



BMG Research Report

Leicestershire Town and Village Centres Survey:
Coalville
2006

Prepared for:
Leicestershire County
Council & Leicester Shire
Economic Partnership

Prepared by:
BMG Research



Because people matter.

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1 Introduction

Leicestershire County Council and the Leicester Shire Economic Partnership 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 Area 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 Coalville.

Report contents

Section 2 of this report looks at why respondents visited Coalville, 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 Coalville, 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. Section 4 looks at how respondents in Coalville perceived crime and safety, and which issues were seen as big problem areas, whilst Section 5 summarises the key findings from the survey. Finally, section 6 concludes the main findings and provides recommendations.

Sampling methodology

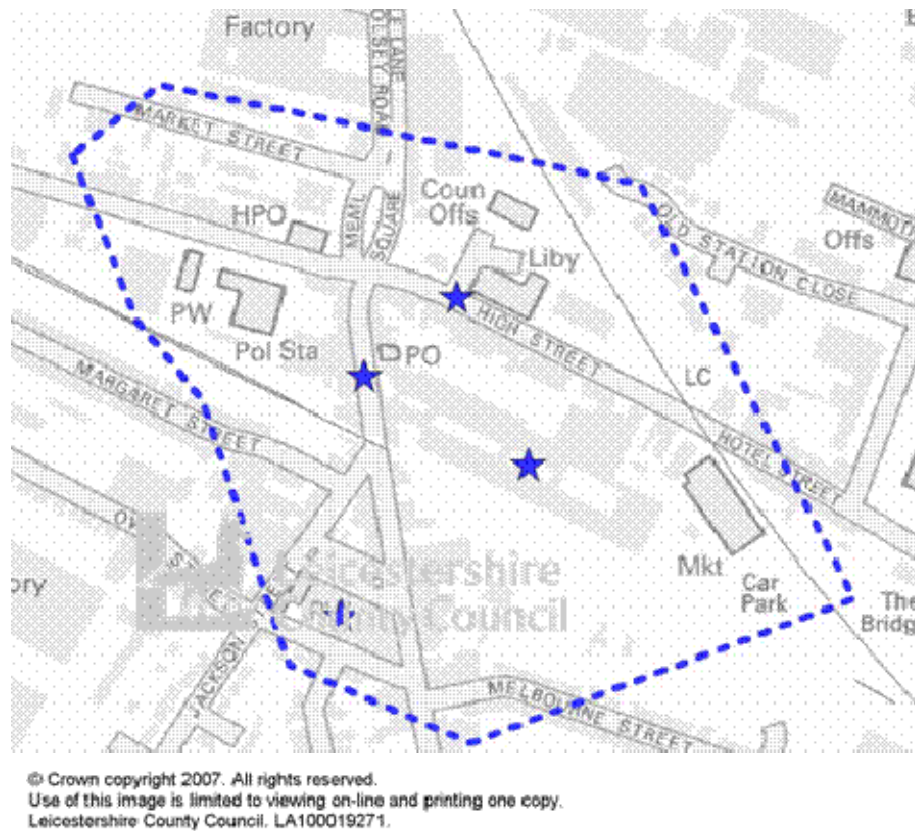
In total, 3000 interviews were planned across the 17 settlements. The sample structure called for a minimum of 100 interviews per settlement, with the remaining 1300 interviews distributed pro-rata on the basis of population size, meaning that the target for some of the villages was only a little over 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 Coalville:

Figure 1



Source: Leicestershire County Council

Respondent Profile

Within Coalville, 226 interviews were achieved. Of the sample, the majority of respondents were female (56%). 29% of respondents in Coalville were aged 16-24, 26% were aged 25-44, 29% were aged 45-64, with the remaining 14% being of retirement age (65+). As reported by the 2001 Census, within Coalville 12% of the population were aged between 16-24, 37% were aged between 25-44, 31% were aged between 45-64 and 21% were aged 65 and over.

The vast majority of respondents in Coalville (94%) described themselves as white British, whereas 3% of respondents described themselves as Indian, 1% African and 1% Pakistani. According to the 2001 Census, 99% of the population of Coalville described themselves as white.

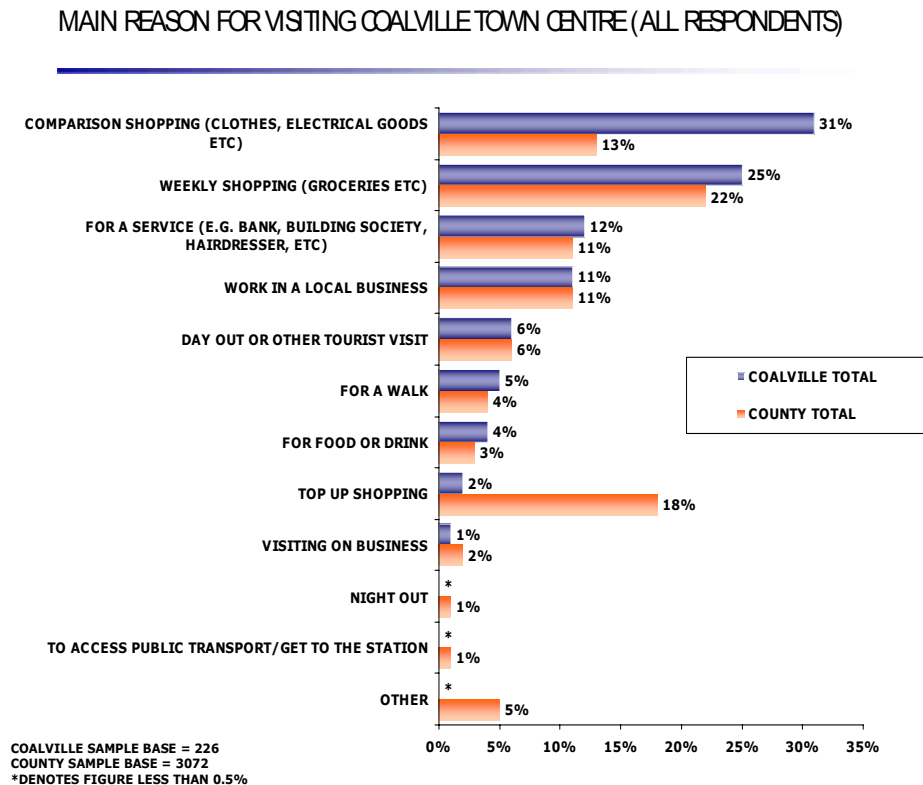
By economic status, 57% of respondents in Coalville were in work (55% employed and 2% self-employed). The largest proportion of those respondents not in work were retired (21% of the total Coalville sample). 7% of respondents were not in work because they were looking after children or other dependents or the home and a further 7% of respondents were claiming benefits. 4% of respondents were in education or training, whilst 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 Coalville, their mode of transport used to get to the centre, frequency of visits as well as if they had visited any attractions and events in the centre.

Figure 2

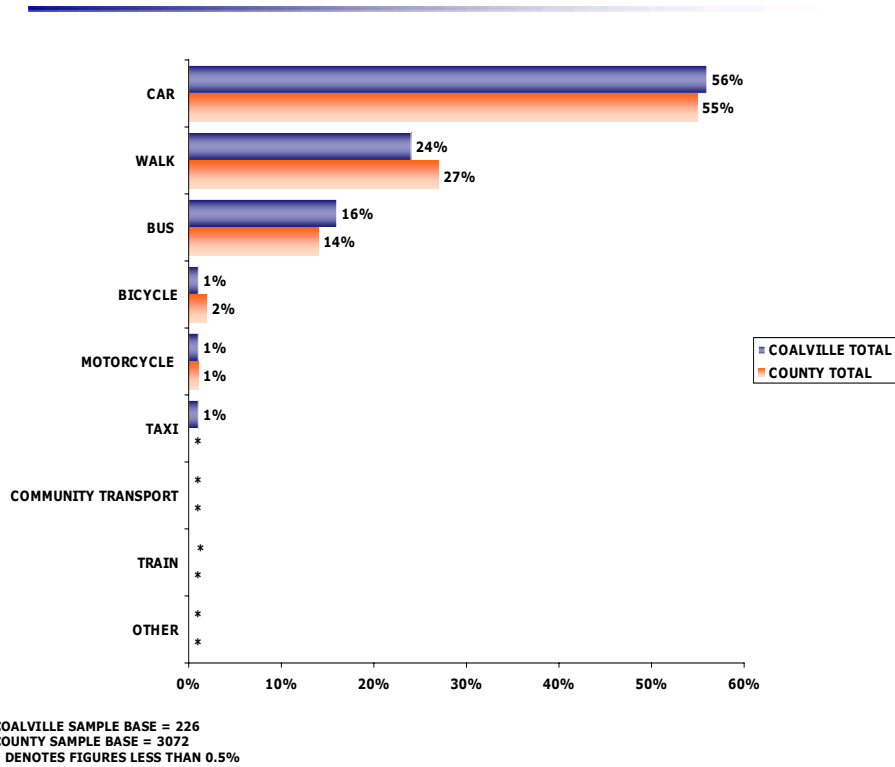


The intention of the survey was to speak to a cross-section of people present in the centres of the towns and villages, who may have been present for a whole range of purposes. Shopping trips of various sorts accounted for just over half of visits to Coalville (58%), which was slightly higher than the total county figure (53%). 12% of respondents in Coalville were visiting the centre for services such as banking which was similar to the county average (11%). Just over one in ten were present because they worked in the centre whilst 6% of respondents said that they were in Coalville for a day out.

Mode of transport used to get into the centre of town

Figure 3

MODE OF TRANSPORT TO COALVILLE TOWN CENTRE (ALL RESPONDENTS)

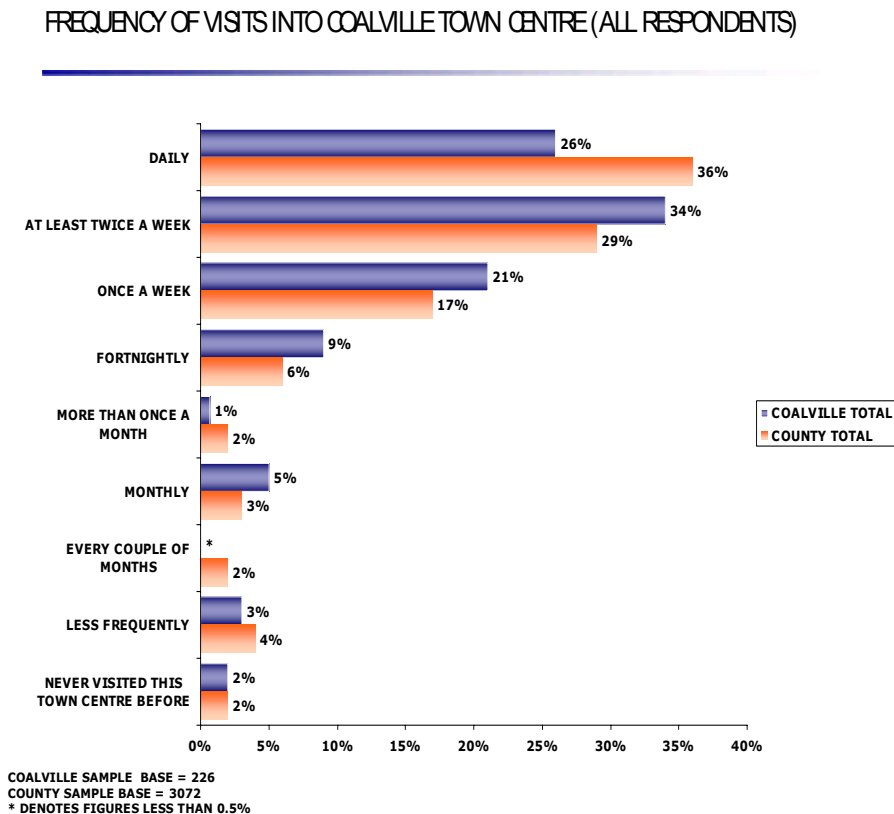


Over half of trips into the centre by respondents on the day of the survey were made by car (56%). Almost a quarter of respondents walked into the centre (24%) whilst 16% arrived by bus.

Frequency of visits

As illustrated in the graph below, just over a third of respondents reported that they visited the centre at least twice a week (34%), whilst just over a quarter visited daily (24%) and 21% visited once a week. 2% of those in Coalville were visiting for the first time, which was the same figure for the county as a whole.

Figure 4



Just over half of respondents visited Coalville on weekdays (53%), whilst 32% visited both at weekends and on weekdays (32%). 14% of respondents visited at weekends.

The majority of respondents (86%) visited Coalville during the day (before 5.30pm), with 2% visiting the centre only in the evening (after 5.30pm). 10% of respondents visited the town centre both during the daytime and evening.

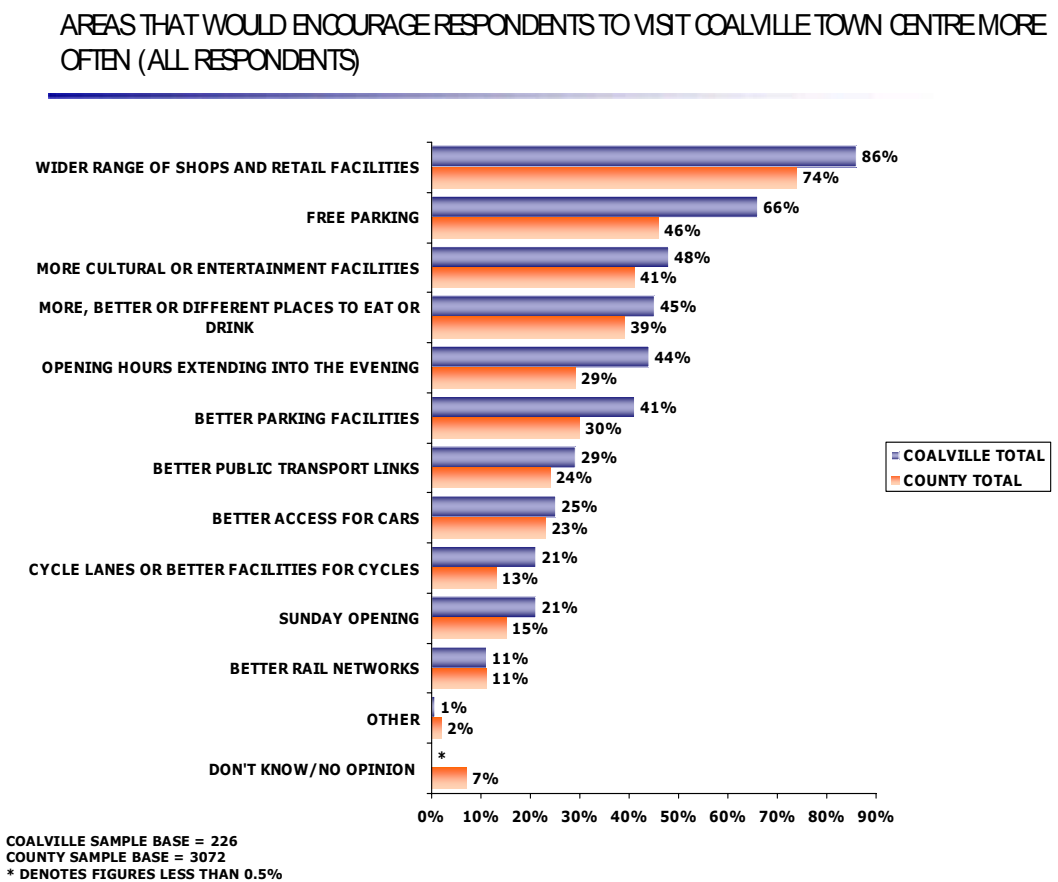
Evening visitors were asked how often they visited Coalville in the evening. 17% of respondents visited Coalville town centre in the evening once a week, whilst 15% visited at least twice a week. Saturday and Sunday evenings proved to be popular amongst respondents to visit the centre with 23% of respondents choosing to do so, whilst 14% of respondents visited on a Friday evening.

Encouraging more people to visit the centre

Respondents were asked to identify those issues which would encourage them to visit Coalville more often. They were able to cite more than one issue. Having a wider range of shops and retail facilities (86%) and free parking (66%) were cited as two areas that would encourage respondents to visit Coalville more often. 48% of respondents cited more cultural or entertainment facilities as being a way of encouraging more visits.

Improvements in having better places for food and drink and an extension of opening hours, particularly evening opening, were also important for some visitors.

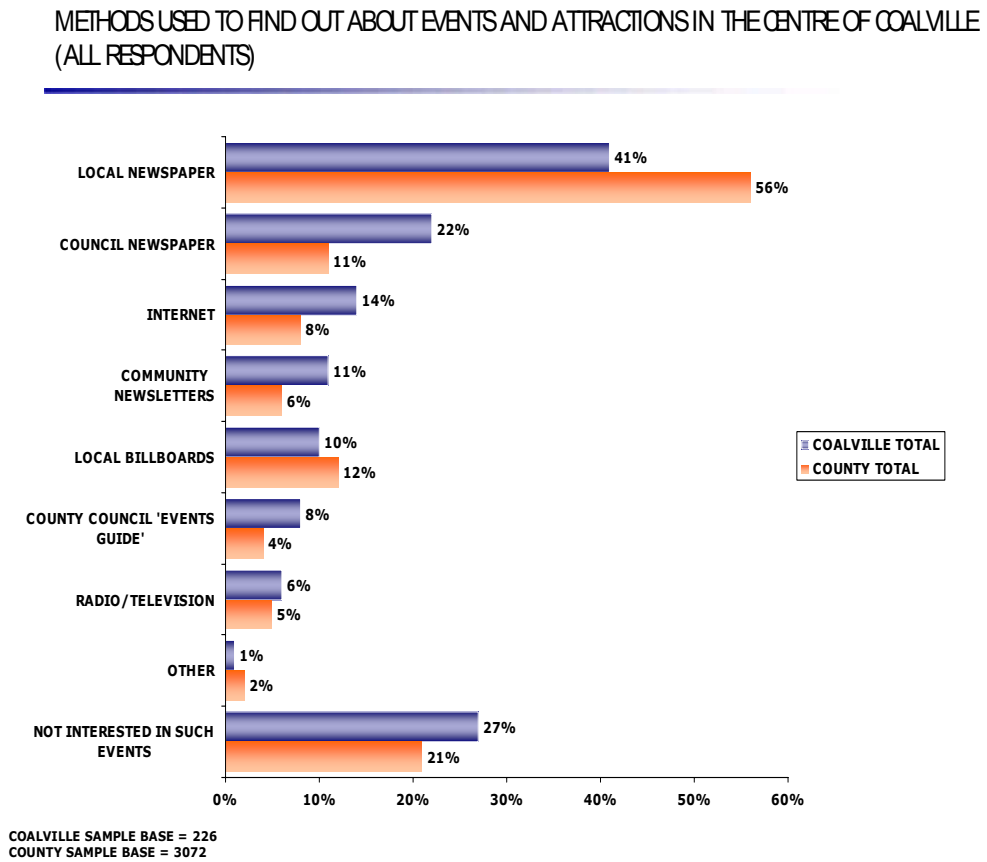
Figure 5



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 Coalville, with other sources only modest in their importance by comparison. Notably, the council newspaper was also a popular method in finding out about events and attractions in Coalville compared to the rest of the county (22% Coalville, 11% county total). Radio or television (6%) and the County Council’s events guide (8%) were least likely to be used to find out about events and attractions in the centre of Coalville.

Figure 6



When respondents were questioned about whether they had attended any events in the town centre recently, 3% said that they had compared to the county figure of 12%. Of these 3%, two people said they had attended Party in the Park, whilst one person could not recall the event that they went to. Three people said that they had attended another event in Coalville.

Respondents were asked what made the centre unique, different or special in Coalville. A high proportion (36%) of people said that there was nothing that was unique, different or special in Coalville and 36% also said that they did not know. 4% of respondents said it was a safe area and had low crime levels, a further 4% said the market, whilst 2%

of respondents said Coalville was a quiet and peaceful place. Other notable responses included:

- The layout (3%);
- The history and heritage (2%);
- The size (2%);
- Architecture and buildings (1%);
- Born here or live here (1%);
- Community spirit (1%);
- Culture (1%);
- Easily accessible or easy to get to (1%);
- Friendly (1%);
- Pleasant and attractive appearance (1%);
- Shops and shopping centre (1%); and
- Cleanliness (1%).

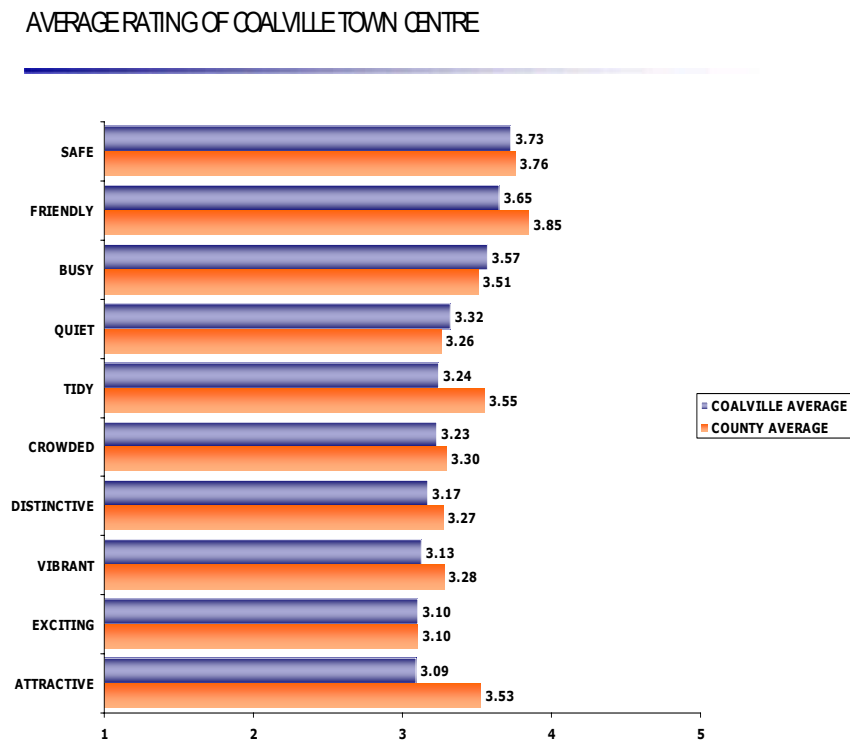
3 Attitude towards the centre

This section examines the attitudes of respondents to the different aspects of Coalville, 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 Coalville on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 was strongly disagree and 5 strongly agree. Overall, Coalville was most likely to be described as 'safe', 'friendly', 'busy' and 'quiet'. At the opposite end of the spectrum, Coalville was least likely to be described as 'attractive' and 'exciting'.

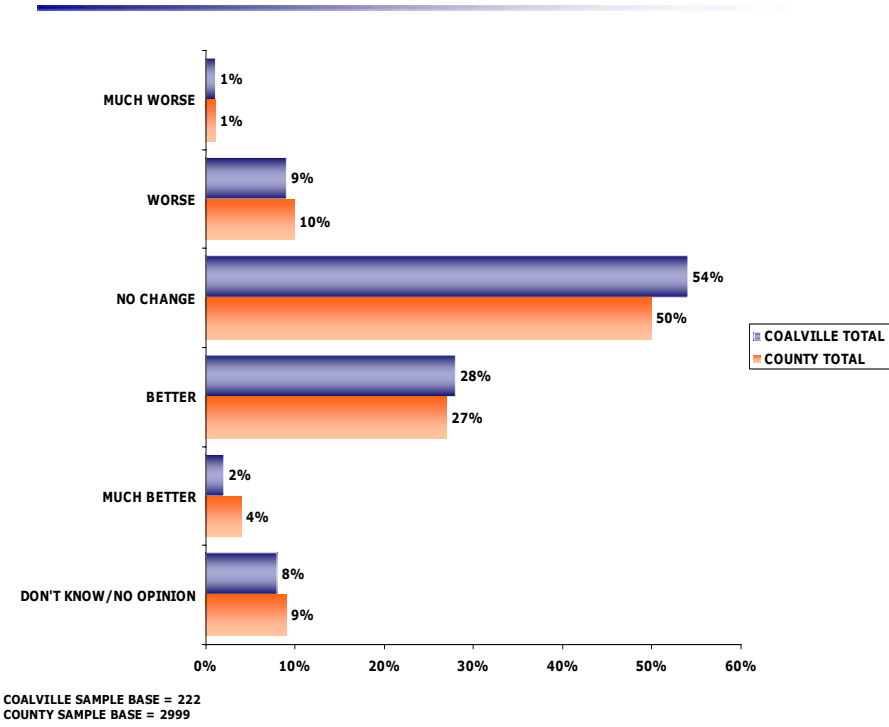
Figure 7



Whilst 54% of respondents didn't report any overall change in Coalville, 28% believed that it had got better or much better, compared to 9% who thought it had got worse or much worse, as shown below:

Figure 8

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



All respondents were asked for their views on how well Coalville served different groups in the population. The results for each of these groups are shown in Table 1 below. Respondents tended to think that the best served groups were elderly people and families. However, it was clear there was greater concern about how the centre served young people than for any other group. 13% of respondents thought the centre was very poor or poor for young people, and this is followed by 11% of respondents who thought that the centre was very poor or poor for shoppers.

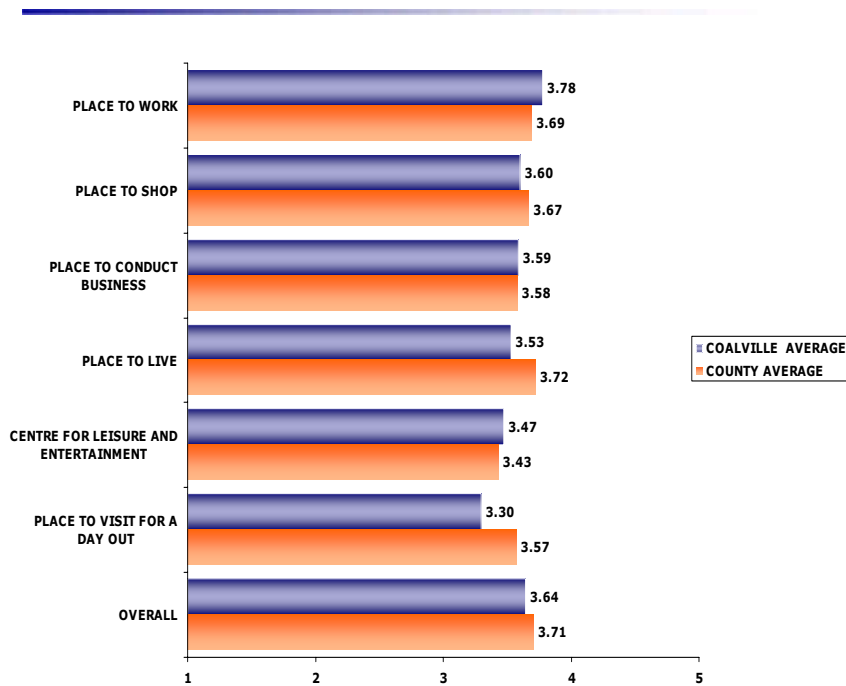
Table 1

RATING OF COALVILLE FOR VARIOUS GROUPS							
	Very poor	Poor	Neither good nor poor	Good	Very good	DK/no opinion	Mean score
	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Elderly people	1	1	31	48	16	3	3.80
Families	0	3	29	45	17	6	3.80
Visitors	1	5	34	35	17	7	3.67
People with disabilities	0	2	46	35	13	4	3.60
Shoppers	0	11	28	38	14	9	3.59
Young people	3	10	41	32	10	4	3.37
SAMPLE BASE: 226							

How good are the centres as places for particular activities?

Figure 9

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

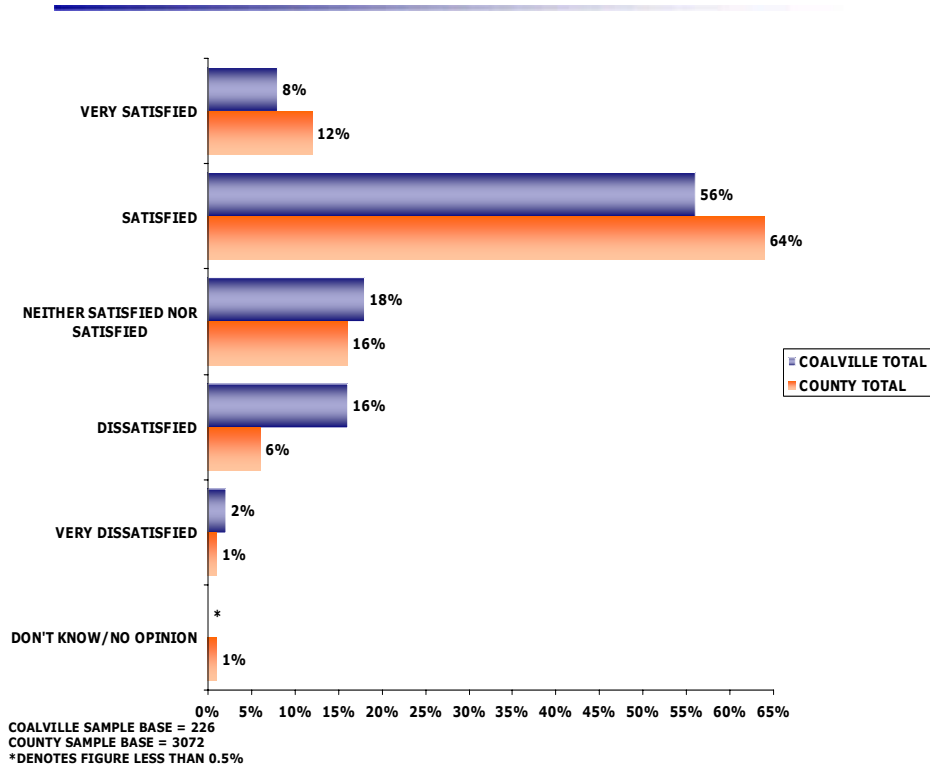


Overall, on a scale of 1 to 5, where 5 is the most positive score, Coalville was rated 3.64, which was slightly lower than the county average of 3.71 - that is they are well above average, good but not very good. Coalville was considered as a good place to work and place to shop compared to the rest of the county. However, Coalville scored lower than the county as a good place to visit for a day out (3.30 Coalville, 3.57 county).

Overall 64% of respondents were very satisfied or satisfied with Coalville as a good place to shop, visit and to do business as demonstrated in the graph below. However, this figure was lower than the county total of 76%.

Figure 10

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

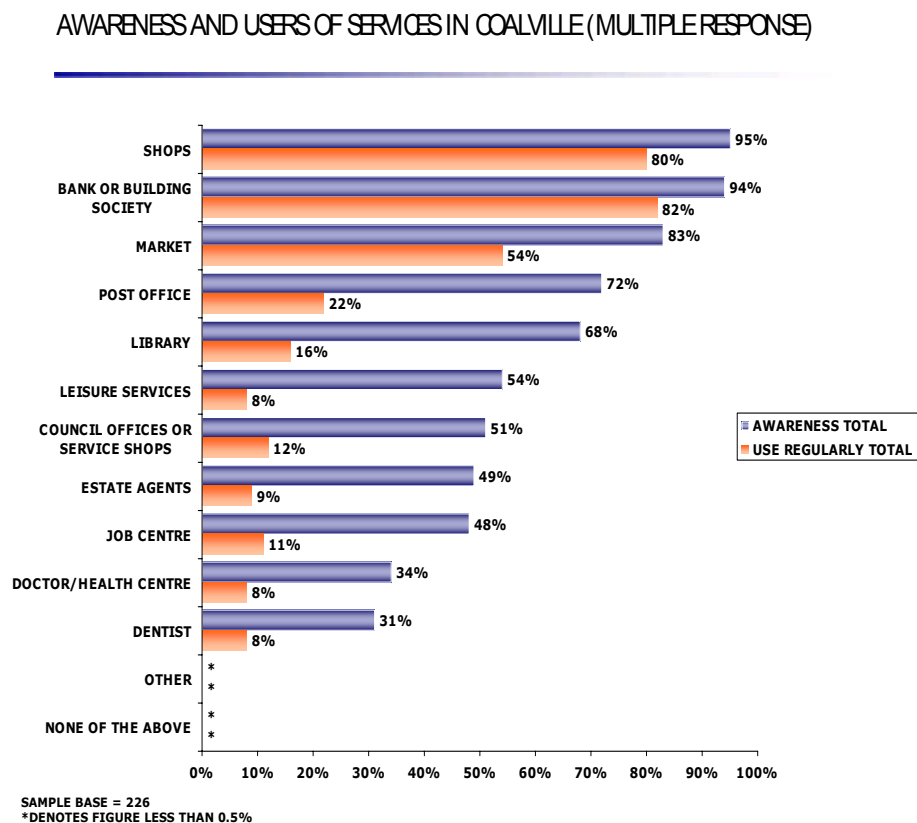


Services available in the centre

Services available in the centre of Coalville 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 shops, banks & building societies and the market and these were the services which were regularly used. However, there were some services that people were aware of but were less likely to use regularly. For example 72% of respondents said that they were aware of a post office in Coalville but only 22% used the service on a regular basis, whereas 68% of respondents were aware of a library in the centre of Coalville but only 16% were regular users. Furthermore, respondents were aware of health services within the centre of Coalville but less people used them on a regular basis - 34% of respondents were aware of a doctor's or health centre in Coalville, but 8% of respondents used the service regularly, whilst 31% of respondents were aware of a dentist in Coalville and only 8% were regular users.

Figure 11



Respondents were questioned as to their opinions about the market in Coalville. Just over a third of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that there was a wide range of products available to buy in the market.

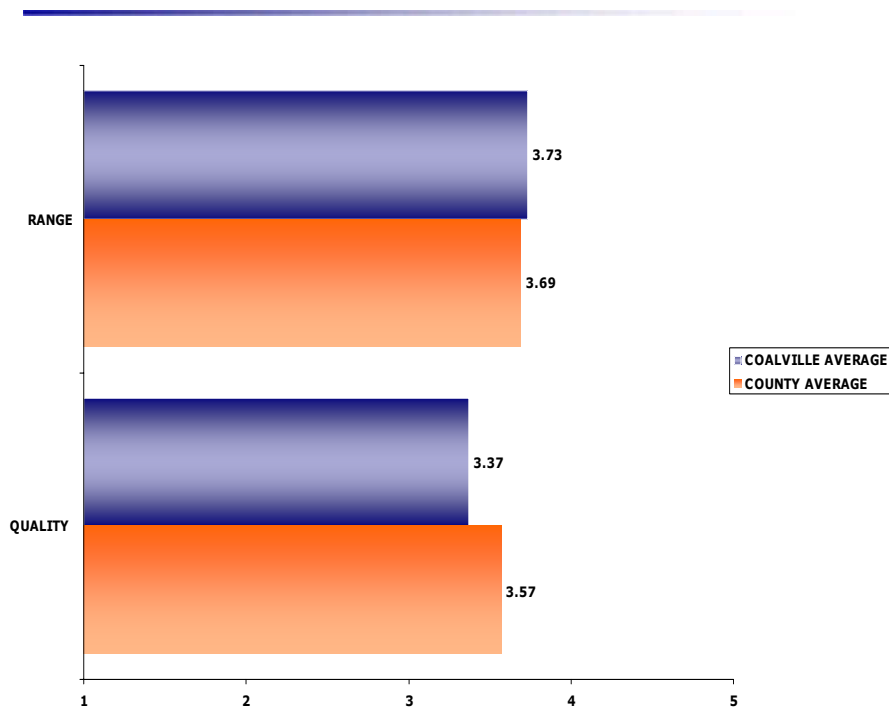
Respondents were questioned as to whether the retail outlets in Coalville met their shopping needs. 37% of respondents said that the variety of the retail outlets and shops adequately met their needs. A third of

respondents said the variety of the retail outlets and shops met their needs, whilst over a quarter of respondents (27%) said the retail outlets in Coalville did not meet their needs.

Respondents were asked to rate the range and quality of places to eat out in Coalville on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 was very poor and 5 was very good. Respondents were more positive about the range than the quality as shown in figure 12.

Figure 12

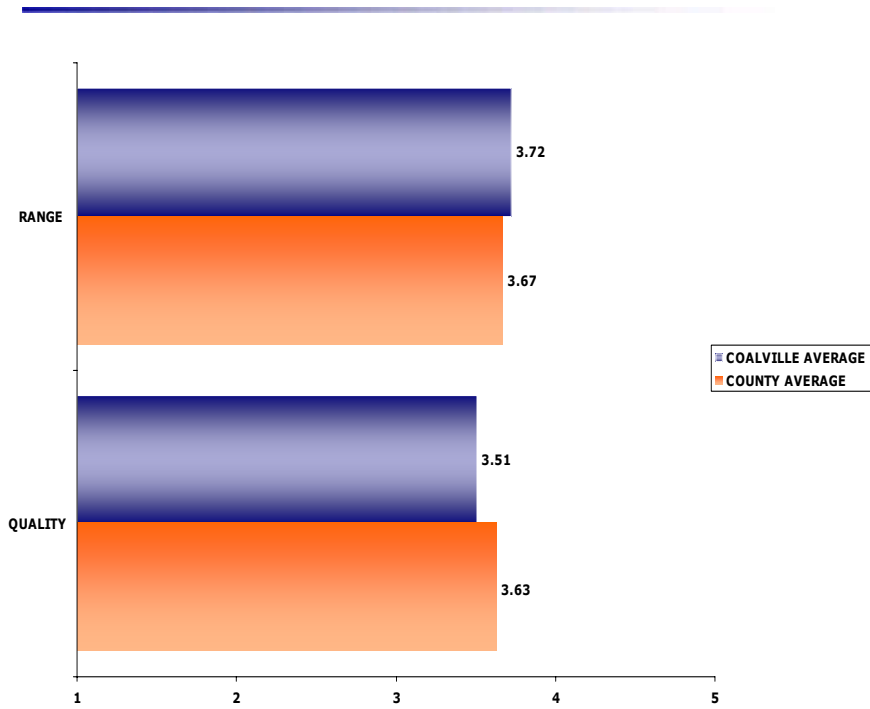
RANGE AND QUALITY OF THE PLACES TO EAT OUT IN COALVILLE



Respondents were then asked to rate the range and quality of pubs, bars and clubs in Coalville on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 was very poor and 5 was very good. Respondents were slightly more positive about the range than the quality of pubs, bars and clubs in Coalville, as shown below. This was also reflected in the county average.

Figure 13

RANGE AND QUALITY OF PUBS, BARS AND CLUBS IN COALVILLE



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

WHETHER RESPONDENTS AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS ABOUT THE CENTRE OF COALVILLE						
	Disagree Strongly	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Agree strongly	Mean score
	%	%	%	%	%	
Pedestrian signage is relevant, clear and easy to understand	5	9	25	39	16	3.54
The parks are well maintained	5	7	26	42	12	3.52
Street lighting is good	3	16	22	42	13	3.49
Pavements and walkways are safe and well maintained	3	8	40	31	15	3.48
Pavements and walkways are clean and tidy	1	17	24	49	8	3.45
The centre is well planted in summertime	3	15	31	32	15	3.43
Shop fronts are well maintained	6	15	27	37	14	3.38
The baby changing facilities provided are clean and tidy	4	9	26	27	8	3.38
The public toilets are clean and tidy	1	13	17	35	34	3.33
There are enough public toilets	5	13	31	34	9	3.31
The design and layout of the centre is attractive	2	24	28	31	12	3.27
Seating in and around shopping areas is well maintained	9	10	35	35	10	3.26
There are enough baby changing facilities	5	13	25	26	4	3.16
There is sufficient seating in and around the centre	9	21	28	35	6	3.08
SAMPLE BASE: 226						

Note: Percentage no replies not shown

Overall, respondents had positive views about the environment and facilities available in the centre of Coalville. Respondents felt that the public toilets were clean and tidy (69% of respondents agreed or agreed strongly), pavements and walkways were clean and tidy (57%) and parks were well maintained. There was less agreement about sufficient seating in and around the centre (30% disagreed or disagreed strongly), the design and layout of the centre being attractive (26% disagreement) and the shops being well maintained (21%).

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

Table 3

WHETHER RESPONDENTS AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS ABOUT ASPECTS IN AND AROUND THE CENTRE OF COALVILLE						
	Disagree strongly	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Agree strongly	Mean score
	%	%	%	%	%	
The centre could do with more high street chain stores	5	7	24	33	31	3.79
Pedestrians can walk around the centre without feeling threatened by traffic	2	8	20	47	20	3.78
The centre needs more local, independent shops	3	8	22	44	21	3.75
The road network provides easy access into the centre	1	8	25	55	10	3.66
The centre is accessible for disabled people and older people	3	6	31	37	19	3.66
Road signs make it easy for cars to access the centre	2	13	27	43	13	3.52
It is easy for drivers to find the car parks around the centre	6	9	26	40	14	3.50
Roads in the centre are well maintained	6	10	30	36	14	3.43
Roads in the centre are congested	7	13	28	31	18	3.42
The level of service in shops is of a high standard	4	16	35	29	13	3.31
There is enough car parking available	11	10	25	37	10	3.28
Car parking costs too much	5	16	32	28	12	3.28
There is too much traffic noise in the centre	16	21	18	31	12	3.04
There is too much other noise (music, pubs and clubs) in the centre	20	33	17	19	9	2.63
SAMPLE BASE: 226						

As demonstrated in the above table, 67% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that pedestrians could walk around the centre without feeling threatened by traffic. In descending order of agreement, this was followed by the centre needs more local, independent shops (65%), the road network provides easy access into the centre (65%), road signs make it easy for cars to access the centre (56%) and the centre is

accessible for disabled and elderly people (56%). Just over half of respondents (53%) 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 Coalville. The most frequently cited responses were more specialist shops (73%), a greater range of shops (71%) and the cleanliness and tidiness of the centre (67%). When asked to prioritise their *top three* areas of improvement, respondents cited a greater range of shops (51%), more specialist shops (42%) and the cleanliness and tidiness of the centre (40%).

4 Crime and safety

This section looks at how respondents in Coalville 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, groups of people hanging round the streets was seen as a big problem by the largest proportion of respondents in Coalville (23% considered this to be a very big problem or a big problem). This was followed by dirty pavements and chewing gum (20%) and rubbish and litter lying around (20%). Areas that were seen as less of a problem included racial harassment (88% considered this either not a problem, or only a small problem), assaults and other violent crime (85%) and fly tipping (84%).

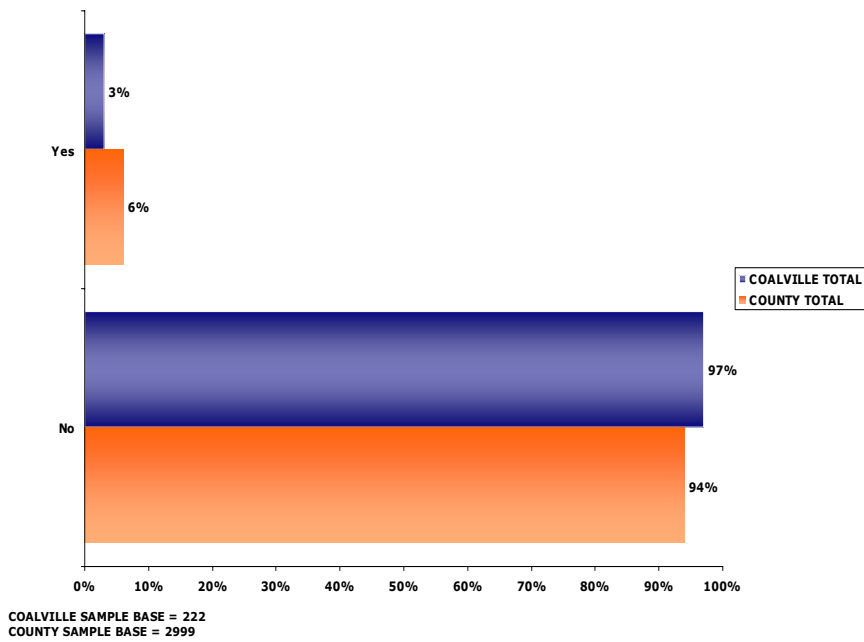
Table 4

AREAS THAT ARE SEEN AS PROBLEMS IN THE CENTRE OF COALVILLE						
	Very big problem	Big Problem	Neither big nor small	Small Problem	Not a problem at all	Mean score
	%	%	%	%	%	
Groups of people hanging round the streets	13	10	13	18	45	3.71
Dirty pavements and chewing gum	5	15	9	16	47	3.94
Vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property or vehicles	4	11	11	25	47	4.01
Rubbish and litter lying around	2	18	12	9	59	4.04
Street canvassers	0	8	13	39	34	4.11
People being drunk or rowdy in public spaces	2	12	7	24	53	4.18
People not treating each other with respect and consideration	4	6	9	25	54	4.24
Property being stolen from a vehicle	0	3	14	29	53	4.28
Assaults and other violent crime (personal robbery, mugging)	0	8	6	33	52	4.28
People using or dealing drugs	0	5	17	30	35	4.291
Personal theft (pick pocketing)	1	7	7	25	55	4.31
Verbal abuse or other aggressive behaviour	0	4	15	22	58	4.31
Road safety or speeding	2	5	10	23	58	4.33
Vehicles being stolen	3	4	7	25	58	4.34
Racial harassment	4	4	3	23	65	4.44
Fly tipping	4	4	6	15	69	4.47
Aggressive begging	3	3	5	18	65	4.49
SAMPLE BASE: 226						

Respondents were questioned about whether they had ever felt worried about being assaulted or harassed in Coalville within the last 12 months. 97% of respondents said that they had not felt worried compared to the county total of 94%.

Figure 14

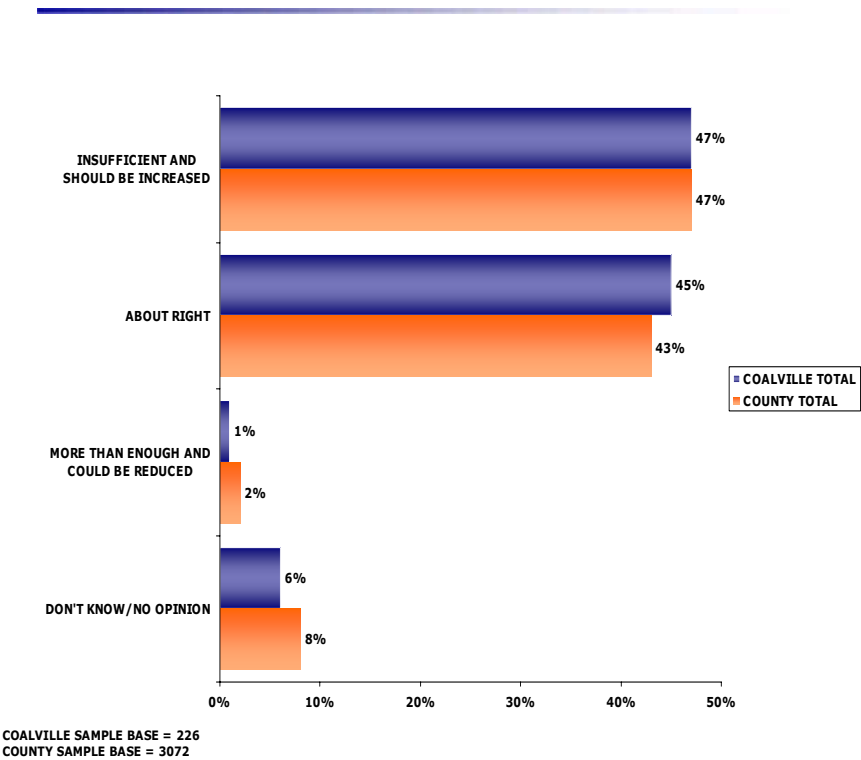
WHETHER RESPONDENTS HAVE EVER FELT WORRIED ABOUT BEING ASSAULTED OR HARASSED WHILST IN THE CENTRE OF COALVILLE WITHIN THE LAST 12 MONTHS



Respondents were then questioned about their perceptions of police presence within Coalville. 47% of respondents felt the police presence in the centre was insufficient and should be increased (which was the same figure as the county total), whilst 45% felt that the police presence was about right.

Figure 15

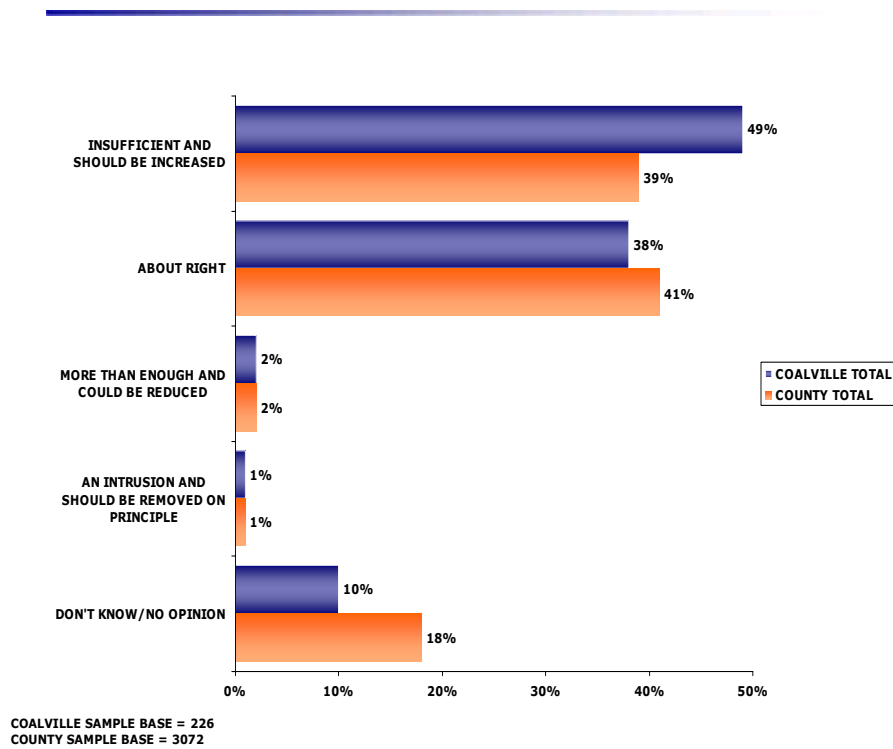
PERCEPTIONS OF POLICE PRESENCE IN THE CENTRE OF COALVILLE



When questioned about the presence of CCTV in Coalville, 49% of respondents felt it was insufficient and should be increased (which was higher than the county total of 39%), whilst 38% of respondents said the presence of CCTV was about right.

Figure 16

PERCEPTIONS OF CCTV PRESENCE IN THE CENTRE OF COALVILLE



5 Summary

Visiting the centre

- Shopping trips accounted for the majority of the trips to Coalville.
- 12% of respondents were using a service in Coalville whilst 11% of respondents worked in a local business.
- The majority of visitors arrived in Coalville by car, with the second most common method being on foot and the third being by bus.
- Just over a third of respondents visited the centre at least twice a week.
- A wider range of shops and retail facilities, free parking and more cultural or entertainment facilities were the improvements most likely to encourage more people to come to Coalville 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 radio or television and the County Council's events guide.
- Only 3% of respondents had attended an event in the centre.

Attitudes towards the centre

- Overall, Coalville was most likely to be described as 'safe', 'friendly', 'busy' and 'quiet'.
- 54% of respondents reported no change in the centre of Coalville within the last 12 months, whilst 28% of respondents reported the centre had got better and 10% said it had got worse.
- Respondents felt that the centre catered better for elderly people and families than it did for young people and disabled people.

Services available in the centre

- Shops, banks or building societies 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 Coalville.
- Slightly over a third of respondents said that there was a wide range of products available to buy in the market.
- 37% of respondents in Coalville said the variety of retail outlets and shops in the centre adequately met their needs.

Town Centre environment

- Overall, respondents were generally positive about the environment and facilities in and around the centre.
- Respondents felt that the public toilets were clean and tidy, pavements and walkways were clean and tidy and parks were well maintained.
- Having a greater range of shops, more specialist shops and the cleanliness and tidiness of the centre were seen as the areas that needed the most attention within Coalville.

Crime and safety

- Groups of people hanging around the street, dirty pavements and chewing gum and rubbish and litter lying around were seen as the most significant problems in Coalville.
- Racial harassment, assaults and other violent crime (such as personal robberies and muggings) and fly-tipping were not seen as a big problem.
- Nearly all respondents said that they had not felt worried about being assaulted or harassed whilst in the centre within the last 12 months.
- There were mixed views on the level of police presence in Coalville, with 47% of respondents saying it was insufficient and should be increased and 45% of respondents claiming it were just about right.
- 49% of respondents felt that the CCTV presence in Coalville was insufficient and should be increased, whilst 38% said it was about right.

6 Conclusions and recommendations

- Overall, respondents were positive about Coalville. 64% of respondents were very satisfied or satisfied with Coalville as a place to shop, visit and to do business. Moreover, although the majority of respondents reported no change within the last 12 months, 30% felt that Coalville had improved.
- Many respondents were aware of services such as shops, bank or building societies and the market in Coalville.
- Findings indicated that Coalville catered better for elderly people and families than it did for young people. This shows how the centre serves different groups of people.
- A wider range of shops and retail facilities, free parking and more cultural or entertainment facilities were the improvements most likely to encourage more people to come to Coalville more often.
- Seating, the design and layout of the centre and the maintenance of the shops were identified as aspects of the town centre with the most scope for improvement, although most respondents were satisfied with the existing provision of these facilities.
- Respondents felt more attention should be given to having a greater range of shops, more specialist shops in Coalville and the cleanliness and tidiness of the centre.
- In terms of crime and safety issues, groups of people hanging around the street, dirty pavements and chewing gum and rubbish and litter lying around were seen as the most significant issues.