



**STONY STRATFORD**  
**business association**

Promoting Prosperity & Wellbeing

**Business in Stony Stratford**

# A Thriving Town Centre: The Case of Stony Stratford

For Action for Market Towns: Town Centre Solutions Workshop, Stony Stratford, 29 November 2011



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# Stony Stratford Business Association perspective

# Background

Stony Stratford Business Association (SSBA) has always supported businesses in the town by encouraging footfall...

Hanging baskets in the summer, bunting, the Christmas lights...

And had done its own branding work to come up with a visual identity and strapline for SSBA...

In 2010, there was the opportunity of a tailor-made market research project, and so it was the town's turn...

# Objectives of the market research project

Establish what the retailers believed Stony Stratford has to offer

**Confirm/reject 'retail magnets' hypothesis**

Establish why visitors did or did not use Stony Stratford (more)

**Provide recommendations for action to promote the town**

# Three stages of research

Retailers: group (March 2010)

On street: 110 x face to face  
interviews (April)

In catchment area: 98 x telephone  
interviews (June/July)

# A taster of the findings

# Summary: Visitor survey

Broadly, those we spoke to for the street survey shared retailers' views of Stony Stratford e.g.

Friendly, has good customer service,  
nice place to spend time

Parking and traffic flow are good

# Summary: Visitor survey

Top three single reasons for visiting Stony Stratford when interviewed:

1. Work here 21%
2. Health visit – optician, dentist, doctor, other health appointment 11%
3. Visiting business professionals – solicitor, bank, accountant, etc. 10%



**Business and health related necessities = the leading magnets drawing people in**

# Summary: Visitor survey

Top three total reasons for visiting Stony Stratford when interviewed:

- |                                    |     |
|------------------------------------|-----|
| 1. Meal/drink/coffee               | 41% |
| 2. Groceries                       | 38% |
| 3. Visiting business professionals | 35% |



# Summary: Catchment area survey

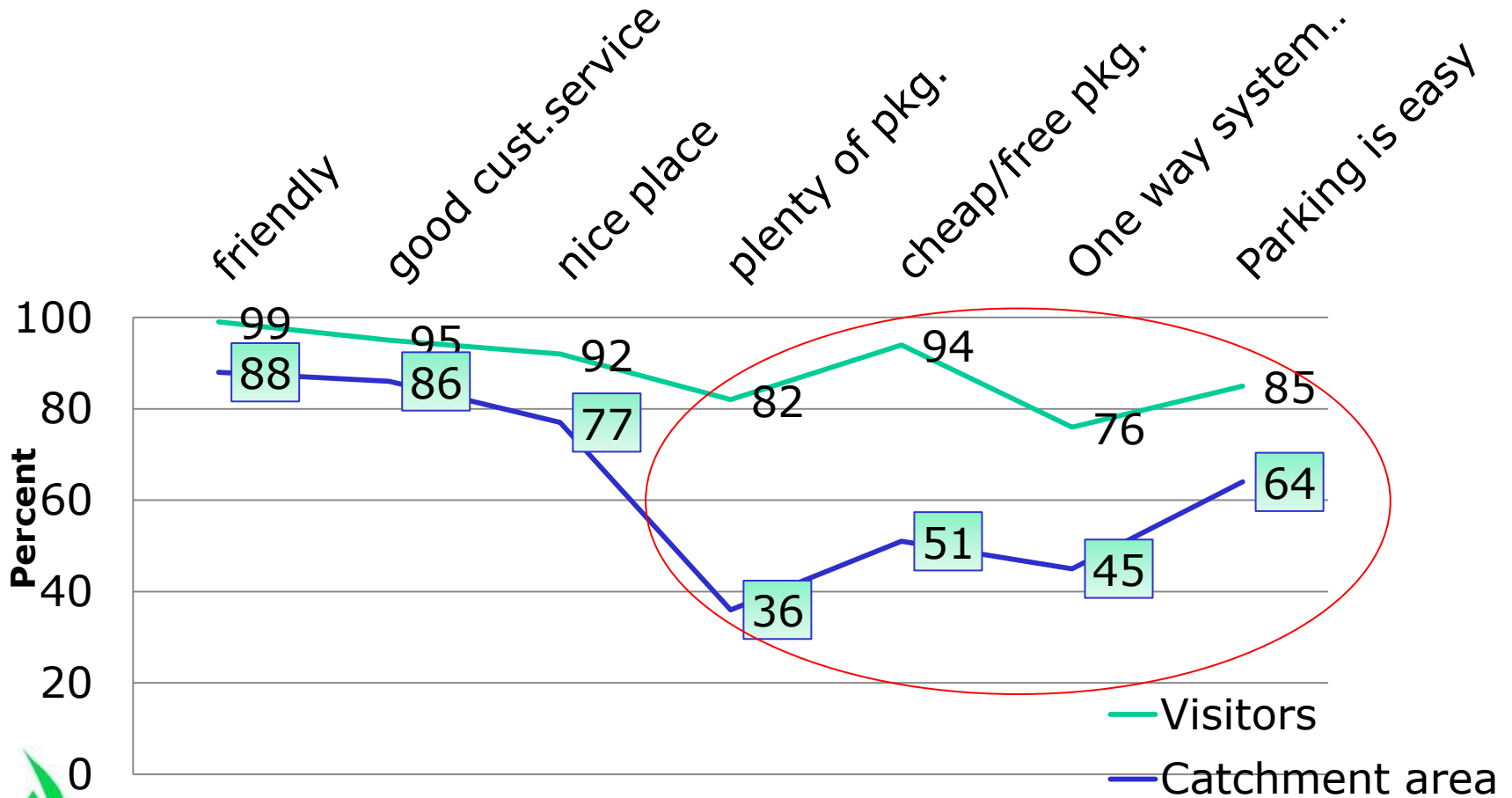


How far do retailers' and potential visitors' views match?

Over a third of the sample (35%) living in the catchment area never visit Stony Stratford

Those who never visit are more likely to  
→ have hazier perceptions – but also they have more negative perceptions (why?)

# Perceptions of Stony Stratford are lower in the catchment area, particularly re: parking and traffic

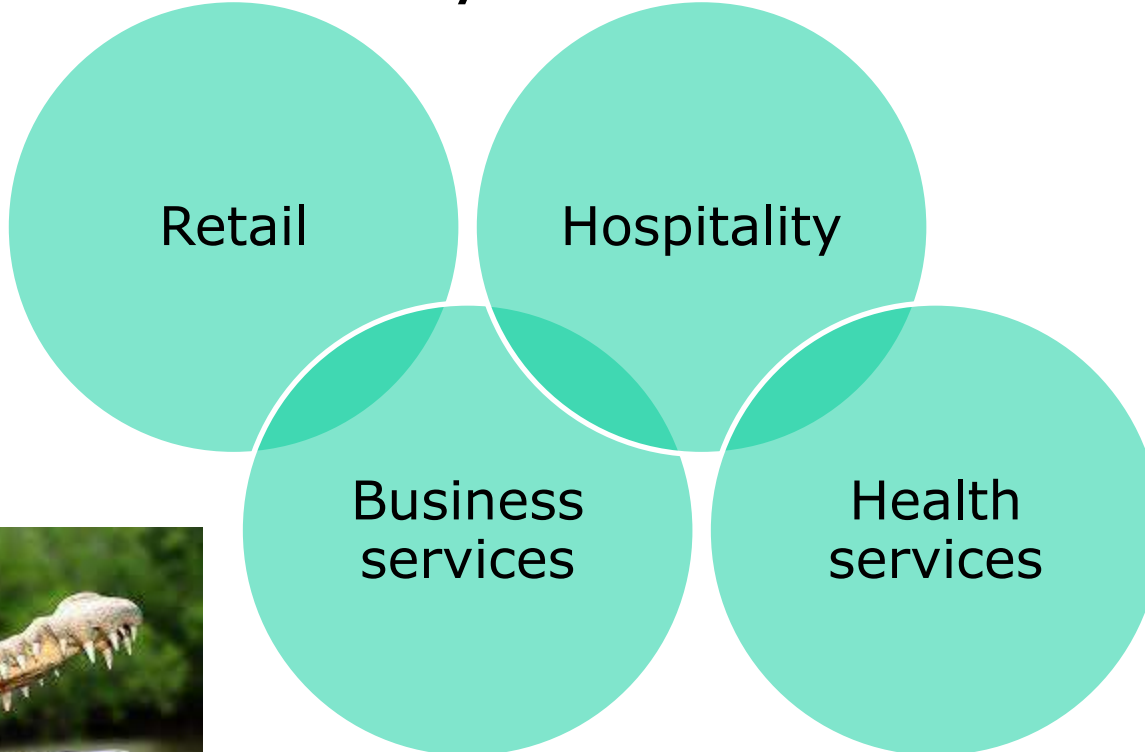


NB Data points not linked

# Key lesson learnt:

Original 'retail magnets' hypothesis  
was *partially* correct

BUT there's a symbiotic relationship...



# Highlights of the project

Confirming some beliefs, confounding assumptions

Providing an evidence base for action planning

Catalyst for SSBA Marketing Activity



# Then what?...

Tactics (feeding into existing marketing activities)

- Mention free parking in all publicity
- Raise awareness of all events/entertainment in Stony Stratford

# New and continuing marketing initiatives

- Marketing sub-group of SSBA formed to drive and implement marketing initiatives
- Continued development of SSBA website
- Strategic partnership with 'About my Area' website
- 'Town for all Reasons' leaflet
- The Stony Stratford calendar
- Updated 'Stony Walks' leaflet
- Parking information map
- Membership of Action for Market Towns
- Membership of Destination MK

# Christmas late night opening 8<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> December

- Long standing success of lights and 'Switch on day'
- How to build on that success
- Need to build footfall in December
- Differentiate Stony Stratford from other retail destinations
- Promote Stony Stratford as 'family friendly'
- More retail traffic = more hospitality + service traffic =
  - The 'symbiotic' relationship

And next year

For the first time ever....



24th February to 4th March 2012

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## Stony Stratford Feastival - a festival of food and drink

For eleven days in Spring 2012 Stony Stratford in Buckinghamshire, UK, will be celebrating food and drink.

The town has a long history of providing hospitality to travellers upon the Watling Street - from the Romans to the current day.

Bookmark this page now and return for more information about Stony Stratford Feastival, our festival of food and drink.

For more information email [clayton@cockandbull.org.uk](mailto:clayton@cockandbull.org.uk)

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