Executive Summary

Introduction
London Borough of Bromley commissioned Faber Maunsell to conduct both an on-street survey of users of Beckenham Town Centre, and a postal survey of local residents. 206 interviews were completed with daytime users and a further 91 with evening users of the town centre. 571 residents returned their questionnaire; a response rate of 14%. The survey asked respondents about day time and night time use of the town centre, and focused on what might be required to encourage more footfall in the town centre. The main findings are summarised below:

Use of Beckenham Town Centre
The most frequent activities in Beckenham town centre were:
- Shopping (51% of residents, 71% of users doing so once a week or more);
- Work (25% of residents, 42% of users doing so once a week or more); and
- Personal business, such as visiting banks, post office, hospitals etc (18% of residents, and 53% of users doing so once a week or more).

Travelling to Beckenham Town Centre
- Nearly half of frequent visitors in the user survey travelled by bus (46%). 42% walked and 35% used a car to get into Beckenham Town Centre. 26% of residents walked in and 20% travelled in by bus frequently (once a week or more).
- 49% of residents (and 39% of users) travelled in by car once a week or more.
- Of those who travelled to Beckenham by car, 82% of residents and 52% of users found it difficult or very difficult to park on street. Parking in a car park was found to be easier, with 49% of residents and 75% of users finding it easy or very easy.

Likes and Dislikes of Beckenham Town Centre
- The main thing residents liked about Beckenham was that it had a variety of restaurants/cafés (24%); the main things users of the town centre liked were that it is convenient and local (25%) and good for shopping (25%).
- Key dislikes of the town centre for residents focused around accessing the town centre, such as difficulties parking (21%), and congestion (19%). 40% of users said that there was nothing they disliked about Beckenham Town Centre.
- The majority of users (81%), and just over half of residents (54%), said that their dislikes of the town centre had not put them off visiting Beckenham.

Perceptions of Beckenham Town Centre
- The most commonly used word to describe the town centre was ‘Traditional’ (49% residents, 45% users).
- The atmosphere of Beckenham Town Centre in the daytime was described as:
  - Safe (67% residents, 47% users).
  - Pleasant (66% residents, 59% users); and
  - Relaxing (55% residents, 49% users).
- The atmosphere of Beckenham Town Centre in the evening was described as:
  - Busy/Bustling (37% residents, 34% users);
  - Pleasant (30% residents, 26% users); and
  - Safe (30% residents, 18% users).

However, 31% (residents) and 12% (users) described the town centre as unsafe, and 21% (residents) and 17% (users) described it as aggressive in the evenings.
Satisfaction with Beckenham Town Centre

- Respondents were most satisfied with:
  - Ease of getting around the town centre on foot (80% residents, 81% users);
  - The feeling of personal safety during the day (77% residents, 91% users); and
  - Distance between places you want to go (75% residents, 77% users).
- Respondents were least satisfied with:
  - The variety of shops (40% residents, 21% users);
  - Public facilities such as toilets / baby change (39% residents, 22% users); and
  - Feeling of personal safety at night (32% residents, 23% users).

Measures to encourage respondents to use Beckenham Town Centre more often

To encourage more frequent visits to Beckenham town centre, the following were mentioned:

Daytime

- A wider choice of shops (72% residents, 45% users);
- More cultural facilities (61% residents, 16% users); and
- Less congestion (48% residents, 22% users).

Evening

- More restaurants/cafes (56% residents, 12% users);
- Increased safety (55% residents, 36% users); and
- More pubs/bars (27% residents, 7% users).

Shopping

In order to encourage more frequent shopping in Beckenham Town Centre, the key improvement suggested was a wider choice of shops (35% residents, 54% users);

The types of shops respondents wanted to see more of were:

- Clothes shops - Fashion (59% residents, 44% users);
- Specialist shops (45% residents, 49% users); and
- Haberdashery/Home ware shops (45% residents, 13% users).

Beckenham Market

- Most respondents were aware of Beckenham's occasional market (63% residents, 56% users), and half of those who were aware (50% residents, 55% users) had shopped there.
- The majority of respondents (86% residents, 76% users) thought that the occasional market was a good/very good idea.

Evening Activities

- The top two priorities for improvement to encourage more use of the town centre in the evenings were providing a safer environment (31% residents, 25% users) and a wider choice of restaurants (17% residents, 25% users).
- Half (49%) of residents, and a fifth (19%) of users would like to see more small independent restaurants in the town centre.