How and why does shopping quality and street appearance vary within a specific area of the Leicester Central Business District?

The specific area is made up of these five streets:

- Halford Street
- Rutland Street
- Charles Street
- Humberstone Gate
- Gallowtree Gate

By Thomas Barker

Introduction

In this coursework I will answer the following question: *How and why does shopping quality and street appearance vary within a specific area of the Leicester Central business District?* Leicestershire is situ ated in the East Midlands, it is to the north of Northamptonshire, south of Nottinghamshire and to the east of Lincolnshire. To the west of the county are Derbyshire, Staffordshire and Warwickshire. Leicester CBD contain the core of the cities facilities, it has a very good public transport system. Several major roads lead into Leicester, including the A46, A50 and A6. The M1 also runs west of the city. This means that all the shops, businesses etc have a huge potential catchment area for customers because of the easily accessible city centre. For these reasons and the fact that there are major stores situated in Leicester CBD the shopping quality and street appearance will be of a very high standard. I will answer this main question by answering these questions:

- What factors affect shopping quality and why?
- What factors affect street appearance and why?
- How have shops and Leicester City Council tried to improve the shopping quality and street appearance in the area, and how successful have these schemes been?

The area on which I will base my coursework consists of five streets in the CBD, which are:

- Rutland Street
- Halford Street
- Charles Street
- Humberstone Gate (not including the Haymarket centre)
- Gallowtree gate

The map below shows the streets on which my coursework will be based.

Prediction

I predict the shopping quality and street appearance will vary throughout the CBD because certain streets contain the majority of the major stores these stores will be able to pay the most money for ren ting the building so this money can be spent

improving the street appearance. Less popular streets will have a poorer shopping quality and street appearance.

Information required

The information that I will require includes the shopping quality and street appearance of the area. I will score each location and record it on a 'shopping quality and street appearance recording sheet'. I will also produce a questionnaire; I hope to interview about twen ty people of varying ages so I can gain a variety of views. The questionnaire will require shoppers to score the area much in the same way that I will be doing, comment on their likes and dislikes and answer other questions so I can complete this study. I will take photographs, I believe about twenty photographs should be enough. I also plan on writing to Leicester City Council and the major stores in Leicester to answer one of my questions: *How have shops and Leicester City Council tried to improve the sho pping quality and street appearance in the area, and how successful have these schemes been?* I will ask if they believe these schemes have been successful, I will also judge if these schemes have been successful, as well as asking shoppers in the questionnaire. I can search through books, Internet and other sources of media to find out what schemes have been introduced.

Below is my methodology table.

Key: SA: Street Appearance
SQ: Street Appearance

Technique	Data collected	Purpose	Method	Limitaions	Date
Shopping quality and street appearance survey	Scores for each location in a particular street	So I can judge whether the areas have a good shopping quality and street appearance	I would score each location by using a scoring system of 1, good, to 5,poor, the lower the overall score the better the SQ and SA.	This is a reliable way of scoring each location, I collected the data myself so I know it is correct and in no way bias.	11/4/03
Questionnaire	Twelve peoples views on the CBD	To see what people think of the CBD and what factors affects effect SQ and SA	I simply went up to people randomly and asked if they would fill in one of my questionnaires.	I had to make sure I asked a broad range of people, not only lots of people but they would have to be of different ages.	11/4/03
Photographs	Eighteen photographs	So I can annotate them and illustrate my points	I took photographs that were relevant, e.g. I took pictures of the litter on the floor or the attractive shops.	None, they give possibly the truest representation of what was there, they show no bias.	11/4/03

There were several small problems encountered. I asked twelve people to fill in my questionnaire, I would have preferred to ask more people, and about twenty to twenty-five would have provided a better range. I asked mainly fifteen to twenty - five year olds to fill in the questionnaire. It would have been ideal to have a couple of responses from each of the age groups below:

- 10-14 years old

- 15-19 years old
- 20-29 years old
- 30-45 years old
- 46-55 years old
- 55+ years old

Different age groups would hav e different views on what makes the shopping quality good and how attractive the area is. Part of the recording sheet was to score the area on how many pedestrians there were. I started at around 10.30am, which is a fairly quiet time in the CBD, I finished at about 1.30pm, a relatively busy time in the CBD. This will have meant that a street normally busy in the afternoon but scored in the morning would have a score that was lower in comparison to a street that is on the whole quieter but scored in the afte rnoon. This makes comparing the two locations unfair and unreliable.

Below is a copy of the scoring system I used for the shopping quality and street appearance recording sheets, you can see that it contains a number of criteria which you have to score.

Shopping quality		**Score (on a scale of 1 to 5)**	**Street appearance**		**Score (on a scale of 1 to 5)**
A	Type of shop	1= dominated by department/variety stores or shops selling 'comparison' goods 5= wide variety of shop types, convenience goods dominant	E	Safety for pedestrians crossing street	1= very safe 3=busy street with pelican crossing 5= high risk - busy with no crossing
B	Other land-use groups	1= mainly shops 2=shops and banks/building societies 4=mainly offices 5=very few shops – dominated by house industry	F	Shopping crowds	1= very busy – large no. Of shopper 5= very quiet – few shoppers
			G	Street cleanliness	1= very clean – no litter
C	Retail organistaions	1= national chain store department 3= mixed – some national and independent 5= small, independent shop units	H	Exterior appearance of shops	1= well maintained property/attractive window display 5= poorly maintained/very drab
			I	Traffic/pedestria n segregation	1= pedestrianised street/precinct 2= buses route only 3= open to all traffic – no parking 4= open to all traffic – limited parking 5=main traffic route – no parking restrictions
D	Quality of goods	1=good quality and/or high price goods 5= low quality and/or low price goods	J	Vacant premises	1= all premises occupied 5= many vacant premises/cleared sites

On the next page is a blank copy of one of the **Shopping Quality and Street Appearance Recording Sheets**

I asked a questionnaire when I went to Leicester. Before I went to Leicester I decided to make a pilot questionnaire, t his is so my final questionnaire would provide me with the best possible results for the investigation. Below shows the pilot questionnaire:

1. How far do you have to travel to get to Leicester?
2. How do you get to Leicester?
3. Which street offers the best s hopping quality?
4. Which street offers the best street appearance?
5. Which of these is the main factor that affects shopping quality?
   - Size of shop
   - Quality of goods
   - Appearance of shop
6. Which of these is the main factor that affects street appearance?
   - Safety
   - Size of streets
   - Cleanliness
7. Of the many promotions, which has been the most beneficial?
8. Do you believe this scheme has been successful?
9. What would you like to be seen done to improve the areas shopping quality?
10. What would you like to be seen don e to improve the areas street appearance?

After asking members of my family to fill in the pilot questionnaire it was clear that some of the questions needed to be revised. Questions 3 and 4 are too vague; I need to list the five streets that I am investigating. Questions 5 asks the shoppers to choose one of the factors, this limits the shopper to having to choose one of only three factors, in my final questionnaire I will leave a blank space leaving shoppers to fill their own response, this will give me a broader range of answers. The same applies for question 6. Question 7 asks ‘of the many promotions, which has been the most beneficial? ‘ I believe it would be useful to list some examples and ask a question about a specific scheme. Below shows a copy of the actual questionnaire I will use.

How does shopping quality and street appearance vary with a specific area of the Leicester CBD?

1.How far do you have to travel to get to Leicester?

2. How do you travel to Leicester city centre?

3. Do you regularly shop in Leicester?

4. Why do you choose to shop in Leicester rather than another town or city centre?

5. Which of these streets offers the best shopping quality?

- Rutland Street
- Halford Street
- Charles Street
- Humberstone Gate (not including the Haymarket centre)
- Gallowtree gate

6. Which of the streets offers the best street appearance?

- Rutland Street
- Halford Street
- Charles Street
- Humberstone Gate (not including the Haymarket centre)
- Gallowtree gate

7.What are the three main factors that affect shopping quality?

8. What are the three main factors that affect street appearance?

9. There has recently been the promotion of late night shopping in the centre, have you ever come and what did you think of it?

10.Other schemes include pedestrianisation, improving public transport and restricting on street parking, have these schemes ever influenced your decision to come shopping here?

11. Do you believe these schemes have been successful on the whole?

Questionnaire continued…

12. What would you like to be seen done to the centre to improve shopping quality?

13. What would you like to be seen done to the centre to improve street appearance?

The table bellows explains the reasons I asked the quest ions that I did.

Question	Reason for question
How far do you have to travel to get to Leicester?	To see how far people were prepared to travel to a city centre.
How do you travel to Leicester city centre?	To see if the improved public transport schemes have had an affect on the general public.
Do you regularly shop in Leicester?	To see how regularly a shopper visits Leicester.
Why do you choose to shop in Leicester rather than any other town or city centre?	To see why they prefer Leicester to other cit ies.
Which of these streets offers the best shopping quality? • *Rutland Street* • *Halford Street* • *Charles Street* • *Humberstone Gate (not including the Haymarket centre)* • *Gallowtree gate*	As well as my own personal view on which street offers the best shopping qual ity I would like to know what streets other members of the public think offers the best shopping quality.
Which of the streets offers the best street appearance? • *Rutland Street* • *Halford Street* • *Charles Street* • *Humberstone Gate (not including the Haymarket centre)* • *Gallowtree gate*	As well as my own personal view on which street has the best street appearance I would like to know what other members of the public think.
What are the three main factors that affect shopping quality?	This will help me answer one of my main questions in the investigation.
What are the three main factors that affect street	This will help me answer one of my main questions in the investigation.

appearance?	
There has recently been the promotion of late night shopping in the centre, have you ever come and what did you think of it?	I would like to find out if the 'City Centre Action Programme' has been successful and whether people have found the schemes to be beneficial.
Other schemes include pedestrianisation, improving public transport and restricting on street parking, have these schemes ever influenced your decision to come shopping here?	I would like to find out if these other schemes set up by the council have been successful.
What would you like to be seen done to the centre to improve shopping quality?	This is to see if the council and shops could do anything else to improve shopping quality.
What would you like to be seen done to the centre to improve street appearance?	This is to see if the council and shops could do anything else to improve street appearance.

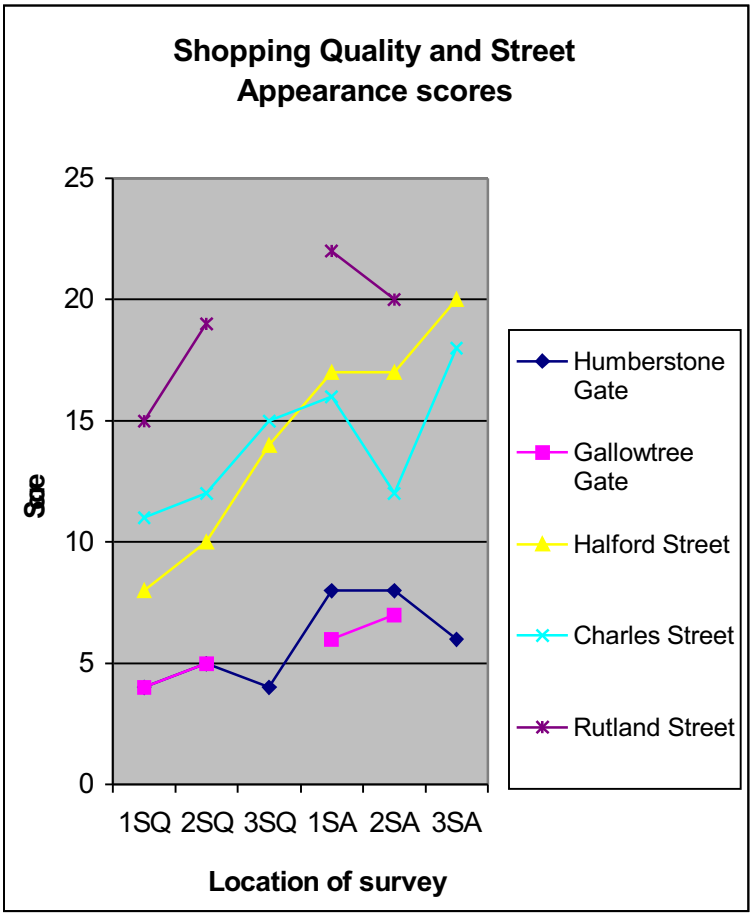
Data Analysis

All the data that I used in this investigation was used to help me answer the following question: *How does shopping quality and street appearance vary within a specific area of the Leicester CBD?*
I included photos with complementary notes, the photos helped visually and the notes explained why the area had the shopping quality and street appearance score that they did. To show which locations scored what, I included the scores in the notes with the photos but I also drew proportional columns on a map of the streets I had surveyed. This meant that you could easily see which locations got the best scores and the worst scores. Below is the table of which streets got the best average score. To do this I added up the individual shopping quality scores from each location within a street then divided by how many locations there were in the street then repeated it to with the street appearance scores to get the average street appearance score. I did this so I could easily see how the shopping quality and street appearance varies within a city.

Ranked position	Street	Average Shopping Quality score
1	Humberstone Gate	4.3
2	Gallowtree Gate	4.5
3	Halford Street	10.6
4	Charles Street	12.66
5	Rutland Street	17

Prev. ranked position	Ranked position	Street	Average Street Appearance score
2	1	Gallowtree Gate	6.5
1	2	Humberstone Gate	7.3
3	3	Halford Street	18.6
4	4	Charles Street	19.33
5	5	Rutland Street	20.5

This table above shows how streets that scored well in street appearance (SA) scored well in shopping quality (SQ). Only two of the streets, indicated by blue did not achieve the same ranking both times. This shows there is a clear link between good shopping quality and good street appearance, and bad shopping quality and bad street appearance.



The graph on the left shows how the five streets shopping quality and street appearance scores compared. The graph shows how Humber ton Gate and Gallowtree Gate got by far the best scores and Rutland Street got a very poor score for each location scored.

I carried out a questionnaire, below shows the analysis of the results.

Question	Analysis of answers
How far do you have to travel to get to Leicester?	The average distance people travelled was 16.25 miles, this indicates that people are prepared to travel quite long distances to shop in Leicester city centre
How do you travel to Leicester city centre?	Five people travelled by car, four by train, one took the bus, one walked and one came once on a lorry. Public transport is being used, but only one person questioned used the bus.
Do you regularly shop in Leicester?	The average was once every 56 days. The main answer to this was once a month, which shows that although some of the people live quite far away they are prepared to come here often because of the good shopping quality and good street appearance.
Why do you choose to shop in Leicester rather than any other town or city centre?	Eight of the people questioned said it was because it was very accessible and fairly close, this is an answer I would except because of the improved public transport links. The other four people said it was because it had the shops they liked.
Which of these streets offers the best shopping quality? • *Rutland Street* • *Halford Street* • *Charles Street* • *Humberstone Gate (not including the Haymarket centre)* • *Gallowtree gate*	Seven of the people said Humberstone Gate, the other five said Gallowtree gate. This is what I would expect because these two streets contain the major shops. This fits in with what I found out when I calculated the average shopping quality score and average street appearance score, see the two tables above.
Which of the streets offers the best street appearance? • *Rutland Street* • *Halford Street* • *Charles Street* • *Humberstone Gate (not including the Haymarket centre)* • *Gallowtree gate*	Six people said Humberstone Gate and six people said Gallowtree Gate, again this fits in with what I found, these two areas are the most popular so the most is being done to try and improve these areas as it is these areas that are visited most by shoppers.
What are the three main factors that affect shopping quality?	There were a large range of answers, including a wide variety of goods at low prices, attractive shops that are not neglected, large stores etc.
What are the three main factors that affect street appearance?	As above there were a range of answers including litter free, pedestrianisation, not too busy, wide paths, good lighting at night, no pollution from cars etc.
There has recently been the promotion of late night shopping in the centre, have you ever come and what did you think of it?	Six of the peopled questions had been late night shopping, this is only 50%, I would have expected higher. People who had been late shopping said it had less busy, but there were negatives, for example one of the people complained some of the shops were still closed. Some people said they would not feel safe.
Other schemes include pedestrianisation, improving public transport and restricting on street parking, have these schemes ever influenced your decision to	Eleven of those questioned said yes, people said that they liked the fact that it had been pedestrianised and that there was better public transport.

come shopping here?	
What would you like to be seen done to the centre to improve shopping quality?	Many of those questioned said it was good the way it was.
What would you like to be seen done to the centre to improve street appearance?	People views included less litter around certain areas, less traffic between certain areas, like between the main shopping streets and the train station and more green areas like the one at Gallowtree Gate.

I would liked to have done a more in depth analysis of the questionn aires but since only twelve people filled in the questionnaire this would be unhelpful in my investigation.

Another one of my main questions was to find out how shops and Leicester City Council have tried to improve the shopping quality and street appea rance in the area, and how successful have these schemes been? Leicester city centre is a major regional shopping centre; it attracts over half a million people annually. The shopping area is compact, the main shops are concentrated in a small area of only several street. It is very important that the council and shops try to improve shopping quality and street appearance because of the pressures Leicester city centre faces. The council along with the Environment City Partnership have set up the City Centre Action Programme (CCAP) The CCAP is a set of environmental improvement and transport proposals for the city centre covering a ten year period. The programmes hopes to:

- Encourage more people to live in the city
- Improve buildings, shops and street
- Create more public space
- Promote street cafes
- Reduce traffic to central area

Below shows two newspaper articles that talk about several of the schemes.

Evaluation and conclusion

My main question was split up into three sub-questions.

- How and why does shopping quality and street appearance vary within a specific area of the Leicester CBD?
  - What factors affect shopping quality and why?
  - What factors affect street appearance and why?
  - How have shops and Leicester City Council tried to improve the shopping quality and street appearance in the area, and how successful have these schemes been?

What factors affect shopping quality and why?

By looking at the shopping quality and street appearance scores it can be seen that Humberstone Gate and Gallowtree Gate score the highest of any of the five streets, the questionnaire I carried out also proves that shoppers liked these areas shopping quality the most, certain factors in the streets caused shoppers to like them, whereas factors in streets such as Rutland Street and Halford Street cause the streets to get low scores. From analysing all the results I gained I believe the main factors that affect shopping quality are: The quality of the goods, shopper want high quality goods at low prices so they are not wasting their money. The atmosphere of the shop also affected the shopping quality of the street, shoppers preferred large, airy shops, which were not crowded. Stores like Marks & Spencer and GAP have recently expanded. Another factor that affects shopping quality is the variety of shops, people like a large variety of shops in a relatively small, concentrated area. The reason for this is that distances between shops are small and more shopping can be done in smaller amounts of time compared to a city with shops that are all spaced out. Shoppers also want attractive stores that are well maintained, this is why Rutland Street scored poorly.

What factors affect street appearance and why?

Gallowtree Gate and Humberstone Gate scored highly. These areas had certain factors that meant their street appearance was good, whilst Rutland Street and Halford Street had certain factors, which meant their street appearance was poor. Many factors affect street appearance. Safety is a huge factor affecting street appearance. Humberstone Gate and Gallowtree gate scored so highly because no vehicles are allowed in the streets, whereas busier, more dangerous streets achieved lower score. The two streets mentioned have been pedestrianised whereas poorer scoring streets were open to traffic. Photo ten shows litter on Rutland Street, litter is a major factor that affects street appearance, the less litter the better the street appearance and the more likely shoppers will use these streets. Photo 13 shows one of the streets being cleaned, this shows the council is keen to keep the streets clean. Wide paths affected street appearance because when it became very busy the street was not too crowded. The maintenance of the shops was also an important factor, two very contrasting photos are photo 2 and

photo 11, the former shows a well kept shop in Humberstone Gate, the latter shows a poorly maintained shop in Halford street. Humberstone Street scored more highly than Halford Street because all the shops in Humberstone Gate were very well maintained whereas many of the shops in Halford Street were poorly maintained.

The link between shopping quality and street appearance

The factors that affect shopping quality and street appearance are not independent of each other; certain factors affect shopping quality and street appearance. For example a well-maintained shop exterior would mean the street appearance of the area is very good, which is likely to improve the shopping quality of the area. If a street is cleaned the appearance will improve which is likely to increase shoppers enjoyment of being in the area, which will improve the shopping quality of the area.

By looking at the graphs which show shopping quality and street appearance of the streets it can be easily seen that shop ping quality and street appearance are closely linked, for example if a shop sells good quality items it will attract a lot of custom. The shop is likely to make large profits and this money can then be spent on improving the appearance of the exterior of the shop, which will increase street appearance. If a street is very safe for shopper more of them are likely to visit and buy things from these shops. The shops can then increase the size of the shop and improve the shopping quality of the area. The diag rams below show this snowball effect.

Fig. 1a

Fig.1b

How have shops and Leicester City Council tried to improve the shopping quality and street appearance in the area, and how successful have these s chemes been?

The shops in Leicester city centre and the council have introduced many schemes, see table below.

Scheme	Details	Has it been a success
Late night shopping	This is joint venture along with the shops in the city centre. Promotions such as late night shopping are linked with entertainment.	I believe the scheme has been a success, the questionnaire that people filled in showed that people were going late night shopping, they liked the fact that it was less busy. The council website advertises the late night shopping as follows: *Now stores are open for later and on Sundays, the city council's Meynells Gorse park and ride service is also running for longer so people can enjoy the convenience of the shuttle service.*
Government and European funding to regenerate areas of the city centre	Leicester City Council is bidding for Government and European funding to regenerate areas of the city centre like Rutland Street and Halford Street	The council have not yet received the money but the areas that need improving desperately do, the buildings are neglected, many of the shoppers do not see these areas, but if the regeneration goes ahead these areas are to be markedly improved.
Pedestrianisation and other public service schemes	Plans include pedestrianisation routes, cycle lanes, bus priority measures and park and ride facilities.	These schemes have been successful, in 1991 traffic volumes were affecting the city centre but after several years of these schemes the 1999 traffic figures suggest the measures to slow down the growth in car travel may be beginning to have an effect.
Community safety	This was a joint scheme between the council and the local business. Many people are deterred from going to the city centre because of the fear of crime. CCTV was introduced and new street lighting was used. Late night shopping meant that new lighting had to be fitted; to reduce the risk of crime	One way to judge whe ther this scheme has been successful is to analyse the success of late night shopping which has been a success, this proves to some extent that this schemes has been successful.

	CCTV cameras were also fitted. Leicester Partnership against Crime and Disorder set up this scheme.	
The Big Clean Up Campaign	This is to improve the street appearance of the area, which in turn will increase the shopping quality of the area. In May 2002 the city council pledged to invest £2 million in a programme of citywide improvements. Two of the ideas include having a litter warden who is to fine anyone who drops litter.	I asked people in Leicester whether they though this was a good scheme or not ''*We should have more cleaners and make the bins* bigger.'' *"I think a litter warden would be good and on-the-spot fines are a great idea. If people put litter in the bin in the first place there would be no problem."* *Leicester is a bit messy, especially in the city centre, people just don't care, especially young people. Fines are a good idea."*
Shop mobility	This scheme was set up to increase the mobility of disabled people in the city centre.	The paths are smooth and flat and all the major stores have disabled access. This schemes has therefore been a success.

These are just a few of the many schemes set up by the shops and council in Leicester, for all the schemes visit this website: www.leicester.gov.uk

However the main question of the investigation was 'How and why does shopping quality and street appearance vary within a specific area of the Leicester CBD?' Shopping quality and street appearance does vary, see map A. Humberstone Gate and Gallowtree Gate achieved the highest scores. Several reasons are behind the fact that shopping quality and street appearance vary.

Shopping quality is best in Humberstone Gate and Gallowtree Gate because these streets have the major stores like Topshop, Topman, WHSmiths, Virgin Marks & Spencer etc. They sell a wide variety of goods at low, competitive prices. Street appearance is best in Humberstone Gate and Gallowtree Gate also because the most is done to keep these areas attractive, and shoppers are most likely to visit these areas. This is why the shops set up here and the prices for doing so are so high, so the most money is spent on these areas. The council can afford to do this because of the money being made from letting out the buildings to shops. Because few shoppers visit street like Rutland Street the council are unlikely to spend money improving these areas. The areas tend to get worse and worse see Fig. 1b.

Evaluation

All the data I collected was used in some way to help complete this investigation. This investigation could have possibly been better. All the data I collected was on my own, this data may have been inaccurate because it contained by own thoughts and perceptions, for example another person may have scored certain street higher and other streets lower. In hindsight I believe my questionnaire could have been structured better and a better range of questions could have been

asked. I would also like to have asked more people to complete my questionnaire, this would have given me a broader range of responses and a truer picture of what shoppers thought on Leicester CDB. I would like to have asked a wider range of age groups to complete the questionnaire. It would have been useful to interview shoppers, which would have given me the opportunity to ask more detailed questions and I could have followed up with points of interest. Although an interview would not have been practical, they are time consuming both for myself and for the shoppers being interviewed. Another potential inaccuracy was the scoring of the areas of how busy they were, this might not have been a true reflection of how busy the area is usually. There were good points of the investigation. The range of locations used for the shopping quality and street appearance survey meant I gained a comprehensive set of results. I believe I answered the main investigation question and the sub-questions very well, the results also fit in with my prediction.
When I did the shopping quality and street appearance recording sheet I scored each of the locations on how busy they were, 1 being very busy, 5 being very quiet. To improve my investigation I should have done pedestrian counts at each of the location, I would have counted how many people walked past me in three minutes and a better picture of how busy the streets were could have been compiled. As well as scoring the areas according to the criteria on the shopping quality and street appearance recording sheets I could have included additional criteria to score the locations.

Air quality= 1: Clean air
5: Poor air quality
Crime and vandalism= 1: no evidence of crime and vandalism
5: lots of evidence of crime and vandalism
Noise levels= 1: Acceptable noise levels
5: Disruptive noise levels

This last criterion could be expanded upon; I would have liked to use a decibel meter. Or I could have used a table like the one below.

Score	**Noise Type**
1	Can hear a whisper from someone nearby
2	No difficulty hearing a conversation nearby
3	Have to raise voice slightly for conversation
4	Have to raise voice considerably for conversation
5	Conversation is very hard.

Sources used

Class notes on Leicester and the CCAP plan
www.leicester.gov.uk I used this website for many of the schemes, it proved very useful.
Changing environments a class book
www.streetmap.co.uk this website provided me with Leicester street map pictures.

Appendix

- Sample questionnaires
- Shopping quality and street appeara nce recording sheets
- The original map I used