



BMG Research Report

Leicestershire Town and Village Centres Survey:
Earl Shilton
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 Earl Shilton.

Report contents

Section 2 of this report looks at why respondents visited Earl Shilton, 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 Earl Shilton, 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 Earl Shilton 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

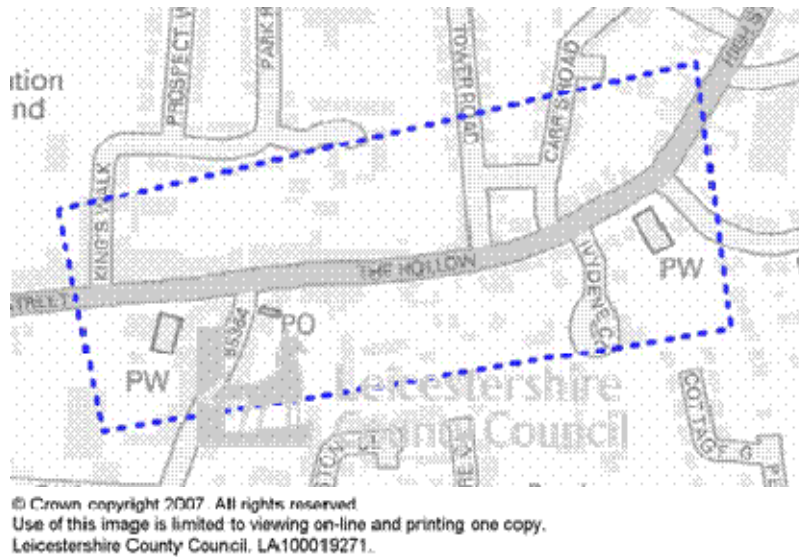
In total, 3000 interviews were planned across the 17 settlements. The sample structure called for a minimum of 100 interviews per settlement, with the remaining 1300 interviews distributed pro-rata on the basis of population size, meaning that the target for some of the villages was only a little over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

Figure 1



Source: Leicestershire County Council

Respondent Profile

Within Earl Shilton, 142 interviews were achieved. Of the sample, 54% of respondents were female and 46% were male. 4% of respondents in Earl Shilton were aged 16-24, 31% were aged 25-44, 45% were aged 45-64, with the remaining 15% being of retirement age (65+). As reported by the 2001 Census, within Earl Shilton 13% of the population were aged between 16-24, 34% were aged between 25-44, 32% were aged between 45-64 and 21% were aged 65 and over.

The vast majority of respondents in Earl Shilton (96%) described themselves as white British, whereas 1% of respondents described themselves as Chinese, 1% Indian and 1% other Black background. The remaining 1% refused to describe their ethnicity. According to the 2001 Census, 98% of the population of Earl Shilton described themselves as white.

By economic status, 59% of respondents in Earl Shilton were in work (52% employed and 7% self-employed). The largest proportion of those respondents not in work were retired (29% of the total Earl Shilton sample). 8% of respondents were not in work because they were looking after children or other dependents or the home. 2% of respondents were claiming benefits, whilst a further 1% were not in work due to an illness or disability. The remaining 1% of respondents were in education or training.

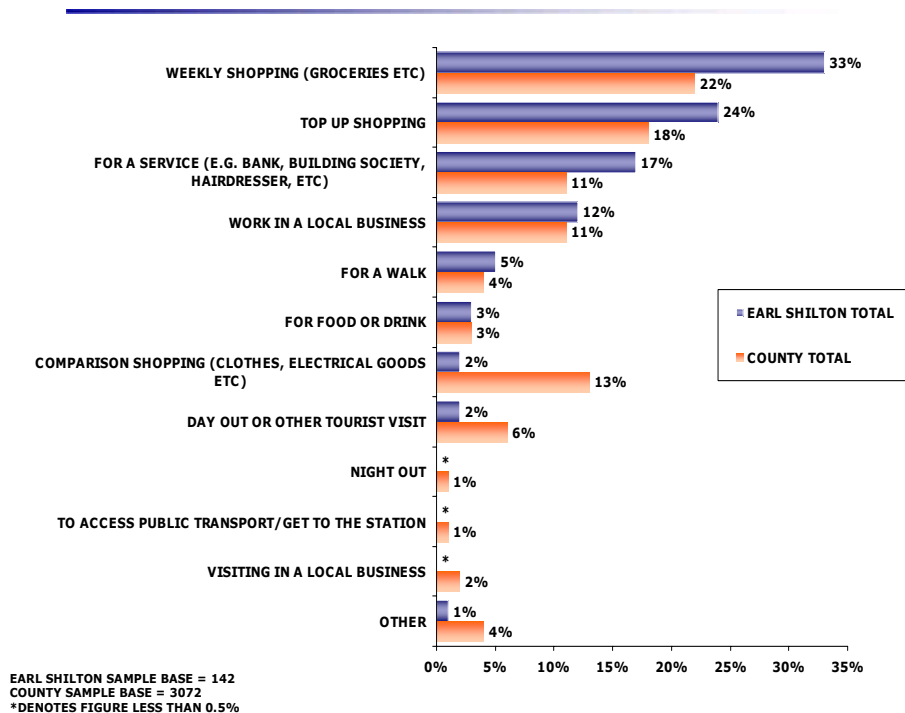
2 Visiting the Town Centre

Visits

This section looks at the reasons why people visited Earl Shilton, their mode of transport used to get to the centre, the frequency of visits as well as if they had visited any attractions and events in the centre.

Figure 2

MAIN REASON FOR VISITING EARL SHILTON CENTRE (ALL RESPONDENTS)

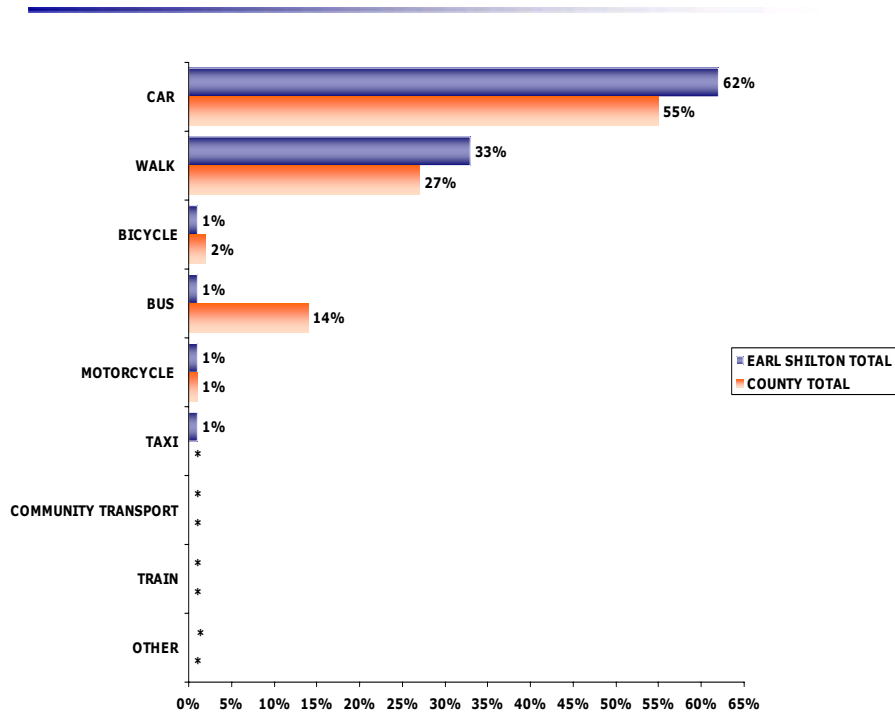


The intention of the survey was to speak to a cross-section of people present in the centres of the towns and villages, who may have been present for a whole range of purposes. Shopping trips of various sorts accounted for 69% of visits to Earl Shilton, which was just slightly higher than the total county figure of 53%. 17% of respondents in Earl Shilton were visiting the centre for services such as banking compared to 11% in the county. Just over one in ten (12%) were present because they worked in the centre whilst 5% of respondents said that they were out for a walk.

Mode of transport used to get into the centre of town

Figure 3

MODE OF TRANSPORT TO EARL SHILTON CENTRE (ALL RESPONDENTS)



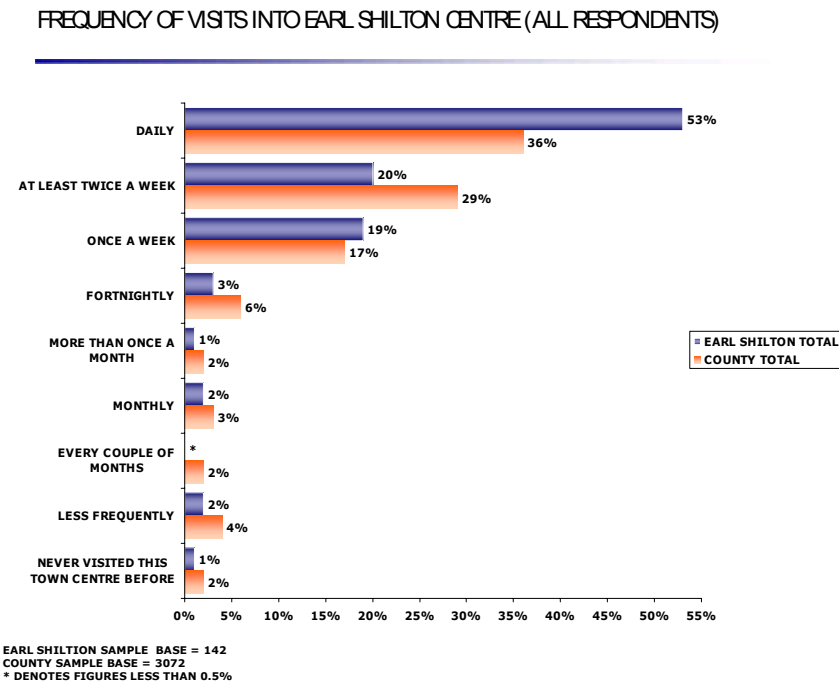
EARL SHILTON SAMPLE BASE = 142
 COUNTY SAMPLE BASE = 3072
 * DENOTES FIGURES LESS THAN 0.5%

Just over three-fifths of trips into the centre by respondents on the day of the survey were made by car. A third of respondents walked into the centre (33%) whilst the remaining respondents arrived by bicycle (1%), bus (1%), motorcycle (1%) and taxi (1%).

Frequency of visits

As illustrated in the graph below, over half of respondents reported that they visited the centre daily (53%), much higher than the County average. A fifth visited at least twice a week and 19% visited once a week. 3% of respondents visited Earl Shilton fortnightly.

Figure 4



Three-fifths of respondents visited Earl Shilton both at weekends and on weekdays (60%). 31% of respondents visited on a weekday whilst 9% visited at weekends.

The majority of respondents (84%) visited Earl Shilton during the day (before 5.30pm), whilst 14% of respondents visited the town centre both during the daytime and evening and with 1% only visiting in the evening (after 5.30pm).

Of those respondents who only visited Earl Shilton in the evening, 7% visited Earl Shilton centre at least twice a week, 6% visited once a week, whilst 4% said they visited daily and a further 4% said they visited fortnightly. Just over a fifth of respondents visited mainly on a Saturday or Sunday evening (22%) whereas 4% respondents visited mainly on a Friday evening.

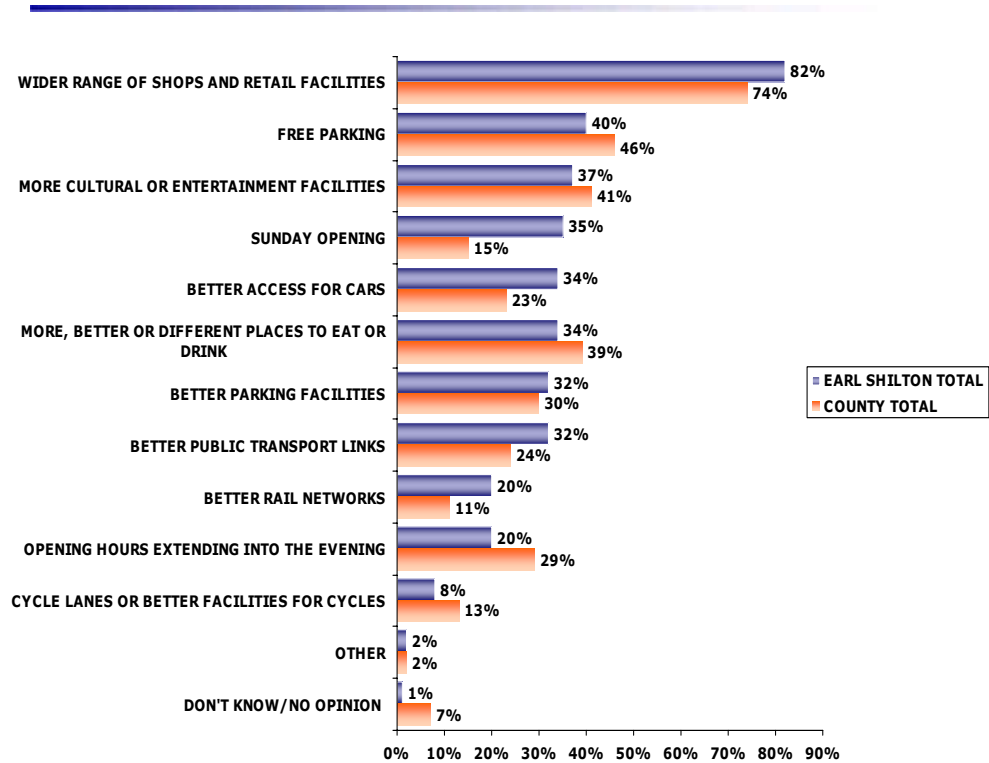
Encouraging more people to visit the centre

Respondents were asked to identify those issues which would encourage them to visit Earl Shilton more often. They were able to cite more than one issue. Having a wider range of shops and retail facilities (82%) and free parking (40%) were cited as two areas that would encourage respondents to visit Earl Shilton more.

Improvements in cultural or entertainment facilities, Sunday opening and better access for cars were also very important to some respondents. In addition having better or different places to eat or drink and better parking facilities were also significant for some visitors.

Figure 5

AREAS THAT WOULD ENCOURAGE RESPONDENTS TO VISIT EARL SHILTON CENTRE MORE OFTEN (ALL RESPONDENTS)

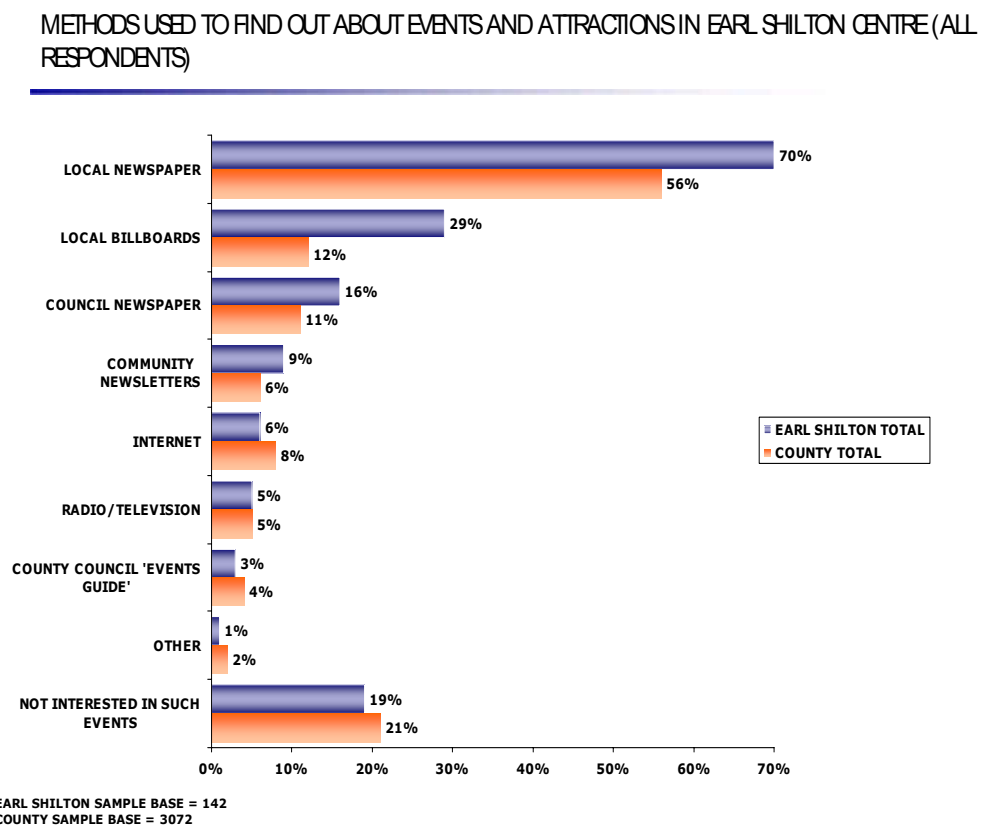


EARL SHILTON SAMPLE BASE = 142
 COUNTY SAMPLE BASE = 3072

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 Earl Shilton, with other sources only modest in their importance by comparison. Notably, local billboards were also a popular method of finding out about events and attractions in Earl Shilton compared to the rest of the county (29% Earl Shilton, 12% county total). The County Council’s events guide and radio or television were the least used methods to find out about events and attractions in Earl Shilton.

Figure 6



When respondents were questioned about whether they had attended any events in the town centre recently, 23% said that they had compared to the county figure of 12%. Of these 23%, 25 people said they had attended the carnival, 4 people had attended the Age Concern event, 2 people had attended the turning on of the Christmas lights and 1 person had attended the Jurassic Park or Dinosaur event. 3 people said that they had attended another event in Earl Shilton.

Respondents were asked what made the centre unique, different or special in Earl Shilton. The vast majority of people said that they did not know (49%) or that there was nothing unique (25%). The most frequently cited responses included that it was a safe area and had low crime levels (6%) and the culture of Earl Shilton made the centre unique, different or special (3%). Other responses included:

- Born here or live here (1%);
- Character (1%);
- Cleanliness (1%);
- Community spirit (1%);
- Easily accessible or easy to get to (1%);
- Events (1%);
- Leisure facilities (1%);
- Pleasant and attractive appearance (1%);
- Quiet and peaceful (1%);
- Shops and shopping centre (1%);
- The history and heritage (1%);
- The market (1%); and
- Transport facilitates (1%).

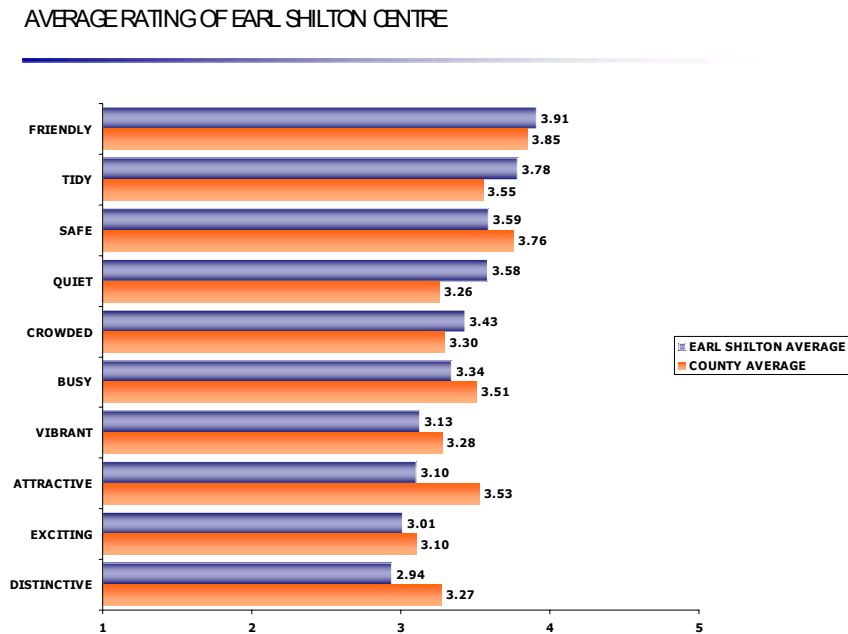
3 Attitude towards the centre

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

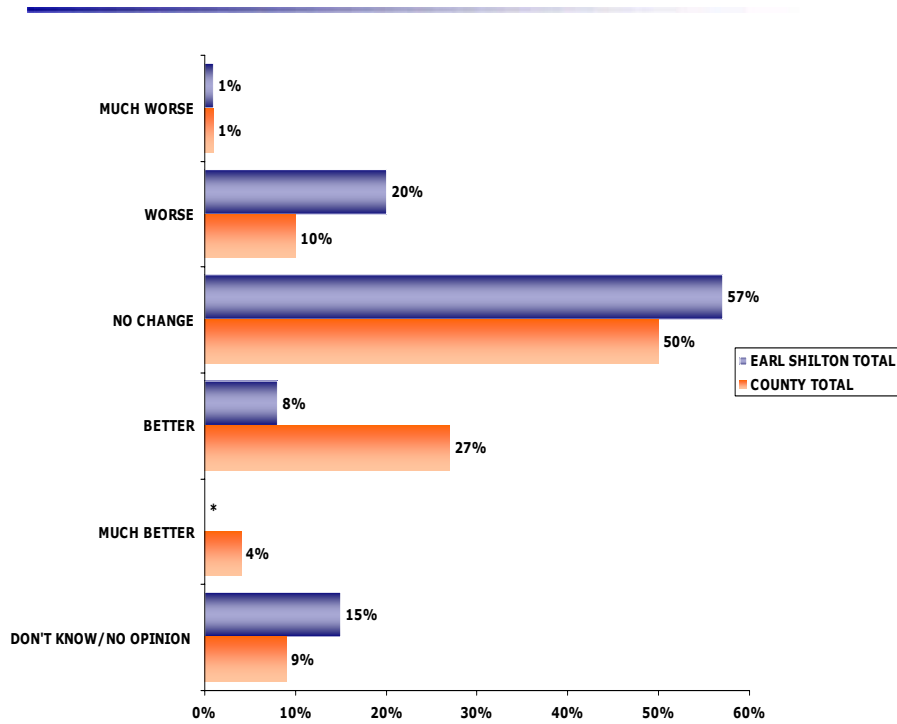
Figure 7



Whilst 56% of respondents didn't report any overall change in Earl Shilton, 21% believed that it had got worse or much worse, compared to just under one in ten who thought it had got better. These figures are much worse than the county averages, as shown below:

Figure 8

WHETHER EARL SHILTON HAS GOT BETTER OR WORSE WITHIN THE LAST 12 MONTHS



EARL SHILTON SAMPLE BASE = 141
 COUNTY SAMPLE BASE = 2999
 *DENOTES LESS THAN 0.5%

All respondents were asked for their view on how well Earl Shilton 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 shoppers, families and visitors. However, it was clear that amongst the total population of respondents in Earl Shilton, there was greater concern about how the centre served young people than for any other group. 34% of respondents thought the centre was very poor or poor for young people.

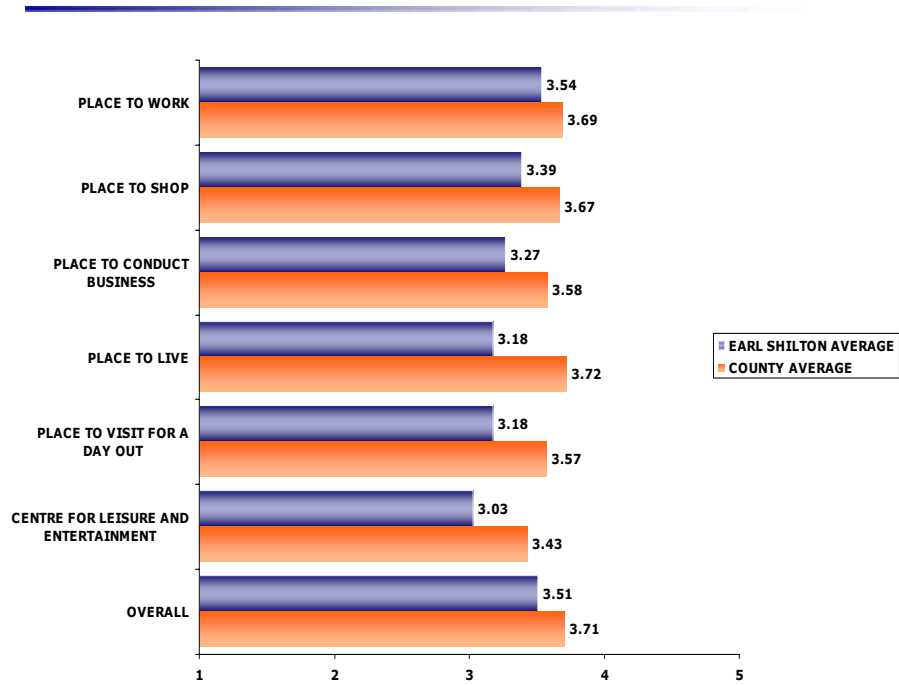
Table 1

RATING OF EARL SHILTON FOR VARIOUS GROUPS							
	Very poor	Poor	Neither good nor poor	Good	Very good	DK/no opinion	Mean score
	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Elderly people	1	2	23	24	9	12	3.76
Shoppers	1	7	36	41	11	4	3.55
People with disabilities	1	2	42	16	14	25	3.52
Families	12	4	36	34	9	6	3.24
Visitors	5	12	35	26	8	14	3.23
Young people	18	16	46	12	4	5	2.66
SAMPLE BASE: 142							

How good are the centres as places for particular activities?

Figure 9

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



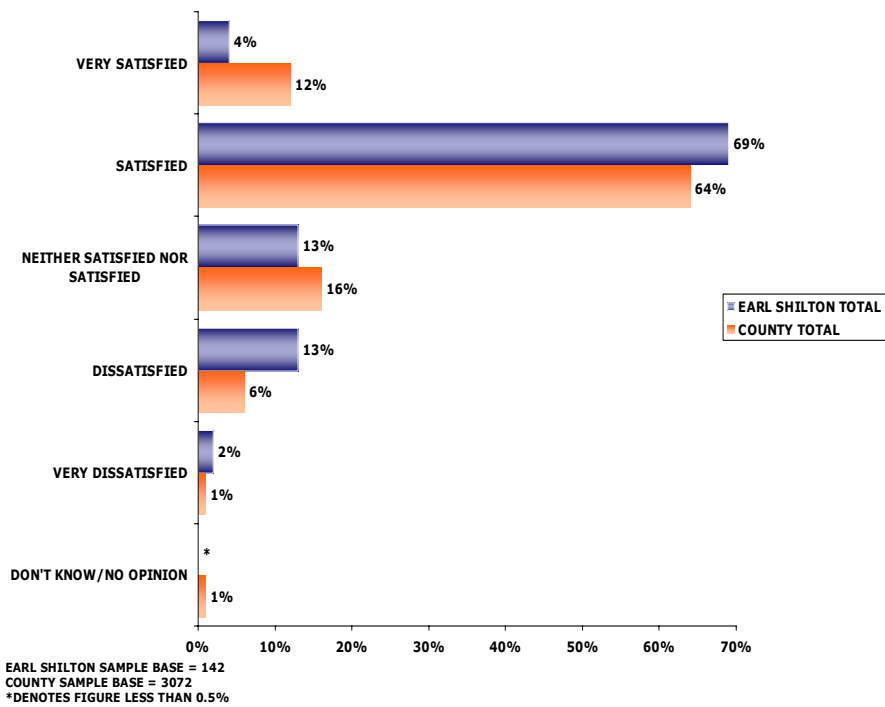
Overall, on a scale of 1 to 5 where 5 is the most positive score, Earl Shilton was rated 3.51, which was lower than the county average of 3.71 - that is they are well above average, good but not very good. On all accounts, Earl Shilton scored below the county average as demonstrated in the figure above.

Overall, satisfaction was very high amongst respondents as they considered Earl Shilton a good place to shop, visit and to do business, but the figure for the county total was slightly higher as the graph below demonstrates (73% Earl Shilton, 76% county).

The proportion of people dissatisfied with Earl Shilton a good place to shop, visit and to do business was 13%, over double the county average (6%).

Figure 10

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

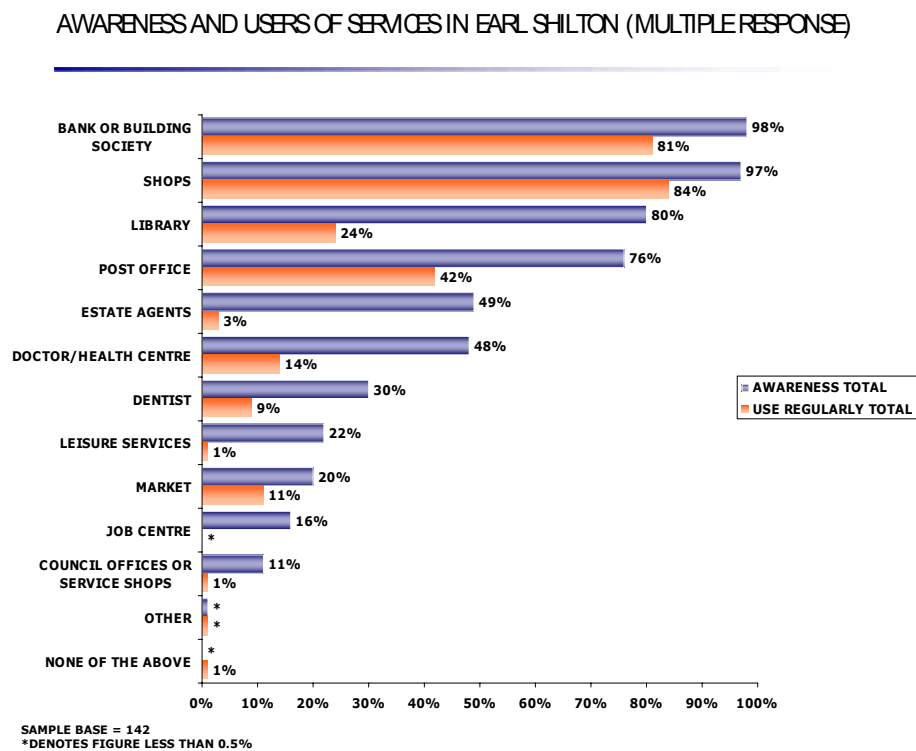


Services available in the centre

Services available in the centre of Earl Shilton 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 and shops and these were the two services which were also most regularly used. However, there were some services that people were aware of but were less likely to use regularly. For example 80% of respondents were aware of a library in Earl Shilton but only 24% used the service. Furthermore, respondents were aware of health services within the centre of Earl Shilton but less people use them on a regular basis - 48% of respondents were aware of a doctor's or health centre in Earl Shilton, but 14% of respondents were regular users whilst 30% of respondents were aware of a dentist in Earl Shilton whilst only 9% were regular users.

Figure 11

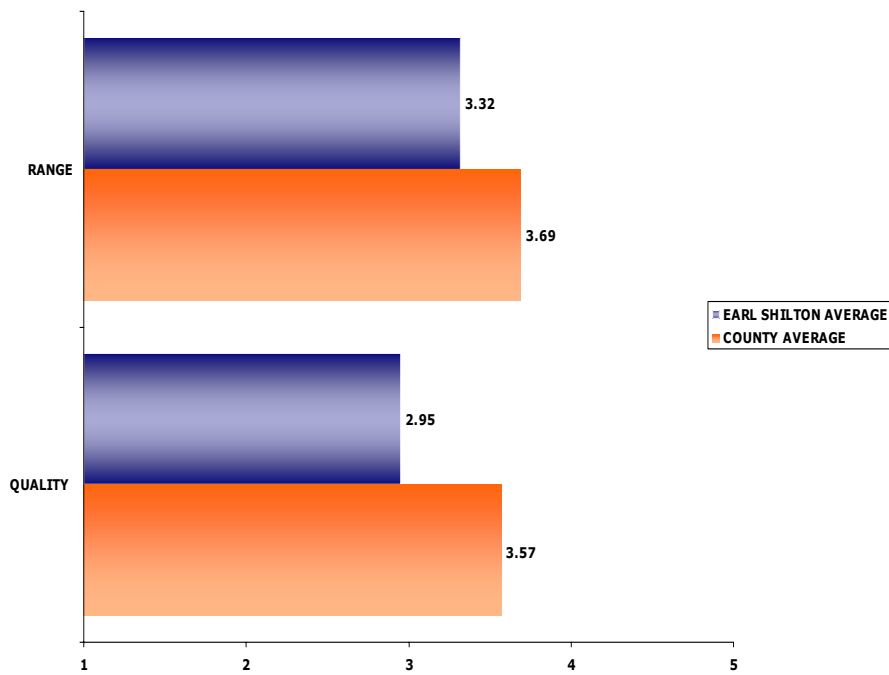


Respondents were questioned as to whether the retail outlets in Earl Shilton met their shopping needs. Almost two-fifths of respondents said that the variety of the retail outlets and shops in the centre met their needs adequately (39%), whilst a third said it met their needs very well or quite well. 27% said it did not meet their needs.

Respondents were asked to rate the range and quality of places to eat out in Earl Shilton 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, a pattern which reflected the position across the county as a whole. However, the figures for Earl Shilton were well below the county average.

Figure 12

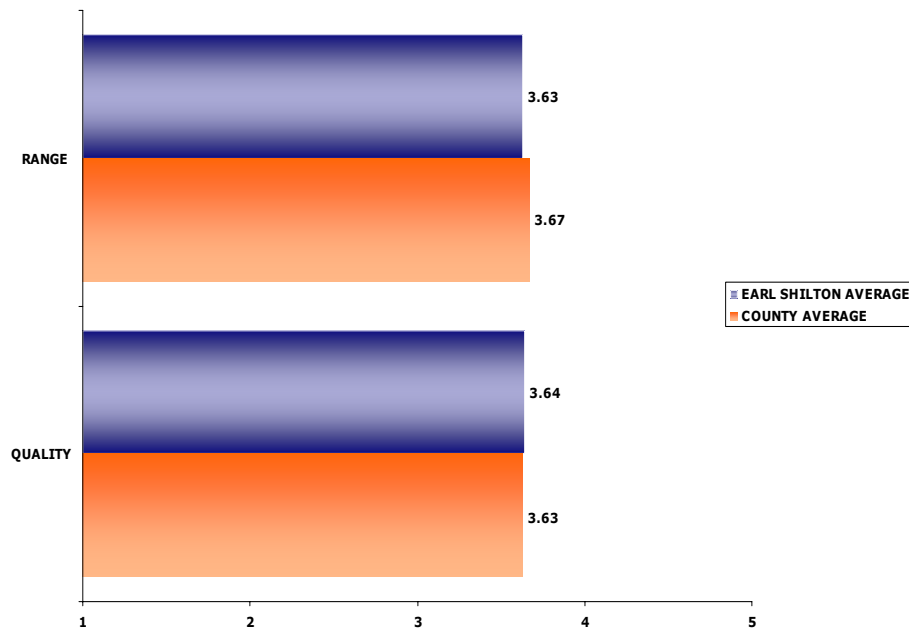
RANGE AND QUALITY OF THE PLACES TO EAT OUT IN EARL SHILTON



Respondents were then asked to rate the range and quality of pubs, bars and clubs in Earl Shilton 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 Earl Shilton, as shown below. This was also the same position county-wide, though real differences are small.

Figure 13

RANGE AND QUALITY OF PUBS, BARS AND CLUBS IN EARL SHILTON



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 EARL SHILTON CENTRE						
	Disagree Strongly	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Agree strongly	Mean score
	%	%	%	%	%	
Street lighting is good	4	16	27	34	13	3.62
Pavements and walkways are safe and well maintained	0	11	34	44	11	3.55
Pavements and walkways are clean and tidy	1	14	30	48	8	3.48
The baby changing facilities provided are clean and tidy	2	8	16	37	9	3.46
The public toilets are clean and tidy	4	17	23	36	11	3.45
There are enough baby changing facilities	2	10	25	24	10	3.40
Shop fronts are well maintained	2	25	27	38	9	3.38
Seating in and around shopping areas is well maintained	9	13	24	37	13	3.35
Pedestrian signage is relevant, clear and easy to understand	2	16	31	35	7	3.33
There are enough public toilets	6	17	21	38	9	3.28
The centre is well planted in summertime	2	24	33	33	5	3.15
The design and layout of the centre is attractive	4	23	28	25	10	3.15
The parks are well maintained	4	20	37	25	8	3.14
There is sufficient seating is and around the centre	1	38	18	35	5	3.05
SAMPLE BASE: 142						

Note: Percentage no replies not shown

Overall, respondents had positive views about the environment and facilities available in the centre of Earl Shilton. Respondents felt that the pavements and walkways were clean and tidy (56% agreed or agreed strongly) as well as being safe and well maintained (55% agreed or agreed strongly) and that seating in and around shopping areas were well maintained (50%). Respondents were less positive that there was sufficient seating in and around the centre (39% disagreed or disagreed

strongly), that the design and layout of the centre was attractive (27%) and that the shop fronts were well maintained (27%).

Respondents were then asked to respond to a series of statements about aspects in and around the centre of Earl Shilton 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 EARL SHILTON						
	Disagree Strongly	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Agree strongly	Mean score
	%	%	%	%	%	
The centre could do with more high street chain stores	1	9	20	33	36	3.96
The centre needs more local, independent shops	0	6	20	44	25	3.93
The centre is accessible for disabled people and older people	0	2	23	50	13	3.84
Roads in the centre are well maintained	3	13	26	48	9	3.65
There is too much traffic noise in the centre	1	13	22	42	16	3.63
Road signs make it easy for cars to access the centre	1	11	31	44	12	3.55
The road network provides easy access into the centre	1	12	29	47	10	3.54
The level of service in shops is of a high standard	1	11	28	51	7	3.53
It is easy for drivers to find the car parks around the centre	1	12	31	43	10	3.51
There is too much other noise (music, pubs and clubs) in the centre	1	15	35	30	12	3.41
Pedestrians can walk around the centre without feeling threatened by traffic	1	18	28	37	10	3.38
There is enough car parking available	9	11	29	37	12	3.35
Roads in the centre are congested	1	5	25	62	6	3.01
Car parking costs too much	6	33	25	12	5	2.72
SAMPLE BASE: 142						

Note: Percentage no replies not shown

As demonstrated in the above table 69% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that Earl Shilton could do with more high street chain stores and a further 69% agreed or strongly agreed that the centre

needs more local, independent shops. In descending order of agreement, this was followed by roads in the centre were congested (68%), the centre was accessible for disabled people and older people (63%) and there was too much traffic noise in the centre (58%). Nearly two-fifths of respondents (39%) disagreed with the statement that the car parking costs too much.

Respondents were given a list of options and asked to say which issues they thought most needed attention in Earl Shilton over the next year. The most frequently cited responses were the cleanliness and tidiness of the centre (51%), a greater range of shops (44%) and more parking (39%). When asked to prioritise their *top three* areas of improvement, respondents cited a greater range of shops (38%), more parking (29%) and the cleanliness and tidiness of the centre (26%).

4 Crime and safety

This section looks at how respondents in Earl Shilton 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, vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property or vehicles was seen as a big problem by the largest proportion of respondents in Earl Shilton (31% considered this to be a very big problem or a big problem). This was followed by people being drunk or rowdy in public spaces (30%) people not treating each other with respect and consideration (26%) and road safety or speeding (26%). Areas that were seen as less of a problem included racial harassment (73% considered this either not a problem, or only a small problem), aggressive begging (70%) and rubbish and litter lying around (65%).

Table 4

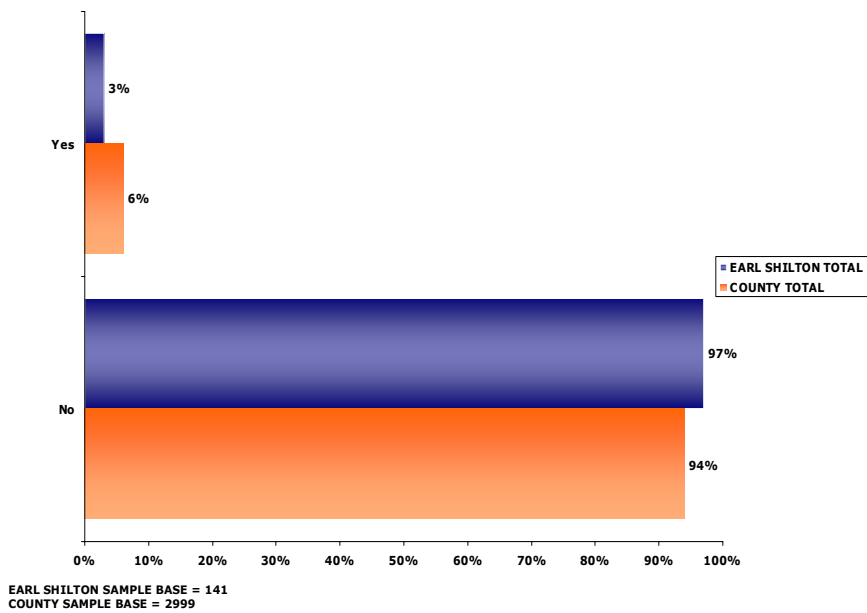
AREAS THAT ARE SEEN AS PROBLEMS IN THE CENTRE OF EARL SHILTON						
	Very big problem	Big Problem	Neither big nor small	Small Problem	Not a problem at all	Mean score
	%	%	%	%	%	
Racial harassment	0	0	16	25	49	4.37
Aggressive begging	1	9	18	28	42	4.04
Street canvassers	1	11	23	23	40	3.92
Assaults and other violent crime (personal robbery, mugging)	1	6	32	25	32	3.87
Rubbish and litter lying around	0	11	25	37	28	3.82
Dirty pavements and chewing gum	1	8	39	25	28	3.72
People using or dealing drugs	1	15	23	21	26	3.65
Verbal abuse or other aggressive behaviour	0	17	27	28	24	3.62
Fly tipping	0	20	35	11	32	3.56
Groups of people hanging round the streets	4	19	27	16	30	3.51
People not treating each other with respect and consideration	3	23	29	11	26	3.38
People being drunk or rowdy in public spaces	4	26	24	18	26	3.38
Personal theft (pick pocketing)	2	21	30	25	18	3.36
Road safety or speeding	2	24	31	21	21	3.35

Vehicles being stolen	5	16	38	20	18	3.31
Property being stolen from a vehicle	4	21	35	21	14	3.21
Vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property or vehicles	13	18	27	22	17	3.11
SAMPLE BASE: 226						

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

Figure 14

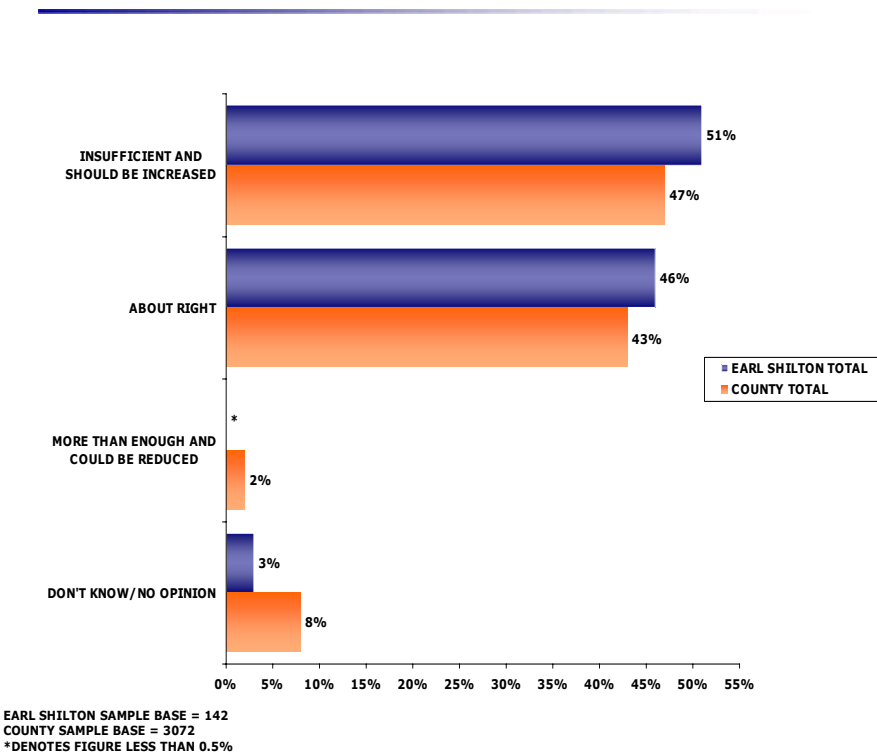
WHETHER RESPONDENTS HAVE EVER FELT WORRIED ABOUT BEING ASSAULTED OR HARASSED WHILST IN THE CENTRE OF EARL SHILTON IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS



Respondents were then questioned about their perceptions of police presence within Earl Shilton. 51% of respondents felt that the police presence was insufficient and should be increased whilst 46% felt the police presence in the centre was about right.

Figure 15

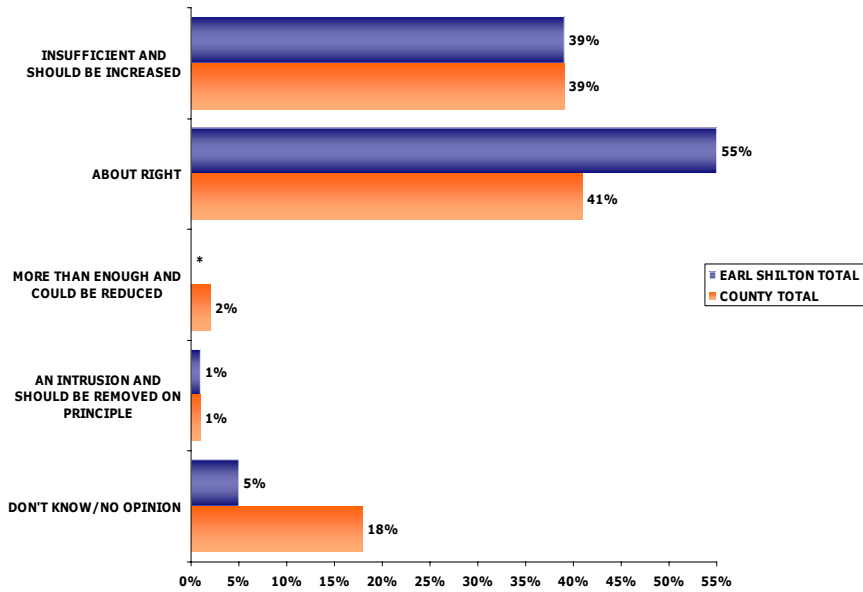
PERCEPTIONS OF POLICE PRESENCE IN THE CENTRE OF EARL SHILTON



When questioned about the presence of CCTV in Earl Shilton, 55% felt it was about right, which was higher than the county total of 41%. 39% of respondents felt it was insufficient and should be increased, which was the same as figure as the county total.

Figure 16

PERCEPTIONS OF CCTV PRESENCE IN THE CENTRE OF EARL SHILTON



EARL SHILTON SAMPLE BASE = 142
 COUNTY SAMPLE BASE = 3072
 *DENOTES FIGURE LESS THAN 0.5%

5 Summary

Visiting the town centre

- Shopping trips of various sorts accounted for 69% of the trips to Earl Shilton.
- 17% of respondents used a service in Earl Shilton whilst just over one in ten respondents worked in a local business.
- The majority of visitors arrived in Earl Shilton by car, with the second most common method being on foot.
- Just over half of respondents visited the centre daily.
- 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 Earl Shilton more often.

Attractions and events

- The local newspaper was identified as the most widely used method of 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.
- Just over a fifth of respondents had attended an event in the centre.

Attitudes towards the centre

- Overall, Earl Shilton was most likely to be described as 'friendly', 'tidy', 'safe', and 'quiet'.
- Just over half of respondents reported no change in the centre of Earl Shilton within the last 12 months, whilst one-fifth believed that it had got worse and just less than one in ten believed it had got better.
- Respondents felt that the centre catered better for shoppers, families and visitors than it did for young people.

Services available in the centre

- Banks & building societies and shops were the services that respondents were most aware of and were most likely to use on a regular basis in Earl Shilton.
- Nearly two-fifths of respondents in Earl Shilton said the variety of retail outlets and shops in the centre met their needs adequately.

Town centre environment

- Overall, respondents were positive about the environment and facilities in and around the centre.
- Respondents felt that pavements and walkways were clean and tidy as well as being safe and well maintained and that seating in and around shopping areas were well maintained.
- Having a greater range of shops, more parking and the cleanliness and tidiness of the centre were seen as the areas that needed the most improvement.

Crime and safety

- Vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property or vehicles, people being drunk and rowdy in public and people not treating each other with respect and consideration were seen as the most significant problems in Earl Shilton.
- Nearly all respondents said that they had not felt worried about being assaulted or harassed while in the town centre within the last 12 months.
- Just over half of respondents said that policing was insufficient and should be increased in Earl Shilton, whilst 46% said it was just about right.
- 55% of respondents said the presence of CCTV was about right, whilst 39% of respondents felt was insufficient and should be increased.

6 Conclusions and recommendations

- Overall, respondents were positive about Earl Shilton. 73% of respondents were very satisfied or satisfied with Earl Shilton as a place to shop, visit and to do business. Moreover, the majority of respondents reported no change in Earl Shilton within the last 12 months.
- Many respondents were aware of and users of services such as the bank or building society, shops, the library and the post office in Earl Shilton.
- Findings indicated that Earl Shilton catered better shoppers, families and visitors 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 Earl Shilton 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 parking and the cleanliness and tidiness of the centre.
- In terms of crime and safety issues, vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to the property or vehicles, people being drunk and rowdy in public spaces and people not treating each other with respect and consideration were seen as the biggest issues in Earl Shilton.