

## CABINET – 24th NOVEMBER 2005

### Report of the Deputy Chief Executive

#### ITEM 9 RESPONSE TO THE CAR PARK SCRUTINY PANEL – REVIEW OF CAR PARKING PRACTICES

##### Purpose of the Report

The Cabinet Lead Member's response to the issues raised in the Car Park Scrutiny Panel Report as presented to Cabinet on the 13<sup>th</sup> October is set out below.

##### Lead Member Response

The Panel's report is welcomed as it provides useful information and comments about the effectiveness of the car park service.

Findings from the recent public consultation (Cabinet minute October 108 refers) have been extracted (where applicable) and compared against the matters raised for Cabinets ease of reference.

In addition it should be noted that following public consultation, an exceedingly high overall satisfaction level of 86.5% with the current parking facilities in Loughborough has been achieved: -

With regard to the recommendations made by the panel I am able to respond (response in italics) as follows:

##### Recommendation 1

That the Investigation and Review Scrutiny Committee is recommended to add to its current work programme the establishment of a Panel to review implementation of the agreed option for decriminalised parking provided the agreed option includes a role for the Borough Council

*The establishment of a Panel to consider Decriminalised parking enforcement in due course is a matter for the Investigation and Review Scrutiny Committee. In terms of progress on this issue, it is understood that we are pursuing an agreement with the County Council and the other Districts and the signs are promising that a new scheme will be introduced in 2006.*

##### Recommendation 2

That a study to assess parking needs (to include cars, cycles and motor cycles) outside Loughborough is commissioned, jointly with the County Council, to complement the Atkins study and to inform implementation plans for decriminalised car parking, land use planning decisions and public transport planning. The study to include the concept of better linking of parking and public transport services.

*Such a study would clearly be useful and we will approach the County Council with a view to jointly programming a study in a future service plan.*

### Recommendation 3

That the Council uses its influence to ensure that the introduction of decriminalised parking is used to re-introduce effective enforcement through the operational arrangements for the new service

*It is essential that the agreed scheme makes proper provision for enforcement with sufficient resources to carry it out. The Borough Council will do everything it can to achieve this.*

### Recommendation 4

That the findings of this review are taken into account fully in the Atkins Study of parking provision in Loughborough.

*I will ensure that this is so. The Panel's Report has already been passed to Atkins.*

### Recommendation 5

That there should be further joint working between Councils and local businesses to promote town and village centres more effectively and that integral to that should be innovative approaches to marketing parking facilities.

*Partnership working on promotion is essential to protect and develop the prosperity of our town and village centres. In Loughborough, delegated authority has recently been given to officers to introduce parking incentives linked to special events and promotions. Price reviews are made in alternate years with a focus on service improvements and marketing in the intervening years. The potential for joint marketing in the villages and towns outside Loughborough is limited without the ability to use the charging mechanism, we can promote the use of village car parks where required*

*An initiative to paint the interior walls of Beehive Lane car park is also being pursued in order to lighten the car park and provide a more congenial environment for users. It is considered that this proposal will attract additional users to the car park. This improvement to the car parks would cost approximately £10,000 and can be contained in the existing capital 'Improvements to Public Buildings' budget for 2005/06.*

### Recommendation 6

That the overall degree of satisfaction with the current parking facilities in Loughborough is to be commended but that the following improvement areas be acted upon speedily

#### 6a - Level of cleanliness in Car Parks

*The Public Consultation reports that 63% (page 16 Q8 refers) of the public consider that the current level car park cleansing to be of an acceptable standard.*

The report also details (Page 16 Q9) that when asked if 'you would be prepared to pay higher charges for improved services' 97.5% consider that they would not pay for improved cleansing.

The current cleansing routines are considered to be robust with enthusiastic staff taking a pride in their work, however there are occasions when anti-social behaviour, particularly in the toilets stairwells at Beehive Lane car park occurs. On these occasion staff respond immediately to cleanse the affected areas. Operational procedures will however be reviewed to see if any service improvements can be made.

#### 6b - Publication of Security Measures

The Public Consultation report shows that:-

70.5 % of the public find the level of lighting acceptable with an additional 17.9% as 'don't know'. 72.2 % of the public find the level of security patrols acceptable with an additional 21.5% as 'don't know'.

69.8% of the public find the level of CCTV surveillance acceptable with an additional 24.7% as 'don't know'.

The report also shows (Page 16 Q9) that when asked if 'you would be prepared to pay higher charges for improved services'

99.8% consider that they would not pay higher charges for improved lighting

99.6% consider that they would not pay higher charges for more security patrols

99.8% consider that they would not pay higher charges for more CCTV. These are encouraging statistics that indicate that the existing security provision is robust, this is further enforced by the increasing fall in reported crime with only 2 crimes being reported this year to date for all Loughborough town centre car parks.

However, security provision should not be taken lightly and it is proposed that an advertising campaign (through the communications team) be implemented to inform residents and businesses of the borough of the car park services available.

#### 6c - Park Mark Security Award

In response to the Car Park Scrutiny Panel's request to achieve the 'Park Mark Award' at all car parks that qualify, the Deputy Chief Executive intends to liaise with representatives of Park Mark to ascertain which car parks can achieve this standard. It should be noted however that if additional car parks do qualify there would need to be a review of existing resources to meet the demands of the management award criteria.

Following consultation with Park Mark representatives, and if any car park is considered suitable, the Deputy Chief Executive will submit a further report to Cabinet outlining the additional resources needed.

#### 6d - Improved Information / Marketing Of Car Park Services & Signage

Currently advertising campaigns are released through the 'Charnwood News' the Council Website and local press. However, and in addition to the item on security provision advertising above, it is proposed that a further an advertising campaign (through the communications team)

be implemented to inform residents and businesses of the borough of the car park services available.

The Deputy Chief Executive will also liaise with the County Council to request improved Town Centre signage.

#### 6e - Extension of The Three-Hour Parking Period To All Car Parks in Loughborough Town Centre

The Chamber of Trade has also submitted this suggestion, but it has ramifications that have not been considered and may result in fewer users and lower income which would not be in the interests of traders and taxpayers.

The Council currently operates short stay car parking, with 'up to 2 hours car parking' defined as short stay car parking. This is a standard short stay car parking period definition applied by many authorities.

The Council currently already operates up to 3 hour parking periods at the following car parks: -

Beehive Lane multi- story (levels 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6)	- 532 spaces
Pinfold gate	- 42 spaces (after the sale in Nov)
Southfield Road	- 45 spaces
Macaulay House Offices (Saturdays only)	- 42 spaces
Southfields Offices (Saturdays only)	- 95 spaces

Up to 2 hour parking periods are available at the following car parks: -

Granby Street	- 202 spaces
Browns Lane*	- 192 spaces

\* These spaces would be lost if in future Cabinet decide to dedicate the use of this car park for Leisure Facility users only.

Granby Street (a designated 'shoppers car park') is the most popular Council car park and is on the majority of occasion fully occupied which supports the two hour short term parking definition, as if this was unsuitable, shoppers who required more time to shop would prefer to park at one of the other Council car parks where three hour parking is available.

To amend the short term parking at Granby Street to up to 3 hours would actually reduce the numbers of spaces available for shoppers using the up to 2 hour parking period by up to 50%, (if shoppers were permitted to park for up to 3 hours).

One other suggestion was to allow up to 3 hour parking for the up to 2 hour parking tariff therefore affording no loss of convenience to users, this would however still displace some of the up to 2 hour users and also result in a significant loss of up to 50% of income generated at this popular car park.

In conclusion it is considered that the introduction of up to 3 hour parking would be a retrograde step with regards to the popularity of this car park (by current users), and further limit the availability of spaces for users who wish to park for up to 2 hour parking periods as some would be displaced to park at alternative car parks.

Browns Lane currently operates 'demand management' charges which are intended to encourage shoppers to park at other car parks in the town centre thus ensuring that the maximum number of spaces are kept vacant for users of leisure facilities. To extend the demand management charges to up to 3 hours would encourage more shoppers to park in this car park. However a major review of the administration of the Leisure Centre is taking place with the management contractor SERCO and this matter will be included in discussions.

#### 6f - Explore Innovative Charging Regimes

A report was submitted to Cabinet on 3rd November (minute no. 108) 2005 and Cabinet has approved the use of promotional vouchers as a method of providing flexible car parking and supporting the vitality of the Town Centre. Subsequently, a programme of promotional events that include car parking concessions has recently been published.

The Scrutiny Panel also ask for consideration to 'flexible approaches' for those with mobility difficulties that do not qualify for the blue badge scheme. If a person has a mobility difficulty they can apply for a blue badge in accordance with the rules of the scheme, and it seems unnecessary to implement a scheme out side of the Blue Badge Scheme, which works very well with the exception of criminal fraud being perpetrated i.e. persons using Blue Badges when not the owner and the use of laser printed copies. However in response to the Scrutiny Panel concerns all Car Park Wardens will be reminded of the social responsibilities and instructed to offer assistance to members of the public where it is necessary.

The Scrutiny Panel also ask for consideration to the introduction of a 'grace period' on the expiry of parking tickets. A grace period for parking penalties has never been applied due to it being seen as simply a movement of the parking period deadline and an extension of parking time allowed, and also due to the complications in dealing fairly with appeals from members of the public, who argue for example, on a grace period of 5 minutes, that there was little difference in being 5 minutes late as compared with perhaps 6 minutes so why can't a 6 minute appeal be upheld and the penalty cancelled, especially when the reason for returning late to their car was comparable, accordingly the Deputy Chief Executive considers that it is unnecessary to introduce a grace period.

Officers are also examining proposals for the provision of free car parking for Eco-friendly vehicles e.g. electric, gas/LPG etc. and will, if feasible implement a pilot scheme.

#### 6g - Introduction of Pay on Exit at Beehive Lane and Browns Lane

As the Scrutiny Panel acknowledges the introduction of Pay on Exit would have severe practical difficulties and would incur costs for car park users and tax payers.

In February 1994 the Housing and Public Services Committee approved the pay and display payment method of parking payment as part of the design process (minute 636 refers) and the Beehive Lane car park was designed with that instruction.

The introduction of pay on exit compared with / against pay and display was also considered by Cabinet in November 1999, (minute no. 535 Refers) and new improved pay and display equipment was chosen in favour of pay on exit for the following reasons:-

### Beehive Lane

The entrance to the car park is a single entrance and would have to be redesigned to accommodate a second entrance (in order to ensure adequate traffic flow and receipt of income if one barrier fails).

At busy times delays caused by having to wait to enter the car park could cause gridlock due to the build up of cars at the Beehive lane and Woodgate junction (this is a consideration at the moment even with the ease of access using the pay and display system).

Redesign of the entrance would reduce the number of spaces available by 17 due to the need to revise the traffic flow (this would not only reduce the level of space available but also reduce income).

Furthermore redesign of the entrance and traffic flow would result in the closure of the Woodgate exit, which would be an inconvenience to users who use this exit and may affect the popularity of the car park. In addition the closure of the Woodgate exit would adversely increase the traffic flow onto Southfield Road (Further frustration would be caused by users, who would have previously used the Woodgate exit being unable to leave the car park through the Southfield Road exit when the barriers fails).

Estimates for this proposal are:-

To install the operating machinery necessary to convert Beehive Lane to pay on exit	£55,000 - £60,000
To remodel the entrance / exits, new signage it is expected to cost in the region of	£15,000
The estimated loss of annual income due to the reduction of spaces would be	£10,200
The estimated loss of annual income due to changes in operational practices	£37,000

Whilst considering the conversion of Beehive Lane car park to pay on exit the results of the public consultation should be noted i.e. that overall, an exceedingly high satisfaction level of 86.5% with the current parking facilities in Loughborough has been achieved, and that 39.4% of the public favour pay and display compared with 44.1% preferring pay on exit, a marginal difference of only 2.35%.

Due to the above reasons the continuation of the pay and display parking system at Beehive Lane car park is recommended at the present time.

### Browns Lane

*Many of the comments on pay on exit made for Beehive Lane are also applicable to Browns Lane. However, I have asked officers to examine this point in the major review of the administration of the Leisure Centre and we expect to report in due course.*

### 6h Dedicated Parking Spaces / Discounted Car Parking For Market Traders

*This item has been responded to in a separate report on this Cabinet agenda titled ' Additions and Amendments to Car Parking Practices'.*

### 6i That the Parking Needs of the Market Traders are taken into account in the Atkins Study

*We would like to do this, there will be some difficult practical considerations but we will look into these.*

### Recommendation 7

*That the Cabinet takes urgent action, in conjunction with Loughborough Chamber of Trade, to implement parking related initiatives (for instance 'd' 'e' and 'f' above) as part of a package to promote Loughborough's trading position in the lead up to Christmas*

*A response to this recommendation has been made individually under each of the fore mentioned headings.*

Key Decision: No

### Background Papers:

Cabinet January 2003 Minute 273

Cabinet October 2005 (Car Park Scrutiny Panel Report & Consultation) Minute 108

Cabinet November 1999 Minute 535

Housing & Public Services Committee February 1994 Minute 636

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# BMG Research Report

Leicestershire Town and Village Centres Survey: Loughborough  
October 2006

Prepared for:  
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Leicestershire County  
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Prepared by:  
BMG Research



Because people matter.

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# 1 Introduction

Leicestershire County Council commissioned BMG to conduct a customer satisfaction survey in 17 town and village centres across Leicestershire, to inform the establishment of baselines to support Local Authority Agreement (LAA) work. The intention of the survey has been to understand the issues specific to each settlement with a view to developing action plans for intervention. This report summarises the findings from Loughborough.

## Report contents

Section 2 of this report looks at why respondents visited Loughborough, frequency of visits, attractions and events and what, if anything, would encourage more people to visit the centre on a regular basis. Section 3 examines the attitudes of respondents to the different aspects of Loughborough, considering whether the centre is a good place to shop, work and live as well as discussing the various services available in the area and the surrounding environment. Finally, section 4 looks at how respondents in Loughborough perceived crime and safety, and which issues were seen as big problem areas.

## Sampling methodology

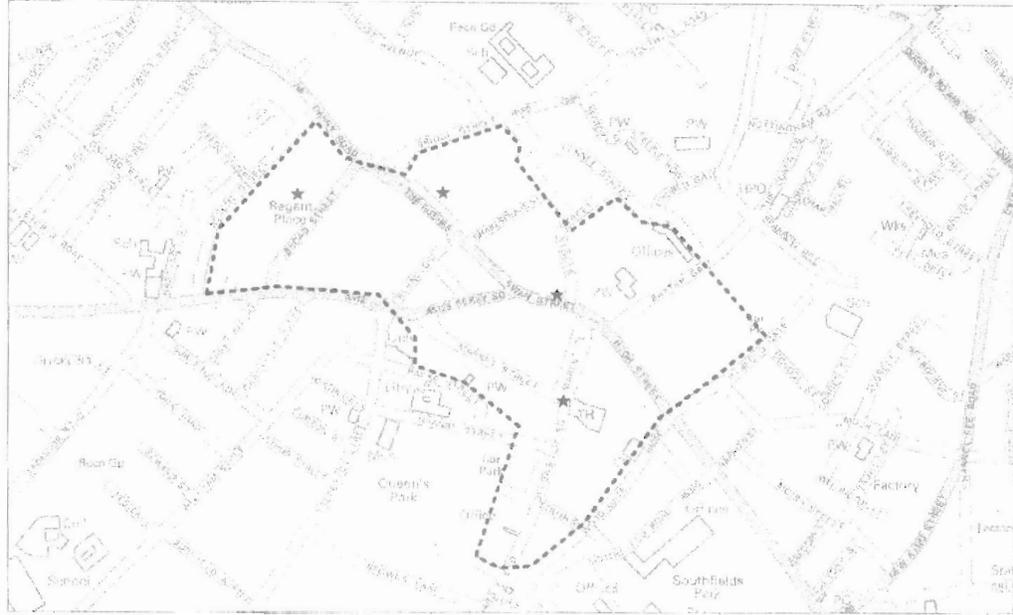
In total, 3000 interviews were planned across the 17 settlements. The sample structure called for a minimum of 100 interviews per settlement, with the remaining 1300 interviews distributed pro-rata on the basis of population size, meaning that the target for some of the villages was only a little over 100 in total, whilst for Loughborough it was over 300. Within the total sample, and for each centre, quotas were also established to control for:

- Age group;
- Ethnicity (white and non-white respondents);
- Gender;
- Interviews conducted on weekdays and Saturdays;
- Interviews conducted during the daytime and evening (after 5.30);
- Interviews conducted on market days and non-market days (where centres had a market).

The client identified a number of locations in the centre of each settlement where interviews took place – these were typically within the main shopping areas, often in or around the main market squares or retail developments. Interviews took place over a six week period through July and August 2006, following a pilot in Loughborough and Shepshed which indicated no problems in delivering the questionnaire.

Below is a map of the sampling points in Loughborough:

Figure 1



Source: Leicestershire County Council

## Respondent Profile

Within Loughborough, 354 interviews were achieved. Of the sample, gender was almost evenly split; 51% being male and 49% female. 15% of respondents in Loughborough were aged 16-24, 34% were aged 25-44, 37% were aged 45-64, with the remaining 10% being of retirement age (65+). As reported by the 2001 Census, within Loughborough 29% of the population were aged between 16-24, 31% were aged between 25-44, 24% were aged between 45-64 and 16% were aged 65 and over.

The majority of respondents in Loughborough (86%) described themselves as white (84% white British and 2% other white background). 4% of respondents described themselves as Indian, 3% Bangladeshi, 1% Pakistani and a further 1% as other Asian background. According to the 2001 Census, 88% of the population of Loughborough described themselves as white.

By economic status, 55% of respondents in Loughborough were in work (50% employed and 5% self-employed). The largest proportion of those respondents not in work were retired (16% of the total Loughborough sample). 12% of respondents were in education or training, 9% of respondents were not in work because they were looking after children or

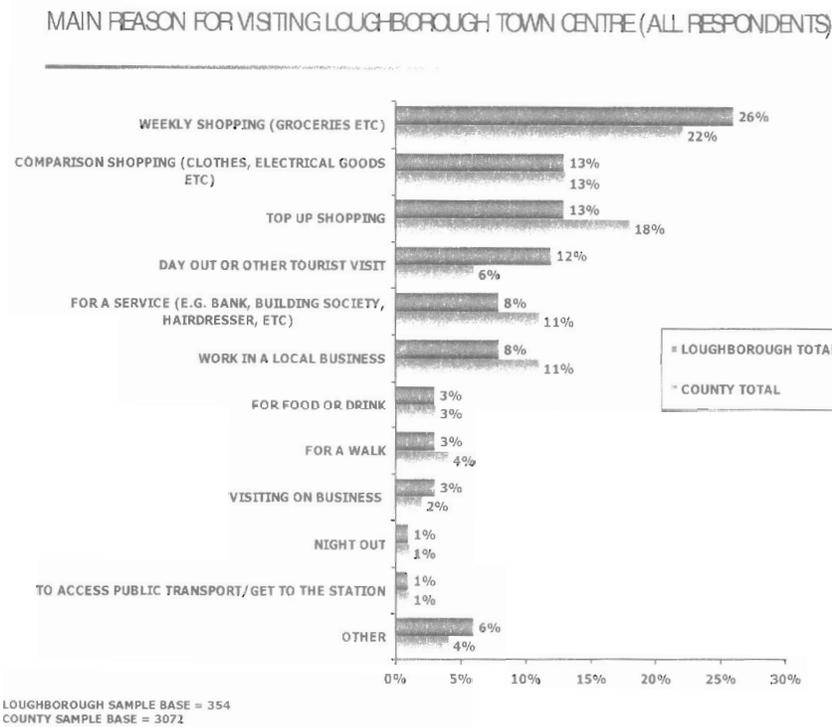
other dependents or the home, whilst 6% were claiming benefits. 3% were not in work due to an illness or disability.

## 2 Visiting the Town Centre

### Visits

This section looks at the reasons why people visited Loughborough, their mode of transport for their visit, the frequency of visits as well as if they had visited attractions and events in the town centre.

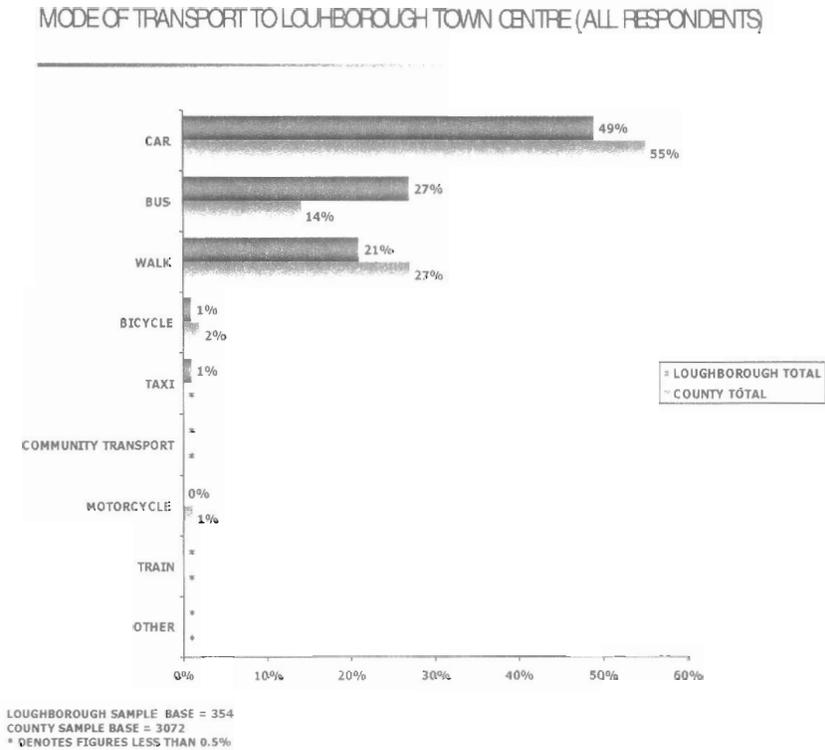
Figure 2



The intention of the survey was to speak to a cross-section of people present in the centres of the towns and villages, who may have been present for a whole range of purposes. Shopping trips of various sorts accounted for just over half of visits to Loughborough (52%), which was similar to the county total (53%). 12% of respondents in Loughborough were visiting the centre as a tourist and 11% were visiting services such as banking. Just less than one in ten were present because they worked in the centre, whilst only a small number of visitors were present primarily for food or drink. It is likely that this would have been a secondary reason for many of the visitors there for other reasons.

### Mode of transport used to get into the centre of town

Figure 3

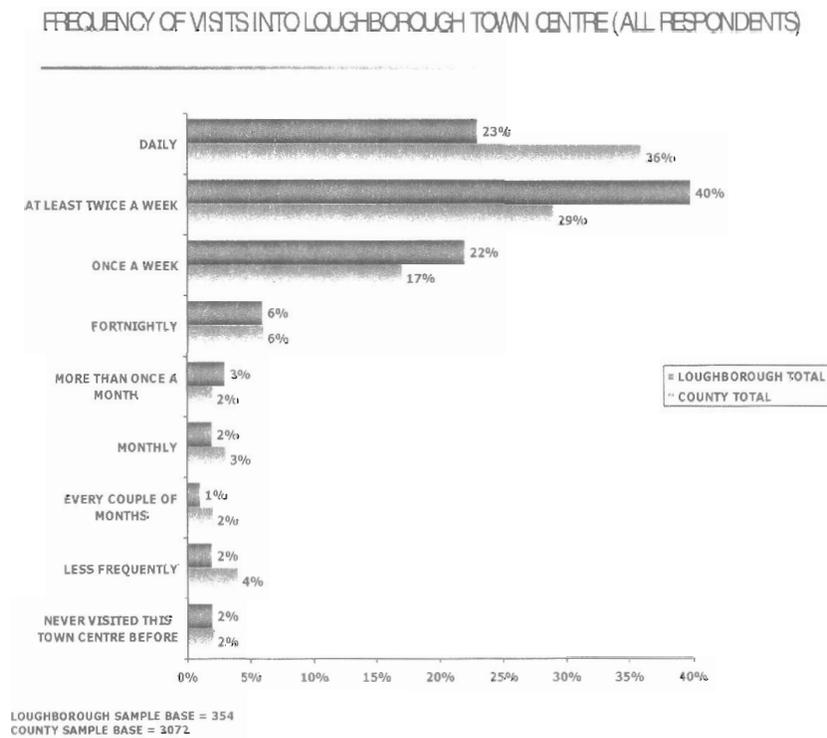


Nearly half of trips into the centre by respondents on the day of the survey were made by car. This was followed by the bus, where over a quarter of respondents used this method (which was higher than the county total of 14%), whilst just over a fifth of respondents walked onto the centre, 1% travelled by bicycle and a further 1% travelled by taxi.

## Frequency of visits

As illustrated in the graph below, two-fifths of respondents reported that they visited the centre at least twice a week (40%), whilst just over a fifth visited daily (23%) and 22% visited once a week. 6% of respondents visited the centre fortnightly whilst 3% visited more than once a month.

Figure 4



Over half of respondents visited Loughborough both at weekends and on weekdays, whilst 29% visited at weekdays. 13% of respondents visited Loughborough at weekends.

The majority of respondents (65%) visited Loughborough during the day (before 5.30pm), with 32% visiting the centre both during the daytime and evening. Only 1% of respondents visited the town centre during the evening (after 5.30pm).

Respondents were asked how often they visited Loughborough town centre in the evening. 15% of respondents visited Loughborough town centre in the evening at least once a week, 11% visited at least twice a week and 12% of respondents visited fortnightly. Saturday and Sunday evenings proved to be a popular day to visit the centre amongst

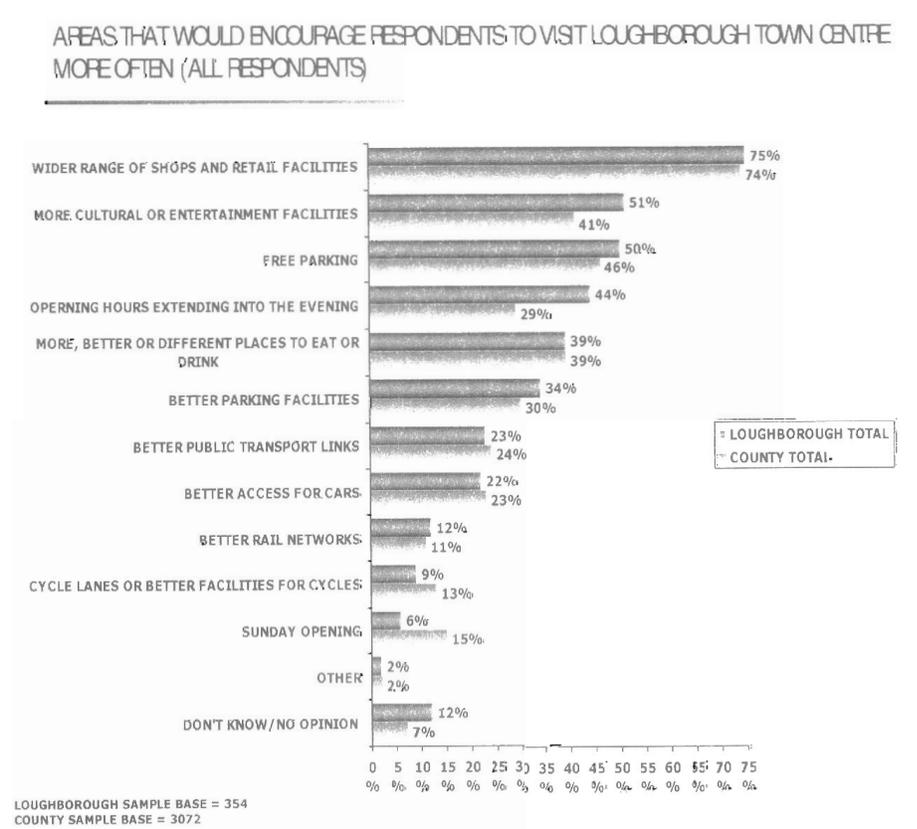
respondents, with 20% choosing to do so, whilst 14% of respondents visited mainly on a Friday evening.

### Encouraging more people to visit the centre

Respondents were asked to identify those issues which would encourage them to visit Loughborough more often. They were able to cite more than one issue. Having a wider range of shops and retail facilities was by far the most significant area that would encourage respondents to visit Loughborough more, with 75% of respondents stating this.

Improvements in cultural and entertainment venues and free parking were also very important, underlining the importance accorded to centres which offer a wider range of activity than merely retail. The extension of opening hours, particularly evening opening, was also important for some visitors.

Figure 5

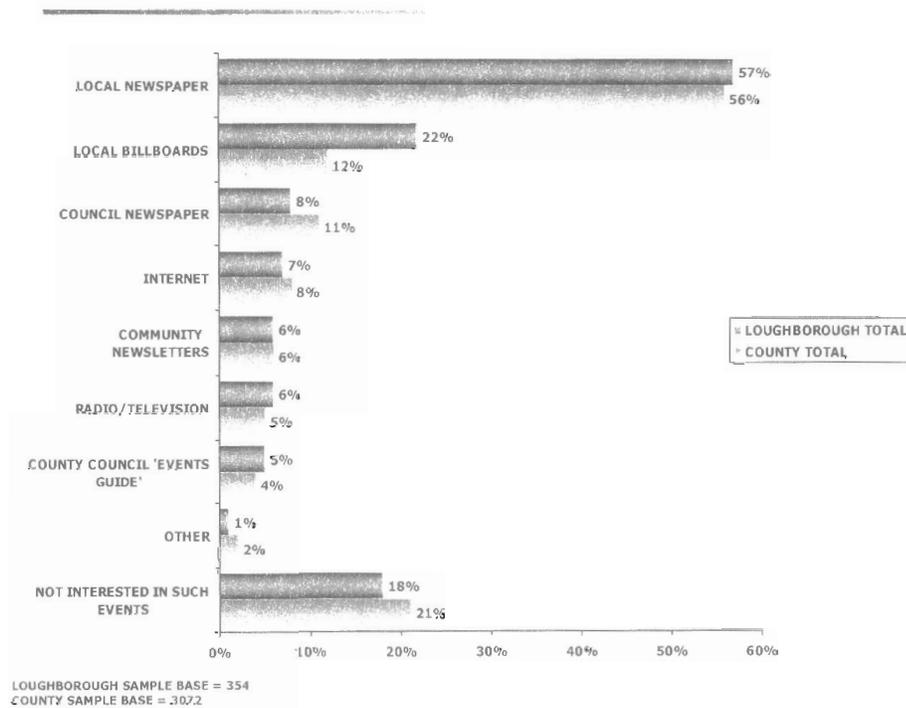


## Attractions and events

As is clear from figure 6 below, local newspapers were overwhelmingly the most likely source of information about local events and attractions taking place in Loughborough, with other sources only modest in their importance by comparison. Notably, local billboards was also a popular method of finding out about events and attractions in Loughborough compared to the rest of the county (22% Loughborough, 12% county total). County Council event guides and radio or television were the least likely methods to be used by respondents to find out about attractions and events in the centre of Loughborough.

Figure 6

METHODS USED TO FIND OUT ABOUT EVENTS AND ATTRACTIONS IN THE CENTRE OF LOUGHBOROUGH TOWN CENTRE (ALL RESPONDENTS)



When respondents were questioned about whether they had attended any events in the town centre recently, only 14% said that they had. Of these 14%, 17 people said they had attended the fair in the centre of Loughborough, 5 people said that they had attended various festivals, 6 people cited the town hall concert and a further 6 people had attended a theatre show or play. 10 people said they had attended another event in the town.

Respondents were asked what made the town centre unique, different or special in Loughborough. Just over one in ten (11%) cited the culture of Loughborough as a distinguishing feature, followed by that it was a safe area and that it has low crime levels (3%), events (2%) and that it was quiet and peaceful (2%). Other notable responses included:

- Architecture/buildings (1%);
- Attractive and pleasant appearance (1%);
- Bell Street (1%);
- Born here/live here (1%);
- Cleanliness (1%);
- Friendly (1%);
- Melton Mowbray pork pies (1%);
- Museums (1%);
- Students/student life (1%);
- The history/heritage (1%);
- The layout (1%); and
- The size (1%).

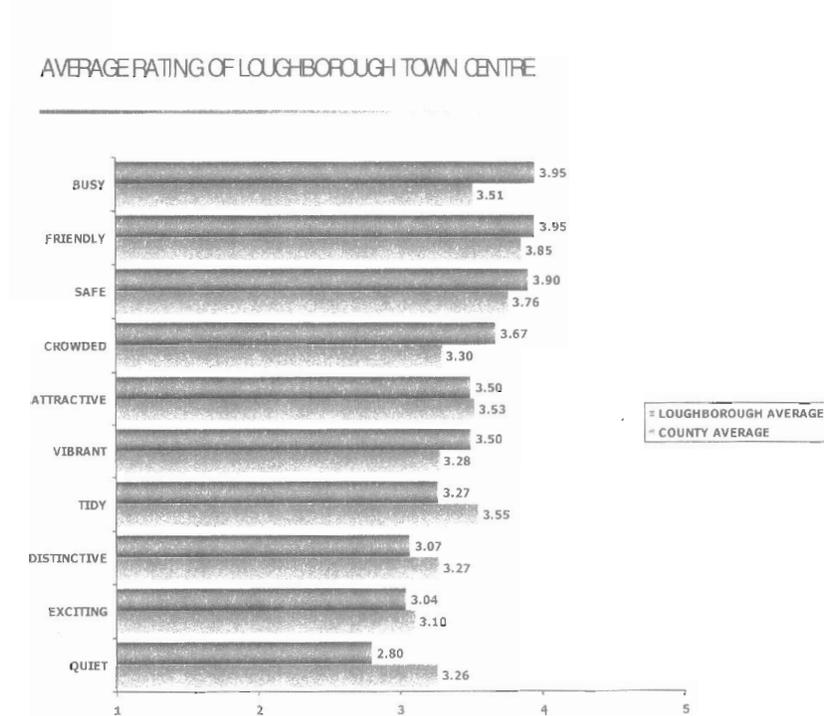
### 3 Attitude towards the centre

This section examines the attitudes of respondents to the different aspects of Loughborough, considering whether the centre is a good place to shop, work and live as well as discussing the different services available in the area.

#### Description and attitudes towards the centre

Respondents were asked to say to what extent they agreed with a series of words to describe Loughborough on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 was strongly disagree and 5 was strongly agree. Overall, Loughborough was most likely to be described as 'busy', 'friendly', 'safe' and 'crowded' At the opposite end of the spectrum, Loughborough was least likely to be described as 'quiet' and 'exciting'.

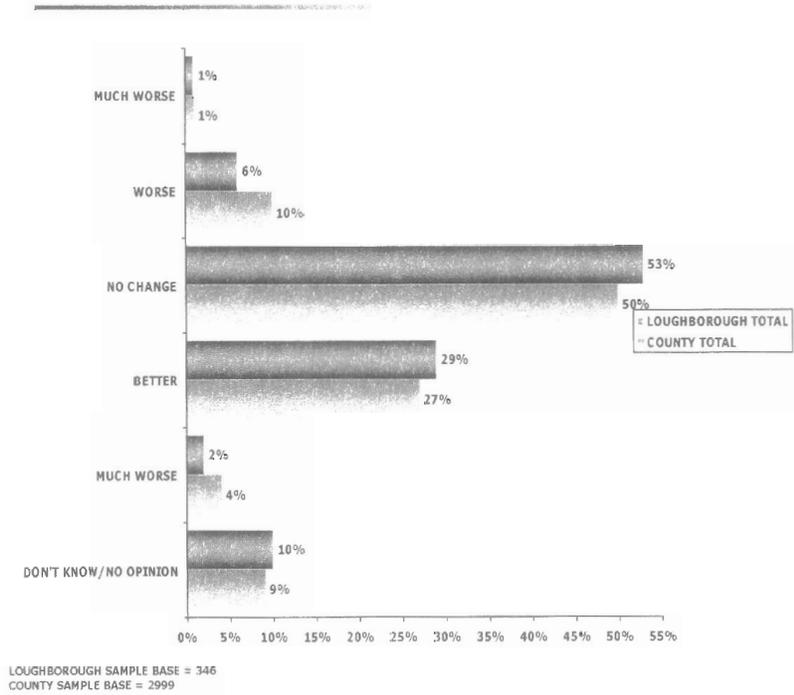
Figure 7



Whilst 52% of respondents didn't report any overall change in Loughborough, 29% believed that it had improved compared to 6% who thought it had got worse, as shown below:

Figure 8

WHETHER LOUGHBOROUGH TOWN CENTRE HAS GOT BETTER OR WORSE WITHIN THE LAST 12 MONTHS



All respondents were asked for their view on how well Loughborough served different groups in the population. The results for each of these groups are shown in Table 1 below. It was clear that amongst the total population of respondents in Loughborough, there was greater concern about how the centre served young people than for any other group. 11% of respondents thought the centre was very poor or poor for young people. Respondents tended to think that the best served groups were shoppers and visitors.

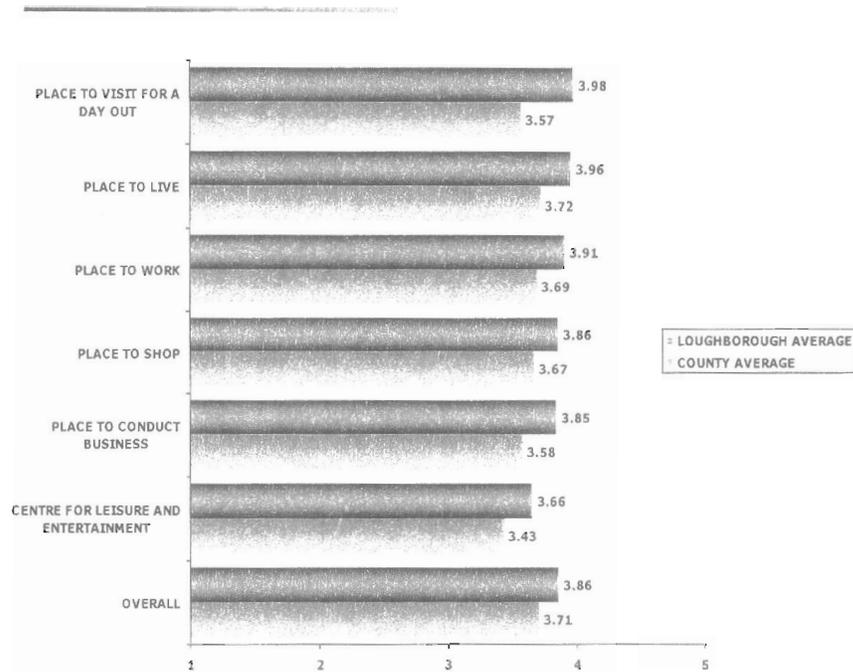
Table 1

RATING OF LOUGHBOROUGH FOR VARIOUS GROUPS							
	Very Poor	Poor	Neither good nor poor	Good	Very good	DK/no opinion	Mean score
	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Visitors	0	4	22	62	10	4	3.80
Shoppers	0	3	22	64	8	3	3.80
People with disabilities	0	3	25	48	9	15	3.73
Elderly people	0	5	26	51	8	11	3.70
Families	0	5	26	56	8	5	3.70
Young people	1	11	22	50	6	11	3.55
<b>SAMPLE BASE: 354</b>							

## How good are the centres as places for particular activities?

Figure 9

### RATING OF LOUGHBOROUGH AS A PLACE TO LIVE, WORK, SHOP, ETC (ALL RESPONDENTS)

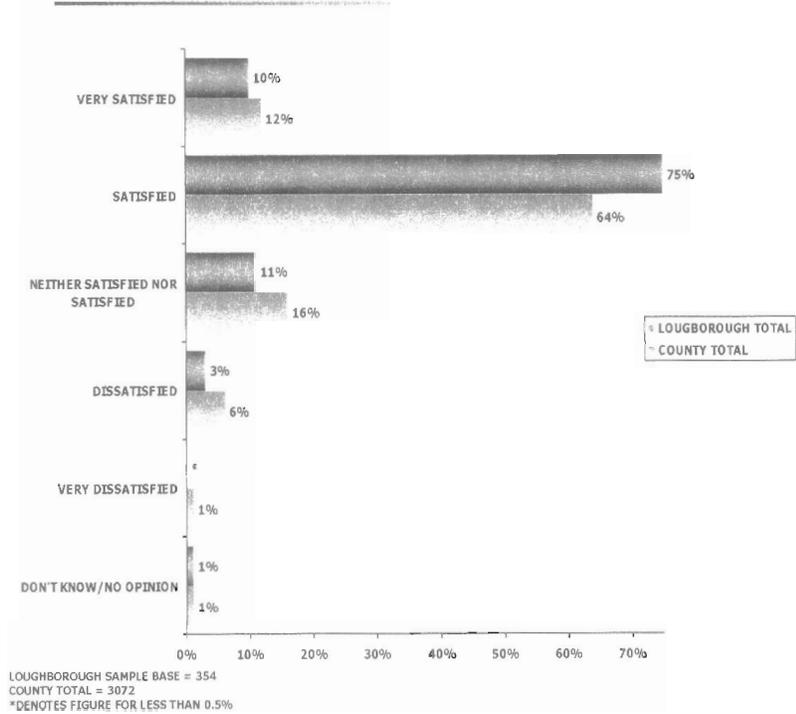


Overall, on a scale of 1 to 5 where 5 is the most positive score, Loughborough was rated 3.86, which was slightly higher than the county average of 3.71 - that is they are well above average, good but not very good. Loughborough scored very highly compared to the rest of the county on all accounts. Most notably, Loughborough was considered as a good place to visit for a day out compared to the rest of the county (3.98 Loughborough, 3.57 county).

Overall, satisfaction was very high amongst respondents as they considered Loughborough a good place to shop, visit and to do business. The graph below demonstrates that the overall level of satisfaction for Loughborough was higher than the total for the county.

Figure 10

OVERALL SATISFACTION WITH LOUGHBOROUGH AS A GOOD PLACE TO SHOP, VISIT AND TO DO BUSINESS (ALL RESPONDENTS)

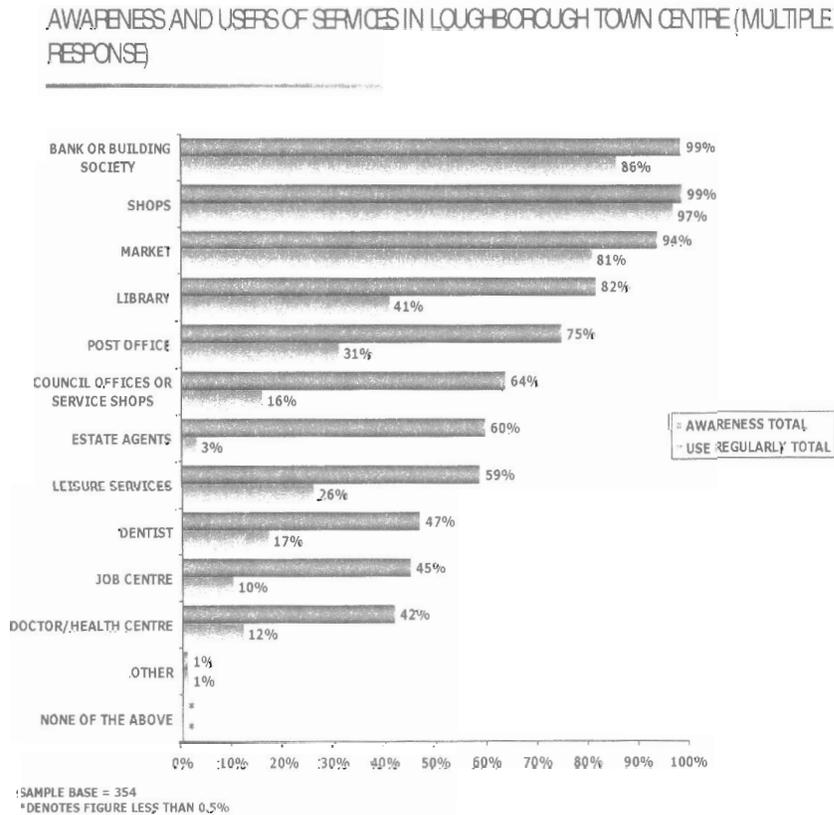


### Services available in the centre

Services available in the centre of Loughborough were rated on the basis of awareness and on how often respondents used them.

As shown below respondents were more likely to be aware of services such as banks & building societies, shops and markets and these were the services which were also most regularly used. However, there were some services that people were aware of but were less likely to be regular users of. For example 82% of respondents were aware that there is a library in Loughborough but only 41% used the service. Furthermore, respondents were aware of health services within the centre of Loughborough but fewer people used them on a regular basis - 47% of respondents were aware that there was a dentist in Loughborough and only 17% were regular users, whilst 42% of respondents were aware of a doctor's or health centre in Loughborough, but 12% of respondents were regular users.

Figure 11

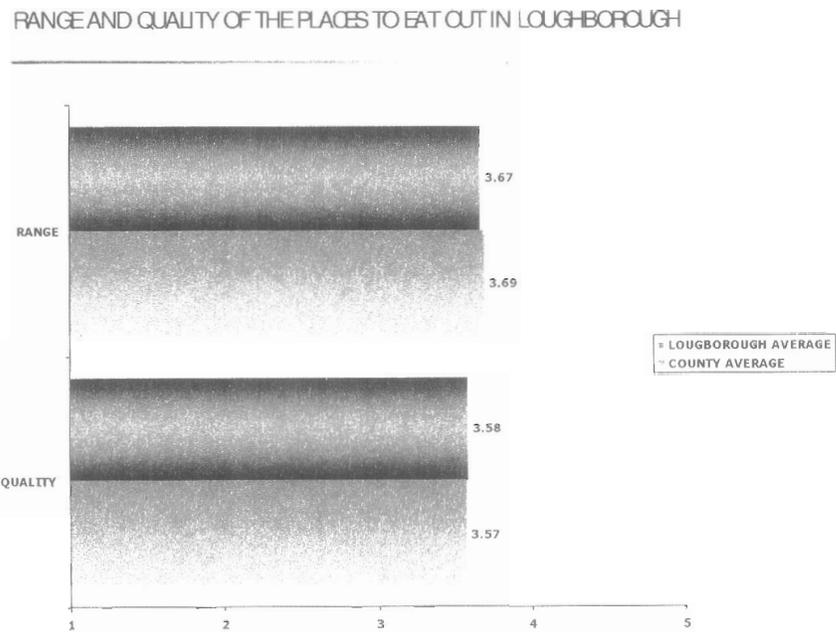


Respondents were questioned as to their opinions about the market in Loughborough. The majority (67%) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that there was a wide range of products available to buy in the market.

60% of respondents in Loughborough said that the variety of the retail outlets and shops in the centre met their needs very well or quite well, whilst 11% said it did not meet their needs.

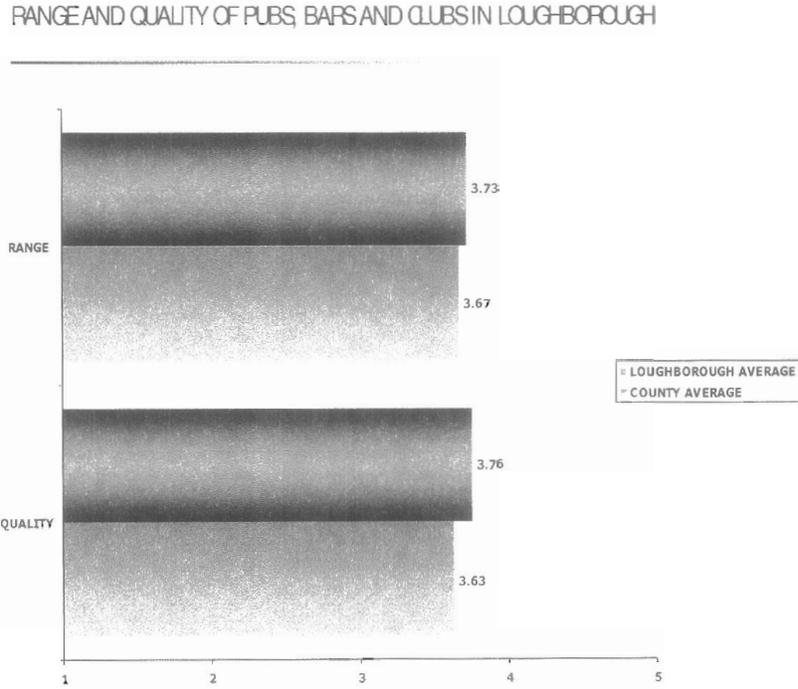
Respondents were asked to rate the quality of places to eat out in Loughborough on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 was very poor and 5 was very good. Respondents tended to be more positive about the range than the quality as shown in figure 12. This was the same on a county-wide position.

Figure 12



Respondents were then asked to rate the range and quality of pubs, bars and clubs in Loughborough on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 was very poor and 5 was very good. Respondents were slightly more positive about the quality than the range of pubs, bars and clubs in Loughborough, as shown below. This was a reversal of the county-wide position, although the real differences are small.

Figure 13



## Town Centre Environment

Respondents were given a series of statements about the environment of the town centre and asked whether they agreed or disagreed with them.

Table 2

<b>WHETHER RESPONDENTS AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS ABOUT THE CENTRE OF LOUGHBOROUGH</b>						
	<b>Disagree Strongly</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Agree strongly</b>	<b>Mean score</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	
The parks are well maintained	0	5	27	53	12	3.74
Shop fronts are well maintained	0	5	27	59	7	3.70
Pedestrian signage is relevant, clear and easy to understand	0	3	34	52	9	3.68
Street lighting is good	0	4	36	46	9	3.63
The centre is well planted in summertime	0	7	35	44	10	3.58
There is sufficient seating in and around the centre	1	16	18	57	5	3.51
Seating in and around shopping areas is well maintained	1	14	30	42	10	3.49
The baby changing facilities provided are clean and tidy	1	2	26	20	2	3.40
Pavements and walkways are safe and well maintained	0	12	44	35	8	3.39
There are enough public toilets	2	7	42	32	8	3.39
The public toilets are clean and tidy	2	13	35	31	10	3.37
The design and layout of the centre is attractive	0	20	32	38	9	3.36
There are enough baby changing facilities	2	7	25	16	4	3.24
Pavements and walkways are clean and tidy	1	27	30	34	7	3.19
<b>SAMPLE BASE: 354</b>						

Overall, respondents had positive views about the environment and facilities available in the centre of Loughborough. Respondents felt that the shop fronts were well maintained (66% agreed or agreed strongly), the parks were well maintained (65%) and there was sufficient seating in and around the centre (62%). Respondents tended to disagree

pavements and walkways were clean and tidy in the centre of Loughborough (28% disagreed or disagreed strongly), the design and layout of the centre was attractive (20%) and the public toilets were clean and tidy (17%).

Respondents were then asked to respond to a series of statements about aspects in and around the centre of Loughborough and asked whether they agreed or disagreed with them.

Table 3

<b>WHETHER RESPONDENTS AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS ABOUT ASPECTS IN AND AROUND THE CENTRE OF LOUGHBOROUGH</b>						
	<b>Disagree Strongly</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Agree strongly</b>	<b>Mean score</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	
The centre could do with more high street chain stores	0	7	20	55	14	3.78
Car parking costs too much	2	7	18	37	14	3.69
The centre needs more local, independent shops	1	6	27	50	12	3.69
Pedestrians can walk around the centre without feeling threatened by traffic	0	8	28	51	11	3.66
Road signs make it easy for cars to access the centre	0	5	37	37	10	3.57
Roads in the centre are congested	0	11	32	38	11	3.55
The centre is accessible for disabled people and older people	1	2	48	35	6	3.48
It is easy for drivers to find the car parks around the centre	0	11	35	33	8	3.45
Roads in the centre are well maintained	0	8	43	34	7	3.43
The road network provides easy access into the centre	1	9	39	34	6	3.41
The level of service in shops is of a high standard	1	7	48	38	5	3.41
There is too much traffic noise in the centre	3	21	38	29	8	3.19
There is enough car parking available	3	23	24	26	5	3.07
There is too much other noise (music, pubs and clubs) in the centre	1	39	33	18	6	2.87
<b>SAMPLE BASE: 354</b>						

As demonstrated in the above table 69% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the centre could do with more high street chain stores – the statement on this list with which respondents most strongly agreed. In descending order of agreement, this was the centre needs more local, independent shops (62%), pedestrians can walk around without feeling threatened by traffic (62%) and car parking costs too much (61%). Two-fifths of respondents (40%) disagreed with the statement that there was too much other noise (music, pubs and clubs) in the centre.

Respondents were given a list of options and asked to say which issues they thought most needed attention in Loughborough. The most frequently cited responses were a greater range of shops (62%), more specialist shops (59%) and the cleanliness of the centre (51%). When asked to prioritise their *top three* areas of improvement, respondents cited a greater range of shops (52%), the cleanliness and tidiness of the centre (41%) and more specialist shops (37%).

## 4 Crime and safety

This section looks at how respondents in Loughborough perceived crime and safety, and which issues were seen as big problem areas.

As shown in the table below, of a series of issues on which the opinion of respondents was sought, rubbish and litter was lying around was seen as a big problem by the largest proportion of respondents in Loughborough (26% considered this a very big problem or big problem). This was followed by dirty pavements and chewing gum (25%) and street canvassers (15%). Areas that were seen as less of a problem included assaults and other violent crime such as personal robberies and muggings (85% considered this either not a problem, or only a small problem), racial harassment (85%) and vehicles being stolen (85%).

Table 4

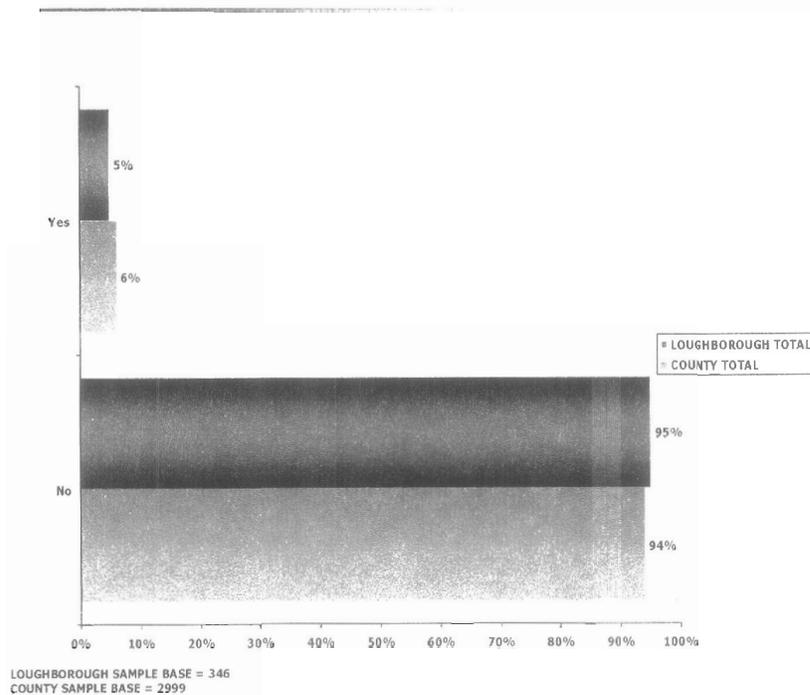
AREAS THAT ARE SEEN AS PROBLEMS IN THE CENTRE OF LOUGHBOROUGH						
	Very big problem	Big Problem	Neither big nor small	Small Problem	Not a problem at all	Mean score
	%	%	%	%	%	
Racial harassment	0	0	5	31	54	4.53
Vehicles being stolen	0	2	5	35	50	4.46
Assaults and other violent crime (personal robbery, mugging)	0	1	8	35	50	4.42
Property being stolen from a vehicle	0	3	7	35	47	4.37
Verbal abuse or other aggressive behaviour	0	3	10	34	47	4.33
People using or dealing drugs	1	3	9	29	42	4.32
Aggressive begging	1	2	9	37	45	4.31
Road safety or speeding	0	1	14	33	46	4.31
Personal theft (pick pocketing)	0	3	9	37	42	4.30
Fly tipping	0	5	12	33	46	4.24
People not treating each other with respect and consideration	1	3	14	40	38	4.18
People being drunk or rowdy in public spaces	1	5	14	36	40	4.15
Vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to	1	4	18	35	38	4.11

property or vehicles						
Groups of people hanging round the streets	2	10	21	33	32	3.86
Street canvassers	1	14	21	23	34	3.81
Dirty pavements and chewing gum	8	17	19	29	25	3.47
Rubbish and litter lying around	10	17	22	25	24	3.37
<b>SAMPLE BASE: 354</b>						

Respondents were questioned about whether they had ever felt worried about being assaulted or harassed in Loughborough within the last 12 months. 95% of respondents said that they had not felt worried about being assaulted or harassed as figure 14 illustrates.

Figure 14

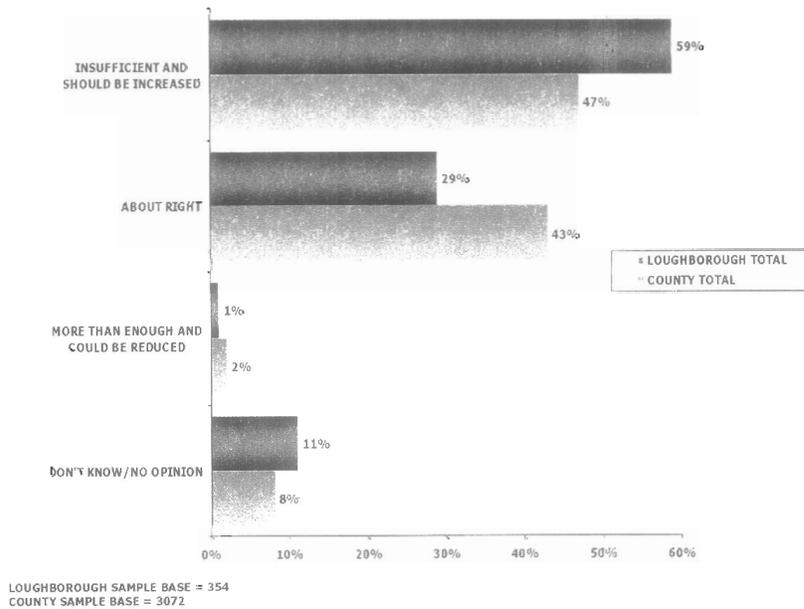
WHETHER RESPONDENTS HAVE EVER FELT WORRIED ABOUT BEING ASSAULTED OR HARASSED WHILST IN THE CENTRE OF LOUGHBOROUGH IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS



Although the majority of respondents said that they were not worried about being assaulted or harassed, 59% felt that the police presence in the centre was insufficient and should be increased, whilst 29% felt that it was about right.

Figure 15

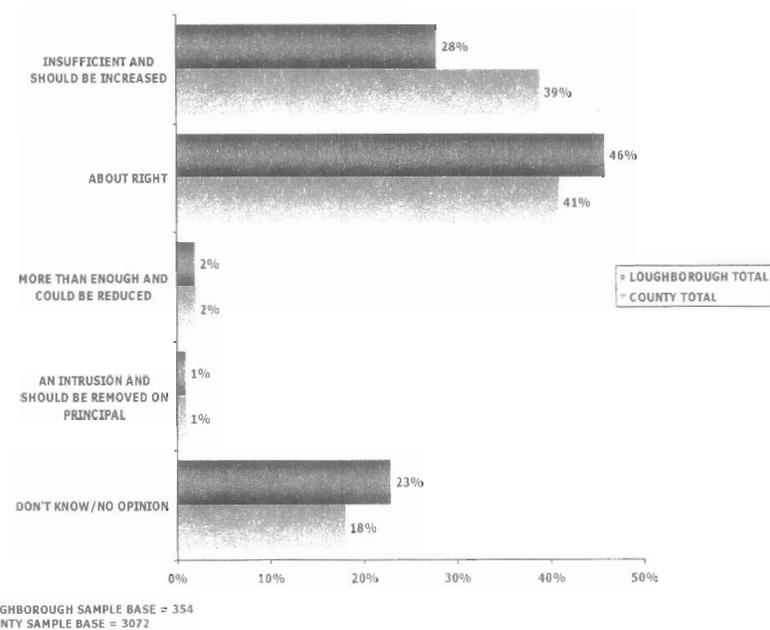
PERCEPTIONS OF POLICE PRESENCE IN THE CENTRE OF LOUGHBOROUGH



When questioned about the presence of CCTV in Loughborough, 46% of respondents felt it was about right, which was slightly higher than the county total of 41%. 28% of respondents said the presence of CCTV was insufficient and should be increased.

Figure 16

PERCEPTIONS OF CCTV PRESENCE IN THE CENTRE OF LOUGHBOROUGH



## 5 Summary

### Visiting the centre

- Shopping trips accounted for 52% of the trips to Loughborough.
- 12% of respondents were a tourist in Loughborough whilst 11% of respondents were using a service.
- A large proportion of visitors arrived in Loughborough by car, with the second most common method being the bus and the third being on foot.
- Two-fifths of respondents visited the centre at least twice a week.
- A wider range of shops and retail facilities, more cultural or entertainment facilities and free parking were the improvements most likely to encourage more people to come to Loughborough more often.

### Attractions and events

- The local newspaper was identified as the most widely used method for finding out about attractions and events in the centre, whilst the least used methods were the County Council's events guide and radio or television
- Only 14% of respondents had attended an event in the centre.

### Attitudes towards the centre

- Overall, Loughborough was most likely to be described as 'attractive', 'friendly', 'safe', 'busy', and 'crowded'.
- 52% of respondents reported no change in the centre of Loughborough within the last 12 months, whilst 29% of respondents reported the centre had got better and 6% said it had got worse.
- Respondents felt that the centre catered better for shoppers and visitors than it did for young people.

### Services available in the centre

- Banks & building societies, shops and the market were the top three services that respondents were most aware of and were most likely to use on a regular basis in Loughborough.
- The majority of respondents agreed that there was a range of products available to buy in the market.
- 60% of respondents in Loughborough said the variety of retail outlets and shops in the centre met their needs.

## Town Centre environment

- Overall, respondents were positive about the environment and facilities in and around the centre.
- Respondents felt that shop fronts were well maintained, parks were well maintained and there was sufficient seating in and around the town centre.
- Having a greater range of shops, the cleanliness and tidiness of the town centre and more specialist shops were seen as the areas that needed the most improvement.

## Crime and safety

- Rubbish and litter lying around, dirty pavements and chewing gum and street canvassers were seen as the most significant problems in Loughborough.
- Assaults and other violent crimes, racial harassment and vehicles being stolen were not seen as a problem, or seen only as a small problem in Loughborough.
- 95% of respondents said that they had not felt worried about being assaulted or harassed while in the centre within the last 12 months.
- Nearly three-fifths of respondents said policing in Loughborough was insufficient and should be increased whereas 29% said it was about right.
- 46% of respondents felt that the CCTV presence in Loughborough was about right whilst 28% felt it was insufficient and should be increased.

## 6 Conclusions and recommendations

- Overall, respondents were positive about Loughborough. 85% of respondents were very satisfied or satisfied with Loughborough as a place to shop, visit and to do business. Moreover, although the majority of respondents reported no change within the last 12 months, 31% reported that the centre had got better or much better.
- Many respondents were aware of services such as the bank or building society, shops, the market and the library in Loughborough.
- Findings indicated that Loughborough catered better for shoppers and visitors than it did for young people. This shows how the centre serves different groups of people.
- The cleanliness of pavements and walkways, the design and layout of the centre and public toilets were areas identified by respondents as being inadequate.
- Respondents called for a greater range of shops and more specialist shops within Loughborough. In addition, improving the cleanliness and tidiness was also cited.
- In terms of crime and safety issues, rubbish and litter lying around, dirty pavements and chewing gum and street canvassers were seen as big problem areas by the largest proportion of respondents in Loughborough.

## Minutes of Meeting

Job Number: A033770

Title: **LOUGHBOROUGH PARKING STRATEGY**

Name Of Meeting: Stakeholder Workshop

Meeting Held At: Borough Council Offices, Southfields, Loughborough

Date And Time: 13th December 2006 @ 18.00

Minutes Taken By: Rob Holland

Attendees:

Apologies:

Distribution: All attendees and invitees

Date Of Next Meeting:

Date Of Issue:

File Reference: A033770

The following list summarises the comments made by stakeholders during the presentation and workshop on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> December 2006.

## 1. Amount of Parking

Concessionary travel encourages more trips by public transport. Kinchbus have 30% more pensioners with free local bus travel. Uncertainty as to whether these are replacing car trips or are newly generated trips.

Location of car parks is considered good for the less able bodied as they are conveniently located within walking distance of key destinations.

A reduction in the amount of on-street parking and wider footways would encourage more trips to be made on foot and by cycle. Wards End is considered to be particularly unsafe in this respect but needs for loading/unloading must be considered.

Free on-street parking encourages traffic to circulate the town searching for a space rather than paying for parking in car parks. Circulating traffic is considered a problem.

The Town Centre Group consider that cars should be given lowest priority in comparison to other modes of travel for accessing the town centre.

It is important to consider the type of space as well as the number of spaces, for example short and long stay spaces. Although over 7000 parking spaces looks good we need to look at the availability and type of provision.

Differing opinions were raised regarding the effect loss of on-street parking would have on retail. A view was raised that along Baxter Gate where on-street parking has been removed the effect on retail has been negative. Concern was raised that this may happen along Wards End with the MP proposals where a large proportion of trade is from people using on-street parking. It was suggested that the habit of parking directly outside of a particular shop needs to be broken.

Links from the Browns Lane car park to the town centre should be improved. An improved footway/cycle link through the park was suggested.

Signing should be improved to make drivers aware of which car parks are short stay and which are long stay. A further comment was made regarding specific signing for motorcyclists to reduce the amount of time spent circulating for an available space.

The Police indicated that a key factor in the usage of car parks was security. It was stated that the crime rate at the Beehive Lane car park is low.

It was stated that the reason behind the high satisfaction amongst car park users was attributable to factors such as security, cleanliness, and lighting.

**Action**

Large scale investment is focused primarily into Nottingham, Derby, and Leicester. There is concern from retailers that Loughborough may fall behind as a result. A loss of on-street parking would accentuate this. Further concern expressed regarding competition from Fosse Park. As a result parking in Loughborough needs to be 'cheap and plentiful'. The need to model future parking needs taking into account competition from the 3 Cities and Fosse Park was raised.

The view was expressed that parking is a secondary consideration after choice of shops. Loughborough needs to find its niche in the market. Additional view expressed that the cost of parking was less of an issue than the choice of shops. Further opinion raised that Loughborough offers things that the '3 cities' don't such as food shopping and a market. Some consider that the same people would still shop in Loughborough regardless of whether or not it has a market.

Reference was made to the indications in Regional Planning guidance that car parking should not be increased in order to help encourage use of other modes.

## **2. Location/Distribution of Car Parks**

A general query was made regarding the possibility of having a park and ride site in Loughborough as it often takes too long to get in and out of the town centre. The view was expressed that whilst there are so many public and Private spaces in the town centre people won't use a park and ride facility.

A view was expressed that it can be difficult to find a car park when approaching the town from the west along Ashby Road due to poor signage.

The Town Team support the idea of a good standard of peripheral car parks.

It was queried whether or not commuter parking would be covered in the parking strategy.

Concern was raised that commerce may leave the centre of town as it has done in Leicester where businesses have relocated to Meridian Business Park.

Increase focus needs to be given to improving public transport. It was stated that public transport services from Loughborough tend to decrease in frequency after 17:00.

Granby St considered to serve an important function and its presence should be maintained

## **3. Quality of Car Parks**

The appearance of the Beehive Lane car park is attractive whereas the appearance of The Rushes car park is considered unattractive.

An extension to the Sainsbury car park and superstore was recently rejected by the company.

It was stated that the CCTV cameras at the Beehive Lane car park are not viewed

after 6pm. Car park CCTV needs to be managed as part of the wider town centre provision.

A view was expressed that less people visit Loughborough in the evenings than perhaps could do.

A member of the Motorcycle User Group considered that motorcycle thefts are high. Study needs to take account of published guidance (copy provided) to ensure provision is secure and observed. Good provision in Beehive Lane but nothing available in Baxter Gate area.

There is a lack of secure parking at the Baxter Gate end of town.

Parking charges are reviewed on an annual basis and a decision is made based upon what the market will stand and the budget available.

A pay and display method of payment can be problematic when people do not have the correct change.

The minimum charge for a bus into town is £1.20. When compared to car parking fees this is considered to be an unattractive option.

Demand for cycle stands is evident during the Summer when cycles are chained to railings and lamp posts because of a lack of cycle stands/appropriately located cycle stands.

Market Street and Ashby Road are primary routes for cycling into Loughborough for students. Market Street in particular is considered to offer a poor standard of provision for cyclists.

Cycle stands are sometimes positioned too close to buildings and other cycle stands. A good example of this is in the vicinity of the college.

#### **4. Tariff Structures**

Competition from other cities and the internet needs to be recognised.

Retailers prefer pay on foot rather than pay and display. Pay on foot allows shoppers to spend as much time as they like browsing the shops without having to return to their cars by a certain time. If people spend more time browsing they spend more money. The retailers would prefer new car parks to be pay on foot.

However, other stakeholders considered that the results of the report were not as conclusive as they had been portrayed. Issue for car parks where there is a 2 hour maximum stay and pay and display ensures spaces turn over during the day. Concerns that pay on foot would result in a loss of security staff patrolling each car park. Where crime is low security staff were considered to have a key role in this. Whilst there appeared to be a good argument for pay on foot this was not supported by strong evidence.

Overall stakeholder dislike how income from fines generated by car parking is used

by the Council. It was then stated that if income generated from fines is not retained like at present the parking tariffs would need to increase.

In Birmingham and Lincoln a system has been introduced whereby people can 'top up' their pay and display ticket using their mobile phone.

It was stated that people who park in The Rushes tend to do so for 2 hours or less.

There is confusion as to how much to pay when arriving at pay and display car parks at certain times of the day. For example if someone arrives at 17:30 the daily rate still applies but at 18:00 the evening charge of 50p begins.

The question was raised as to whether retailers could be charged a specific rate per year to enable free parking in public car parks for shoppers. There was a counter view that as bus fares were so high there was a case for subsidising them.

## **5. Longer Term Issues**

Civil Parking Enforcement will force people to park in the town centre rather than in residential areas as they do at the moment.

Ashby Road is considered to be one of many hazardous areas in terms of road safety.

Civil Parking Enforcement will be cost neutral. The number of enforcement officers will be similar to when the number of traffic wardens were at their peak.

Draft RSS indicates zero traffic growth by 2026

## **6. Other Issues**

The appropriateness of locating a new car park in the vicinity of Pinfold Gate and also expanding the Browns Lane car park was questioned.

The location of future car parks should depend on ease of access to town centre and road network and to the distance to walk into town.

In the past the integration of the Somerfield car park with the Granby Street car park was considered. However this was not included in the Town Centre Masterplan. A request was made for this to be reviewed again as part of the parking strategy.

WYG were invited to attend the next Chamber of Trade meeting scheduled for 15<sup>th</sup> January 2007.

## Minutes of Meeting

Job Number: A033770

Title: **LOUGHBOROUGH PARKING STRATEGY**

Name Of Meeting: Chamber of Trade Presentation and Workshop

Meeting Held At: Ramada Hotel, Loughborough

Date And Time: 15<sup>th</sup> January 2007 @ 18:00

Minutes Taken By: Rob Holland

Attendees: Colin Shields (WYG), Rob Holland (WYG), Brian McInnes (Astra Zeneca), Thomas Baldry (Oak 107 FM), Eddie Startup (Oak 107 FM), Stephen Foster (Rent-A-Washa), Paul Hull (Pell Telecom), Richard Hood (Brian Mee Associates Ltd), Maggie Robinson (M Powered Coaching), Phil Cutler (Charnwood Funerals), Jim Harkness (Travail Employment Group), Alvin Bailiss (Zodiac Recruitment), Baljit Kooner (Carillon Court), Stuart Simpson (Rainbow International), Robert White (R and J Antiques), Gareth Bowen (HSBC), David Pagett-Wright (Moss Solicitors), John Ashford (Bartholomugh), David Exley (The Rushes), Vicki Brind (Carillon Windows), Adrian McInness (William Davis)

Apologies:

Distribution: Jonathan Hale (CBC), Kevin Biddulph (CBC), Tony Herrington (CBC)

Date Of Next Meeting: NA

Date Of Issue: 16<sup>th</sup> January 2007

File Reference: A033770

The following summarises the comments made by attendees at the Chamber of Trade presentation and workshop:-

1. The results of the user surveys of Loughborough carried out by CBC do not reflect public opinion. Request made that retailer and shopper surveys are carried out as part of the study.
2. Concern that trade is being lost to Nottingham, Derby, and Leicester. This situation will worsen as financial investment is primarily given to the 3 cities rather than Loughborough.
3. The cost of introducing pay on exit at existing car parks isn't as high as the Council lead people to believe. There was strong support for a pay on exit method of payment as it is believed that people will spend longer in Loughborough than they do under the existing pay and display method of payment.
4. Concern that the additional 200 spaces identified for the next 10 years in the Masterplan will prove insufficient. Accessibility was seen as a key advantage Loughborough has over the 3 cities. The location and tariff structure of existing car parking is considered to be good. Relocating car parking to the edge of town is considered problematic. Browns Lane Car Park is considered to be too far from the town centre and not an adequate replacement for a possible loss of parking at Granby Street Car Park.
5. Concern relating to the phasing of new development and car parking e.g. whilst the new magistrates court is under construction there is reduced parking at Pinfold Gate but no alternative.
6. A mixture of on-street, surface level, and multi-storey car parking should be provided at Wards End.
7. Rationalising existing car parking as identified in the Masterplan is not a reflection of the views made by traders over the last 2 years. Parts of the Masterplan are not a reflection of the views of the town team made to CBC e.g. cars should be given the lowest priority of all modes of travel available.
8. Bedford Square should be made an arrival space. Rationalise what is there and keep an element of parking.
9. Privately maintained cycle parking should be considered as well as Council maintained cycle parking.
10. Some disagreement as to whether Regent Place is really a town centre car park.
11. There is a view that the number of on-street car parking spaces has decreased over the last 10 years.
12. Recent changes along Baxter Gate are not believed to be a major cause for the closure of some businesses here.
13. If surveys reveal that some car parks have spare capacity this should be treated with caution as these car parks may not be conveniently located.
14. The study should consider more than the hard facts as there is concern that this could result in Loughborough entering a downward spiral. The uniqueness of Loughborough should be considered and the direction it wishes to move in i.e. does Loughborough want to compete with the 3 cities and attract the larger retailers or does it want to attract the smaller specialist retailers. Edge of town car parks are suitable for shoppers wishing to use the larger stores but on-street parking is important to specialist retailers.
15. Parking is considered to be one of the factors that makes Loughborough attractive.
16. Management at Carillon Court Car Park has been campaigning for VMS signing for

**Action**

the previous 4 years. They're willing to provide financial input but suggest that assistance (non financial) from the Council has not been forthcoming.

17. A view was expressed that parking isn't the reason why people chose to shop elsewhere (Nottingham, Derby, Leicester). The main reason is that the retail offering isn't good enough in Loughborough.
18. The Parking Strategy should have an element of flexibility incorporated into it.