



BMG Research Report

Leicestershire Town and Village Centres Survey:
Shepshed
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 Shepshed.

Report contents

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

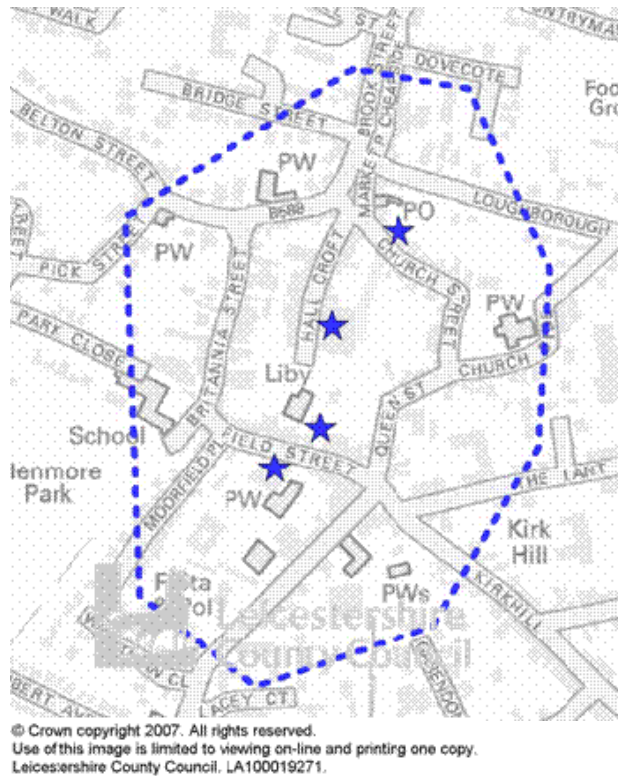
In total, 3000 interviews were planned across the 17 settlements. The sample structure called for a minimum of 100 interviews per settlement, with the remaining 1300 interviews distributed pro-rata on the basis of population size, meaning that the target for some of the villages was only a little over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

Figure 1



Source: Leicestershire County Council

Respondent Profile

Within Shepshed, 108 interviews were achieved. Of the sample, gender was almost evenly split, 51% being male and 49% being female. 8% of respondents in Shepshed were aged 16-24, 38% were aged 25-44, 40% were aged 45-64, with the remaining 13% being of retirement age (65+). As reported by the 2001 Census, within Shepshed 13% of the population were aged between 16-24, 36% were aged between 25-44, 38% were aged between 45-64 and 18% were aged 65 and over.

The vast majority of respondents in Shepshed (95%) described themselves as white British and 1% described themselves Irish and 3% as other white. The remainder described themselves as Indian (1%). According to the 2001 Census, 98% of the population of Shepshed described themselves as white.

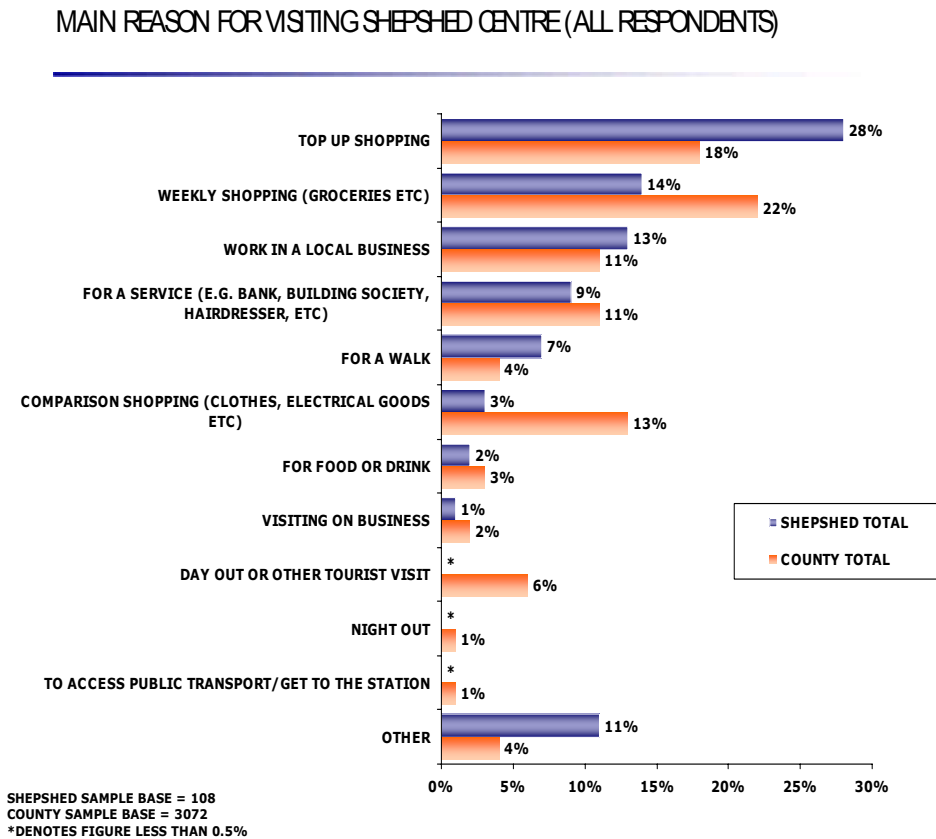
By economic status, 66% of respondents in Shepshed were in work (58% employed and 9% self-employed). The largest proportion of those respondents not in work were retired (12% of the total Shepshed sample). 8% of respondents were not in work because they were looking after children or other dependents or the home, 5% were not in work due to an illness or disability, 4% were claiming benefits whilst 3% of respondents were in education or training.

2 Visiting the Town Centre

Visits

This section looks at the reasons why people visited Shepshed, 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

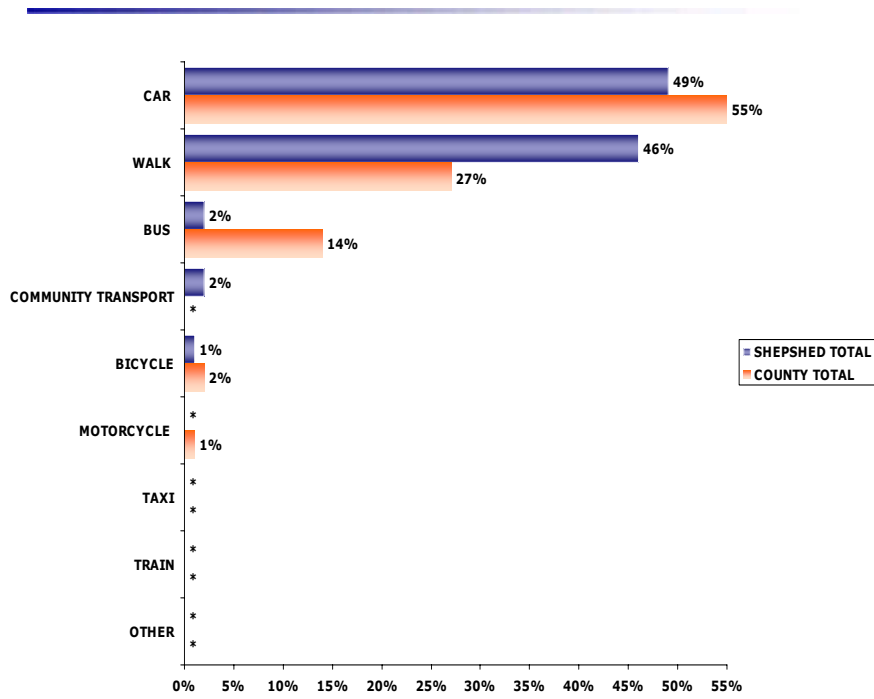


The intention of the survey was to speak to a cross-section of people present in the centres of the towns and villages, who may have been present for a whole range of purposes. Shopping trips of various sorts accounted for 45% of visits to Shepshed, which was slightly lower than the total county figure of 53%. 13% of respondents in Shepshed were present because they worked in the centre and 9% were using a service in the centre.

Mode of transport used to get into the centre of town

Figure 3

MODE OF TRANSPORT TO THE CENTRE OF SHEPSHED (ALL RESPONDENTS)



SHEPSHED SAMPLE BASE = 108
 COUNTY SAMPLE BASE = 3072
 * DENOTES FIGURES LESS THAN 0.5%

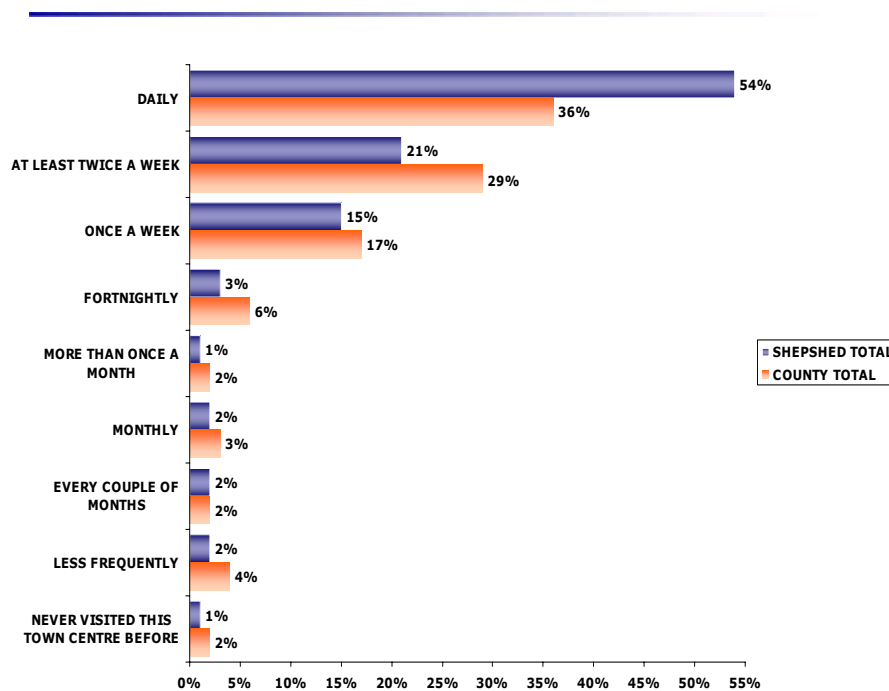
Nearly half of the trips into the centre by respondents on the day of the survey were made by car (49%) whilst over two-fifths of respondents walked into the centre (46%). This figure was higher compared to the county total of 27%. 2% arrived by bus, 2% arrived by community transport and 1% of respondents arrived by bicycle.

Frequency of visits

As illustrated in the graph below, just over half of respondents reported that they visited the centre daily (54%), whilst just over a fifth visited at least once a week (24%) and 15% visited once a week.

Figure 4

FREQUENCY OF VISITS INTO SHEPSHED CENTRE (ALL RESPONDENTS)



SHEPSHED SAMPLE BASE = 108
 COUNTY SAMPLE BASE = 3072

70% of respondents visited Shepshed both at weekends and on weekdays, whilst 18% visited on weekdays and 12% of respondents visited at weekends.

The majority of respondents (54%) visited Shepshed during the day (before 5.30pm), with 6% visiting the centre only in the evening (after 5.30pm). 38% of respondents visited the town centre both during the daytime and evening.

Respondents who only visited the centre in the evening were asked how often they visited the centre. 21% of respondents visited Shepshed town centre in the evening once a week, whilst 18% visited at least twice a week. Saturday and Sunday evenings proved to be popular amongst respondents to visit the centre, with 12% of respondents choosing to do so whilst 3% of respondents visited mainly on a Friday.

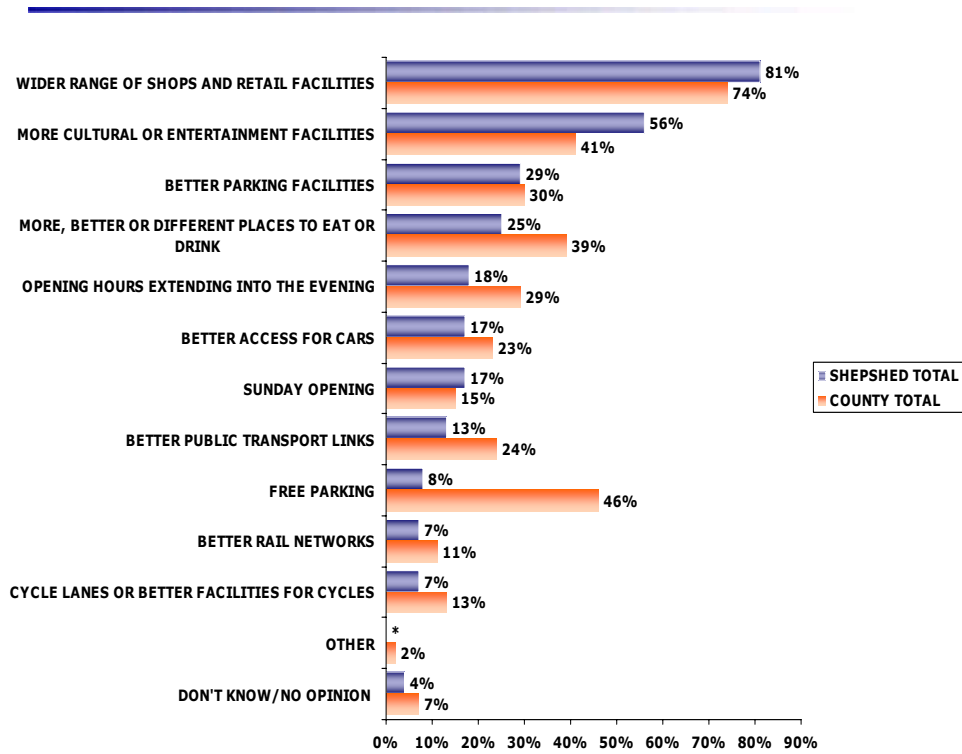
Encouraging more people to visit the centre

Respondents were asked to identify those issues which would encourage them to visit Shepshed more often. They were able to cite more than one issue. Having a wider range of shops and retail facilities (81%) and more cultural or entertainment facilities (56%) were cited as two areas that would encourage respondents to visit Shepshed more.

Improvements in parking facilities and having better places for food and drink as well as extending opening hours were also important for some visitors.

Figure 5

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



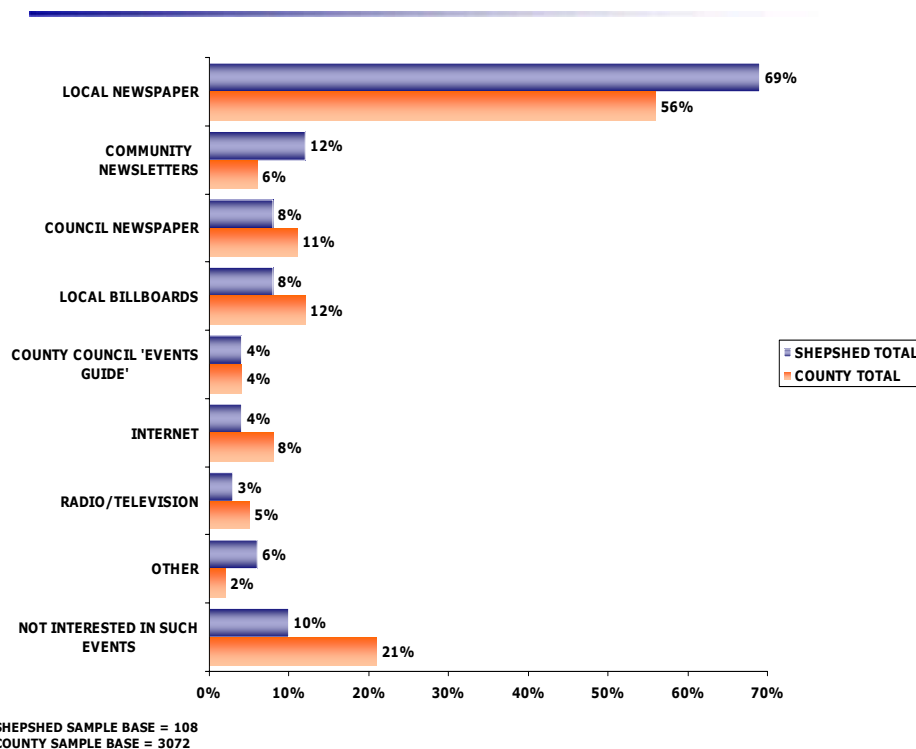
SHEPSHED SAMPLE BASE = 108
 COUNTY SAMPLE BASE = 3072
 * DENOTES FIGURES LESS THAN 0.5%

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 Shepshed, with other sources only modest in their importance by comparison. Notably, community newsletters are also a popular method in finding out about events and attractions in Shepshed compared to the rest of the county (12% Shepshed, 6% county total). The radio or television and the internet were the least used methods to find out about attractions and events in the centre of Shepshed.

Figure 6

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



When respondents were questioned about whether they had attended any events in the town centre recently, 19% said that they had compared to the county figure of 12%. Of these 19%, sixteen people said they had attended the carnival, two people had attended the fair two people said that they had attended another event in the centre of Shepshed.

Respondents were asked what made the centre unique, different or special in Shepshed. 7% of respondents said the market, 7% said it was a safe area and that it had low levels of crime, whilst 6% cited the history and heritage. Other notable responses included:

- The layout (5%);
- Born here or live here (4%);

- Shops and shopping centre (4%);
- The size (4%);
- Attractive and pleasant appearance (3%);
- Community spirit (3%);
- Cleanliness (2%);
- Friendly people (2%);
- Architecture and buildings (1%);
- Castle (1%);
- Churches (1%);
- Culture (1%);
- Flower displays and scenery (1%);
- Parking facilities (1%);
- Parks (1%); and
- Quiet and peaceful (1%).

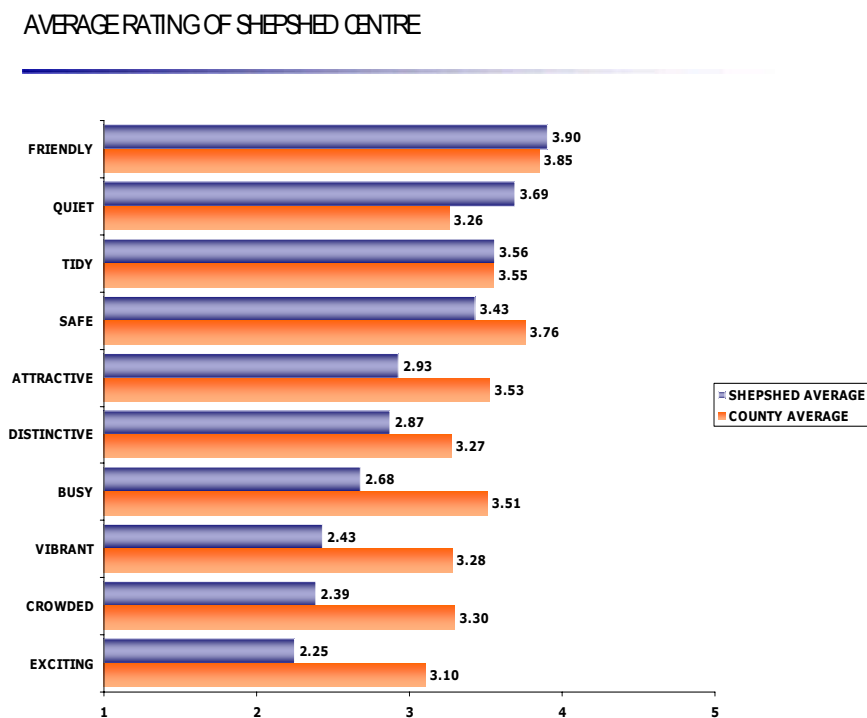
3 Attitude towards the centre

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

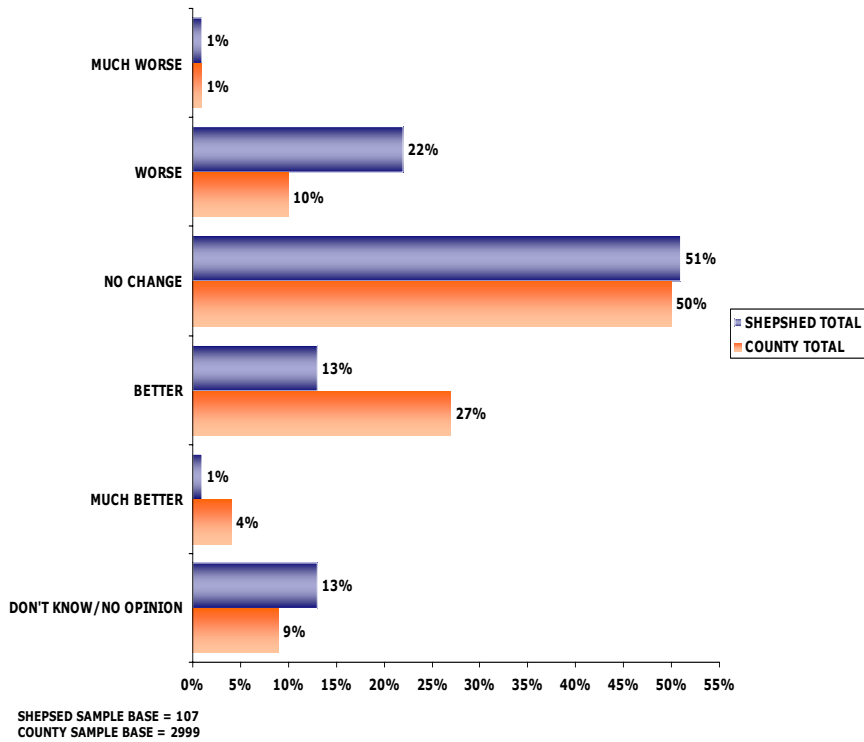
Figure 7



Whilst 51% of respondents didn't report any overall change in Shepshed, 22% believed it has got worse compared to 13% who believed it had improved as shown below:

Figure 8

WHETHER SHEPshed HAS GOT BETTER OR WORSE WITHIN THE LAST 12 MONTHS



All respondents were asked for their view on how well Shepshed 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 group was elderly people, with 60% of respondents stating this. However, it was clear that amongst the total population of respondents in Shepshed, there was greater concern about how the centre served young people than for any other group. 55% of respondents thought the centre was very poor or poor for young people.

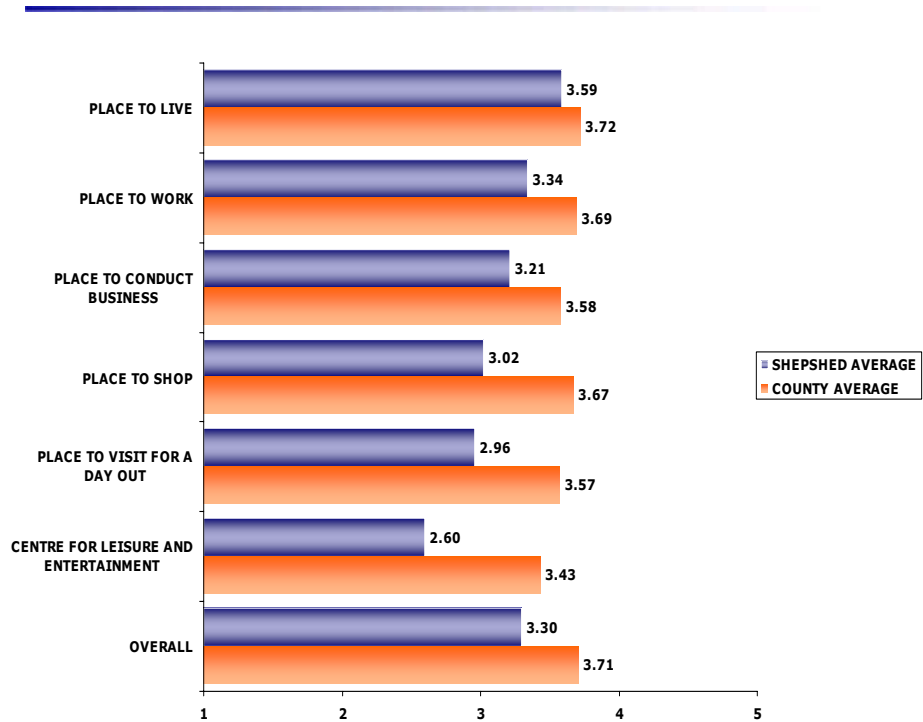
Table 1

RATING OF SHEPshed FOR VARIOUS GROUPS							
	Very poor	Poor	Neither good nor poor	Good	Very good	DK/no opinion	Mean score
	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Elderly people	0	7	17	59	1	17	3.66
People with disabilities	0	8	18	49	0	25	3.54
Families	0	7	29	52	0	12	3.52
Shoppers	4	16	22	43	1	14	3.25
Visitors	2	23	19	37	0	19	3.13
Young people	11	44	19	12	0	15	2.37
SAMPLE BASE: 108							

How good are the centres as places for particular activities?

Figure 9

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

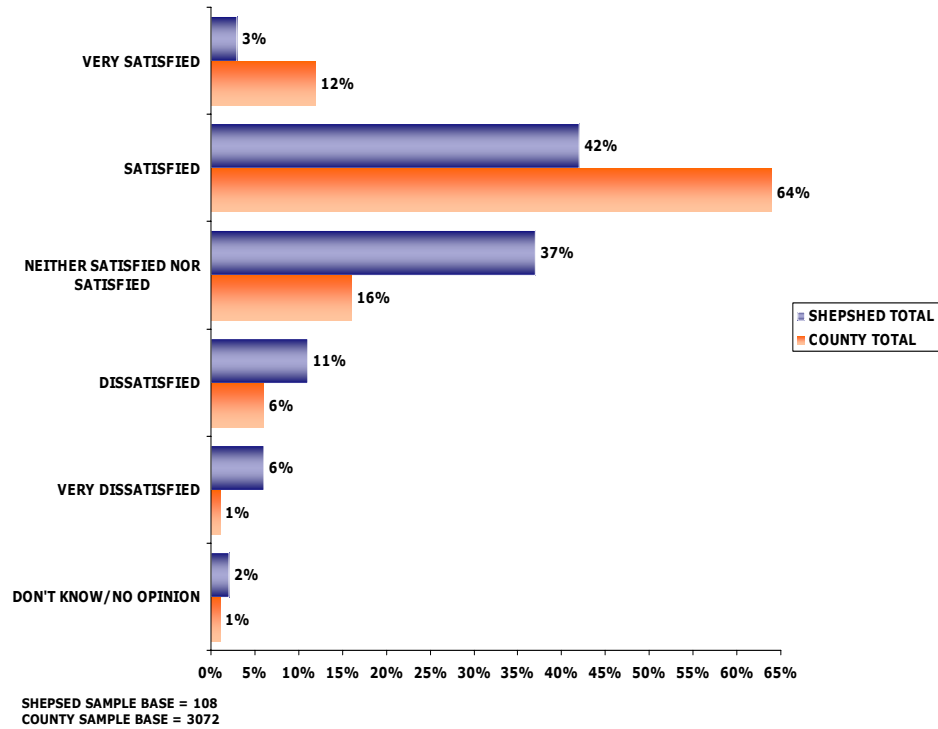


Overall, on a scale of 1 to 5 where 5 is the most positive score, Shepshed was rated 3.30 which was lower than the county average of 3.71 - that is they were considered as well above average, good but not very good. On all accounts, Shepshed was rated lower compared to the rest of the county as illustrated in the graph above. In particular, Shepshed was not seen as a good centre for leisure and entertainment (2.60 Shepshed, 3.43 county) and was not seen as a good place to visit for a day out (2.96 Shepshed, 3.57 county).

Overall 45% of respondents were very satisfied or satisfied with Shepshed 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 SHEPSHED AS A GOOD PLACE TO SHOP, VISIT AND TO DO BUSINESS (ALL RESPONDENTS)



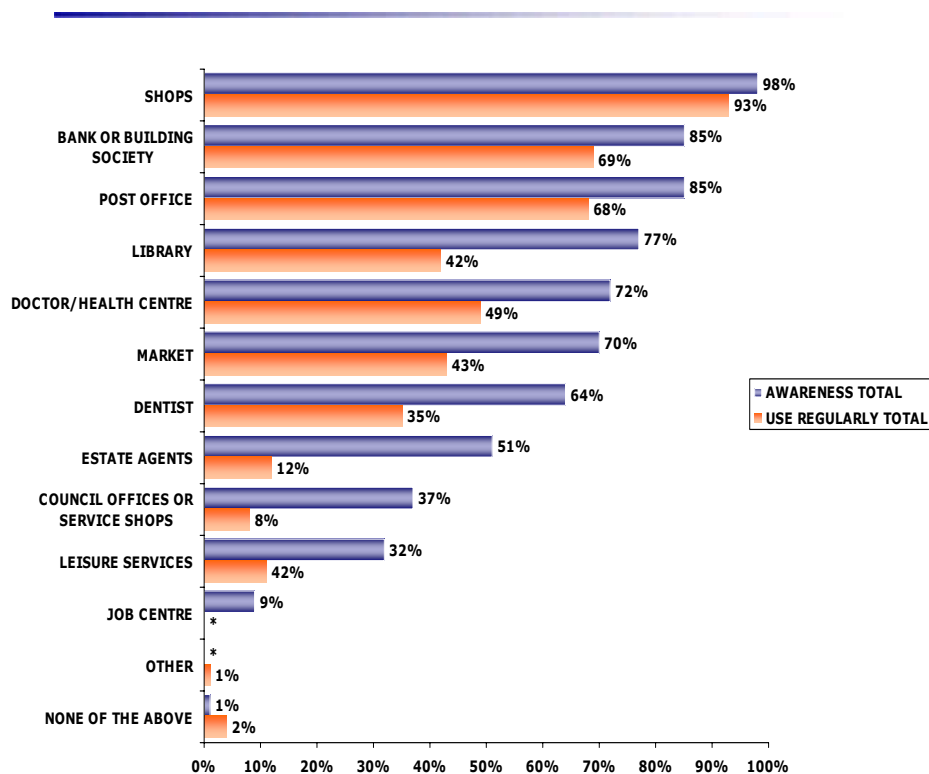
Services available in the centre

Services available in the centre of Shepshed 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 post office and these were the services which were regularly used. Furthermore, respondents were aware of health services within the centre of Shepshed but less people used them on a regular basis - 72% of respondents were aware of a doctor's or health centre in Shepshed, but 49% of respondents used the service regularly, whilst 64% of respondents were aware of a dentist in Shepshed and only 35% were regular users.

Figure 11

AWARENESS AND USERS OF SERVICES IN SHEPshed CENTRE (MULTIPLE RESPONSE)



SAMPLE BASE = 108
 *DENOTES FIGURE LESS THAN 0.5%

Respondents were questioned as to their opinions about the market in Shepshed. Over half of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that there was a wide range of products available to buy in the market (59%). Only 12% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that there was a wide range of products available to buy in the market.

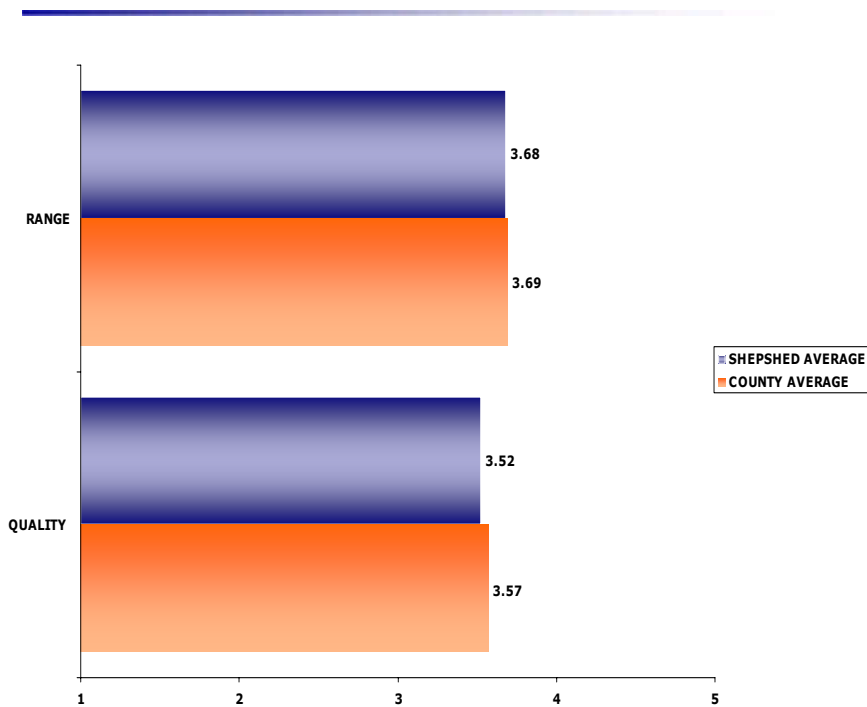
Respondents were questioned as to whether the retail outlets in Shepshed met their shopping needs. 43% of respondents said that the variety of the retail outlets and shops did not meet their needs. 30% said the retail outlets in Shepshed meet their needs adequately, whilst

just over a fifth of respondents (22%) said the variety of the retail outlets and shops met their needs very well or quite well.

Respondents were asked to rate the range and quality of places to eat out in Shepshed 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. This pattern was also reflected on a county-wide level as shown in figure 12.

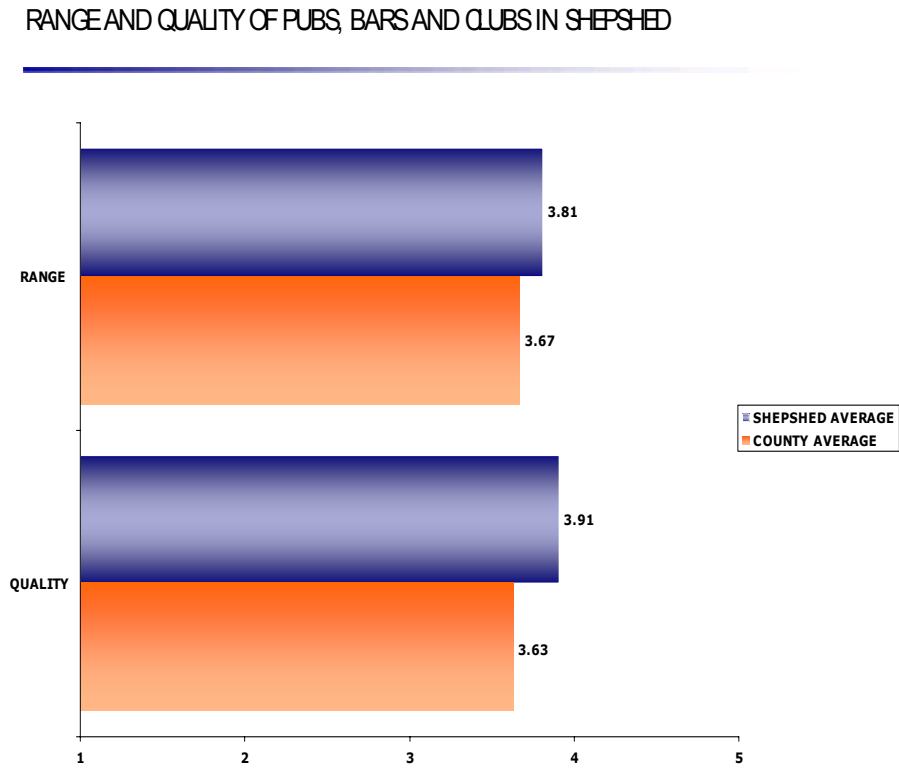
Figure 12

RANGE AND QUALITY OF THE PLACES TO EAT OUT IN SHEPSHED



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

Figure 13



Town Centre Environment

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

Table 2

WHETHER RESPONDENTS AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS ABOUT THE CENTRE OF SHEPshed						
	Disagree Strongly	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Agree strongly	Mean score
	%	%	%	%	%	
Street lighting is good	0	6	10	75	4	3.81
The parks are well maintained	1	5	15	63	3	3.72
Seating in and around shopping areas is well maintained	0	7	17	68	2	3.68
The centre is well planted in summertime	0	9	17	62	4	3.66
There is sufficient seating in and around the centre	0	13	14	64	4	3.62
Shop fronts are well maintained	0	17	11	70	1	3.56
Pavements and walkways are clean and tidy	0	19	18	61	2	3.47
Pavements and walkways are safe and well maintained	0	19	18	61	1	3.44
The public toilets are clean and tidy	1	9	32	36	2	3.42
The design and layout of the centre is attractive	0	18	25	53	2	3.40
Pedestrian signage is relevant, clear and easy to understand	0	19	22	53	1	3.38
There are enough public toilets	2	12	29	41	1	3.17
There are enough baby changing facilities	8	3	19	12	2	2.91
The baby changing facilities provided are clean and tidy	8	2	19	13	0	2.87
SAMPLE BASE: 108						

Note: Percentage no replies not shown

Overall, respondents had positive views about the environment and facilities available in the centre of Shepshed. Respondents felt that the street lighting was good (79% of respondents who would agree or strongly agree), seating in and around shopping areas were well maintained (70%) and there was sufficient seating in and around the centre (68%). Respondents were less positive that the pavements were clean and tidy (19% of respondents disagreed or disagreed strongly),

that the pavements were safe and well maintained (19%) and that the pedestrian signage was relevant, clear and easy to understand (19%).

Respondents were then asked to respond to a series of statements about aspects in and around the centre of Shepshed 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 SHEPshed						
	Disagree strongly	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Agree strongly	Mean score
	%	%	%	%	%	
The centre needs more local, independent shops	0	6	6	74	12	3.95
The centre could do with more high street chain stores	1	17	7	56	16	3.71
The road network provides easy access into the centre	0	7	26	61	3	3.61
The level of service in shops is of a high standard	2	4	27	62	2	3.61
Road signs make it easy for cars to access the centre	0	8	25	62	1	3.58
It is easy for drivers to find the car parks around the centre	0	8	24	58	2	3.58
The centre is accessible for disabled people and older people	2	7	17	52	2	3.58
There is enough car parking available	0	19	11	60	4	3.51
Roads in the centre are well maintained	0	15	26	55	2	3.45
Pedestrians can walk around the centre without feeling threatened by traffic	1	23	12	62	0	3.38
Roads in the centre are congested	1	24	25	45	3	3.25
There is too much traffic noise in the centre	1	37	25	33	1	2.96
There is too much other noise (music, pubs and clubs) in the centre	2	38	32	20	0	2.77
Car parking costs too much	21	40	19	11	3	2.30
SAMPLE BASE: 108						

Note: Percentage no replies not shown

As demonstrated in the above table, 86% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the centre needs more local, independent shops. In descending order of agreement, this was followed by the centre could do

with more high street chain stores (72%), the level of service in shops was of a high standard and the road network provided easy access into the centre (64%). Just three-fifths of respondents (61%) 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 Shepshed. The most frequently cited responses were a greater range of shops (67%), more leisure facilities (44%) and more specialist shops (44%). When asked to prioritise their *top three* areas of improvement, respondents cited a greater range of shops (58%), more specialist shops (37%) and more leisure facilities (32%).

4 Crime and safety

This section looks at how respondents in Shepshed 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 Shepshed (30% considered this to be a very big problem or a big problem). This was followed by dirty pavements and chewing gum (16%) and people not treating each other with respect and consideration (16%). Areas that were seen as less of a problem included aggressive begging (82% considered this either not a problem, or only a small problem), street canvassers (81%) assaults and other violent crime (74%) and racial harassment (74%).

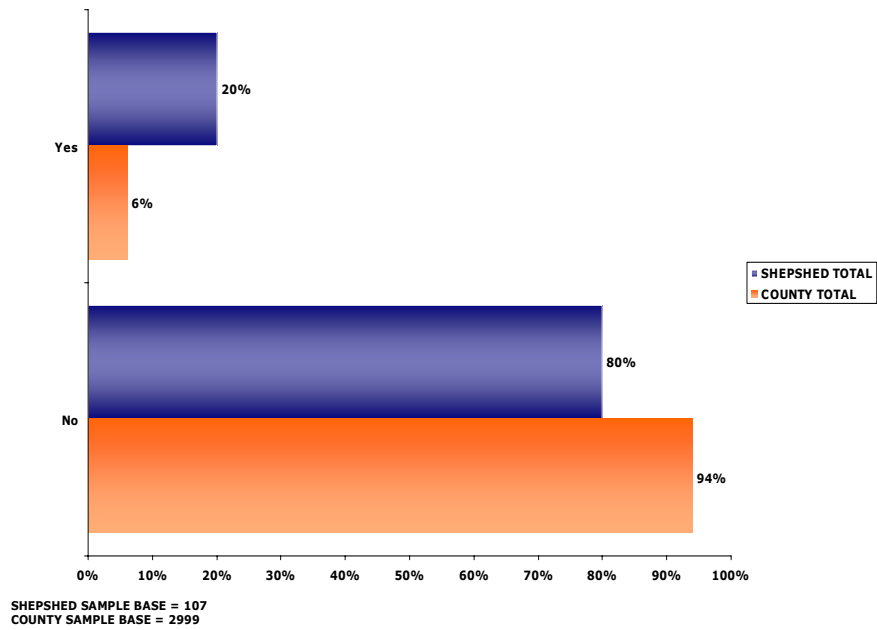
Table 4

AREAS THAT ARE SEEN AS PROBLEMS IN THE CENTRE OF SHEPshed						
	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	12	18	19	32	15	3.21
Vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property or vehicles	3	9	22	28	30	3.79
People not treating each other with respect and consideration	6	10	13	33	32	3.81
Dirty pavements and chewing gum	3	13	19	24	37	3.83
People being drunk or rowdy in public spaces	0	9	21	32	26	3.84
Rubbish and litter lying around	0	11	27	21	36	3.86
Road safety or speeding	5	7	19	26	35	3.86
People using or dealing drugs	1	13	8	26	29	3.89
Fly tipping	1	7	17	19	44	4.14
Verbal abuse or other aggressive behaviour	2	7	9	28	44	4.18
Assaults and other violent crime (personal robbery, mugging)	1	6	6	25	49	4.34
Personal theft (pick pocketing)	1	5	7	22	49	4.37
Property being stolen from a vehicle	0	2	7	27	44	4.41
Vehicles being stolen	0	2	8	21	46	4.44
Street canvassers	0	0	13	22	59	4.49
Aggressive begging	0	1	7	22	60	4.56
Racial harassment	0	0	8	16	58	4.61
SAMPLE BASE: 108						

Respondents were questioned about whether had ever felt worried about being assaulted or harassed in Shepshed within the last 12 months. 80% of respondents said that they had not felt worried compared to the county total of 94%.

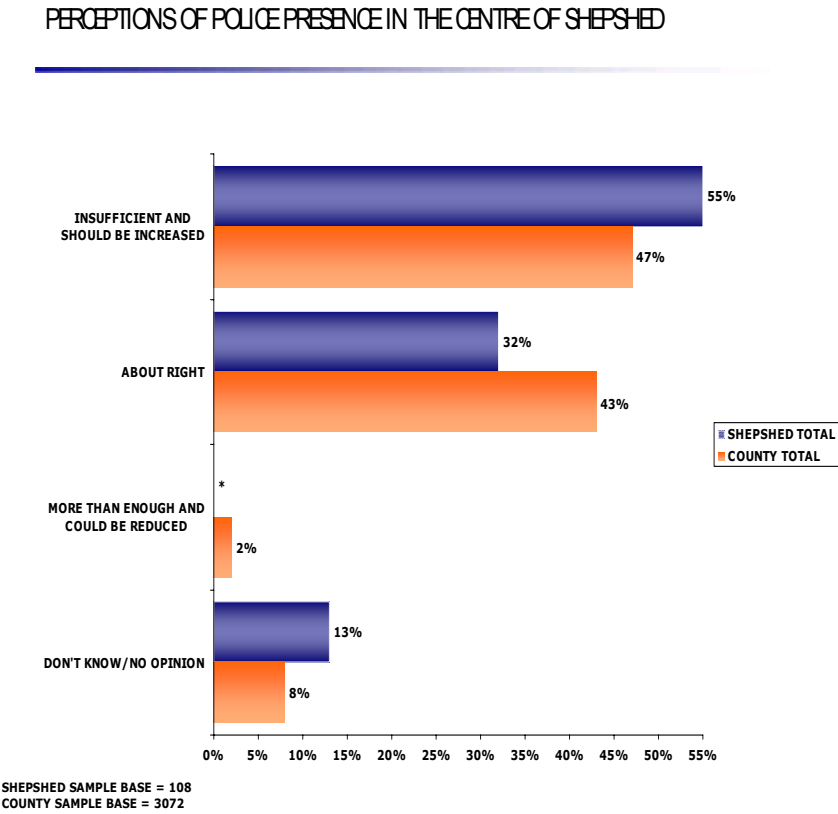
Figure 14

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



Respondents were then questioned about their perceptions of police presence within Shepshed. 55% of respondents felt the police presence in the centre was insufficient and should be increased (which was slightly higher than the county total) whilst 32% felt that the police presence was about right.

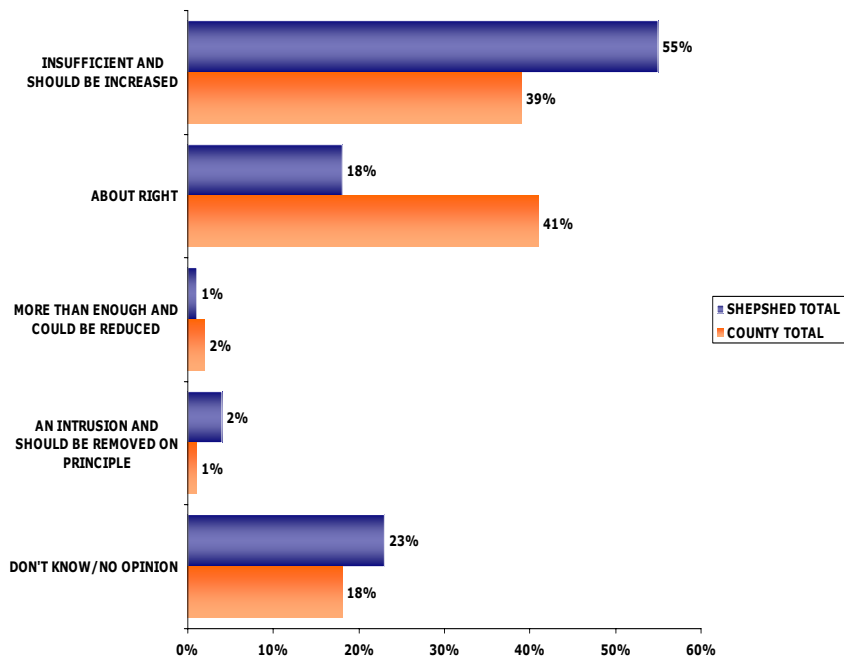
Figure 15



When questioned about the presence of CCTV in Shepshed, 55% of respondents felt it was insufficient and should be increased (which was higher than the county total of 39%), whilst 18% of respondents said the presence of CCTV was about right.

Figure 16

PERCEPTIONS OF CCTV PRESENCE IN THE CENTRE OF SHEPSHED



MELTON MOWBRAY SAMPLE BASE = 108
COUNTY SAMPLE BASE = 3072
*DENOTES FIGURE LESS THAN 0.5%

5 Summary

Visiting the centre

- Shopping trips accounted for 45% of the trips to Shepshed.
- 13% of respondents were present because they worked in the centre whilst 9% were using a service in Shepshed.
- Just under half of visitors arrived in Shepshed by car, with the second most common method being on foot.
- Two-fifths of respondents visited the centre daily.
- A wider range of shops and retail facilities, more cultural or entertainment facilities and better parking facilities were the improvements most likely to encourage more people to come to Shepshed 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 internet.
- 19% of respondents had attended an event in the centre.

Attitudes towards the centre

- Overall, Shepshed was most likely to be described as 'friendly', 'quiet', 'tidy', and 'safe'.
- 50% of respondents reported no change in the centre of Shepshed within the last 12 months, whilst 22% of respondents reported the centre had got worse and 13% said it had got better.
- Respondents felt that the centre catered better for elderly people than it did for young people.

Services available in the centre

- Shops, banks & building societies and the post office were the top three services that respondents were most aware of and were most likely to use on a regular basis in Shepshed.
- Over half of respondents strongly disagreed or disagreed that there was a range of products available to buy in the market.
- 43% of respondents in Shepshed said the variety of retail outlets and shops in the centre did not meet their needs.

Town Centre environment

- Overall, respondents were positive about the environment and facilities in and around the centre.
- Respondents felt that the centre of Shepshed had good street lighting, seating in and around the shopping area was 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 attention.

Crime and safety

- Groups of people hanging round the streets, dirty pavements and chewing gum and people not treating each other with respect and consideration were seen as the most significant problems in Shepshed.
- Aggressive begging, street canvassers, assaults and other violent crime and racial harassment were not seen as a problem, or seen only as a small problem.
- 80% of respondents said that they had not felt worried about being assaulted or harassed whilst in the centre of Shepshed within the last 12 months.
- 55% of respondents said policing in Shepshed was insufficient and should be increased whereas 32% said it was about right.
- 55% felt the CCTV presence in Shepshed was insufficient and should be increased, whilst 18% of respondents felt that it was about right.

6 Conclusions and recommendations

- Overall, respondents were positive about Shepshed. 45% of respondents were very satisfied or satisfied with Shepshed as a place to shop, visit and to do business. However, although the majority of respondents reported no change within the last 12 months, 23% reported that the centre had got worse or much worse.
- Many respondents were aware of and users of services such as shops, the bank or building society, the post office and the library in Shepshed.
- Findings indicated that Shepshed catered better for 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, more cultural or entertainment facilities and better parking facilities were the improvements most likely to encourage more people to come to Shepshed more often.
- The cleanliness and tidiness of pavements, as well as the safety and maintenance of pavements along with pedestrian signage 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 a greater range of shops, more specialist shops and more parking within Shepshed.
- In terms of crime and safety issues, groups of people hanging round the streets, dirty pavements and chewing gum and people not treating each other with respect and consideration were seen as the most significant issues in Shepshed.