Introduction

• Luton Borough Council wished to undertake a programme of research investigating perceptions of visitors and non visitors to the town centre

• 3 surveys were undertaken
  – 563 face to face interviews with visitors about perceptions of the town centre
  – 220 telephone interviews among non visitors and infrequent visitors to the town centre (where visited less than 3 times in the last 6 months)
  – 625 face to face interviews with visitors about transport usage

• Interviewing took place in June/July 2012
Visiting Luton town centre
Visitors’ reasons for using the town centre

Q2 Reasons for using the town centre (all visitors)  Base=563

- **Shop**: 70%
- **Leisure (including cinema, gym restaurants etc)**: 37%
- **Work**: 23%
- **Live in the town centre/returning home**: 8%
- **Study**: 4%
- **Other**: 11%
Visitors’ spending in the town centre (mean £)

Q6 Spend on the day of interview (all visitors)  Base=563

Many visitors did not spend anything:
- Groceries/food shopping (66%)
- Restaurants/pubs (75%)
- Takeaways/sandwiches (72%)
- Clothes/cosmetics (68%)
- Attending events/attraction (96%)
- Other expenditure (85%)

Clothes, cosmetics/toiletries (179)  12.34
Groceries/food shopping (192)  6.23
Attending events/attractions (21)  0.53
Restaurants/pubs/cafes (139)  2.93
Takeaways/sandwiches (158)  1.68
Other expenditure (84)  6.28

All respondents
Those spending
Non visitors’ main reasons for not using the town centre - unprompted

Q9 Reasons for not visiting the town centre more frequently (all non/infrequent visitors) Base=220 All mentioned by at least 3%

- Parking difficulties: 20%
- Dislike town centre: 20%
- Have no / need to go: 17%
- Unattractive / appearance: 16%
- Poor range of shops: 16%
- Disability / poor health: 15%
- Overcrowded: 12%
- Feel unsafe/anti-social behaviour: 11%
- Type of people there (unfriendly / unsavoury): 9%
- Travelling difficulties: 8%
- Too many non-English speaking people: 6%
- Too busy / short of time: 3%
- Repairs / maintenance taking place (inc. road works): 3%
- Preferable to shop on-line: 3%
- Prefer to go to elsewhere: 3%

When prompted:
42% said they did not feel informed about what is available in the town centre
13% said it was difficult to get to Luton from where they lived
Perceptions of Luton town centre
Q11 Rating of aspects of the town centre – proportion saying good (4-5/out of 5) (all visitors providing a valid response) Bases vary

- Number of public spaces: 74%
- Quality of pedestrian areas: 73%
- Maintenance of pedestrian areas: 69%
- Public transport access: 69%
- Signage to and within the town centre: 65%
- Cleanliness: 63%
- CCTV coverage: 58%
- Adequate car parking: 54%
- Quality of the buildings: 53%
- Events to promote the town centre: 52%
- Maintenance of the buildings: 51%
- The cost of car parking: 33%
Visitors’ agreement with statements about the town centre environment

- Litter bins in the town centre are adequate and well placed: 91%
- There is adequate seating: 91%
- Pedestrian crossings in the town centre are safe to use: 82%
- The town centre's open spaces and landscaping enhance its environment: 80%
- Pedestrian areas in the Town Centre are well lit at night: 75%
- Cycle routes in the Town Centre are well lit at night: 58%
- Subways to the town centre are safe to use: 52%

Q10 Agreement with statements about the town centre environment – proportion that agree (4-5/out of 5) (all visitors providing a valid response) Bases vary
Visitors’ main suggestions for improvements that would most enhance the town centre

Q12 Which 2 improvements would most enhance the environment of the town centre (all visitors)  Base=563  (All those mentioned by at least 2%)

- Street drinkers, beggars and chuggers: 29%
- More green spaces and better landscaping: 9%
- Better quality buildings: 6%
- Less litter: 7%
- Cleaner pavements: 7%
- Less congestion: 4%
- More floral arrangements: 8%
- Improved public transport networks: 4%
- Better street lighting: 3%
- Better maintenance of buildings: 3%
- Removal of graffiti and fly posting: 5%
- Fewer buskers / street peddlers: 5%
- Less street clutter e.g. unused signage, bins etc: 3%

0% 5% 10% 15% 20% 25% 30% 35%
Shopping in Luton town centre
Rating of the quality of shopping facilities in the town centre

Q25 Rating of the quality of shopping facilities in the town centre (all visitors providing a valid response)  Base=386
Q21 Rating of the quality of shopping facilities in the town centre (all visitors providing a valid response)  Base=207

Visitors

- Very good: 12%
- Good: 45%
- Average: 34%
- Poor: 8%
- Very poor: 1%

Non visitors

- Very good: 8%
- Good: 24%
- Average: 43%
- Poor: 20%
- Very poor: 6%
Visitors’ perceptions of Luton’s shopping facilities compared to other towns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town</th>
<th>Better in Luton</th>
<th>The same</th>
<th>Worse in Luton</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Milton Keynes (319)</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watford (198)</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Albans (228)</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hemel Hempstead (181)</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hitchin (201)</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harpenden (191)</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welwyn Garden City (118)</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bedford (240)</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hatfield including the Galleria Outlet (136)</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stevenage (177)</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q26 Rating of the retail experience in Luton compared to other places (all visitors providing a valid response) Bases shown in brackets
Main places where non visitors usually go for shopping

- Milton Keynes: 32%
- Watford: 5%
- Hitchin: 3%
- Stevenage: 3%
- St Albans: 3%
- Hemel Hempstead: 3%
- Bedford: 2%
- Harpenden: 1%
- Welwyn Garden City: 1%

Q1 Where non/infrequent visitors usually go for general shopping (all non visitors) Base=220
Main reasons why non visitors go to other places for shopping

Q3 Reasons why respondents usually go to specific places for general shopping (where go to specific places)  Base=203

- Variety of shops / shopping experience: 30%
- Access to car parking: 11%
- Open spaces / parks: 5%
- Cheaper parking: 5%
- Good road networks: 2%
- Low level of crime / feel safe: 2%
- Children / family friendly attractions: 1%
- Good public transport links: 1%
- Clean streets: 1%
- Road and traffic safety: 1%
- Fewer beggars, street drinkers, chuggers: 1%
Leisure facilities in Luton town centre
Visitors’ perceptions of Luton’s leisure facilities compared to other towns

Q28 Rating of the leisure and entertainment facilities in Luton compared to other places (all visitors providing a valid response) Bases shown in brackets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town</th>
<th>Better in Luton</th>
<th>The same</th>
<th>Worse in Luton</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Milton Keynes (394)</td>
<td>13% had</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watford (273)</td>
<td>22% had</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Albans (271)</td>
<td>32% had</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bedford (290)</td>
<td>36% had</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hatfield including the Galleria Outlet (204)</td>
<td>44% had</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hemel Hempstead (238)</td>
<td>45% had</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hitchin (240)</td>
<td>46% had</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stevenage (227)</td>
<td>39% had</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welwyn Garden City (176)</td>
<td>48% had</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harpenden (233)</td>
<td>50% had</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Main places where non/infrequent visitors usually go for leisure

Q5 Where non/infrequent visitors usually go for leisure activities (all non/infrequent visitors)  Base=220

- Milton Keynes: 18%
- Harpenden: 6%
- Hitchin: 5%
- Bedford: 3%
- Watford: 2%
- St Albans: 2%
- Stevenage: 1%
- Hemel Hempstead: 1%
Main reasons why non visitors go to other places for leisure

Q7 Reasons why respondents usually go to specific places for leisure activities (where go to specific places)  Base=155

- Variety of shops / shopping experience: 8%
- Children / family friendly attractions: 5%
- Variety of pubs/clubs: 5%
- Low level of crime / feel safe: 5%
- Access to car parking: 4%
- Open spaces / parks: 3%
- Variety of cultural/arts venues: 3%
- Cheaper parking: 3%
- Fewer beggars, street drinkers, chuggers: 2%
- Good public transport links: 1%
- Clean streets: 1%
- Good road networks: 1%
Perceptions of the ‘liveliness’ of the town centre

Q23 How lively or exciting the town centre is (all visitors providing a valid response)  Base=383
Q20 How lively or exciting the town centre is (all non/infrequent visitors providing a valid response)  Base=174

- **Visitors**
  - Very lively: 6%
  - Fairly lively: 60%
  - Not very lively: 26%
  - Not at all lively: 8%

- **Non visitors**
  - Very lively: 11%
  - Fairly lively: 40%
  - Not very lively: 29%
  - Not at all lively: 20%
Visitors’ suggestions of events & activities that would improve the ‘liveliness’ of the town centre

- Specialist markets (e.g., Farmers, French markets): 64%
- Music events/concerts: 64%
- Festivals (e.g., food, cultural festivals): 54%
- Fun fairs: 37%
- Other: 4%
- None: 5%
- Don't know: 1%
Perceptions of safety in Luton town centre
Perceptions of safety in the town centre

Q13/Q14 Perceptions of safety in the town centre during the day/after dark) (all visitors providing a valid response) Bases=563/469
Q18/Q19 Perceptions of safety in the town centre during the day/after dark) (all non/infrequent visitors providing a valid response) Bases=202/172
Three aspects that make visitors feel the most unsafe in the town centre

- People being drunk in the street: 56%
- Young people hanging around: 33%
- Fear of crime/becoming a victim of crime: 28%
- People begging in the street: 25%
- People using or dealing drugs: 23%
- Low police presence: 23%
- Litter in the street: 5%
- Run down / derelict buildings: 5%
- Street lighting: 4%
- Access to car parks: 4%
- Graffiti / Vandalism: 4%
- Queuing for public transport: 3%
- CCTV coverage: 3%
- Poor building lighting: 1%
- Other: 2%
- Nothing: 10%
- Don't know: 3%

Q16 Which 3 aspects make visitors feel the most unsafe in the town centre (all visitors) Base=563
Visitors’ perceptions of crime in the town centre

• The most common crimes are perceived to be
  – Robbery/mugging (28%)
  – Theft/pick pocketing (19%)
  – Anti-social behaviour (12%)
  – Shoplifting (11%)

• The main reasons for these perceptions are
  – Word of mouth (51%)
  – Personal experience (26%)
  – Relative/friend (21%)
  – Local media (15%)

• 6% of visitors have been a victim of crime in the last 12m, mainly
  – Theft/mugging/robbery (56% of victims)
  – Anti-social behaviour (31%)
  – Violent crime (11%)
  – Hate crime (11%)

Q17 Whether been a victim of crime (all visitors) Base=563, Q18 Crimes experienced (where a victim) Base=36, Q19 Perceptions of the most common Crimes in the town centre (all visitors) Base=563, Q20 Reasons for visitors perceptions of crime (where mentioned a common crime) Base=460
Overall satisfaction with Luton town centre
Overall satisfaction with Luton town centre

Q29 Overall satisfaction with the town centre (all visitors providing a valid response)  Base=561
Q13 Overall satisfaction with the town centre (all visitors providing a valid response)  Base=216

Visitors
- Very satisfied: 8%
- Fairly satisfied: 59%
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied: 21%
- Fairly dissatisfied: 9%
- Very dissatisfied: 3%

Non visitors
- Very satisfied: 7%
- Fairly satisfied: 30%
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied: 19%
- Fairly dissatisfied: 25%
- Very dissatisfied: 19%
Visitors’ suggestions of one main thing that should be changed about the town centre - unprompted

Wider variety of shops / better shopping experience - 25%
More children / family friendly attractions - 13%
Level of crime - 9%
Reduce the number of beggars, street drinkers, chuggers - 5%
More open spaces / parks - 4%
Cleaner streets - 4%
Road & Traffic Safety - 4%
More toilets - 3%
Better public transport links - 2%
Wider variety of cultural / arts venues - 2%
More cultural attractions - 2%

Q32 One thing that visitors would like to change about the town centre (all visitors)  Base=563  All those mentioned by at least 2%
Non visitors’ suggestions of **one** main thing that should be changed about the town centre - unprompted

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suggestion</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wider variety of shops / better shopping experience</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to parking</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of crime</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better road networks</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduce the number of beggars, street drinkers, chuggers</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-design layout</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More children / family friendly attractions</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have a more patriotic feel/more people speaking in English</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleaner streets</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Road &amp; Traffic Safety</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheaper parking</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More independent / small shops</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q15 One thing that visitors would like to change about the town centre (all on/infrequent visitors)  Base=220  All those mentioned by at least 2%
Thank you

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