

**'A NEW HEART FOR
SHIRLEY TOWN CENTRE'
REPORT ON
PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY**

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BACKGROUND

Shirley Advance through its consultants Communiqué has commissioned ERS Market Research to analyse questionnaires received from members of the public who attended an exhibition held in Shirley, a suburb of Solihull, on two occasions in August and September, 2004.

Shirley Advance is a partnership between Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council, Coltham Developments and Oswin Developments.

The questionnaire was designed by Shirley Advance. The questionnaires were handed out to members of the public at the exhibitions. A sealed ballot box was provided by ERS, at each exhibition, for survey participants to put completed questionnaires in. These ballot boxes were returned to ERS still sealed, so no member of Shirley Advance or any third party had access to participants' confidential responses.

Respondents could also post completed questionnaires directly to ERS.

Although respondents were asked for personal details for validation purposes, ERS Market Research is bound by the Market Research Society Code of Conduct and will neither pass any details of who has participated back to a client organisation nor include information in reports that could lead to the identification of individuals. As a result, the views of groups with fewer than 10 respondents will not be shown separately in our reports.

Respondents could, however, indicate that they would like further information on this project. In these instances, contact details alone were passed back to Shirley Advance.

520 completed questionnaires were received by ERS. The table below shows how many were received from the first and second exhibitions and through the post.

| | | |
|-------------------|------------|---------------|
| First Exhibition | 158 | 30.4% |
| Second Exhibition | 199 | 38.3% |
| Postal Responses | 163 | 31.3% |
| Total | 520 | 100.0% |

This report contains the overall response to each question, together with question on question analysis (where relevant) and a summary of the response to the open ended questions.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

Amongst all respondents:

- 67.6% are aged 55 and above;
- 84.6% live in households which do not contain children under 16;
- 17.3% stated that they agree with the principles being proposed for the design ideas for the new Heart for Shirley, whilst a further 33.3% agree with the principles being proposed with reservations. 49.4% stated that they do not agree with the principles being proposed;

among those who do *not* have children under 16 living in their household, 15.7% stated that they agree with the principles being proposed for the design ideas for the new Heart for Shirley, whilst a further 32.1% agree with the principles being proposed with reservations. 52.3% stated that they do not agree with the principles being proposed;

among those who *do* have children under 16 living in their household, 21.6% stated that they agree with the principles being proposed for the design ideas for the new Heart for Shirley, whilst a further 43.2% agree with the principles being proposed with reservations. 35.1% stated that they do not agree with the principles being proposed;

of those who either stated that they do not agree with the principles being proposed, or agree but have reservations, 38.3% stated that they are opposed to having another supermarket or superstore and/or that there are enough in the area already, 34.3% stated that they are concerned about increased traffic and 20.1% stated that the scheme will hit existing shops and/or they prefer to have small, local shops;

- 31.5% stated that they agree with the principles being proposed for the design ideas for Shirley Park, whilst a further 28.0% agree with the principles being proposed with reservations. 40.4% stated that they do not agree with the principles being proposed;

among those who do *not* have children under 16 living in their household, 29.4% stated that they agree with the principles being proposed for the design ideas for Shirley Park, whilst a further 27.6% agree with the principles being proposed with reservations. 43.0% stated that they do not agree with the principles being proposed;

among those who *do* have children under 16 living in their household, 41.7% stated that they agree with the principles being proposed for the design ideas for Shirley Park, whilst a further 31.9% agree with the principles being proposed with reservations. 26.4% stated that they do not agree with the principles being proposed;

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

...CONT.

of those who either stated that they do not agree with the principles being proposed, or agree but have reservations, 41.7% stated that they are opposed to building on parkland/green spaces, 11.7% stated that they oppose development on the parkland as part of a wider opposition to the proposed development and 10.2% stated that the park is well used and/or a valued recreational facility for local people;

- 83.0% stated that they would like to see modern toilet facilities in Shirley Town Centre, 67.2% stated that they would like to see CCTV in Shirley Town Centre whilst 56.5% stated that they would like to see improvements to Shirley Park.

SECTION 1 INFORMATION ABOUT YOURSELF

Postcode

| (N=488) | |
|---------|-------|
| B901 | 7.0% |
| B902 | 52.0% |
| B903 | 26.4% |
| B904 | 7.8% |
| B911 | 3.1% |
| B913 | 3.7% |

The table above shows the proportion of respondents giving each local postcode to four digits.

The table below shows these postcodes taken to a fifth digit. Figures have been withheld when fewer than 10 people gave an individual code.

| (N=488) | |
|---------|-------|
| B902A | 6.1% |
| B902B | 4.3% |
| B902D | 4.3% |
| B902E | 9.8% |
| B902H | 2.5% |
| B902J | 5.3% |
| B902L | 4.1% |
| B902N | 2.0% |
| B902P | 4.7% |
| B902Q | 4.7% |
| B902R | 3.1% |
| B903H | 4.1% |
| B903J | 7.8% |
| B903L | 3.1% |
| B903N | 4.1% |
| B903R | 2.3% |
| < 10 | 27.7% |

As can be seen below, 11 in 20 survey participants are female.

Gender

| (N=507) | |
|---------|-------|
| Male | 45.0% |
| Female | 55.0% |

Age band

| (N=513) | |
|-------------------|-------|
| 16 to 24 years | 2.7% |
| 25 to 34 years | 3.5% |
| 35 to 54 years | 26.1% |
| 55 to 64 years | 26.5% |
| 65 years and over | 41.1% |

As can be seen above, two thirds of our respondents (67.6%) were aged 55 and above.

Including yourself, how many people live in your household?

| (N=487) | |
|-----------------------|-------|
| Adults only | 84.6% |
| Children in household | 15.4% |

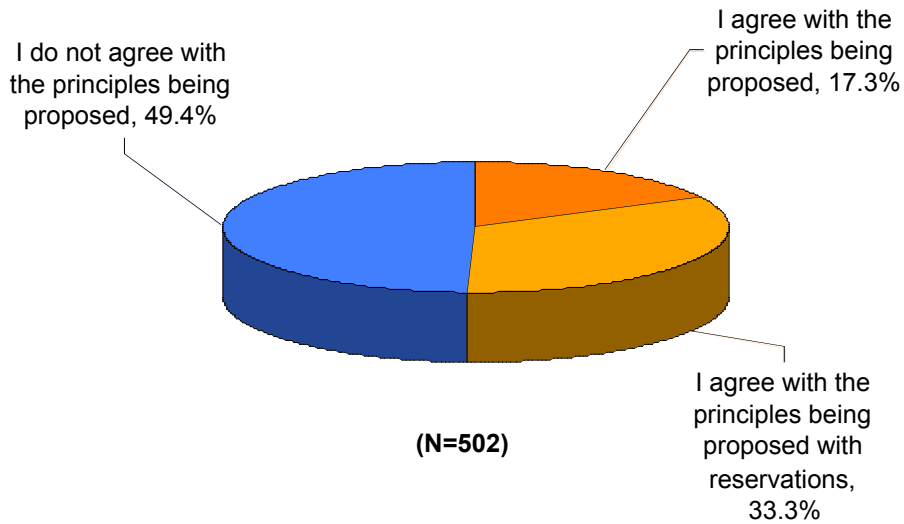
The table above shows that fewer than one in six respondents have children (under 16) living in their household.

As can be seen below, the fact that a high proportion of older people are included among our respondents is linked to the fact that a relatively low proportion of respondents have under 16's living with them.

| | Household | | |
|-------------------|------------------|--------------------|------------------------------|
| | N | Adults only | Children in household |
| 16 to 24 years | 14 | 71.4% | 28.6% |
| 25 to 34 years | 18 | 44.4% | 55.6% |
| 35 to 54 years | 127 | 55.9% | 44.1% |
| 55 to 64 years | 130 | 98.5% | 1.5% |
| 65 years and over | 193 | 100.0% | 0.0% |

SECTION 2
QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What is your view of the design ideas for the new Heart for Shirley?



As can be seen above, one respondent in six agrees, without reservation, with the design ideas for the new Heart for Shirley. If, however, those who agree but with reservations are added, those in agreement (50.6%) slightly outnumber the opponents (49.4%).

As can be seen below, an analysis of the response to this question by four digit postcode shows the greatest support for the proposal to come from B913 and the greatest opposition to come from B904.

| | N | I agree with the principles being proposed | I agree with the principles being proposed with reservations | I do not agree with the principles being proposed |
|------|----------|---|---|--|
| B901 | 32 | 28.1% | 18.8% | 53.1% |
| B902 | 245 | 14.3% | 35.5% | 50.2% |
| B903 | 126 | 13.5% | 38.1% | 48.4% |
| B904 | 36 | 8.3% | 19.4% | 72.2% |
| B911 | 14 | 21.4% | 21.4% | 57.1% |
| B913 | 18 | 61.1% | 22.2% | 16.7% |

**1. What is your view of the design ideas for the new Heart for Shirley?
...Cont.**

Analysis of response by postcode taken to a fifth digit shows strongest opposition (80.0%) to come from B903L and strongest support (80.0%), albeit with reservations, to come from B902N.

| | N | I agree with the principles being proposed | I agree with the principles being proposed with reservations | I do not agree with the principles being proposed |
|-------|-----------|---|---|--|
| B902A | 29 | 6.9% | 20.7% | 72.4% |
| B902B | 20 | 10.0% | 25.0% | 65.0% |
| B902D | 19 | 15.8% | 31.6% | 52.6% |
| B902E | 47 | 12.8% | 27.7% | 59.6% |
| B902H | 12 | 16.7% | 33.3% | 50.0% |
| B902J | 26 | 19.2% | 46.2% | 34.6% |
| B902L | 19 | 10.5% | 52.6% | 36.8% |
| B902N | 10 | 20.0% | 60.0% | 20.0% |
| B902P | 23 | 8.7% | 52.2% | 39.1% |
| B902Q | 21 | 33.3% | 23.8% | 42.9% |
| B902R | 14 | 7.1% | 42.9% | 50.0% |
| B903H | 20 | 5.0% | 55.0% | 40.0% |
| B903J | 36 | 11.1% | 58.3% | 30.6% |
| B903L | 15 | 13.3% | 6.7% | 80.0% |
| B903N | 20 | 10.0% | 35.0% | 55.0% |
| B903R | 11 | 18.2% | 18.2% | 63.6% |

There is, as can be seen below, little difference in the response to this question when replies are analysed by gender.

| | Male (N=221) | Female (N=268) |
|--|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| I agree with the principles being proposed | 19.9% | 15.7% |
| I agree with the principles being proposed with reservations | 30.3% | 35.8% |
| I do not agree with the principles being proposed | 49.8% | 48.5% |

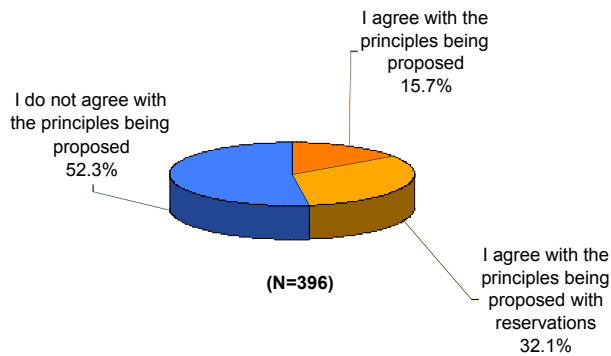
1. What is your view of the design ideas for the new Heart for Shirley? ...Cont.

As can be seen below, support is stronger among people who are younger and people who have children living in the household (who tend to be younger). Opposition is stronger among older people (who tend not to have under 16's living with them).

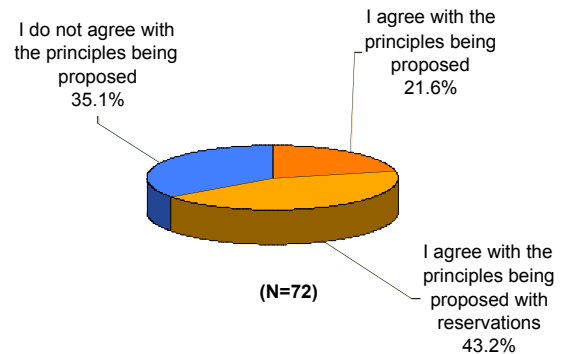
| | 16 to 24 years (N=13) | 25 to 34 years (N=18) | 35 to 54 years (N=133) | 55 to 64 years (N=135) | 65 years and over (N=196) |
|--|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| I agree with the principles being proposed | 76.9% | 11.1% | 20.3% | 16.3% | 12.2% |
| I agree with the principles being proposed with reservations | 0.0% | 44.4% | 42.1% | 32.6% | 28.6% |
| I do not agree with the principles being proposed | 23.1% | 44.4% | 37.6% | 51.1% | 59.2% |

| | Household | |
|--|------------------------------------|---|
| | Adults only (N=396) | Children in household (N=74) |
| I agree with the principles being proposed | 15.7% | 21.6% |
| I agree with the principles being proposed with reservations | 32.1% | 43.2% |
| I do not agree with the principles being proposed | 52.3% | 35.1% |

Adults only



Children in household



1. What is your view of the design ideas for the new Heart for Shirley? ...Cont.

If you have reservations, or do not support the principles being proposed, please give brief details.

Responses to this question have been summarised under the broad headings shown in the table below.

| | (N=379) | (N=379) | (N=520) |
|---|---------|---------|---------|
| Opposed to a supermarket/superstore - we have enough of these in the area already | 145 | 38.3% | 27.9% |
| Concerned about increased traffic/scheme will make a bad situation even worse | 130 | 34.3% | 25.0% |
| Scheme will hit existing shops/I prefer to have small, local shops | 76 | 20.1% | 14.6% |
| Concerned about loss of important recreational parkland/green spaces in Shirley | 49 | 12.9% | 9.4% |
| This could damage/destroy the unique character of Shirley | 33 | 8.7% | 6.3% |
| Do not want big high street names/a mini 'Touchwood'/a 'clone town' | 29 | 7.7% | 5.6% |
| Need to know more about it before I decide | 25 | 6.6% | 4.8% |
| Proposed development is just too 'big' for somewhere this size/should be scaled down | 21 | 5.5% | 4.0% |
| What this area needs is more small, specialist shops | 19 | 5.0% | 3.7% |
| Shirley residents already have easy access to Birmingham and Solihull shops for what they can't get locally | 17 | 4.5% | 3.3% |
| Why not look instead at alternative brownfield/currently empty/derelict sites, e.g., the Powergen site | 17 | 4.5% | 3.3% |
| Agree that there is a need to smarten Shirley up | 16 | 4.2% | 3.1% |
| Improving/providing (free) parking facilities must be incorporated into the planning | 13 | 3.4% | 2.5% |
| Feel that new business could soon pull out/the town may become a ghost town | 9 | 2.4% | 1.7% |
| I oppose the proposal (general) | 9 | 2.4% | 1.7% |
| Opposed to Asda/Walmart | 9 | 2.4% | 1.7% |
| Sports facilities would be lost/Shirley needs more sports & leisure facilities | 9 | 2.4% | 1.7% |
| Will have detrimental effect on residents - lower incomes, quality of life etc. | 9 | 2.4% | 1.7% |
| Noise/noise of heavy traffic, deliveries etc. | 7 | 1.8% | 1.3% |
| Sceptical about other shops (e.g., Next) being persuaded to open outlets in the proposed development | 7 | 1.8% | 1.3% |
| Tacit support dependent on scheme not including (large) supermarket | 7 | 1.8% | 1.3% |
| Concerned about environmental damage/increased pollution | 6 | 1.6% | 1.2% |
| Scheme should incorporate affordable housing | 6 | 1.6% | 1.2% |
| Worried about implications for crime/anti-social behaviour/troublesome youths | 6 | 1.6% | 1.2% |
| Feel developers are only interested in lining their pockets | 5 | 1.3% | 1.0% |
| Feel it will go ahead, whatever local residents think | 5 | 1.3% | 1.0% |
| Opposed to (yet more) charity/junk shops, banks etc. | 5 | 1.3% | 1.0% |
| Worried about the level of rates/rents for small businesses | 5 | 1.3% | 1.0% |
| Other | 130 | 34.3% | 25.0% |
| No response | 141 | — | 27.1% |

In the table above, percentages in the first column are calculated against the number of respondents who gave an answer at this question. The second column of percentages is calculated against the total number of respondents to the survey. No 'Other' comment was made by more than four respondents.

As replies could be summarised under more than one heading, the sum of the percentages will inevitably exceed 100.

A summary of the concerns expressed either by those who support the design ideas but have reservations or are opposed to the proposals is shown above. The three most commonly voiced reservations are that an additional supermarket is not required, that there will be extra traffic consequences and that the scheme will impact negatively on the existing shops.

**1. What is your view of the design ideas for the new Heart for Shirley?
...Cont.**

If you have reservations, or do not support the principles being proposed, please give brief details. ...Cont.

A selection of quotes, taken directly from the questionnaires, have been reproduced below as they succinctly express commonly raised concerns.

“Traffic congestion is bad now. I think it is a priority to try to improve traffic flow & at the same time protect pedestrians & give safe access across Stratford Road.”

“I am not averse to change, however, I do feel that the atmosphere of Shirley shopping at present is very pleasant and would not want to lose the very ‘traditional’ high street shops distinctly lacking in other areas.”

“There are already several good supermarkets. There is better shopping for clothes etc in Touchwood + Bullring than could be in the new centre. To be viable, the new centre will have to attract people travelling by car. Stratford Road is already overloaded – more traffic will kill Shirley. I do not support the development.”

“We will have no local shops and end up looking like every other town. We live here because it has local people running local shops, not big concerns.”

“A new superstore is totally unnecessary. The surrounding area is completely unable to support the dramatic increase in traffic that will arise. We already have adequate supermarket facilities including M&S, Iceland, Safeway, Aldi, Woolworths, besides local Tesco (X2), Sainsburys.”

“Local traders have always been the backbone of Shirley – it would appear that this new project would destroy this situation.”

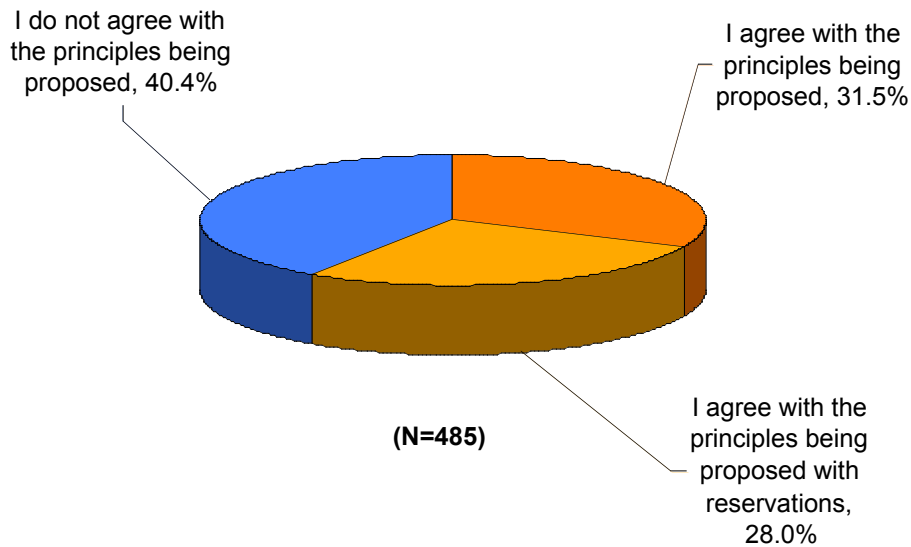
“Must limit large, national chain shops dominating centre, i.e., being a clone town.”

“Any use of park for development should be opposed as enough land already exists in Shirley for improvement.”

“The park should remain and Powergen site be used as part of the proposal.”

“Just need to see everything in a little more detail.”

2. What is your view of the design ideas for Shirley Park?



As can be seen above, 31.5% of our respondents unreservedly agree with the design ideas for Shirley Park. When those who agree but with reservations are added, the proportion recording their agreement becomes 59.5%.

An analysis of the response to this question by postcode taken to four digits shows B904 to be the only one from which an outright majority of respondents recorded their opposition. At the other end of the scale, there is a very high level of support from B913.

| | N | I agree with the principles being proposed | I agree with the principles being proposed with reservations | I do not agree with the principles being proposed |
|------|------------|---|---|--|
| B901 | 30 | 46.7% | 16.7% | 36.7% |
| B902 | 238 | 26.9% | 28.2% | 45.0% |
| B903 | 122 | 28.7% | 32.8% | 38.5% |
| B904 | 38 | 15.8% | 26.3% | 57.9% |
| B911 | 13 | 53.8% | 23.1% | 23.1% |
| B913 | 16 | 87.5% | 6.3% | 6.3% |

2. What is your view of the design ideas for Shirley Park? ...Cont.

An analysis of the response to this question by postcode taken to five digits shows quite a variation in responses with the highest level of opposition (61.5%) coming from B903L and the highest level of support (73.6%), albeit with reservations, coming from B903H.

| | N | I agree with the principles being proposed | I agree with the principles being proposed with reservations | I do not agree with the principles being proposed |
|-------|-----------|---|---|--|
| B902A | 29 | 27.6% | 13.8% | 58.6% |
| B902B | 20 | 20.0% | 25.0% | 55.0% |
| B902D | 19 | 21.1% | 21.1% | 57.9% |
| B902E | 44 | 18.2% | 31.8% | 50.0% |
| B902H | 11 | 9.1% | 36.4% | 54.5% |
| B902J | 26 | 23.1% | 46.2% | 30.8% |
| B902L | 18 | 44.4% | 16.7% | 38.9% |
| B902N | 10 | 60.0% | 10.0% | 30.0% |
| B902P | 22 | 27.3% | 36.4% | 36.4% |
| B902Q | 21 | 33.3% | 28.6% | 38.1% |
| B902R | 14 | 28.6% | 35.7% | 35.7% |
| B903H | 19 | 36.8% | 36.8% | 26.3% |
| B903J | 38 | 28.9% | 39.5% | 31.6% |
| B903L | 13 | 23.1% | 15.4% | 61.5% |
| B903N | 19 | 21.1% | 36.8% | 42.1% |
| B903R | 10 | 30.0% | 10.0% | 60.0% |

As with the previous question, gender does not appear to be a significant determinant of view.

| | Male (N=218) | Female (N=255) |
|--|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| I agree with the principles being proposed | 32.1% | 31.0% |
| I agree with the principles being proposed with reservations | 28.4% | 28.2% |
| I do not agree with the principles being proposed | 39.4% | 40.8% |

2. What is your view of the design ideas for Shirley Park? ...Cont.

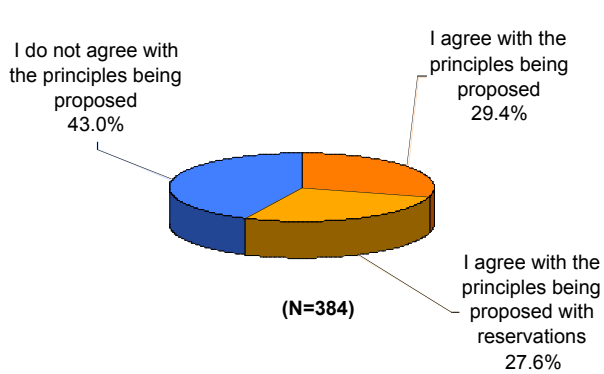
| | 16 to 24 years (N=13) | 25 to 34 years (N=17) | 35 to 54 years (N=129) | 55 to 64 years (N=134) | 65 years and over (N=185) |
|--|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| I agree with the principles being proposed | 76.9% | 35.3% | 38.8% | 26.1% | 25.9% |
| I agree with the principles being proposed with reservations | 7.7% | 23.5% | 31.0% | 31.3% | 25.9% |
| I do not agree with the principles being proposed | 15.4% | 41.2% | 30.2% | 42.5% | 48.1% |

Opposition is at its highest, and unreserved support is at its lowest, among respondents in the upper age bands as can be seen above.

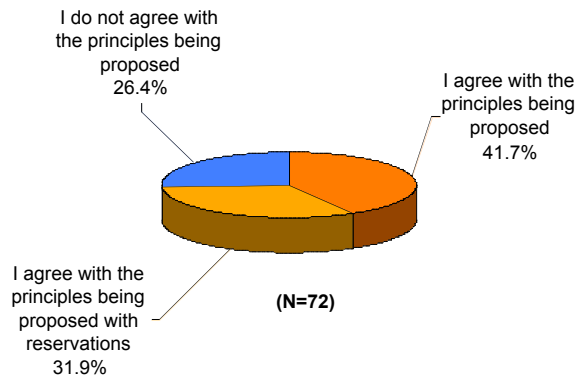
Consistent with this is the finding in the charts below that support is greater, and opposition lower, among respondents who have children living in their households.

| | Household | |
|--|---------------------------|------------------------------------|
| | Adults only (N=384) | Children in household (N=72) |
| I agree with the principles being proposed | 29.4% | 41.7% |
| I agree with the principles being proposed with reservations | 27.6% | 31.9% |
| I do not agree with the principles being proposed | 43.0% | 26.4% |

Adults only



Children in household



2. What is your view of the design ideas for Shirley Park? ...Cont.

If you have reservations, or do not support the principles being proposed, please give brief details.

Responses to this question have been summarised under the broad headings shown in the table below.

| | (N=266) | (N=266) | (N=520) |
|--|---------|---------|---------|
| Opposed to building on parkland/green spaces - leave park as it is | 111 | 41.7% | 21.3% |
| Oppose development on parkland as part of general opposition to proposed development - increased traffic, enough local supermarkets already etc. | 31 | 11.7% | 6.0% |
| Park is well used/a valued recreational facility for local people | 27 | 10.2% | 5.2% |
| Need to know more about it (e.g., exactly how much park space is to be lost) before I decide | 23 | 8.6% | 4.4% |
| Agree that park requires better security e.g., better lighting, CCTV, park keeper, police presence | 22 | 8.3% | 4.2% |
| In favour of some development of the park, e.g., cafes, improved sports facilities | 17 | 6.4% | 3.3% |
| Park should be improved, but not built on | 13 | 4.9% | 2.5% |
| Agree that park facilities could be better maintained or improved | 11 | 4.1% | 2.1% |
| Agree that limited development of some of the current park space would be acceptable | 9 | 3.4% | 1.7% |
| Park/large sections of park should be left in current/natural state/no need for a trendy 'show piece' park | 9 | 3.4% | 1.7% |
| Provide toilet facilities | 8 | 3.0% | 1.5% |
| Worried about even more crime and vandalism | 8 | 3.0% | 1.5% |
| Do not think the park should be treated like a link/pedestrian thoroughfare | 7 | 2.6% | 1.3% |
| Why not look instead at alternative brownfield/currently empty/derelict sites, e.g., the Powergen site | 7 | 2.6% | 1.3% |
| Agree that the park is an underdeveloped/underused amenity | 6 | 2.3% | 1.2% |
| Other | 89 | 33.5% | 17.1% |
| No response | 254 | - | 48.8% |

In the table above, percentages in the first column are calculated against the number of respondents who gave an answer at this question. The second column of percentages is calculated against the total number of respondents to the survey.

No 'Other' comment was made by more than four respondents.

As replies could be summarised under more than one heading, the sum of the percentages will inevitably exceed 100.

A summary of the concerns expressed either by those who support the design ideas for Shirley Park but have reservations or are opposed to the proposals is shown above. Plainly, the potential loss of parkland is the dominant concern.

2. What is your view of the design ideas for Shirley Park? ...Cont.

If you have reservations, or do not support the principles being proposed, please give brief details. ...Cont.

A selection of quotes, taken directly from the questionnaires, have been reproduced below as they succinctly express commonly raised concerns.

“I do not agree with any loss of open parkland – replacing it with retail development.”

“Initial concept too vague and does not indicate whether park will be made smaller.”

“I prefer the park left as it is.”

“Shirley Park is a well known and well used green space, none of which should be built upon unless, perhaps, a ‘leisure centre’ is situated there.”

“I do not think any land should be taken from the park.”

“If we had more police patrolling the park, security would be improved and vandalism reduced.”

“Shirley Park needs to be developed. Developed for the children and adults of the area. Leisure facilities are needed in the area.”

“Too big for our village. We don’t want to be a mini-town. Do we really need more residential?”

“Shirley Park is for the people of Shirley to enjoy. I’ve enjoyed it for 50 years.”

“Design acceptable, provided car parking does not take too much area up.”

3. The design ideas for Shirley Town Centre show more than a new superstore. Which of the following ideas would you like to see?

Respondents could give more than one answer at this question.

| | (N=494) |
|---|----------------|
| Range of new shops to complement existing provision | 52.4% |
| Improvements to Shirley Park | 56.5% |
| Highway improvements in the area | 52.2% |
| A dedicated shoppers' car park | 46.2% |
| New pedestrian links to shops across the Stratford Road | 44.3% |
| Residential accommodation in the town centre | 26.7% |
| CCTV | 67.2% |
| Shopmobility | 35.4% |
| Cafes and restaurants | 46.6% |
| Modern toilet facilities | 83.0% |
| Public art | 18.6% |
| Other | 25.1% |

As can be seen above, modern toilet facilities (83.0%), CCTV (67.2%) and improvements to Shirley Park (56.5%) were the three most commonly supported ideas from the pre-prepared list which respondents were invited to indicate support for. Public art (18.6%) drew the lowest support.

The table below shows the 'other' suggestions which were made by five or more respondents.

| | (N=494) | (N=494) |
|---|----------------|----------------|
| Leisure facilities, e.g., sports, swimming etc. | 20 | 4.0% |
| No supermarkets/superstores | 13 | 2.6% |
| Improvements to roads/traffic management in area | 10 | 2.0% |
| None/no additional shops | 10 | 2.0% |
| More small, independent shops in general | 8 | 1.6% |
| A cinema | 6 | 1.2% |
| Activities/facilities for teenagers | 6 | 1.2% |
| Fully staffed police station/a bigger police presence | 6 | 1.2% |
| A library | 5 | 1.0% |
| Adequate/free parking | 5 | 1.0% |
| Public art/exhibitions etc. | 5 | 1.0% |
| Others | 43 | 8.7% |