5.3), and leisure offer (3.7 to 3.0), but lower on its community life (3.9 to 4.4) and work opportunities (3.7 to 4.4).

#### Differences by location

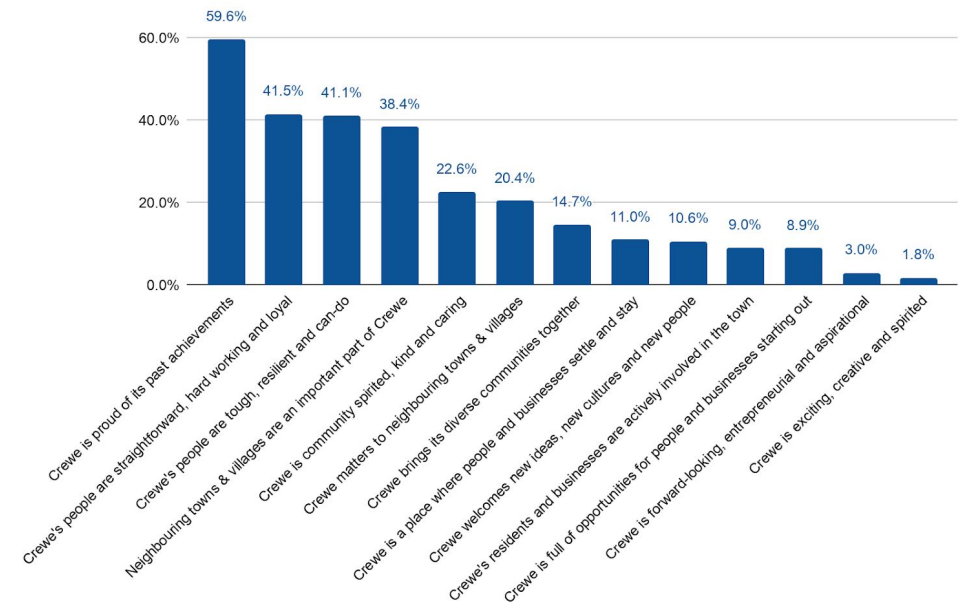
Crewe and Cheshire East residents rated the town's transport links lower (5.1, 5.2) than those living in the rest of the UK (5.9). Respondents from the rest of the UK also rated Crewe higher on its leisure offer (3.7 to the average 3.0) and vibrancy & pulse (3.4 to 3).

#### 4.4 | Statements

Which of the 3 following statements describing Crewe do you most agree with?

Statements / Personality	%	Count
Crewe is proud of its past achievements	59.6%	808
Crewe's people are straightforward, hard working and loyal	41.5%	563
Crewe's people are tough, resilient and can-do	41.1%	557
Neighbouring towns & villages are an important part of Crewe	38.4%	520
Crewe is community spirited, kind and caring	22.6%	306
Crewe matters to neighbouring towns & villages	20.4%	277
Crewe brings its diverse communities together	14.7%	199
Crewe is a place where people and businesses settle and stay	11.0%	149
Crewe welcomes new ideas, new cultures and new people	10.6%	144
Crewe's residents and businesses are actively involved in the town	9.0%	122
Crewe is full of opportunities for people and businesses starting out	8.9%	121
Crewe is forward-looking, entrepreneurial and aspirational	3.0%	41
Crewe is exciting, creative and spirited	1.8%	25

Statements



**Key Message:** These statements were gathered during stakeholder workshops. The lower half of the table are the things that stakeholders believe Crewe could (and should) be better known for. The popular answers suggest that respondents are looking backwards (to a better time?) than forwards to a more positive future.

#### 4.4.1 | Statements: Cross-tab insights

We identified variances in what statements different demographic and behavioural segments selected to describe Crewe.

##### Differences by age & gender

As a general rule of thumb, **the younger age segments were less likely** to select Crewe being proud of **past achievements** as befitting Crewe, which was otherwise the top selection.

However, **younger demographics** were slightly more inclined to feel that Crewe residents and businesses are actively involved in the town; that Crewe brings diverse communities together; is welcoming to new ideas, cultures and people; forward-looking, entrepreneurial and aspirational; exciting, creative and spirited.

**Older demographics** on the other hand were more likely to describe Crewe and its people as straightforward, hard-working and loyal; tough, resilient and can-do; community spirited, kind, caring.

In terms of **gender**, female respondents were more inclined to describe Crewe and its people as community spirited, kind and caring; straightforward, hard working, and loyal; as well as tough, resilient and can-do.

##### Differences by employment circumstances

Respondents' employment circumstances did only slightly affect answers. For example, looking at the top 3 statements, **retired** respondents (see also differences by age) and those **caring at**

**home for others** more frequently selected the statement describing Crewe as proud of its past achievements.

##### Differences by location

**Crewe residents** were less likely to describe Crewe as important to its neighbouring towns and villages (13% to the 20% average), but a comparatively higher number of **Cheshire East** residents suggested neighbouring towns & villages are an important part of Crewe (43% to the 38% average) and that Crewe matters to its neighbouring towns & villages (25% to 20%).

Respondents from the **Rest of the UK** (excluding Crewe and Cheshire East) less frequently described Crewe as proud of its past achievements (56% to the 59% average), but were most likely to find that Crewe matters to neighbouring towns & villages (29% to 20%); and suggest Crewe to be a place where people and businesses settle and stay (16% to 11%).

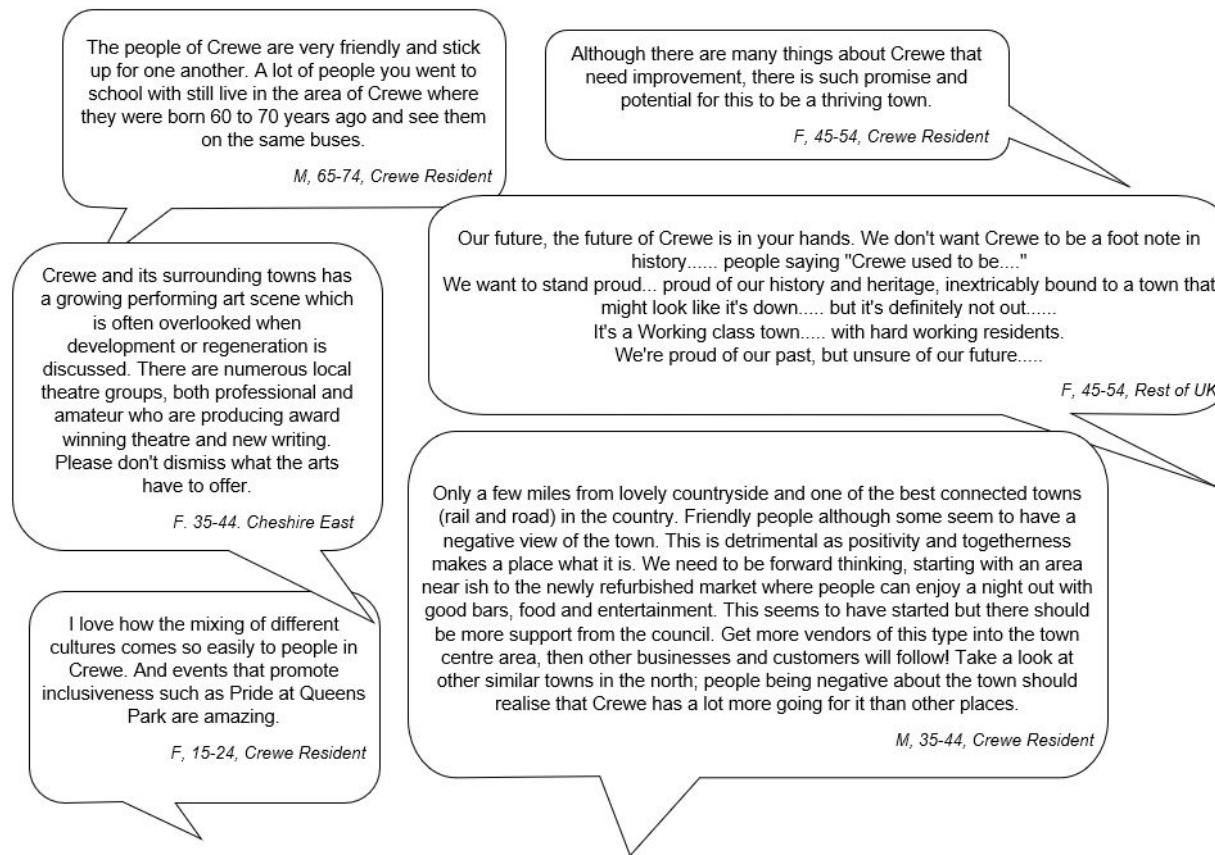
##### Differences by relationship to Crewe

**Students** were over 10% less likely to pick the most popular option - Crewe being proud of its past achievements - and 5% less likely to find neighbouring towns & villages are an important part of Crewe, and Crewe's people are straightforward, hard working and loyal. 18% of students (compared to 11% overall) described Crewe as welcoming of new ideas, new cultures and new people, and a quarter of students said Crewe brings its diverse communities together. Respondents **visiting Crewe** were 5% less likely to select the statement describing Crewe's people as tough, resilient and can-do.

#### 4.5 | Verbatim comments [Selection]

**Q.** And finally, if you wish to then please take a moment to share anything you feel passionate about in relation to Crewe, or think people should know about it. We would love to hear it.

Overall there were 823 comments. We cannot pretend that the majority were positive, but there is positivity and potential - some of which is flagged below.



## 5 | Headline Insights

- Overall survey results show that respondents - residents & visitors alike - were very vocal about several perceived **challenges** / something needing to be done about the decline of the town, especially the town centre which is a very visible problem and drowns out the good news
- There's a sense of Crewe not living up to its **potential** (yet), especially in terms of celebrating its **(industrial) heritage and hard-working people / communities**. Nor is it seen to be shining a light on its cultural sector, or its thriving business sector, which includes creative industries
- Crewe as an important **transport** hub / Crewe being well-connected is a common theme for all segments.
- **Education and skills** as key dimensions, especially for young people and students rating Crewe high for its education & skills offer evidenced by its FE colleges, best practice apprenticeship pathways and skills development type programmes across all sectors.
- **Alexandra & Bentley** as well-known local institutions/brands,
- Very **multicultural** for its size - with some respondents pointing towards the potential in & benefits of diversity and multiculturalism but this is far from universal and the verbatim comments reveal a lot of underlying tensions around community integration to be addressed.
- Older generations seemingly look to the **past** more than the future for inspiration - but students and young people are significantly more positive about Crewe being welcoming to new cultures/people/communities and offering new opportunities.
- Understanding Crewe's place among **neighbouring towns and villages** is revealing. If Crewe residents feel that neighbouring towns and villages have turned away from them and don't need Crewe, the opposite is being said by the Cheshire East residents who recognise that a successful and thriving Crewe is good for them too, and something that they need for work and leisure.
- Hard-work, resilience, kindness and loyalty are seen as key community values.