HEALTH CHECK ASSESSMENTS

Introduction

Set out below is WYG’s assessment of the vitality and viability of ten of Northumberland’s town centres as specified in the tender, these being: Allendale; Bedlington Station; Bellingham; Corbridge; Ellington; Guide Post; Hadston; Haydon Bridge; Lynemouth; and Widdrington Station.

The Importance of Town Centres

The ten town centres have an important role to play in Northumberland in serving the needs of the local community. They form a focal point for the community and provide a wide range of services that are accessible to the local population, including retail, employment, leisure, education and transport.

Planning Policy Statement 6: Planning for Town Centres (PPS6) emphasises the need for local authorities to monitor the ‘health’ of their town centres and how they are changing over time. Vital and viable town centres help to foster civic pride and local identity and can contribute towards the aims of sustainable development.

Since the turn of the century, town centres nationally have generally performed strongly, with significant retail sales growth and the implementation of a large number of town centre redevelopment schemes. Therefore, despite the ongoing growth of out-of-centre retail development, there has been resurgence in development activity within established centres, primarily linked to the ambitious expansion plans of national department stores and key retailers such as Debenhams, Next, Primark and so on. However, more recently, the onset of the ‘credit crunch’ has impacted on consumer spending, which has in turn impacted on the vitality of the high street nationally. This has led to an increase in vacancy rates in many centres, as retailers struggle to compete in a challenging market and shop owners struggle to let their stores to retailers.
Purpose

It is important that established centres in Northumberland remain competitive and continue to attract and meet the needs of shoppers, visitors and businesses. To achieve this, town centres must continually strive to build on their strengths, alleviate their weaknesses and improve the facilities they provide to the community. Successful town centres must respond effectively to the changing needs and demands of their users.

The Northumberland Town Centre Health Check Assessment serves a number of important functions, these being to:

1. Help assess the success of retail policies in the Northumberland Consolidated Planning Policy Framework and to assist, where necessary, in the formulation of new policies;
2. Provide a starting point for any future retail strategy;
3. Provide useful baseline data against which annual monitoring can be undertaken to assess how the town centres are performing over time;
4. Allow positive and negative aspects of the town centres to be identified and, where appropriate, for action to be taken;
5. Provide data that can be used to compare the performance of town centres to other neighbouring centres in the County, to ensure that Northumberland’s centres remain competitive.
Regional Hierarchy

Table 1 illustrates the position of Northumberland’s main centres within the hierarchy of nationwide town centres based upon the Management Horizons Europe’s (MHE) UK Shopping Index (2008). The index ranks the top 6,721 retail venues within the UK (including town centres, stand-alone malls, retail warehouse parks and factory outlets), based on current retail provision. Towns and major shopping centres are rated using a straightforward weighted scoring system which takes account of each location’s provision of multiple retailers and anchor store strength. It should be noted that the 2004 data included only 1,672 centres.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Centre</th>
<th>MHE Score</th>
<th>Location Grade</th>
<th>Rank 2008</th>
<th>Rank 2004</th>
<th>Change in Rank 2004 - 2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Edinburgh</td>
<td>564</td>
<td>Major City</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Newcastle</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>Major Regional</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>-3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carlisle</td>
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<td>Regional</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>-11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ashington</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>District</td>
<td>424</td>
<td>336</td>
<td>-88</td>
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<tr>
<td>Berwick-upon-Tweed</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>District</td>
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<td>Hexham</td>
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<td>District</td>
<td>487</td>
<td>435</td>
<td>-52</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cramlington</td>
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<td>District</td>
<td>532</td>
<td>502</td>
<td>-30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>District</td>
<td>553</td>
<td>421</td>
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<tr>
<td>Morpeth</td>
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<td>694</td>
<td>664</td>
<td>-30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alnwick</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Minor District</td>
<td>943</td>
<td>743</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bedlington</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Local</td>
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<td>Amble</td>
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<td>2,779</td>
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<td><strong>Corbridge</strong></td>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td><strong>Minor Local</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,120</strong></td>
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<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Haltwhistle</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Minor Local</td>
<td>3,321</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prudhoe</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Minor Local</td>
<td>3,321</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wooler</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Minor Local</td>
<td>3,321</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>Rothbury</td>
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<td>3,575</td>
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<td><strong>Haydon Bridge</strong></td>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
<td><strong>Minor Local</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,870</strong></td>
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<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seahouses</td>
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<td>Belford</td>
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<td>4,226</td>
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<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Bellingham</strong></td>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
<td><strong>Minor Local</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,666</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seaton Delaval</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Minor Local</td>
<td>5,257</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: Management Horizons Europe: UK Shopping Index (2008)

Of 6,721 shopping venues surveyed, Corbridge is ranked 3,120th, which places it within the top 47% of all UK shopping venues. Haydon Bridge is ranked 3,870th, which places it within the top 58% of all UK shopping venues. Bellingham is placed within the top 70% of all UK shopping venues and is ranked 4,666th. These three centres are all identified as a ‘minor local centre’ by MHE, and none of these centres were surveyed in 2004. The remaining seven centres were not surveyed by MHE in either 2004 or 2008.
ALLENDALE HEALTH CHECK ASSESSMENT

Date of Site Visit: 23 September 2009

Status: Town Centre (Tynedale District Local Plan (2000))

Centre Overview

Allendale is located approximately 10 miles to the south west of Hexham, and acts as a service centre for the local population and a destination for tourists. Allerdale is identified as a defined centre by the Tynedale Local Plan (2000) which has now become part of the Consolidated Planning Policy Framework for Northumberland (April 2009). Much of its initial development was focussed around the Market Place; however, this is now used as a car park and bus stop. The centre is accessed off the B6295, which is off the A686. The B6303 provides a 'loop' road off the B6295, presumably making it easier for heavy goods vehicles to service the town, given the location of a number of tricky bends and a small road bridge on the B6295. At the time of the 2001 census, the Allendale Ward had a population of 2,402.

The main focus for retailing in Allendale is the Market Place. There are also a couple of retail units off Shield Street, which is the main through road to Allendale Town Centre.
Photographs of Allendale Town Centre

Photos removed for distribution purposes.

**Figure 1 (top left):** Market Place, Shield Street
**Figure 2 (top centre):** Allendale Gift Shop, Market Place/Shield Street junction
**Figure 3 (top right):** Co-op store, Market Place
**Figure 4 (bottom left):** Pebbles Art Gallery, Shield Street
**Figure 5 (bottom right):** Car park, Market Place
Figure 6: Land Use Plan for Allendale Town Centre (2009)

Source: WYG site visit (September 2009)
Table 2: Diversity of Uses in Allendale Town Centre (2009)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Outlets</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Allendale (%)</th>
<th>UK (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Convenience</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparison</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>34.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Service</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure Services</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>21.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial and Business Services</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>11.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>16</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: WYG site visit (September 2009)

Table 3: Existing Floorspace in Allendale Town Centre (2009)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Existing Floorspace</th>
<th>Sq m</th>
<th>Allendale (%)</th>
<th>UK (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Convenience</td>
<td>598</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparison</td>
<td>468</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>37.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Service</td>
<td>657</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure Services</td>
<td>1,094</td>
<td>37.2</td>
<td>22.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial and Business Services</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,940</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: WYG site visit (September 2009)

Figure 7: Use of Units in Allendale Town Centre (2009)

Source: WYG site visit (September 2009)

Figure 8: Use of Floorspace in Allendale Town Centre (2009)

Source: WYG site visit (September 2009)
Convenience
12.5% of units are used for the sale of convenience goods in Allendale, which is slightly higher than the national average of 8.8%. The proportion of floorspace, at 20.3%, is also greater than the national average of 14.2%. This sector contains the principal grocery store, the Allendale Co-Operative Society, along with the local butcher, Cranstons.

Comparison
Comparison stores in Allendale occupy 25.0% of units, which is lower than the national average of 34.5%. Comparison goods floorspace comprises 15.9% of all floorspace, which is less than half of the national average of 37.7%. The sector is dominated by independent stores and traders include a chemist, an art sales shop, a newsagent and a gift shop.

Overall Service
The service sector comprises 10 units and occupies 1,874 sq m of floorspace. The proportion of service outlets (62.6%) is above the national average (45.7%). Likewise, the proportion of service floorspace (63.7%) is also above the national average (38.4%).

Retail Service
The proportion of retail service units (18.8%) is above the national average (13.0%). The amount of floorspace in use in this sector amounts to 22.3%, which was significantly higher than the national average of 7.0%. This sector includes an independent garage located off the Market Place, where the proprietor has exploited a ‘niche’ market and sells/rents out quad bikes for use. Other units comprise a hairdressers and a post office.

Leisure Services
Leisure services are particularly dominant in Allendale, with the proportion of units dedicated to this use (37.5%) being above the national average (21.5%). Likewise, the proportion of floorspace occupied (37.2%) is also above the national average (22.7%). The leisure service offer within Allendale comprises a number of independents including public houses, a hotel and a café.

Financial Services
Just one unit, a high street bank, falls within this sector. This sector is under-represented in Allendale with the proportion of units occupied (6.3%) being below the national average (11.2%).

Non-Retail
There was one non-retail use within the town centre boundary, Allendale Library, which has limited hours of opening, being open on a Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday.
Vacancies

The number of vacant units within a centre can provide a good indication of how a shopping centre is performing. However, care should be taken when interpreting figures. Vacancies can occur for positive as well as negative reasons; for example, the opening of a new retail centre elsewhere in a town may draw retailers from older properties or more peripheral areas of the city. Vacant units will be found in even the strongest of town centres. However, they can be a useful indicator of the level of demand. For example, some properties may lay vacant because they are poorly maintained, unsuited to modern retailing requirements or are simply not being actively marketed. Conversely, a low vacancy rate does not necessarily mean that a centre is performing well. For example, if there is a proliferation of charity shops and other uses not usually associated with a town centre it may be a sign of decline, particularly where these uses are located in prime locations.

Table 4: Vacancies in Allendale Town Centre (2009)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vacancy</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Allendale (%)</th>
<th>UK (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of Outlets</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Floorspace (sq m)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: WYG site visit (September 2009)

Table 4 illustrates that, at September 2009, there were no vacant units within Allendale Town Centre. There is however a vacant site, which has planning permission for a new art gallery and design studio. The applicant is Allendale Creative Artists CIC Ltd, which already operates a gallery in the centre and which is looking to expand its business.
### Business Survey Results

A questionnaire was distributed to all local businesses within Allendale in order to gain an understanding of the opinions of retailers. A total of 18 questionnaires were distributed, with 3 being returned: a response rate of 17%. The main findings of the business survey results were as follows:

- A third (33%) of respondents indicated that their business was a food retailer. A further 33% were non-food retailers and 33% were retail services. There were no respondents from leisure services, professional services or charity shops;
- All respondents were independent traders;
- Two thirds (67%) of respondents had been trading in the town centre in excess of twenty years, with 33% having been in operation for over one year;
- 67% of respondents owned their premises, whilst 33% leased their premises;
- Two thirds (67%) of traders stated that since they began trading business had ‘grown moderately’, with 33% indicating that business had ‘remained largely static’;
- 67% of respondents indicated that their business was currently trading ‘well’ with 33% stating that their business was currently performing ‘moderately’;
- The survey indicated that two thirds (67%) of traders relied upon residents from in or around Allendale Town Centre for the majority of their business, although a further 33% relied primarily on specialist buyers;
- When asked about measures that would improve the town centre, 11% of respondents stated that improved street paving would have this effect. Other measures suggested included more street cleaning (11%) and improved street furniture (7%);
- All of the respondents felt that there was a goods balance between shops and other non-retail uses;
- Respondents identified the main barriers to trading performance as being high rents/overheads (20%), a lack of passing trade outside premises (20%), competition from other traders in the town centre (20%), the inadequacy of current premises (20%) and the internet (20%);
- Half of respondents indicated that they had no plans to alter their business in any way over the next five years, with another half planning to refurbish their existing floorspace;
- When asked if their business currently has its own website, 67% stated yes, with 33% stating that their business does not currently have its own website;
- Of those who did have a website, two thirds (67%) stated that their website contains contact information, with 33% stating that their website provides to ability to browse goods available at their premises;
- Half of respondents said that their website was important to their business, however 50% of respondents said that their website was of little importance to their business;
- All respondents indicated that their website attracts customers from a wider catchment, i.e. beyond Northumberland;
All respondents stated that customers visit their store as a result of browsing their website; Up to 10% of sales are from the internet according to all respondents; and Of those respondents who did not have a website, the reason all respondents gave was because a website was not relevant/necessary.

The business survey asked respondents to rate a number of different aspects of Allendale in terms of whether they were considered to be ‘good’, ‘average’ or ‘poor’. The majority of aspects were rated as being ‘average’ by the largest proportion of respondents. However, a number of aspects were rated as being ‘poor’ by the greatest proportion of respondents. These aspects were: the cleanliness of the public realm (100%), the number of fast-food shops (100%) and the number of multiple traders (100%). Respondents were also able to add any additional comments they wished to make at the end of the survey, however no further comments were made.

In Street Survey Results

Introduction
- Of respondents questioned, 37% live in Allendale but do not work there;
- 39% of respondents never visit Allendale in the evening. However, 62% visit Allendale every day in the daytime;
- The main reason provided for visiting Allendale is for food shopping only (42%), followed by work (21%) and then for social reasons (11%).

Accessibility
- The majority of respondents travelled into the centre by car (74%), with a further 21% walking to the centre;
- All respondents who drove parked in Allendale Town Centre;
- The majority of respondents (89%) did not think anything could be improved as part of their shopping experience in Allendale, with a further 11% indicating that they did not know what they would like to see improved;
- The following are the aspects of the town centre which were most frequently rated as being ‘good’ or ‘very good’ by respondents: safety and security in the daytime (95%); the availability of public parking spaces; and the safety/security of parking facilities (84%);
- The following are the aspects of the town centre which were most frequently rated as being ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’ by respondents: the quality of bus services (11%); the regularity of bus services (11%); and the destinations to and from Allendale served by public transport (11%).
Almost half of respondents (47%) thought that Allendale does not offer a wide choice of quality shops;

The majority of respondents (79%) planned to spend less than £25 in Allendale during their visit.

Leisure

- The majority of respondents (79%) do, on occasion, visit Allendale for leisure/cultural events. Of those which do, 53% visit events which were not specified on the survey, 27% said that they visit their local pub in Allendale and 13% attend concerts in Allendale;
- 79% of respondents did not know which additional events/activities they would like to see in Allendale on a regular basis. 5% of respondents stated that they wished to see more active outdoor sessions;
- Visits to cafes (63%) and pubs and clubs (47%) were the leisure/cultural activities which were most frequently rated as being ‘good’ or ‘very good’ by respondents;
- Only pubs and clubs (5%) were rated as ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’ by respondents.

Local Environment

- The following factors affecting the environmental quality of Allendale were most frequently rated by respondents as either being ‘good’ or ‘very good’: litter (58%); graffiti/fly posting (58%); and the overall level of cleanliness (58%);
- The only environmental quality factor rated as ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’ was the general quality of the footways/paving (16%);
- In terms of how Allendale is used, the largest proportion of respondents felt that as a place to live (68%) or as a place to shop (53%) Allendale is ‘good’ or ‘very good’;
- However, 5% of respondents felt that Allendale is ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’ as a place to visit (5%);
- Over the last twelve months, the majority of respondents (74%) felt that the overall attractiveness of the town had stayed the same, with 16% stating that the attractiveness of Allendale had improved and 11% did not know either way;
- To make Allendale better, the largest proportion of respondents (11%) considered that Allendale needs improved parking, with 5% stating that improved pavements would improve the centre.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accessibility</th>
<th>Environmental Quality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Car:** Allendale is situated circa 11 miles south west of Hexham, with the A69 (which connects to the A1(M) and M6 motorway networks being located a short distance to the north. The A686 runs southwards from the A69, which leads to Allendale via a ‘B’ road. Allendale is not therefore readily accessible to the main road network. However, as part of the in-street survey, 84.2% of respondents who travelled to Allendale felt it was easy to access, presumably due to their proximity to the centre and the relative lack of traffic.  

**Car parks:** A limited amount of parking is available in the Market Place itself, though this was dominated by a number of caravans on visit. Street parking is readily available on Shield Street, to the front of Arnison Terrace, and on the day of visit appeared busy.  

**Public transport:** There are bus stops at the Market Place, with services heading in northerly and southerly directions. This includes an hourly service to Hexham, and a service every 90 minutes to Allenheads.  |

Allendale is a small local centre used primarily to serve the needs of local people, though, given the surrounding countryside, it also provides for recreational visitors. The town centre is focused around the Market Place and parts of Shield Street. None of the centre is pedestrianised, but given the relatively low levels of traffic which use the Market Place this is not considered to be a problem. Shield Street itself is fairly busy, and it may be that a pedestrian crossing would be of benefit. Retail units are fairly randomly interspersed with dwellings, with pub/hotel buildings being to some degree dominant. There is a single infill redevelopment site available to the west of the market place. Street furniture and landscaping is limited. A Public toilet is located adjacent to the library. The streets are relatively litter-free and the town centre itself is well maintained. At the time of the survey, there was no evidence of graffiti or crime. There is little evidence of street lighting, which may make the centre less safe for visitors at night-time. |
**BEDLINGTON STATION HEALTH CHECK ASSESSMENT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of Site Visit:</th>
<th>22 September 2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Status:</strong></td>
<td>Town Centre (Wansbeck District Local Plan (2007))</td>
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**Centre Overview**

Bedlington Station is located adjacent to the nearby town of Bedlington. The centre is defined as a Town Centre in the Wansbeck District Local Plan (July 2007), which has now become part of the Consolidated Planning Policy Framework for Northumberland (April 2009). The centre has developed around the (now disused) train station, with trains passing through the centre directly across Station Road. The centre benefits from strong road links with the A1147 and the A189 (which links to the A1) accessed off the eastern end of Clayton Street. At the time of the 2001 census, Bedlington Station had a population of 5,316 (derived from the appropriate Wansbeck Super Output Areas).

The main focus for retailing in Bedlington Station comprises Station Road, Station Street, Ravensworth Terrace and Clayton Street. A land use plan of Bedlington Station is provided overleaf.
Photographs of Bedlington Station Town Centre

Photos removed for distribution purposes.

**Figure 9 (top left):** Former railway station, Station Street
**Figure 10 (top centre):** Retail frontages, Station Street
**Figure 11 (top right):** Vacant unit, Ravensworth Terrace
**Figure 12 (bottom left):** Landscaped area, Station Street
**Figure 13 (bottom right):** Retail frontages, Palace Road
Figure 14: Land Use Plan for Bedlington Station Town Centre (2009)

Source: WYG site visit (September 2009)
### Table 5: Diversity of Uses in Bedlington Station Town Centre (2009)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Outlets</th>
<th>Bedlington Station (%)</th>
<th>UK (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Convenience</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparison</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>23.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Retail Service</td>
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<td>15.4</td>
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<td>Leisure Services</td>
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<td>35.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Financial and Business Services</td>
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<td>0.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vacant</td>
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<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>39</td>
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</table>

Source: WYG site visit (September 2009)

### Table 6: Existing Floorspace in Bedlington Station Town Centre (2009)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Existing Floorspace</th>
<th>Sq m</th>
<th>Bedlington Station (%)</th>
<th>UK (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Convenience</td>
<td>1,295</td>
<td>27.1</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparison</td>
<td>1,075</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>37.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Service</td>
<td>398</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure Services</td>
<td>1,767</td>
<td>37.0</td>
<td>22.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial and Business Services</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4,777</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: WYG site visit (September 2009)

### Figure 15: Use of Units in Bedlington Station Town Centre (2009)

- **Bedlington Station**
- **National Average (2009)**

Source: WYG site visit (September 2009)

### Figure 16: Use of Floorspace in Bedlington Station Town Centre (2009)

- **Bedlington Station**
- **National Average (2009)**

Source: WYG site visit (September 2009)
### Convenience
18.0% of retail units in Bedlington Station are in use for the sale of convenience goods which is greater than the national average (8.8%). The proportion of floorspace dedicated to this use (27.1%) is significantly higher than the national average (14.2%). The sector is dominated by the Co-op store and Premier store (both Station Road) and Londis (Clayton Street). Other convenience traders in the centre include local independent butchers, bakers, greengrocers and a pet supplies store.

### Comparison
Comparison stores in Bedlington Station occupy 23.1% of units, which is below the national average of 34.5%. In terms of floorspace, this is again below the national average, with 22.5% being occupied by the sale of comparison goods compared to the UK benchmark of 37.7%. The comparison goods offer in Bedlington Station includes a Boots store and several independent stores. Both Station Motorcycles and Michael Metcalf Carpet Shop were both closed on the day of visit, but did not appear to be vacant.

### Overall Service
The service sector comprises 20 units and occupies 2,165 sq m of floorspace. The proportion of service outlets (51.3%) is slightly above the national average (45.7%). Similarly, the proportion of service floorspace (45.3%) is also above national average (38.4%).

### Retail Service
Retail services in Bedlington Station comprise 15.4% of all outlets and 8.3% of all floorspace, which compares with respective national averages of 13.0% and 7.0%. These services include independent hairdressers, ‘health and beauty’ traders and a funeral director. The majority of this offer is located along Ravensworth Terrace, to the north of the centre.

### Leisure Services
The proportion of Bedlington Station outlets within this sector (15.4%) is above the national average (13.0%). Similarly, the proportion of floorspace in this sector (37.0%) is above the national average (22.7%). Hot food/take aways occupy eight units in this sector, and there are also two pubs and a working mans club within the town centre.

### Financial Services
There are no financial service units in Bedlington Station.

### Non-Retail
Non-retail uses include the medical centre, library and a taxi service. There are also several residential properties included within the town centre boundary.
At the time of survey, Bedlington Station had three vacant retail units in the town centre, occupying a total of 242 sq m of floorspace. This represents 7.7% of units and 5.1% of floorspace, compared with respective national averages of 10.8% and 9.0%. Two of the vacant units are located on Clayton Street, with the other being located on Station Road. WYG has spoken with local agents, Mike Rogerson Estate Agents and Property Consultants, and understands that there have been several offers for the vacant properties, all of which are considered too low by the vendor. The units on Clayton Street do not appear to be being actively marketed.

In addition, it is also evident that a unit outside the town centre boundary (at Station Street) is being marketed for A1/A2 use. Furthermore, the former railway station building lies disused and has the potential to enhance the retail offer within Bedlington Station given its prominent town centre location. On the day of survey, two units (Michael Metcalf Carpet Shop and Station Motorcycles) were closed, which could be a sign of reduced opening hours or that the units have recently been vacated. According to the local agent (Mike Rogerson), the Station Motorcycles unit has been re-let, though he does not know for what use.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vacancies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 7: Vacancies in Bedlington Station Town Centre (2009)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of Outlets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Floorspace (sq m)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: WYG site visit (September 2009)
### Business Survey Results

No business surveys were returned for this centre.

### In Street Survey Results

#### Introduction
- 88% of those questioned live in Bedlington Station but don't work there;
- 40% of respondents never visit Bedlington Station in the evening. However, 72% visit Bedlington Station every day in the daytime;
- The main reason respondents visit Bedlington Station is for food shopping only (72%), followed by non-food shopping only (12%) and then for work purposes (8%).

#### Accessibility
- The majority of respondents walked to centre on the day of survey (88%), with a further 12% travelling to the centre by car;
- Two thirds of respondents (67%) parked in Bedlington Station Town Centre, with a third (33%) parking in other places;
- 40% of respondents stated that they want to see illegal parking eradicated to improve their shopping experience in Bedlington Station. In addition to this, 28% suggested that better shops are required and 20% stated a need for increased safety and security;
- The following are the aspects of the town centre which were most frequently rated as being ‘good’ or ‘very good’ by respondents: the quality of bus services (76%); the regularity of bus services (76%); and the destinations to and from Bedlington Station served by public transport (72%);
- The following are the aspects of the town centre which were most frequently rated as being ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’ by respondents: safety and security in the night-time (56%); the availability of public parking spaces (8%) and street furniture (4%).
All the respondents thought that Bedlington Station did not offer a wide choice of quality shops;

All of the respondents planned to spend less than £25 during their visit to Bedlington Station.

**Leisure**

- No respondents ever visit Bedlington Station to participate in leisure/cultural events;
- Respondents failed to suggest any events/activities that they would like to see take place in the town centre on a regular basis;
- The leisure/cultural destinations which were most frequently rated as being ‘good’ or ‘very good’ by respondents were sandwich shops (40%) and takeaways (24%);
- The leisure/cultural destinations which were most frequently rated as being ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’ by respondents were cafes (16%) and restaurants (8%).

**Local Environment**

- In terms of factors affecting the environmental quality of Bedlington Station, the only factor respondents rated as ‘good’ or ‘very good’ was the general quality of the footways/paving (4%)’
- Factors rated as ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’ by the majority of respondents include: the general state of the buildings (96%); the level of graffiti/fly posting (88%); and the overall level of cleanliness (84%);
- When asked about how Bedlington Station is used, 28% of respondents considered that it is a ‘good’ or ‘very good’ place to live and 4% stated the same in terms of it being a place to enjoy yourself;
- However, the majority of respondents considered that, as a place to shop (92%) or as a place to visit (72%), Bedlington Station is ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’;
- In the last twelve months, the majority of respondents (72%) felt that the overall attractiveness of the town had stayed the same, with 20% stating that the attractiveness of the centre had declined. 8% felt that the attractiveness of Bedlington Station had improved;
- More than half of respondents thought that a better retail offer was required to make Bedlington Station better, with 52% believing that improved leisure facilities would improve the centre.
Accessibility

**Car:** Bedlington Station is situated near the junction of the A1147 and the A189. The A189 connects to Ashington to the north and Blyth, Cramlington and Newcastle (via the A19/A1) to the south. The A1(M) is the nearest motorway to the south of Newcastle, providing links to Scotland and the rest of the UK. All respondents to the in-street survey stated Bedlington Station was 'very easy' or 'fairly easy' to access.

**Car parks:** There are two main shoppers’ car parks in Bedlington Station, off Clayton Street and Ravensworth Terrace. In addition, there is a shoppers’ car park located to the rear of the Co-op store on Station Road. It was noted that all car parks were well used, though in the case of the Ravensworth Terrace car park, this may be related to residential uses to the rear, or through the use of the car park by shop employees. Parking on-street is also possible, principally at the periphery of Bedlington Station.

**Public transport:** There are four bus stops (two in either direction) along Station Road and Station Street, and two bus stops opposite the Clayton Arms along Palace road which serve destinations en route to Blyth, Newbiggin, Ashington, and Wansbeck Hospital. The local railway line is no longer in use.

Environmental Quality

Bedlington Station is a small local centre used primarily to serve the needs of local people. The town centre is focussed on Station Road, Station Street (which runs into Ravensworth Terrace on the opposing side of the road), Palace Road and Clayton Street. The centre is dominated by the train line which runs through the centre. None of the centre is pedestrianised. Pavement widths and quality vary, with a change in paving style evident outside shops on the eastern side of the train line. Traffic islands at Station Road and Clayton Street facilitate the crossing of pedestrians adequately. The streets were relatively litter free (though this was not the case in the car parks) and bins were well used on the day of survey.

Retail units take the form of the ground floor of terraced properties and there is some variety in terms of how well they are maintained. Generally speaking, units along Station Road, Station Street and Ravensworth Terrace are well maintained, and Clayton Street and Palace Road less so. Street furniture includes bins, benches, bus shelters and landscaping. In terms of evident criminal activity small amounts of graffiti were found, particularly to the rears and side walls of shop units.
BELLINGHAM HEALTH CHECK ASSESSMENT

Date of Site Visit: 22 September 2009

Status: Town Centre (Tynedale District Local Plan (2000))

Centre Overview

Bellingham is identified as a town centre by the Tynedale Local Plan. Bellingham operates as a service centre for a number of small hamlets at the southern end of the Northumberland National Park. The town is located adjacent to the B6320, and the A68 runs north to south a few miles to the east. The town centre is not well located in terms of accessibility to other, larger, centres such as Hexham (approximately 17 miles by road). At the time of the 2001 census, the Bellingham ward had a population of 1,228.

The main focus for retailing in Bellingham comprises Front Street, Parkside Place, Lock Up Lane and Manchester Square. A land use plan of Bellingham Town Centre is provided overleaf.
Photographs of Bellingham Town Centre

Photos removed for distribution purposes.

**Figure 17 (top left):** Rose and Crown public house, Market Square
**Figure 18 (top centre):** Vacant unit, Parkside Place
**Figure 19 (top right):** Green amenity area, Market Square
**Figure 20 (bottom left):** Retail frontages, Front Street
**Figure 21 (bottom right):** Retail frontages, Front Street
Figure 22: Land Use Plan for Bellingham Town Centre (2009)

Source: WYG site visit (September 2009)
Table 8: Diversity of Uses in Bellingham Town Centre (2009)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Outlets</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Bellingham (%)</th>
<th>UK (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Convenience</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparison</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>34.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Service</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure Services</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>21.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial and Business Services</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>11.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>16</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: WYG site visit (September 2009)

Table 9: Existing Floorspace in Bellingham Town Centre (2009)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Existing Floorspace</th>
<th>Sq m</th>
<th>Bellingham (%)</th>
<th>UK (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Convenience</td>
<td>333</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparison</td>
<td>495</td>
<td>24.3</td>
<td>37.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Service</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure Services</td>
<td>509</td>
<td>24.9</td>
<td>22.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial and Business Services</td>
<td>489</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,041</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: WYG site visit (September 2009)

Figure 23: Use of Units in Bellingham Town Centre (2009)

Source: WYG site visit (September 2009)

Figure 24: Use of Floorspace in Bellingham Town Centre (2009)

Source: WYG site visit (September 2009)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Convenience</th>
<th>Retail Service</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18.8% of retail units in Bellingham are in use for the sale of convenience goods, which is higher than the national average of 8.8%. The proportion of floorspace dedicated to the sale of convenience goods (16.3%) is slightly higher than the national average of 14.2%. The convenience goods sector is dominated by the Co-op store. There is also a butcher and a baker in the centre.</td>
<td>Retail services in Bellingham comprise 6.3% of outlets, compared to the national average of 13.0%. The proportion of retail service floorspace (1.5%) is also well below the national average (7.0%). The only retail service unit evident in Bellingham is a hairdresser. However, the premises were closed at the time of the site visit and it was not clear if the business was still in operation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comparison</th>
<th>Leisure Services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comparison goods retailers occupy 31.3% of all units. This compares to a national average of 34.5%. The proportion of comparison floorspace (24.3%) is also below the national average (37.7%). All comparison goods stores in Bellingham are occupied by independent traders.</td>
<td>Leisure service units comprise 18.8% of all units in Bellingham Town Centre, which compares to a national average of 21.5%. In contrast, the proportion of floorspace in this sector (24.9%) is above the national average (22.7%). The leisure service offer in Bellingham comprises two pubs and one hotel/restaurant.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall Service</th>
<th>Financial Services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The service sector comprises seven units and occupies 1,029 sq m of floorspace. The proportion of service outlets (43.9%) is slightly below the national average (45.7%). However, the proportion of service floorspace (50.4%) is above the national average (38.4%).</td>
<td>Financial and business services occupy three units in the centre. The proportion of floorspace occupied in this sector equates to 18.8%, higher than the national average of 11.2%. Two high street banks and a solicitor make up the uses in this sector.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Non-Retail | |
|------------||
| Other than residential dwellings, there were no other non-retail uses in the centre. | |
Table 10: Vacancies in Bellingham Town Centre (2009)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vacancy</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Bellingham (%)</th>
<th>UK (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of Outlets</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Floorspace (sq m)</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: WYG site visit (September 2009)

Table 10 indicates that at September 2009 there was one vacant unit in Bellingham Town Centre, which was 184 sq m in size and located at Parkside Place. This single vacancy represents 6.3% of outlets and 9.0% of floorspace in Bellingham, which compares with respective national averages of 10.8% and 9.0%. A planning application for a new refrigeration unit to the rear of the store was registered in October 2009, which suggests this store is being readied for conversion into a convenience store. Local press reports indicate that the occupier may be the Co-op, which is seeking to move to larger premises than their existing store.
Business Survey Results

A questionnaire was distributed to all local businesses within Bellingham in order to gain an understanding of the opinions of retailers. A total of 17 questionnaires were distributed, with 8 being returned: a response rate of 47%. The main findings of the business survey results were as follows:

- Half (50%) of respondents indicated that their business was a food retailer and the other half of respondents indicated that their business was a non-food retailer;
- All respondents were independent traders;
- Half (50%) of respondents had been trading in the town centre in excess of twenty years, with 25% having been in operation for over five years and 25% for over ten years;
- 75% of respondents owned their premises, whilst 25% leased their premises;
- The majority (86%) of traders stated that since they began trading business had either ‘grown moderately’ or ‘grown significantly’, with 14% indicating that business had ‘remained largely static’;
- Three quarters of respondents (75%) indicated that their business was currently trading ‘well’ or ‘very well’, with a quarter (25%) stating that their business was currently performing ‘moderately’;
- The survey indicated that over half (57%) of traders relied upon residents from in or around Bellingham Town Centre for the majority of their business, although 14% relied primarily on residents from across Northumberland County and a further 14% relied primarily on residents from outside Northumberland County;
- When asked about measures that would improve the town centre, 8% of respondents stated that an increased choice/range of shops would have this effect. Other measures suggested included more independent/specialist traders (7%) and more street cleaning (7%);
- The majority of respondents (80%) felt that there was a good balance between shops and other non-retail uses, with 20% indicating that there were too many non-retail uses;
- Respondents identified the main barriers to trading performance as being inadequate customer car parking (20%), a lack of day visitors/tourists to the town (17%), the poor quality of the town centre shopping environment (13%) and a lack of passing trade outside premises (10%);
- 43% of respondents indicated that they planned to extend the floorspace in their premises over the next five years, although 29% had no plans to alter their business in any way;
- When asked if their business currently has its own website, 13% stated yes, with 88% stating that their business does not currently have its own website;
- Of those who did have a website, one third (33%) stated their website gives customers the ability to order goods directly from the website, with 33% stating that their website contains contact information and another 33% stating that their website allows customers to contact the business directly via e-mail;
- All respondents said that their website was very important to their business;
- All respondents indicated that their website attracts customers from a wider catchment, i.e. beyond Northumberland;
All respondents stated that customers visit their store as a result of browsing their website; up to 10% of sales are from the internet according to all respondents; and of those respondents who did not have a website, 38% indicated that this was because a website was not relevant/necessary, 25% of respondents indicated that they were in the process of designing a website. A further 25% stated that they don’t have a computer and 13% indicated that having a website is too time consuming.

The business survey asked respondents to rate a number of different aspects of Bellingham in terms of whether they were considered to be ‘good’, ‘average’ or ‘poor’. A large proportion of aspects were rated as being ‘average’ by a number of respondents. However, even more aspects were rated as being ‘poor’ by the greatest proportion of respondents. These aspects were: the amount of car parking (100%), the location of car parking (71%) and the number of multiple traders (71%) amongst others. Respondents were also able to add any additional comments they wished to make at the end of the survey. Through this process, retailers highlighted that the former Premier store, which is now vacant, has a negative effect on the centre. In addition to this, certain retailers felt that there is an antisocial behaviour problem in the centre, particularly in the evenings.

In Street Survey Results

Introduction

- Of those respondents questioned, 36% live in Bellingham but do not work there;
- 40% of respondents do not visit Bellingham in the evening. However, 48% visit Bellingham every day in the daytime;
- The main reason respondents visit Bellingham is for food shopping only (66%), followed by food and non-food shopping (14%) and to visit the bank/building society (6%).

Accessibility

- The majority of respondents travelled into the centre by car (76%), with a further 18% walking to the centre;
- Of those respondents that travelled by car, 92% parked in Bellingham Town Centre;
- Respondents were asked what, if anything, they would like to see improved as part of their shopping experience. Although 28% of respondents felt that improved parking provision would improve their shopping experience, a further 26% stated that nothing could be added to improve it;
- The following are the aspects of the town centre which were most frequently rated as being ‘good’ or ‘very good’ by respondents: the destinations to and from Bellingham served by public transport (62%); the regularity of bus services (58%); and the quality of bus services (56%);
- The following are the aspects of the town centre which were most frequently rated as being ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’ by respondents: the availability of public parking spaces (36%); street furniture (32%); and the availability of disabled parking spaces (28%);
Over half of respondents (54%) thought that Bellingham does not offer a wide choice of quality shops;
- The majority of respondents (86%) planned to spend less than £25 in Bellingham during their visit;
- 42% of respondents stated that they did not know what improvements to Bellingham’s retail offer they would like to see. However, 18% of respondents considered that a supermarket would improve the town centre’s offer, with 16% stating a bigger Co-op and 6% believing that more clothes shops would achieve the same effect.

Leisure
- The majority of respondents (74%) do not come to Bellingham for leisure/cultural events.
- When asked what events/activities respondents would like to see on a regular basis, almost half of respondents (48%) did not mention anything. However, of those that did offer a response, the most popular suggestions were a farmer’s market (24%), sporting events (10%) and a continental style market (8%);
- The leisure/cultural destinations which were most frequently rated as being ‘good’ or ‘very good’ by respondents were cafes (42%) and sandwich shops (20%);
- The leisure/cultural destinations which were most frequently rated as being ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’ by respondents were takeaways (24%) and restaurants (22%).

Local Environment
- In terms of factors affecting the environmental quality of Bellingham, those most frequently rated as ‘good’ or ‘very good’ were: the level of graffiti/fly posting (78%); litter (50%); and the overall level of cleanliness (32%);
- Environmental quality factors in Bellingham most frequently rated as ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’ were: shop frontages (86%); the general state of buildings (56%); and street furniture (48%);
- In terms of how Bellingham is used, 58% of respondents felt that Bellingham is a ‘good’ or ‘very good’ place to live, with 50% feeling the same about it as a place to visit;
- However, 42% of respondents considered it to be a ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’ place to shop, with 12% feeling the same about it as a place to shop;
- Over the last twelve months, half of respondents (50%) felt that the overall attractiveness of the town had stayed the same, with 24% stating that Bellingham’s attractiveness had declined. 10% felt that the attractiveness of Bellingham had improved and 16% did not know;
- In terms of making Bellingham better, 46% of respondents felt that the centre needs to improve its parking provision, with a further 46% stating that a better retail offer is necessary to improve the centre.
**Accessibility**

**Car:** Bellingham is located a few miles from the B6320, which runs through the National Park. The town is therefore not particularly well located in terms of accessibility to larger centres, such as Hexham (approximately 17 miles away). However, the in-street survey suggests that 74% of respondents consider Bellingham ‘very easy’ to access.

**Car parks:** On street parking is available outside Barclays Bank on Manchester Square. On the day of survey, the level of parking seemed appropriate to visitor numbers; though parking may be limited at busier times.

**Public transport:** There is a bus service every 90 minutes on the newly opened 880 route to Hexham and Kielder Water.

**Environmental Quality**

Bellingham is a small local centre which serves a wide, sparsely populated area. The town centre is focussed on Front Street, Parkside Place, Lock Up Lane and Manchester Square. The war memorial and town hall building sit at the heart of the centre. None of the centre is pedestrianised, and this is not considered necessary given the fairly low level of traffic evident on visit. Pavement widths and qualities vary, dependent on the area of town and age of buildings. There is little street furniture in evidence, other than that to the rear of the war memorial where there are a number of bins and benches. This area is reasonably well maintained, as is the town itself, though some buildings suffer due to a lack of maintenance. On the day of survey there was no evidence of anti-social behaviour and the town felt very safe. No graffiti or littering are present in the town centre and this contributes to a very pleasant overall environment.
## CORBRIDGE HEALTH CHECK ASSESSMENT

**Date of Site Visit:** 23 September 2009  
**Status:** Town Centre (Tynedale District Local Plan (2000))

### Centre Overview

Corbridge is located approximately three miles to the east of Hexham and 17 miles to the west of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Corbridge is identified as a town centre by the Tynedale Local Plan (2000), which has now become part of the Consolidated Planning Policy Framework for Northumberland (April 2009). Corbridge is also ‘washed over’ by Green Belt. The centre itself is part of a wider Conservation Area designation, and has developed around the former Market Place and St Andrew’s Church. The centre is accessed off three ‘B’ roads from the north, two of which link directly to the A69 dual carriageway. To the south, a narrow road bridge gives the B6321 access to Hexham and the A68 (via Broomhaugh and Riding), as well as Corbridge Station, where trains to Newcastle and Carlisle are available. At the time of the 2001 census, Corbridge had a population of 1,501.

The main focus for retailing in Corbridge comprises Middle Street, the Market Place, Hill Street and Princess Street. There are also secondary retail frontages on Watling Street. A land use plan of Corbridge Town Centre is provided overleaf.
Photographs of Corbridge Town Centre

Photos removed for distribution purposes.

Figure 25 (top left): Retail frontages, Market Place
Figure 26 (top centre): Retail frontages, Market Place
Figure 27 (top right): Co-op store, Hill Street
Figure 28 (bottom left): Retail frontages, Hill Street
Figure 29 (bottom right): The Angel Inn public house, Main Street
Figure 30: Land Use Plan for Corbridge Town Centre (2009)

Source: WYG site visit (September 2009)
Table 11: Diversity of Uses in Corbridge Town Centre (2009)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Outlets</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Corbridge (%)</th>
<th>UK (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Convenience</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparison</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>47.4</td>
<td>34.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Service</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure Services</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>21.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial and Business Services</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>11.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>57</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: WYG site visit (September 2009)

Table 12: Existing Floorspace in Corbridge Town Centre (2009)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Existing Floorspace</th>
<th>Sq m</th>
<th>Corbridge (%)</th>
<th>UK (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Convenience</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparison</td>
<td>2,152</td>
<td>38.6</td>
<td>37.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Service</td>
<td>543</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure Services</td>
<td>1,833</td>
<td>32.9</td>
<td>22.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial and Business Services</td>
<td>521</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>5,569</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: WYG site visit (September 2009)

Figure 31: Use of Units in Corbridge Town Centre (2009)

Source: WYG site visit (September 2009)

Figure 32: Use of Floorspace in Corbridge Town Centre (2009)

Source: WYG site visit (September 2009)
Convenience
5.8% of floorspace within Corbridge Town Centre is used for the sale of convenience goods, which is significantly lower than the national average of 14.2%. In terms of unit numbers, this is only slightly lower than the national average, with 7.0% being in use for the sale of convenience goods, compared to 8.8% nationally. The convenience offer in Corbridge comprises a Co-op supermarket and Threshers off licence, along with independent retailers including a baker and butcher.

Comparison
Comparison stores in Corbridge comprise 47.4% of units, which is higher than the national average of 34.5%. Comparison goods sales occupy 38.6% of floorspace, which is also higher than the national average of 37.7%. The sector comprises a high number of independent retailers, many of which are clothing shops.

Overall Service
The service sector comprises 23 units and occupies 2,897 sq m of floorspace. The proportion of service outlets (40.3%) is below the national average (45.7%). However, the proportion of service floorspace (52.1%) is significantly above the national average (38.4%).

Retail Service
10.5% of units in Corbridge Town Centre are in use within this sector, which compares to a national average of 13.0%. The use represents 9.8% of all floorspace, which is higher than the national average of 7.0%. Units in retail service use include a vehicle maintenance centre, hairdresser and various health and beauty uses.

Leisure Services
19.3% of all units fall within this sector, equating to 32.9% of floorspace. This compares to respective national averages of 21.5% and 22.7%. The leisure service offer within Corbridge comprised several pubs, take aways and cafés.

Financial Services
There are six units within this sector, which represents 10.5% of units which broadly correlated to the national average of 11.2%. The offer within this sector is made up of a couple of high street banks and a number of independent financial services.

Non-Retail
Other than retail uses, there is a dental practice, medical practice, tourist information centre and library in the town centre.

Vacancies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 13: Vacancies in Corbridge Town Centre (2009)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vacancy</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of Outlets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Floorspace</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: WYG site visit (September 2009)

The above table illustrates that at September 2009 there were three vacant retail units in Corbridge Town Centre. Two of these are located on Watling Street, with a further unit being situated at the Market Place. The three units are all limited in size and occupy a combined floorspace of 195 sq m. This represents 5.3% of all outlets and 3.5% of floorspace, compared to respective national averages of 10.8% and 9.0%.

The units were not being actively marketed by agents and it is unclear why these units have not been resold/let.
Business Survey Results

A questionnaire was distributed to all local businesses within Corbridge in order to gain an understanding of the opinions of retailers. A total of 75 questionnaires were distributed, with 22 being returned: a response rate of 29%. The main findings of the business survey results were as follows:

- Over half (58%) of respondents indicated that their business was a non-food retailer, with 21% indicating that their business was a food retailer. 16% of respondents indicated that their business was a retail service, whilst the remaining 5% stated that their business was a professional service;
- The majority (85%) of respondents were independent traders, with 15% indicating that they were part of a national/regional group or chain;
- Less than half (43%) of respondents had been trading in the town centre in excess of twenty years, with 19% indicating that they had been trading in the town centre for over ten years. 29% of respondents had been in the centre for over five years and 10% for over three years;
- Two thirds (67%) of respondents leased their premises, whilst 29% owned their premises. 5% of respondents did not answer this question;
- The majority (91%) of traders stated that since they began trading business had either ‘grown moderately’ or ‘grown significantly’, with 5% indicating that business had ‘remained largely static’. 5% of respondents indicated that their business had declined moderately;
- Over half (57%) of respondents indicated that their business was currently trading ‘well’ or ‘very well’, with 43% stating that their business was currently performing ‘moderately’;
- The survey indicated that 39% of traders relied upon residents from across Northumberland County for the majority of their business, although 22% relied primarily on residents from in or around Corbridge Town Centre and a further 11% relied primarily on residents from outside Northumberland County;
- When asked about measures that would improve the town centre, 14% of respondents stated that a better mix of short/long stay parking would have this effect. Other measures suggested included improved street paving (12%) and lower parking charges (10%);
- The majority of respondents (95%) felt that there was a good balance between shops and other non-retail uses, with 5% indicating that there were too many non-retail uses;
- Respondents identified the main barriers to trading performance as being inadequate customer car parking (32%), high rents/overheads (19%), a lack of passing trade outside premises (2%) and the poor location of premises (2%);
- Almost three quarters (74%) of respondents indicated that they had no plans to alter their business in any way over the next five years, although 16% planned to refurbish their existing floorspace, 5% planned to extend their floorspace and 5% planned to relocate out-of-centre;
- When asked if their business currently has its own website, over half (57%) stated yes, with 43% stating that their business does not currently have its own website; 27% stated their website gives customers the ability to order goods directly from the website;
- Of those who did have a website, the largest proportion of respondents (27%) stated their website provides customers with contact information, 17% stated that their website allows customers to contact their business directly via e-mail, 15% stated that their website allows customers to browse goods available, and 15% stated that their website gives customers the opportunity to order goods directly from the website;
• A quarter (25%) of respondents said that their website was very important or essential to their business, however half (50%) of respondents felt that their website was fairly important or of little importance to their business.

• A further 25% of respondents stated that their website was important to their business;

• All respondents indicates that their website attracts customers from a wider catchment, i.e. beyond Northumberland;

• 70% respondents stated that customers visit their store as a result of browsing their website, with 30% stating that their website does not lead to more customers visiting their store;

• Up to 10% of sales are from the internet according to all respondents; and

• Of those respondents who did not have a website, almost two thirds (63%) indicated that this was because a website was not relevant/necessary. A further 25% stated that it was because a website was too time consuming with 13% indicating that it was because they do not have the skills to produce/run a website.

The business survey asked respondents to rate a number of different aspects of Corbridge in terms of whether they were considered to be ‘good’, ‘average’ or ‘poor’. A large proportion of aspects were rated as being ‘average’ by a number of respondents. However, even more aspects were rated as being ‘poor’ by the greatest proportion of respondents. These aspects were: the range of marketing and promotion (65%), the amount of car parking (57%) and the amount of marketing and promotion (55%). Respondents were also able to add any additional comments they wished to make at the end of the survey. Through this process, a number of retailers highlighted that the short stay car parks are too short. In addition to this, certain retailers felt that more street cleaning needs to be done and that there needs to be an improvement in signage in the centre.

In Street Survey Results

Introduction

• Of those respondents questioned, 48% had made a special visit to Corbridge, rather than working or living there;

• 40% of respondents did not visit Corbridge in the evening. However, 32% visit Corbridge every day in the daytime;

• The main reason respondents visit Corbridge is for food shopping (28%), followed by for social reasons (24%) and then to visit the bank/building society (12%).

Accessibility

• The majority of respondents travelled into the centre by car on the day of survey (76%), with a further 24% walking to the centre;

• All respondents who travelled by car parked in Corbridge Town Centre;

• Respondents were asked what would improve their shopping experience in Corbridge. The largest proportion of respondents (60%) suggested nothing, although 8% suggested improved parking provision and 4% suggested less traffic;

• The following are the aspects of the town centre which were most frequently rated as being ‘good’ or ‘very good’ by respondents: safety and security in the daytime (all respondents); the regularity of bus services (48%); and the destinations to and from Corbridge served by public transport (48%);

• The following are the aspects of the town centre which were most frequently rated as being ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’ by respondents: the availability of parking spaces (52%); the safety/security of parking facilities (32%) and the availability of disabled parking spaces (28%);
The majority of respondents (56%) thought that Corbridge offers a wide choice of quality shops;  
The majority of respondents (60%) planned to spend less than £25 in Corbridge on the day of survey;  
None of the respondents knew what improvements to the retail offer they would like to see in Corbridge.

**Leisure**  
Over half of respondents (52%) come to Corbridge for leisure/cultural events. Of those which do, 31% said that they visit an event not listed on the survey, with 23% stating that they visit their local pub in Corbridge;  
When asked what events/activities respondents would like to see on a regular basis, the majority of respondents (88%) did not mention anything. However, of those that did, the most popular responses were active outdoor sessions (4%), children's activities (4%) and other events (4%);  
The leisure/cultural destinations which were most frequently rated as being 'good' or 'very good' by respondents were restaurants (56%) and pubs and clubs (52%);  
Only the take aways in the town centre (4%) were rated as 'poor' or 'very poor' by any respondents.

**Local Environment**  
In terms of factors affecting the environmental quality of Corbridge, those most frequently rated as 'good' or 'very good' were: the level of graffiti/fly posting (88%); the general state of buildings (84%); and the overall level of cleanliness (84%);  
The environmental quality factors in Corbridge most frequently rated as 'poor' or 'very poor' were: the general quality of the footways/paving (8%); and the level of litter (4%);  
In terms of how Corbridge is used, the majority of respondents felt that as a place to visit (92%) or as a place to enjoy yourself (76%) Corbridge is 'good' or 'very good';  
Over the last twelve months, the majority of respondents (72%) felt that the overall attractiveness of the town had stayed the same, with 4% stating that the attractiveness of the centre had improved. A further 24% did not know;  
In terms of making Corbridge better, 40% of respondents felt that the centre needs to improve its parking provision, with 8% stating that improved pavements would benefit the centre.
## Accessibility

**Car:** Corbridge is easily accessible via the A69, being located a short distance to the south. It is located approximately 3 miles to the east of Hexham, which is again accessible via the A69 or the 'B' road network. The A68 is a couple of miles to the east and links the town to County Durham to the south.

**Car parks:** Car parking is limited in Corbridge and comprises several on street 'pay and display' car parking spaces. These were almost all occupied on the day of visit, and this clearly presented a problem for local visitors.

**Public transport:** Several bus stops were easily accessible within the centre. These provide services to Hexham, Carlisle (hourly) and Newcastle (hourly).

## Environmental Quality

Corbridge is a medium-sized Town Centre, which is situated to the south west of the authority area, and which is anchored by a Co-op store. The centre is focused around St Andrew's Church, with former Town Hall buildings located to the eastern side. The convenience retail provision is considered adequate for most needs of shoppers; however, it is likely that the location and convenient access of Hexham is a particular draw. Although Corbridge is not pedestrianised, it is considered that a safe and pleasant environment is provided for shoppers. At the time of survey (the morning of 23 September) there was an average level of footfall. Pavements are wide, but there are no pedestrian crossings in the centre. The streets are generally clean with little evidence of litter or graffiti, whilst shop units themselves are maintained to high standards which reflect the traditional environment. Retail units are mostly located within traditional properties, though the 'Old Bakery Yard' development has provided some new floorspace, which is fully occupied. Street furniture includes benches, bins, flowers, trees and street lighting. There are public toilets in the centre which are maintained to a reasonable standard.
### ELLINGTON HEALTH CHECK ASSESSMENT

**Date of Site Visit:** 23 September 2009  
**Status:** Local Retail Service Centre (Castle Morpeth District Local Plan 1991 - 2006 (2003))

**Centre Overview**

Ellington is situated to the north west of Lynemouth and to the south east of Widdrington Station. It is located approximately 23 miles north of Newcastle City Centre and is identified as a local retail service centre by the adopted Castle Morpeth District Local Plan 1991 – 2006 (February 2003). Ellington is situated close to the A189, which leads in turn to the A19 and is also not far from the A1. The A1 provides access to Scotland to the north and Newcastle to the south, and communications are further enhanced by Newcastle International Airport, some 23 miles away.

The focus for retailing in Ellington comprises Front Street and Warkworth Drive. A land use plan of Ellington centre is provided overleaf.
Photographs of Ellington Local Retail Service Centre

Photos removed for distribution purposes.

**Figure 33 (top left):** General store, Front Street
**Figure 34 (top centre):** Post office, Front Street
**Figure 35 (top right):** The Plough Inn public house, Front Street
**Figure 36 (bottom left):** Convenience store, Warkworth Drive
**Figure 37 (bottom right):** Retail frontages, Warkworth Drive
Figure 38: Land Use Plan for Ellington Local Retail Service Centre (2009)

Source: WYG site visit (September 2009)
Table 14: Diversity of Uses in Ellington Local Retail Service Centre (2009)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Outlets</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Ellington (%)</th>
<th>UK (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Convenience</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparison</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>34.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Service</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure Services</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>21.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial and Business Services</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>11.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: WYG site visit (September 2009)

Table 15: Existing Floorspace in Ellington Local Retail Service Centre (2009)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Existing Floorspace</th>
<th>Sq m</th>
<th>Ellington (%)</th>
<th>UK (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Convenience</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparison</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>37.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Service</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure Services</td>
<td>463</td>
<td>56.2</td>
<td>22.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial and Business Services</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>824</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: WYG site visit (September 2009)
Convenience
33.3% of all retail units in Ellington centre are in use for the sale of convenience goods, compared to the national average of 8.8%. The proportion of retail floorspace in use for the sale of convenience goods also is well above the national average (29.5% compared to 14.2% nationally). No particular store dominates this sector in Ellington.

Comparison
There are no comparison goods traders in Ellington.

Overall Service
The service sector comprises four units and occupies 581 sq m of floorspace. The proportion of service outlets (66.6%) is above the national average (45.7%). Similarly, the proportion of service floorspace (70.5%) is above the national average (38.4%).

Retail Service
Retail services, which comprise such uses as hairdressers, dry cleaners and petrol filling stations, account for 33.3% of outlets and 14.3% of floorspace in Ellington, which compares to respective national averages of 13.0% and 7.0%. Ellington contains a Post Office on Front Street.

Leisure Services
Leisure services, as defined by Experian GOAD, include uses such as restaurants, cafes, bookmakers and public houses. Ellington is over-provided for in terms of the proportion of such outlets in comparison to the national average (33.3% compared to 21.5%). Likewise, the proportion of floorspace occupied (56.2%) is above the national average (22.7%).

Financial Services
There are no financial services in Ellington.

Non-Retail
In addition to the retail service on offer, there is a church, library, community centre and several dwellings in the settlement. However, these are scattered throughout Ellington and are not located in the centre.

Vacancies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 16: Vacancies in Ellington Local Retail Service Centre (2009)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vacancy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of Outlets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Floorspace</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: WYG site visit (September 2009)

Table 4 illustrates that at September 2009 there were no vacant retail units in Ellington centre.
**Business Survey Results**

A questionnaire was distributed to all local businesses within Ellington in order to gain an understanding of the opinions of retailers. A total of 7 questionnaires were distributed, with 2 being returned: a response rate of 29%. The main findings of the business survey results were as follows:

- None of the respondents indicated their retail type;
- All respondents were independent traders;
- Half (50%) of respondents had been trading in the town centre for over twenty years, with 50% having been in operation for over ten years;
- 50% of respondents owned their premises and the other 50% of respondents did not give an answer;
- Half (50%) of traders stated that since they began trading business had ‘grown moderately’, with 50% indicating that business had ‘remained largely static’;
- 50% of respondents indicated that their business was currently trading ‘well’, with 50% stating that their business was currently performing ‘moderately’;
- The survey indicates that all traders relied upon residents from in or around Ellington Town Centre for the majority of their business;
- When asked about measures that would improve the town centre, half (50%) of respondents stated that an increased choice would have this effect. The remaining 50% stated that improved public toilets would benefit the centre;
- All respondents identified the main barrier to trading performance as being the inadequacy of their current premises;
- All respondents indicates that they planned to extend the floorspace in their premises over the next five years;
- When asked if their business currently has its own website, half (50%) stated yes, with the remaining 50% stating that their business does not currently have its own website;
- Of those who did have a website, 25% of respondents stated that their website provides customers with the ability to browse goods available at their premises, 25% stated that their website provides customers with the ability to order goods that will be delivered to a designated address and 25% stated that their website provides customers with their business contact information. The remaining 25% stated that their website allows customers to contact their website directly via e-mail;
- All respondents said that their website was important to their business;
• Of those respondents who did not have a website, all respondents indicated that this was because a website was not relevant/necessary.

The business survey asked respondents to rate a number of different aspects of Ellington in terms of whether they were considered to be ‘good’, ‘average’ or ‘poor’. A large proportion of aspects were rated as being ‘average’ by a number of respondents. However, other aspects were rated as being ‘poor’ by a number of respondents. These aspects were: accessibility by public transport (50%), the amount of car parking (50%) and the number of shops in general (50%). Respondents were also able to add any additional comments they wished to make at the end of the survey, however no further comments were made.

In Street Survey Results

Introduction
• Of those respondents questioned, 56% live in Ellington but do not work there;
• 44% of respondents do not visit Ellington in the evening. However, 40% visit Ellington every day in the daytime;
• The main reason respondents visit Ellington is for food shopping only (36%), followed by non-food shopping (16%) and then to visit the post office (12%).

Accessibility
• The majority of respondents travelled into the centre by car (68%), with a further 32% walking to the centre;
• All respondents who travelled by car parked in Ellington centre;
• Respondents were asked what, if anything, they would like to see improved as part of their shopping experience. The majority of respondents (60%) did not think anything would improve their shopping experience in Ellington. The most popular suggestions were improvements to the quality of footpaths (4%), improved parking provision (4%) and improved facilities for children (4%);
• The following are the aspects of the centre which were most frequently rated as being ‘good’ or ‘very good’ by the largest proportion of respondents: safety and security in the daytime (76%); the availability of public parking spaces (56%); and safety and security in the night-time (52%);
• The following are the aspects of the centre which were most frequently rated ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’ by the largest proportion of respondents: the quality of bus services (36%); the regularity of bus services (36%); and the destinations to and from Ellington served by public transport (36%);
The majority of respondents (80%) thought that Ellington did not offer a wide choice of quality shops; 
The majority of respondents (92%) planned to spend less than £25 in Ellington during their visit; 
44% of respondents stated that they did not know what improvements to the retail offer they would like to see in Ellington. However, 8% of respondents considered that a supermarket would improve the town centre's offer, 8% suggested that anything would and 4% felt that a butcher would improve Ellington’s retail offer.

Leisure

Almost all respondents (96%) do not come into Ellington for leisure/cultural events. All of those that do visit said that it was to visit their local pub; 
When asked what events/activities respondents would like to see on a regular basis, the majority of respondents (72%) did not mention anything. However, of those that did offer a response, the most popular responses were sporting events (12%), a farmer’s market (4%) and arts and crafts (4%); 
The leisure/cultural activities which were most frequently rated as being ‘good’ or ‘very good’ by respondents were pubs and clubs (32%) and sandwich shops (20%); 
The leisure/cultural activities most frequently rated as being ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’ by respondents were pubs and clubs (24%) and restaurants (12%).

Local Environment

The factors affecting the environmental quality of Ellington which were most frequently rated as ‘good’ or ‘very good’ by respondents were: the amount of litter (88%); the general state of buildings (88%); and the overall level of cleanliness (88%); 
The only environmental quality factor rated as ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’ was the general quality of the footways/paving (12%); 
In terms of how Ellington is used, 72% of respondents felt that the centre is a ‘good’ or ‘very good’ place to live, with 48% feeling the same about it as a place to enjoy yourself; 
However, 56% of respondents considered it to be a ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’ place to shop, with 16% feeling the same about it as a place to enjoy yourself (16%); 
Over the last twelve months, the majority of respondents (84%) felt that the overall attractiveness of the town had stayed the same, with 8% stating that the attractiveness of the centre had declined. 4% felt that the attractiveness of Ellington had improved and 4% did not know; 
In terms of making Ellington better, 28% of respondents felt that the centre needs to improve its general retail offer, and 12% stated that improved accessibility would improve the centre.
Accessibility

Car: Ellington is situated adjacent to the A1068, which leads to the A189. The centre also benefits from reasonable proximity to the A1. Front Street is the busiest road running through the centre. However, it is generally safe for shoppers. The majority of respondents to the in-street survey (92%) felt that it was either 'fairly easy' or 'very easy' to travel into Ellington.

Car parks: There is one car park in Ellington, located off Warkworth Drive, which is free of charge. On-street parking is also available.

Public transport: The town also benefits from good accessibility by public transport. Ellington is located on the 518 bus route which provides services to Amble, Morpeth, Gosforth and Newcastle City Centre amongst other locations.

Environmental Quality

Ellington is a small local centre situated to the east of the authority area. The centre is focused on Front Street and Warkworth Drive, which are located in separate parts of the settlement. There are very few retail units in Ellington. The retail units available provide only the basic needs of shoppers; however, this is considered appropriate for the size of the settlement. None of the streets are pedestrianised in the centre, but the centre appears to be a safe environment for shoppers. At mid-afternoon on the day of the survey (Wednesday 23 September), there was a very low level of footfall in Ellington. Pavements are wide and there are no pedestrian crossings in the centre. The streets are generally clean, with little evidence of litter, whilst shop units themselves are maintained to fairly high standards, creating an attractive shopping environment. Units are a mixture of old and new build. Street furniture includes benches, bins, flowers and street lighting. There are no public toilets in the centre.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of Site Visit:</th>
<th>22 September 2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Status:</td>
<td>Town Centre (Wansbeck District Local Plan (2007))</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Centre Overview**

Guide Post is situated to the east of Morpeth and to the south west of Newbiggin-by-the-Sea. Guide Post is located approximately 16 miles north of Newcastle City Centre and is identified as a town centre by the Wansbeck District Local Plan (July 2007). Guide Post is located off the A1068, which runs north to south between the A1 and A189. Newcastle International Airport is around 16 miles away.

The focus for retailing in Guide Post is The Square. A land use plan of Guide Post Town Centre is provided overleaf.
Photographs of Guide Post Town Centre

Photos removed for distribution purposes.

**Figure 41 (top left):** Co-op Foodstore, The Square
**Figure 42 (top centre):** Londis store, The Square
**Figure 43 (top right):** Boots store, The Square
**Figure 44 (bottom left):** Retail frontages, The Square
**Figure 45 (bottom right):** Post office, The Square
Figure 46: Land Use Plan for Guide Post Town Centre (2009)

Source: WYG site visit (September 2009)
Table 17: Diversity of Uses in Guide Post Town Centre (2009)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Outlets</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Guide Post (%)</th>
<th>UK (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Convenience</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparison</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>34.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Service</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure Services</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>21.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial and Business Services</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>11.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: WYG site visit (September 2009)

Table 18: Existing Floorspace in Guide Post Town Centre (2009)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Existing Floorspace</th>
<th>Sq m</th>
<th>Guide Post (%)</th>
<th>UK (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Convenience</td>
<td>1,069</td>
<td>43.9</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparison</td>
<td>356</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>37.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Service</td>
<td>720</td>
<td>29.6</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure Services</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>22.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial and Business Services</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>2,433</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: WYG site visit (September 2009)
Convenience
25.0% of all retail units in Guide Post Town Centre are in use for the sale of convenience goods, compared to the national average of 8.8%. The proportion of retail floorspace in use for the sale of convenience goods is also well above the national average (43.9% compared to 14.2% nationally). The single biggest store within this sector is the Co-op foodstore at The Square.

Comparison
Comparison traders in Guide Post occupy 20.0% of outlets, compared to the national average of 34.5%. Similarly, with regard to comparison goods floorspace, Guide Post has a relative under-provision, with 14.6% of floorspace being in this use, compared to a national average of 37.7%. The comparison goods retail offer in Guide Post includes one national multiple, this being the Boots store.

Overall Service
The service sector comprises ten units and occupies 942 sq m of floorspace. The proportion of service outlets (50.0%) is slightly above the national average (45.7%). The proportion of service floorspace dedicated to service uses (38.7%) almost directly corresponds to the national average (38.4%).

Retail Service
Retail services, which comprise such uses as hairdressers, dry cleaners and petrol filling stations, account for 35.0% of outlets and 29.6% of floorspace in Guide Post, which compares to respective national averages of 13.0% and 7.0%. Guide Post contains a Post Office at The Square.

Leisure Services
Leisure services, as defined by Experian GOAD, include uses such as restaurants, cafes, bookmakers and public houses. Guide Post is under-provided for in terms of the proportion of such outlets in comparison to the national average (10.0% compared to 21.5%). Similarly, the proportion of floorspace occupied by leisure uses (5.2%) is well below the national average (22.7%).

Financial Services
In terms of the proportion of units occupied by financial and business services, the proportion of outlets (5.0%) is below the national average (11.2%).

Non-Retail
In addition to the retail service on offer, there is a dentist’s surgery, a library and two dwellings, all of which are located within the town centre boundary.

Vacancies

Table 19: Vacancies in Guide Post Town Centre (2009)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vacancy</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Guide Post (%)</th>
<th>UK (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of Outlets</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Floorspace</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: WYG site visit (September 2009)

Table 19 illustrates that at September 2009 there was one vacant retail unit in Guide Post Town Centre, at The Square, which occupied a floorspace of 6,110 sq m. This single vacancy represents 5.0% of all outlets and 2.7% of floorspace, compared to respective national averages of 10.8% and 9.0%. No commercial agent information was available for the vacant unit at the Square.
**Business Survey Results**

A questionnaire was distributed to all local businesses within Guide Post in order to gain an understanding of the opinions of retailers. A total of 12 questionnaires were distributed, with 4 being returned: a response rate of 33%. The main findings of the business survey results were as follows:

- Half (50%) of respondents indicated that their business was a retail service and the other half of respondents indicated that their business was a professional service;
- Three quarters (75%) of respondents were independent traders and a further 25% were part of a national/regional group or chain;
- 25% of respondents had been trading in the in the town centre for over ten years, with 50% having been in operation for over five years and 25% for over one year;
- All respondents leased their premises;
- Half (50%) of traders stated that since they began trading business had either ‘grown moderately’ or ‘grown significantly’, with 50% indicating that business had ‘remained largely static’;
- 50% of respondents indicated that their business was currently trading ‘well’, with 50% stating that their business was currently performing ‘moderately’;
- The survey indicates that all traders relied upon residents from in or around Guide Post Town Centre for the majority of their business;
- When asked about measures that would improve the town centre, 19% of respondents stated that improved security/CCTV would have this effect. Other measures suggested included an increased choice/range of shops (6%) and more independent/specialist traders (6%);
- The majority of respondents (75%) felt that there was a good balance between shops and other non-retail uses, with 25% indicating that there were not enough non-retail uses;
- Respondents identified the main barriers to trading performance as being high rents/overheads (22%), anti-social behaviour (22%), a lack of passing trade outside premises (11%) and inadequate customer car parking (11%);
- Two thirds (67%) of respondents indicated that they had no plans to alter their business in any way over the next five years, although 33% planned to extend the floorspace in their premises;
- When asked if their business currently has its own website, 25% stated yes, with 75% stating that their business does not currently have its own website;
- Of those who did have a website, all respondents stated that their website provides customers with contact information;
- All respondents said that their website was of little importance to their business;
- All respondents indicated that their website does not attract customers from a wider catchment, i.e. beyond Northumberland;
All respondents stated that customers do not visit their store as a result of browsing their website; Up to 10% of sales are from the internet according to all respondents; and Of those respondents who did not have a website, half (50%) indicated that this was because a website was not relevant/necessary, 25% of respondents indicated that a website was too time consuming and 25% indicates that they do not have the skills to produce/run a website.

The business survey asked respondents to rate a number of different aspects of Guide Post in terms of whether they were considered to be 'good', 'average' or 'poor'. A large proportion of aspects were rated as being 'average' by a number of respondents. However, other aspects were rated as being 'poor' by a number of respondents. These aspects were: the number of events (75%), the range of events (75%) and the number of restaurants (50%). Respondents were also able to add any additional comments they wished to make at the end of the survey. Through this process, retailers highlighted that they had concerns that parking charges will be brought in due to the merging of the seven local planning authorities in the County. In addition to this, certain retailers felt that Guide Post is a good centre which has benefited recently from improved car parking arrangements.

**In Street Survey Results**

**Introduction**
- Of those respondents questioned, 75% live in Guide Post but do not work there;
- 43% of respondents do not visit Guide Post in the evening. However, 70% visit Guide Post every day in the daytime;
- The main reason respondents visit Guide Post was due to food shopping only (39%), followed by non-food shopping only (22%) and then food and non-food shopping (10%).

**Accessibility**
- The majority of respondents walked to the centre (60%), with a further 32% travelling to the centre by car;
- Of those respondents that travelled by car, 90% parked in Guide Post Town Centre;
- Respondents were asked what, if anything, they would like to see improved as part of their shopping experience. Although 33% of respondents did not think that there was anything that would improve their shopping experience in Guide Post, 22% suggested a reduction in illegal parking, 18% stated that improved parking provision was required and 14 suggested improved safety and security;
- The following are the aspects of the town centre which were most frequently rated as being 'good' or 'very good' by the largest proportion of respondents: safety and security in the daytime (65%); the destinations to and from Guide Post served by public transport (42%); and the quality of bus services (40%);
• The following are the aspects of the town centre which were most frequently rated ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’ by the largest proportion of respondents: the availability of public parking spaces (43%); the availability of disabled parking spaces (37%); and safety and security in the night-time (36%);
• Nearly half of respondents (45%) thought that Guide Post did offer a wide choice of quality shops;
• The majority of respondents (85%) planned to spend less than £25 in Guide Post on the day of survey;
• Over half of respondents (58%) stated that they did not know what improvements to the retail offer they would like to see in Guide Post. However, 10% stated clothes shops, 5% said a supermarket and 5% felt that a café would improve Guide Post’s retail offer.

Leisure
• The majority of respondents (90%) do not come to Guide Post for leisure/cultural events. Of those who do, 25% visit their local pub, whilst 17% visit the bingo hall;
• When asked what events/activities respondents would like to see on a regular basis, the majority of respondents (51%) did not suggest anything. However, the most popular responses provided by those that did offer an opinion were a farmer’s market (22%), a continental style market (11%) and sporting events (10%);
• The leisure/cultural activities which were most frequently rated as ‘good’ or ‘very good’ by respondents were: sandwich shops (34%) and takeaways (32%);
• The following leisure/cultural activities were rated as ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’ by the largest proportion of respondents: restaurants (44%) and cafes (33%).

Local Environment
• In terms of factors affecting the environmental quality of Guide Post, the greatest proportion of respondents rated the following as ‘good’ or ‘very good’: street furniture (43%); the overall level of cleanliness (40%); and the general quality of the footways/paving (38%);
• Environmental quality factors rated as ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’ included: the general state of buildings (24%); graffiti/fly posting problems (23%); and the level of litter (22%);
• In terms of how Guide Post is used, the largest proportion of respondents felt that as a place to live (52%) or as a place to shop (30%) Guide Post was ‘good’ or ‘very good’;
• However, 44% of respondents considered Guide Post to be a ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’ place to visit, with 42% feeling the same about it as a place to shop;
• Over the last twelve months, the majority of respondents (62%) felt that the overall attractiveness of the town had stayed the same, with 23% stating that the attractiveness of the centre had improved. 10% felt that the attractiveness of Guide Post had improved and 4% did not know;
• To make Guide Post better, 45% of respondents felt that that centre needs a stronger retail offer, with 42% stating that improved parking would benefit the centre.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Accessibility</strong></th>
<th><strong>Environmental Quality</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Car:** Guide Post is located off the A1068, about equidistance from the A1 and A189. Broadway and High Street are the busiest roads surrounding the centre, but these are considered generally safe for shoppers. Almost all of the respondents to the in street survey (98%) considered it to be either 'fairly easy' or 'very easy' to travel into Widdrington Station.  
**Car parks:** There are two car parks in Guide Post, one off The Square and another outside the Co-op Foodstore which is dedicated to Co-op customers. Both these car parks are free of charge. There is also on-street parking available.  
**Public transport:** The town benefits from good accessibility by public transport. Guide Post is located on the 501, 505, 518 and 525 bus routes which provide services to Berwick-upon-Tweed, Alnwick, Morpeth and Newcastle City Centre amongst others.  
| Guide Post is a medium-sized town centre situated to the south east of the authority area, anchored by a Co-op store. The centre is focused around The Square. There are an adequate number and variety of retail units in Guide Post, though some shoppers may travel to do main convenience goods shopping at larger stores elsewhere. There is no pedestrianisation in the centre. However, Guide Post is considered to provide a safe environment for shoppers. At midday on the day of the survey (Tuesday 22 September), there was a low level of footfall in Guide Post. Pavements are wide and there are no pedestrian crossings in the centre. The streets are generally clean with little evidence of litter, whilst shop units themselves are maintained to fairly high standards, creating a fairly attractive shopping environment. Units are mostly housed in traditional accommodation. Street furniture includes benches, bins, flowers, trees and street lighting. There are no public toilets in the centre. |
**HADSTON HEALTH CHECK ASSESSMENT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of Site Visit:</th>
<th>23 September 2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Status:</strong></td>
<td>Local Retail Service Centre (Castle Morpeth District Local Plan 1991 - 2006 (2003))</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Centre Overview**

Hadston is situated to the north of Widdrington Station and to the south east of Alnwick. Hadston is located approximately 28 miles north of Newcastle City Centre and is identified as a local retail service centre by the Castle Morpeth District Local Plan 1991 – 2006 (February 2003). The town is located off the A1068, which runs parallel to the A1. Newcastle International Airport is some 28 miles away.

The focus for retailing in Hadston is focussed around The Precinct. A land use plan of Hadston Town Centre is provided overleaf.
Photographs of Hadston Local Retail Service Centre

Photos removed for distribution purposes.

**Figure 49 (top left):** Co-op Foodstore, The Precinct
**Figure 50 (top centre):** Boots Pharmacy, The Precinct
**Figure 51 (top right):** Retail frontages, The Precinct
**Figure 52 (bottom left):** Retail frontages, The Precinct
**Figure 53 (bottom right):** Retail frontages, The Precinct
Figure 54: Land Use Plan for Hadston Local Retail Service Centre (2009)

Source: WYG site visit (September 2009)
Table 20: Diversity of Uses in Hadston Local Retail Service Centre (2009)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Outlets</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Hadston (%)</th>
<th>UK (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Convenience</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparison</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>34.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Service</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure Services</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>21.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial and Business Services</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>11.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>12</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: WYG site visit (September 2009)

Table 21: Existing Floorspace in Hadston Local Retail Service Centre (2009)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Existing Floorspace</th>
<th>Sq m</th>
<th>Hadston (%)</th>
<th>UK (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Convenience</td>
<td>438</td>
<td>31.4</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparison</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>37.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Service</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure Services</td>
<td>399</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>22.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial and Business Services</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,396</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: WYG site visit (September 2009)

Figure 55: Use of Units in Hadston Local Retail Service Centre (2009)

Source: WYG site visit (September 2009)

Figure 56: Use of Floorspace in Hadston Local Retail Service Centre (2009)

Source: WYG site visit (September 2009)
Convenience
16.7% of all retail units in Hadston centre are in use for the sale of convenience goods, compared to the national average of 8.8%. The proportion of retail floorspace in use for the sale of convenience goods is also well above the national average (31.4% compared to 14.2% nationally). The sector is dominated by the Co-op Foodstore at The Precinct.

Comparison
Comparison goods units occupy 16.7% of outlets in Hadston against a national average of 34.5%. Similarly, with regard to comparison goods floorspace, Hadston is under-provided for with 9.7% of floorspace being dedicated to this use, which is significantly below the national average of 37.7%. The comparison goods retail offer in Hadston includes one national multiple, this being the Boots store.

Overall Service
The service sector comprises six units and occupies 613 sq m of floorspace. The proportion of service outlets (50.0%) is above the national average (45.7%). Similarly, the proportion of service floorspace utilised for service uses (43.9%) is above the national average (38.4%).

Retail Service
Retail services, which comprise such uses as hairdressers, dry cleaners and petrol filling stations, account for 25.0% of outlets and 15.3% of floorspace in Hadston, which compares to respective national averages of 13.0% and 7.0%.

Leisure Services
Leisure services, as defined by Experian GOAD, include uses such as restaurants, cafes, bookmakers and public houses. Hadston is well-provided for in terms of the proportion of such outlets in comparison to the national average (25.0% compared to 21.5%). Similarly, the proportion of floorspace occupied (28.6%) is above the national average (22.7%).

Financial Services
There are no financial service traders in Hadston.

Non-Retail
In addition to the retail service on offer, there is a library, police station, school and several dwellings. However, all of these are located outside the centre boundary.

Vacancies
Table 22: Vacancies in Hadston Local Retail Service Centre (2009)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vacancy</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Hadston (%)</th>
<th>UK (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of Outlets</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Floorspace</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: WYG site visit (September 2009)

Table 10 illustrates that at September 2009 there were two vacant retail units in Hadston centre, both of which are located at The Precinct and occupied a floorspace of 209 sq m. The vacancies represent 16.7% of all outlets and 15.0% of floorspace, compared to respective national averages of 10.8% and 9.0%. We have spoken to commercial property agent Rickard Chartered Surveyors Ltd, who indicates that there has not been significant interest in the vacant unit towards the east of the Precinct. What interest there has been is from operators seeking to let the unit as a hot food takeaway. However, this particular unit has restrictions prohibiting this type of use. It is also relevant to note that The Precinct has recently changed hands and is in new ownership. No information is available with regard to the other vacant unit at the west of the Precinct.
**Business Survey Results**

A questionnaire was distributed to all local businesses within Hadston in order to gain an understanding of the opinions of retailers. A total of 15 questionnaires were distributed, with 2 being returned: a response rate of 13%. The main findings of the business survey results were as follows:

- All respondents indicated that their businesses were food retailers;
- Half (50%) of respondents were independent traders and the other half were part of a national/regional group or chain;
- 50% of respondents had been trading in the town centre for over twenty years, with 50% having been in operation for over one year;
- All respondents leased their premises;
- All traders responding to the business survey stated that since they began trading business had either ‘grown moderately’ or ‘grown significantly’;
- All respondents indicated that their business was currently trading ‘well’ or ‘very well’;
- The survey indicates that half (50%) of traders primarily relied on residents from in or around Hadston Town Centre for the majority of their business and the other half primarily relied on specialist buyers;
- When asked about measures that would improve the town centre, 15% of respondents stated that more street cleaning would have this effect. Other measures suggested included improved public toilets (15%) and an increased choice/range of shops (8%);
- All respondents felt that there were not enough non-retail uses;
- Respondents identified the main barriers to trading performance as being a lack of passing trade outside premises (25%), a lack of day visitors/tourists to the town (25%) and anti-social behaviour (25%). 25% felt that there were no barriers to the trading performance of their business;
- Half (50%) of respondents indicated that they had no plans to alter their business in any way over the next five years, although 50% planned to extend the floorspace in their premises;
- When asked if their business currently has its own website, all respondents said yes;
- Of those who did have a website, 40% of respondents stated that their website provides customers with the ability to contact their business directly via e-mail and 20% stated that their website provides customers with the ability to order goods directly from the website. 20% indicated that their website allows customers the ability to order goods that will be delivered to a designated address and a further 20% stated that contact information is provided on their website;
- 50% of respondents said that their website was essential to their business, with a further 50% stating that their website was very important to their business;
- All respondents indicated that their website does attract customers from a wider catchment, i.e. beyond Northumberland;
All respondents stated that customers do not visit their store as a result of browsing their website; Over 75% of sales are from the internet according to half of respondents, whilst up to 10% of sales from the internet for the other half of respondents; and None of the respondents who did not have a website stated why this was the case.

The business survey asked respondents to rate a number of different aspects of Hadston in terms of whether they were considered to be ‘good’, ‘average’ or ‘poor’. A large proportion of aspects were rated as being ‘average’ by a number of respondents. However, other aspects were rated as being ‘poor’ by a number of respondents. These aspects were: the number of services in general (100%), the range of services in general (100%) and the number of restaurants (100%). Respondents were also able to add any additional comments they wished to make at the end of the survey. Through this process, retailers highlighted that the car park building is in need of repair.

### In Street Survey Results

#### Introduction
- Of those respondents questioned, 73% live in Hadston but do not work there;
- 38% of respondents do not visit Hadston in the evening. However, 52% visit Hadston every day in the daytime;
- The main reason respondents visit Hadston is for food shopping only (44%), followed by food and non-food shopping (26%) and non-food shopping (8%).

#### Accessibility
- The majority of respondents walked to the centre (58%), with a further 37% travelling to the centre by car;
- All respondents that travelled by car parked in Hadston centre;
- Respondents were asked what, if anything, they would like to see improved as part of their shopping experience. The most frequent suggestion was for safety and security to be improved (32%), with other responses being improved road safety (12%), improved street lighting (11%) and improved quality of the footpaths (11%);
- The following are the aspects of the centre which were most frequently rated as being ‘good’ or ‘very good’ by respondents: safety and security in the daytime (59%); the availability of public parking spaces (37%); and the safety/security of parking facilities (25%);
- The following are the aspects of the centre which were most frequently rated as being ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’ by the largest proportion of respondents: street furniture (66%); safety and security in the night-time (45%); and the quality of bus services (30%);
More than half of respondents (52%) thought that Hadston did not offer a wide choice of quality of shops; 
The majority of respondents (92%) planned to spend less than £25 in Hadston during their visit; 
45% of respondents stated that they did not know what improvements to Hadston’s retail offer that they would like to see. However, 27% of respondents considered that clothes shops would improve the town centre’s offer, with 23% stating that a supermarket and 7% indicating that more clothes shops would achieve the same effect.

Leisure
- Almost all of the respondents (97%) do not come to Hadston for leisure/cultural events; 
- When asked what events/activities respondents would like to see on a regular basis, 43% of respondents did not mention anything. However, of those that did offer a response, the most popular responses were a farmer’s market (22%), sporting events (11%) and arts and crafts activities (10%); 
- The leisure/cultural activities which were most frequently rated as being ‘good’ or ‘very good’ by respondents were cafes (10%) and sandwich shops (8%); 
- The leisure/cultural activities which were most frequently rated as being ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’ by respondents were restaurants (67%) and pubs and clubs (41%).

Local Environment
- In terms of factors affecting the environmental quality of Hadston, those most frequently rated as ‘good’ or ‘very good’ were: the general condition of the buildings (6%); the level of litter (4%); and the amount of graffiti/fly posting (4%); 
- Environmental quality factors in Bellingham most frequently rated as ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’ were: shop frontages (78%); the level of litter (75%); and the overall level of cleanliness (75%); 
- In terms of how Hadston is used, 15% of respondents felt that as a place to live (15%) or as a place to shop (7%) Hadston was ‘good’ or ‘very good’; 
- However, 85% of respondents considered Hadston to be a ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’ place to enjoy yourself, with 80% feeling the same about it as a place to visit (80%); 
- Over the last twelve months, the majority of respondents (59%) felt that the overall attractiveness of the town had stayed the same, with 21% stating that the attractiveness of the centre had declined. 12% felt that the attractiveness of Hadston had improved and 8% did not know; 
- In terms of improving Hadston, 67% of respondents felt that the centre needed a stronger retail offer, with 27% stating that improved leisure facilities would benefit the centre.
### Accessibility

**Car:** Hadston is located off the A1068, close to the east coast. Hadston Road is the busiest road running through the centre. However, traffic calming measures are in place to increase pedestrian safety. Almost all of the respondents to the in street survey (97%) considered it to be either 'fairly easy' or 'very easy' to travel into Hadston.

**Car parks:** There are two car parks in Hadston, located on either side of The Precinct and both of which are free of charge. On-street parking is also available.

**Public transport:** The town also benefits from good accessibility by public transport. Hadston is located on the 518 bus route which provides services to Amble, Morpeth, Gosforth and Newcastle City Centre amongst others.

### Environmental Quality

Hadston is a small local centre, situated to the east of the county and anchored by a Co-op store. The centre is focused around The Precinct. There are considered to be an adequate number and variety of retail units in Hadston. Some shoppers do their main food shop at the Co-op store at The Precinct, whilst others travel further afield to larger supermarkets. None of the streets in the centre is pedestrianised. However, Hadston is considered to offer a safe environment for shoppers. At mid-morning on the day of the survey (Wednesday 23 September), there was a low level of footfall in Hadston. Pavements are generally wide and there are no pedestrian crossings in the centre. The streets are clean with little evidence of litter, whilst shop units themselves are maintained to fairly high standards, creating an attractive shopping environment. Units are a mixture of traditional properties and new build. Street furniture includes benches, bins, bike racks, trees and street lighting. The public toilets in the centre were closed at the time of the survey.
Haydon Bridge Local Centre is located approximately 7 miles to the west of Hexham. The centre is identified in the Tynedale Local Plan (2000) which has now become part of the Consolidated Planning Policy Framework for Northumberland (April 2009). Haydon Bridge is situated close to the A69, which leads to the A1 (easterly direction) and M6 (westerly). The A1/M6 routes can be used to reach Scotland to the north, with the A69 linking Newcastle to the east. At the time of the 2001 census the Haydon Ward (which encompasses an area much larger that Haydon Bridge itself) had a population of 2,027.

The focus for retailing in Haydon Bridge comprises North Bank, Ratcliffe Road (both north of the River Tyne) and John Martin Street/Shaftoe Street (south of the River Tyne). A land use plan of Haydon Bridge Local Centre is provided overleaf.
Photographs of Haydon Bridge Local Centre

Photos removed for distribution purposes.

Figure 57 (top left): Bridge spanning River Tyne
Figure 58 (top centre): Spar Distribution Centre, Church Street
Figure 59 (top right): Vacant unit, Shaftoe Street
Figure 60 (bottom left): Retail frontages, Shaftoe Street
Figure 61 (bottom right): Co-op store, Ratcliffe Road
Figure 62: Land Use Plan for Haydon Bridge Local Centre (2009)

Source: WYG site visit (September 2009)
Table 23: Diversity of Uses in Haydon Bridge Local Centre (2009)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Outlets</th>
<th>Haydon Bridge (%)</th>
<th>UK (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Convenience</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparison</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Service</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure Services</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial and Business Services</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>16</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: WYG site visit (September 2009)

Table 24: Existing Floorspace in Haydon Bridge Local Centre (2009)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Existing Floorspace</th>
<th>Sq m</th>
<th>Haydon Bridge (%)</th>
<th>UK (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Convenience</td>
<td>722</td>
<td>24.9</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparison</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>37.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Service</td>
<td>376</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure Services</td>
<td>1,333</td>
<td>46.0</td>
<td>22.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial and Business Services</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,897</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: WYG site visit (September 2009)
Convenience
12.5% of all retail units in Haydon Bridge Local Centre are in use for the sale of convenience goods, compared to the national average of 8.8%. The proportion of retail floorspace in use for the sale of convenience goods is well above the national average, at 24.9% (compared to 14.2%). The Co-op and Post Office (single unit) dominates this sector.

Comparison
Two units (12.5%) are in use within this sector, which equate to 3.8% of total retail floorspace. This is significantly lower than the national average of 37.7% of floorspace being in comparison goods use. The two comparison goods units comprise a newsagent and a chemist.

Overall Service
The service sector comprises ten units and occupies 1,754 sq m of floorspace. The proportion of service outlets (71.4%) is above the national average (45.7%). Similarly, the proportion of floorspace in service sector use (60.6%) is well above the national average (38.4%).

Retail Service
Retail services account for 6.3% of outlets and 13.0% of floorspace (there is just a single unit in retail service use). This represents a relative under-provision in terms of the proportion of units (the national average being 13.0%) and an over-provision in terms of floorspace (the national average is 7.0%). The single unit within this sector is a car mechanic.

Leisure Services
Half of all units (50.0%) and a similar proportion of floorspace (46.0%) are utilized for leisure services, which is well above the respective national averages of 21.5% and 22.7%. This sector is dominated by a number of pubs and by bed and breakfast accommodation.

Financial Services
The financial services sector in Haydon Bridge is comprised of a single high street bank, which represents 6.3% of units and 1.6% of floorspace. Accordingly, this sector is under-represented in Haydon Bridge compared to the national average of 11.2% of units and 8.7% of floorspace falling in this use.

Non-Retail
In addition to the centre’s retail services, there is also a church and several residential dwellings.

Vacancies

| Table 25: Vacancies in Haydon Bridge Local Centre (2009) |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
|                  | Total           | Haydon Bridge (%) | UK (%)        |
| No. of Outlets   | 2               | 12.5             | 10.8          |
| Floorspace       | 310             | 10.7             | 9.0           |

Source: WYG site visit (September 2009)

At the time of survey, there were two vacant units in Haydon Bridge, which represent 12.5% of outlets and 10.7% of floorspace. This broadly corresponds with the respective national averages of 10.8% and 9.0%.

The units were not being actively marketed by agents and no further information on these properties has been discovered during the site visit. Accordingly, it is unclear why these units have not been resold/let.
Business Survey Results

A questionnaire was distributed to all local businesses within Haydon Bridge in order to gain an understanding of the opinions of retailers. A total of 11 questionnaires were distributed, with 3 being returned: a response rate of 27%. The main findings of the business survey results were as follows:

- The majority of respondents (83%) were professional services and the other 17% were food retailers;
- Two thirds (67%) of respondents were independent traders and the other 33% were part of a national/regional group or chain;
- One third (33%) of respondents had been trading in the town centre for over twenty years, with 33% having been in operation for over ten years and a further 33% for over five years;
- All respondents owned their premises;
- Two thirds of traders responding to the business survey stated that since they began trading business had ‘grown significantly’, although 33% of traders had ‘declined moderately’;
- All respondents indicated that their business was currently trading ‘well’;
- The survey indicates that half (50%) of traders primarily relied on residents from in or around Haydon Bridge Town Centre for the majority of their business, whilst 25% primarily relied on residents from across Northumberland County and the remaining 25% primarily relied on residents from outside Northumberland County;
- When asked about measures that would improve the town centre, 11% of respondents stated that more street cleaning would have this effect. Other measures suggested included improved street furniture (11%), more street cleaning (11%) and greater promotion/marketing of the centre (11%);
- Half (50%) of respondents felt that there was a good balance of shops and other non-retail uses and the other half felt that there were not enough non-retail uses;
- Respondents identified the main barriers to trading performance as being a lack of passing trade outside premises (25%), the poor location of premises (25%), inadequate customer car parking (25%) and a lack of day visitors/tourists to the town (25%);
- A third (33%) of respondents indicated that they had no plans to alter their business in any way over the next five years, although 33% planned to relocate out-of-centre and 33% planned to refurbish their existing floorspace;
- When asked if their business currently has its own website two thirds (67%) of respondents said yes, whilst the other 33% said no;
- Of those who did have a website, all respondents stated that their website provides customers with contact information;
- All respondents said that their website was important to their business;
- All respondents indicated that their website does attract customers from a wider catchment, i.e. beyond Northumberland;
All respondents stated that customers do not visit their store as a result of browsing their website; up to 10% of sales are from the internet according to all respondents; and all of the respondents who did not have a website stated that this was because it was not relevant/necessary.

The business survey asked respondents to rate a number of different aspects of Haydon Bridge in terms of whether they were considered to be 'good', 'average' or 'poor'. A large proportion of aspects were rated as being 'average' by a number of respondents. However, other aspects were rated as being 'poor' by a number of respondents. These aspects were: the number of events (100%), the range of events (100%), the amount of marketing and promotion (100%) and the range of marketing and promotion (100%). Respondents were also able to add any additional comments they wished to make at the end of the survey. Through this process, retailers highlighted that a business park outside of the centre should be created.

In Street Survey Results

Introduction

- Of those respondents questioned, 59% live in Haydon Bridge but do not work there;
- 59% of respondents (59%) visited Haydon Bridge every day in the evening. However, almost all respondents (98%) visited Haydon Bridge every day in the daytime;
- The main reason respondents visited Haydon Bridge was due to food shopping only (43%), followed by non-food shopping only (16%) and for work (10%).

Accessibility

- The majority of respondents (74%) walked to the centre and a further 25% travelled into the centre by car;
- The majority of respondents (92%) parked in Haydon Bridge Town Centre;
- Respondents were asked what would improve their shopping experience in Haydon Bridge. The largest proportion of respondents (41%) suggested nothing, although 12% suggested improved parking provision and a further 12% suggested more shops would improve their shopping experience in Haydon Bridge;
- The following were rated 'good' or 'very good' by the majority of respondents: safety and security in the daytime (all respondents); the destinations to and from Haydon Bridge served by public transport (76%); and safety and security in the night-time (69%);
- The following were rated 'poor' or 'very poor' by the largest proportion of respondents: the availability of public parking spaces (55%); the availability of disabled parking spaces (51%); and the safety/security of parking facilities (41%);
The majority of respondents (55%) neither agreed or disagreed with the statement that ‘Haydon Bridge offers a wide choice of quality shops’;

Almost all respondents (96%) planned to spend less than £25 in Haydon Bridge;

The largest proportion of respondents (96%) did not know what improvements to the retail offer they would like to see in Haydon Bridge. However, 2% stated more shops offering local produce and 2% felt that a bakers would improve Haydon Bridge’s retail offer.

Leisure

- Over half of respondents (53%) come to Haydon Bridge for leisure/cultural events. Of those who do, 39% visit other responses not listed on the survey and 27% visit their local pub in Haydon Bridge;
- When asked what events/activities respondents would like to see on a regular basis, the majority of respondents (67%) didn’t know. However, of those that did, the most popular responses were a farmer’s market (8%), sporting events (6%) and community events (6);
- The following leisure/cultural activities were rated as ‘good’ or ‘very good’ by the largest proportion of respondents: takeaway (84%) and sandwich shops (74%);
- The following leisure/cultural activities were rated as ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’ by the largest proportion of respondents: sandwich shops (2%) and cafes (2%).

Local Environment

- In terms of factors affecting the environmental quality of Haydon Bridge, the largest proportion of respondents rated the following as ‘good’ or ‘very good’: the level of graffiti/fly posting (57%); shop frontages (37%); and the general state of buildings (33%);
- Environmental quality factors rated as ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’ in Haydon Bridge by the largest proportion of respondents include: the level of litter (39%); the general quality of the footways/paving (37%); and street furniture (2%);
- In terms of how Haydon Bridge is used, the largest proportion of respondents felt that as a place to live (71%) or as a place to enjoy yourself (33%) Haydon Bridge was ‘good’ or ‘very good’;
- However, as a place to shop (29%) or as a place to visit (12%), the largest proportion of respondents felt that Haydon Bridge was ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’;
- In the last twelve months, the majority of respondents (59%) felt that the overall attractiveness of the town had improved, with 35% stating that the attractiveness of the centre had stayed the same and 6% felt that it had declined;
- To make Haydon Bridge better; the largest proportion of respondents (41%) didn’t know how to make the town centre better, with 37% stating that improved parking would benefit the centre.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accessibility</th>
<th>Environmental Quality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Car:** Haydon Bridge is situated close to the A69 which leads to the A1 (east direction) and M6 (west). The recent A69 bypass scheme has taken traffic away from Haydon Bridge centre, though this is still accessible via Ratcliffe Road (B6319) which is the busiest road running through the centre. Shoppers have to cross this to access the footbridge over the river, and the other side of the town centre. Crossing this road is potentially dangerous, particularly for vulnerable users. The majority of respondents (85.7%) felt it was very easy to travel into Haydon Bridge.  

**Car parks:** There was only on street parking available (other than a patron’s only car park for one of the pubs) and this lack of parking clearly was an issue highlighted by respondents. Parked cars did dominate the centre, despite the low footfall.  

**Public transport:** The town benefits from good public transport accessibility, though no stops were present within the centre itself with bus stops and a railway station located just outside the centre boundary Haydon Bridge is on the Newcastle – Carlisle train line, and is served by bus to these destinations (and others en route).  

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**Environmental Quality**  
Haydon Bridge is a small local centre to the west of the authority area. The centre is split into two separate areas, which are separated by the River Tyne and linked by a footbridge. To access this footbridge from the northern side pedestrian have to cross a busy main road. There are few retail units in Haydon Bridge, which provide for only the basic needs of shoppers. None of the streets within the centre were pedestrianised though the footways were very wide which assisted towards a safe retail environment. At mid afternoon on the day of survey (Wednesday 23rd September) there was a low level of footfall in the centre. The streets are generally clean with little evidence of litter, whilst shop units themselves were fairly well maintained (particularly the Co-op) on the north side of the river, this was not the case on the southern side of the river (though there were very few units present here). Street furniture included bins and a couple of benches in front of the church, with some landscaping here. There was also a picnic area to the rear of units on Church Street, outside the town centre boundary adjacent to the river, though this did not appear well used. There are no public toilets within the centre.
## LYNEMOUTH HEALTH CHECK ASSESSMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of Site Visit:</th>
<th>22 September 2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Status:</strong></td>
<td>Local Centre (Castle Morpeth District Local Plan 1991 - 2006 (2003))</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Centre Overview

Lynemouth is situated to the south east of Ellington and to the north of Newbiggin-by-the-Sea. Lynemouth is located approximately 22 miles north of Newcastle City Centre and is identified as a local centre by the Castle Morpeth District Local Plan 1991 – 2006 (February 2003). Lynemouth is located off the A1068 which is parallel to the A1. Newcastle International Airport is some 22 miles away.

The focus for retailing in Lynemouth comprises West Market Street. A land use plan of Lynemouth Town Centre is provided overleaf.
Photographs of Lynemouth Local Centre

Photos removed for distribution purposes.

Figure 65 (top left): Co-op Foodstore, West Market Street
Figure 66 (top centre): Premier store, West Market Street
Figure 67 (top right): Retail frontages, West Market Street
Figure 68 (bottom left): Vacant petrol filling station, West Market Street
Figure 69 (bottom right): Vacant unit, West Market Street
Figure 70: Land Use Plan for Lynemouth Local Centre (2009)

Source: WYG site visit (September 2009)
Table 26: Diversity of Uses in Lynemouth Local Centre (2009)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Outlets</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Lynemouth (%)</th>
<th>UK (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Convenience</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparison</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>34.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Service</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure Services</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>21.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial and Business Services</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>11.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: WYG site visit (September 2009)

Table 27: Existing Floorspace in Lynemouth Local Centre (2009)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Existing Floorspace</th>
<th>Sq m</th>
<th>Lynemouth (%)</th>
<th>UK (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Convenience</td>
<td>541</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparison</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>37.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Service</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure Services</td>
<td>383</td>
<td>29.6</td>
<td>22.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial and Business Services</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,296</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: WYG site visit (September 2009)

Figure 71: Use of Units in Lynemouth Local Centre (2009)

Source: WYG site visit (September 2009)

Figure 72: Use of Floorspace in Lynemouth Local Centre (2009)

Source: WYG site visit (September 2009)
Convenience
25.0% of all retail units in Lynemouth Local Centre are in use for the sale of convenience goods, compared to a national average of 8.8%. The proportion of retail floorspace in use for the sale of convenience goods also is well above the national average (41.7% compared to 14.2% nationally). At present, this sector is dominated by the Co-op Foodstore on West Market Street.

Comparison
Comparison traders in Lynemouth occupy 12.5% of outlets against a national average of 34.5%. Similarly, when it comes to comparison goods floorspace, Lynemouth is below the national average of 37.7% with a figure of 7.8%. The one comparison goods store in the centre is an independent retailer.

Overall Service
The service sector comprises three units and occupies 383 sq m of floorspace. The proportion of service outlets (37.5%) is below the national average (45.7%). Likewise, the proportion of service floorspace (29.6%) is below the national average (38.4%).

Retail Service
There are no retail service traders in Lynemouth.

Leisure Services
Leisure services, as defined by Experian GOAD, include uses such as restaurants, cafes, bookmakers and public houses. Lynemouth is well-provided for in terms of the proportion of such outlets in comparison to the national average (37.5% compared to 21.5%). Likewise, the proportion of floorspace occupied (29.6%) is above the national average (22.7%).

Financial Services
There are no financial service traders in Lynemouth.

Non-Retail
In addition to the retail service on offer, there are two churches, a community centre, a school and several dwellings; however all of these are located outside the town centre boundary.

Vacancies
Table 28: Vacancies in Lynemouth Local Centre (2009)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vacancy</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Lynemouth (%)</th>
<th>UK (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of Outlets</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Floorspace</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: WYG site visit (September 2009)

Table 28 illustrates that at September 2009 there were two vacant retail units in Lynemouth Town Centre, both of which are located on West Market Street and occupied a floorspace of 271 sq m. This represents 25.0% of all outlets and 20.9% of floorspace, compared to respective national averages of 10.8% and 9.0%. Having spoken to commercial property agent Greig Cavey Commercial Ltd, it was found that the former Storewise unit on West Market Street has been vacant for 6-9 months; however there has been interest in the unit. No information was available for the other vacant unit on West Market Street.
Business Survey Results

A questionnaire was distributed to all local businesses within Lynemouth in order to gain an understanding of the opinions of retailers. A total of 17 questionnaires were distributed, with 3 being returned: a response rate of 18%. The main findings of the business survey results were as follows:

- All respondents were retail services;
- All respondents were independent traders;
- Half (50%) of respondents had been trading in the town centre for over twenty years, with half having been in operation for over three years;
- 50% of respondents leased their premises and a further 50% owned their premises;
- Half (50%) of traders responding to the business survey stated that since they began trading business had ‘grown moderately’, although 50% of traders had ‘remained largely static’;
- 50% of respondents indicated that their business was currently trading ‘well’ and 50% of respondents indicated that their business was currently trading ‘moderately’;
- The survey indicates that half (50%) of traders primarily relied on residents from in or around Lynemouth Town Centre for the majority of their business, whilst 50% primarily relied on residents from across Northumberland County;
- When asked about measures that would improve the town centre, 25% of respondents stated that an increased choice/range of shops would have this effect. Other measures suggested included more national multiples (13%), a foodstore in the town centre (13%) and an improved built environment (13%) amongst others;
- All respondents felt that there was a good balance of shops and other non-retail uses;
- Respondents identified the main barriers to trading performance as being anti-social behaviour (25%), the poor quality of the town centre shopping environment (25%), a lack of passing trade outside premises (13%) and the poor location of premises (13%);
- Half (50%) of respondents indicated they had no plans to alter their business in any way over the next five years, although 50% planned to refurbish their existing floorspace;
- When asked if their business currently has its own website, half (50%) of respondents said yes, whilst the other half said no;
- Of those who did have a website, 50% of respondents stated that their website provides customers with contact information, whilst 50% of respondents stated that their website allows customers to contact their business directly via e-mail;
- All respondents said that their website was of little importance to their business;
- All respondents indicated that their website does not attract customers from a wider catchment, i.e. beyond Northumberland;
All respondents stated that customers do not visit their store as a result of browsing their website; Up to 10% of sales are from the internet according to all respondents; and None of the respondents who did not have a website gave a reason for not having a website.

The business survey asked respondents to rate a number of different aspects of Lynemouth in terms of whether they were considered to be ‘good’, ‘average’ or ‘poor’. A large proportion of aspects were rated as being ‘average’ by a number of respondents. However, other aspects were rated as being ‘poor’ by a number of respondents. These aspects were: the range of services in general (100%), the number of restaurants (100%), the number of licensed premises (100%) and the attractiveness of the public realm (100%). Respondents were also able to add any additional comments they wished to make at the end of the survey. Through this process, retailers highlighted that businesses need to be encouraged to invest in their premises. In addition to this, certain retailers felt that a purpose-built car park would improve pedestrian safety and the pavements needed improving in the centre.

In Street Survey Results

Introduction
- Of those respondents questioned, 65% lived in Lynemouth but didn’t work there;
- The largest proportion of respondents (35%) never visited Lynemouth in the evening. However, 64% visited Lynemouth every day in the daytime;
- The main reason respondents visited Lynemouth was due to food shopping only (47%), followed by social reasons (12%) and to visit the chemist (11%).

Accessibility
- The majority of respondents (60%) walked to the centre (60%) and a further 32% travelled into the centre by car;
- The majority of respondents (58%) parked in Lynemouth Local Centre, with 25% parking off-street and 17% in other areas;
- The greatest proportion of respondents (28%) didn’t know what would improve their shopping experience in Lynemouth. Aside from this, respondents suggested more shops would be an improvement (19%), as well as improved safety and security (15%) and improved quality of the footpaths (11%);
- The following were rated ‘good’ or ‘very good’ by the largest proportion of respondents: the quality of bus services (31%); the availability of public parking spaces (29%); and the regularity of bus services (29%);
- The following were rated ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’ by the largest proportion of respondents: street furniture (75%); safety and security in the night-time (59%); and safety/security of parking facilities (37%);
The majority of respondents (51%) thought that Lynemouth did not offer a wide choice of quality of shops;
The majority of respondents (79%) planned to spend less than £25 in Lynemouth;
The largest proportion of respondents (45%) did not know what improvements to the retail offer they would like to see in Lynemouth. However, 15% stated a butchers, 8% said a supermarket and 8% felt that clothes shops would improve Lynemouth’s retail offer.

Leisure
- The majority of respondents (88%) never come to Lynemouth for leisure/cultural events. Of those who do, 67% visit other facilities not mentioned in the survey and 22% visit their local pub in Lynemouth;
- When asked what events/activities respondents would like to see on a regular basis, the greatest proportion of respondents (27%) wanted a farmer’s market in Lynemouth. Aside from this, 25% didn’t know, 20% wanted sporting events and 19% suggested arts and crafts;
- The following leisure/cultural activities were rated as ‘good’ or ‘very good’ by the largest proportion of respondents: takeaways (35%) and cafes (17%);
- The following leisure/cultural activities were rated as ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’ by the largest proportion of respondents: restaurants (76%) and sandwich shops (55%).

Local Environment
- In terms of factors affecting the environmental quality of Lynemouth, the greatest proportion of respondents rated the following as ‘good’ or ‘very good’: graffiti/fly posting problems (7%); shop frontages (5%); and street furniture (4%);
- Environmental quality factors rated as ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’ included: street furniture (80%); the level of litter (72%); and the general quality of the footways/paving (63%);
- In terms of how Lynemouth is used, the largest proportion of respondents felt that as a place to live (11%) or as a place to shop (8%) Lynemouth was ‘good’ or ‘very good’;
- However, as a place to visit (79%) or as a place to enjoy yourself (77%), the largest proportion of respondents felt that Lynemouth was ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’;
- In the last twelve months, the majority of respondents (63%) felt that the overall attractiveness of the town had declined, with 25% stating that the attractiveness of the centre had stayed the same. 7% didn’t know and 5% felt that the attractiveness of the centre had improved;
- To make Lynemouth better; the greatest proportion of respondents (43%) felt that the centre needed improved leisure facilities with 39% stating that a better retail offer would benefit the centre.
### Accessibility

**Car:** Lynemouth is located off the A1068 which is parallel to the A1. Albion Terrace is the busiest road running adjacent to the centre; however traffic calming measures are in place to increase pedestrian safety. The majority of respondents to the in-street survey (85%) felt that it was either ‘fairly easy’ or ‘very easy’ to travel into Lynemouth.

**Car parks:** There are no car parks in Lynemouth; however there is on-street parking available.

**Public transport:** The town also benefits from good accessibility by public transport. Hadston is located on the 518 bus route which provides services to Amble, Morpeth, Gosforth and Newcastle City Centre amongst others.

### Environmental Quality

Lynemouth is a small local centre situated to the east of the authority area, anchored by a Co-op store. The centre is focused on West Market Street. Retail units are few in number and lack variety in Lynemouth. Again, many shoppers will choose to do their main food shop at larger supermarkets elsewhere. None of the streets in the centre are pedestrianised; however traffic calming measures are in place to aid shopper safety. At late afternoon on the day of the survey (Tuesday, 22 September), there was a very low level of footfall in Lynemouth. Pavements are wide and there are no pedestrian crossings in the centre. The streets are generally clean however litter was present in places. Shop units themselves are maintained to mixed standards, creating a fairly unattractive shopping environment. Units are a mixture of old and new build. Street furniture includes benches, bins and street lights. There are no public toilets in the centre.
## WIDDRINGTON STATION HEALTH CHECK ASSESSMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Date of Site Visit:</strong></th>
<th>23 September 2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Status:</strong></td>
<td>Local Centre (Castle Morpeth District Local Plan 1991 - 2006 (2003))</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Centre Overview

Widdrington Station is situated to the north of Ashington and to the south of Alnwick. Widdrington Station is located approximately 26 miles north of Newcastle City Centre and is identified as a local centre by the Castle Morpeth District Local Plan 1991 – 2006 (February 2003). Widdrington Station is located off the A1068 which is parallel to the A1. Newcastle International Airport is some 26 miles away.

The main focus for retailing in Widdrington Station comprises Ena Street and Grangemoor Road. A land use plan of Widdrington Station is provided overleaf.
Photographs of Widdrington Station Local Centre

Photos removed for distribution purposes.

**Figure 73 (top left):** Co-op Foodstore, Grangemoor Road  
**Figure 74 (top centre):** Retail frontages, Grangemoor Road  
**Figure 75 (top right):** Retail frontages, Ena Street  
**Figure 76 (bottom left):** The Widdy Chippy, Ena Street  
**Figure 77 (bottom right):** Railway Station, Grangemoor Road
Figure 78: Land Use Plan for Widdrington Station Local Centre (2009)

Source: WYG site visit (September 2009)
Table 29: Diversity of Uses in Widdrington Station Local Centre (2009)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Outlets</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Widdrington Station (%)</th>
<th>UK (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Convenience</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparison</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>34.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Service</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure Services</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>21.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial and Business Services</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>11.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: WYG site visit (September 2009)

Table 30: Existing Floorspace in Widdrington Station Local Centre (2009)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Existing Floorspace</th>
<th>Sq m</th>
<th>Widdrington Station (%)</th>
<th>UK (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Convenience</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>37.3</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparison</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>37.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Service</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure Services</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>22.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial and Business Services</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>36.6</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>913</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: WYG site visit (September 2009)

Figure 79: Use of Units in Widdrington Station Local Centre (2009)

Source: WYG site visit (September 2009)

Figure 80: Use of Floorspace in Widdrington Station Local Centre (2009)

Source: WYG site visit (September 2009)
**Convenience**

10.0% of all retail units in Widdrington Station Local Centre are in use for the sale of convenience goods, compared to a national average of 8.8%. The proportion of retail floorspace in use for the sale of convenience goods also is well above the national average (37.3% compared to 14.2% nationally). At present, this sector is dominated by the Co-op Foodstore on Grangemoor Road.

**Comparison**

There are no comparison traders in Widdrington Station.

**Overall Service**

The service sector comprises three units and occupies 238 sq m of floorspace. The proportion of service outlets (30.0%) is below the national average (45.7%). Likewise, the proportion of service floorspace (26.1%) is below the national average (38.4%).

**Retail Service**

Retail services, which comprise such uses as hairdressers, dry cleaners and petrol filling stations, account for 20.0% of outlets and 12.8% of floorspace in Widdrington Station, which compares to respective national averages of 13.0% and 7.0%.

**Leisure Services**

Leisure services, as defined by Experian GOAD, include uses such as restaurants, cafes, bookmakers and public houses. Widdrington Station is under-provided for in terms of the proportion of such outlets in comparison to the national average (10.0% compared to 21.5%). Likewise, the proportion of floorspace occupied (13.3%) is below the national average (22.7%).

**Financial Services**

There are no financial service traders in Widdrington Station.

**Non-Retail**

In addition to the retail service on offer, there is a church, community centre, library, school and several dwellings; however all of these are located outside the town centre boundary.

**Vacancies**

Table 31: Vacancies in Widdrington Station Local Centre (2009)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Widdrington Station (%)</th>
<th>UK (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of Outlets</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Floorspace</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>36.6</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: WYG site visit (September 2009)

Table 16 illustrates that at September 2009 there were six vacant retail units in Widdrington Station Town Centre, three of which are located on Ena Street and the other three units are on Grangemoor Road. These units occupied a floorspace of 334 sq m. It represents 60.0% of all outlets and 36.6% of floorspace, compared to respective national averages of 10.8% and 9.0%.

Having spoken to commercial property agent Rickard Chartered Surveyors Ltd, there has been some interest in the vacant units on Grangemoor Road; however they have been vacant for the past 6 months. Two separate parties have been close to letting one or more of the properties however they pulled out due to personal reasons. As with Hadston, the majority of the offers have been from developers seeking to let the unit as a hot food takeaway (Use Class A5); however these units have restrictions prohibiting this type of use. No information was available for the vacant units on Ena Street.
Business Survey Results

No business surveys were returned for this centre.

In Street Survey Results

Introduction

- Of those respondents questioned, 40% lived in Widdrington Station but didn’t work there, with a further 40% just visiting;
- The largest proportion of respondents (40%) never visited Widdrington Station in the evening. However, 32% visited Widdrington Station every day in the daytime;
- The main reason respondents visited Widdrington Station was due to food shopping only (32%), followed by for social reasons (16%) and whilst on holiday (12%).

Accessibility

- The greatest proportion of respondents walked to centre (48%) and a further 44% travelled into the centre by car;
- The majority of respondents (82%) parked in Widdrington Station Local Centre;
- The greatest proportion of respondents thought that nothing would improve their shopping experience in Widdrington Station. Aside from this, respondents suggested a bakers (8%), more variety (8%) and improved road safety (4%);
- The following were rated ‘good’ or ‘very good’ by the largest proportion of respondents: the availability of public parking spaces (76%); safety and security in the daytime (68%); and safety/security of parking facilities (64%);
- The following were rated ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’ by the largest proportion of respondents: the regularity of bus services (36%); the destinations to and from Widdrington Station served by public transport (32%); and safety and security in the night-time (24%);
Respondents were split equally with regard to the question of whether Widdrington Station offers a wide choice of quality shops;

- The majority of respondents (84%) planned to spend less than £25 in Widdrington Station;
- The largest proportion of respondents (36%) did not know what improvements to the retail offer they would like to see in Widdrington Station. However, 24% stated nothing, 12% said a butchers and 8% felt that a bakers would improve Widdrington Station’s retail offer.

### Leisure

- The majority of respondents (92%) never come to Widdrington Station for leisure/cultural events. Of those who do, half visit other facilities not mentioned on the survey and the other half visit their local pub in Widdrington Station;
- When asked what events/activities respondents would like to see on a regular basis, the greatest proportion of respondents (48%) didn’t know. However, of those that did, the most popular responses were a farmer’s market (12%), a continental style market (4%) and sporting events (4%);
- The following leisure/cultural activities were rated as ‘good’ or ‘very good’ by the largest proportion of respondents: restaurants (36%) and pubs and clubs (20%);
- The following leisure/cultural activities were rated as ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’ by the largest proportion of respondents: cafes (52%) and sandwich shops (48%).

### Local Environment

- In terms of factors affecting the environmental quality of Widdrington Station, the greatest proportion of respondents rated the following as 'good' or 'very good': the general quality of the footways/paving (88%); the overall level of cleanliness (84%); and the level of litter (80%);
- Environmental quality factors rated as ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’ included: shop frontages (32%); street furniture (16%); and the general state of the buildings (12%);
- In terms of how Widdrington Station is used, the largest proportion of respondents felt that as a place to visit (44%) or as a place to live (40%) Widdrington Station was 'good' or 'very good';
- However, as a place to shop (60%) or as a place to enjoy yourself (40%) the largest proportion of respondents felt that Widdrington Station was ‘poor’ of ‘very poor’;
- In the last twelve months, the greatest proportion of respondents (40%) felt that the overall attractiveness of the town had stayed the same and 36% didn’t know. 16% felt that the attractiveness of Widdrington Station had improved and 8% stated that it had declined;
- To make Widdrington Station better; the greatest proportion of respondents (40%) didn’t know how to improve the centre. However, of those who did, 12% stated that the centre needed a café and a further 12% stated that more pubs would benefit the centre.
Accessibility

Car: Widdrington Station is located off the A1068 which is parallel to the A1. Grangemoor Road is the busiest road running through the centre; however pedestrian crossings are in place to aid pedestrians. All of the respondents to the in-street survey felt that it was ‘very easy’ to travel into Lynemouth.

Car parks: There is one car park in Widdrington Station, located off Ena Street, which is free of charge. There is also on-street parking available.

Public transport: The town also benefits from good accessibility by public transport. Hadston is located on the 518 bus route which provides services to Amble, Morpeth, Gosforth and Newcastle City Centre amongst others. There is also a railway station off Grangemoor Road which provides a local service.

Environmental Quality

Widdrington Station is a small local centre situated to the east of the authority area, anchored by a Co-op store. The centre is focused at Ena Street and Grangemoor Road. There are a small number of retail units which lack variety in Widdrington Station. It is likely that shoppers will travel further afield to a larger supermarket to do their main food shop. None of the streets in the centre are pedestrianised; however Widdrington Station provides a safe environment for shoppers. At midday on the day of the survey (Wednesday, 23 September), there was a very low level of footfall in Widdrington Station. Pavements are wide and there are no pedestrian crossings in the centre. The streets are clean with no evidence of litter, whilst shop units themselves are maintained to high standards. This creates an attractive shopping environment, although this would be improved if there were fewer vacancies in the centre. Units are mostly new build. Street furniture includes bins, flowers and street lighting. There are no public toilets in the centre.