

Market Town Benchmarking

Measuring the performance of town centres

Loughborough Report

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INTRODUCTION

Town Benchmarking is a research methodology developed by market town partnerships and Action for Market Towns in 2006. The process provides a comprehensive portrait of the commercial life of the town and involves gathering and analysing data on 12 Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) within a designated town centre area. The analysis provides data on each KPI for individual towns.

METHODOLOGY

Each KPI was collected in a standardized manner as highlighted in the Table below.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	DATA COLLECTION METHODOLOGY
KPI 1: Total number of commercial units	Visual Survey
KPI 2: Retail by Comparison/Convenience	Visual Survey
KPI 3:Key attractors / multiple trader representation	Visual Survey
KPI 4: Number of vacant units	Visual Survey
KPI 5: Number of markets / traders	Visual Survey
KPI 6: Prime retail property yields	Contacting Commercial Agent
KPI 7: Zone A Retail Rents	Contacting Commercial Agent
KPI 8: Footfall	Footfall Survey on Market and Non Market Days
KPI 9: Car Parking Availability and Usage	Footfall Survey on Market and Non Market Days
KPI 10: Business Confidence	Business Confidence Survey
KPI 11: Visitor Satisfaction	Visitor Satisfaction Survey
KPI 12: Shoppers Origin	Shoppers Origin Postcode

Before any KPI data was collected the core commercial area of the town centre was defined working alongside the local Authority. The town centre area included the core shopping streets and car parks adjacent to these streets.

KEY FINDINGS

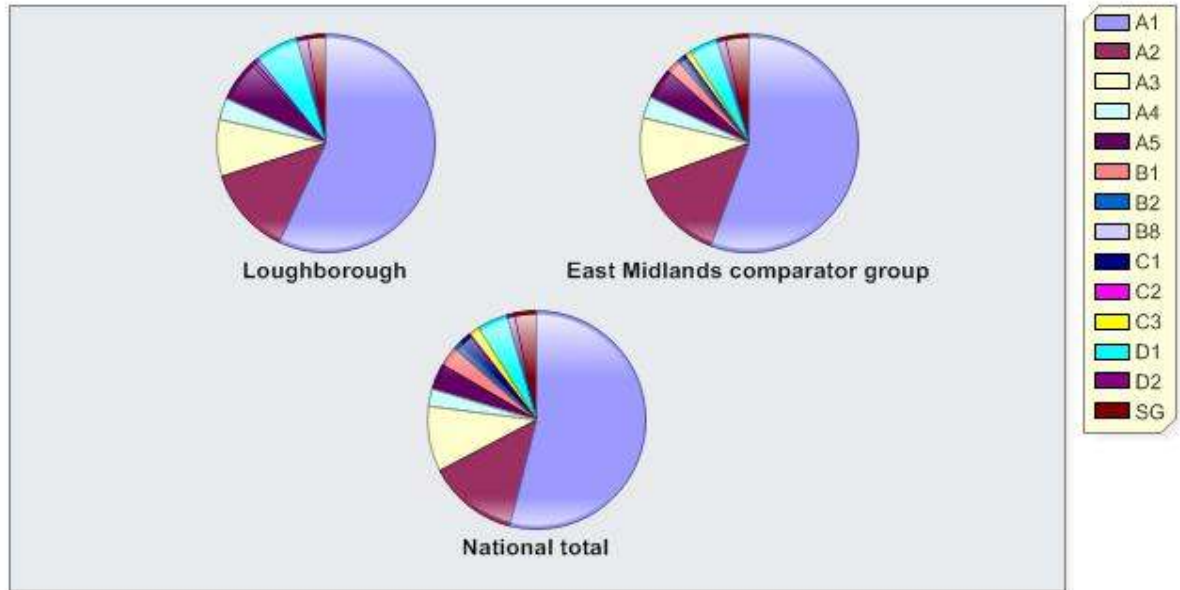
The following section is a full detailed analysis of the data collected on each of the KPI's.

KPI 1: Total Number of Commercial Units

It is important to understand the scale and variety of the “commercial offer” throughout the town. A variety of shops and a wide range of services in a town are important to its ability to remain competitive and continue to attract customers. Sustaining a balance between the different aspects of buying and selling goods and services ensures that the local population (and visitors from outside) can spend time and money there, keeping the generated wealth of the town within the local economy. Importantly, it forms the employment base for a substantial proportion of the community too, helping to retain the population rather than lose it to nearby towns and cities.

	Loughborough	East Midlands comparator group	National total
A1	57.03%	55.70%	53.96%
A2	13.05%	13.76%	13.36%
A3	8.43%	9.27%	9.71%
A4	3.21%	3.21%	2.58%
A5	6.22%	4.61%	3.83%
B1	0.20%	2.07%	2.98%
B2	0.00%	0.87%	0.97%
B8	0.00%	0.03%	0.17%
C1	0.40%	0.31%	1.72%
C2	0.60%	0.17%	0.24%
C3	0.00%	0.87%	1.47%
D1	6.43%	4.18%	4.50%
D2	1.61%	1.28%	1.16%
SG	2.81%	3.65%	3.35%

Loughborough total : 498 units in use



CLASS	DESCRIPTION
A1	SHOPS: Shops, retail warehouses, hairdressers, travel agents, post offices, newsagents, garages, opticians, sandwich bars, showrooms, domestic hire shows and funeral directors
A2	FINANCIAL AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICES: Banks, building societies, estate and employment agencies, professional and financial services and betting offices
A3	FOOD AND DRINK
A4	DRINKING ESTABLISHMENTS
A5	HOT FOOD TAKEAWAY
B1	BUSINESS: Offices not within Class A2, Research and development, studios, labs, high tech and Light industrial
B2	GENERAL INDUSTRY
B8	WAREHOUSES
C1	HOTELS AND HOSTELS: Hotels, boarding and guest houses, and hostels
C2	RESIDENTIAL INSTITUTIONS: Residential care homes, hospitals, nursing homes, boarding schools and residential colleges and training centres
D1	NON RESIDENTIAL INSTITUTIONS: Churches, Church halls, clinics, health centres and consulting rooms, museums, training centres, schools, libraries, art galleries, crèches and day nurseries, law courts.
D2	ASSEMBLY AND LEISURE: Cinemas, dance, sport and concert halls, bingo and other indoor and outdoor

	leisure uses, gymnasiums, skating rinks
SG	SUI GENERIS- UNIQUE ESTABLISHMENTS: Theatres, launderettes and dry cleaners, taxi operator, amusement centres, car showroom, petrol filling station, tanning shops, beauty parlours nightclubs and casinos

KPI 2: Retail by Comparison / Convenience

A1 Retail units selling goods can be split into two different types Comparison and Convenience. Convenience retail describes merchandise that is purchased on a very frequent basis, is of relatively low value, and is often consumable in nature, including;

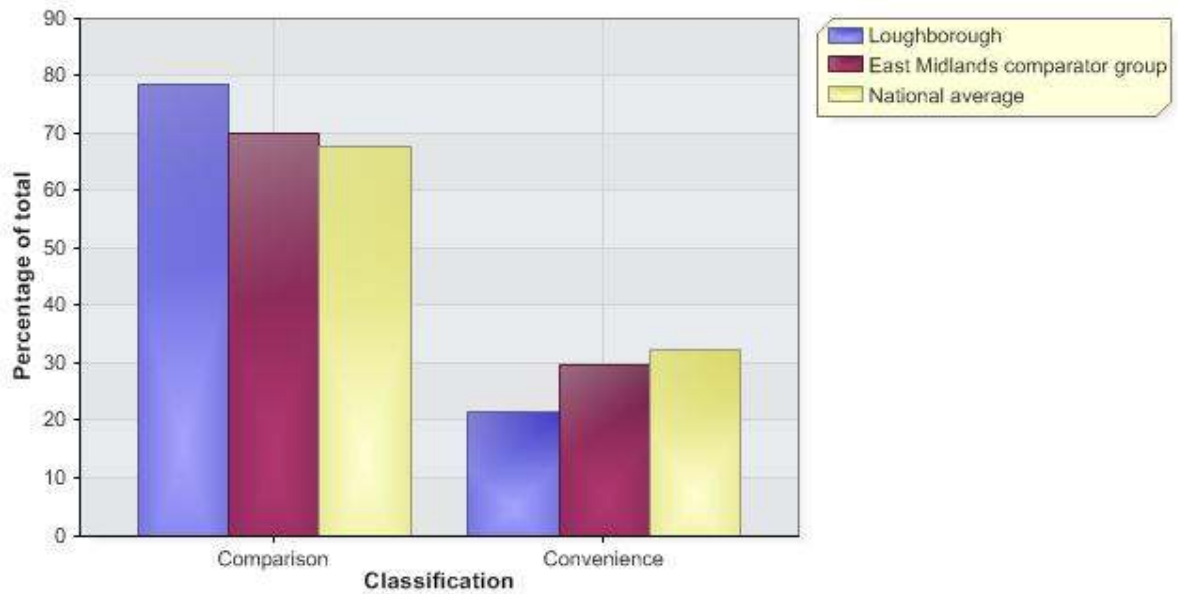
- Newsagents
- Food
- Chemist/cosmetics/toiletries
- Off licence
- Florist

Comparison retail describes merchandise that is purchased infrequently and is often of a high unit value where shoppers make comparisons before purchase, including;

- Clothing
- Furniture
- Electrical/white goods (fridges and freezers etc.)
- DIY
- Music/ records

The presence of a variety of shops in a shopping centre is important to its ability to remain competitive and continue to attract customers. A balance of both comparison and convenience retail units is therefore ideal in terms of encouraging visitors / potential customers.

	Loughborough	East Midlands comparator group	National average
Comparison	79%	70%	68%
Convenience	21%	30%	32%



KPI 3: Key attractors / multiple trader representation

The vitality of a town centre depends highly on the quality and variety of retailers represented. National retail businesses are considered key attractors and are particularly important in terms of attracting visitors and shoppers to a town. However, the character and profile of a town often also depends on the variety and mix of independent shops that can give a town a “unique selling point” and help distinguish it from other competing centres. A sustainable balance of key attractors and multiple names alongside local independent shops is therefore likely to have the greatest positive impact on the vitality and viability of a town.

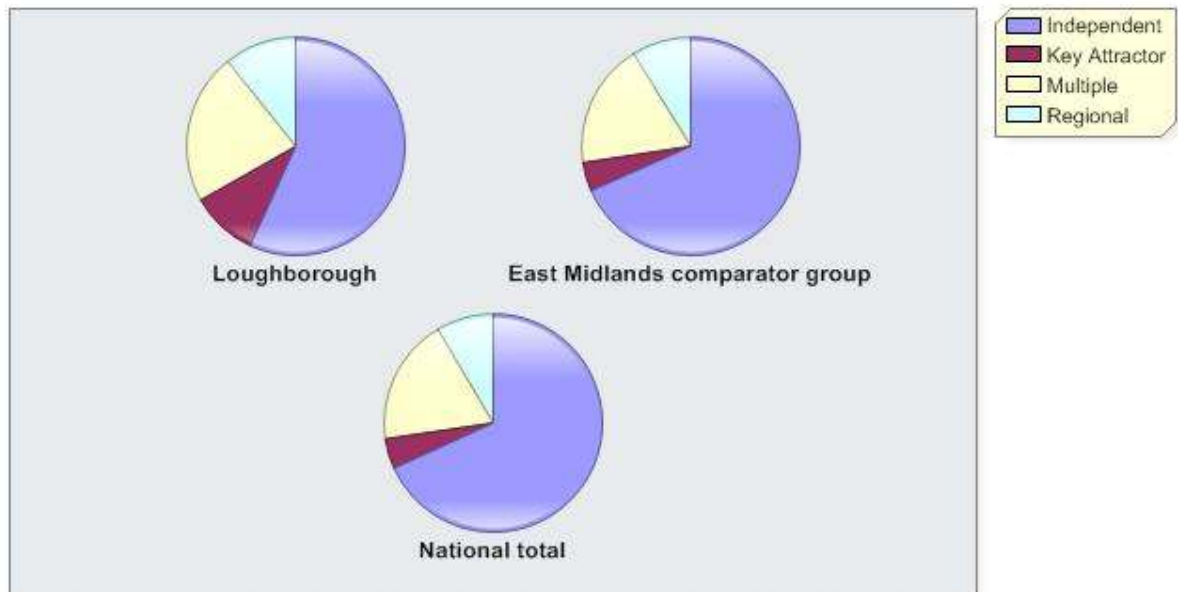
The following shops are considered key attractors by Experian Goad Key Attractors List 2009.

Argos	BHS
Boots	River Island
Superdrug	Top Man
Burton	Top Shop
Clarks	WH Smith
Clintons	H and M
Debenhams	HMV
Dorothy Perkins	Sainsbury's
House of Fraser	Tesco

John Lewis	Wilkinson's
Marks and Spencer	Waterston's
Carphone Warehouse	Waitrose
Curry's	Vodafone
New Look	Virgin
Next	

Multiple traders have a countrywide presence and are well known household names. Regional shops are identified as those with stores / units in several towns throughout one geographical region only and Independent shops are identified as those that are specifically local to Loughborough.

	Loughborough	East Midlands comparator group	National total
Independent	57%	68%	68%
Key Attractor	10%	4%	4%
Multiple	22%	19%	19%
Regional	11%	9%	9%



KPI 4: Number of vacant units

Vacant units are an important indicator of the vitality and viability of a town centre. The presence of vacant units over a period of time can identify potential weaknesses in a town centre, whether due to locational criteria, high rent levels or strong competition from other centres.

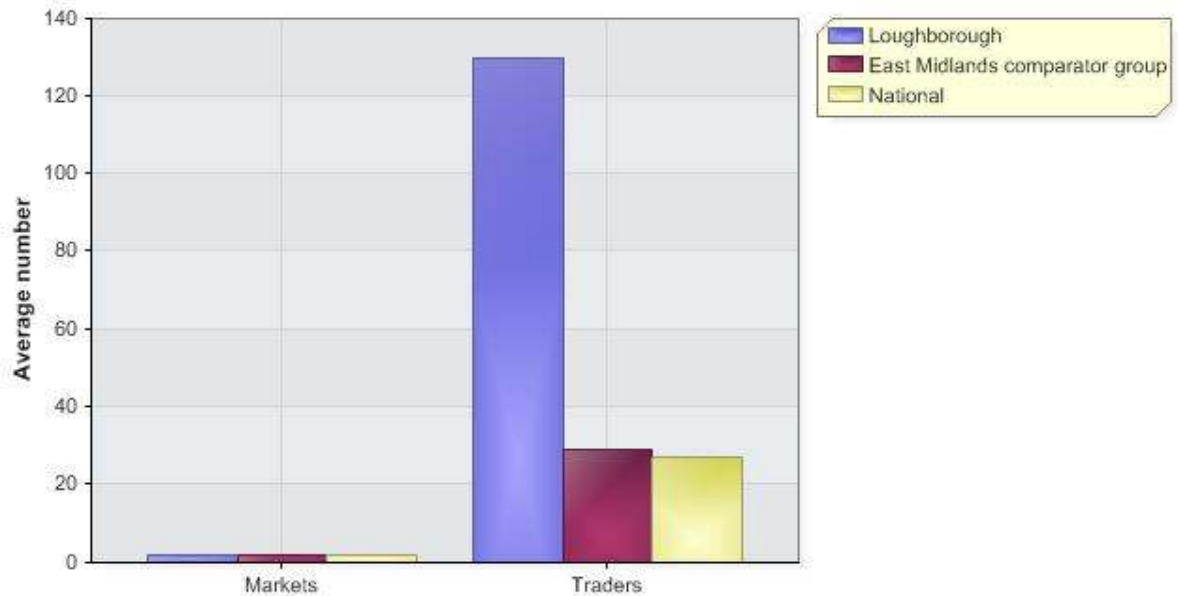
	Loughborough	East Midlands comparator group	National total
Occupied	93%	93%	92%
Vacant	7%	7%	8%



KPI 5: Number of markets / traders

Good quality markets provide competition and choice for consumers. A busy and well-used street market can therefore be a good indicator of the vitality of a town centre. Conversely, if a market is in decline (e.g. empty pitches reducing numbers), it can be an indication of potential weaknesses in the town centre e.g. a lack of footfall customers due to an inappropriate retail mix or increased competitor activity. Street markets can also generate substantial benefits for the local economy. Markets can also provide a local mechanism for a diverse range of local enterprises to start, flourish and grow, adding to the sustainable mix of shops services on offer throughout the town.

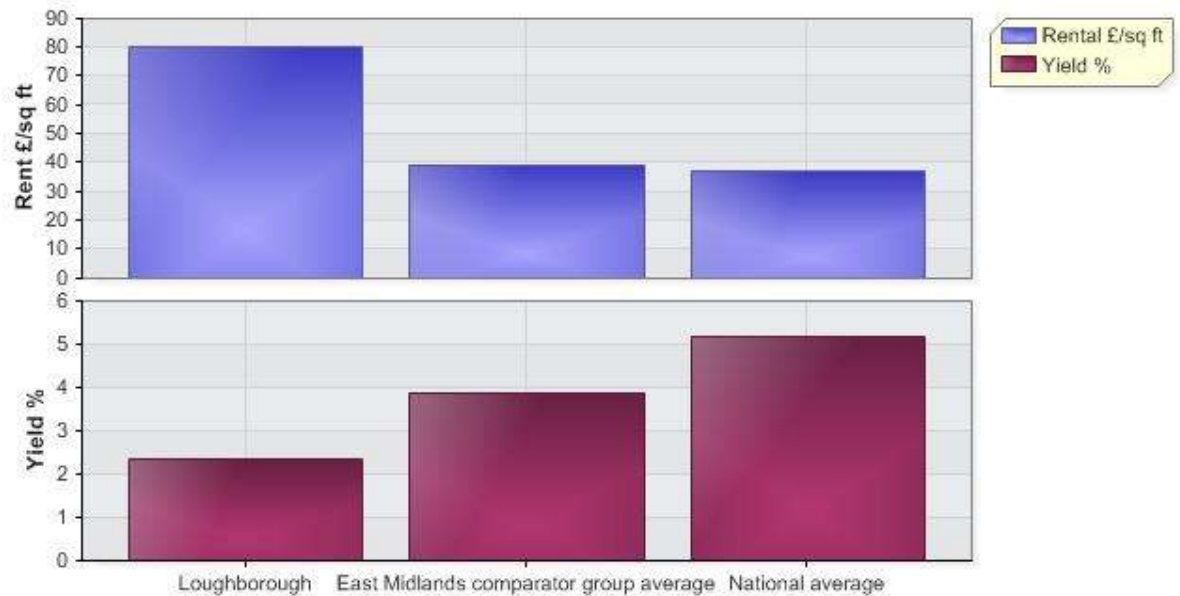
	Loughborough	East Midlands comparator group	National
Markets	2	2	2
Traders	130	29	27



KPI 6: Zone Retail Rents & KPI 7: Prime retail property yields

The values for prime retail property yield and Zone A rentals are the “industry” benchmarks for the relative appeal of a location with its users and with the owners or investors in property. All real estate has a value and this value is based on the return on investment that can be levered out of the site. As these indicators rise and fall, they provide a barometer of success or failure and, because the same property dimensions are assessed to determine them, they can be used as an indicator of improving or declining fortunes for towns. In particular retail rents can provide a useful indication of a town’s performance and highlight how attractive it is to businesses. Conversely, where rents are falling it can be an indicator of decline.

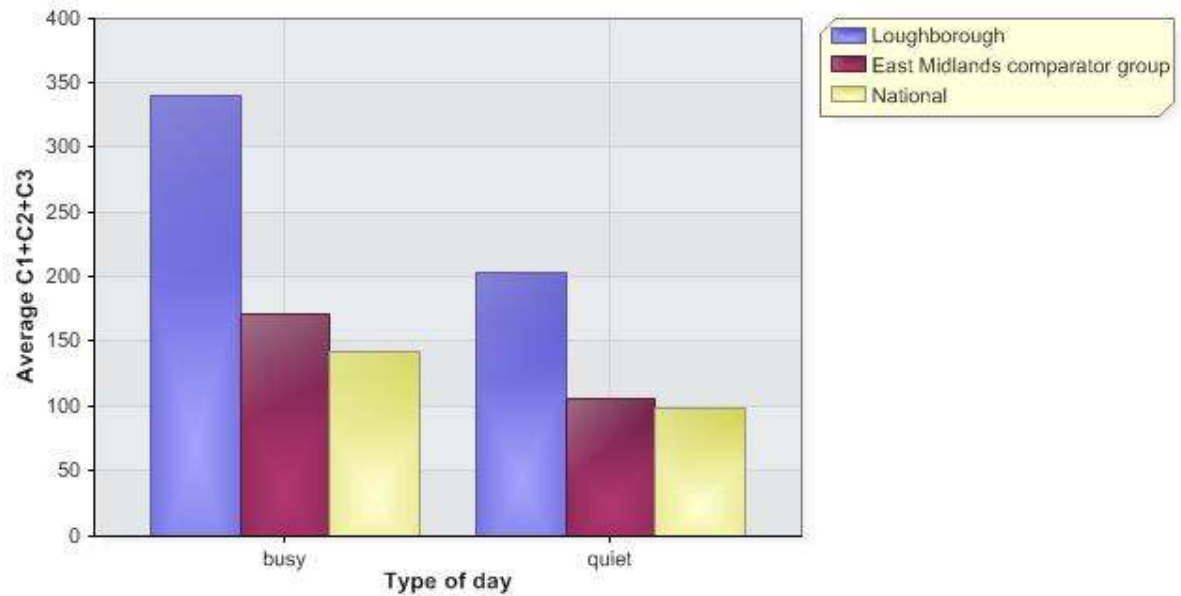
	Loughborough	East Midlands comparator group average	National average
Rental £/sq ft	80	39	37
Yield %	2	4	5



KPI 8: Footfall Counts

The arrival and movement of people, whether as residents, workers, visitors or shoppers is vital to the success of the majority of businesses within the town centre. The more people that are attracted to the town, the better it trades and the more prosperous the businesses in it, provided there is ample available disposable income in that population. Measuring passing people in a consistent manner in the same place, at the same time builds up a picture of the town, its traders and their relative success over the weeks and months.

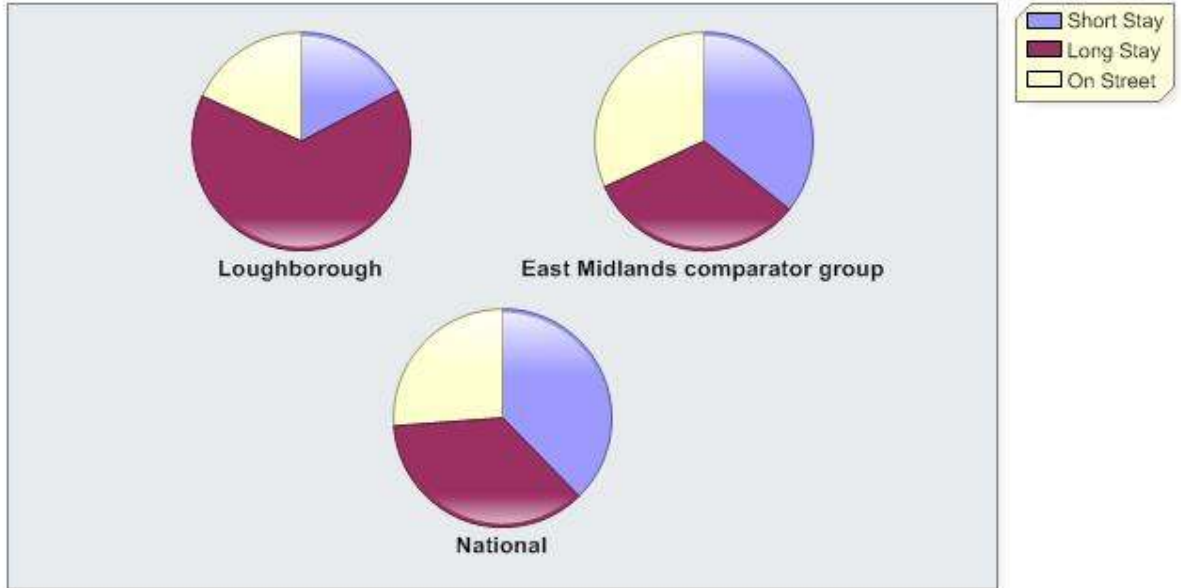
	Loughborough	East Midlands comparator group	National
busy	340	171	143
quiet	204	106	99



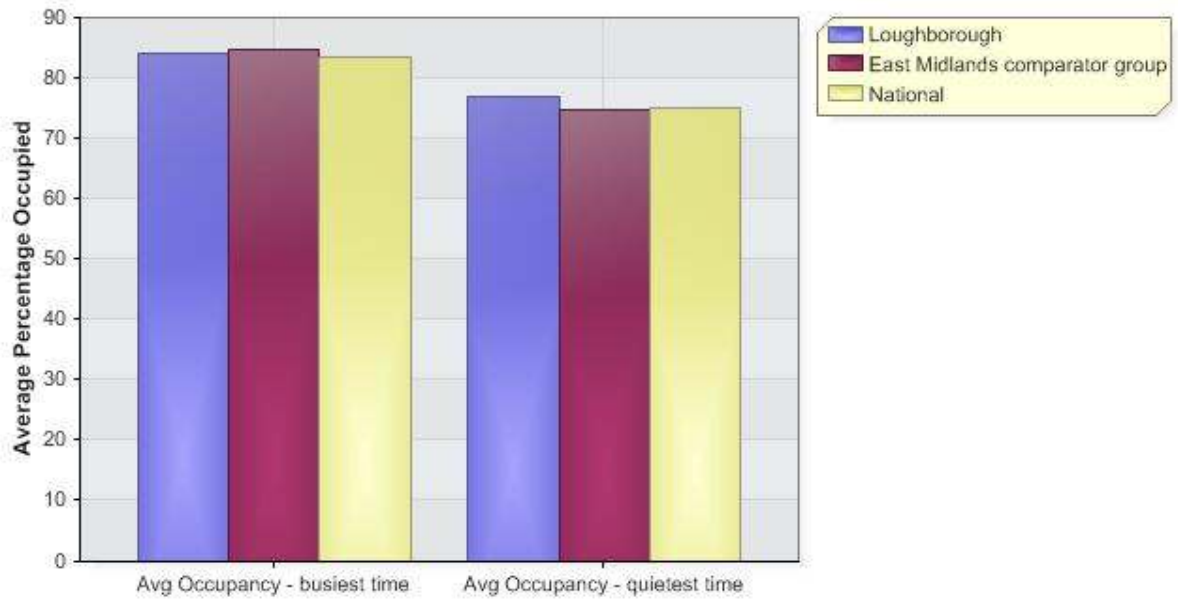
KPI 9: Car Parking Availability and Usage

These days a large proportion of spending customers in a town centre come by car. In the rural setting, the car tends to be an essential tool, used by both those who come to spend and those who come to work. The provision of adequate and convenient car parking facilities is therefore a key element of town centre vitality. An acceptable number of available spaces with a regular, quick turn-over for shoppers is the ideal while adequate longer stay, less convenient spaces for local owners/workers and visitors must be considered too.

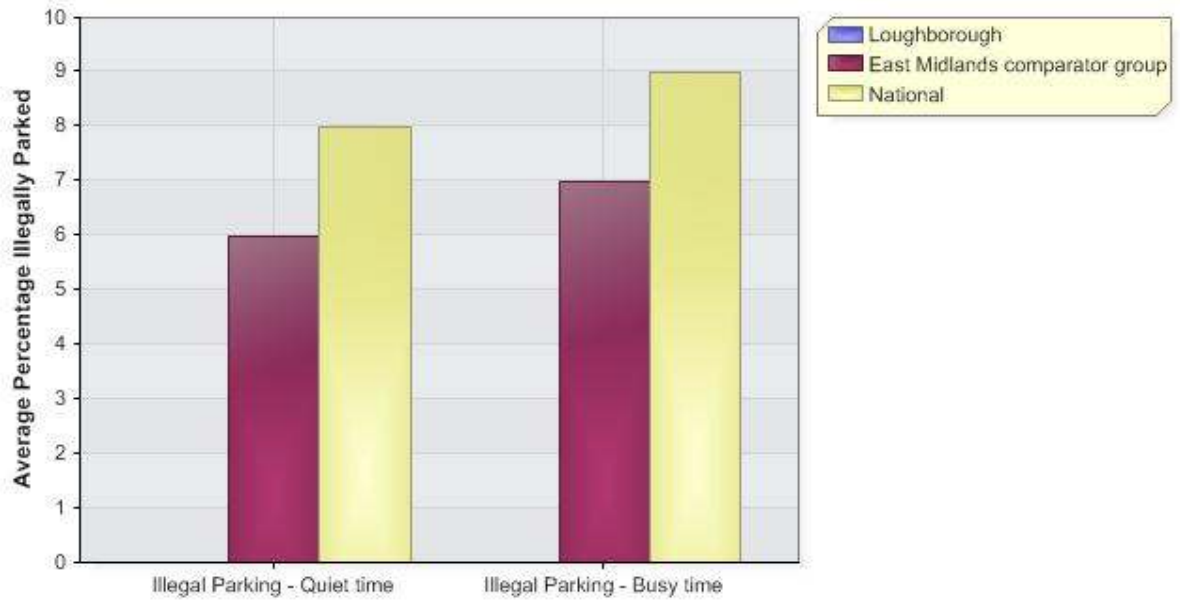
	Loughborough	East Midlands comparator group	National
Short Stay	479 (17%)	315 (36%)	344 (38%)
Long Stay	1787 (65%)	286 (32%)	330 (36%)
On Street	504 (18%)	281 (32%)	239 (26%)



	Loughborough	East Midlands comparator group	National
Avg Occupancy - busiest time	84%	85%	83%
Avg Occupancy - quietest time	77%	75%	75%



	Loughborough	East Midlands comparator group	National
Illegal Parking - Quiet time	0	6	8
Illegal Parking - Busy time	0	7	9

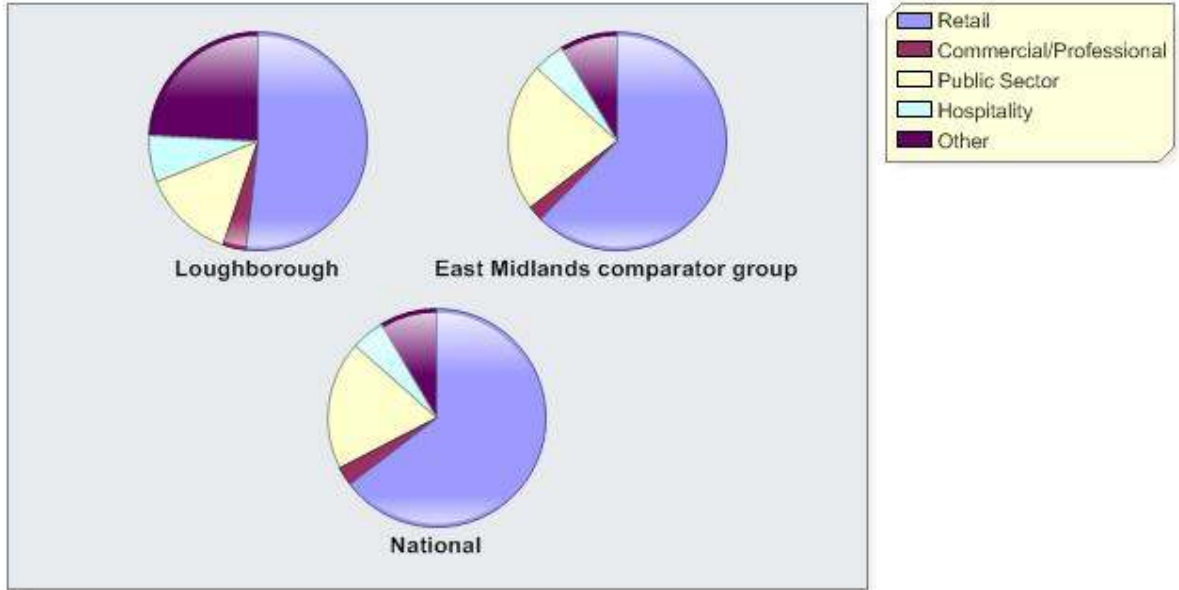


KPI 10: Business Confidence Survey

The aim of the Business Confidence Survey is to establish an understanding of the economy of the town. By establishing the trading conditions of the town centre businesses efforts can be focussed on looking at issues which are of concern and how to improve them.

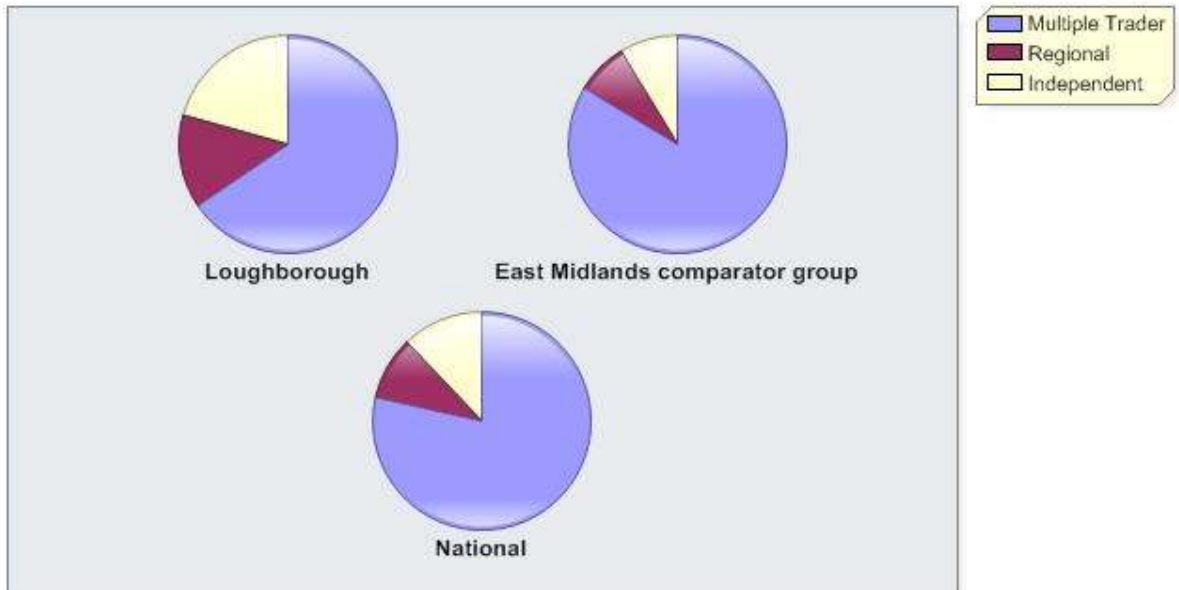
1. What is the nature of your business?

	Loughborough	East Midlands comparator group	National
Retail	52%	62%	65%
Commercial/Professional	3%	2%	3%
Public Sector	14%	22%	19%
Hospitality	7%	5%	5%
Other	24%	9%	9%



2. What type of business are you?

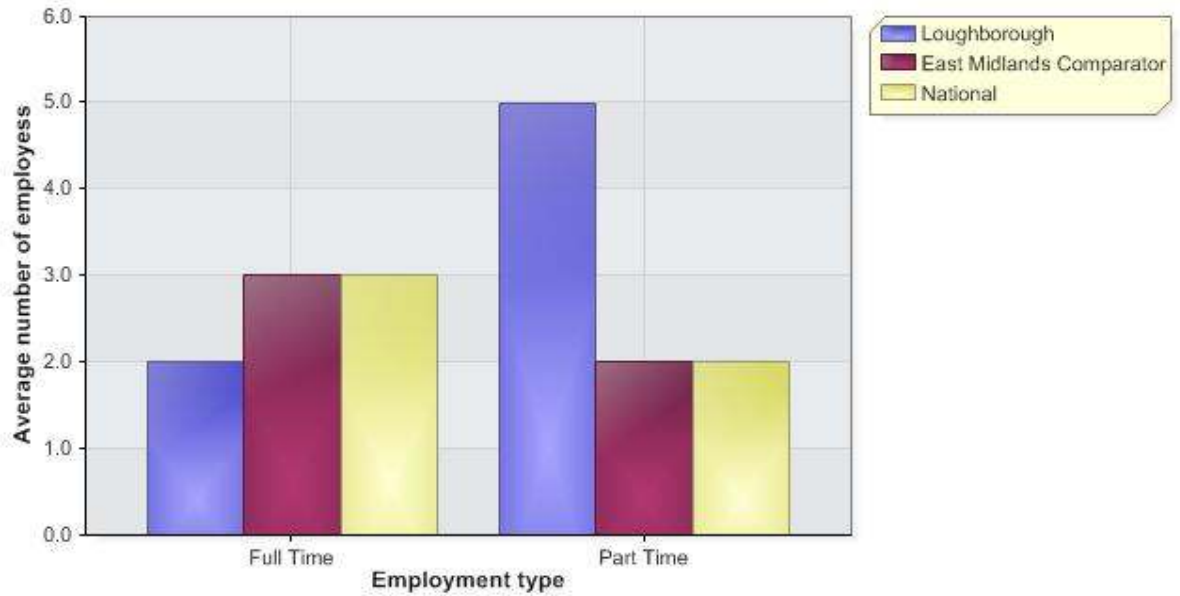
	Loughborough	East Midlands comparator group	National
Multiple Trader	66%	84%	78%
Regional	14%	8%	9%
Independent	21%	9%	12%



3. How many people work at these premises?

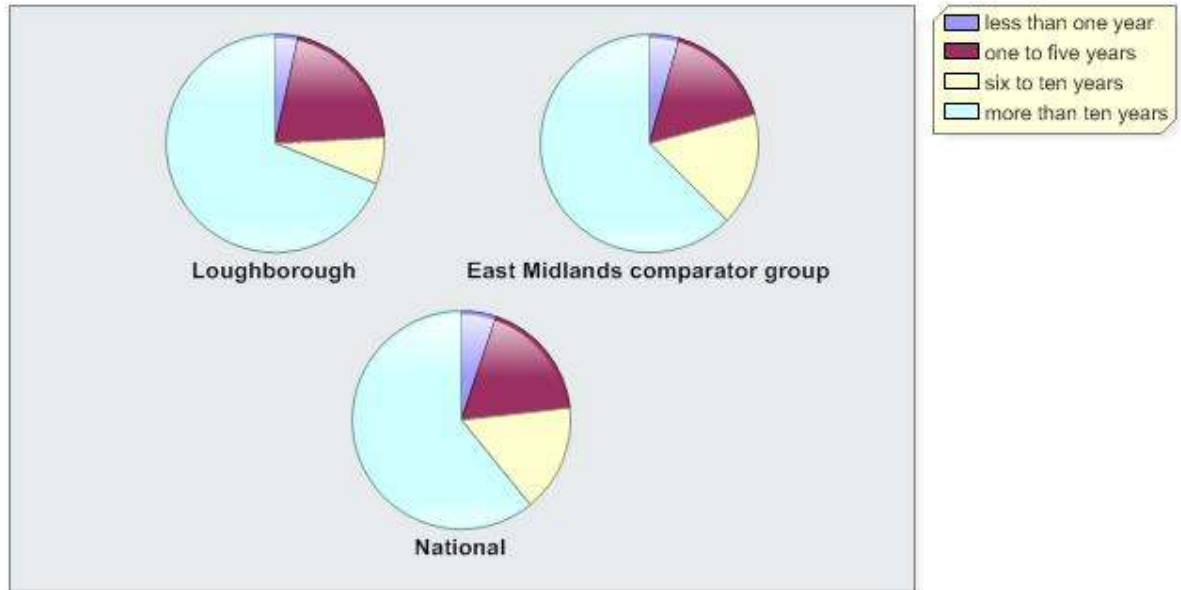
	Loughborough	East Midlands Comparator	National
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	Loughborough	East Midlands Comparator	National
Full Time	2	3	3
Part Time	5	2	2



4. How long has your business been in the town?

	Loughborough	East Midlands comparator group	National
less than one year	3%	4%	5%
one to five years	21%	16%	18%
six to ten years	7%	17%	16%
more than ten years	69%	63%	61%



5. Compared to last year has your turnover.....?,

	Loughborough	East Midlands comparator group	National
increased	41%	34%	35%
stayed the same	24%	30%	31%
decreased	34%	36%	34%



6. Compared to last year has your profitability.....?

	Loughborough	East Midlands comparator group	National
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	Loughborough	East Midlands comparator group	National
increased	41%	40%	41%
stayed the same	28%	24%	24%
decreased	31%	36%	35%



7. Over the next 12 months do you think your turnover will ...?

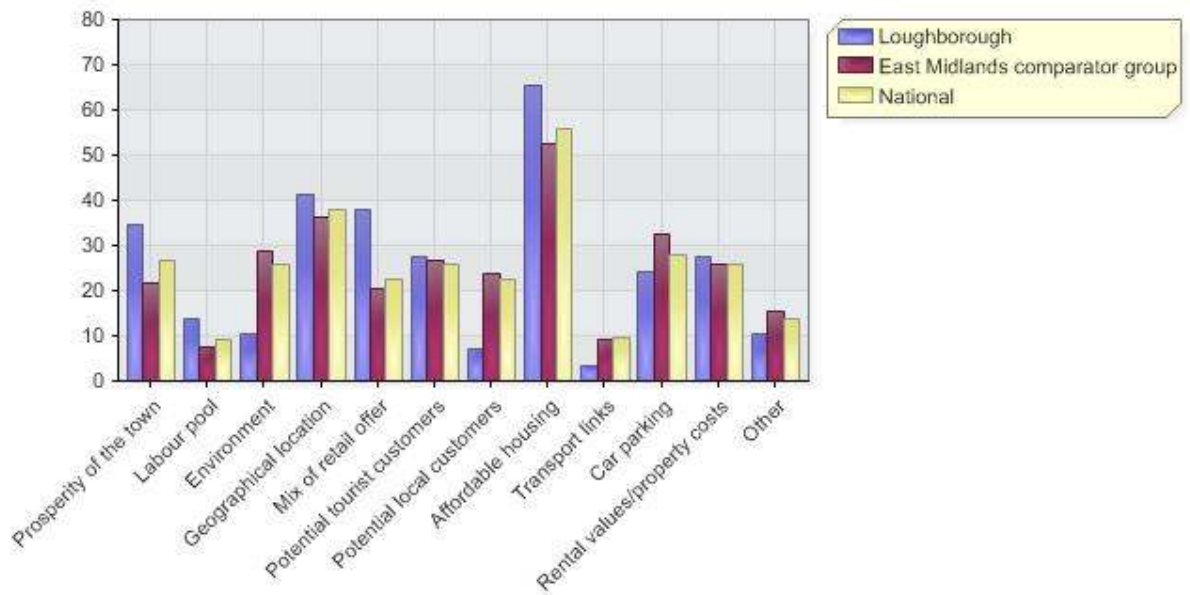
	Loughborough	East Midlands comparator group	National
increase	34%	47%	45%
stay the same	41%	37%	39%
decrease	24%	16%	16%

8. What are the positive aspects of having a business located in the town?

(Multiselect)

	Loughborough	East Midlands comparator group	National
Prosperity of the town	34%	22%	27%
Labour pool	14%	8%	9%
Environment	10%	29%	26%
Geographical location	41%	36%	38%
Mix of retail offer	38%	21%	22%
Potential tourist customers	28%	27%	26%

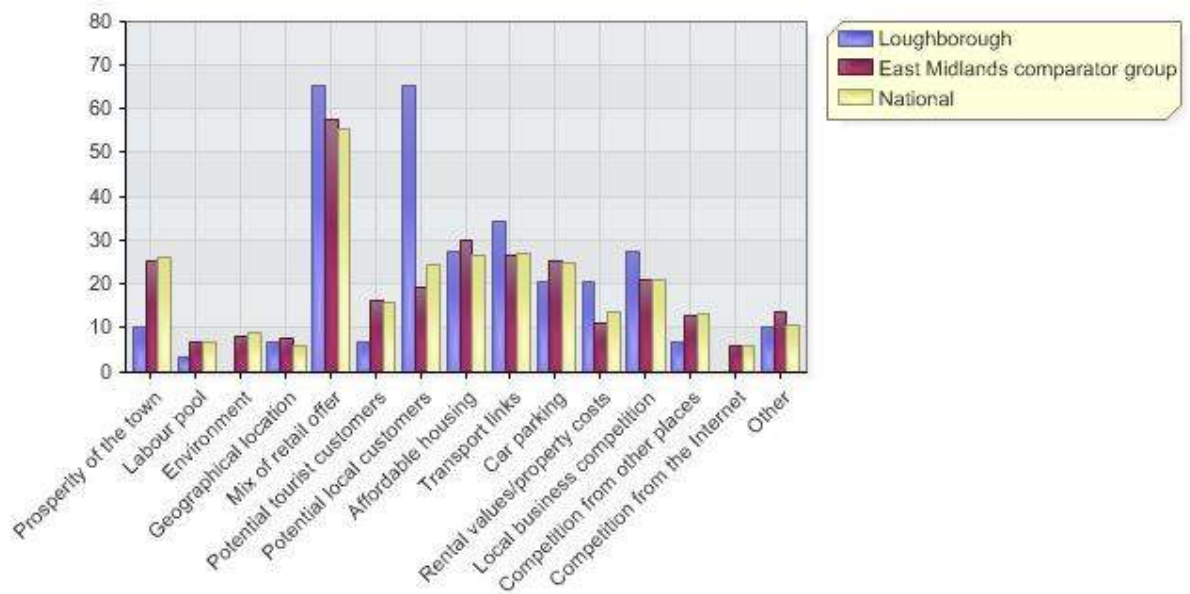
	Loughborough	East Midlands comparator group	National
Potential local customers	7%	24%	23%
Affordable housing	66%	53%	56%
Transport links	3%	9%	10%
Car parking	24%	33%	28%
Rental values/property costs	28%	26%	26%
Other	10%	15%	14%



9. What are the negative aspects of having a business located in the town?
(Multiselect)

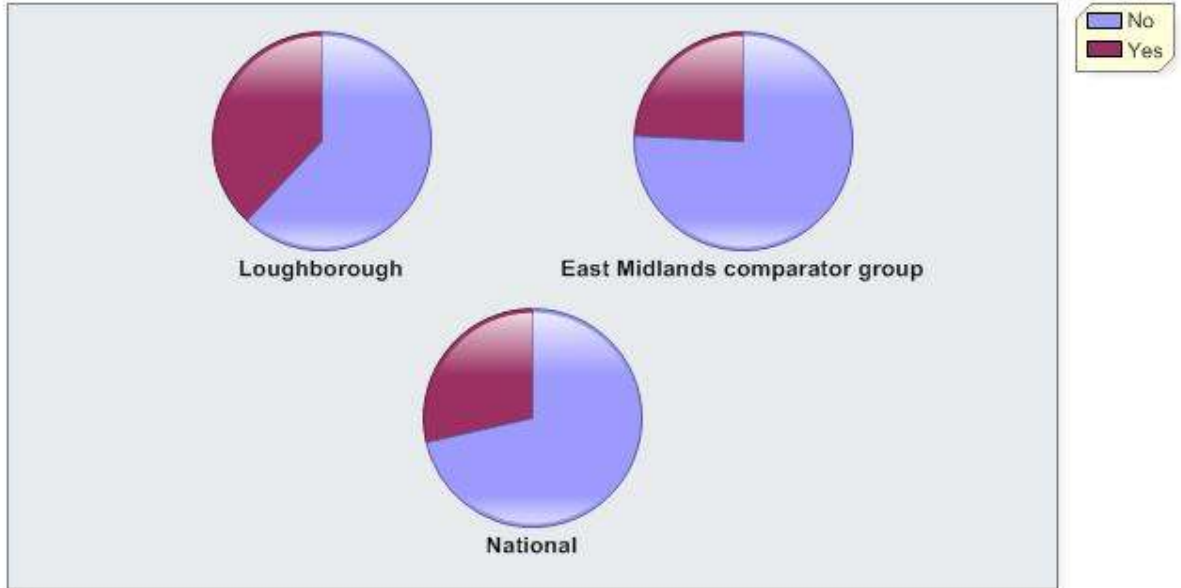
	Loughborough	East Midlands comparator group	National
Prosperity of the town	10%	25%	26%
Labour pool	3%	7%	7%
Environment	0%	8%	9%
Geographical location	7%	8%	6%
Mix of retail offer	66%	58%	56%
Potential tourist customers	7%	16%	16%
Potential local customers	66%	19%	25%
Affordable housing	28%	30%	27%

	Loughborough	East Midlands comparator group	National
Transport links	34%	26%	27%
Car parking	21%	25%	25%
Rental values/property costs	21%	11%	14%
Local business competition	28%	21%	21%
Competition from other places	7%	13%	13%
Competition from the Internet	0%	6%	6%
Other	10%	14%	11%



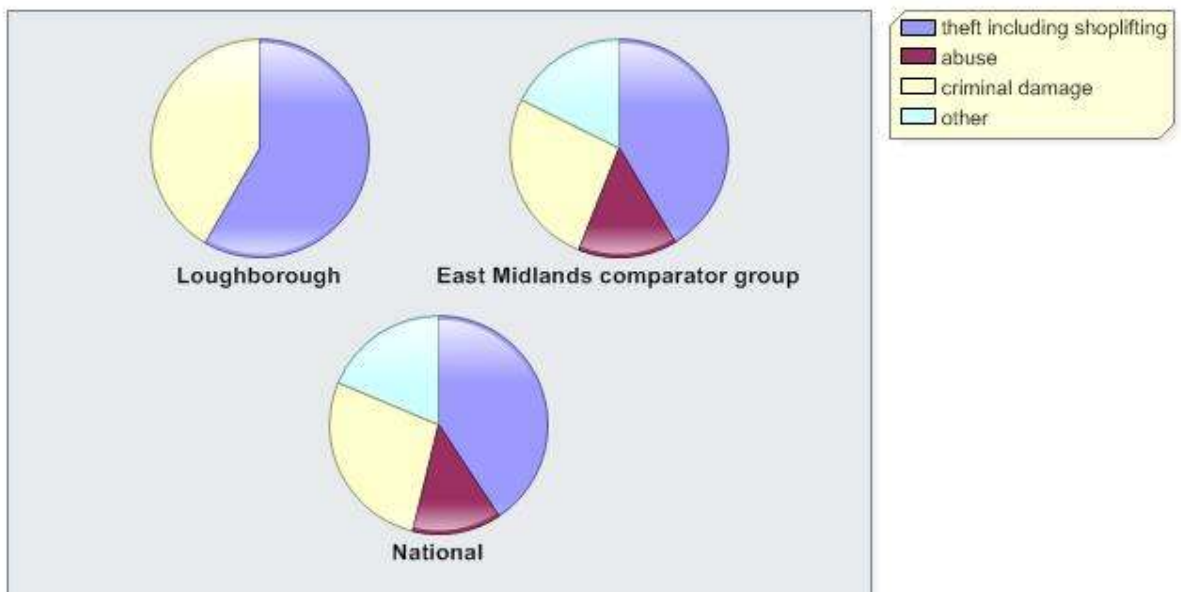
10a. Has your business suffered from any crime over the last 12 months?

	Loughborough	East Midlands comparator group	National
No	62%	76%	71%
Yes	38%	24%	29%



10b. What type of crime has your business suffered over the last 12 months (Multiselect)

	Loughborough	East Midlands comparator group	National
theft including shoplifting	58%	41%	41%
abuse	0%	15%	13%
criminal damage	42%	26%	28%
other	0%	18%	19%



How Businesses would improve the town centre?

Better free car parking. Less empty units.
Limit large franchises moving into town ie. there are 2 large tesco's in Loughborough - encourage small businesses.
Shops for middle age men and women
Attract better shops with lower rents Make car parking easier with possible incentive free parking
Get rid of Council running town replace with people who no what they are doing and not on personal glory trip.
No more coffee shops, hairdressers, pound shops, charity shops. Better shops, lower rates.
Reduce rates, reason for empty shops. Improve situation of market stalls blocking shop fronts reducing sales.
Traditional market stores in town. Reduce the rental and rates.
Cheaper business rates or a notable value for money
Increase footfall Easier parking
Website that offers customer savings, retailers products, links. Reviews, awards, awareness. Top retailers to draw footfall from 3 cities.
Smaller rents - shops and shopping centres. Too many charity shops.
Free car parking for 2 hours. Bus station required.
Local independents. Cheaper rents Variety - not all the same.

KPI 11: Visitor Satisfaction Survey

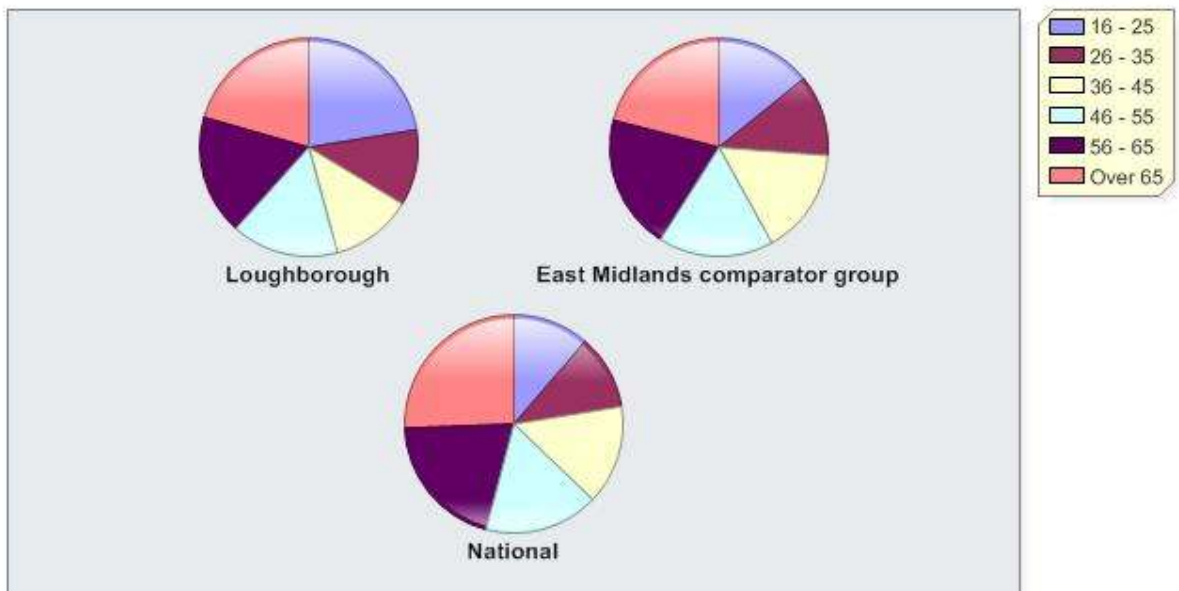
The aim of the Visitor Satisfaction Survey is to establish how your town is seen by those people who use it. By asking visitors, of all types, a more detailed picture can be obtained as what matters to regular visitors (i.e. locals who pop in every day or work in town) can be very different to someone who has never been to the place before. For the first group signage is not an issue, for example, and the second may not worry about fear of night time crime.

1. Personal Information

	Loughborough	East Midlands comparator group	National
Male	44%	36%	37%
Female	56%	64%	63%

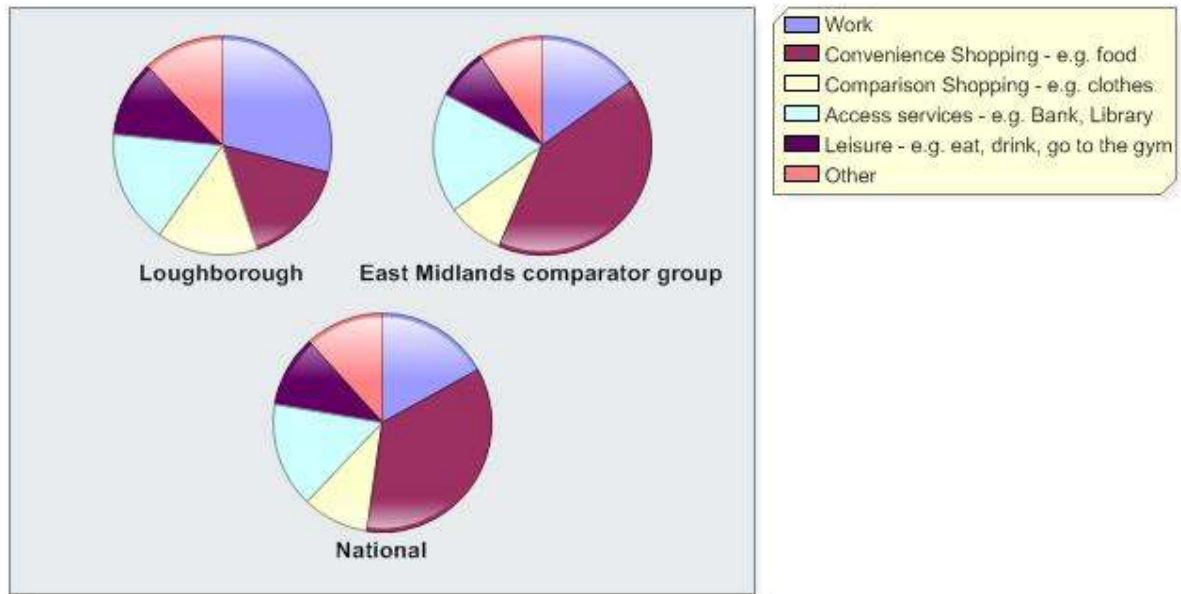


	Loughborough	East Midlands comparator group	National
16 - 25	22%	14%	11%
26 - 35	11%	12%	11%
36 - 45	12%	16%	15%
46 - 55	16%	17%	17%
56 - 65	18%	20%	20%
Over 65	21%	21%	26%



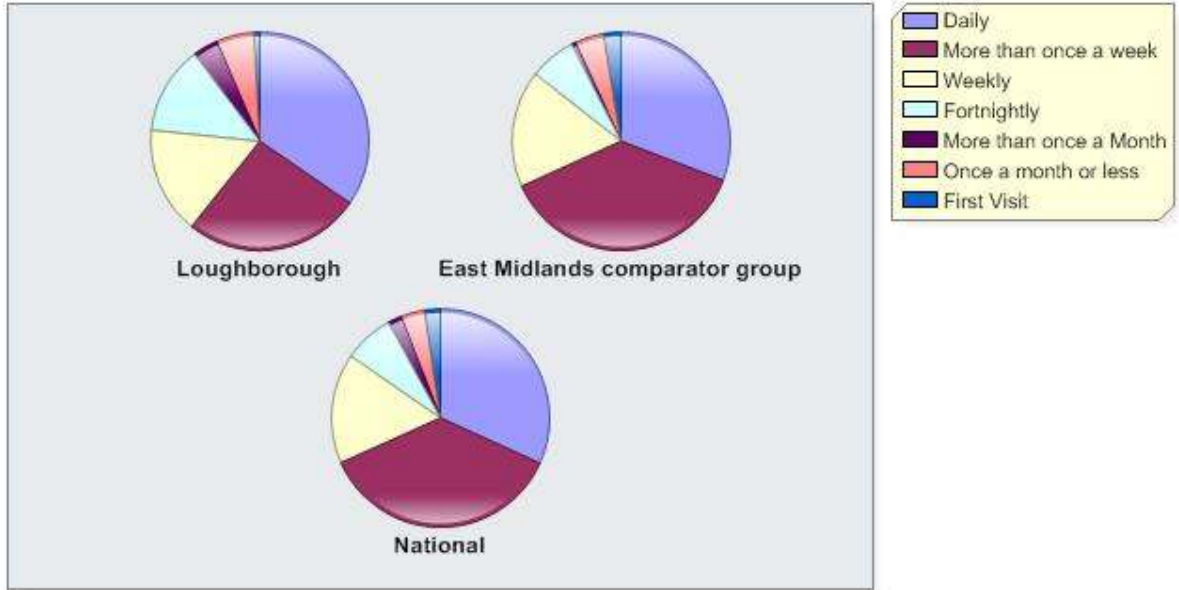
2. What is the main purpose of your visit to the town centre today?

	Loughborough	East Midlands comparator group	National
Work	29%	15%	17%
Convenience Shopping - e.g. food	16%	41%	35%
Comparison Shopping - e.g. clothes	15%	9%	10%
Access services - e.g. Bank, Library	17%	18%	16%
Leisure - e.g. eat, drink, go to the gym	11%	8%	11%
Other	12%	10%	12%



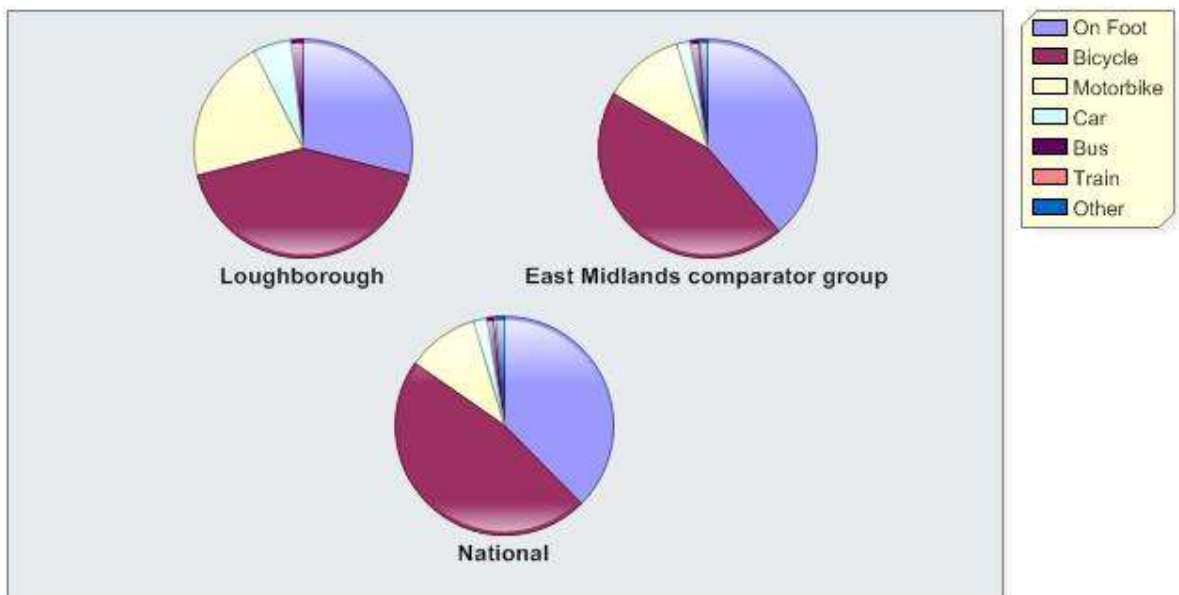
3. How often do you visit the town centre?

	Loughborough	East Midlands comparator group	National
Daily	35%	31%	32%
More than once a week	26%	37%	36%
Weekly	16%	17%	16%
Fortnightly	13%	7%	7%
More than once a Month	4%	1%	2%
Once a month or less	6%	4%	3%
First Visit	1%	3%	2%



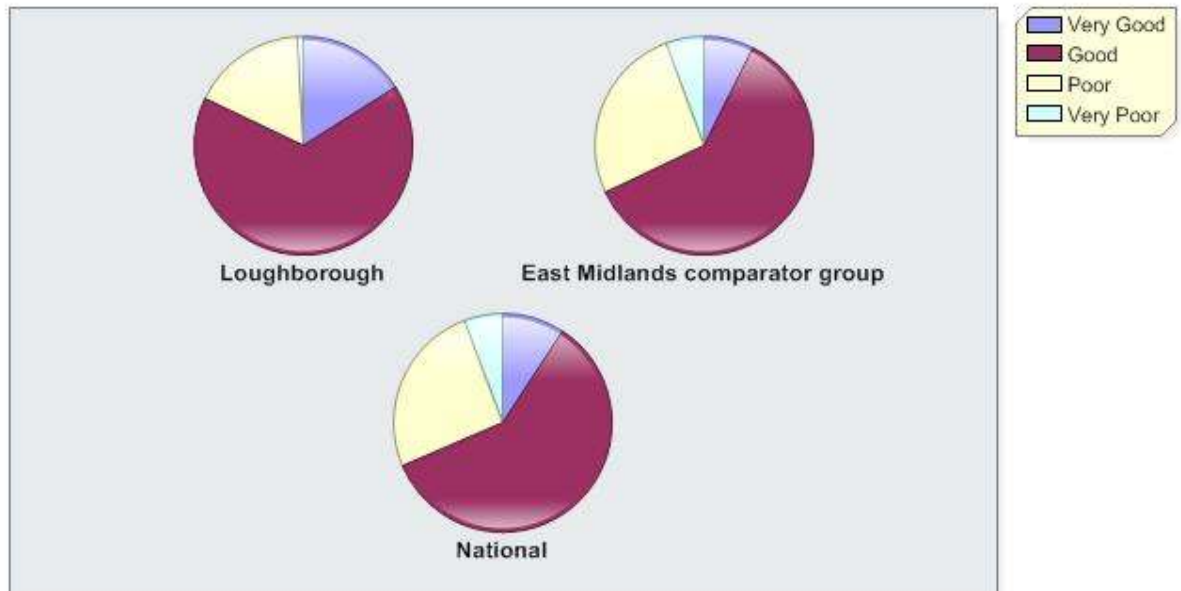
4. How did you travel into the town centre today?

	Loughborough	East Midlands comparator group	National
On Foot	29%	39%	38%
Bicycle	42%	45%	47%
Motorbike	21%	12%	11%
Car	6%	2%	2%
Bus	2%	1%	1%
Train	0%	0%	0%
Other	0%	1%	1%



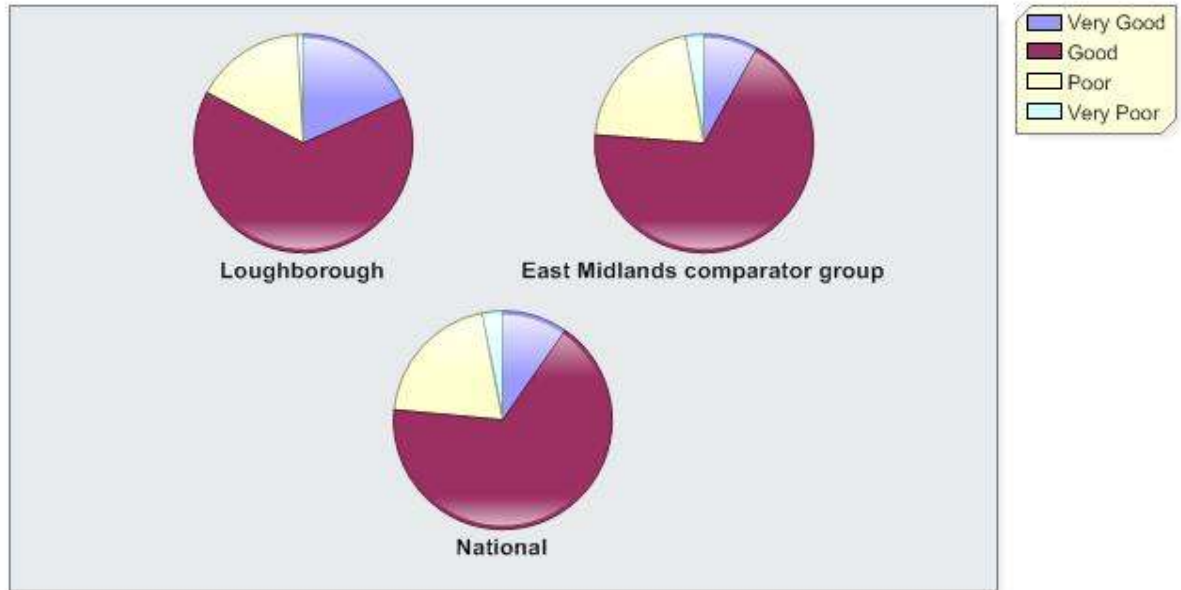
5. How do you rate the physical appearance of the town centre?

	Loughborough	East Midlands comparator group	National
Very Good	16%	7%	9%
Good	66%	61%	59%
Poor	17%	26%	26%
Very Poor	1%	6%	6%



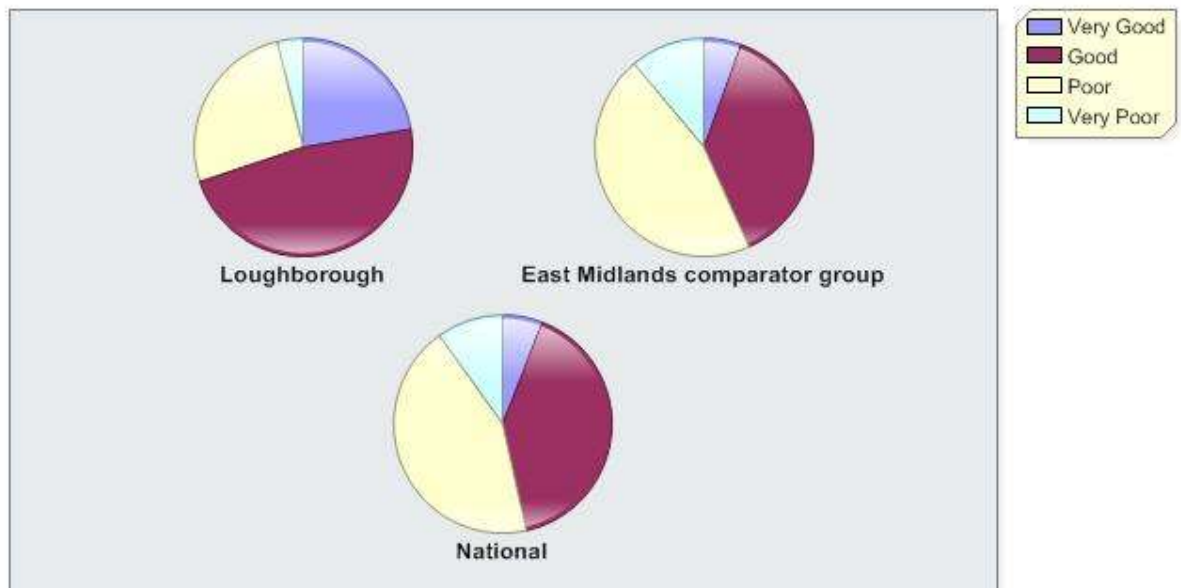
6. How do you rate the cleanliness of the town centre?

	Loughborough	East Midlands comparator group	National
Very Good	18%	8%	10%
Good	64%	68%	67%
Poor	16%	21%	20%
Very Poor	1%	3%	3%



7. How do you rate the variety of shops in the town centre?

	Loughborough	East Midlands comparator group	National
Very Good	22%	6%	6%
Good	48%	38%	41%
Poor	26%	46%	44%
Very Poor	4%	11%	10%



8. How do you rate the leisure and cultural activities in the town centre?

	Loughborough	East Midlands comparator group	National
Very Good	10%	10%	10%
Good	40%	30%	30%
Poor	40%	50%	50%
Very Poor	10%	10%	10%

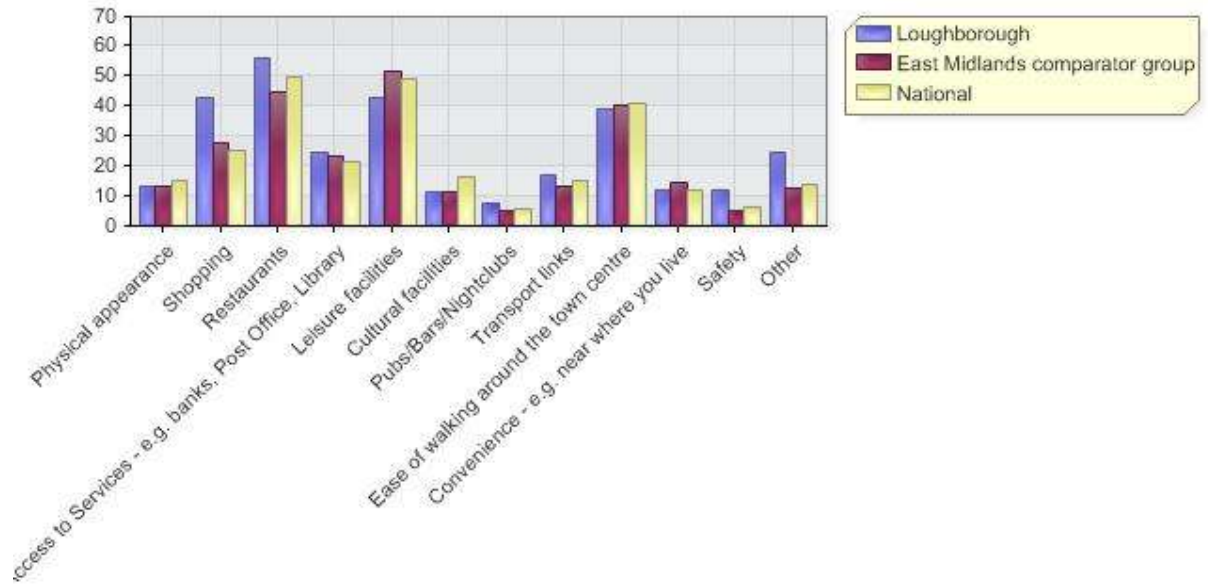
	Loughborough	East Midlands comparator group	National
Very Good	14%	5%	8%
Good	67%	46%	49%
Poor	18%	39%	35%
Very Poor	0%	10%	8%



9. What are the best aspects of the town centre?
(Multiselect)

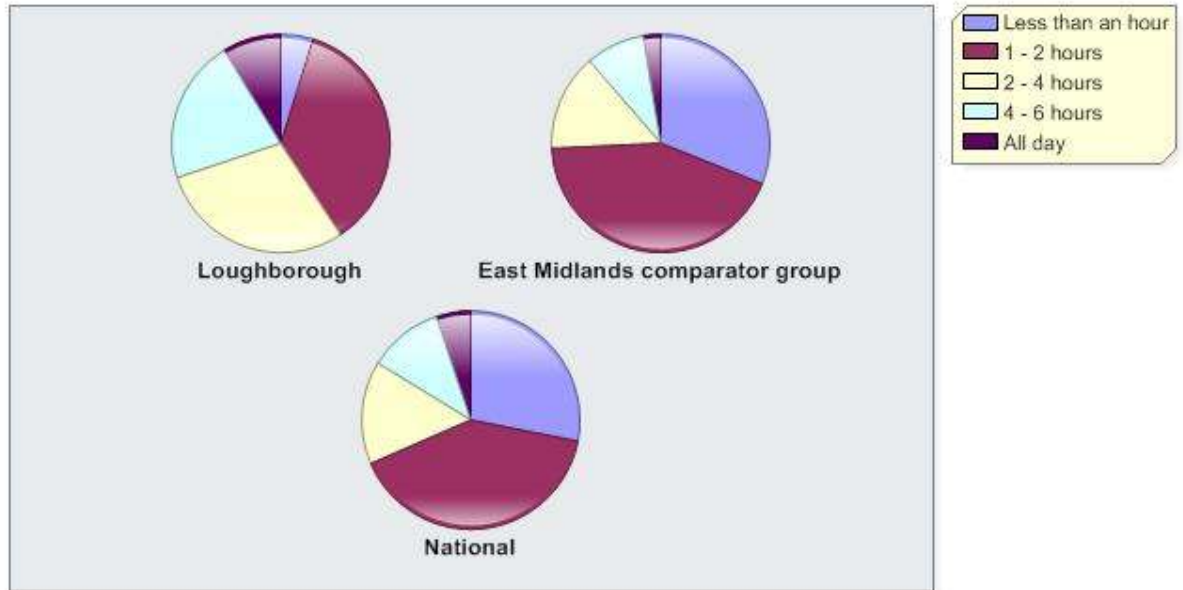
	Loughborough	East Midlands comparator group	National
Physical appearance	13%	13%	15%
Shopping	43%	28%	25%
Restaurants	56%	45%	50%
Access to Services - e.g. banks, Post Office, Library	24%	23%	21%
Leisure facilities	43%	52%	49%
Cultural facilities	11%	11%	17%
Pubs/Bars/Nightclubs	7%	5%	6%
Transport links	17%	13%	15%
Ease of walking around the town centre	39%	41%	41%
Convenience - e.g. near where you live	12%	14%	12%

	Loughborough	East Midlands comparator group	National
Safety	12%	5%	6%
Other	24%	13%	14%



10. How long do you intend to stay on this visit to the town centre?

	Loughborough	East Midlands comparator group	National
Less than an hour	5%	31%	28%
1 - 2 hours	36%	43%	40%
2 - 4 hours	29%	14%	15%
4 - 6 hours	21%	9%	11%
All day	9%	3%	5%



How visitors would improve the town centre

Get rid of pigeons
Better facilities
None
Bus Station
None
Need a better variety of shops
Attract some big name shops
More variety of shops
Remove sockman!
More physical features.
More greenery & benches.
More markets
Clean up Baxter Gate. Filfy
Seat - more benches near Swan Street entrance at precinct.
More benches in end of precinct.
Needs a tidy up after the fair
Remove Sockman.
More shops – Clothes
Proper shoe shops
Decent Clothes shop ie Debenhams.
More seating.
Place to leaving shopping bags & children.
Use of by-pass
Focus more on children & locals
No more empty shops!

More to do!
Allow better movement on market days
More shopping
More live music
More of an alternative scene, its very geared to chain pubs and clubs.
Clean up of buildings.
Sort out vacant properties
More noticeboards - what's happening.
Signpost eg. Library.
Wider spread of Christmas.
More No Cycling signs
Bring more bigger brands of shops ie M&S, Debenhams, etc
Bus station
More disabled parking
Parking - Free on market days
Encouragement for more businesses and variety.
Improve area of Leicester Road; shops
Post Office would be better if more central
More pedestrianised pavements.
More services near each other.
Stop cycles on pedestrian street
Access from Shelthorpe poor because of roundabout at end of Epinal Way.
Person selling shelter magazine rather intimidating - outside town hall.
More benches
Fill empty shops
Discount card
More Independent shops
More free parking or just more parking with easy road access. Possibly on edge of town, within walking distance.
Really need some music shops that sell cd's i records etc.
get rid of the sockman
Get rid of the sockman!
Cut down on 'thuggish' behaviour i.e. more police. Improve/increase free parking
Attract few more shops such as M&S. apple Mac Shop
Make more community centres to improve friendship between ethnic groups. Tackle drug dealers and crime
Variety of shops.
Cultural/historical exhibitions programmes
more clubs
cheaper places
Bus station to keep buses away from centre and pulling up at curb.
?
More on the spot fines for 'litterbugs'
Have the centre entirely traffic free.

Ensure that cyclists/skateboarders are not allowed in the town centre - and enforce it.
More shops Clean up of old shop fronts
Keep the library
more activities for children. more jobs to be around more people to be less shabby
variety of activities for teens. clean town more
Better Quality Shops Pedestrianise the A6
More tourist information
Better variety of shops Better covered shopping center
More up market shops More individual shops more proper pubs
Tourist information signs to help visitors, town hall had sign but no bus timetable. Library has better information
Too many similar types of shops, new business needs to be encouraged to replace bars and charity shops and budget shops. stop charity 'muggers'
Lush shop in Loughborough
getting in bigger retailers attracting bigger musicians bands plays etc to town venues
I like the town centre everything is good for me. thank you
Greater multi-culturalism more music shops for instruments
coffee shops open longer than 1800 more shops
More police presence as robbery crime is quite high. pavements to be made safer for walking during xmas.
Remove Sockman keep litter free
more pedestrianisation

KPI 12: Shoppers Origin Survey

The Shoppers Origin Survey tracks the general area that your visitors originate from. This data can be used to target local marketing or promotional literature at specific parts of the wider catchment for your town to encourage others to make the journey. It can also be used as evidence of the success of such campaigns or other elements of your action plan by gauging the penetration into the population of their understanding of the benefits your town offers

The postcodes have been split into 3 categories to be able to compare with other towns. The categories are:

- Locals (i.e. in the post codes which cover the town)
- Visitors (i.e. in adjoining postcodes within a half an hour car journey according to AA Route Planner)
- Tourists (all the rest including overseas shoppers)

	Loughborough	East Midlands Comparator	National
Locals	39%	53%	58%
Tourists	10%	9%	8%
Visitors	51%	39%	34%

