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Experience Milngavie BID

Consultation Results

APRIL 2010

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Introduction

The Experience Milngavie BID is a joint-initiative led by the Milngavie Traders Association and East Dunbartonshire Council's Economic Development department.

The Project aims to establish a Business Improvement District (BID) in Milngavie Town Centre: a BID is a self-financing model of town centre management, where each business within the BID area makes an annual levy payment into a central account, the sum total of which is then invested in additional projects and services in the town centre.

Crucially, these projects and services are delivered **in addition** to those statutory services already provided by the local authority and funded via existing rates and taxes.

The Process

The development of a Business Improvement District is led by the businesses themselves via a Steering Group. This committee, representing a cross-section of local business interests, oversees a business consultation, which informs the development of a five-year business plan.

Each business within the BID area is then given the opportunity to vote, via formal ballot, either in favour or against the business plan. Should a majority vote in favour (both by turnout and by rateable value), a company is formed (the Board of which is comprised of private sector representatives) to oversee the delivery of the business plan.

The Business Consultation

Each of the businesses in Milngavie Town Centre was sent a copy of the business consultation document with a covering letter. A copy of the survey document is available as an Appendix to this document.

The survey questioned businesses on three main areas:

1. Current business performance
2. Current perceptions of Milngavie Town Centre
3. Aspirations and priorities for improvement in Milngavie Town Centre

There were two important reasons for carrying out the business consultation: firstly, the aspirations and priorities for improvement will be reflected in the business plan proposal which businesses will ultimately vote on; secondly, information gathered on current business performance and perceptions of the town centre will be used as a benchmark.

Should the business community of Milngavie Town Centre vote in favour of the BID proposal, an annual consultation and performance measuring exercise will take place to gauge the impact the BID has in the area. Data gathered prior to the first year of the BID will be used as a starting point for comparison.

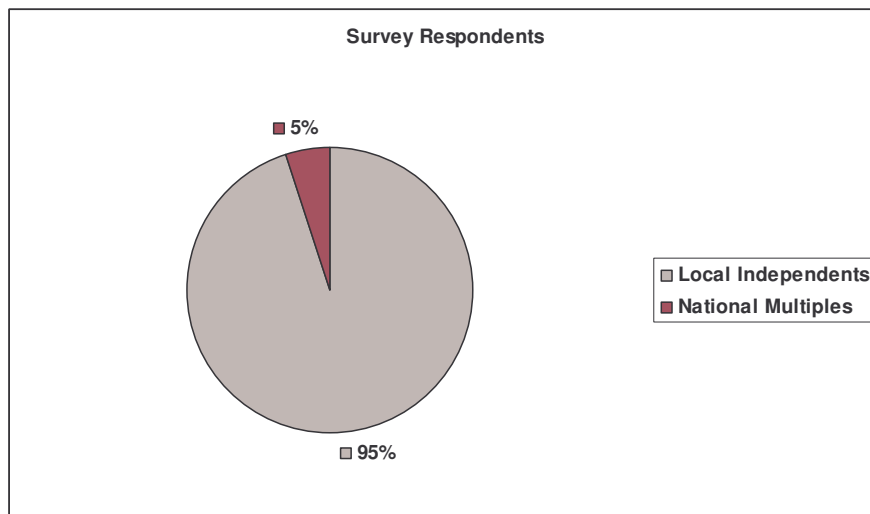
Methodology & Respondents

A total of 117 surveys were sent directly by post to each business within the proposed BID area, along with a cover letter explaining the survey process and response arrangements.

Respondents were given the option to either return completed surveys to Townhead Carpets at 15 Mugdock Road, or to hold on to them for collection from their premises.

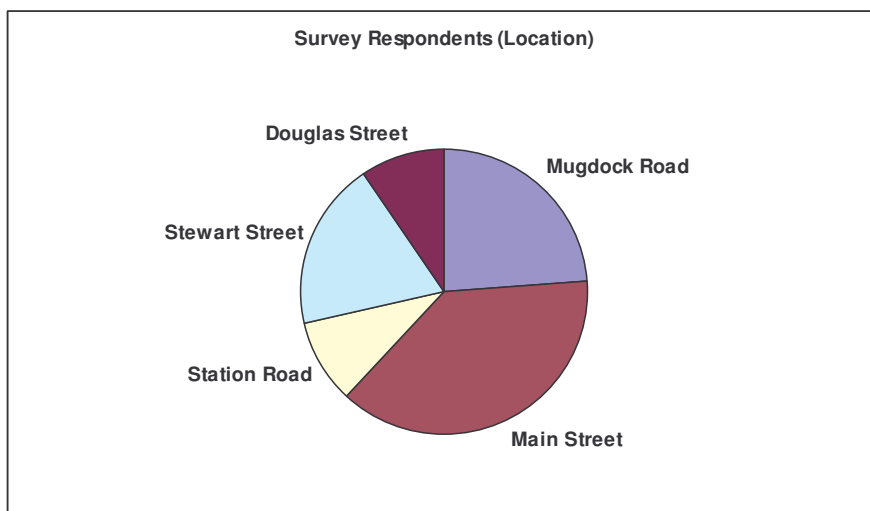
Response Rate

21 completed surveys were received as of the start of April, representing a response rate of around 18%. Our understanding is that this represents a reasonable response rate for this type of exercise, in comparison to others which have been carried out by established Business Improvement Districts.



Respondents Profile

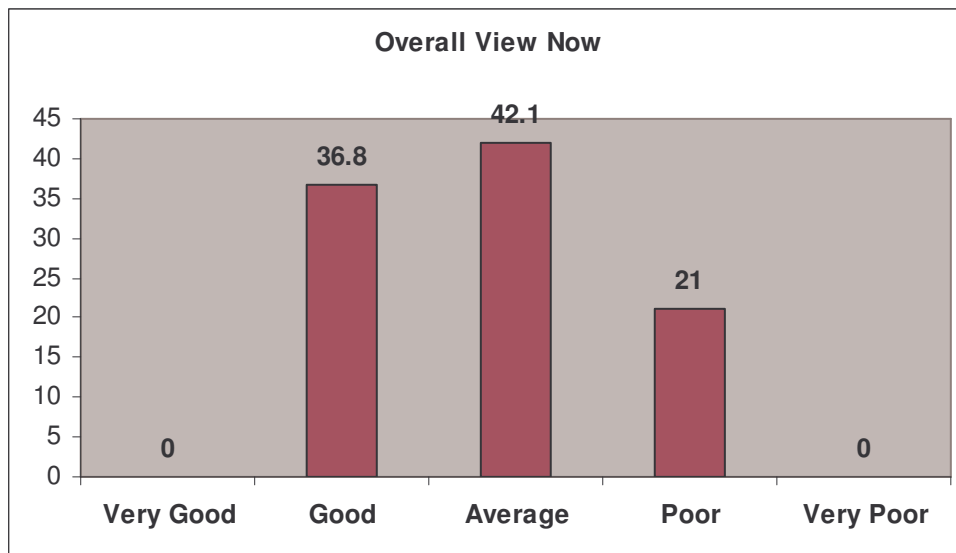
Almost all of the respondents who submitted a completed survey represented local independent traders. Again, in comparison to other established BIDS, this level of engagement with national multiples is to be expected. As illustrated below, responses were received from businesses in each of the key streets in the town centre.



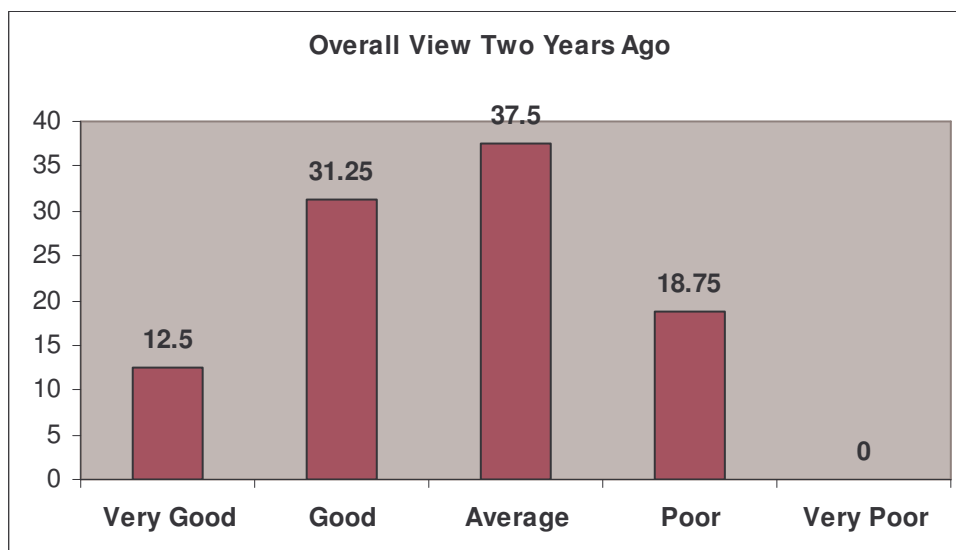
Results

CURRENT PERCEPTIONS OF MILNGAVIE TOWN CENTRE

Businesses were asked to rate their current perceptions of Milngavie Town Centre as a place to trade from, and make a comparison to their overall view of the town centre two years prior.

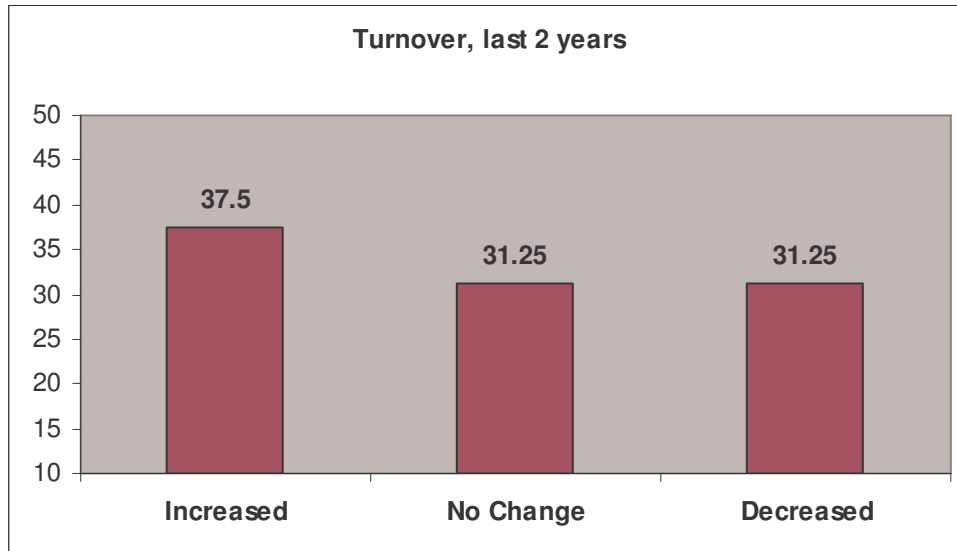


The majority of businesses view the town centre as either a good or average location from which to trade from; in comparison to two years previously, this reflects a slight inward trend, with less businesses viewing the area as being very good or very poor, and more as good or average.

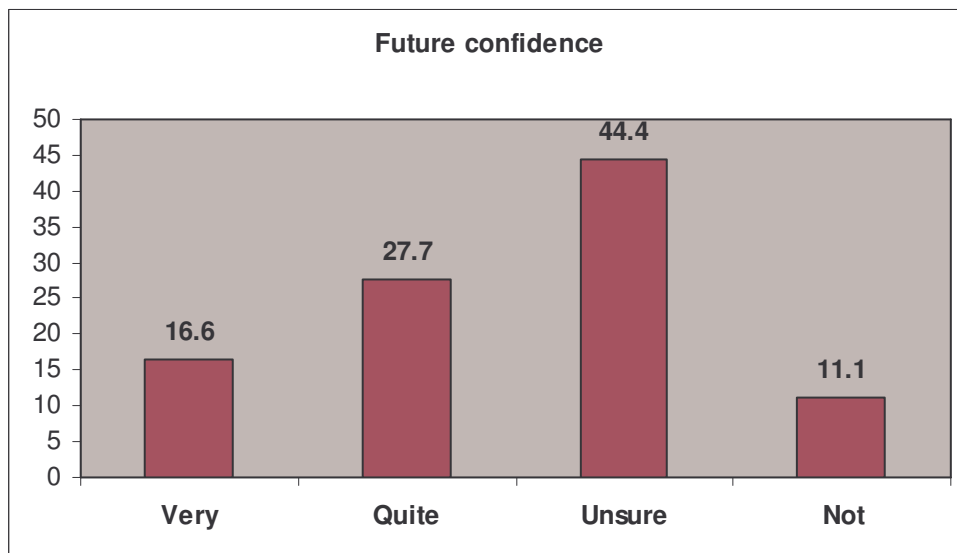


Turnover & Future Confidence

Businesses were asked to identify any change in turnover during the last two years; as illustrated by the graph below, the results show a mixed picture, with equal response rates of 31.25% for no change / decrease in turnover during the last two years, and a slightly higher response rate of 37.5% for increased levels of turnover.



This even spread of response rates indicates a mixed picture for business performance in Milngavie over the last two years in terms of turnover.



When questioned on their confidence of future business performance in Milngavie Town Centre, there was a broad spread of responses, with the majority of businesses indicating they were either quite confident, or unsure of how well their businesses would perform in the future. Only a minority of 11.1% indicated that they were not confident of future performance.

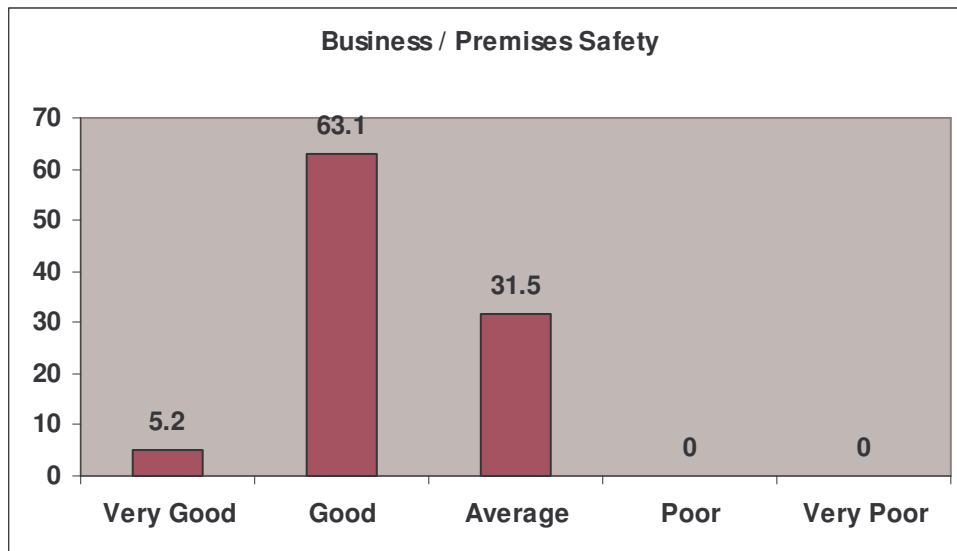
Safety & Security

Businesses were questioned on their current perception of safety and security in the town centre over three key areas: personal safety or safety of staff, the safety of their customers and the security of their premises themselves.



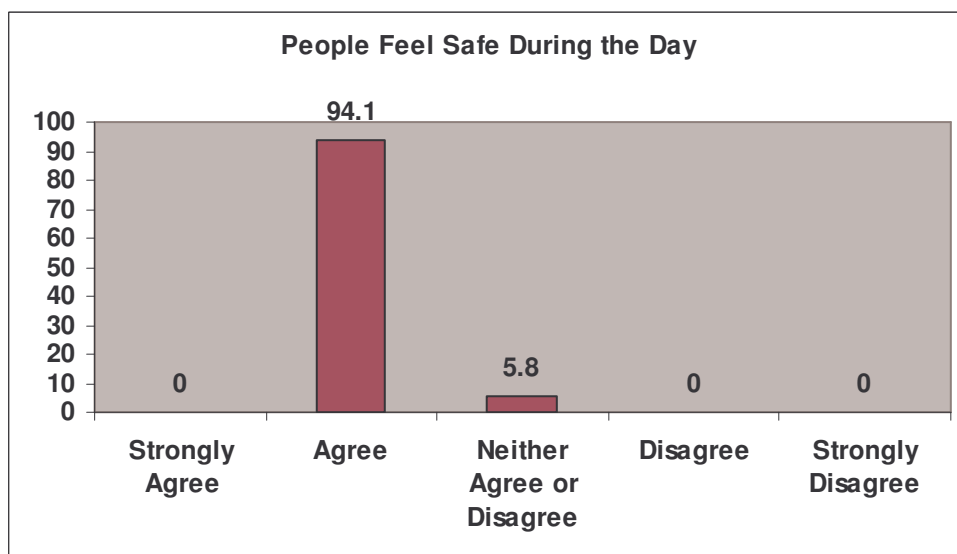
None of the respondents questioned felt that safety and security was either poor or very poor over any of the three areas surveyed.

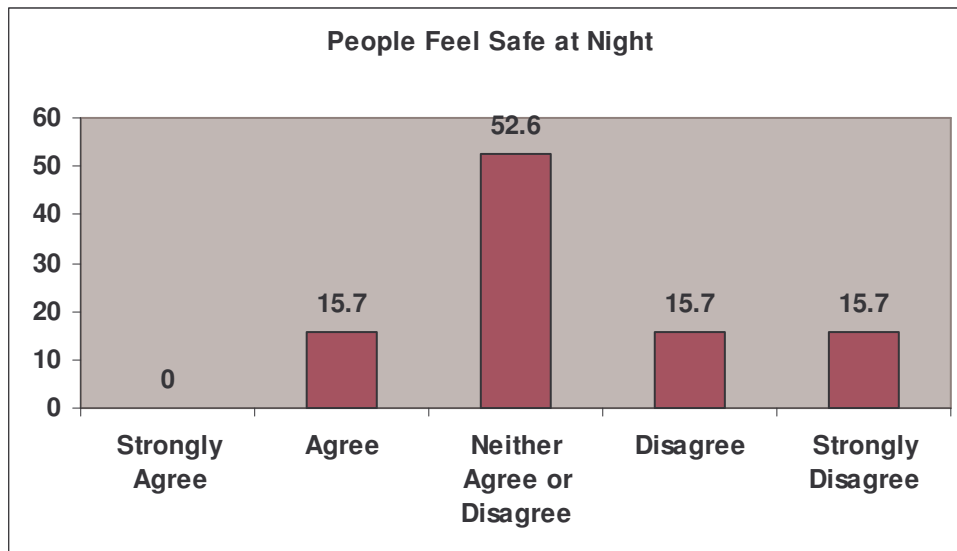




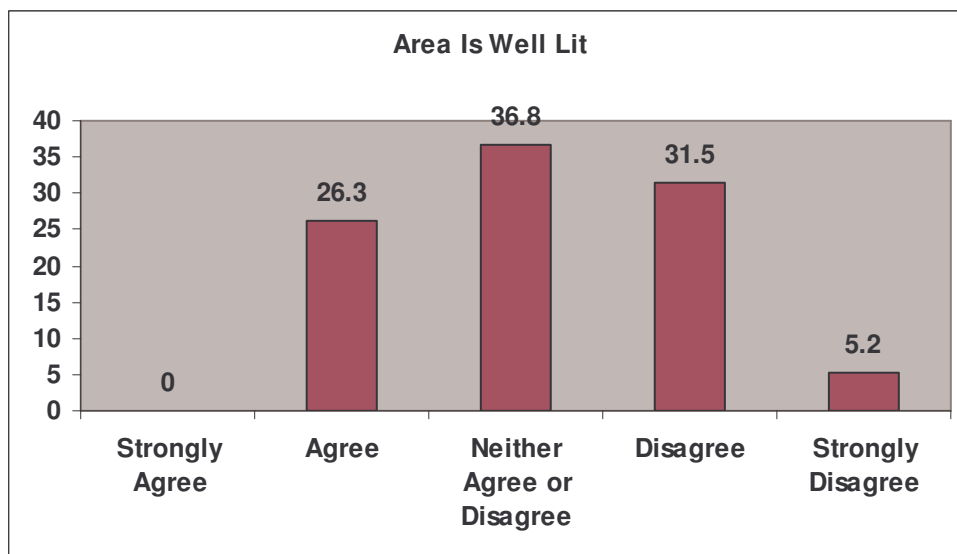
For each of the three questions, the majority of respondents perceived safety and security to currently be either good or very good in the town centre.

This trend is maintained where businesses were asked to which extent they either agree or disagree with the following statement; ***'People feel safe during the day'*** with the majority of respondents agreeing.

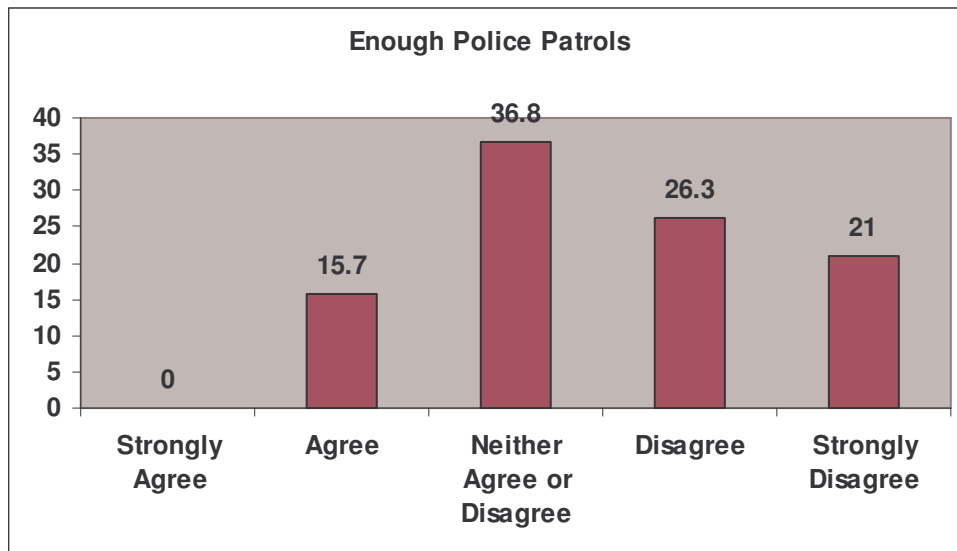




However, when asked to reflect on the statement *'People feel safe at night'*, a more mixed response was received; only a minority agreed, the majority of respondents neither agreeing nor disagreeing.

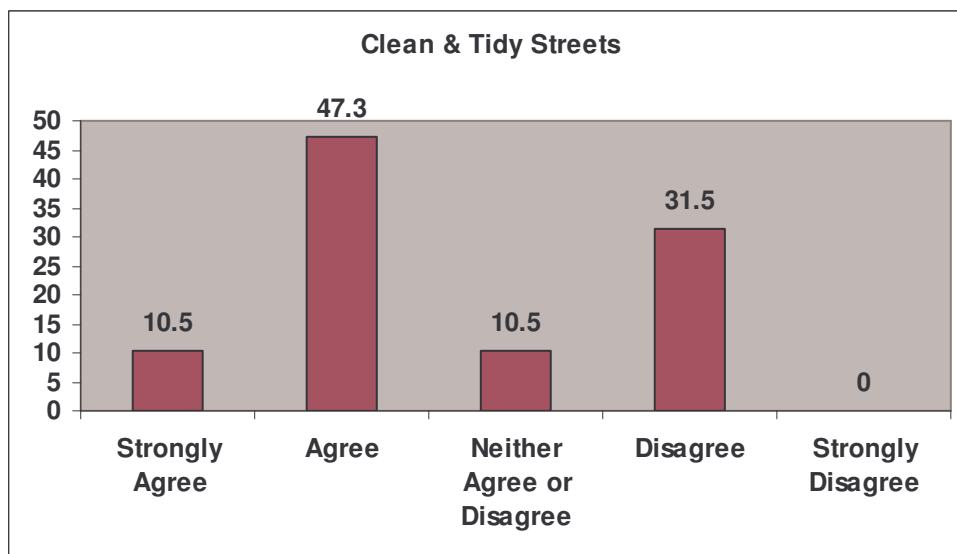


In a similar theme, respondents were asked to what extent they agreed with the statement that *'the area is well lit'*. As illustrated above, a mix of responses were received, though the majority of responses recorded were neither agree nor disagree, or disagree.



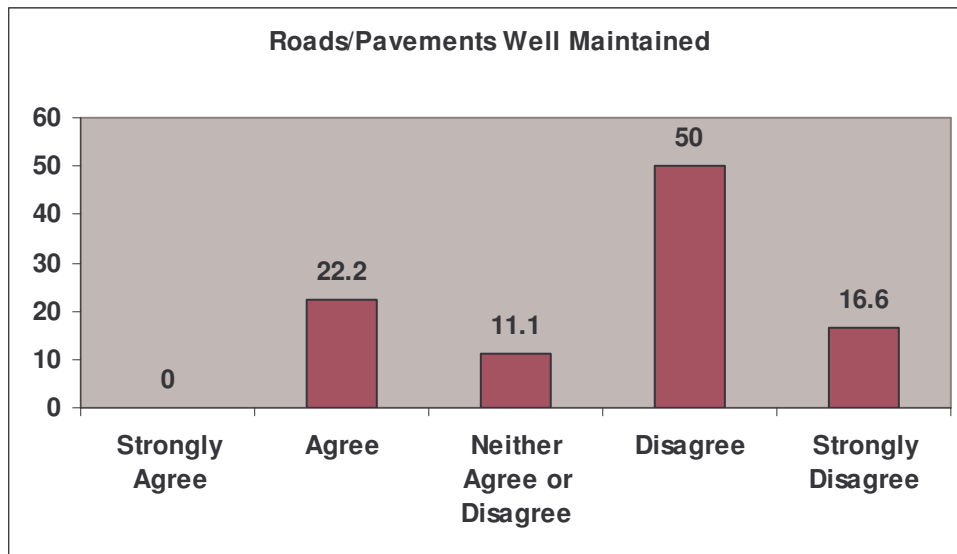
Questioned on whether or not they agree with the statement *'There are enough police patrols'*, a mix of responses were received, with the majority neither agreeing nor disagreeing.

Clean & Tidy Streets



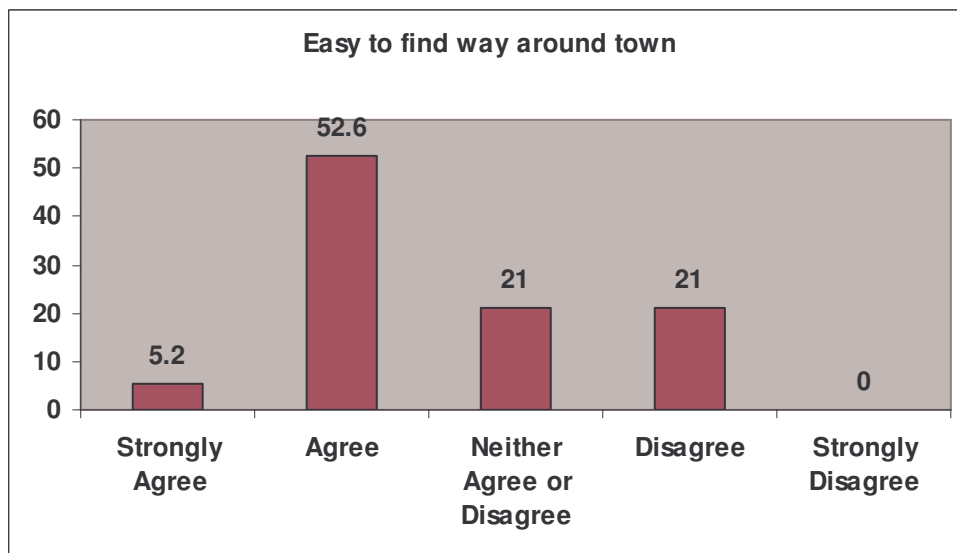
When asked to what extent they agree that *'The town centre has clean and tidy streets (graffiti/littering)'*, a clear split in responses can be identified. Although a majority of respondents answered that they agree with this statement, the second most popular choice was to disagree with the statement, indicating a clear mix in opinion on the issue.

Roads Maintenance



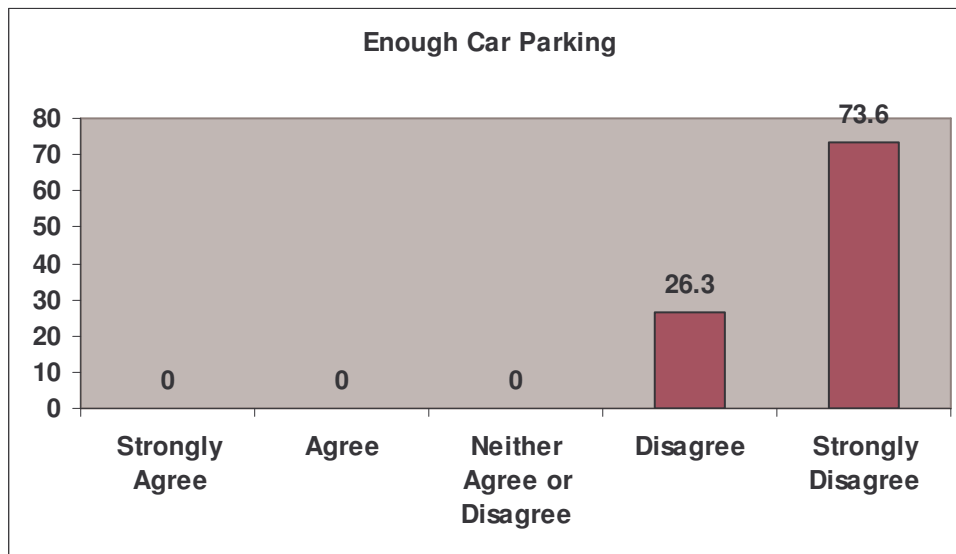
A majority of respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the following statement; ***'Roads and pavements are well maintained'***.

Navigating around Milngavie Town Centre



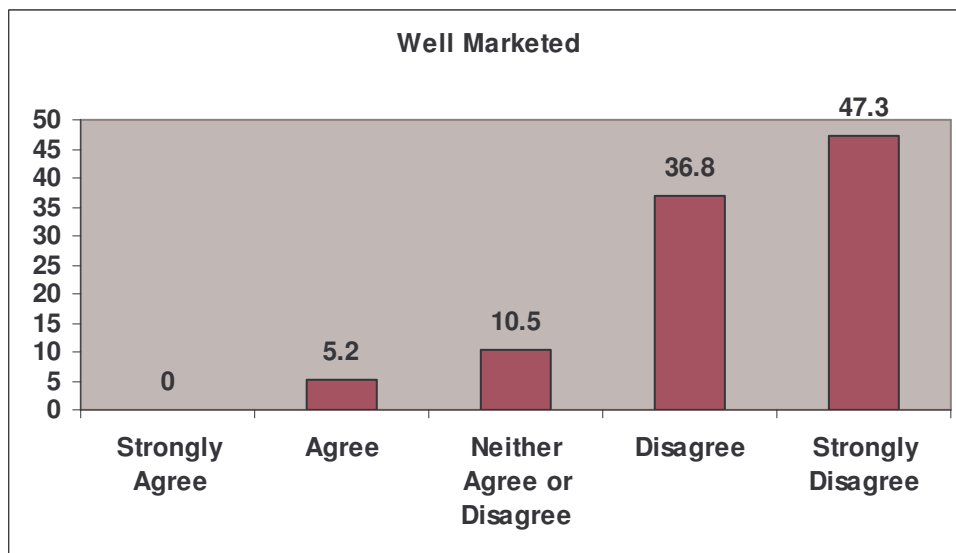
A majority of respondents agreed with the statement that it is ***'easy for people to find their way around the town centre'***. However, the second most popular response was to neither agree nor disagree, or to disagree, with the statement.

Car Parking



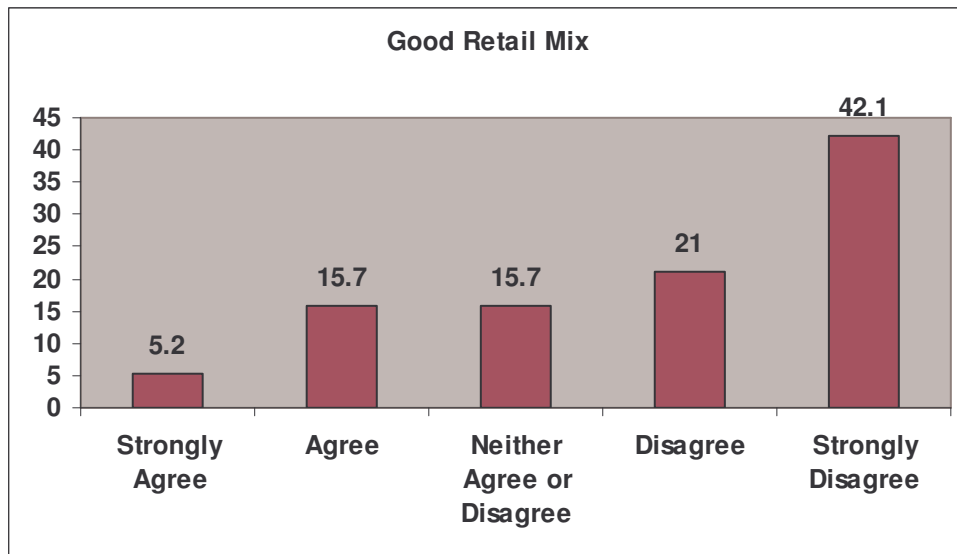
When questioned to what extent they agree with the statement that ***‘there is enough car parking in the town centre’***, all respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, with the vast majority strongly disagreeing.

Marketing



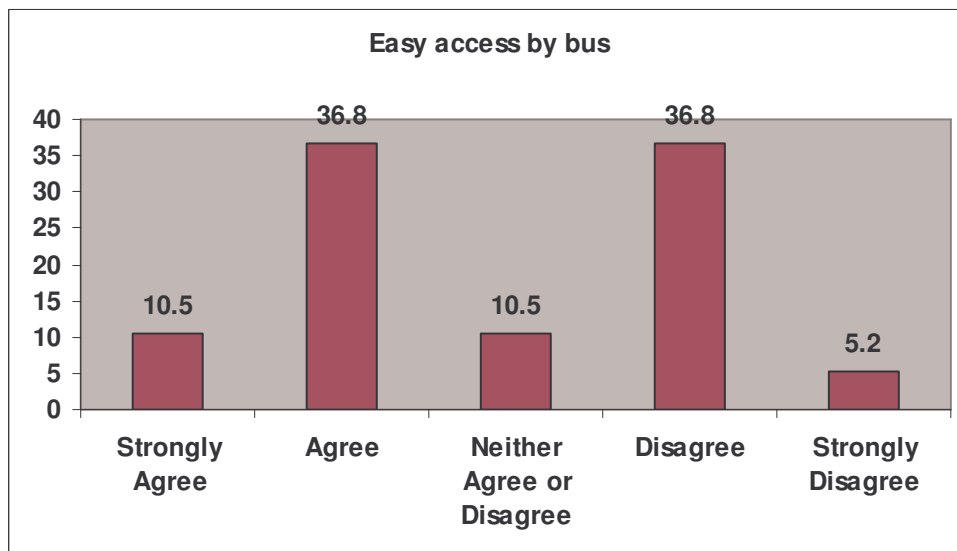
‘The Town Centre is well marketed to shoppers’; the majority of respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement. Only a small number of respondents differed from this consensus opinion.

Good Retail Mix

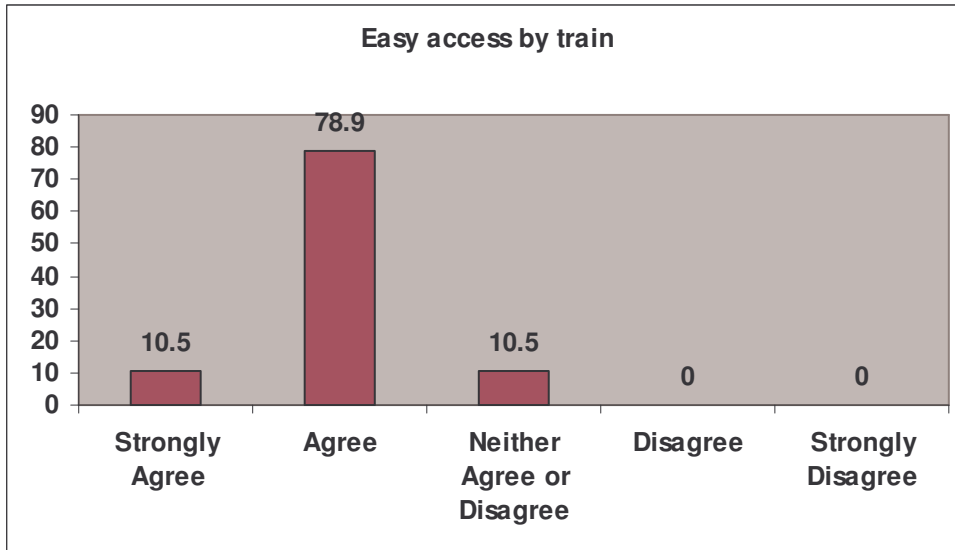


'There is a good retail mix in the town centre'; the majority of respondents strongly disagreed with this statement. However, a number of other responses were also recorded, indicating a mixed perception of the current retail profile in Milngavie Town Centre.

Public Transport

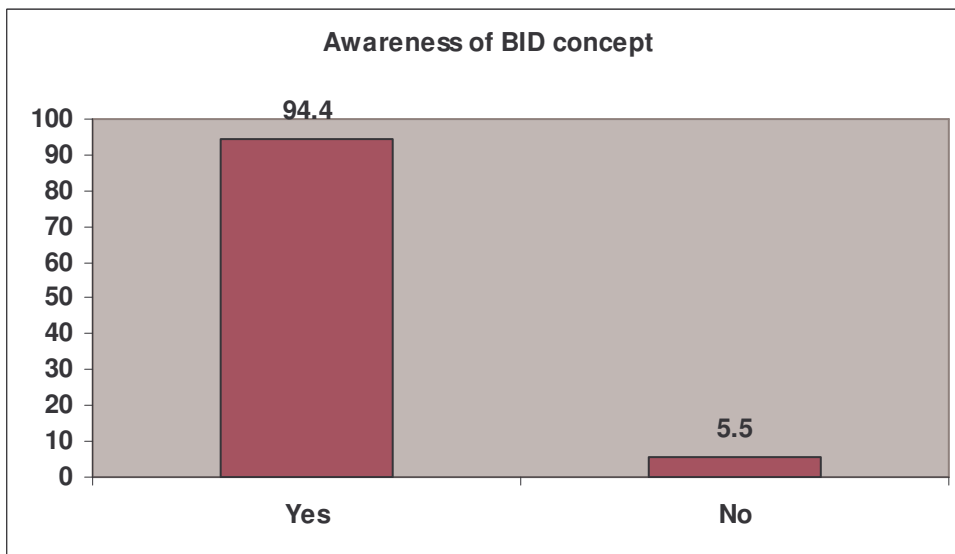


'The area is easily accessed by public transport (bus)'; there was a clear split in opinion between respondents who agreed and disagreed with this statement.



The majority of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that the town centre is easily accessed by public transport (train).

Awareness of BID concept



Businesses were also questioned on their awareness of the BID concept and the fact that they were based in a potential BID area: 94.4% of respondents answered YES to this question, an encouraging reflection on the marketing activity and communications that have been completed to date.

Potential BID Projects

Project Areas – Ranked in order of relative importance

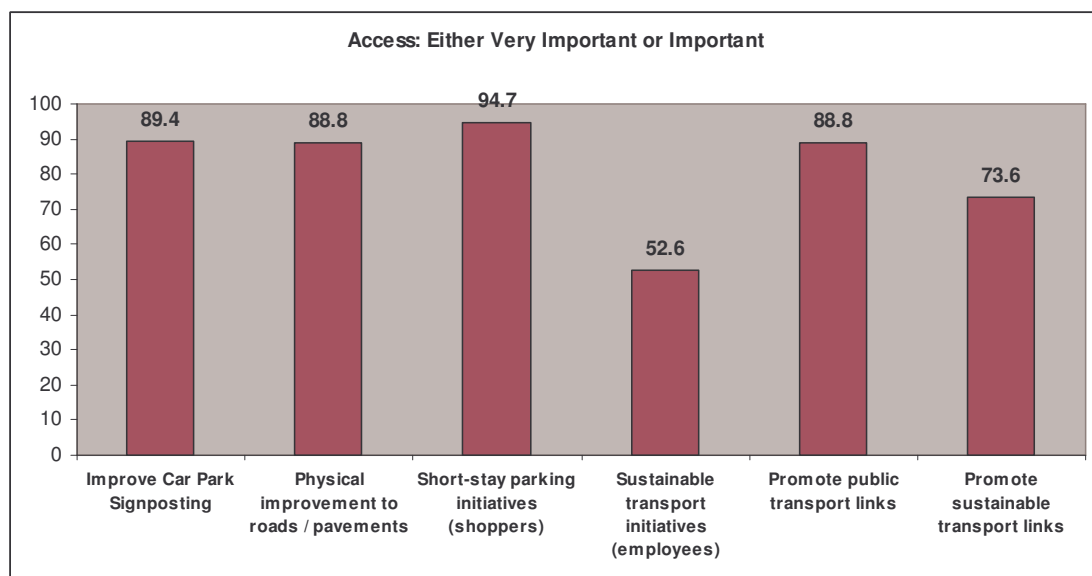
Respondents were asked to rate the relative importance of each of the project areas through a ranking system of 1 to 7, where 1 is the project area of most importance to the town centre, and 7 of the least importance.

The table below ranks these projects in order, based on the total number of respondents who responded either 1 or 2:

1. Access
2. Cleanliness and Appearance
3. Marketing and Promotion
= Enhancing the Retail Mix
4. Safety and Security
= Sustainable Business Practices
5. Events

Businesses were then asked to rate the importance of a number of example projects under each of the following headings:

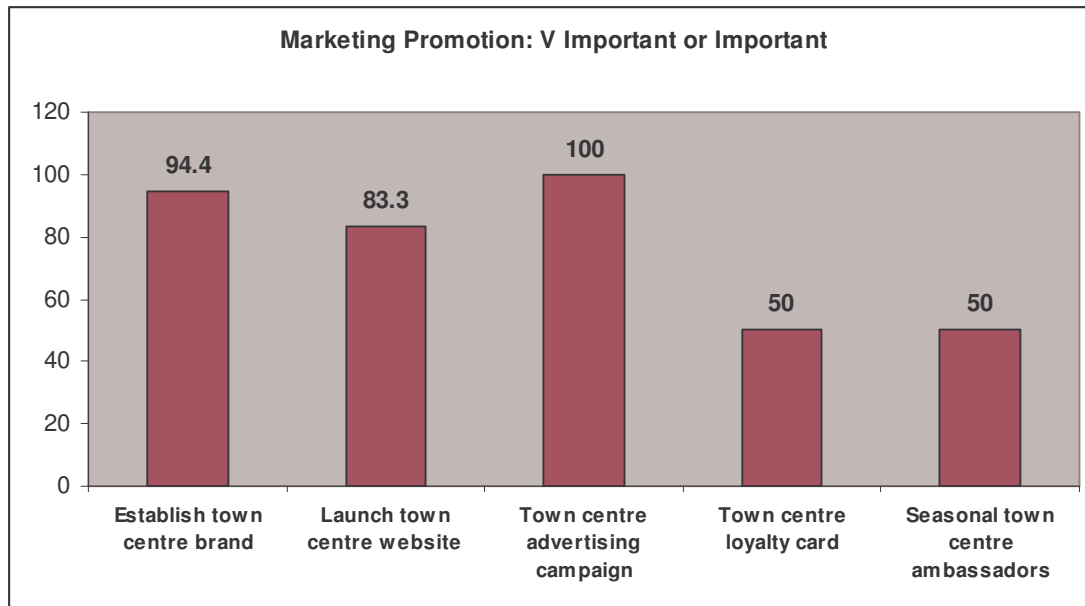
Access



Each of the projects suggested under the 'Access' heading received a favourable response from respondents – corroborating the trends identified in the access statements of the previous section, which related to parking and public transport.

Short-stay parking initiatives for shoppers received the highest rating, closely followed by improving car park signposting, physical improvements to roads and pavements and promoting public transport links.

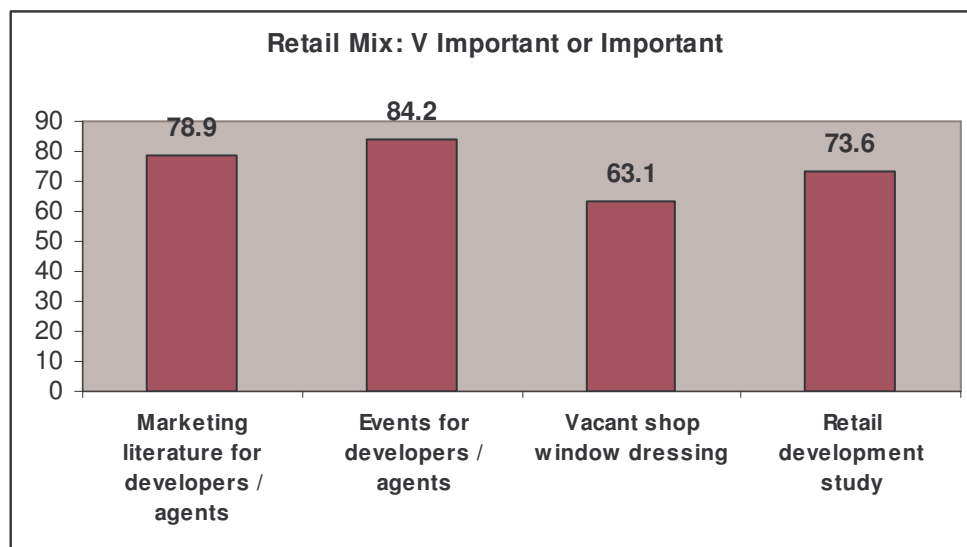
MARKETING AND PROMOTION



Under the marketing and promotion heading, every respondent identified a town centre advertising campaign as being of high importance to businesses in the town centre, closely followed by establishing a town centre brand and launching a town centre website.

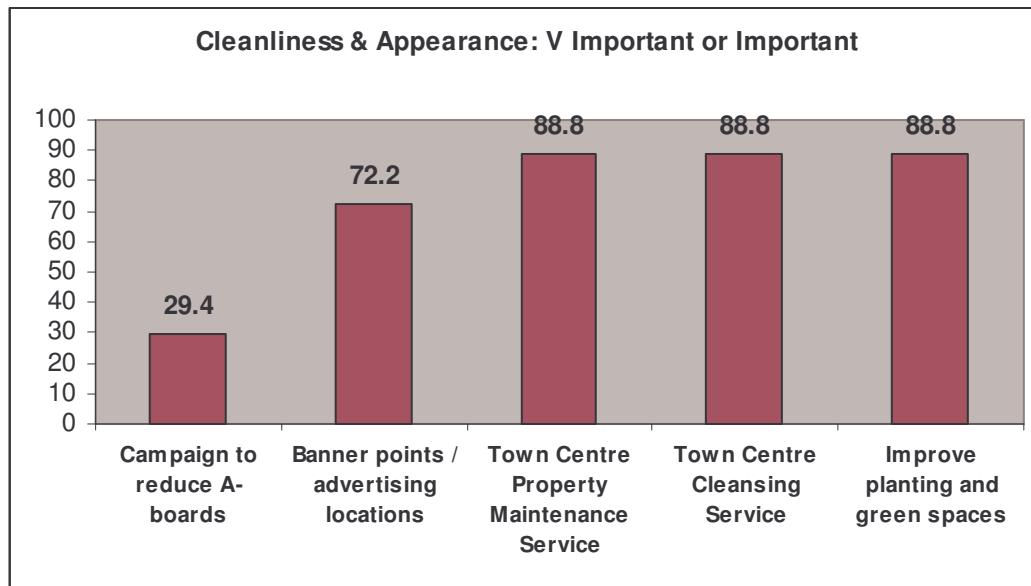
The suggestions of a town centre loyalty card and recruiting seasonal town centre ambassadors were less well received, with only 50% of respondents to each identifying these as either important or very important.

ENHANCING THE RETAIL MIX



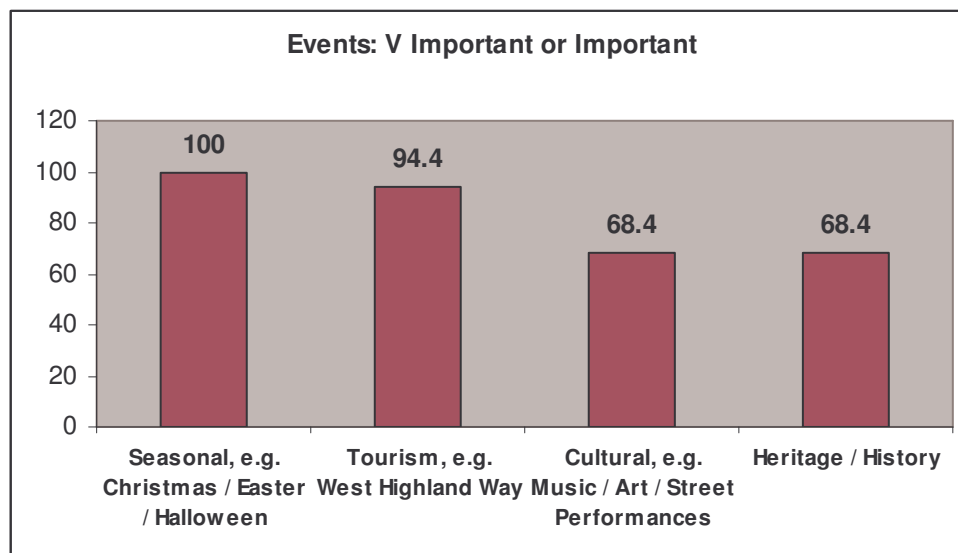
There was an even spread of responses between the different project suggestions for enhancing the retail mix, with the majority favouring events to attract developers and agents to the town centre, with the creation of specific marketing literature a close second.

CLEANLINESS AND APPEARANCE



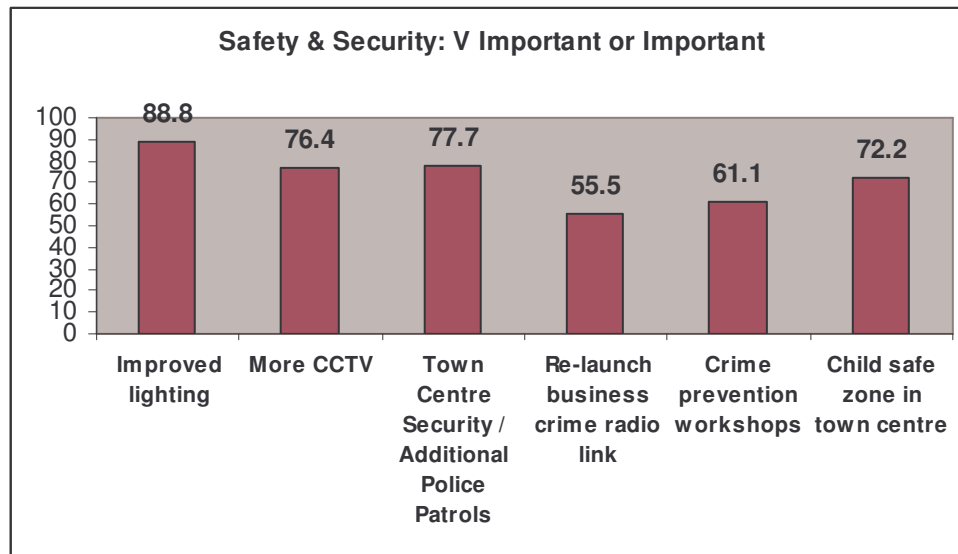
There was general support for enhanced property maintenance, enhanced cleansing services and improvements to planting and green spaces in the town centre. The suggestion to reduce the number of A-boards in the precinct was less well received.

EVENTS



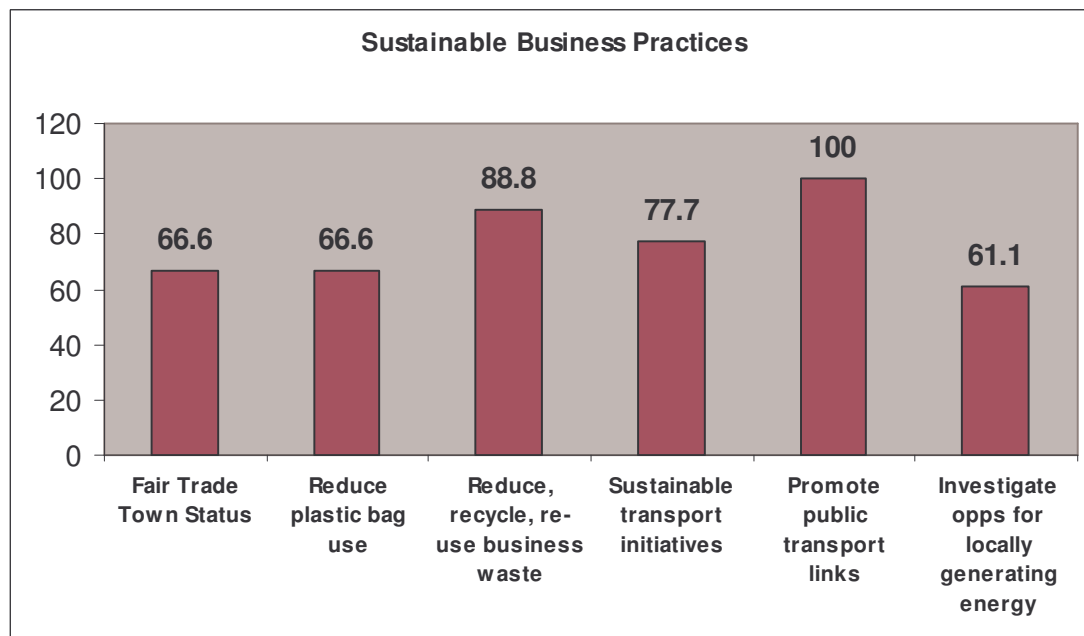
Seasonal events, such as those held at Christmas / Easter / Halloween etc. and Tourism themed events were identified by the majority as being of most importance to the town centre.

SAFETY AND SECURITY



There was general support for each of the projects identified under the Safety and Security heading. Those most poorly received were the suggestion that the business crime radio link should be re-launched and that crime prevention workshops for local businesses should be programmed.

SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS PRACTICES



There was general support for each of the projects identified under the Sustainable Business Practices heading. Each of the respondents identified the Promotion of Public Transport links as being of high importance, closely followed by projects to support the reduction, recycling and re-using of business waste.

The Next Step

The written business consultation exercise which has now been concluded marks the start of an on-going period of consultation, giving the business community of Milngavie Town Centre the unique opportunity to play their part in shaping the future of the town centre.

This results document will now be used by the Steering Group as a starting point to inform the basis of the BID Business Plan proposal, and marks the beginning of an on-going period of consultation with the local business community in Milngavie Town Centre.

The proposal will outline a series of projects and services which could be delivered in the town centre, **in addition to the statutory services which the Council already provide**, with the aim of realising Milngavie's potential as an attractive and competitive destination for retail, leisure and business.

Businesses are encouraged to make full use of the website, the BID project team and the BID Steering Group to continue to feedback their views and opinions as the project develops.



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Business Consultation

Introduction

The Experience Milngavie Business Improvement District aims to deliver a 5 year programme of projects and services which will further Milngavie's development as a first class shopping, business and visitor destination for East Dunbartonshire and beyond.

The first step in deciding which projects and services are delivered is through consulting local businesses on their priorities for improvement in Milngavie Town Centre.

This Business Consultation is designed to profile current business performance, current trading conditions in the town centre and to identify the priorities of the business community in Milngavie.

You don't have to answer every question – however, the more questions you answer, the easier it will be to identify the projects and services which will achieve the greatest impact for businesses in Milngavie.



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Tell us about your business...

This section will help to provide an overview of existing businesses and their current performance in the town centre.

Should the BID receive a YES vote, this information will be used to monitor how the BID impacts local business performance.

Business Name:	
Address:	
Owner:	
Store Manager:	
Business Type/Sector:	
How long has the business been trading in Milngavie Town Centre?	

Tell us about current business performance...(please circle)

How does your level of turnover compare with two years ago?				
Increased	No Change	Decreased		
If changed, by how much?				
Less than 5%	5-10%	11-15%	16-20%	More than 20%

Have any of the following influenced this change?		
Change in footfall	Positively	Negatively
Level of crime	Positively	Negatively
Competition from other areas	Positively	Negatively
Parking and Access	Positively	Negatively

Other (please detail)...

How confident are you about future business performance in Milngavie?			
Very	Quite	Unsure	Not

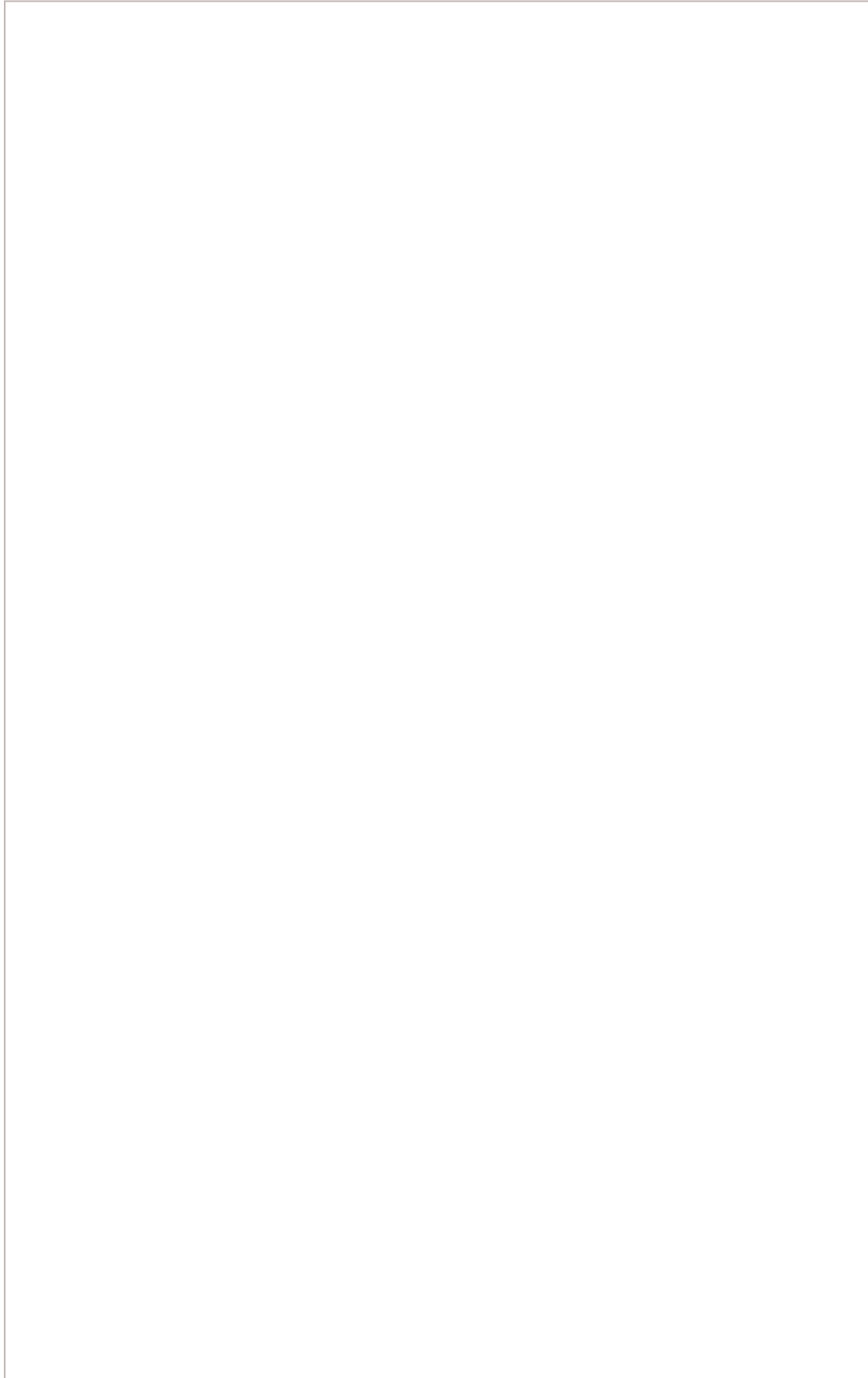
How many people do you currently employ?		
Full Time (more than 30 hours)	Now _____	2 Years Ago _____
Part Time (less than 30 hours)	Now _____	2 Years Ago _____
Seasonal/Temporary	Now _____	2 Years Ago _____
Voluntary	Now _____	2 Years Ago _____

Is your business impacted by the Milngavie Farmers Market?		
Positively	No Impact	Negatively

If so, please specify the perceived impact of the Farmers Market and what could be done to either enhance/mitigate this.

Recently in Milngavie Town Centre, the street furniture has been replaced and the public realm at the entrance to the town centre from the Train Station has been upgraded – do you feel the town centre has been impacted by this?		
Positively	No Impact	Negatively

Please use the space below to add any other relevant comments.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the user to provide additional comments. The box occupies most of the page's vertical space below the instruction.



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Tell us about the current trading environment in Milngavie Town Centre...

This section will help to provide an overview of both the positive and negative aspects of Milngavie Town Centre at present.

What is your overall view of Milngavie Town Centre as a place in which to operate a business? (please circle)

Now	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor
2 Years Ago	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor

How do you rate the safety of Milngavie Town Centre? (please circle)

Personal/Staff	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor
Customer	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor
Business/Premises	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor

What are the three main advantages of Milngavie Town Centre as a place to do business from?

1.

2.

3.

What are the three main disadvantages of Milngavie Town Centre as a place to do business from?

1.

2.

3.



Please rate the following statements by ticking the box on the right which most closely reflects your opinion:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<i>The town centre has clean and tidy streets (graffiti/littering)</i>					
<i>Roads and pavements are well maintained</i>					
<i>People feel safe during the day</i>					
<i>People feel safe at night</i>					
<i>It is easy for people to find their way around the town centre</i>					
<i>The area is well lit</i>					

<i>There is enough car parking</i>					
<i>The town centre is well marketed to shoppers</i>					
<i>There is a good retail mix in the town centre</i>					
<i>There are enough police patrols</i>					
<i>The area is easily accessed by public transport (bus)</i>					
<i>The area is easily accessed by public transport (train)</i>					



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Tell us about your aspirations for Milngavie Town Centre...

This section will help to provide an overview of the positive ways the BID can impact on local businesses through the projects and services it delivers.

Are you aware of the BID concept and that you are located in a BID area?

Yes	No
-----	----

Are you / is your organisation / supportive of the BID concept?

Yes	No	Unsure	Not
-----	----	--------	-----

Rate the following areas in terms of levels of importance to Milngavie Town Centre (1 being most important, 7 being least):

Accessibility	
Marketing and Promotion	
Enhancing the Retail Mix	
Cleanliness and Appearance	
Events	
Safety and Security	
Sustainable Business Practices	

Other (please specify)



Access:

Rate the following example projects in terms of level importance to the town centre



	Very Important	Important	Not Important	Unimportant	Very Unimportant
Improve car park signposting					
Physical improvement to roads / pavements					
Short-stay parking initiatives (shoppers)					
Sustainable transport initiatives for employees (e.g. car sharing)					
Promote public transport links					
Promote sustainable transport links (e.g. walking / cycling)					

Marketing and Promotion:



Rate the following example projects in terms of level importance to the town centre

	Very Important	Important	Not Important	Unimportant	Very Unimportant
Establish Milngavie Town Centre brand					
Launch town centre website					
Town centre advertising campaign					
Town centre loyalty card					
Recruit seasonal town centre ambassadors to provide tourist info					

Enhancing the retail mix:



Rate the following example projects in terms of level importance to the town centre

	Very Important	Important	Not Important	Unimportant	Very Unimportant
Create marketing literature for developers / agents / businesses					
Hold events to proactively market the town centre to developers / agents / businesses					
Vacant shop unit window dressing					
Commission retail development study to determine opps for increasing no of specialist / independent businesses					

Cleanliness and Appearance:



Rate the following example projects in terms of level importance to the town centre

	Very Important	Important	Not Important	Unimportant	Very Unimportant
Launch campaign to reduce A-boards					
Banner points / advertising locations in town centre					
Town Centre Property Maintenance service, minor repairs and maintenance to public realm (in addition to Council provision)					
Town Centre Cleansing Service – general cleansing and graffiti removal (in addition to Council provision)					
Improve planting and green spaces in the town centre					

Events:



Rate the following example event themes in terms of level importance to the town centre

	Very Important	Important	Not Important	Unimportant	Very Unimportant
Seasonal e.g. Christmas/Easter/Halloween					
Tourism, e.g. West Highland Way					
Cultural e.g. music / art / street performances					
Heritage / History					

Safety and Security:

Rate the following example projects in terms of level importance to the town centre



	Very Important	Important	Not Important	Unimportant	Very Unimportant
Improved lighting					
More CCTV					
Town Centre Security Guards / Additional Police Patrols					
Re-launch business crime radio link					
Crime prevention / business security workshops					
Launch child safe zone in town centre					

Sustainable business practices:

Rate the following example projects in terms of level importance to the town centre



	Very Important	Important	Not Important	Unimportant	Very Unimportant
Fair Trade town status for Milngavie					
Reducing plastic bag use					
Reducing, re-using and recycling business waste					
Sustainable transport initiatives for employees & customers (e.g. car sharing, walking, cycling)					
Promote public transport links					
Investigate opportunities for locally generating renewable energy / energy efficiency / reducing demand					

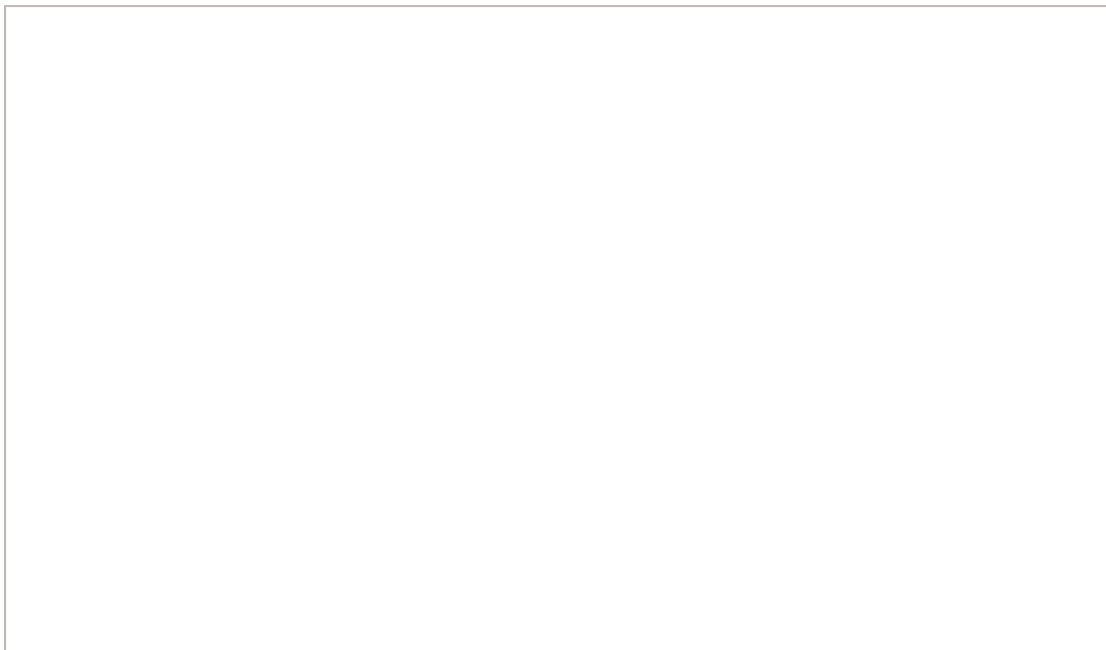
Finally...

Thank you for taking the time to participate in the Experience Milngavie BID Business Consultation – your feedback will inform priority areas for the BID to tackle, which will in-turn inform the Business Plan you will ultimately vote on.

Do you have any additional views that you think are important regarding your current Milngavie Town Centre?



Do you have any ideas for other projects/services you think would positively benefit the business community in Milngavie Town Centre?



Space for additional answers



Thanks for taking the time to fill out the Experience Milngavie BID shopper survey – look out for survey results in the local press and visit the website for more information:

www.experiencemilngaviebid.co.uk

Experience Milngavie BID is working in partnership with East Dunbartonshire Council and will share the information collected with their Economic Development department to aid a performance review of East Dunbartonshire's town centres.