



BMG Research Report

Leicestershire Town and Village Centres Survey:
Hinckley
2006

Prepared for:
Leicestershire County
Council & Leicester Shire
Economic Partnership

Prepared by:
BMG Research



Because people matter.

Table of Contents

1	Introduction	3
	Report contents	3
	Sampling methodology	3
	Respondent Profile	4
2	Visiting the Town Centre	5
	Visits	5
	Attractions and events.....	9
3	Attitude towards the centre.....	11
	Description and attitudes towards the centre	11
	Services available in the centre.....	16
	Town Centre Environment.....	19
4	Crime and safety	22
5	Summary	26
	Visiting the centre.....	26
	Attractions and events.....	26
	Attitudes towards the centre	26
	Services available in the centre.....	26
	Town Centre environment.....	27
	Crime and safety	27
6	Conclusions and recommendations.....	28

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 Hinckley.

Report contents

Section 2 of this report looks at why respondents visited Hinckley, 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 Hinckley, 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 Hinckley 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

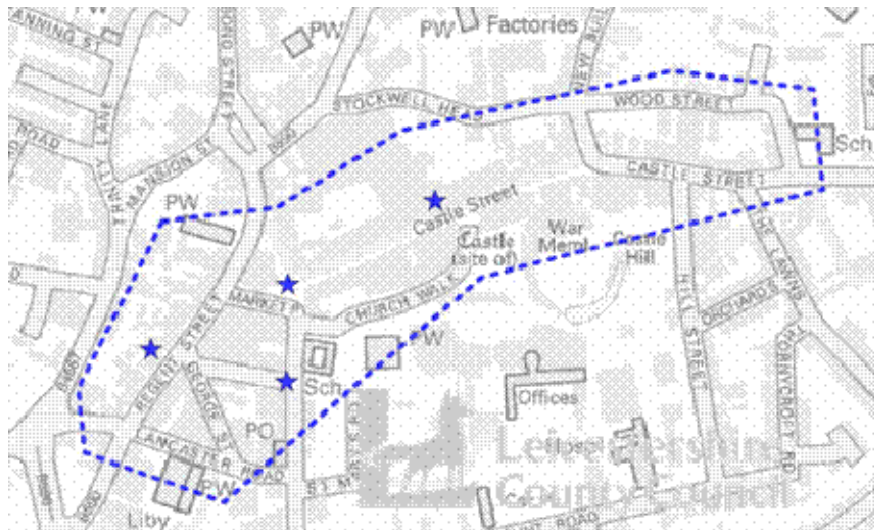
In total, 3000 interviews were planned across the 17 settlements. The sample structure called for a minimum of 100 interviews per settlement, with the remaining 1300 interviews distributed pro-rata on the basis of population size, meaning that the target for some of the villages was only a little over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

Figure 1



© Crown copyright 2007. All rights reserved.
Use of this image is limited to viewing on-line and printing one copy.
Leicestershire County Council. LA100019271.

Source: Leicestershire County Council

Respondent Profile

Within Hinckley 236 interviews were achieved. Of the sample, there were slightly more female respondents than male (54% female, 46% male). 15% of respondents in Hinckley were aged 16-24, 41% were aged 25-44, and 27% were aged 45-64, with the remaining 17% being of retirement age (65+). As reported by the 2001 Census, within Hinckley 13% of the population were aged between 16-24, 39% were aged between 25-44, 31% were aged between 45-64 and 17% were aged 65 and over.

The vast majority of respondents in Hinckley (91%) described themselves as white British and 1% described themselves as other white. 6% of respondents described themselves as Indian, whilst the remaining 2% refused to state their ethnicity. According to the 2001 Census, 98% of the population of Hinckley described themselves as white.

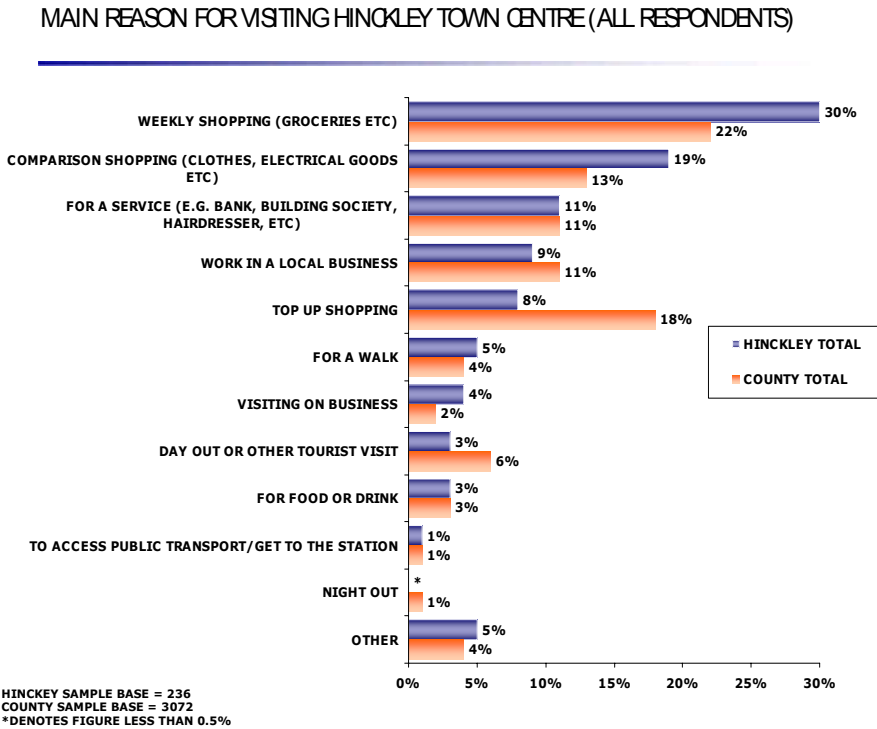
By economic status, 58% of respondents in Hinckley were in work (53% employed and 5% self-employed). The largest proportion of those respondents not in work were retired (21% of the total Hinckley sample). 9% of respondents who were not working were looking after children or other dependents or the home, 6% were in education or training, 4% were claiming benefits, 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 Hinckley, 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

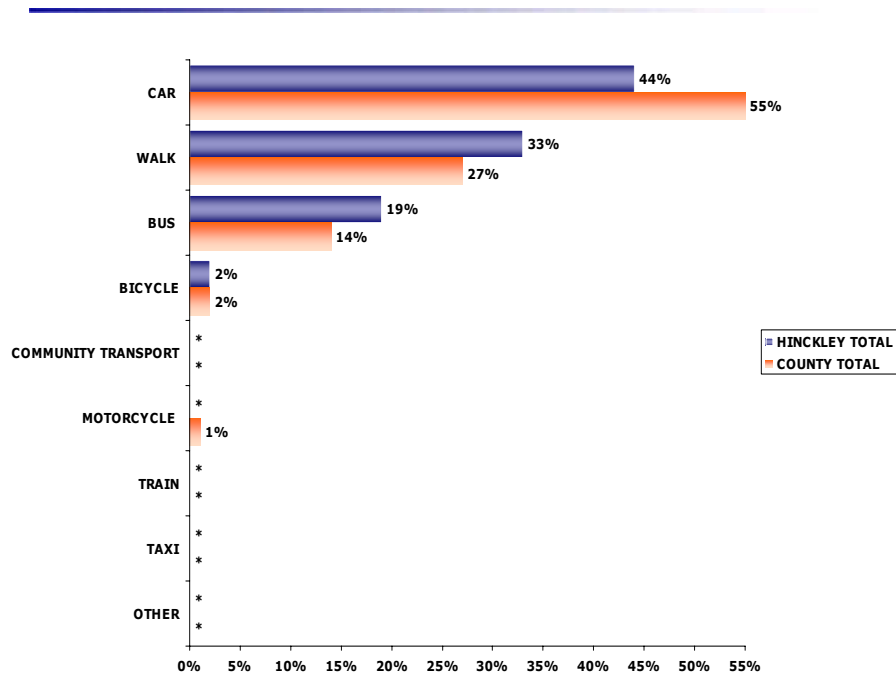


The intention of the survey was to speak to a cross-section of people present in the centres of the towns and villages, who may have been present for a whole range of purposes. Shopping trips of various sorts accounted for almost three-fifths of visits to Hinckley (57%), which was just slightly higher than the county figure (53%). 11% of respondents in Hinckley were visiting the centre for services which was the same figure as the county total. 9% were present because they worked in a local business, whilst 5% were out for a walk.

Mode of transport used to get into the centre

Figure 3

MODE OF TRANSPORT TO HINCKLEY TOWN CENTRE (ALL RESPONDENTS)



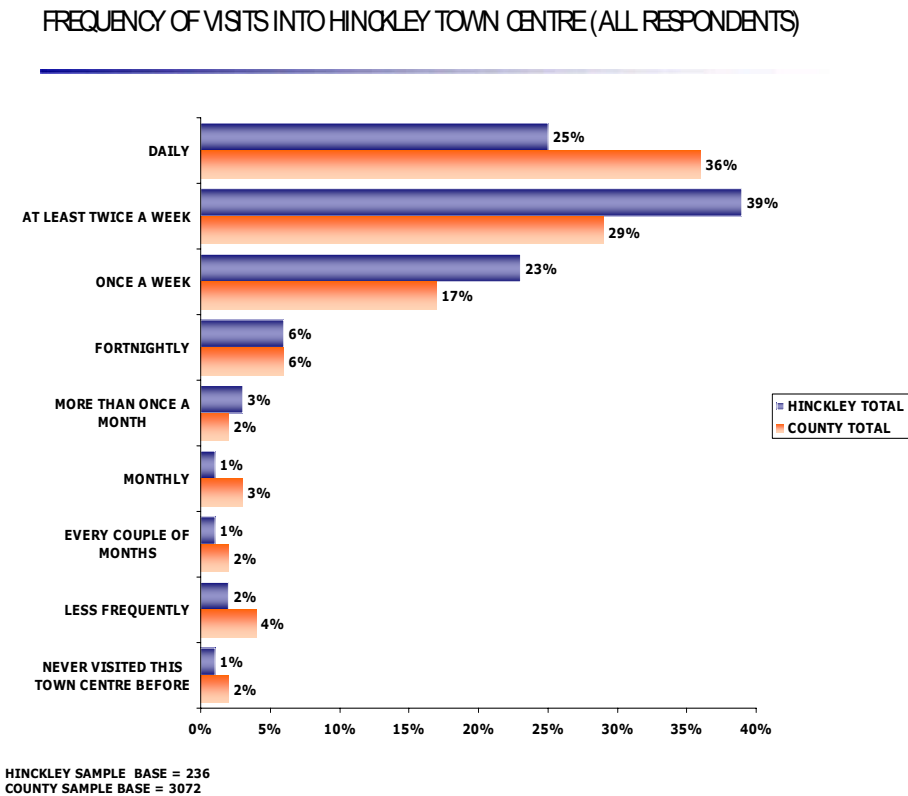
HINCKLEY SAMPLE BASE = 236
 COUNTY TOTAL SAMPLE BASE = 3072
 * DENOTES FIGURES LESS THAN 0.5%

Just over two-fifths of trips into the centre by respondents on the day of the survey were made by car whilst a third of respondents walked into the centre. 19% of respondents arrived by bus (which was slightly higher than the county total of 14%) and 2% arrived by bicycle (which was the same as the county figure).

Frequency of visits

As illustrated in the graph below, nearly two-fifths of respondents reported that they visited the centre at least twice a week (39%), whilst a quarter of respondents visited daily and 23% visited once a week.

Figure 4



Over half of respondents visited Hinckley both on weekdays and at weekends (58%). 29% of respondents visited Hinckley on a weekday whilst 13% visited at weekends.

The majority of respondents (65%) visited Hinckley during the daytime (before 5.30pm), whilst 32% visited both during the daytime and evening. Only 2% visited Hinckley only during the evening (after 5.30pm).

Those people that visited the town centre in the evening were asked how often they visited. 9% of respondents visited Hinckley centre in the evening at least twice a week, whilst 8% visited once a week and 5% of respondents visited daily. Of the respondents who visited Hinckley in the evenings, 20% visited mainly on a Friday evening, whilst 17% of respondents visited on a Saturday or Sunday evening.

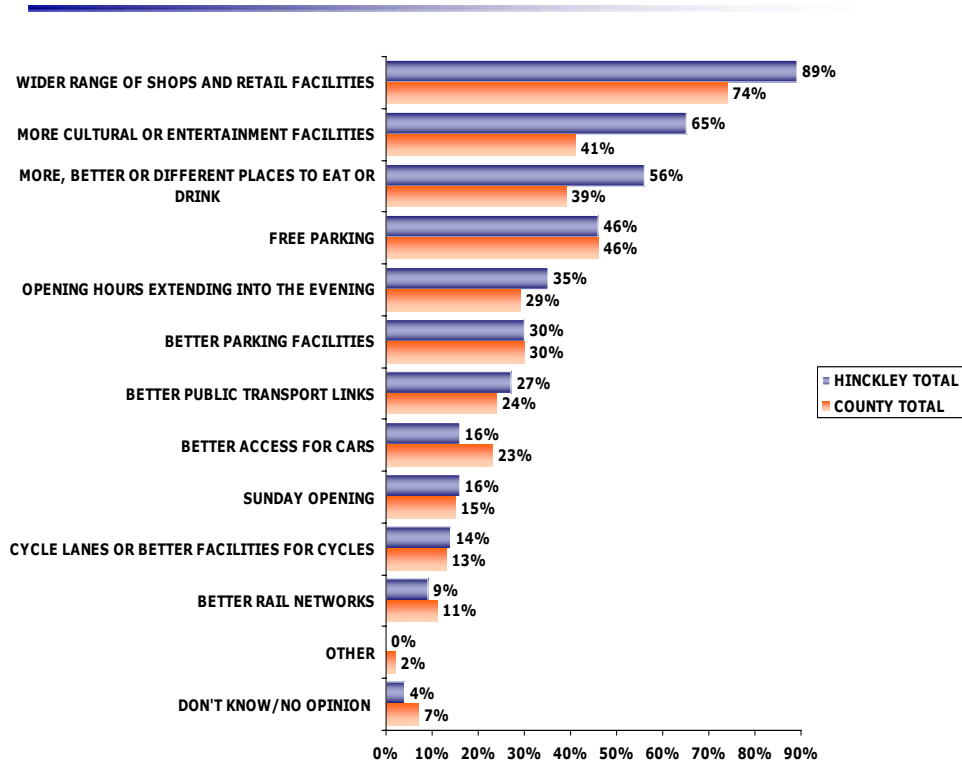
Encouraging more people to visit the centre

Respondents were asked to identify those issues which would encourage them to visit Hinckley 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 Hinckley more, with 89% of respondents stating this.

Improvements in other attractions in the centre – better cultural and entertainment venues and places for food and drink - were also very important. Free parking and the extension of opening hours, particularly evening opening, were also important for some visitors.

Figure 5

AREAS THAT WOULD ENCOURAGE RESPONDENTS TO VISIT HINCKLEY TOWN CENTRE MORE OFTEN (ALL RESPONDENTS)

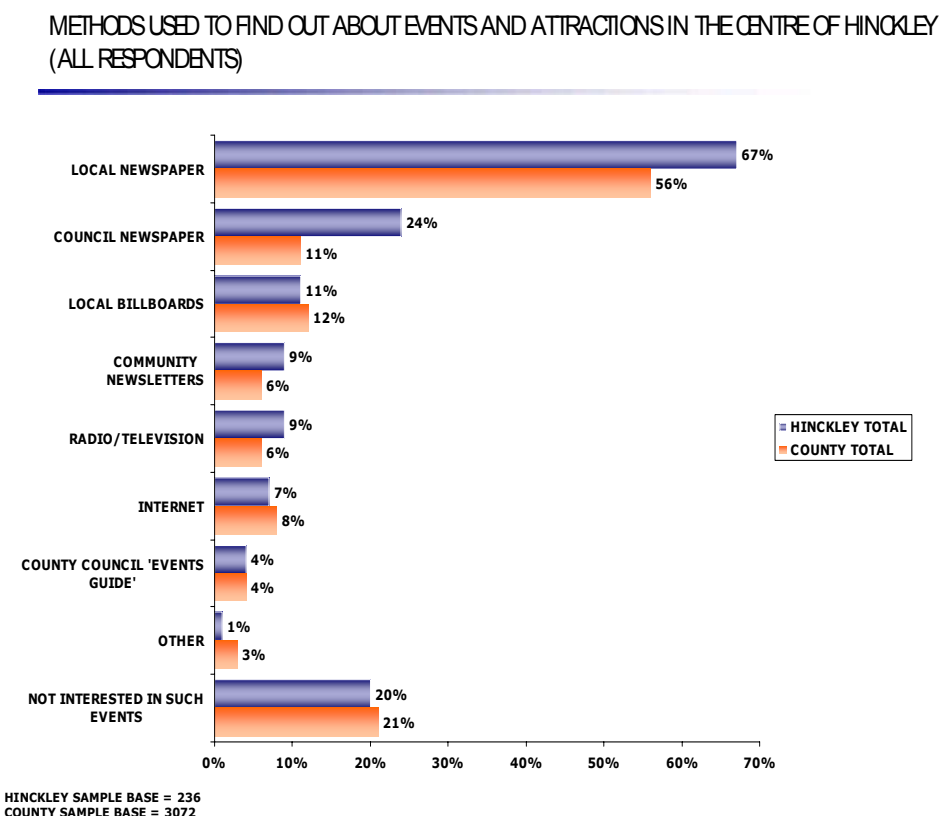


HINCKLEY SAMPLE BASE = 236
 COUNTY SAMPLE BASE = 3072
 * DENOTES FIGURES LESS THAN 0.5%

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 Hinckley, with other sources only modest in their importance by comparison. Notably, the council newspaper was also a popular method of finding out about events and attractions in Hinckley compared to the rest of the county (24% Hinckley, 11% county total). County Council event guides and the internet were less likely to be used in order to find out about attractions and events in the centre of Hinckley.

Figure 6



When respondents were questioned about whether they had attended any events in the centre recently, only 16% said that they had. Of these 16%, 14 people said they had attended the carnival, 4 people said they had attended the farmer's market, 3 people had said they attended the turning on of the Christmas lights and 2 people had attended the Jurassic Park or Dinosaur event. 1 person said that they had attended a theatre show or play, whilst 10 people said that they had attended another event in Hinckley.

Respondents were asked about what made the centre unique, different or special in Hinckley. 8% cited the market, 7% said the layout, 6% said it was a safe or low crime area and a further 6% said the size. Other notable responses included:

- Culture (4%);
- Quiet and peaceful (4%);
- Architecture and buildings (3%);
- Born here or live here (3%);
- Busy, vibrant and lively (3%);
- Cleanliness (3%);
- Appearance (2%);
- Convenience (1%);
- Friendly people (1%);
- Events (1%);
- Flower displays (1%); and
- Shops and shopping centre (1%).

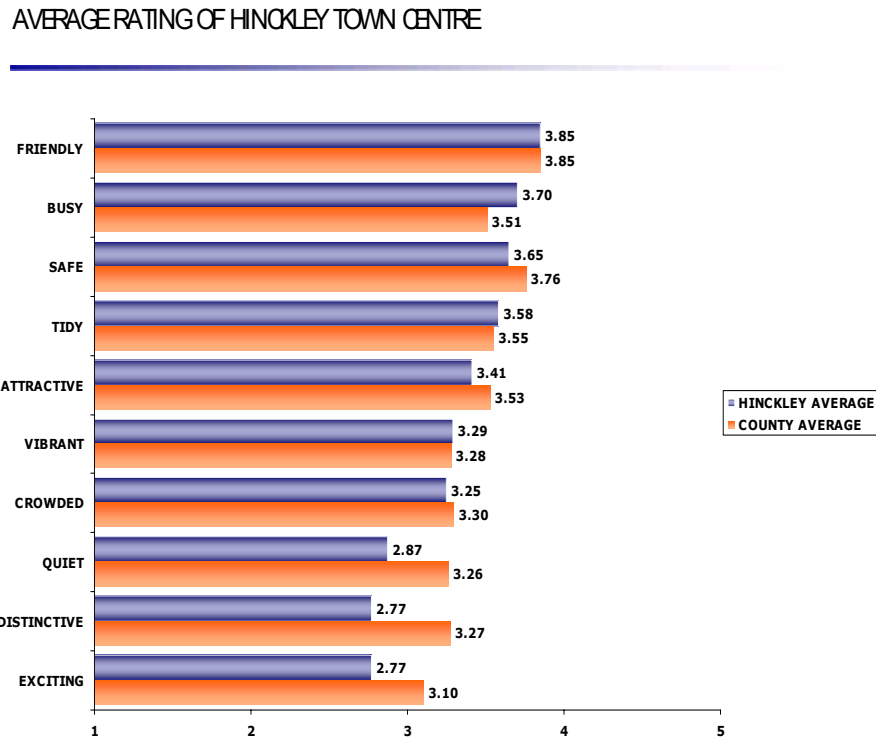
3 Attitude towards the centre

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

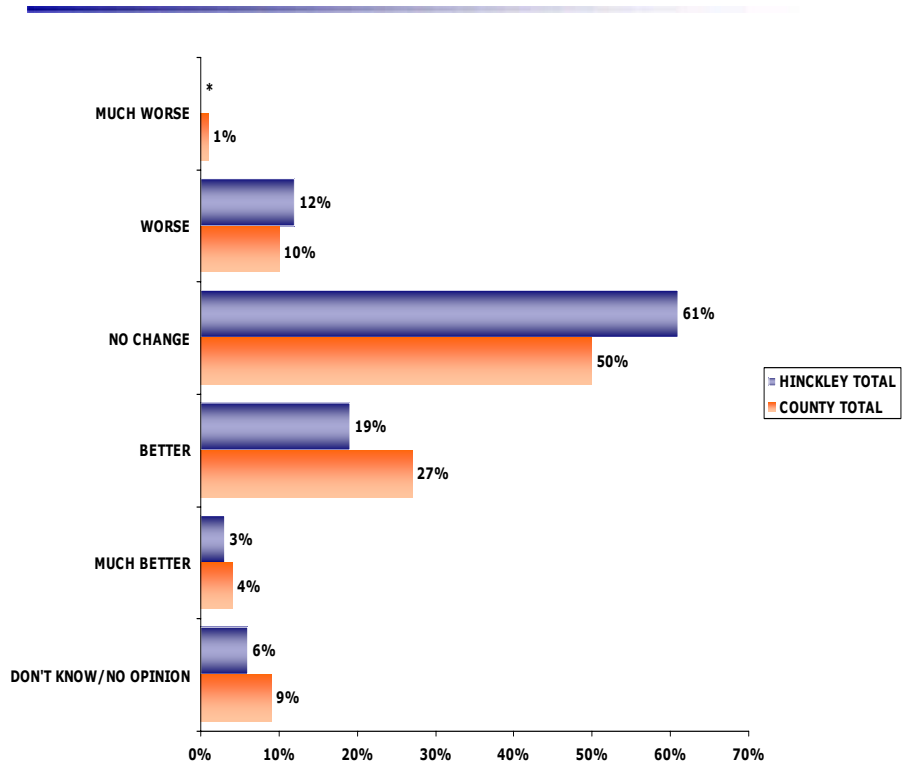
Figure 7



Whilst 61% of respondents did not report any overall change in Hinckley, 19% believed that it had improved compared to just over one in ten who thought it had got worse. Only 3% said it had got much better, as shown below:

Figure 8

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



HINCKLEY SAMPLE BASE = 234
COUNTY SAMPLE BASE = 2999
*DENOTES FIGURE LESS THAN 0.5%

All respondents were asked for their view on how well Hinckley served different groups in the population. The results for each of these groups are shown in Table 1 below. It was clear that respondents in Hinckley felt that the best served group was elderly people. However, there was concern about how the centre served young people than for any other group. 26% of respondents thought the centre was very poor or poor for young people.

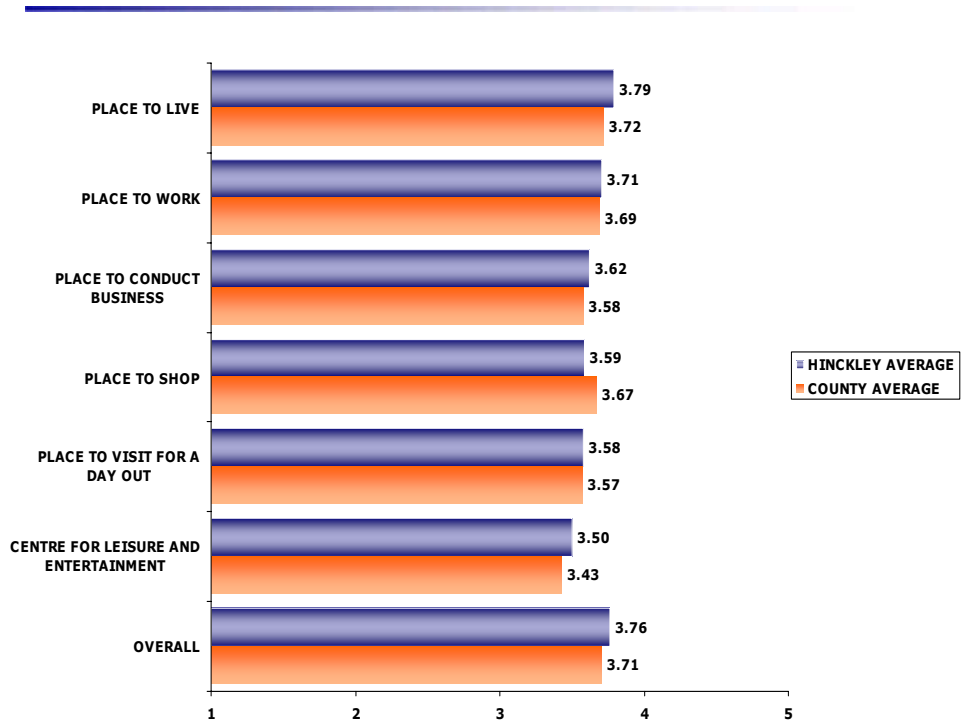
Table 1

RATING OF HINCKLEY FOR VARIOUS GROUPS							
	Very poor	Poor	Neither good nor poor	Good	Very good	DK/no opinion	Mean score
	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Elderly people	0	5	20	61	10	4	3.79
People with disabilities	0	3	23	58	7	9	3.76
Families	0	10	19	63	6	1	3.66
Shoppers	0	9	23	64	3	0	3.62
Visitors	0	13	20	61	6	1	3.59
Young people	3	23	23	45	2	4	3.19
SAMPLE BASE: 236							

How good are the centres as places for particular activities?

Figure 9

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

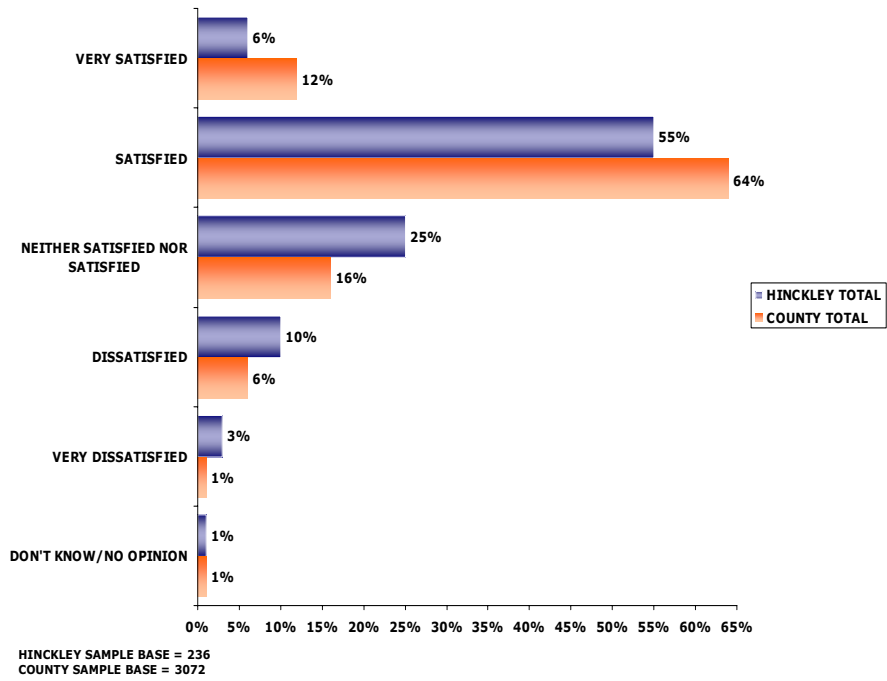


Overall, on a scale of 1 to 5 where 5 is the most positive score, Hinckley was rated 3.76, which was slightly higher than the county average of 3.71 - that is they are well above average, good but not very good. Hinckley was considered as a good place to live, work and a good place to conduct business compared to the rest of the county.

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

Figure 10

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

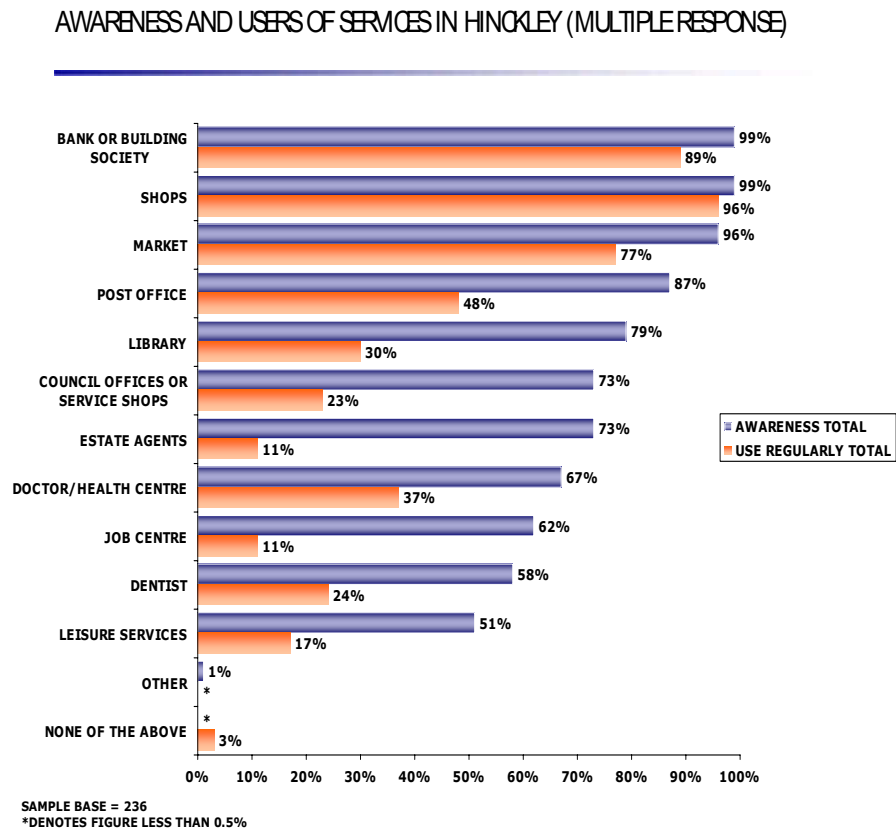


Services available in the centre

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

As shown in the graph below respondents were more likely to be aware of services such as banks & building societies, shops and the market 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. For example, 73% of respondents were aware that there were council offices or service shops in Hinckley but only 23% used this service on a regular basis. Furthermore, respondents were aware of health services within the centre of Hinckley but less people used them on a regular basis - 67% of respondents were aware of a doctor's or health centre in Hinckley, but 37% of respondents were regular users whilst 58% of respondents were aware of a dentist in Hinckley whilst only 24% were regular users.

Figure 11



Respondents were questioned as to their opinions about the market in Hinckley. The majority (65%) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that there was a wide range of products available to buy in the market.

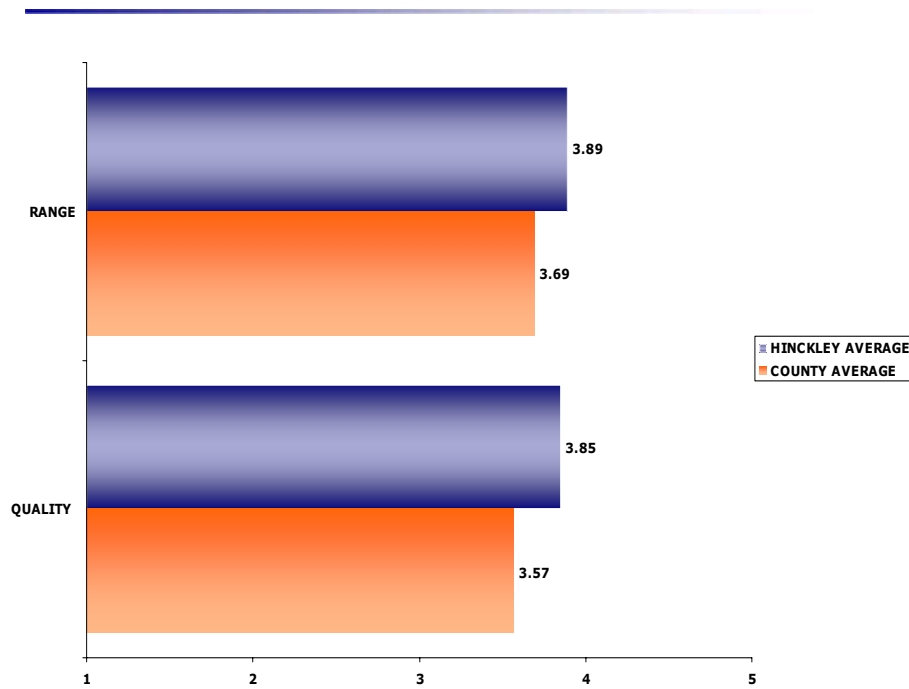
Respondents were questioned about whether or not Hinckley met their retail needs. 35% of respondents in Hinckley said that the variety of the

retail outlets and shops in the centre met their needs, whilst 34% said it did not. 30% of respondents said it met their needs adequately.

Respondents were asked to rate the quality of places to eat out in Hinckley 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. Figures for Hinckley were above the county average.

Figure 12

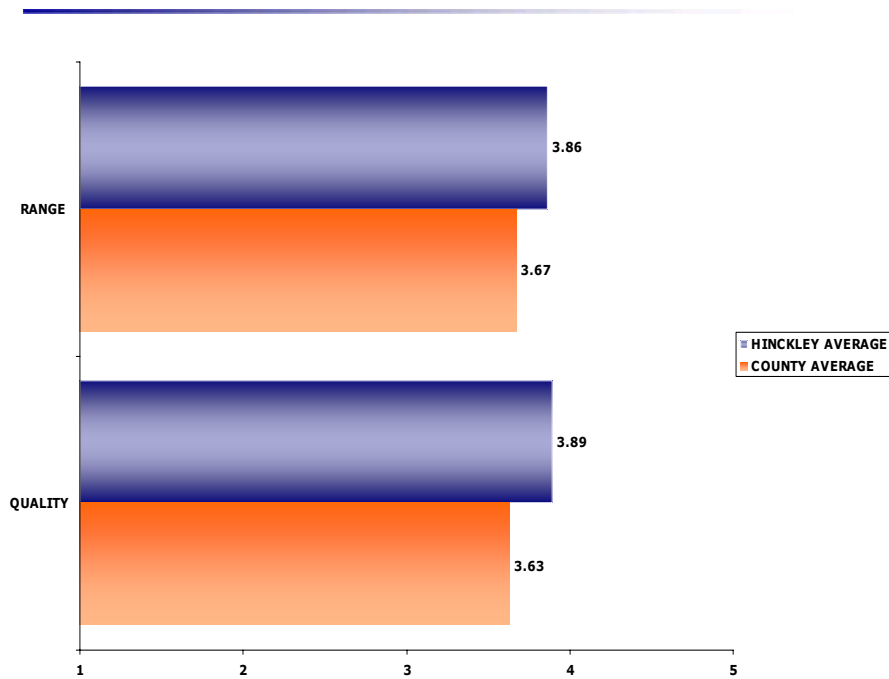
RANGE AND QUALITY OF THE PLACES TO EAT OUT IN HINCKLEY



Respondents were then asked to rate the quality and range of pubs, bars and clubs in Hinckley on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 was very poor and 5 very good. Respondents were slightly more positive about the quality than the range of pubs, bars and clubs in Hinckley, as shown below. However, this was the reverse on a county level, although the real differences are small. Again, figures for Hinckley were higher than the county average.

Figure 13

RANGE AND QUALITY OF PUBS, BARS AND CLUBS IN HINCKLEY



Town Centre Environment

Respondents were given a series of statements about the environment of the 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 HINCKLEY						
	Disagree Strongly	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Agree strongly	Mean score
	%	%	%	%	%	
Pedestrian signage is relevant, clear and easy to understand	0	4	27	61	7	3.71
Shop fronts are well maintained	0	9	25	56	10	3.67
The parks are well maintained	1	3	29	57	6	3.67
Street lighting is good	0	9	26	55	7	3.62
The centre is well planted in summertime	1	9	27	53	10	3.62
Seating in and around shopping areas is well maintained	0	8	32	51	8	3.58
Pavements and walkways are clean and tidy	0	11	28	52	9	3.57
There is sufficient seating in and around the centre	2	14	21	55	9	3.55
Pavements and walkways are safe and well maintained	0	10	30	54	5	3.53
The design and layout of the centre is attractive	0	20	32	38	9	3.49
The baby changing facilities provided are clean and tidy	3	3	18	30	3	3.46
The public toilets are clean and tidy	6	9	25	51	6	3.45
There are enough baby changing facilities	4	4	19	32	2	3.40
There are enough public toilets	7	12	28	45	6	3.30
SAMPLE BASE: 236						

Note: Percentage no replies not shown

Overall, respondents had positive views about the environment and facilities available in the centre of Hinckley. Respondents felt that the pedestrian signage was relevant, clear and easy to understand (68% agreed or agreed strongly) shop fronts were well maintained (66%) and there was sufficient seating in and around the centre (64%). Respondents were less positive that the design and layout of the centre was attractive (20% disagreed or disagreed strongly), that there were

enough public toilets (19% disagreed or disagreed strongly) and that there was sufficient seating in and around the centre (16%).

Respondents were then asked to respond to a series of statements about aspects in and around the centre of Hinckley 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 HINCKLEY						
	Disagree strongly	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Agree strongly	Mean score
	%	%	%	%	%	
The centre could do with more high street chain stores	0	3	20	55	21	3.94
The centre needs more local, independent shops	1	3	20	58	17	3.90
The centre is accessible for disabled people and older people	0	2	25	59	6	3.75
Roads in the centre are well maintained	3	13	26	48	9	3.65
Road signs make it easy for cars to access the centre	0	6	28	56	6	3.64
The road network provides easy access into the centre	0	6	29	53	8	3.63
It is easy for drivers to find the car parks around the centre	0	6	32	48	7	3.59
The level of service in shops is of a high standard	1	8	41	43	6	3.47
There is enough car parking available	3	12	19	43	6	3.45
Pedestrians can walk around the centre without feeling threatened by traffic	2	21	21	43	13	3.44
Roads in the centre are congested	7	25	29	30	5	3.01
Car parking costs too much	11	23	21	22	6	2.86
There is too much other noise (music, pubs and clubs) in the centre	13	41	25	15	3	2.52
There is too much traffic noise in the centre	21	36	24	18	0	2.40
SAMPLE BASE: 236						

Note: Percentage no replies not shown

As demonstrated in the above table 76% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the centre could do with more high street chain stores. In descending order of agreement, the centre needs more local,

independent shops (75%), the centre was accessible for disabled people and older people (65%) and the road network provided easy access into the centre (61%). Over half of respondents (57%) disagreed with the statement that car parking costs too much.

Respondents were given a list of options and asked to say which issues they thought most needed attention in Hinckley. The most frequently cited responses were a greater range of shops (75%), more specialist shops (70%) and the cleanliness and tidiness of the centre (51%). When asked to prioritise their *top three* areas of improvement the same issues arose again. Respondents cited a greater range of shops (61%), more specialist shops (39%) and more leisure facilities (25%).

4 Crime and safety

This section looks at how respondents in Hinckley 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 around the street was seen as a problem in Hinckley (24% of respondents considered this to be a very big problem or big problem). This was followed by rubbish and litter lying around (14%) and people being drunk or rowdy in public spaces. Areas that were seen as less of a problem included fly tipping (86% considered this either not a problem or only a small problem), racial harassment (85%) and aggressive begging (84%).

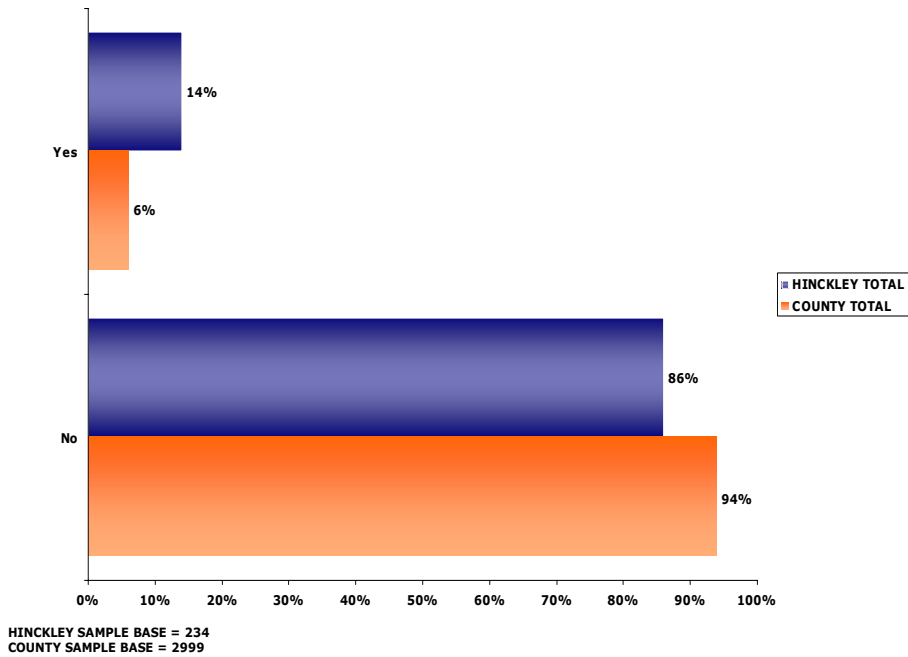
Table 4

AREAS THAT ARE SEEN AS PROBLEMS IN THE CENTRE OF HINCKLEY						
	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	4	20	19	27	29	3.58
Rubbish and litter lying around	2	12	27	29	29	3.73
People being drunk or rowdy in public spaces	2	10	16	30	40	3.99
Vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property or vehicles	1	9	17	31	41	4.02
Dirty pavements and chewing gum	2	6	16	28	47	4.12
People not treating each other with respect and consideration	2	6	9	24	57	4.29
Road safety or speeding	1	7	10	20	56	4.3
Street canvassers	1	4	9	16	63	4.45
Verbal abuse or other aggressive behaviour	4	4	6	11	70	4.46
Assaults and other violent crime (personal robbery, mugging)	3	5	6	11	70	4.48
Personal theft (pick pocketing)	2	6	5	13	67	4.49
People using or dealing drugs	1	4	7	11	67	4.54
Aggressive begging	0	4	5	18	66	4.57
Fly tipping	0	2	9	15	71	4.59
Property being stolen from a vehicle	1	3	6	12	70	4.6
Racial harassment	2	3	5	12	73	4.62
Vehicles being stolen	0	4	5	12	69	4.63
SAMPLE BASE: 236						

Respondents were questioned about whether they ever felt worried about being assaulted or harassed in Hinckley within the last 12 months. 86% of respondents said that they had not felt worried compared to the county total of 94%.

Figure 14

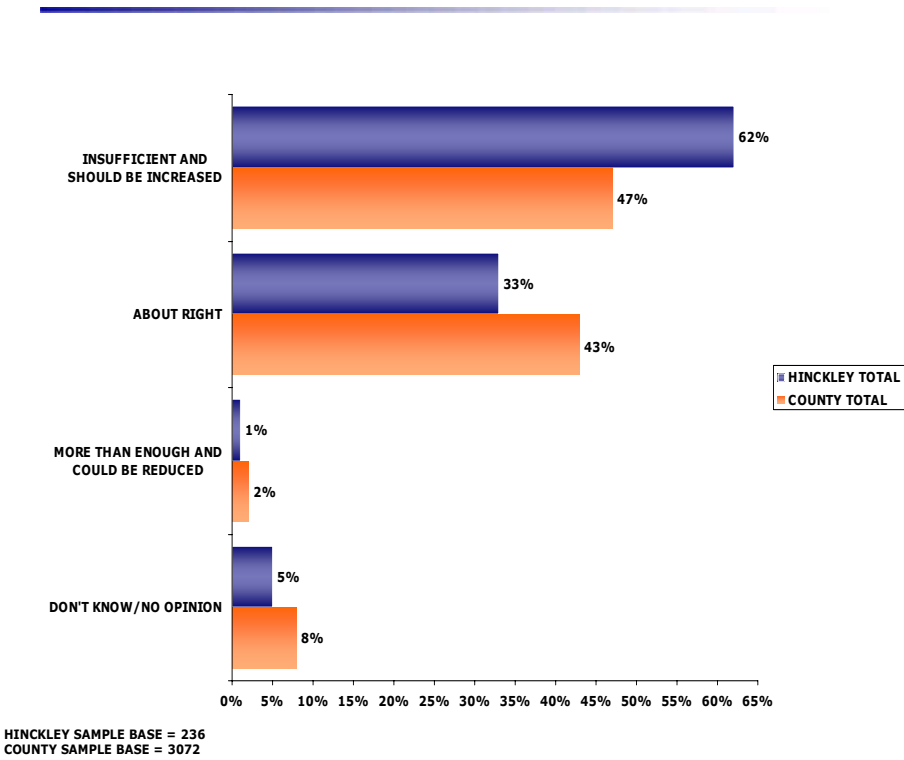
WHETHER RESPONDENTS HAVE EVER FELT WORRIED ABOUT BEING ASSAULTED OR HARASSED WHILST IN THE CENTRE OF HINCKLEY IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS



When respondents were asked about what they thought about the police presence in Hinckley, 62% felt it was insufficient and should be increased, which was higher than the county total of 47%. Only a third of respondents said that police presence in the centre was about right.

Figure 15

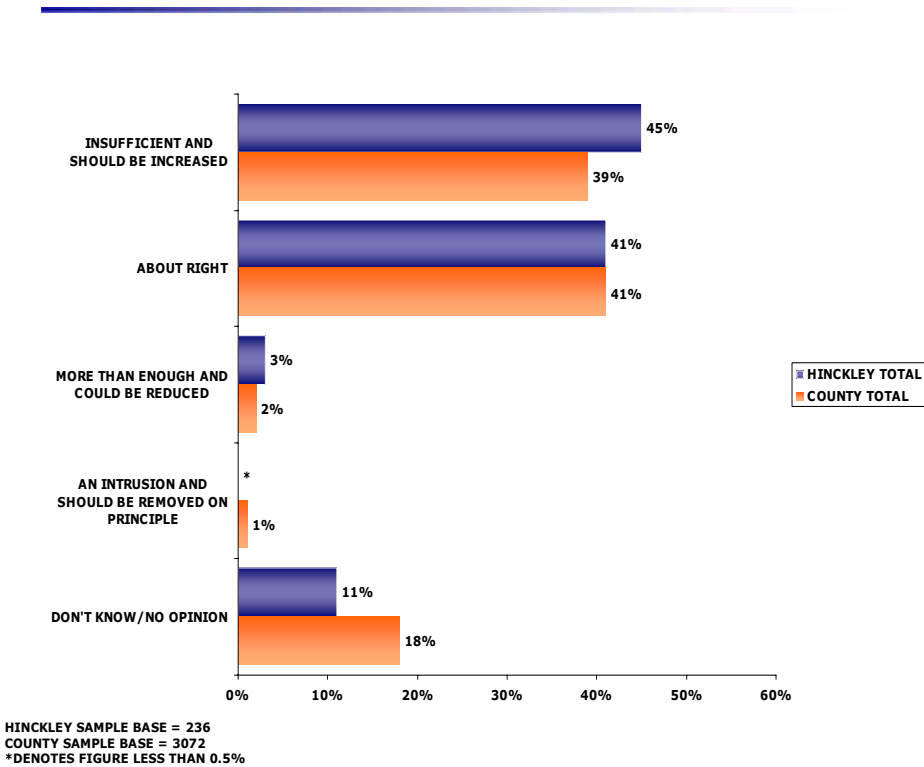
PERCEPTIONS OF POLICE PRESENCE IN THE CENTRE OF HINCKLEY



When questioned about the presence of CCTV in Hinckley, 45% of respondents felt it was insufficient and should be increased, which was a higher figure than the county total of 47%. 41% of respondents said the presence of CCTV was about right. This was the same figure as the total for the county as demonstrated in the graph below.

Figure 16

PERCEPTIONS OF CCTV PRESENCE IN THE CENTRE OF HINCKLEY



5 Summary

Visiting the centre

- Shopping trips accounted for 57% of the trips to Hinckley.
- 11% of respondents were using a service in Hinckley whilst 9% of respondents worked in a local business.
- A large proportion of visitors arrived in Hinckley by car, with the second most common method being on foot and the third being by bus.
- Nearly 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 better places for food and drink were the improvements most likely to encourage more people to come to Hinckley 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 the internet.
- Only 16% of respondents had attended an event in the centre.

Attitudes towards the centre

- Overall, Hinckley was most likely to be described as 'friendly', 'busy', 'safe' and 'tidy'.
- 61% of respondents reported no change in the centre of Hinckley within the last 12 months, whilst 19% of respondents reported the centre had got better and just over one in ten said it had got worse.
- Respondents felt that the centre catered better for elderly people 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 Hinckley.
- The majority of respondents agreed that there was a range of products available to buy in the market.
- Just over a third of respondents in Hinckley 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 pedestrian signage was relevant, clear and easy to understand, shop fronts were well maintained, and there was sufficient seating in and around the centre.
- Having a greater range of shops, more specialist shops and more leisure facilities were seen as the areas that needed the most improvement.

Crime and safety

- Groups of people hanging around the street, rubbish and litter lying around and people being drunk and rowdy in public spaces were seen as the most significant problems in Hinckley.
- Fly tipping, racial harassment and aggressive begging were not seen as a problem, or seen only as a small problem
- 86% of respondents said that they had not felt worried about being assaulted or harassed while in the centre within the last 12 months.
- Just over three-fifths of respondents said policing in Hinckley was insufficient and should be increased whereas a third said it was about right.
- 45% of respondents felt that the CCTV presence in Hinckley was insufficient and should be increased, whilst 41% said it was about right.

6 Conclusions and recommendations

- Overall, respondents were positive about Hinckley. 61% of respondents were very satisfied or satisfied with Hinckley as a place to shop, visit and to do business. Moreover, although the majority of respondents reported no change within the last 12 months, 22% reported that the centre had got better or much better.
- Many respondents were aware of and users of services such as the bank or building society, shops, the market and the post office in Hinckley.
- A wider range of shops and retail facilities, more cultural or entertainment facilities and better places for food and drink were the improvements most likely to encourage more people to come to Hinckley more often
- Findings indicated that Hinckley catered better for elderly people than it did for young people. This shows how the centre serves different groups of people.
- The design and layout of the centre, public toilets and seating 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 and more leisure facilities as area that needed the most attention within Hinckley.
- In terms of crime and safety issues, groups of people hanging around the street, rubbish and litter lying around and people being drunk and rowdy in public spaces were seen as the most significant issues.