Darlington Town Centre Survey

General
An excellent 25% response rate was achieved - the average for this type of survey is 7-10%. Of the responses, 40% came from nationals/multiples and 60% from independents. The breakdown of respondents was: 63% Retail, 11% Food & Drink, 7.5% Office/Commercial and the rest from other sectors.

Marketing & Promotion
• 70%+ regard marketing/promotion as quite or very important to their business
• 60%+ spend over £500 a year on marketing; 20% of these spend over £5,000
• Nearly 70% of marketing spend is controlled locally
• 72%, use online marketing and 64% press as their main forms of marketing
• 70% of marketing spend is local to Darlington; 36% regionally; 35% nationally
• 13% thought the Town Centre was marketed well, 45% felt it was satisfactory

Events
• 47% thought that Town Centre events were important to their business with 28% being indifferent
• Only 67% stated that events helped their business to some degree
• 50% said more events were needed with 46% stating it was about right
• Only 14% thought events were well marketed, 50%+ felt it was satisfactory

Appearance
There was a high level of importance attached to removal of litter, trade waste, chewing gum, graffiti and street cleanliness and care - over 80%.

Safety & Security
The prevention of anti-social behaviour, property damage, staff harassment, shoplifting and the perception of safety/security are seen as key areas to address.

Accessibility
In terms of access, roads into the Town Centre, availability of car parking and pricing scored highly: 60%+.

Business Support
There was keen interest (60%+) in central procurement of trade waste/recycling services and purchasing advertising space/time in order to reduce business costs.

Partnership Working
• Only 35% of businesses have previously supported or sponsored activities or events in the Town Centre
• 75%+ of businesses were aware of Darlington Town Centre Management and its work