

2. What Makes Loughborough Town Centre Special?

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A recent (October 2006) survey of Loughborough Town Centre users found a very high level of overall satisfaction with the Town as a place to shop, visit and work in. 85% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied. 31% of people thought that the town had got better over the previous 12 months while only 7% thought it had got worse. When asked to describe Loughborough the most commonly agreed words were “busy”, “friendly”, “safe”, “crowded”, “attractive” and “vibrant”.

When asked what makes Loughborough unique the most common response was “its Culture”. In terms of what would encourage people to visit Loughborough more often 75% said a wider range of shops and retail facilities, 51% said more cultural or entertainment facilities and 50% said free parking.



Carillon Court Shopping Centre



The Sock Man detail

The following factors are considered to be important in making Loughborough Town Centre the kind of place it is:

- **The large, pedestrianised Market Place - ideal for events**
- **It is “walkable” and easy to comprehend**
- **The twice weekly Market and specialist markets in the heart of the Town**
- **Its rich mix of architecture – Georgian, Victorian, Art Deco and modern**
- **The presence of an internationally renowned University and a large student population**
- **The high quality green spaces in the centre – Queens Park, Southfields Park, the Parish Green**
- **Its mix of quality independent shops and national chain stores**
- **A wide range of bars, restaurants and cafes and a thriving evening economy**
- **The presence of civic, cultural, leisure, entertainment and administrative facilities reflecting its status as a sub-regional centre**
- **The town’s ethnic and cultural diversity**
- **The November Street Fair**



Carillon Tower in Queens Park



Loughborough Fair

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Loughborough Market



Market Place

However, there is no room for complacency and positive action is needed to maintain and improve Loughborough's attractiveness and its position in the hierarchy of centres.

A tremendous opportunity exists to achieve this. The removal of through traffic from the A6 will unite the two halves of the Town Centre and allow major new development opportunities to be realised. The town's historic public spaces will be improved and linked together to provide a safer shopping environment and easier access and movement for all. The main gateways into the Town Centre will be improved and efforts will be made to introduce new retailers and businesses and to encourage investment in housing, offices, leisure and entertainment. All of this is vital to serve Loughborough's growing population in a sustainable way and to allow the town to respond to changing shopping and leisure patterns.

As part of the early work on the Masterplan, DTZ were commissioned to carry out an assessment of Retail and Leisure demand in Loughborough. Atkins used Lambert Smith Hampton to assess the commercial prospects for Town Centre development. Their findings have been taken into account in developing the Masterplan proposals. In addition, independent research was commissioned into parking needs and student housing. The Masterplan's traffic management proposals were tested against the County Council's Loughborough Traffic Model.



Charnwood Museum in Queens Park



Church Gate Conservation Area



Market Street Cafe