

Royton, Shaw and Crompton Town Centre Survey.

Top Line Analysis 12th December 2006.

Background:

Between September 2006 and November 2006 the Regeneration Directorate have been gathering peoples views and thoughts on issues that they feel strongly about in Royton and Shaw and Crompton town centres.

This information has been collected to help the Regeneration Directorate to develop a masterplan that will be used help regenerate and reinvigorate Royton and Shaw and Crompton town centres. This is an important part of work for the directorate and helps to contribute to one of the key ideas in Oldham Beyond.

The information below has been gathered through a questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed in a number of ways. By post, handed out on market days, handed out in the town centres, circulated to local schools and left for collection at a variety of community venues. The following information gives a top line analysis on the data that has been collected.

It is important to note that this top line analysis contains aggregate information from both town centres and there will be some differences when the information is analysed for individual centres.

Section 1, Demographic Breakdown:

- There were an impressive **1585** responses to the questionnaire. This was approximately **25%** of the questionnaires that were distributed.
- There was a very balanced split between the two centres with **52.6%** of the responses related to Shaw and Crompton and **46.6%** related to Royton.
- **15.3%** of people responding considered themselves to have a disability.
- Nearly two thirds, **(61.2%)** of responses were from women, with approximately one third, **(34.5%)** coming from men.
- Over nine out of ten people, **(92.6%)** identified themselves as 'White British', only approximately **2%** of people identified themselves as a different ethnic origin.
- Over one third, **(34.8%)** of respondents identified themselves as retired, **28.3%** work full time, **10.2%** work part time and **8.1%** identified themselves as students.

- Over half, **(52.4%)** of questionnaires that we received back, had been sent out as a post survey, a further **14.1%** were returned by post after been collected from a number of different locations, and very encouragingly, nearly one in ten, **(9.4%)** of surveys were completed electronically online!

Section 2, Your current town centre habits:

- The most frequent uses for the town centre currently are top up shopping **(81.9%)**, banking **(80.0 %)**, and using the post office **(76.9%)**.
- Encouragingly, Two fifths, **(41.4%)** of people use the town centres 3 to 5 times a week, with nearly a quarter, **(24.7%)** of people using the centres daily.
- Thursday, market day, is the day people most frequently visit the centres **18.5%**, and Saturday is the second most frequently visited day at **17.7%**.
- Approximately half of respondents **(50.1%)** stated that they visit the centres for between 30 minutes and 2 hours.
- Nearly half, **(46.1%)** of people travel by car to the centres, nearly four in ten, **(38.3%)** walk and one in ten, **(10.5%)** catch the bus.

Section 3, You don't currently use the centre:

- The most frequent reasons given for not using the town centres currently was around the poor choice of shops **(59.2%)**, and the level of untidiness **(41.7%)**.
- Worryingly, over a third of people **(35.8%)** identified the fear of anti social behaviour as a reason for not going into the town centres and **22.5%** of people stated that they felt unsafe.
- As expected, a number of town centres in and around Oldham are used as alternative venues to shop in.

Section 4, Your views on Royton or Shaw and Crompton:

- **36.1%** of people were very satisfied or satisfied with the choice of shops, however, **19%** of people were very dissatisfied or dissatisfied with the choice of shops available in the town centres.
- **39.4%** of people were very/satisfied with the quality of shops but **10.9%** of people were very dissatisfied or dissatisfied.

- **39.9%** of people were very satisfied or satisfied with the value of shopping on offer in the town centres.
- Only **5.8%** of people are satisfied with the number of employment opportunities, with **17.3%** being dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.
- **45%** of people were very/satisfied with the level of public health provision available and **62.9%** for the level of commercial services on offer.
- Congestion is highlighted as an issue, with **28.6%** of people being dissatisfied or very dissatisfied at the current moment in time.
- Access to leisure facilities is seen as a problem, with **26.7%** of people being dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the provision at the current moment in time.
- There are also concerns over the access to community facilities with nearly one quarter, **23.9%**, of respondents stating they are either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the current provision.
- Current car parking convenience is viewed positively with **53.8%** of people very satisfied or satisfied with current provision.
- The provision of bus services is viewed positively on the whole. **56.2 %** of respondents were very/satisfied with the routes and **59.8%** with the location of bus stops. Only **36.2%** of people were very/satisfied with the frequency of the services.
- It is interesting to note the thoughts regarding car parking in the town centres. Over half the respondents (**53.8%**) were satisfied or very satisfied with the convenience of the car parks, however, over one fifth, (**22.6%**) of people were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the availability of car parking spaces.
- A number of issues arise around the fear of crime and anti social behaviour. Encouragingly **31.6%** of people feel very satisfied or satisfied that they feel safe from crime, however **21.6%** feel dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the fear of crime.
- Anti social behaviour is a real concern with nearly one third of respondents, (**32.1%**) stating that they do not feel safe from anti social behaviour.
- There are some concerns over the level of access through out the town centres. Access to buildings is viewed positively by **39.5%** of people, however, more than one in ten, (**10.3%**) of people responding were dissatisfied with disabled access.

- Cleanliness is highlighted as an issue. **33.7%** of people stated that the centres are not clean enough and a quarter, **(25.1%)** of respondents said that they were unhappy with the level of vandalism and graffiti.
- The current state of the toilets is identified as a significant concern. Over three quarters, **(78.6%)** of respondents stated that they were very/dissatisfied with the current facilities with **52.4%** stating that they were very dissatisfied. Only **2.3%** of respondents were satisfied with the current toilets!
- **27.2%** of respondents were very/dissatisfied with the level of public art and **24.9%** of respondents were very/dissatisfied with public realm in the town centres.
- People were quite happy with the level of street decoration with **52.8%** being very/satisfied and **41.6%** of respondents stating they are very/satisfied with the current provision of public open space.

Section 5, What features are most important to you:

- Nearly four out of ten people, **(37.9%)** identified the choice and quality of shopping been the most important factor for a town centre.
- Public health provision, commercial services and leisure facilities were also identified as being very important.
- Nearly a fifth, **18.9%** of people stated that a safe and secure car park is important for Shaw and Crompton and Royton town centres, with a further **16.2%** identifying the need for adequate car parking spaces.
- When asked about safety and accessibility, four choices scored very highly. **23.7%** stated the centre needs to be clean and tidy, **18.7%** said no fear of crime, **16.8%** said no fear of anti social behaviour and **16.3%** stated that good toilet facilities are most important.
- Unsurprisingly, when asked about open space, nearly one third **(30%)** of people think the centre should be clear of graffiti and vandalism, and nearly a quarter, **(22.4%)** of people identified both high quality public open space and street decoration as important factors for a successful town centre.

Section 6, Other comments:

When given the opportunity to offer their own opinions, most people identified improvements to toilet facilities, less anti social behaviour, fewer takeaways and rowdy pubs, and improvements or solutions to the high levels of congestion.

The need to retain free parking was a continuing theme throughout the questionnaire.

Finally, and on a more positive note it is good to hear that a significant number of people really value the local people and the sense of community in the two centres.