



BMG Research Report

Leicestershire Town and Village Centres Survey:
Oadby
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 Oadby.

Report contents

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

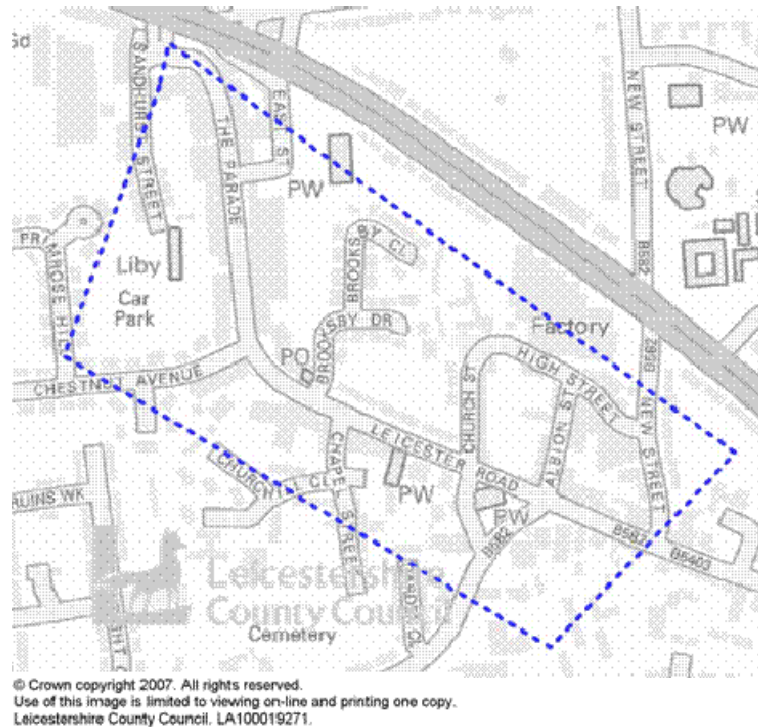
In total, 3000 interviews were planned across the 17 settlements. The sample structure called for a minimum of 100 interviews per settlement, with the remaining 1300 interviews distributed pro-rata on the basis of population size, meaning that the target for some of the villages was only a little over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

Figure 1



Respondent Profile

Within Oadby, 216 interviews were achieved. Of the sample, the majority of respondents were female (57%). 23% of respondents in Oadby were aged 16-24, 27% were aged 25-44, 23% were aged 45-64, with the remaining 22% being of retirement age (65+). As reported by the 2001 Census, within Oadby 11% of the population were aged between 16-24, 36% were aged between 25-44, 34% were aged between 45-64 and 19% were aged 65 and over.

The vast majority of respondents in Oadby described themselves as white British (83%), whilst 1% described themselves as Irish and a further 1% described themselves as other white. 13% of respondents described themselves as Indian. The remaining respondents described themselves as Caribbean (1%) and Pakistani (1%). According to the 2001 Census, 75% of the population of Oadby described themselves as white.

By economic status, 52% of respondents in Oadby were in work (50% employed and 2% self-employed). The largest proportion of those respondents not in work were retired (26% of the total Oadby sample). 9% of respondents were not in work because they were claiming benefits and a further 9% were in education or training, 4% were looking after children or other dependents or the home and 1% were not in work due to an illness or disability.

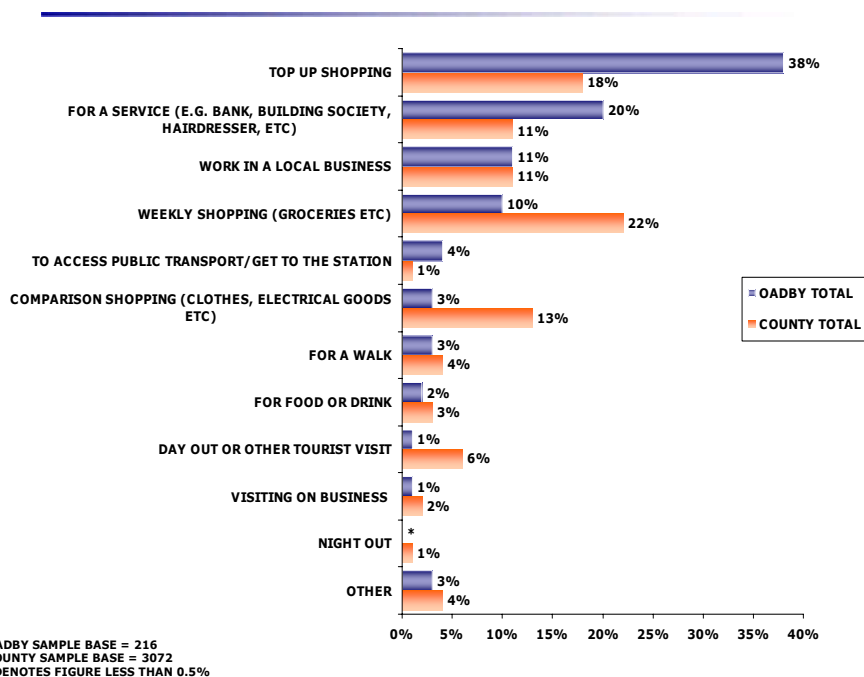
2 Visiting the Town Centre

Visits

This section looks at the reasons why people visited Oadby, 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 OADBY TOWN CENTRE (ALL RESPONDENTS)



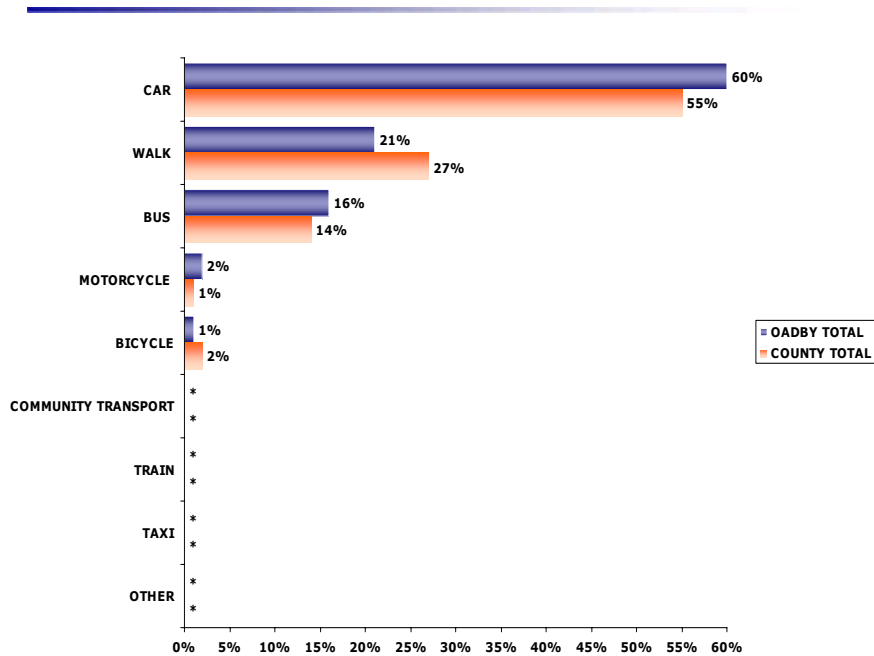
The intention of the survey was to speak to a cross-section of people present in the centres of the towns and villages, who may have been present for a whole range of purposes. Shopping trips of various sorts accounted for just over half of visits to Oadby (51%), which was just slightly lower than the total county figure (53%). People visiting Oadby to shop, were more likely to be doing top up shopping than larger scale weekly shopping or comparison shopping.

A fifth of respondents were in Oadby to use a service, whilst just over one in ten were present because they worked in the centre and 4% said that they were accessing public transport or going to the station.

Mode of transport used to get into the centre of town

Figure 3

MODE OF TRANSPORT TO OADBY TOWN CENTRE (ALL RESPONDENTS)



OADBY SAMPLE BASE = 216
 COUNTY SAMPLE BASE = 3072

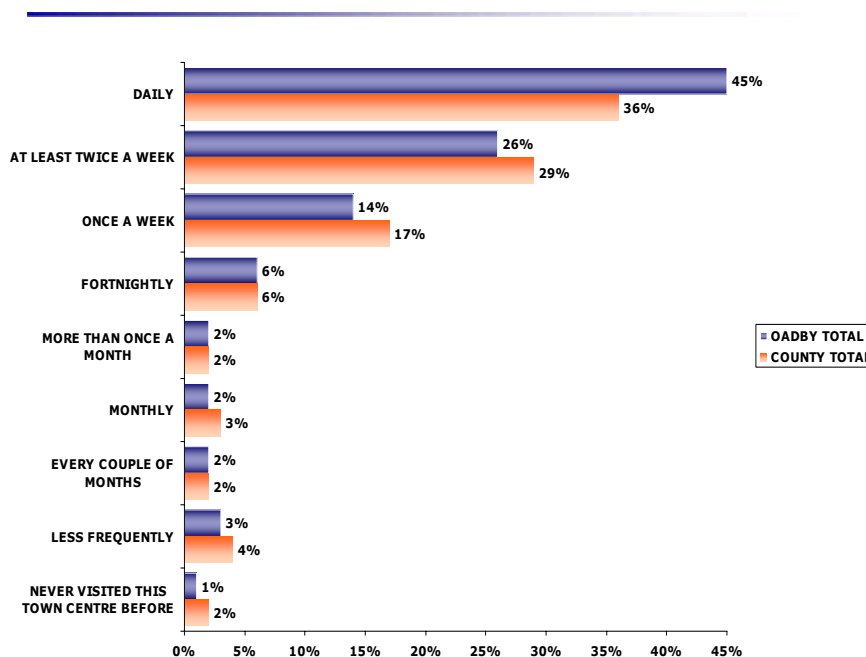
The majority of trips into the centre by respondents on the day of the survey were made by car (60%), whilst just over a fifth of respondents walked into the centre (21%) and 16% arrived by bus (compared to the county total of 14%).

Frequency of visits

As illustrated in the graph below, over two-fifths of respondents reported that they visited the centre daily (45%), whilst just over a quarter visited at least twice a week (26%) and 14% visited once a week.

Figure 4

FREQUENCY OF VISITS INTO OADBY TOWN CENTRE (ALL RESPONDENTS)



OADBY SAMPLE BASE = 216
 COUNTY SAMPLE BASE = 3072

Over half of respondents visited Oadby both at weekends and on weekdays (56%), whilst 37% of respondents visited on a weekday and 9% visited at weekends.

The majority of respondents (72%) mainly visited Oadby during the day (before 5.30pm), with 2% visiting the centre in the evening (after 5.30pm). 25% of respondents visited the town centre both during the daytime and evening.

Those people that visited the town centre in the evening were asked how often this was. 14% of respondents visited Oadby town centre in the evening fortnightly, whilst 12% visited monthly. Saturday or Sunday evenings proved to be popular amongst respondents to visit the centre, with 32% choosing to do so. 26% of respondents visited mainly on a Friday evening.

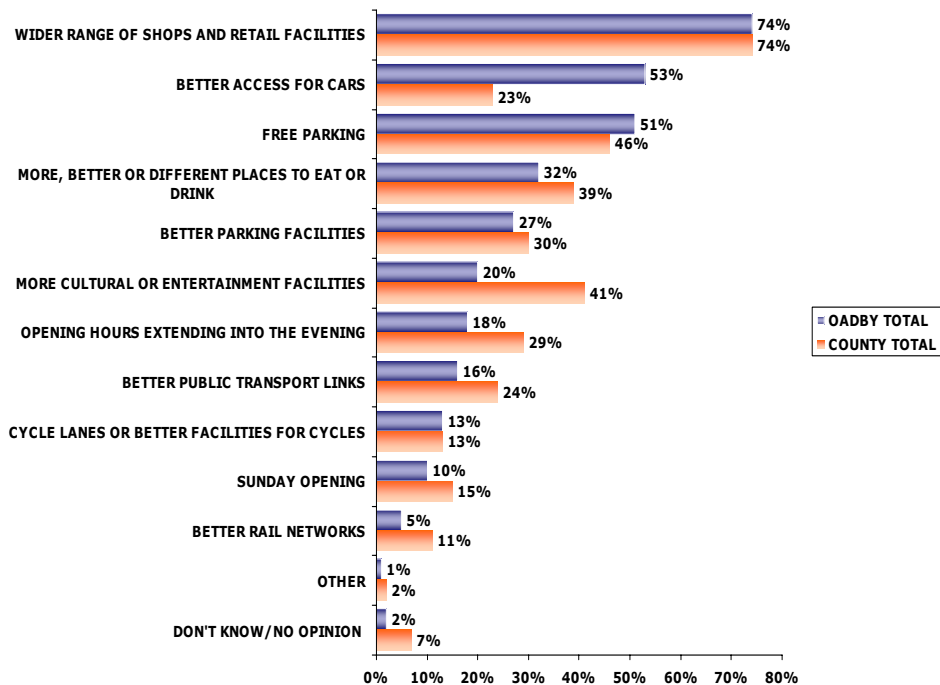
Encouraging more people to visit the centre

Respondents were asked to identify those issues which would encourage them to visit Oadby more often. They were able to cite more than one issue. Having a wider range of shops and retail facilities (74%) and better access for cars (53%) were cited as two areas that would encourage respondents to visit Oadby more.

Free parking as well as improvements in having better places for food and drink and more cultural or entertainment facilities were also very important to some respondents.

Figure 5

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

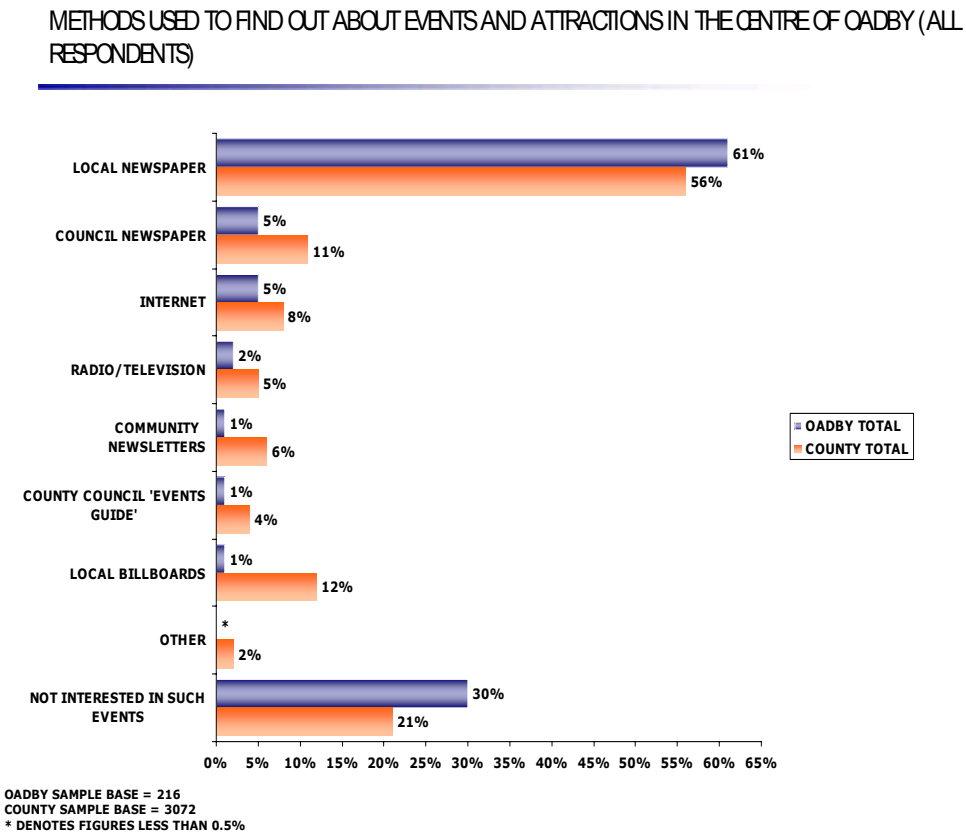


OADBY SAMPLE BASE = 216
 COUNTY SAMPLE BASE = 3072

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 Oadby, with other sources only modest in their importance by comparison. The least popular methods included community newsletters, the County Council's events guide and local billboards (1% in each case).

Figure 6



When respondents were questioned about whether they had attended any events in the town centre recently, nearly all respondents said that they did not attend an event. Only one person said that they attended Party in the Park.

Respondents were then asked what made the centre unique, different or special in Oadby. Overall 31% said there was nothing and 27% said that they didn't know. 8% said it was a safe area and that it had low crime levels, 5% of respondents said the appearance (attractive and pleasant), 4% said the cleanliness and a further 4% said it was quiet and peaceful. Other notable responses included:

- Born here or live here (3%);
- The market (3%);

- Flower displays and scenery (2%);
- Parking facilities (2%);
- Architecture and buildings (1%);
- Friendly people (1%);
- Community spirit (1%);
- Easily accessible or easy to get to (1%);
- Good atmosphere (1%);
- It's got everything (1%);
- Schools and college (1%);
- Shops and shopping centre (1%);
- Small market town or village (1%);
- The history and heritage (1%);
- The layout (1%); and
- The size (1%).

3 Attitude towards the centre

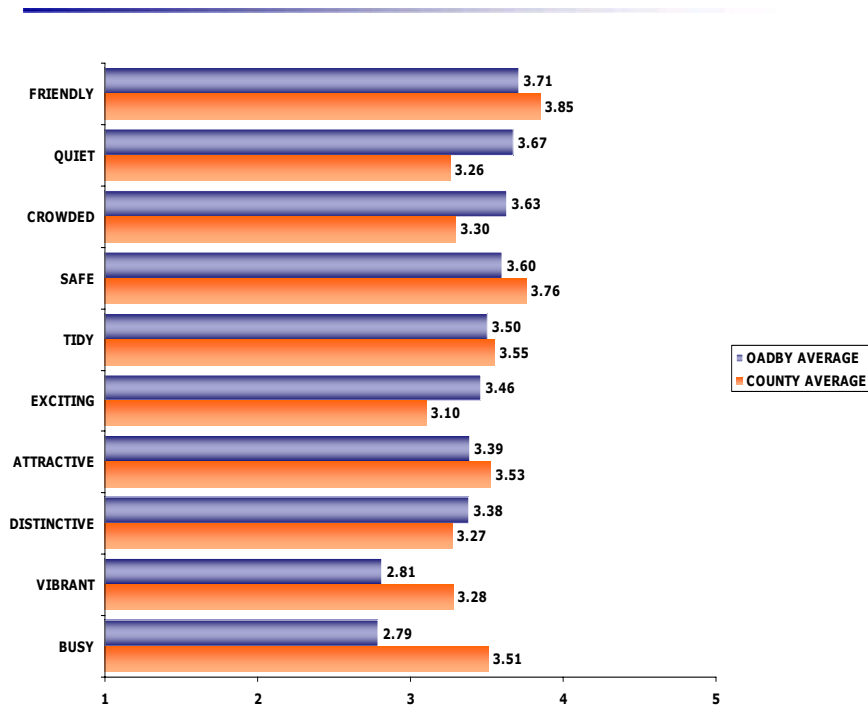
This section examines the attitudes of respondents to the different aspects of Oadby, considering whether the centre was a good place to shop, work and live as well as discussing the different services available in the area.

Description and attitudes towards the centre

Respondents were asked to say to what extent they agreed with a series of words to describe Oadby. Overall, Oadby was most likely to be described as 'friendly', 'quiet', 'crowded' and 'safe'. At the opposite end of the spectrum, Oadby was least likely to be described as 'busy' and 'vibrant'.

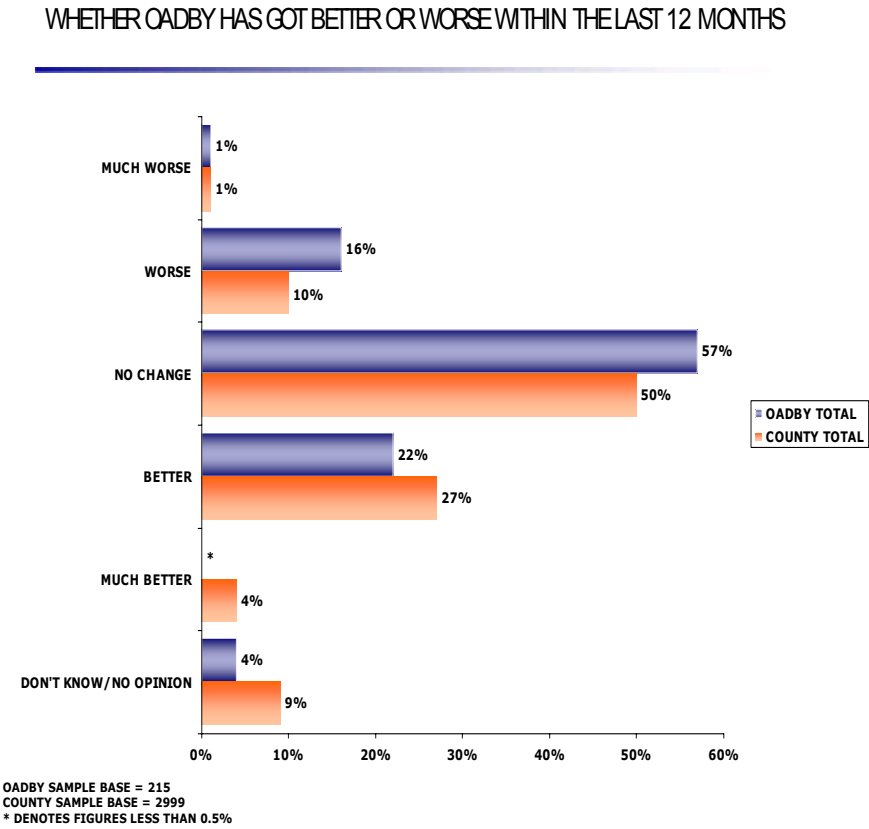
Figure 7

AVERAGE RATING OF OADBY TOWN CENTRE



Whilst 57% of respondents didn't report any overall change in Oadby, 22% believed that it had improved, compared to 16% who thought it had got worse, as shown below:

Figure 8



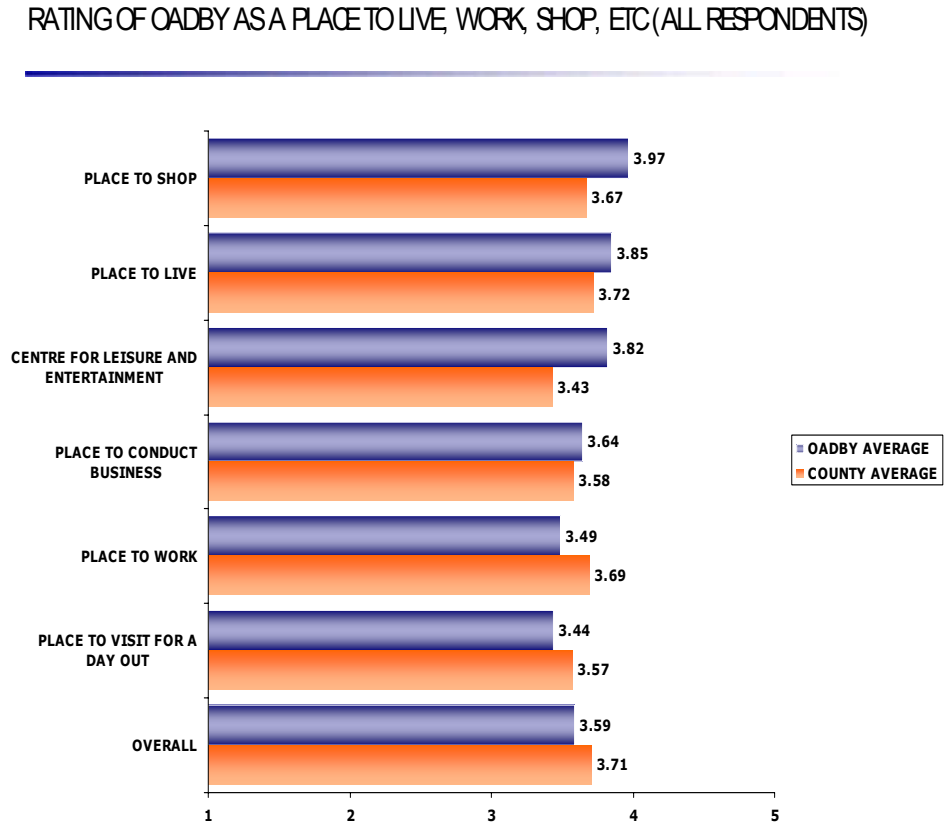
All respondents were asked for their view on how well Oadby served different groups in the population. The results for each of these groups are shown in Table 1 below. Generally respondents were very positive about how the centre of Oadby served various groups and respondents tended to think that the best served groups were families and elderly people. Just over half of respondents thought that the centre was neither good nor poor for people with disabilities.

Table 1

RATING OF OADBY FOR VARIOUS GROUPS							
	Very poor	Poor	Neither good nor poor	Good	Very good	DK/no opinion	Mean score
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Families	0	1	16	56	26	1	4.09
Visitors	0	3	24	62	11	1	3.82
Elderly people	0	3	32	48	17	1	3.79
Shoppers	0	1	34	57	8	1	3.72
Young people	0	3	31	58	7	1	3.70
People with disabilities	0	3	51	39	6	1	3.49
SAMPLE BASE: 216							

How good are the centres as places for particular activities?

Figure 9

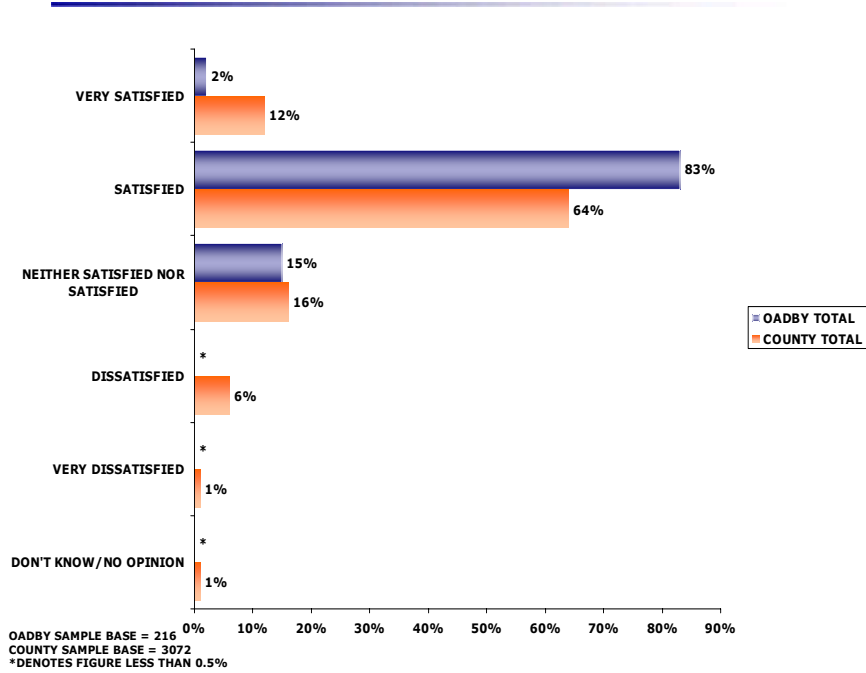


Overall, on a scale of 1 to 5 where 5 is the most positive score, Oadby was rated 3.59 which was lower than the county average of 3.71 - that is they were considered as well above average, good but not very good. Oadby rated positively as a place to shop, place to live, a centre for leisure and entertainment as well as a place to conduct business. Oadby did not score so high as a good place to work and a good place to visit for a day out compared to the county average as demonstrated in the figure above.

Overall, satisfaction was very high amongst respondents as they considered Oadby a good place to shop, visit and to do business. The graph below demonstrates that the overall level of satisfaction for Oadby was higher than the total for the county (85% Oadby, 76% county).

Figure 10

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

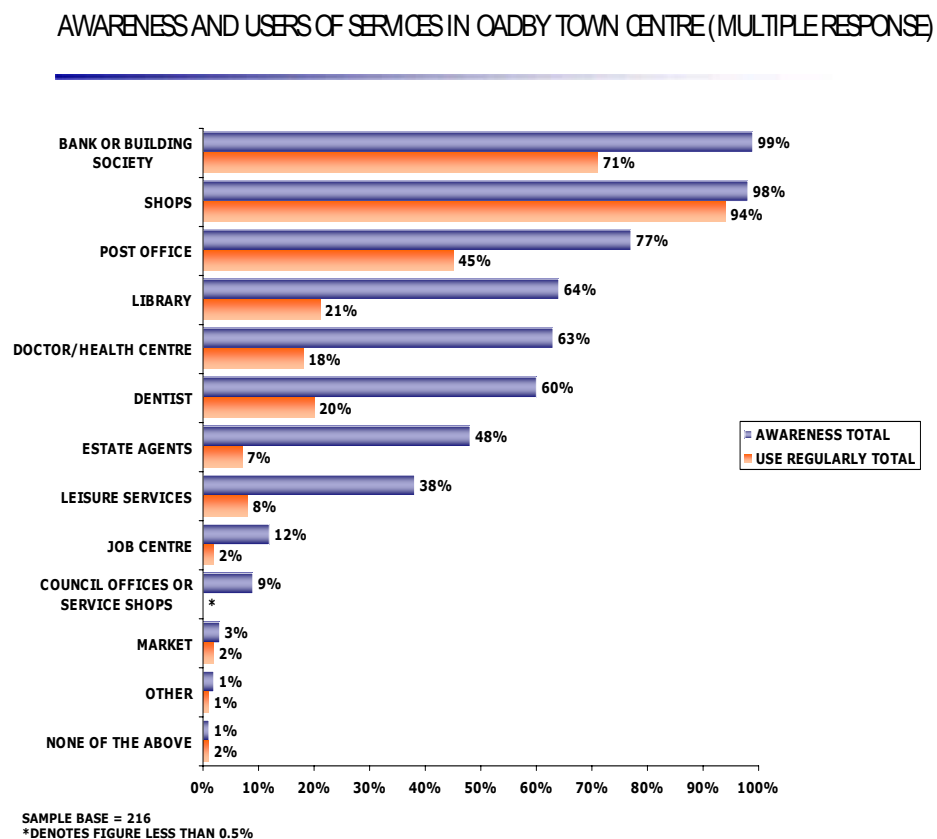


Services available in the centre

Services available in the centre of Oadby 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 the post office 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 use regularly. For example 64% of respondents were aware of a library in Oadby but only 21% used the service. Furthermore, respondents were aware of health services within the centre of Oadby but less people used them on a regular basis - 63% of respondents were aware of a doctor's or health centre in Oadby, but 18% of respondents were regular users whilst 60% of respondents were aware that there was a dentist in Oadby whilst only 20% were regular users.

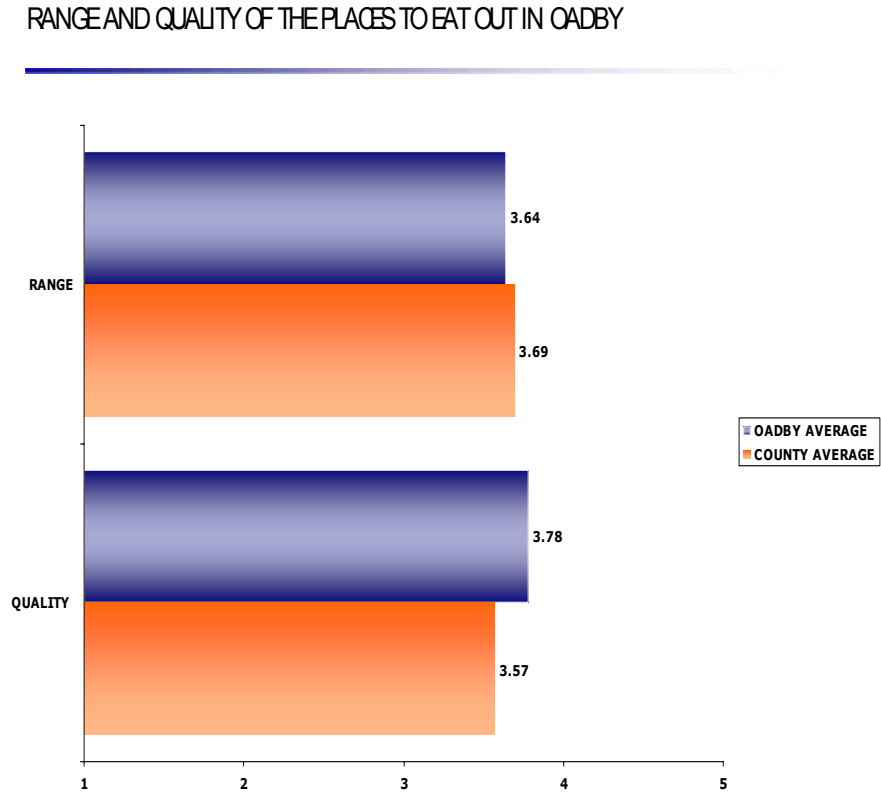
Figure 11



Respondents were questioned as to whether the retail outlets in Oadby met their shopping needs. Just over half of respondents said that the variety of the retail outlets and shops in the centre met their needs very well or quite well (57%). 8% said it did not meet their needs.

Respondents were asked to rate the quality of places to eat out in Oadby on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 was very poor and 5 was very good. Respondents were more positive about the quality than the range as shown in figure 12. On a county-wide level, this pattern was reversed.

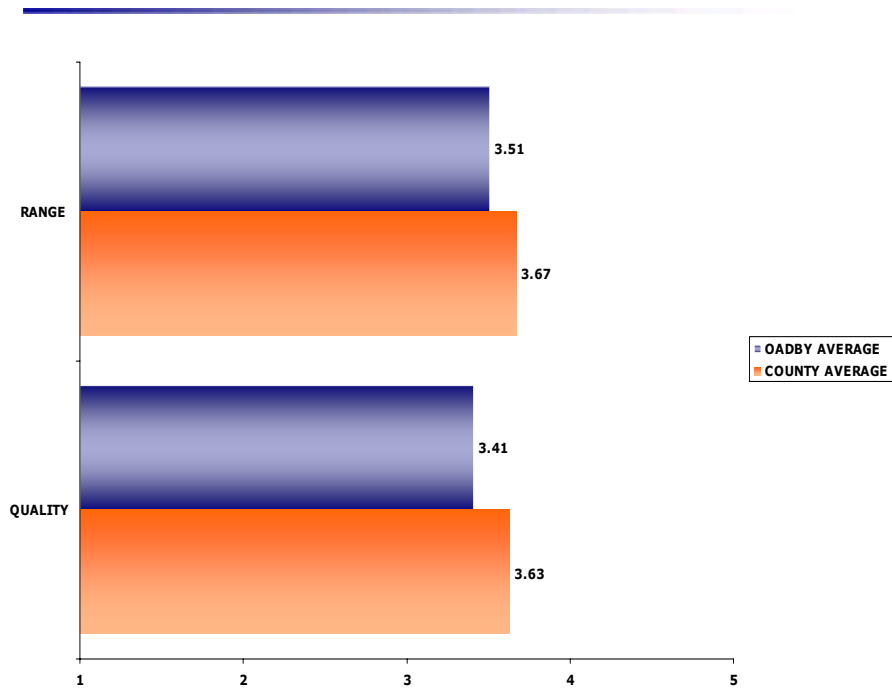
Figure 12



Respondents were then asked to rate the range and quality of pubs, bars and clubs in Oadby 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 of pubs, bars and clubs in Oadby, as shown below. This was also the same position on a county-wide level.

Figure 13

RANGE AND QUALITY OF PUBS, BARS AND CLUBS IN OADBY



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 OADBY						
	Disagree strongly	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Agree strongly	Mean score
	%	%	%	%	%	
Street lighting is good	3	19	26	38	13	3.39
Pedestrian signage is relevant, clear and easy to understand	4	18	32	31	15	3.36
Shop fronts are well maintained	4	18	30	39	9	3.30
The centre is well planted in summertime	5	20	29	33	13	3.29
The parks are well maintained	1	9	29	52	4	3.22
The design and layout of the centre is attractive	10	23	30	28	9	3.02
Pavements and walkways are safe and well maintained	6	25	38	25	5	2.99
Pavements and walkways are clean and tidy	8	35	34	21	2	2.73
There are enough public toilets	18	28	33	15	5	2.60
The public toilets are clean and tidy	20	26	29	14	5	2.55
Seating in and around shopping areas is well maintained	9	55	20	12	2	2.43
There are enough baby changing facilities	28	32	17	13	4	2.26
There is sufficient seating in and around the centre	33	34	19	10	3	2.16
The baby changing facilities provided are clean and tidy	35	27	14	12	4	2.16
SAMPLE BASE: 216						

Note: Percentage no replies not shown

Overall, respondents had very mixed views about the environment and facilities available in the centre of Oadby. Respondents felt that the parks were well maintained (56% of respondents agreed or agreed strongly with this statement), street lighting was good (51%) and shop fronts were well maintained (48%). Respondents tended to disagree that there was sufficient seating in and around the centre (67% disagreed or disagreed strongly), the seating in and around the shopping areas were

well maintained (64%) and the baby changing facilities provided were clean and tidy (48%).

Respondents were then asked to respond to a series of statements about aspects in and around the centre of Oadby 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 OADBY						
	Disagree strongly	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Agree strongly	Mean score
	%	%	%	%	%	
It is easy for drivers to find the car parks around the centre	2	22	33	32	11	3.28
Roads in the centre are well maintained	1	22	34	32	9	3.25
Road signs make it easy for cars to access the centre	3	21	35	29	11	3.24
The centre needs more local, independent shops	7	22	25	30	15	3.23
The centre could do with more high street chain stores	7	22	32	22	15	3.17
The road network provides easy access into the centre	3	19	42	28	7	3.15
Pedestrians can walk around the centre without feeling threatened by traffic	3	24	37	27	8	3.13
The level of service in shops is of a high standard	7	20	33	28	9	3.10
Roads in the centre are congested	4	21	45	23	6	3.06
There is too much traffic noise in the centre	5	31	31	28	5	2.98
There is too much other noise (music, pubs and clubs) in the centre	12	25	34	23	5	2.83
There is enough car parking available	9	26	13	30	4	2.79
Car parking costs too much	12	29	40	16	2	2.69
The centre is accessible for disabled people and older people	19	29	20	22	7	2.67
SAMPLE BASE: 216						

Note: Percentage no replies not shown

Again, there were mixed views about the aspects in and around the centre of Oadby. As demonstrated in the above table, 45% of respondents agreed or agreed strongly that the centre needed more

local, independent shops. In descending order of agreement, this was followed by the roads were well maintained (41%), the centre could do with more high street chain stores (37%) and the level of service in shops were of a high standard (37%). Just under half of respondents (48%) disagreed with the statement that the centre was accessible for disabled people and older people in the centre of Oadby.

Respondents were given a list of options and asked to say which issues they thought most needed attention in Oadby. The most frequently cited responses were a greater range of shops (75%), more parking (36%) and more specialist shops (31%). When asked to prioritise their *top three* areas of improvement, the same issues arose again. Respondents cited greater range of shops (71%), more parking (34%) and more specialist shops (24%)

4 Crime and safety

This section looks at how respondents in Oadby 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, none of the issues were really seen as big problems. Rubbish and litter lying around was the 'biggest' issue, seen as a big problem by 4% of respondents in Oadby.

Table 4

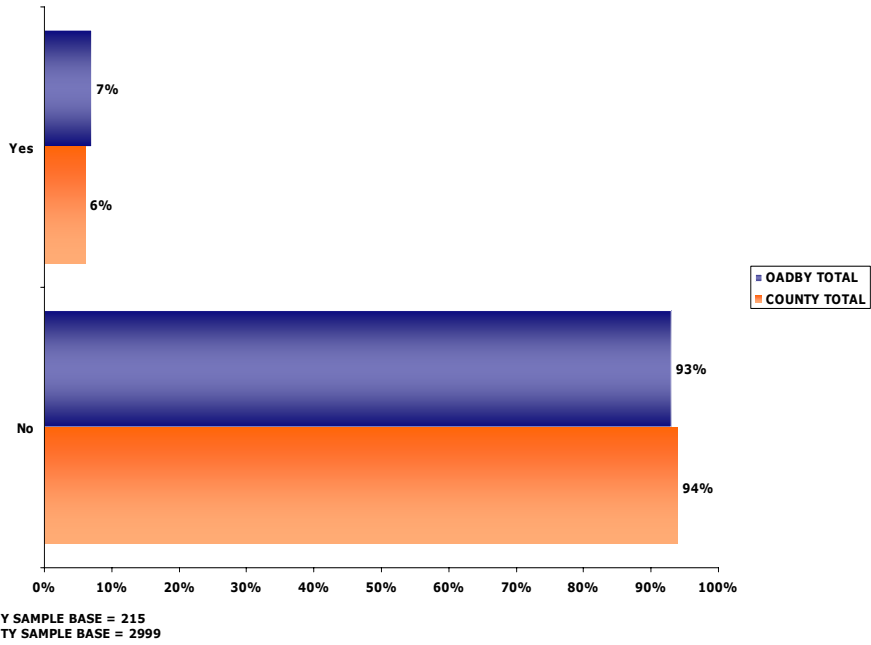
AREAS THAT ARE SEEN AS PROBLEMS IN THE CENTRE OF OADBY						
	Very big problem	Big Problem	Neither big nor small	Small Problem	Not a problem at all	Mean score
	%	%	%	%	%	
People not treating each other with respect and consideration	0	1	16	40	42	4.25
Groups of people hanging round the streets	1	1	12	38	47	4.32
Rubbish and litter lying around	1	3	10	32	53	4.34
Assaults and other violent crime (personal robbery, mugging)	1	1	11	32	54	4.4
Verbal abuse or other aggressive behaviour	1	1	9	32	55	4.44
Vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property or vehicles	0	2	10	29	58	4.45
People being drunk or rowdy in public spaces	1	1	7	32	57	4.46
Dirty pavements and chewing gum	1	1	9	29	60	4.48
Property being stolen from a vehicle	0	0	7	34	57	4.5
Personal theft (pick pocketing)	0	1	8	32	57	4.5
Racial harassment	0	1	10	26	62	4.5
Fly tipping	0	1	6	31	60	4.53
People using or dealing drugs	0	1	6	32	60	4.54
Street canvassers	0	1	6	31	62	4.55
Road safety or speeding	0	1	7	27	63	4.55
Vehicles being stolen	0	0	4	30	64	4.61
Aggressive begging	0	0	5	28	66	4.62
SAMPLE BASE: 216						

Note: Percentage no replies not shown

Respondents were questioned about whether they had ever felt worried about being assaulted or harassed in Oadby within the last 12 months. 93% of respondents said that they did not feel worried about being assaulted or harassed which was similar to the county total of 94%.

Figure 14

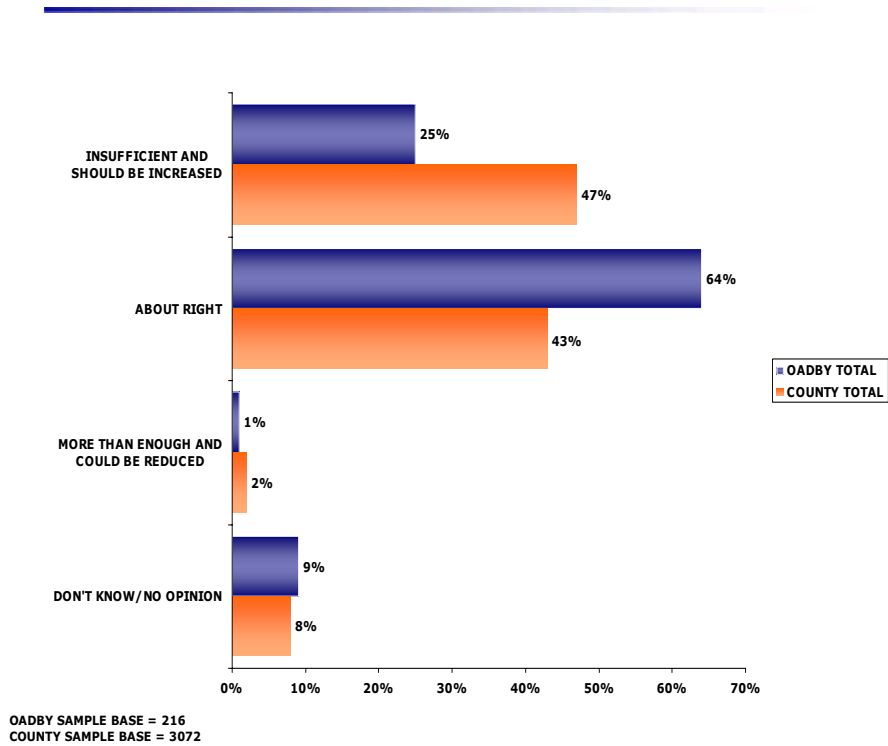
WHETHER RESPONDENTS HAVE EVER FELT WORRIED ABOUT BEING ASSAULTED OR HARASSED WHILST IN THE CENTRE OF OADBY IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS



Respondents were then questioned about their perceptions of police presence within Oadby. 64% of respondents felt the police presence in the centre was about right (which was higher than the county total of 43%). 25% of respondents felt that the police presence was insufficient and should be increased (this figure was lower than the county total of 47%).

Figure 15

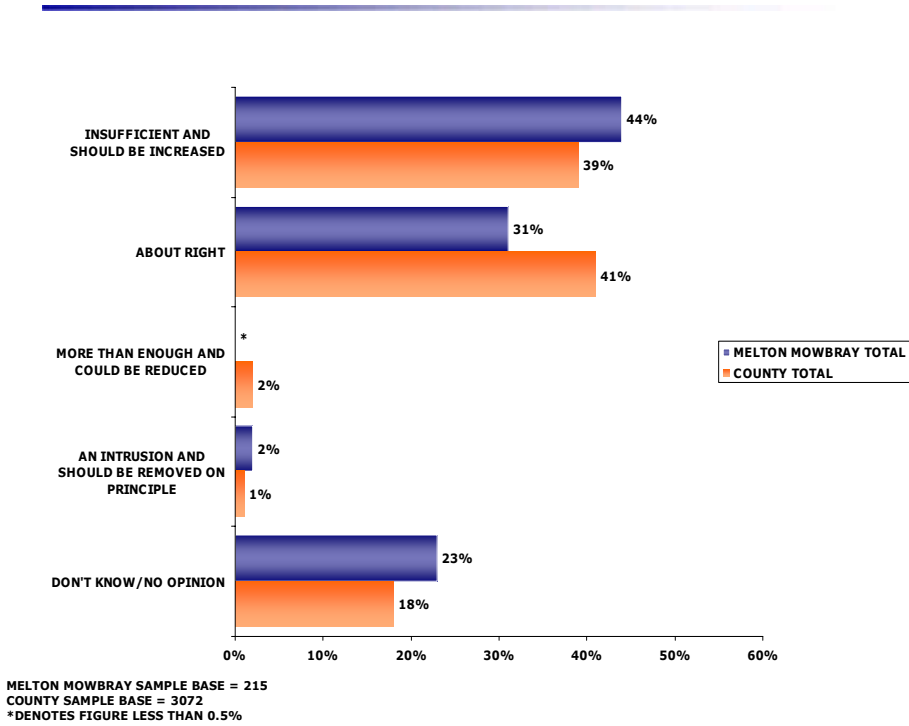
PERCEPTIONS OF POLICE PRESENCE IN THE CENTRE OF OADBY



When questioned about the presence of CCTV in Oadby, 44% of respondents felt it was insufficient and should be increased, which was similar to the county total of 39%. 31% of respondents said the CCTV presence in the centre of Oadby was about right (which was lower than the county total of 41%).

Figure 16

PERCEPTIONS OF CCTV PRESENCE IN THE CENTRE OF OADBY



5 Summary

Visiting the town centre

- Shopping trips accounted for just over half of the trips to Oadby.
- Shopping visits are much more likely to be 'top-up' shopping rather than 'weekly' shopping trips.
- 20% of respondents were in Oadby to use a service, whilst 11% of respondents worked in a local business.
- The largest proportion of visitors arrived in Oadby by car, with the second most common method being on foot and the third being by the bus.
- Just over two-fifths of respondents visited the centre daily.
- A wider range of shops and retail facilities, better access for cars and free parking were the improvements most likely to encourage more people to come to Oadby 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 community newsletters, the County Council events guide and local billboards.
- Nearly all respondents said that they did not attend an event in the centre.

Attitudes towards the centre

- Overall, Oadby was most likely to be described as 'friendly', 'quiet', 'crowded' and 'safe'.
- Over half (57%) of respondents reported no change in the centre of Oadby within the last 12 months, 22% reported the centre had got better and 16% said it had got worse.
- Respondents were generally positive about how the centre served various groups and felt that the centre catered better for families.

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 Oadby.
- Over half of respondents in Oadby said the variety of retail outlets and shops in the centre met their needs very well or quite well.

Town centre environment

- Respondents held mixed views about the environment and facilities in and around the centre.
- Respondents felt that the parks were well maintained, street lighting was good and shop fronts were well maintained.
- Having a greater range of shops, more parking and more specialist shops were seen as the areas that needed the most attention in Oadby.

Crime and safety

- 93% of respondents said that they had not felt worried about being assaulted or harassed while in the town centre within the last 12 months.
- 64% of respondents claimed that the level of police presence in Oadby was about right, whereas 25% felt that it was insufficient and should be increased.
- 44% of respondents felt the presence of CCTV was insufficient and should be increased, whilst 31% of respondents thought it was about right.

6 Conclusions and recommendations

- Overall, respondents were positive about Oadby. 85% of respondents were very satisfied or satisfied with Oadby 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 and the post office in Oadby.
- Findings indicated that Oadby catered better for families and elderly people than it did for young people. This shows how the centre serves different groups of people.
- A wider range of shops and retail facilities, better access for cars and free parking were the improvements most likely to encourage more people to come to Oadby more often.
- Seating and baby changing facilities were identified as aspects of the town centre with the most scope for improvement, although most respondents feeling that the existing provision of these facilities was inadequate.
- Respondents felt that more attention should be given to having a greater range of shops, more parking and more specialist shops within Oadby.