

City Living

Sustainable development?

Rachael Unsworth



Structure of paper

1. Critical examination of principles and practice of city living in terms of sustainable development
2. Reasons for city living coming into being as a new residential and lifestyle option
3. Emergence, strengths and weaknesses of the markets in major UK cities
4. Example of Leeds:
 - supply-side factors contributing to development boom
 - occupier survey: analysis of residents' lifestyle, opinions and intentions in terms of sustainability of city living
5. How to succeed in making city living meet all the main sustainable development criteria?

Urban renaissance: the policy context

- enhanced economic performance of towns and cities + social justice and reduced environmental impact
- Urban Task Force report (DETR, 1999b); Urban White Paper (DETR, 2000a)
 - priority to redeveloping sites and reusing redundant buildings
 - focusing mixed use, medium-density development around transport hubs
 - improving the quality of the urban realm and the quality of urban life

Leeds in 1826: textile mills

'Where there's muck, there's brass'



Dereliction: wharfs and warehouses along the River Aire, 1960s



An industrial city reinvents itself



The rôle of city living in urban renaissance

Apartments – in **converted buildings** and **new blocks** – welcomed as contribution to:

- providing for increasing numbers of 1 & 2 two person households
- improving urban vitality and viability
- mixed use and lower need for travel by car



Top reasons for moving to the city centre

- convenience for work
- city centre lifestyle
- rail links



Success?

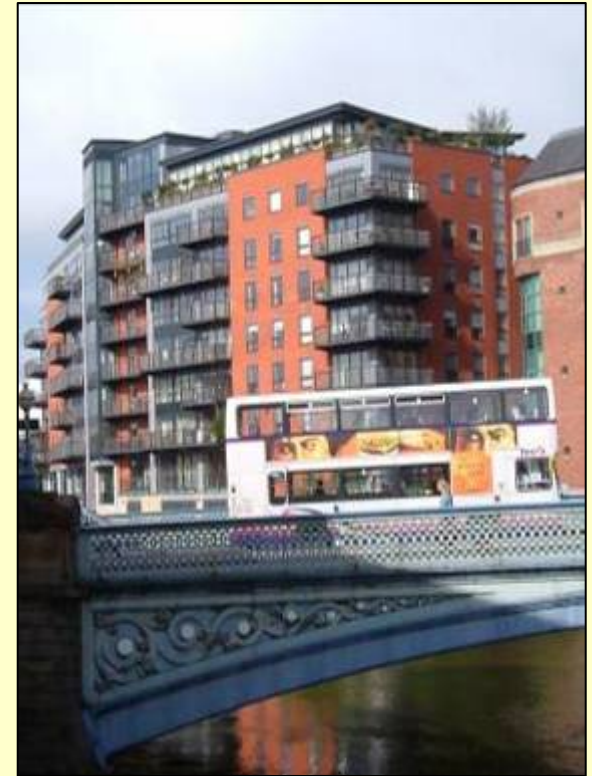
High density, well connected, high value city centre residential development

=

thorough manifestation of sustainable development?

NO:

- economically precarious
- socially elitist; lacks community coherence
- environmentally ambiguous



Why?

- commercial considerations dominate
- planning system ill-prepared for expansion of market
- consumer behaviour

Completed apartments	5,701
Under construction	3,812
With planning permission	5,622
Planned	6,262
TOTAL	21,397

City living 2007

Surveys published 2003, 2005

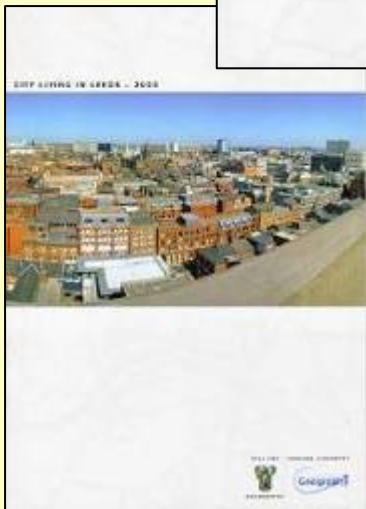
Issues addressed 2007:

- market conditions
- supply pipeline

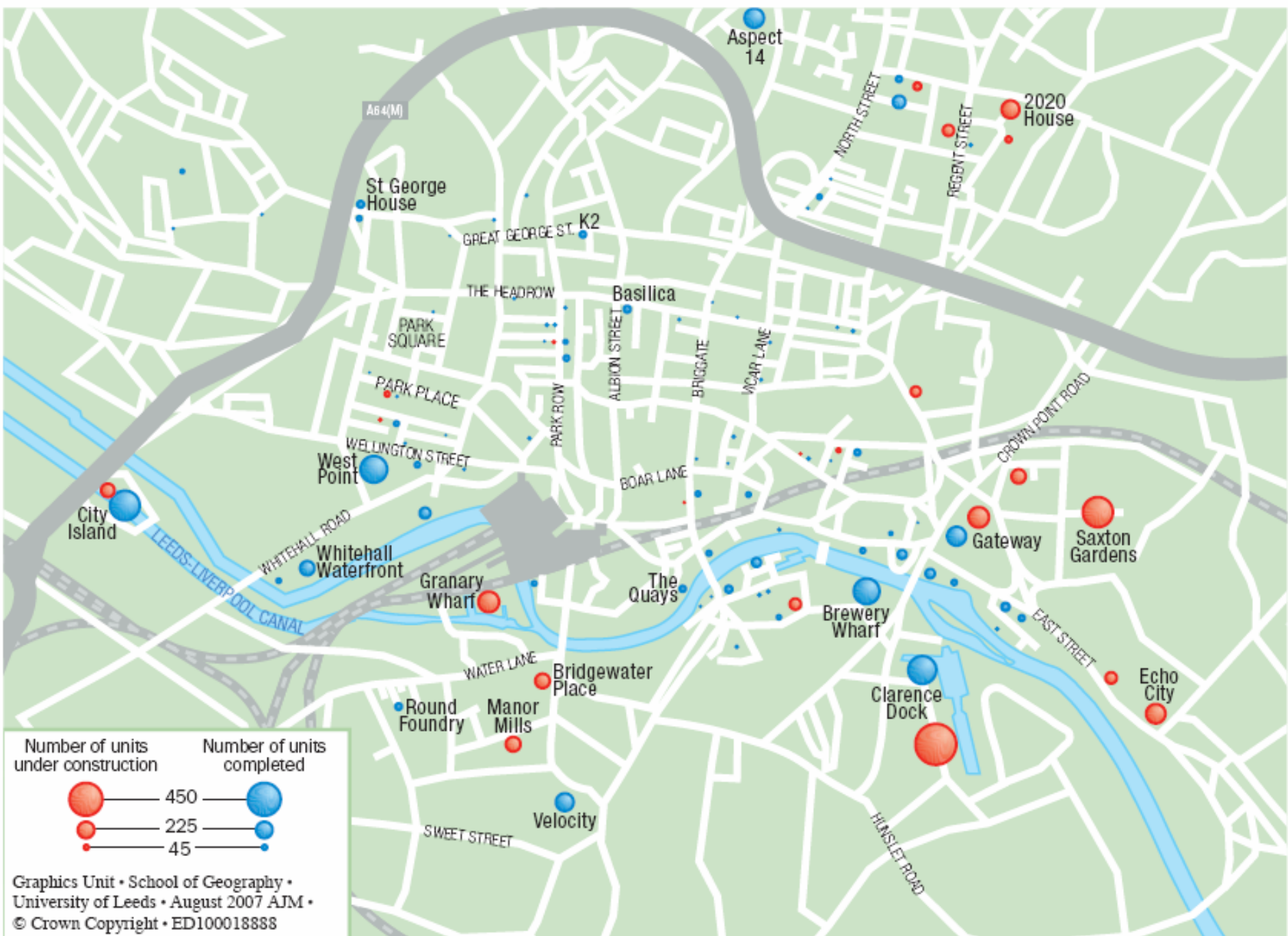
Occupier survey

- profile of city centre dwellers
- attitude to living in city centre
- influences on decision to live in city centre
- influences on decision to move out of city centre
- attitude towards parking and transport
- areas for improvement

610 questionnaires completed
(response rate 13.5%)



MAP 1: LOCATION OF CITY LIVING SCHEMES IN LEEDS: COMPLETED AND UNDER CONSTRUCTION



Graphics Unit • School of Geography • University of Leeds • August 2007 AJM • © Crown Copyright • ED100018888

Economically precarious

- Supply pipeline
- Nature of demand

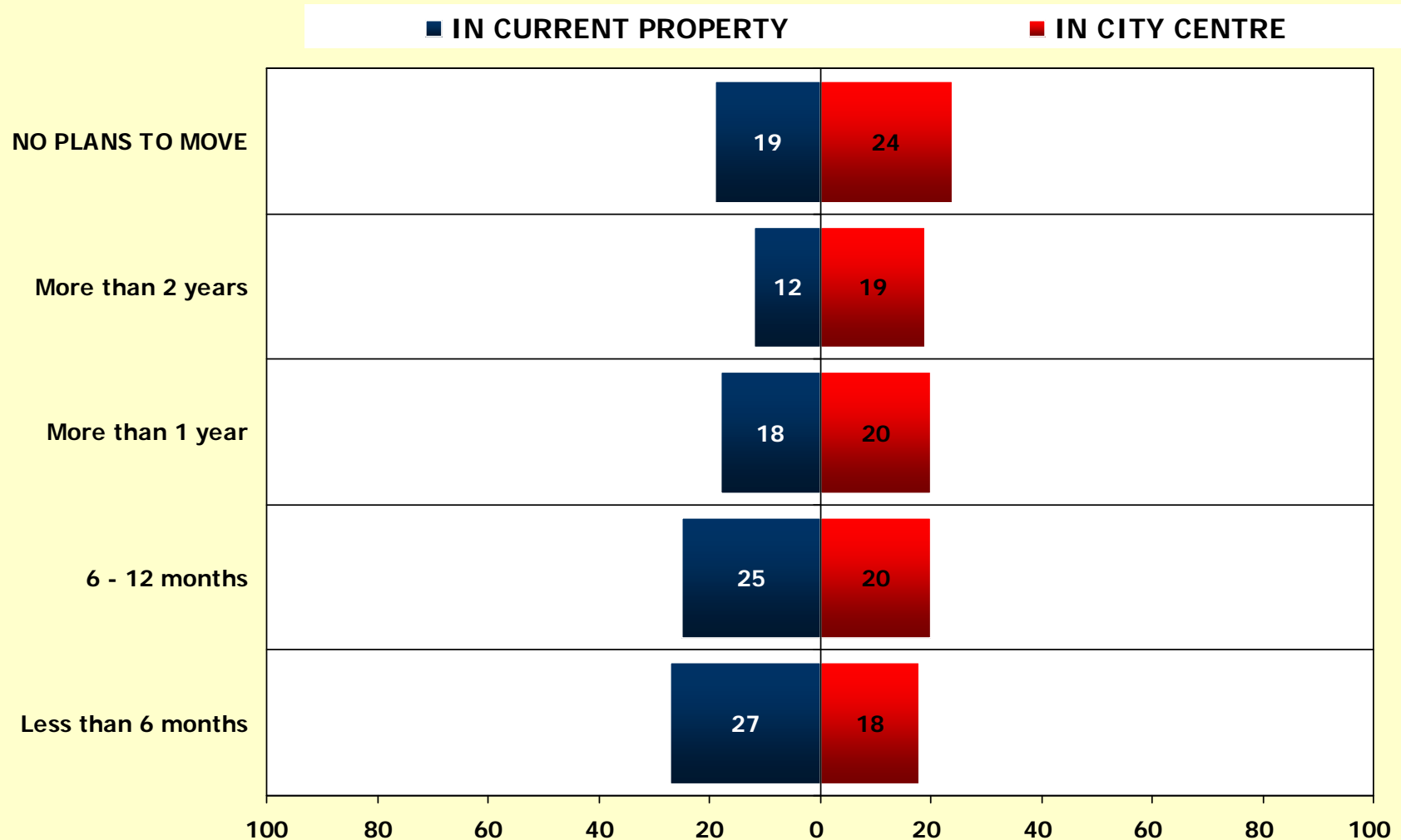


The state of the market

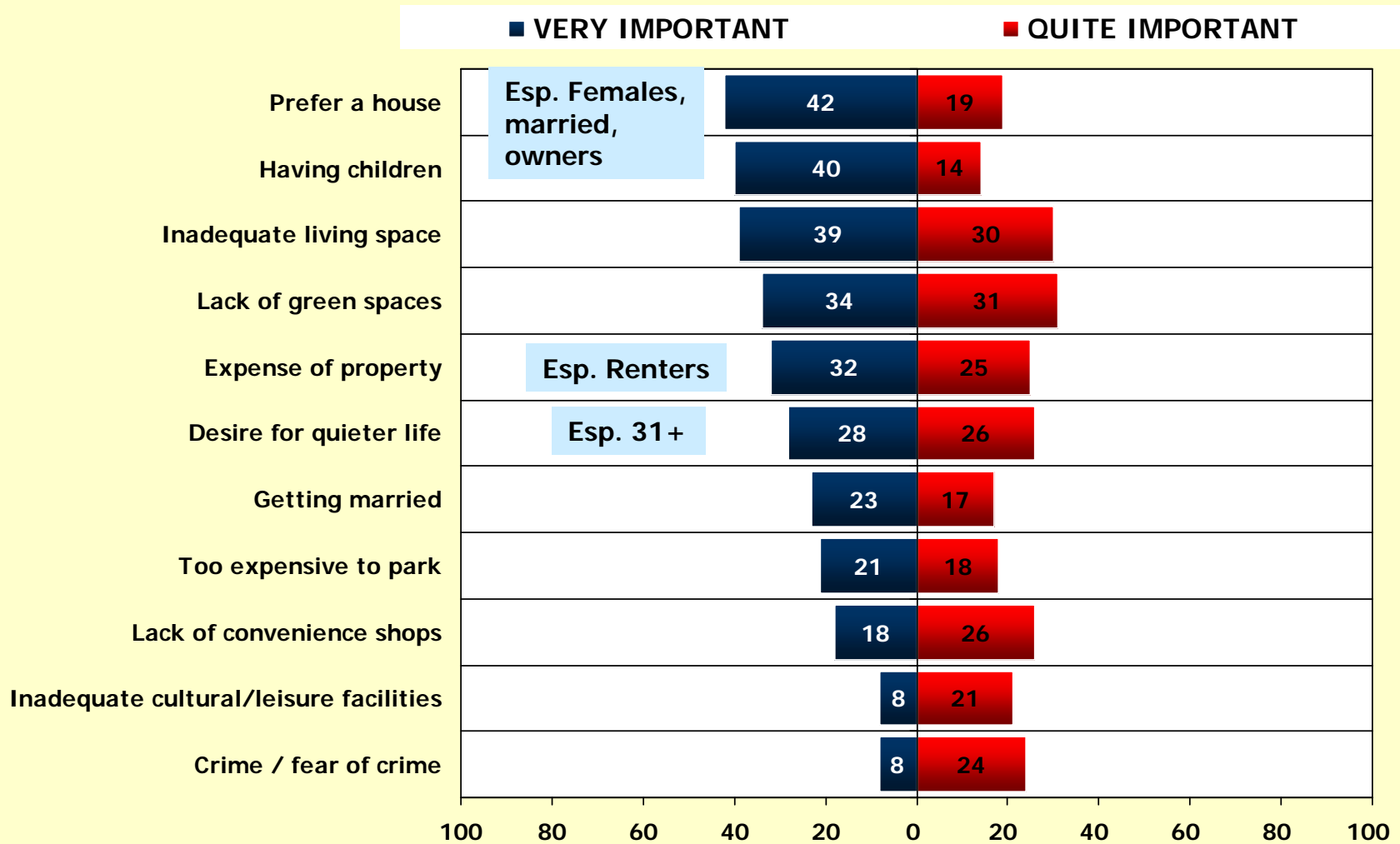
- demand driven by buy-to-let
- planning 'vacuum'
- sales 'off plan' slower
- still strong occupier demand, but supply expanding even faster and new schemes take time to fill up
- differentials opening up between better quality, better located properties & others with less appeal
- narrow demographic profile
- many occupiers will not stay long



How much longer do residents plan to stay in their current flat/in the city centre?



Factors likely to cause migration



Base = 470 – all who expressed plans to move

Socially elitist & lacking coherence

- Affordability
- Contrast with area beyond city centre



Average purchase prices

Total	£168,880
--------------	-----------------

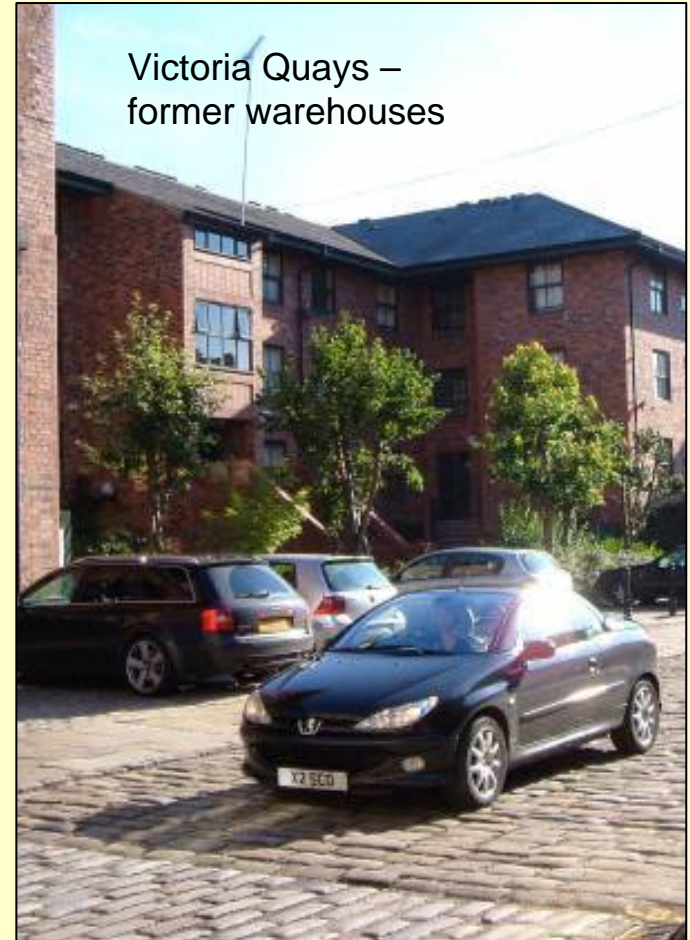
1 bedroom	£127,780
-----------	----------

2 bedrooms	£183,530
------------	----------

3 bedrooms	£234,000
------------	----------

With parking	£188,190
--------------	----------

No parking	£136,420
------------	----------

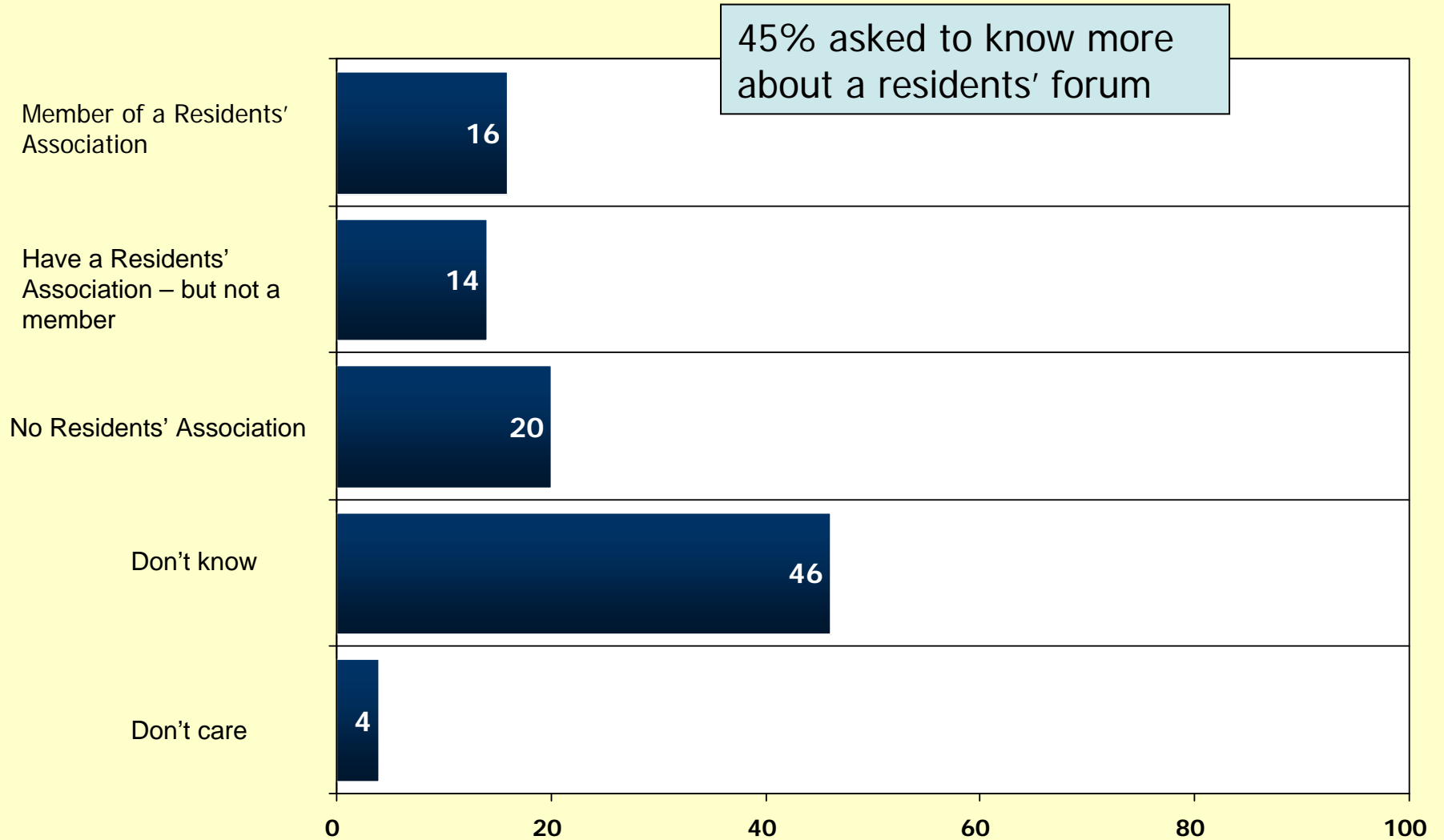


Average rents

Total	£662
1 bedroom	£540
2 bedrooms	£734
3 bedrooms	£983
With parking	£710
No parking	£588



A community?



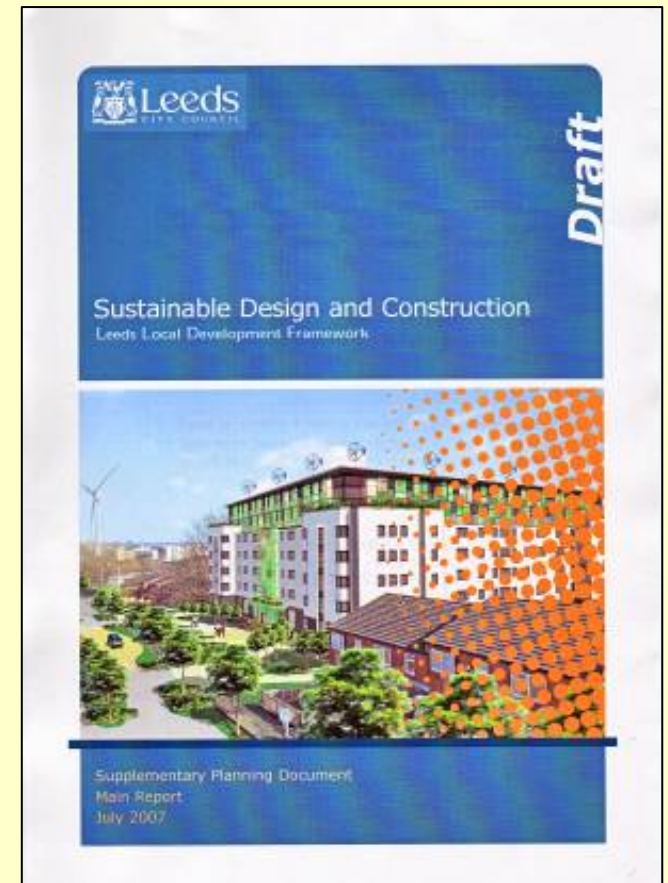
Environmentally ambiguous

- Lack of green building
- Insufficient good quality green open spaces
- Car ownership and use



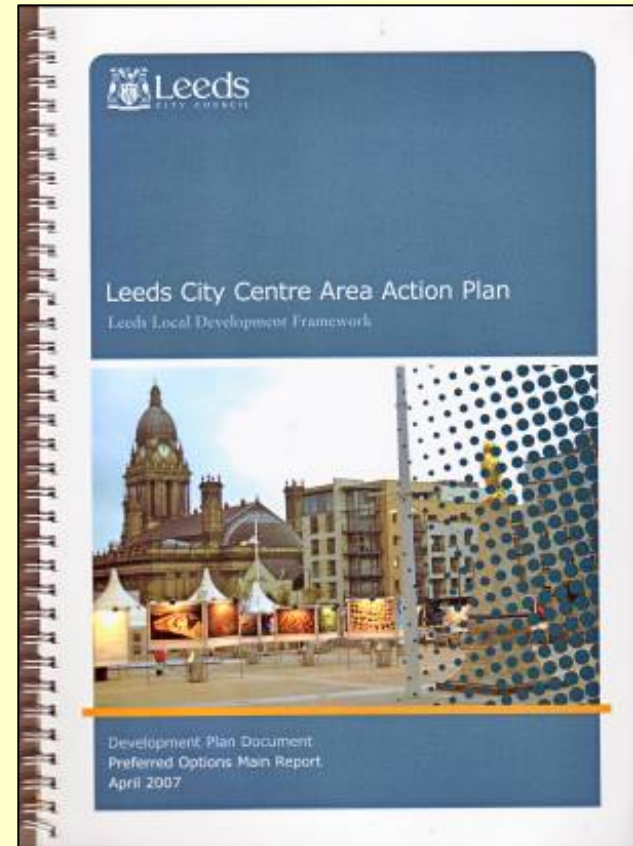
The environmental impact of city living

- building regulations belatedly catching up
- Supplementary Guidance in draft

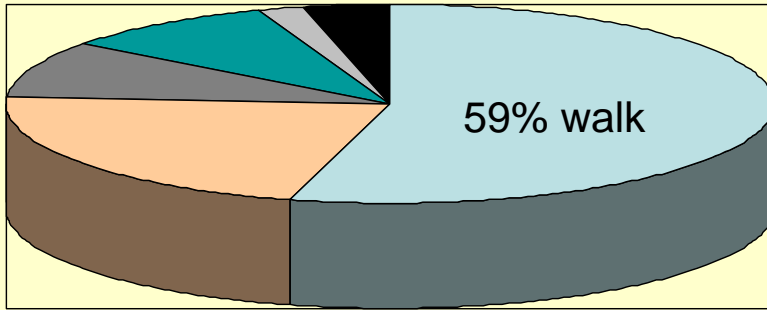


Green open spaces

- In 2005 survey lack of green open spaces given as top factor contributing to likelihood of moving out of city centre
- Needs to be a strong element of LDF



The journey to work

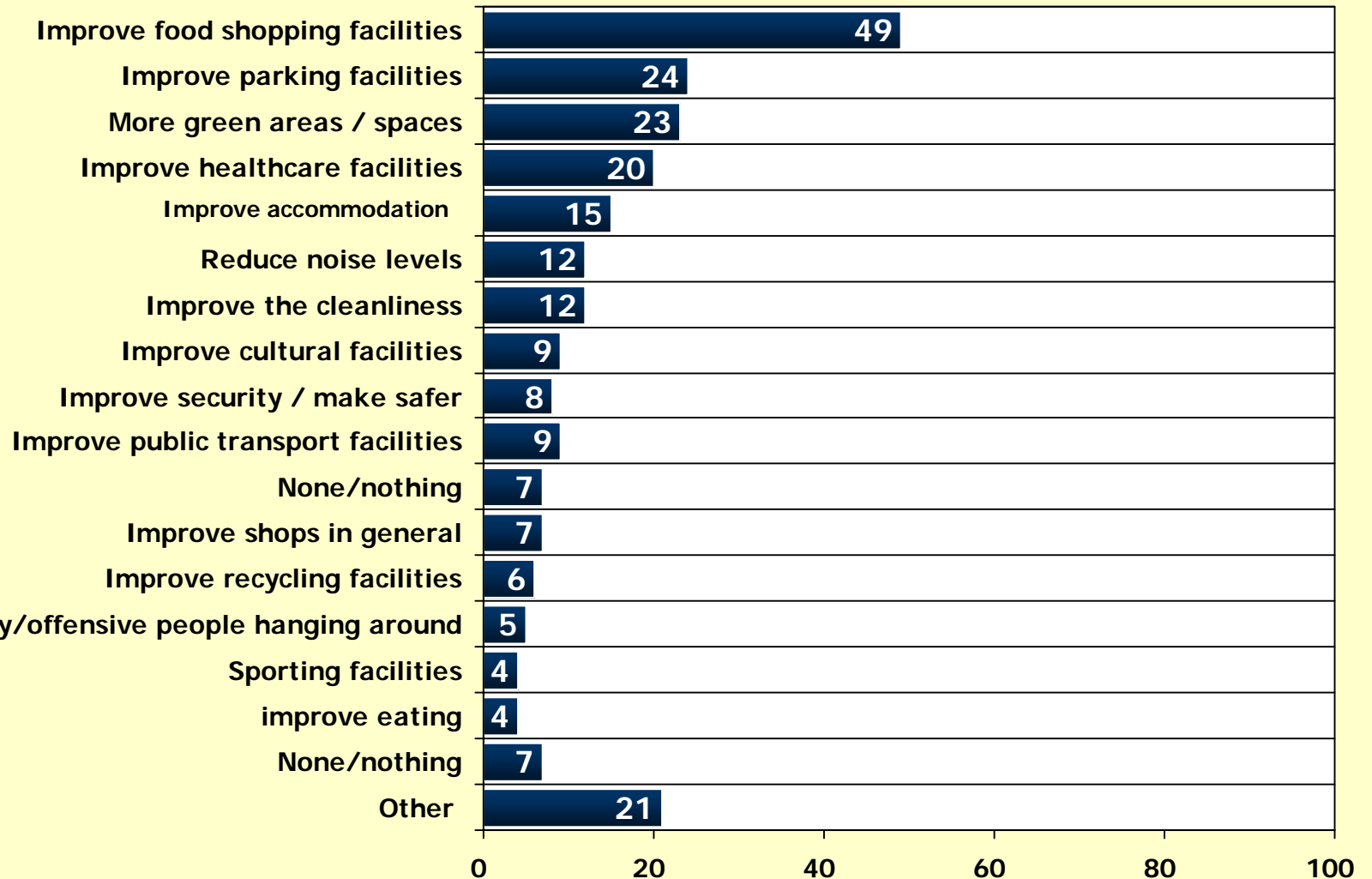


Walk Car Train Bus Bike Other



Heigh ho, heigh ho ...

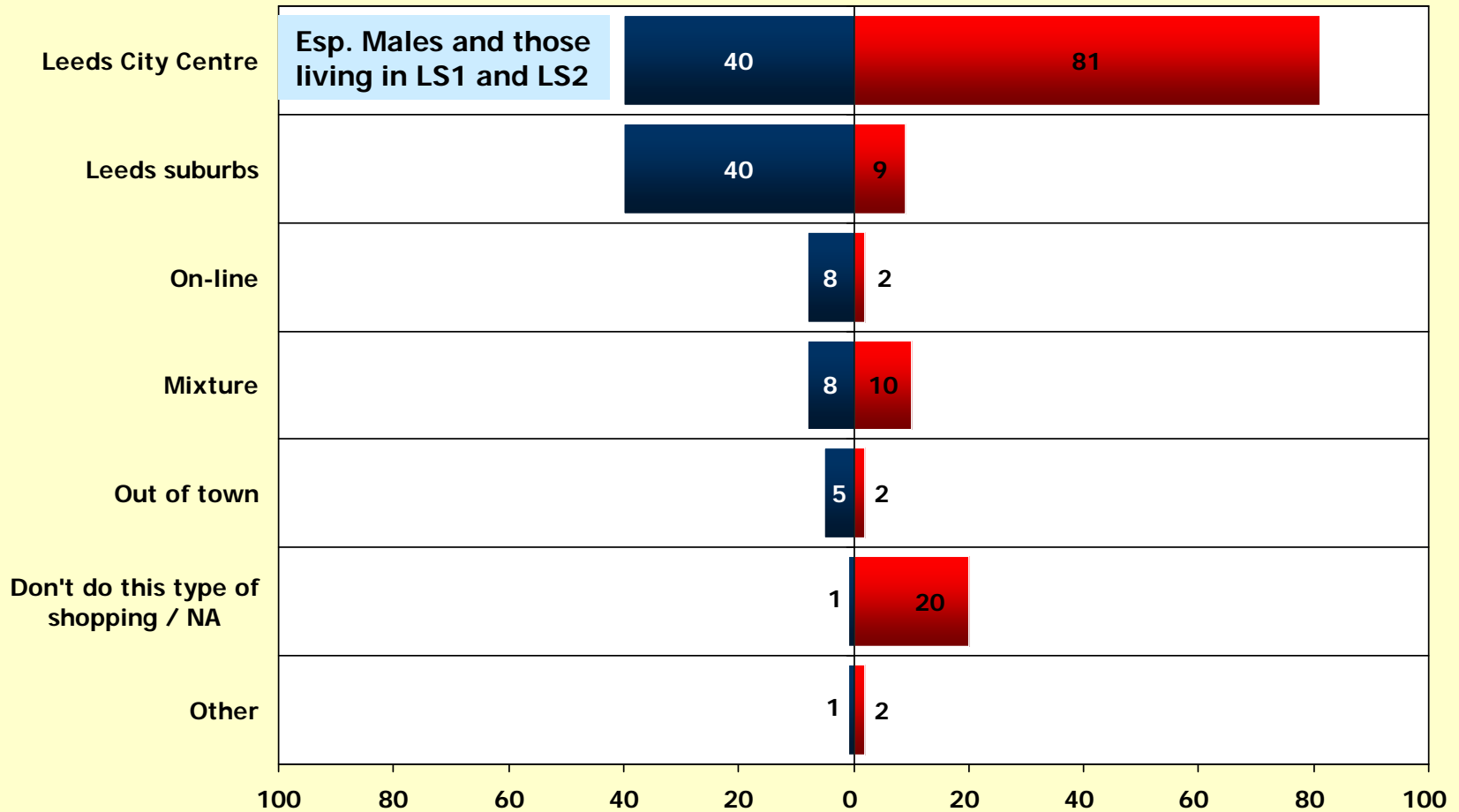
Factors that would improve city centre living



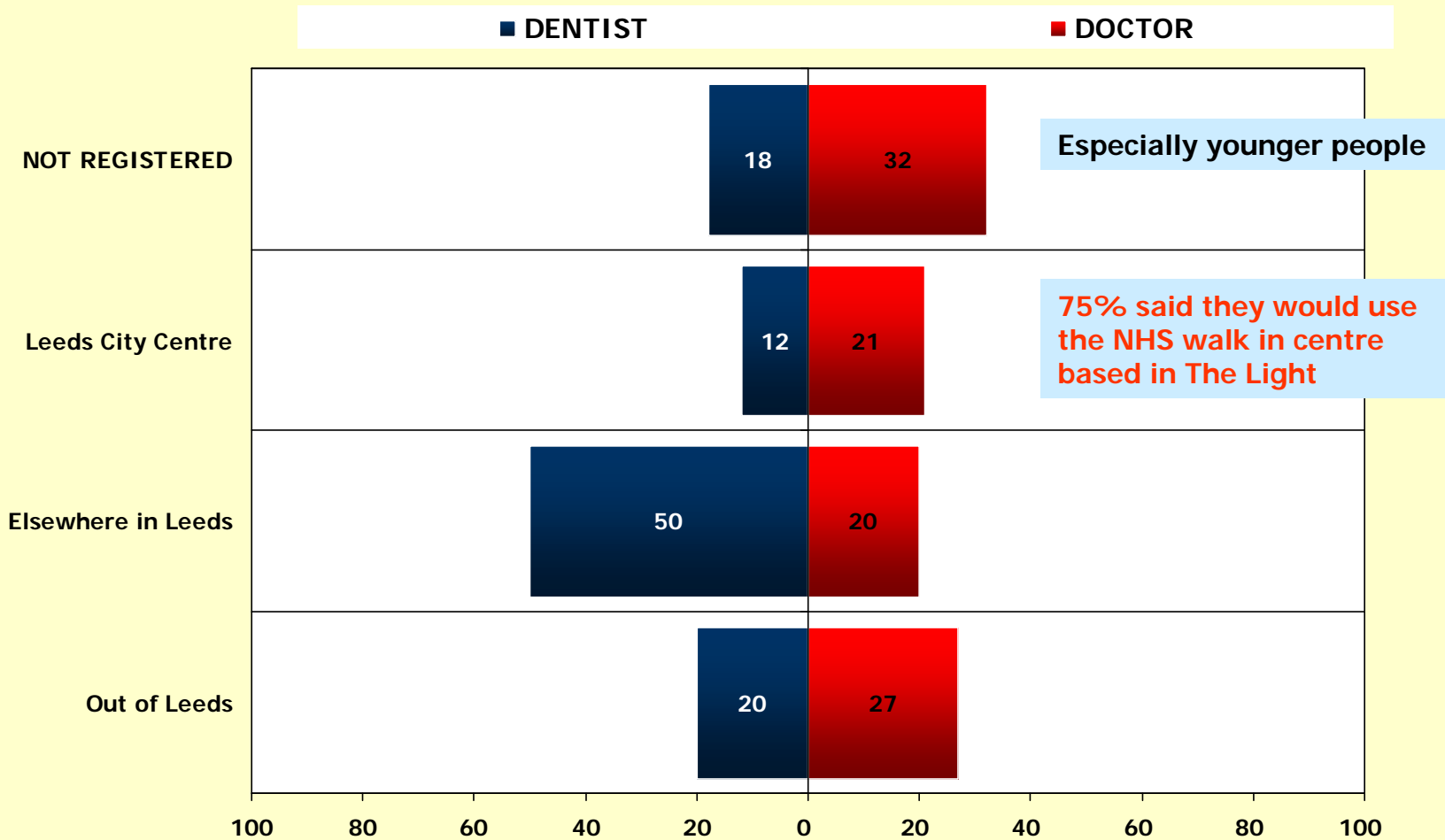
Locations used for food shopping

■ MAIN SHOPPING

■ TOP-UP SHOPPING



Medical facilities



Conclusions (1)

City living is a success on some measures:

- new households
- re-use of buildings and sites
- improved vitality and image
- reduced car dependency for travel to work

But

- a young market – families unlikely
- lack of affordable housing
- high turnover
- lack of 'green building' to date
- still high car ownership

Lumière – green credentials?



Conclusions (2)

- future demand, rents and values?
- transport system?
- high quality design and public realm?
- broadening of night-time economy?
- affordable housing?

Needs stronger steer from planners and more enlightened approach from developers



Turning a corner?

Tower Works



Thank you

- Funding:
KW Linfoot
Morgans City Living
- Data analysis:
Swift Research
WETHERBY, LS22 7DN
01937 543600
www.swift-research.co.uk
- The respondents

