The Countryside Agency

Clitheroe the Future

Shopper's survey

Introduction

This survey was intended as a simple exercise to try to determine the views and habits of shoppers using Clitheroe Town Centre.
The key factors, which had been identified via the focus groups held prior to this, related to transport, car parking, pedestrianisation and the types of shops used and needed to ensure a vibrant shopping centrte.
Although the market itself was identified as important and in need of a fundamental rethink it was decided that the information on this could be realised more effectively via the household survey.

Methodology

A number of independent shops in different areas of retail and a market trader were recruited to perform the survey. They were asked to sample approximately every 5th customer in order to ensure as random sample of shoppers as possible.
In addition samples of customers going into 3 supermarkets were invited to complete the survey.
In total 236 questionnaires were completed over about 10 days. It was felt that this was a large enough sample in order to draw some conclusions.
Local people were defined as people who had travelled 2 miles or less to shop.

Conclusions

1. The majority of people surveyed (56%) travelled 3 miles or more to shop in Clitheroe.
2. 23% of those surveyed travel more than 10 miles to shop here. The mean distance travelled by Non-Clitheronians is 19 miles.
3. The bulk of people travel to Clitheroe(70%) by car with very few people using public transport. However a significant proportion (44%) of local people walk into town.
4. Around 75% of people visit Clitheroe very regularly – once a week or more to shop.
5. The bulk of people use the supermarkets on a regular basis (77%) and around 50% use the market regularly.
6. The most popular response for additional shops related to Marks & Spencer with people specifically mentioning food and underwear as areas to be included.
7. Other deficiencies in the shopping mix mentioned by several people were take-aways, ladies' wear, men's wear, teenage fashions, shoes, children's wear, department store and specifically Next.
8. The main reason for choosing Clitheroe as a shopping destination was split with nearest town, character and independent specialist shops all scoring highly. The range of shops seemed to be less important.
9. The other services used regularly by shoppers were banks (60%), health centre (48%) {local people} and sports facilities (22%). The low response to the use of cultural facilities can be interpreted 2 ways – either there is a lack of interest in culture or there is a shortage of venues and facilities in Clitheroe in this field.
10. Although 71 % of people reported parking as easy, this figure must be viewed in relation to where people parked. 38% of those questioned specified parking other than on street or public car parks and further questioning revealed that almost 100% of these people were parking on supermarket car parks. This is regardless of whether they were using the supermarket or not.

For Non Clitheronians 68 % reported difficulty parking and this % increases for people who did not come to Clitheroe regularly.

11. The age distribution of those questioned suggests that Clitheroe is not a town popular with the younger age group for shopping and this may be reflected in the types of shops identified as missing (e.g. takeaways, teenage fashions, ladies wear, Next.)
12. Of 79 people adding remarks at the end of the questionnaire

    21 were complimentary to the town and its shopkeepers with remarks such as :-

Super place - friendly - delightful market town	1st impressions very good - will come again	Friendly atmosphere in all shops helpful

    18 people remarked on the excessive number of charity shops on the main streets

    10 people made additional reference to lack of parking or the fact that parking was not free.

    The remaining remarks covered a range of topics such as the market, policing, pedestrianisation (for and against), street cleanliness and decoration.

<u>Further Research</u>

It may be worth targeting the young people of Clitheroe to determine what type of shops they feel are missing. However we must appreciate that Clitheroe is not a large town and as such cannot compete with the range of high street shops that are popular with young people.

<u>Recommendations</u>

1. Public car parking must be improved with signage to and between car parks being clear. Earlier research by Clitheroe the Future Transport Group has revealed that on a busy market day the 3 short stay town centre car parks can be 95% occupied.
   Public transport itself will never replace reliance of rural people on the car and this factor must be taken into account when planning facilities and ensuring the future of market towns. Government research has revealed that in rural areas only 2% of journeys are made by bus compared to 10% in metropolitan areas (DETR statistics) and there is a heavy reliance on people in rural areas to use their cars not only for shopping and to get to work but to access other services.
2. Clitheroe is highly dependent on people travelling here to shop and we must capitalise on the strengths identified in the questionnaire to attract people away from the major shopping areas. Clitheroe can never compete on range of shops with out of town shopping centres and the major urban centres and must therefore realise what makes people come here. The retailers of Clitheroe need to consider carefully the responses to this questionnaire and to work together with the Council to ensure that the correct mix of shops is provided in the town centre.
3. Clitheroe is clearly perceived as a shopping destination with a distinct character and has something that is different to the major retail centres. The Council and traders must work together to promote and preserve this.

<u>Results - Attached</u>

<u>Notes</u>

Full details of the results can be obtained from Clitheroe the Future.

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