



BMG Research Report

Leicestershire Town and Village Centres Survey:
Wigston
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 Wigston.

Report contents

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

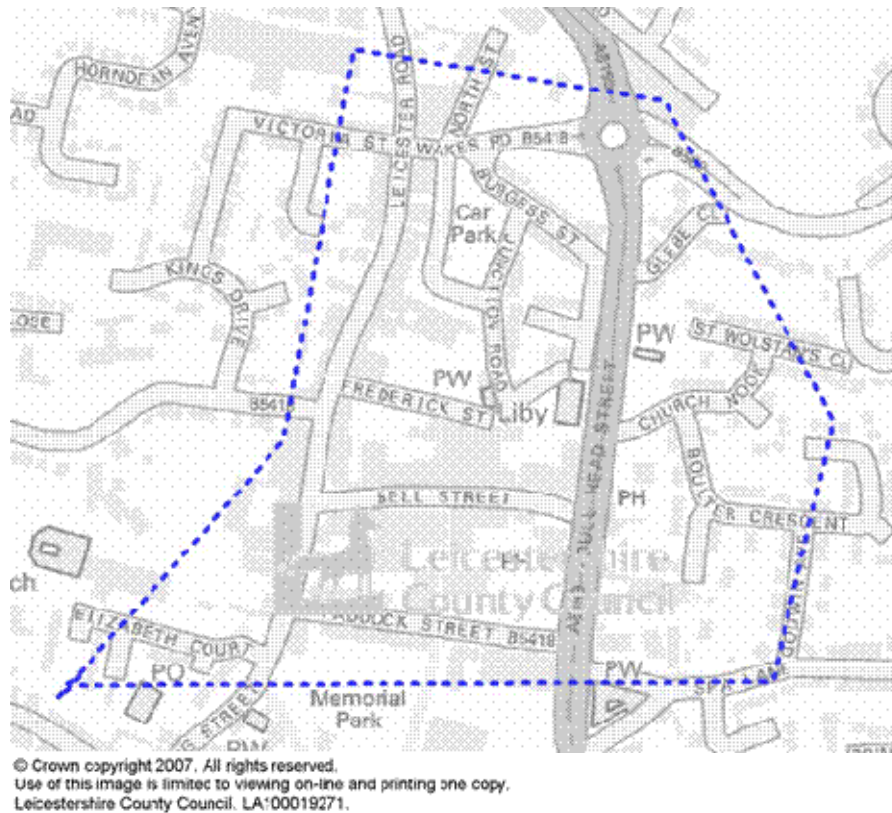
In total, 3000 interviews were planned across the 17 settlements. The sample structure called for a minimum of 100 interviews per settlement, with the remaining 1300 interviews distributed pro-rata on the basis of population size, meaning that the target for some of the villages was only a little over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

Figure 1



Source: Leicestershire County Council

Respondent Profile

Within Wigston 228 interviews were achieved. Of the sample, there were more female respondents than male (56% female, 44% male). 15% of respondents in Wigston 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 Wigston 12% of the population were aged between 16-24, 35% were aged between 25-44, 34% were aged between 45-64 and 18% were aged 65 and over.

The vast majority of respondents in Wigston (88%) described themselves as white British and 1% described themselves as Irish. 8% of respondents described themselves as Indian, whilst the remaining 2% described themselves as Pakistani. According to the 2001 Census, 95% of the population of Wigston described themselves as white.

By economic status, 59% of respondents in Wigston were in work (58% employed and 1% self-employed). The largest proportion of those respondents not in work were retired (25% of the total Wigston sample). 7% of respondents who were not working were in education or training, 6% were claiming benefits and 3% were looking after children or other dependents or the home.

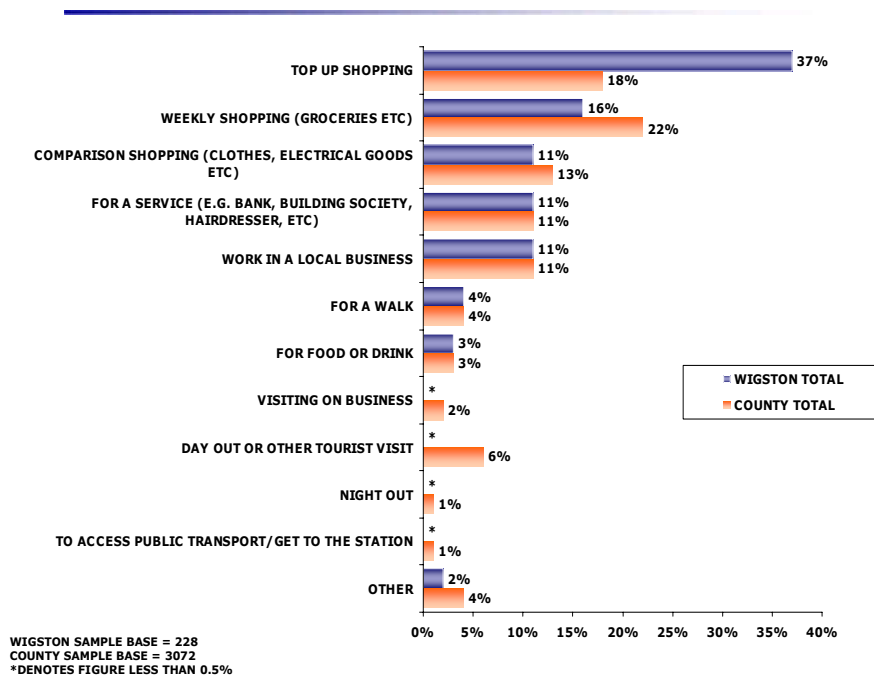
2 Visiting the Town Centre

Visits

This section looks at the reasons why people visited Wigston, 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

MAIN REASON FOR VISITING WIGSTON TOWN CENTRE (ALL RESPONDENTS)

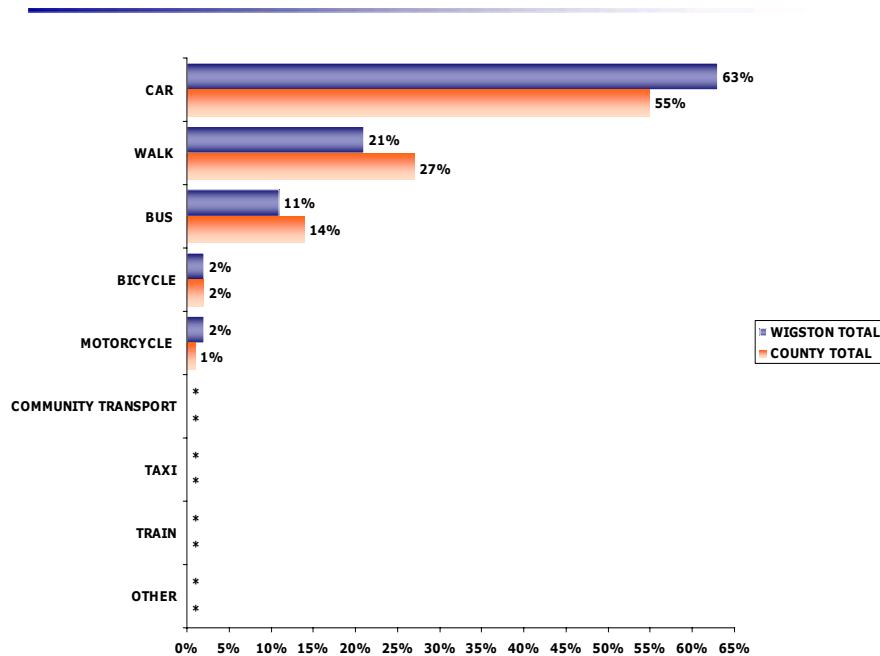


The intention of the survey was to speak to a cross-section of people present in the centres of the towns and villages, who may have been present for a whole range of purposes. Shopping trips of various sorts accounted for almost three-fifths of visits to Wigston (64%), which was slightly higher than the county figure (53%). 11% of respondents in Wigston were visiting the centre for services which was the same figure as the county total. A further 11% were present because they worked in a local business, whilst 4% were out for a walk.

Mode of transport used to get into the centre

Figure 3

MODE OF TRANSPORT TO WIGSTON TOWN CENTRE (ALL RESPONDENTS)



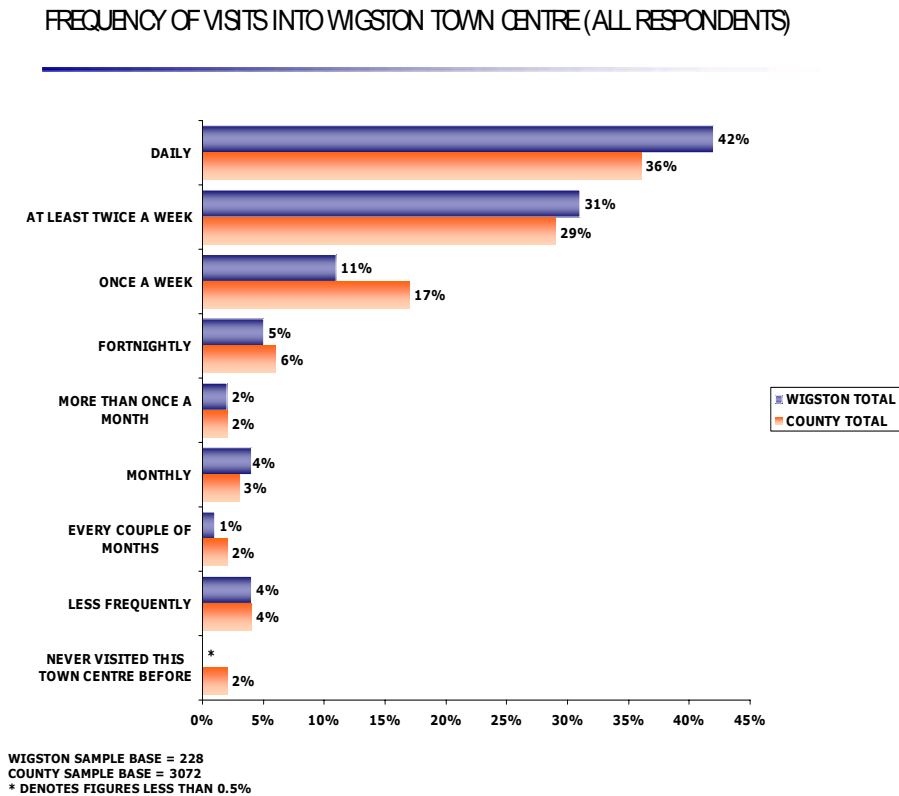
WIGSTON SAMPLE BASE = 228
 COUNTY SAMPLE BASE = 3072
 * DENOTES FIGURES LESS THAN 0.5%

Just over three-fifths of trips into the centre by respondents on the day of the survey were made by car whilst just over one-fifth of respondents walked into the centre. 11% of respondents arrived by bus (which was just slightly lower than the county total of 14%) with the remaining respondents arriving by bicycle and motorcycle (2% in each case).

Frequency of visits

As illustrated in the graph below, slightly over two-fifths of respondents reported that they visited the centre daily (42%), nearly a third visited at least twice a week and just over one in ten visited once a week.

Figure 4



Just over three-fifths of respondents visited Wigston both on weekdays and at weekends (62%). 27% of respondents visited Wigston on a weekday whilst 11% visited at weekends.

The majority of respondents (64%) visited Wigston during the daytime (before 5.30pm), whilst 33% visited both during the daytime and evening. Only 3% visited Wigston during the evening (after 5.30pm).

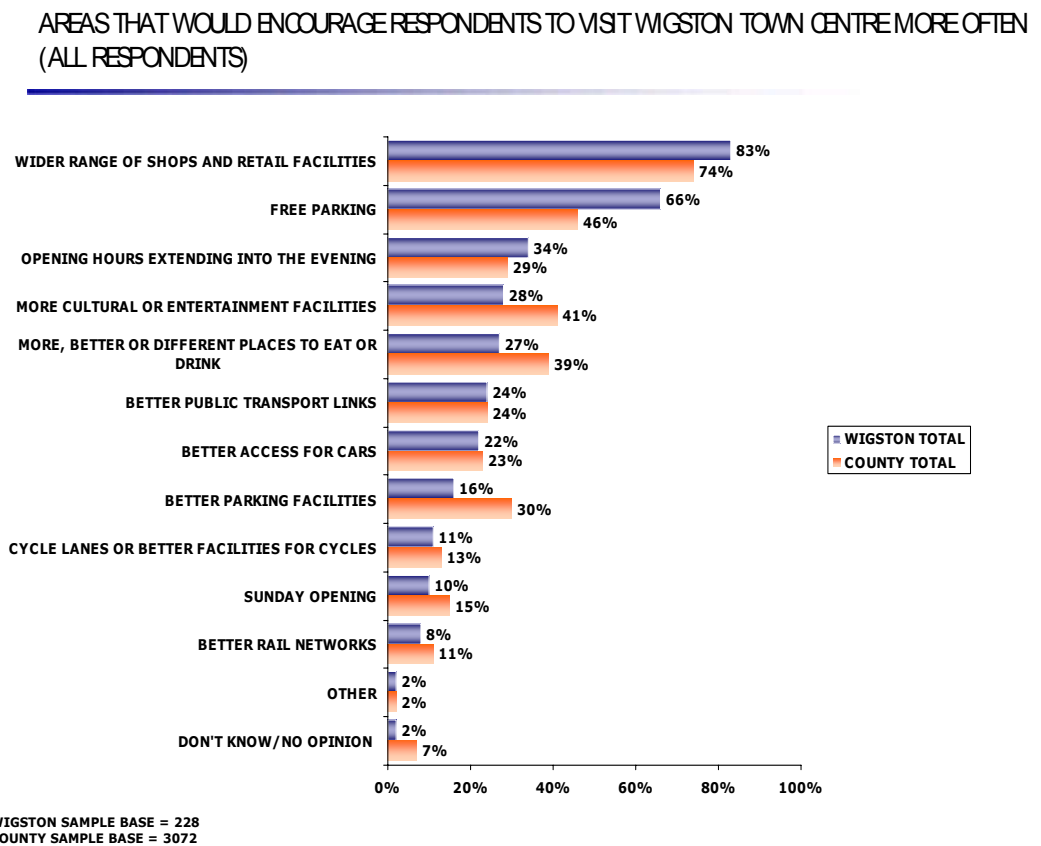
Of those people who visited Wigston town centre in the evening, 10% visited in the evening at least once a week, whilst 9% visited at least twice a week and 7% of respondents visited daily. Of the respondents who visited Wigston in the evenings, 32% visited mainly on a Saturday or Sunday evening, whilst 10% of respondents visited on a Friday evening.

Encouraging more people to visit the centre

Respondents were asked to identify those issues which would encourage them to visit Wigston 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 Wigston more, with 83% of respondents stating this.

Free parking, an extension of opening hours, better cultural and entertainment venues and better places for food and drink were also very important for some visitors.

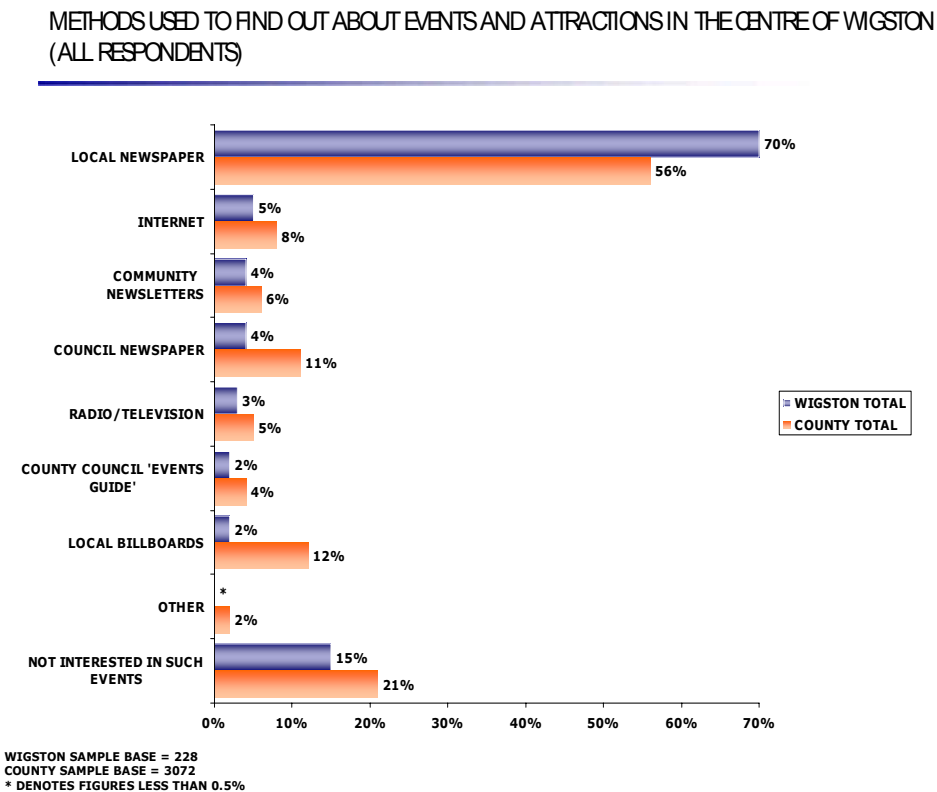
Figure 5



Attractions and events

As is clear from figure 6 below, local newspapers were overwhelmingly the most likely source of information about local events and attractions taking place in Wigston, with other sources only modest in their importance by comparison. The County Council's events guide and local billboards were least likely to be used in order to find out about attractions and events in the centre of Wigston.

Figure 6



When respondents were questioned about whether they had attended any events in the centre recently, the majority said that they did not attend any event, with only 1% stating that they had.

Respondents were asked about what made the centre unique, different or special in Wigston. 7% of respondents said it was a safe area and that it had low crime levels, 6% cited the market and a further 6% cited restaurants, food outlets, pubs and clubs. Other notable answers included:

- Quiet and peaceful (4%);
- The size (4%);
- Born here or live here (3%);
- Attractive and pleasant appearance (2%);

- Cleanliness (2%);
- Community spirit (2%);
- Friendly people (2%);
- Pedestrian areas (2%);
- Architecture and buildings (1%);
- Parking facilities (1%);
- Shops and shopping (1%); and
- The layout (1%).

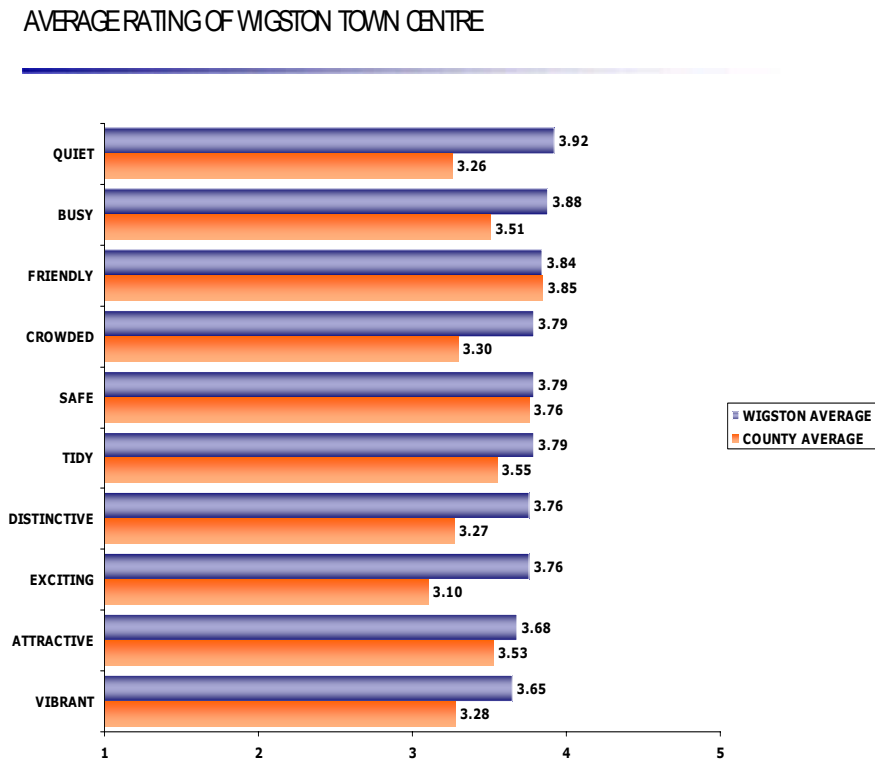
3 Attitude towards the centre

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

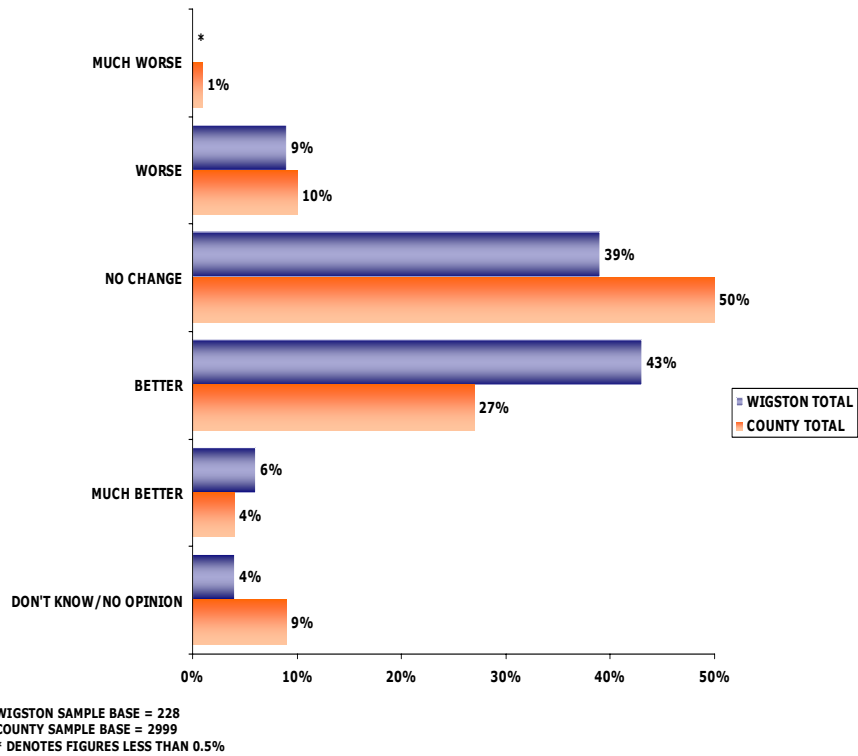
Figure 7



Just over two-fifths of respondents reported that the centre of Wigston had got better in the last 12 months, whilst 39% reported no change. Just less than one in ten said that it had got worse.

Figure 8

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



All respondents were asked for their view on how well Wigston served different groups in the population. The results for each of these groups are shown in Table 1 below. Generally, respondents were positive about how the centre of Wigston served various groups. It was clear that respondents in Wigston felt that the best served group was elderly people. Only 3% of respondents felt that the centre was poor for young people.

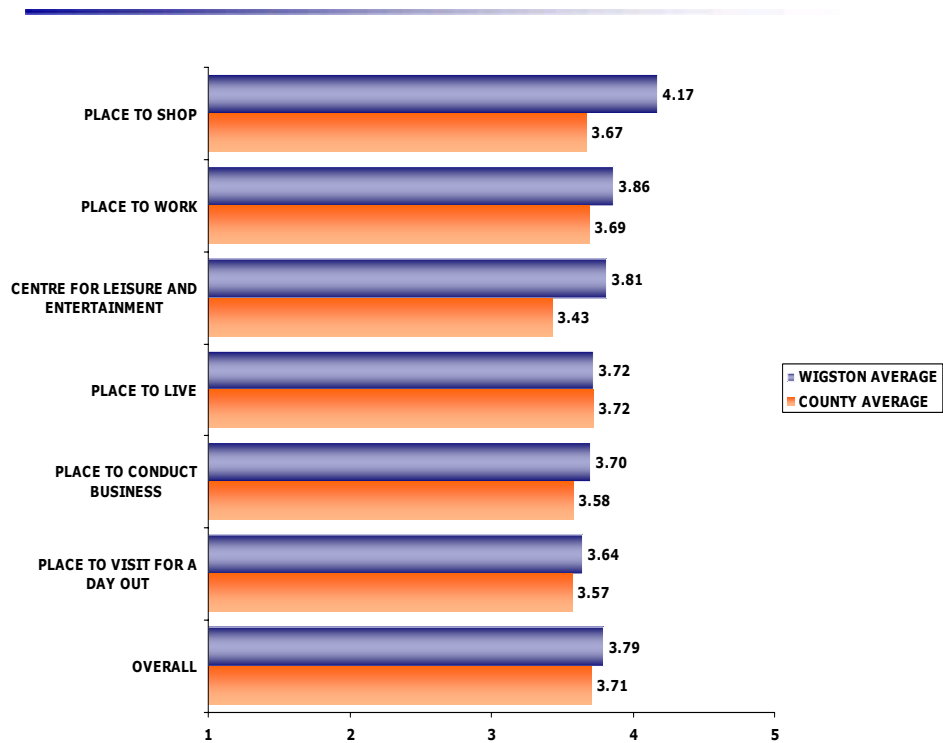
Table 1

RATING OF WIGSTON FOR VARIOUS GROUPS							
	Very poor	Poor	Neither good nor poor	Good	Very good	DK/no opinion	Mean score
	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Elderly people	0	1	11	55	33	0	4.19
Families	0	1	19	52	27	2	4.07
Visitors	0	0	31	50	16	4	3.84
Shoppers	0	0	40	47	9	4	3.67
People with disabilities	0	0	49	38	12	0	3.62
Young people	0	3	45	42	8	2	3.55
SAMPLE BASE: 228							

How good are the centres as places for particular activities?

Figure 9

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

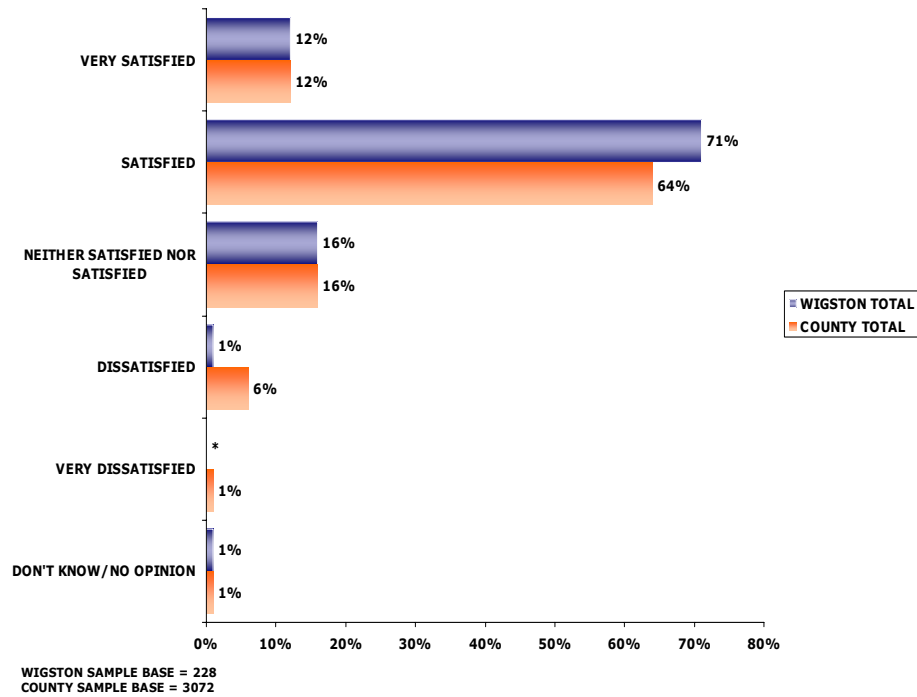


Overall, on a scale of 1 to 5 where 5 is the most positive score, Wigston was rated 3.79 which was slightly higher than the county average of 3.71 - that is, they were considered as well above average, good but not very good. On all accounts, Wigston was rated higher than the county as shown in the graph above. In particular, Wigston was considered as a good place to shop (4.17 Wigston, 3.67 county). Wigston scored the same as the county, when respondents were asked to rate Wigston as a place to live (3.72 in each case).

Overall, satisfaction was very high amongst respondents as they considered Wigston a good place to shop, visit and to do business. The graph below demonstrates that the overall level of satisfaction for Wigston was higher than the county total (83% Wigston, 76% county).

Figure 10

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

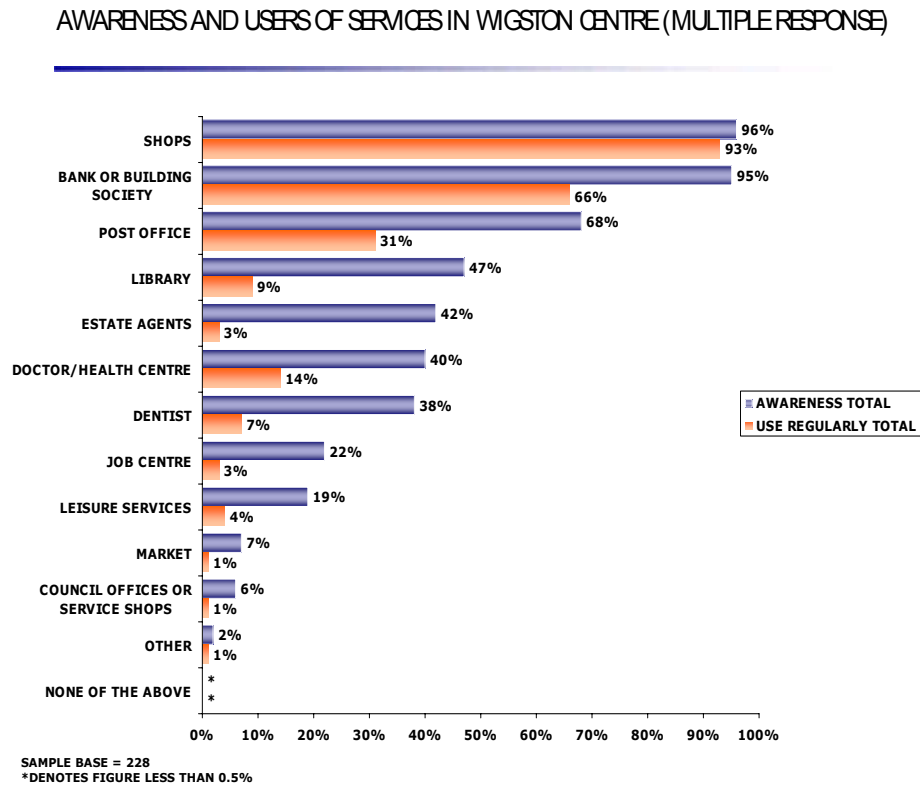


Services available in the centre

Services available in the centre of Wigston 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 shops, banks & building societies 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 be regular users. For example, 47% of respondents were aware that there was a library in Wigston but only 23% used this service on a regular basis. Furthermore, respondents were aware of health services within the centre of Wigston but less people used them on a regular basis - 40% of respondents were aware of a doctor's or health centre in Wigston, but 14% of respondents were regular users whilst 38% of respondents were aware of a dentist in Wigston whilst only 7% were regular users.

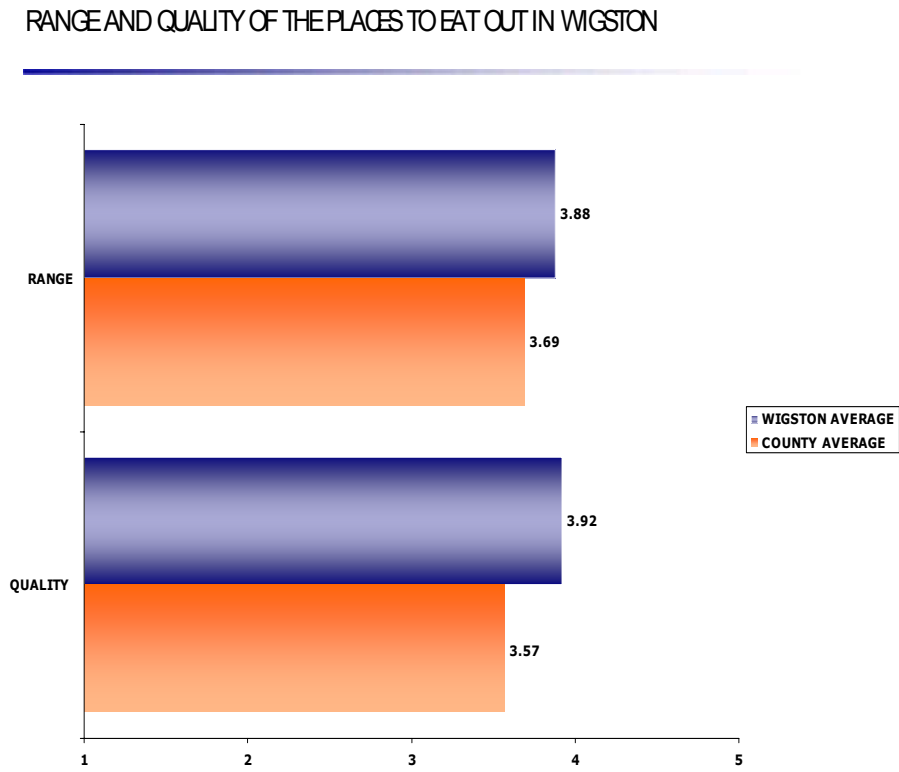
Figure 11



Respondents were questioned about whether or not Wigston met their retail needs. 56% of respondents in Wigston said that the variety of the retail outlets and shops in the centre met their needs very well or quite well, whilst 4% said it did not. 39% of respondents said it met their needs adequately.

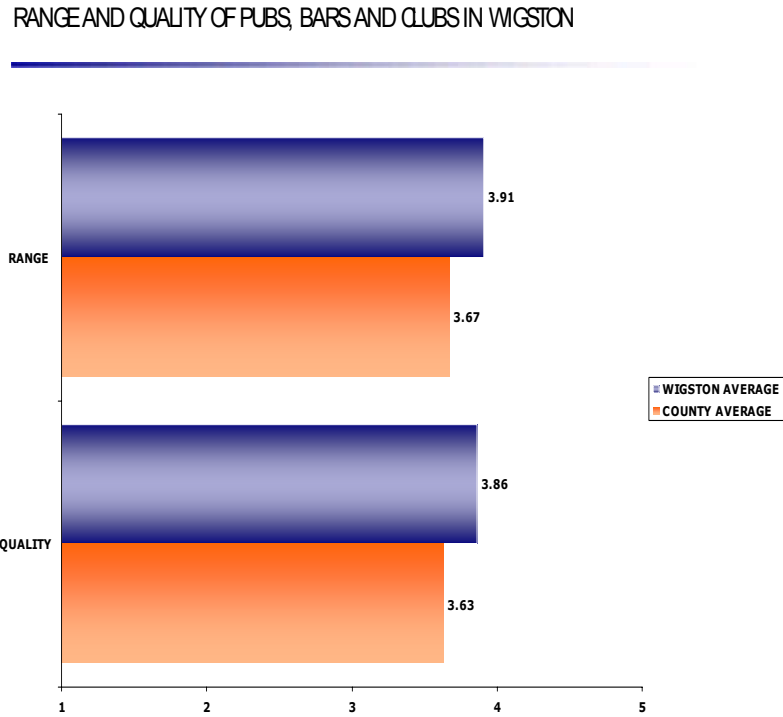
Respondents were asked to rate the quality of places to eat out in Wigston on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 was very poor and 5 was very good. Respondents were positive about the quality than the range as shown in figure 12. On a county level, this pattern was the same.

Figure 12



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

Figure 13



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 WIGSTON						
	Disagree strongly	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Agree strongly	Mean score
	%	%	%	%	%	
The parks are well maintained	5	11	29	38	16	3.49
Street lighting is good	6	12	27	38	15	3.44
Pedestrian signage is relevant, clear and easy to understand	5	13	28	37	14	3.44
The centre is well planted in summertime	3	11	36	34	13	3.44
Pavements and walkways are clean and tidy	3	15	34	37	10	3.36
The design and layout of the centre is attractive	7	14	31	30	15	3.34
Pavements and walkways are safe and well maintained	5	12	38	33	10	3.33
Shop fronts are well maintained	6	14	31	37	10	3.32
There are enough baby changing facilities	10	16	28	31	11	3.18
The public toilets are clean and tidy	10	17	30	25	14	3.16
There are enough public toilets	11	17	29	26	13	3.13
The baby changing facilities provided are clean and tidy	15	13	27	28	10	3.03
Seating in and around shopping areas is well maintained	7	23	44	18	7	2.94
There is sufficient seating in and around the centre	33	19	29	15	3	2.34
SAMPLE BASE: 228						

Note: Percentage no replies not shown

Overall, respondents had mixed views about the environment and facilities available in the centre of Wigston. Respondents felt that the parks were well maintained (54% of respondents agreed or agreed strongly), street lighting was good (53%) and pedestrian signage was

relevant, clear and easy to understand (51%). Respondents tended to disagree that there was sufficient seating in and around the centre (52% of respondents disagreed or disagreed strongly). This was followed seating in and around shopping areas was well maintained (30% disagreed or disagreed strongly) and there were enough public toilets (28% disagreed or disagreed strongly).

Respondents were then asked to respond to a series of statements about aspects in and around the centre of Wigston 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 WIGSTON						
	Disagree strongly	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Agree strongly	Mean score
	%	%	%	%	%	
Roads in the centre are well maintained	6	6	23	41	22	3.69
Road signs make it easy for cars to access the centre	4	7	20	51	15	3.68
It is easy for drivers to find the car parks around the centre	6	6	21	46	18	3.65
Roads in the centre are congested	3	8	23	46	13	3.64
The road network provides easy access into the centre	1	9	37	43	8	3.49
The level of service in shops is of a high standard	5	12	26	40	15	3.48
The centre needs more local, independent shops	7	10	29	35	17	3.47
The centre could do with more high street chain stores	4	14	34	33	11	3.36
Pedestrians can walk around the centre without feeling threatened by traffic	12	6	31	39	10	3.30
There is too much traffic noise in the centre	13	10	25	39	13	3.30
The centre is accessible for disabled people and older people	8	14	28	36	10	3.27
Car parking costs too much	7	14	41	27	8	3.16
There is too much other noise (music, pubs and clubs) in the centre	14	9	31	32	9	3.14
There is enough car parking available	24	18	31	20	5	2.64

SAMPLE BASE: 228

Note: Percentage no replies not shown

As demonstrated in the above table 66% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the centre needs road signs to make it easy for cars to access the centre. In descending order of agreement, it was easy for drivers to find the car parks around the centre (64%), roads in the centre were well maintained (63%) and roads in the centre were congested (59%). Just over two fifths respondents (57%) disagreed with the statement there was enough car parking available.

Respondents were given a list of options and asked to say which issues they thought most needed attention in Wigston. The most frequently cited responses were a greater range of shops (42%), improved lighting (37%) and personal safety (32%). When asked to prioritise their *top three* areas of improvement respondents cited a greater range of shops (35%), personal safety (24%) and the cleanliness and tidiness of the centre (23%).

4 Crime and safety

This section looks at how respondents in Wigston 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 people not treating each other with respect and consideration was seen as a problem in Wigston (27% of respondents considered this to be a very big problem or big problem). This was followed by, groups of people hanging around the street (17%) and people dealing drugs (10%). Areas that were seen as less of a problem included aggressive begging (77% considered this either not a problem or only a small problem), road safety or speeding (76%) and property being stolen from a vehicle (70%).

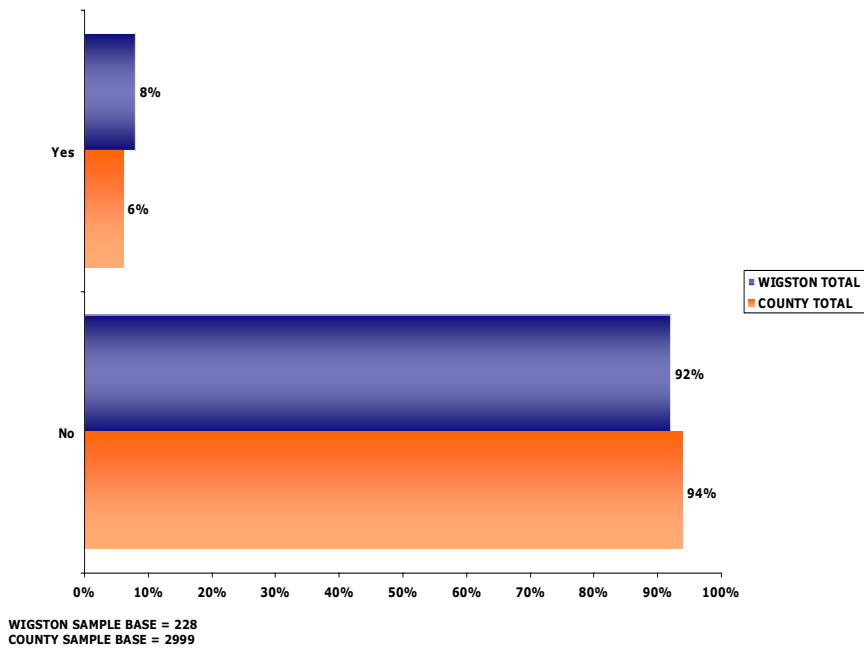
Table 4

AREAS THAT ARE SEEN AS PROBLEMS IN THE CENTRE OF WIGSTON						
	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	11	16	24	27	19	3.28
Groups of people hanging round the streets	4	13	32	32	15	3.42
Assaults and other violent crime (personal robbery, mugging)	2	7	25	38	23	3.76
Verbal abuse or other aggressive behaviour	1	10	25	37	24	3.76
Rubbish and litter lying around	1	6	26	43	21	3.78
Vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property or vehicles	4	5	19	43	22	3.81
Racial harassment	3	7	19	40	25	3.83
People using or dealing drugs	2	8	18	38	27	3.86
Dirty pavements and chewing gum	3	5	20	41	28	3.9
People being drunk or rowdy in public spaces	3	5	18	39	30	3.92
Property being stolen from a vehicle	1	7	18	42	28	3.92
Personal theft (pick pocketing)	1	7	21	35	30	3.92
Street canvassers	2	6	20	33	34	3.95
Vehicles being stolen	2	5	15	41	32	4.01
Fly tipping	2	5	20	33	36	4.02
Aggressive begging	2	3	12	43	34	4.11
Road safety or speeding	0	4	15	39	37	4.13
SAMPLE BASE: 228						

Respondents were questioned about whether they ever felt worried about being assaulted or harassed in Wigston within the last 12 months. 92% of respondents said that they had not felt worried about being assaulted or harassed (which was similar to the county total of 94%).

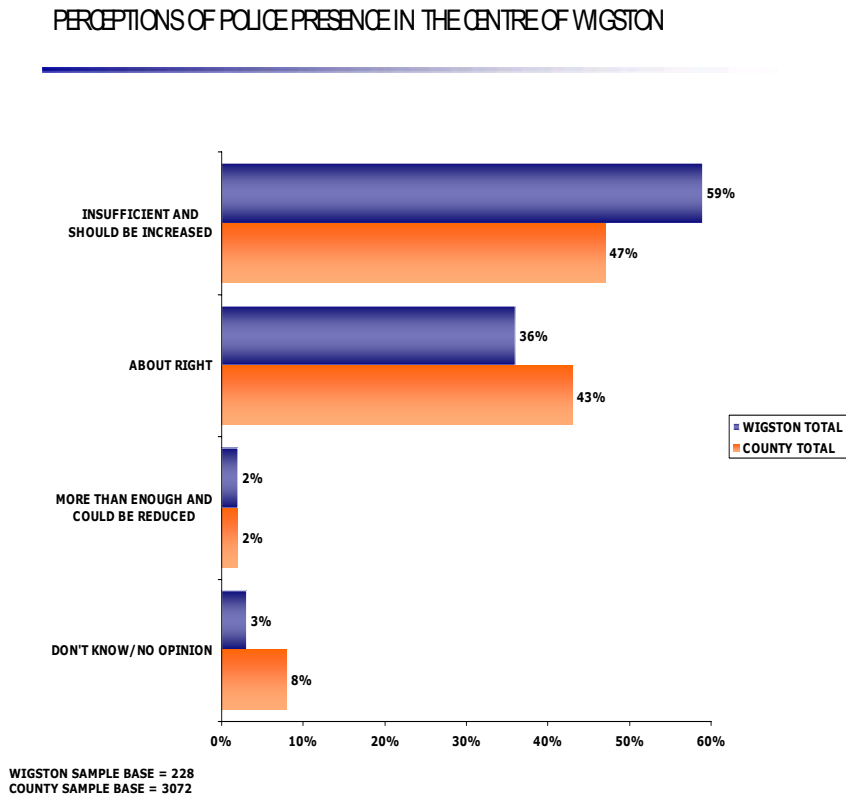
Figure 14

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



When respondents were asked about what they thought about the police presence in Wigston, 59% felt it was insufficient and should be increased, which was higher than the county total of 47%. 36% of respondents said that police presence in the centre was about right.

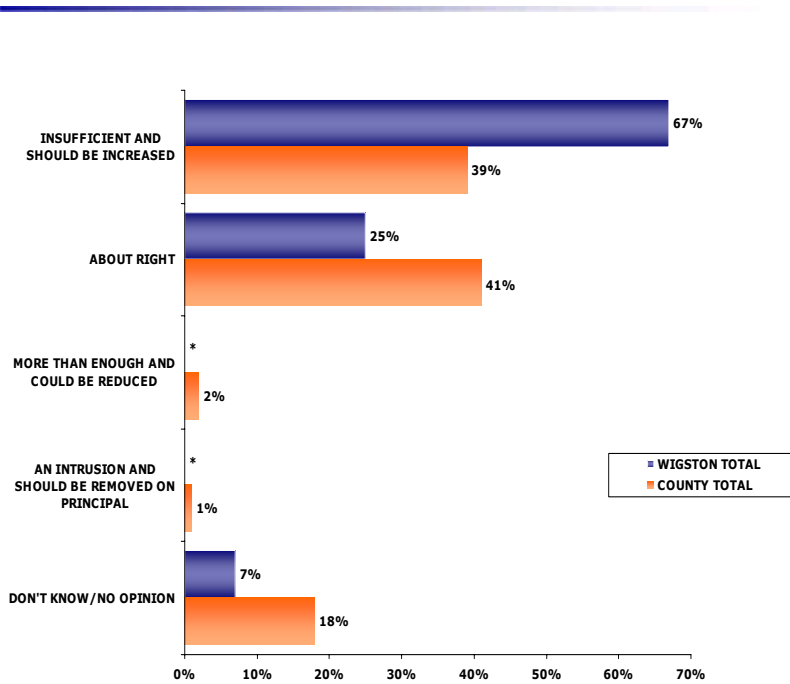
Figure 15



When questioned about the presence of CCTV in Wigston, 67% of respondents felt it was insufficient and should be increased, which was a higher figure than the county total of 47%. A quarter of respondents said the presence of CCTV was about right. This figure was lower than the county total as demonstrated in the graph below.

Figure 16

PERCEPTIONS OF CCTV PRESENCE IN THE CENTRE OF WIGSTON



WIGSTON SAMPLE BASE = 228
 COUNTY SAMPLE BASE = 3072
 *DENOTES FIGURE LESS THAN 0.5%

5 Summary

Visiting the centre

- Shopping trips accounted for 64% of the trips to Wigston.
- 11% of respondents were using a service in Wigston and a further 11% worked in a local business.
- The majority of visitors arrived in Wigston by car, with the second most common method being on foot and third being the bus.
- Just over two-fifths of respondents visited the centre daily.
- A wider range of shops and retail facilities, free parking and extended opening hours were the improvements most likely to encourage more people to come to Wigston 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 local billboards.
- Only 1% of respondents had attended an event in the centre.

Attitudes towards the centre

- Overall, Wigston was most likely to be described as 'quiet', 'busy', 'friendly' and 'crowded'.
- 43% of respondents reported that the centre of Wigston had improved within the last 12 months, whilst 39% of respondents reported no change and 9% 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

- 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 Wigston.
- 56% of respondents in Wigston said the variety of retail outlets and shops in the centre met their needs very well or quite well.

Town Centre environment

- Overall, respondents had mixed views about the environment and facilities in and around the centre.
- Respondents felt that the parks were well maintained, shop fronts were well maintained and pedestrian signage was relevant.
- Having a greater range of shops, personal safety and the cleanliness and tidiness of the centre were seen as the areas that needed the most attention.

Crime and safety

- People not treating each other with respect and consideration, groups of people hanging around the street and people dealing drugs were seen as the most significant problems in Wigston.
- Aggressive begging, road safety or speeding and property being stolen from a vehicle were not seen as a problem, or seen only as a small problem in Wigston.
- 92% of respondents said that they had not felt worried about being assaulted or harassed while in the centre within the last 12 months.
- Nearly three-fifths of respondents said policing in Wigston was insufficient and should be increased whereas over a third said it was about right.
- 67% of respondents felt that the CCTV presence in Wigston was insufficient and should be increased, whilst 25% said it was about right.

6 Conclusions and recommendations

- Overall, respondents had positive views about Wigston. 83% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with Wigston as a place to shop, visit and to do business. Moreover, although 50% reported no change within the last 12 months, 49% reported that the centre had got better or much better.
- Many respondents were aware of and users of services such as shops, the bank or building society, the post office and the library in Wigston.
- Findings indicated that Wigston 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, free parking and extended opening hours were the improvements most likely to encourage more people to come to Wigston more often.
- Seating and public toilets were identified as aspects of the town centre with the most scope for improvement, although most respondents were satisfied with the existing provision of the toilet facilities.
- Respondents felt more attention should be given to facilities such as seating and toilets, more parking and a greater range of shops.
- In terms of crime and safety issues, people not treating each other with respect and consideration, groups of people hanging around the street and people dealing drugs were seen as the most significant issues.