AMBLE TOWN CENTRE HEALTH CHECK REPORT

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Why Measure Town Centre Performance?

Through Planning Policy Statement 6 (PPS6), the Government sets out its key objectives for town centers. Overall, PPS6 describes the need to promote town centre vitality and viability by planning for the growth and development of existing centres; promoting and enhancing existing centres; by focusing development in such centers; and encouraging a wide range of services in a good environment, accessible to all.

More generally, the UK Government is committed to:

- Enhancing consumer choice by making provision for a range of shopping, leisure and local services, which allow genuine choice to meet the needs of the entire community, and particularly socially-excluded groups.

- Supporting efficient, competitive and innovative retail, leisure, tourism and other sectors, with improving productivity.

- Improving accessibility, ensuring that existing or new development is, or will be, accessible and well-served by a choice of means of transport.

The importance of town centres and the contribution that they make to the local economy is also highlighted in the Regional Economic Strategy. According to “Leading the Way”, the draft Regional Economic Strategy (2006), thriving town centres are at the heart of our communities and it is essential that they continue to provide a good range of services such as shops, leisure, transport and other services. Town Centres provide employment in many areas and attract new businesses to sustain the local economy. Research has shown the importance of strong Town Centres as the focus for driving wider economic growth and productivity. The Regional Economic Strategy also emphasises the importance of building on the potential of all town centres so that more remote economies and communities of the settlements around them can be supported.

The importance of the role played by town centres is also highlighted in Northumberland Local Area Agreement (LAA). The LAA Economic Development and Enterprise block includes an outcome to improve the impact of public/private sector
intervention on economic performance of Northumberland Town Centres. Whilst stretch targets leading to additional government funding are not proposed for this outcome, it is hoped that improved town centre performance can help achieve other LAA targets.

1.2 What should we measure?

Government policy contained in PPS6 recognises that:
“Comprehensive, relevant and up to date monitoring is essential to the effective planning and management of town centres. It should be used to inform the review of site allocations and town centre policies and enable early signs of change of town centres to be identified and appropriate action taken”.

In order to ensure that monitoring is effective, data collection on the quality, quantity and convenience of retailing in the area and potential capacity for growth or change of shopping centres is essential. In order to measure the vitality and viability and monitor the health of their town centres and how this is changing over time, local authorities should regularly collect information, preferably in co-operation with the private sector, on the following key indicators:

- Diversity of main town centre uses (by number, type and amount of floorspace): the amount of space in use for different functions – such as offices; shopping; leisure, cultural and entertainment activities; pubs, cafes and restaurants; and, hotels.

- The amount of retail, leisure and office floorspace in edge-of-centre and out-of-centre locations.

- The potential capacity for growth or change of centres in the network: opportunities for centres to expand or consolidate, typically measured in the amount of land available for new or more intensive forms of town centre development.

- Retailer representation and intentions to change representation: existence and changes in representation of types of retailer, including street markets, and the demand of retailers wanting to come into the centre, or to change their representation in the centre, or to reduce or close their representation.
• Shopping rents: pattern of movement in Zone A rents within primary shopping areas (i.e. the rental value for the first 6 metres depth of floorspace in retail units from the shop window).

• Proportion of vacant street level property: vacancies can arise even in the strongest town centres, and this indicator must be used with care. Vacancies in secondary frontages and changes to other uses will also be useful indicators.

• Commercial yields on non-domestic property (i.e. the capital value in relation to the expected market rental): demonstrates the confidence of investors in the long-term profitability of the centre for retail, office and other commercial developments. This indicator should be used with care.

• Pedestrian flows (footfall): a key indicator of the vitality of shopping streets, measured by the numbers and movement of people on the streets, in different parts of the center at different times of the day and evening, who are available for businesses to attract into shops, restaurants or other facilities.

• Accessibility: ease and convenience of access by a choice of means of travel, including – the quality, quantity and type of car parking; the frequency and quality of public transport services and the range of customer origins served; and, the quality of provision for pedestrians, cyclists and disabled people and the ease of access from main arrival points to the main attractions.

• Customer and residents’ views and behaviour: regular surveys will help authorities in monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of town centre improvements and in setting further priorities. Interviews in the town centre and at home can be used to establish views of both users and non-users of the centre, including the views of residents living in or close to the centre. This information could also establish the degree of linked trips.

• Perception of safety and occurrence of crime: should include views and information on safety and security, and where appropriate, information for monitoring the evening and night-time economy.
• State of the town centre environmental quality: should include information on problems (such as air pollution, noise, clutter, litter and graffiti) and positive factors (such as trees, landscaping and open spaces).

In response to the monitoring requirements set out above, the InfoNet has developed the Northumberland Town Centre Performance System, which is designed to assess the vitality and viability of rural market towns and larger centres within the former coalfield areas. The system uses intelligence from the InfoNet Organisation Database; the Northumberland Property Data Service (NPDS) database; the County Public Transport Team; and from the Community Safety Analysis Function maintained for the 6 Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRP’s) in the County. This is complemented by additional primary research designed to capture footfall estimates and shopper perception of town centres. The Service is also designed to complement the Retail Distinctiveness work undertaken for One North East and the Northumberland Strategic Partnership by Millers Consulting; and the Retail Distinctiveness Toolkit that has been developed for use by Town Centre Partnerships and Managers.

The service currently covers the towns of Alnwick, Amble, Ashington, Bedlington, Belford, Berwick upon Tweed, Blyth, Cramlington, Haltwhistle, Hexham, Morpeth, Newbiggin, Ponteland, Prudhoe, Rothbury, Seahouses and Wooler using town centre boundary definitions included in Local Development Frameworks. There will, however, be flexibility to include additional settlements as the system develops.
2.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE TOWN CENTRE

2.1 Amble’s Town Centre Boundary

Throughout this report there are two different boundaries for Amble Town Centre that will be used depending on the section: the town centre boundary as defined by Alnwick District Council (Alnwick DC Local Plan town boundary) (Figure 1), and the boundary as defined by Experian (a source of data used in this report) (Figure 2).

The area of Amble Town Centre in relation to the District Council boundary is 38,513.88m².

Figure 1: Boundary for Amble Town Centre (District Council)

Source: Alnwick District Council, July 2008
Figure 2: Boundary for Amble Town Centre (Experian)

Amble Town Centre - Experian

Source: Experian, August 2008
2.2 Amble’s Town Centre – A Definition

The RSS (Regional Spatial Strategies) definition of a town centre is that it “includes a range of different sized centres, including market and country towns, traditional suburban centres, and quite often, the principal centre(s) in a local authority’s area. Town centres contain a Primary Shopping Area, the area where retail development is generally concentrated”.

(From Alnwick District Council): Amble town is a port once catering for coal but now serving a fishing fleet and a leisure marina. The town grew rapidly in the 19th century at the mouth of the River Coquet and has a strongly lineated main shopping area (Queen Street) with a town square at the eastern end created recently on a derelict site. The town centre is very close to the harbour and marina and so has the sounds and atmosphere of a working port. To the visitor, the layout of the town can be difficult to navigate.

The town has no edge of town or out of town retail although there is current interest in developing a supermarket adjacent to the town centre on an open area known as the Braid. Queen St. itself has a poor physical appearance with tired public realm, inappropriate infill development with a high level of vacant premises and visually unappealing facades. That said, the town has much potential to further develop as a vibrant day visitor destination and local service centre trading on its distinctive assets and qualities. The town could benefit greatly from some remedial investment in the fabric before any additional development.

2.3 History and Development of Amble

Amble is a busy harbour town situated at the mouth of the river Coquet, nine miles south-east of Alnwick. The old spelling for Amble is thought to be Annebelle which means ‘Anna’s promontory’, This is thought to refer to Amble being sited on a point of land that juts out, thus giving extensive views of the coastline.
Evidence of human activity dates back to the Bronze Age, from which a cemetery containing over 40 graves was discovered during quarrying in the 19th century. Evidence of Roman occupation has also been discovered near Gloster Hill.

Up until the 18th century, Amble was situated well to the south of the river Coquet. However, in 1764, heavy rains forced the river to break its banks and change course to a more direct route to the sea. As a result, Amble ended up less than ¼ mile away from the river mouth.

About 70 years later, a harbour was built (originally known as Warkworth Harbour). This became an important port, mainly used for exporting coal from the Radcliffe and Broomhill collieries to Southern England and the Continent. These exports, together with the expanding fishing industry, brought about a massive population growth in the town, from 200 in 1821 to almost 3,000 in 1891.

Today, Amble has a population of around 6,000, and is Northumberland’s most important fishing centre north of the Tyne. As well as accommodating fishing vessels, the harbour also contains an award-winning marina, visited by around 3000 visitors each year. Amble town centre has a variety of shops and eating places, and a market is held at the harbour every Sunday.

Two nature reserves can be found nearby – Hauxley Nature Reserve and Druridge Bay Country Park. Coquet Island is located a mile offshore, which hosts an 80ft high lighthouse, and is a RSPB reserve.
3.0 DIVERSITY OF USES

The diversity of uses within a town centre contributes to the attractiveness of the centre to the local community. In this section the use class of buildings within the town centre will be investigated in terms of the percentage of floorspace occupied within the town centre and which areas of the town centre particular uses of buildings are situated. This chapter will also look at the events that take place throughout the year in Amble Town Centre and also the opinions of shoppers surveyed on the range of retail provision in Amble.

The full breakdown of use class analysed in this section can be found in Appendix 1.
3.1 Diversity of Use within Town Centre

Figure 3 shows that just less than three quarters (71%) of the floorspace in Amble Town Centre are classed as shops. Financial and professional services account for 11% of the floorspace in Amble, with drinking establishments occupying 7% of floorspace. Restaurants and cafes and hot food takeaways each occupy 4% of floorspace.

Figure 3: Floorspace by Use Class

![Floorspace by Use Class - Amble Town Centre](source: Experian, August 2008)

The map (Figure 4) shows that the majority of businesses within the town centre are situated along one main street: Queen Street. The majority of these businesses are shops and are distributed evenly along Queen Street and interspersed with financial and professional services, restaurants and cafes, drinking establishments, hot food takeaways, businesses and assembly and leisure.
Figure 4: Building Use class for Amble Town Centre

Building Use Class for Amble Town Centre

Source: Experian, August 2008
It must be noted that the use class information in this section is based on the ground floor of the premises from the data that was provided by Experian, and with the assumption that the majority of the commercial property in the town centre is situated on the ground floor.

3.2 Events

There are a number of events that take place throughout the year. The Amble Sea Fayre Festival is a two day event which takes place in July. This festival is an outdoor event incorporating a different theme each year and celebrating local tradition with a children’s fun fair, entertainment, local food and craft stalls. The festival also hosts local bands and acoustic sessions to provide a fun, easy-going atmosphere. The Sea Cadets also make an appearance, Amble’s traditional trawler race takes place on the Saturday, the only one in the North East. A continental market also takes place for 2 days at the Market Square in Amble. The Amble Christmas lights get switched on in November with a procession down the main street, followed by entertainment and stalls in the market place. A Sunday Market takes place at the Harbour each week.

3.3 Satisfaction with the range of provision – retail

Question 14 in the Amble Shopper Questionnaire asked:

To what extent do you agree/disagree with the statement “On the whole, Amble offers a wide choice of quality shops”?

The level of agreement with this statement was considerably higher than the level of disagreement (59% vs. 25% of respondents) (Figure 5).
Figure 5: How would you rate “On the whole, Amble offers a wide choice of quality shops”?

(Excludes ‘don’t know’ responses unless otherwise specified)

Source: Northumberland Shopper Questionnaires, June 2008

Base: 123 respondents
4.0 RETAIL TRENDS

The range and diversity of the retail offer directly influences the appeal of a town centre to visitors and shoppers. Convenience goods are consumer goods purchased on a regular basis, including food, groceries, toiletries and cleaning materials. Comparison goods are durable goods such as clothing, household goods, furniture, DIY and electrical goods.

In this section, the category of shops will be investigated and analysed in terms of both category and whether they are part of a multiple chain or are an independent business.

**Figure 6: Multiple Chain and Independent Businesses by Category - Amble**

Figure 6 shows that in Amble town centre, the majority of businesses are comparison retail (20 independent, 1 multiple chain). The category which has the 2nd highest amount of businesses is leisure services: 12 of which are independent and 1 multiple chain. There are 8 convenience retail premises and 12 retail service in total.

Source: Experian, August 2008
5.0 RETAILER DEMAND

5.1 Interest in Vacant Outlets within the Town Centre 2007 - 2008

This section aims to investigate the types of property enquiries that are being made in the town centre and whether the enquirer was of local, regional or national significance. The aim was also to investigate the new occupiers within the town centre over the past year, for which we have referred to section 7.2 (Changes in Town Centre Occupiers 2007 – 2008).

Figure 7 shows that the enquiries for vacant properties within Amble Town Centre as recorded on the Northumberland Property Database (April 2007 – March 2008) were local (within Northumberland) and national. Enquiries were recorded for properties on Dilston Terrace which is just off Church Street towards the edge of the town centre. However, it must be noted that this data is based solely on one source (Northumberland Property Database) and other sources may provide further insight.
Figure 7: Property Enquiries for Amble Town Centre April 2007 – March 2008

Source: Northumberland Property Search.com, April 2008
5.2 A Review of New Town Centre Occupiers

6.0 RETAIL RENTS AND YIELDS

Retail rent and yield are important indicators of viability. This section will investigate the zone A rent for properties within the town centre and also the yield of Northumberland in comparison with the North East and England, as this data does not exist for Amble Town Centre. It has been assumed that the reason for this is, “from Spring 2002 reporting locations with a yield of 10% or over will not be included in the time series on the assumption that such locations are not of major interest in terms of retail property investment. The locations however will still be monitored and if evidence indicates yields have fallen to less than 10% the time series will be continued.”

6.1 Zone A Rental Information

“Zoning is a method of valuation where the highest level of value is attributable to the front part of the shop because that is the part nearest to the pavement, the frontage. It is therefore the part that all shoppers must pass to enter the shop and is also the part where the main display is generally situated in order to entice customers into the shop. The zoning theory is that the level of value within a shop decreases as the shop depth increases. The Valuation Office adopts a zoning pattern of three zones (A, B and C), each measuring 6·10 metres in depth, and then a remainder. The principle is to determine a price for zone A (the highest level of value), use half that price for zone B, half the zone B price for zone C and half the zone C price for the remainder. This is known as "halving back" though in reality the areas are adjusted in the valuation process with each area being expressed "in terms of zone A" (ITZA). The zoning process is restricted to areas of ground floor retail space. Other parts of the property will be measured to NIA and be valued in relation to a fraction of the zone A price.” (Valuation Office, October 2008)

Figure 8 shows the zone A rental information from the Valuation Office. The values relate to the 2005 Rating List, which are based on a valuation date of 1 April 2003. The properties have been banded by intervals of £100, as we cannot publish the exact figure for each building. This will also make it easier to identify trends when analysing the data on the map.

1 www.voa.gov.uk
There are some properties which are shown as “unknown” on Figure 8. These premises could be retail in nature but are not valued on a zoned approach. The reason for this is that zoning is generally not used in various circumstances including:

- Larger retail properties (i.e. shops with a NIA (net internal area) greater than 1500m²).
- Where the retail areas are spread over several floors, again resulting in the Zone A being only a small fraction of the total.
- Larger shops may not have ‘traditional’ shop fronts, such that the zoning approach is not appropriate.
- The ‘market’ does not typically zone larger shops when letting and the VOA tries to follow the market in its analysis and valuation.

**Figure 8: Valuation Office Zone A rental prices for Amble Town Centre**

![Map of Amble Town Centre with Zone A rental prices](image)

Source: Valuation Office, April 2003

Figure 8 shows that for the majority of properties in Amble Town Centre for which the zone A rental information is known, the rent was £100 - £199 per m². These properties were also mainly situated on Queen Street. There were just three
properties in Amble which had a lower zone A rental rate of £0 - £99 per m² in comparison to the other known properties: one on High Street; one on Queen Street; and one on Bridge Street.

6.2 Yield

Yield “is the ratio of rental income to capital value and is expressed in terms of the open market rent of a property as percentage of the capital value.” It “provide a consistent basis for understanding how the property market assesses the comparative attractiveness of shop investments in different locations across the country... low yields indicate that a town is considered to be attractive and as a result be more likely to attract investment than a town with high yields.”

\[
\text{Yield} = \frac{\text{Annual Rent}}{\text{Capital Value} / \text{Sale Price of Property}}
\]

Source: Valuation Office (www.voa.gov.uk)

In Northumberland, this data is only available for 5 towns: Alnwick, Ashington, Berwick upon Tweed, Blyth and Hexham. There is therefore no available data for Amble. However, Figure 9 shows the average yield for Northumberland, the North East of England, and England.

\[\text{www.voa.gov.uk}\]

\[\text{www.voa.gov.uk}\]
The graph (Figure 9) shows that since April 2001, the average yield for Northumberland has generally been higher than the average for the North East of England and England. The biggest difference in yield between Northumberland and the rest of the North East was by 0.86 in January 2005. Similarly for Northumberland and the rest of England in January 2005 it was 1.20. This indicates that based on yield, it has been derived that there is more of a “risk” associated with setting up business in Northumberland compared to the rest of the North East and England. The latest result, however, in July 2007, showed that this gap had decreased. The average yield for Northumberland was 7.05; the average yield for the North East was 7.02; and the average yield for England was 6.70.

6.3 Average Rental Rate

The average monthly rental rate for vacant commercial property in Amble town centre between 1st January 2006 and 31st December 2007 was £107.87 per square metre. Figure 10 show this rate in comparison with other town centres. According to Figure 10, in comparison with other Northumberland town centres, Amble has the 8th highest average monthly rental rate in Northumberland for the 11 towns recorded here with only Haltwhistle, Newbiggin and Rothbury with lower average rental rates. However, it must be noted that these rental figures are based solely on properties
that were vacant between 1\textsuperscript{st} January 2006 and 31\textsuperscript{st} December 2007 and does not take the rental prices of buildings that were occupied throughout this period into consideration.

Figure 10: A comparison on average rental prices for commercial property between Amble and other Northumberland Towns

![A comparison on average rental prices for commercial property between Amble and other Northumberland Towns](image)

Source: Northumberland Property Database, July 2007
7.0 VACANCY RATES

All town centres experience a baseline level of vacancy rates and this should not always be interpreted as a sign of weakness. A large number of vacant units within centres may indicate decline related to poor performance of the town or that shop premises are inadequate to meet the demands of modern retailers. Vacancies concentrated in an area may also reflect an ongoing land assembly in advance of a wider regeneration of part of a town. Furthermore, units may be located in parts of the centre unsuited to retailers’ requirements. This section will investigate the vacancy rates of premises within the town centre by road and overall vacancy rates within the town. Additionally, this section will look at property flows within Amble town centre between 2007 and 2008 in terms of both primary activity type and type of change (i.e. change in occupier, occupied to vacant, vacant to occupied).

It must be noted that the vacancy information in this section is based on the ground floor of the premises from the data that was provided by Experian, and with the assumption that the majority of the commercial property in the town centre is situated on the ground floor.

7.1 Vacancy Rates of Premises

Figure 11 shows that the streets within Amble Town Centre with the most vacant premises are High Street and Wellwood Street, each with 50% of premises vacant. However, when looking at vacancy rates in terms of floorspace, High Street was ranked 1st with 47% of its total floorspace vacant, whereas Wellwood Street was ranked 2nd with 38% of its total floorspace vacant. The only other street recorded to have vacant property in Amble was Queen Street, which was ranked 3rd for highest number of buildings vacant (7%) and total floorspace vacant (15%).

Figure 12 shows that in Amble Town Centre, there were 90% of occupied premises and 10% of vacant premises overall.
Figure 11: Vacancy Rates of Premises

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Road</th>
<th>Vacant (number of buildings)?</th>
<th>Vacant (floorspace sqm)?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rank - vacancy</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRIDGE STREET</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COQUET STREET</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIGH STREET</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queen STREET</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WELLWOOD STREET</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Experian, August 2008

Figure 12: Is a Property Vacant

Is Property Vacant? (Amble Town Centre)

- 10% yes
- 90% no

Source: Experian, August 2008
7.2 Changes in Town Centre Occupiers 2007 – 2008 (Property Flows)

Figure 13: Changes in Primary Activity Type 2007-2008

![Changes in Primary Activity Type 2007-2008 (Amble)](image)

Source: Experian, August 2008

Figure 13 shows changes in Town Centre Occupiers in 2007 and 2008 within Amble Town Centre. The graph shows the number of vacant outlets have increased in 2007 from 4 to 7 in 2008. The primary activities which had increased in quantity within Amble between 2007 and 2008, all increased by one premises apart from Undertakers which increased by two (0 in 2007 to 2 in 2008). The most significant decreases in primary activity were for Children’s Wear (2 in 2007 to 0 in 2008); Department Stores (2 in 2007 to 0 in 2008); and Florists (2 in 2007 to 0 in 2008).

Figure 14 shows the type of changes in premises in Amble Town Centre between 2007 and 2008. Just under two thirds (61%) of the changes were a change in occupier. 13% of these changes were premises that were vacant in 2007 but were occupied in 2008. Approximately one quarter (26%) of premises were occupied in 2007 but vacant in 2008, therefore an increase of vacant premises is evident.
Figure 14: Type of Changes in Premises 2007-2008

Type of Changes in Premises 2007 - 2008
(Amble Town Centre)

- 61% change in occupier
- 26% occupied to vacant
- 13% vacant to occupied

Source: Experian, August 2008
8.0 PEDESTRIAN FLOWS

Pedestrian counts are a useful measure of vitality, in relation to the number and movement of people in different parts of the town centre and at different times of the day. The counts provide a clear picture of footfall patterns across the centre and of the number of people in the town. Over time trends can be identified and the success or decline of locations monitored. This section will analyse the results of the footfall counts that took place in Amble Town Centre in June 2008 and estimate a weekly footfall total.

8.1 Footfall methodology

Footfall counts were taken for 10 minutes of each hour between 9am and 5pm on Tuesday 10th June, Thursday 12th June and Saturday 14th June 2008. They were carried out by interviewers at two “access points” within the town centre (see Figure 15). These counts were used to give estimates of hourly and daily pedestrian rates.

8.2 Estimates of footfall

It is estimated that the footfall for a typical Saturday in Amble town centre is around 1,750, although this will obviously vary depending on the time of year. The data suggests that, on a ‘normal weekday’, this daily figure drops by approximately 400 to 1,350.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location (see Figure 2)</th>
<th>Estimated daily footfall&lt;sup&gt;d&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tuesday (&quot;normal&quot; day)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North End of Queen Street</td>
<td>708</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South End of Queen Street</td>
<td>612</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,320</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Northumberland Footfall Counts, June 2008

<sup>d</sup> Daily footfall has been estimated by summing the footfall counts for each location, then multiplying the totals by 6 to account for the footfall count being carried out for 10 minutes in each hour.
On this occasion, footfalls were calculated for the individual days that they were carried out to give an indication of daily footfall totals on particular “types” of day of the week. In the future, it is the intention to calculate average weekly footfalls for each town.
9.0 ACCESSIBILITY

The availability of different access modes to a town centre is important if shoppers are to be attracted to a centre for frequent visits. This section will investigate various aspects of accessibility into Amble town centre including the different methods of transport used to access the town centre by shoppers that were surveyed, their origin and their perceptions on accessibility and transport, availability of parking within the town centre and bus connectivity.

9.1 Shoppers travelling to town by car

39% of respondents travelled into Amble town centre by car on the day of the interview. 44% of these said that they go to Amble at least once a week during the daytime (although it cannot be deduced how often they use a car for these trips). This figure dropped to 4% in the evenings (Figure 16).

Figure 16: Frequency of visit to the town centre by those respondents travelling in by car

(Excludes 'don't know' responses unless otherwise specified)

46% of the respondents that travelled by car found it fairly easy or very easy to travel into Amble town centre. 25% found it fairly difficult or very difficult (Figure 17).
Figure 17: How easy/difficult do you feel it is to travel into Amble town centre (those respondents that travelled by car)
(Excludes ‘don’t know’ responses unless otherwise specified)

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires, June 2008
Base: 48

9.2 Access to car parking
The availability of car parking spaces was not rated very favourably, with more respondents giving a negative rating than giving a positive rating. For public parking spaces, 29% gave a good or very good rating, and 40% gave a poor or very poor rating. For disabled parking spaces, these figures were 27% and 49% for positive and negative ratings respectively (Figure 18).

The safety/security of the parking facilities was given a slightly higher rating, but still had more respondents giving a negative rating than a positive rating (41% vs. 34%).
Figure 18: Percentage of respondents giving each rating for parking related attributes

(Excludes ‘don’t know’ responses unless otherwise specified)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Availability of public parking spaces</th>
<th>Availability of disabled parking spaces</th>
<th>Safety/security of parking facilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% respondents</td>
<td>% respondents</td>
<td>% respondents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Poor</td>
<td>Very Poor</td>
<td>Very Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OK</td>
<td>OK</td>
<td>OK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires, June 2008

Base : 91 to 116 respondents depending on question (note: this excludes those respondents that gave a ‘don’t know’ response)

12% of the respondents said that one of the main problems with the shopping experience in Amble was the parking. A much greater proportion (48%) said that, in order to improve the town centre, the parking needed to be improved.

Various comments were also made relating to parking in Amble town centre. These are listed below:

1. The main problems with the town centre:
   - “Parking” (4 responses).
   - “Parking can be difficult”.
   - “Parking is poor”.
   - “Limited parking” (3 responses).
   - “Limited parking spaces”.

   ...
• “Very little parking”.
• “Lack of parking spaces”.
• “No parking”.
• “No parking spaces”.
• “Nowhere to park”.

2. Ways to improve the retail offer:
• “Better parking” (2 responses).
• “Better parking for disabled/able bodied”.
• “More parking”.
• “More parking spaces”.

9.3 Cost of parking
Only one third of the respondents gave a good or very good rating for the cost of parking. 41% gave a poor or very poor rating (Figure 19).

Figure 19: Percentage of respondents giving each rating for the cost of parking
(Excludes ‘don’t know’ responses unless otherwise specified)

Source: Northumberland Infinet Shopper Questionnaires, June 2008
Base : 103 respondents (note: this excludes those respondents that gave a ‘don’t know’ response)
9.4 Amble’s car parks

Figures 20 and 21 show the location of car parks within and surrounding Amble Town Centre.

Figure 20: Location of Car Parks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Car Park</th>
<th>Cost of Parking</th>
<th>Type of Car Park</th>
<th>Spaces</th>
<th>Long/Short Stay</th>
<th>Disabled Spaces</th>
<th>Coach Parking</th>
<th>Additional Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Amble Queen Street</td>
<td>Free</td>
<td>Off street, surface car park</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Next to Tourist Information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Amble Queen Street</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Amble, Turner Street</td>
<td>Free</td>
<td>Off street, surface car park</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Amble, Coquet Street</td>
<td>Free</td>
<td>Off street, surface car park</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Amble, Leazes Street</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Alnwick District Council, Transport Direct, August 2008
Figure 21: Location of Car Parks

Source: Alnwick District Council, Transport Direct, August 2008
9.5 Bus Connectivity

The direct connections linking Amble to surrounding towns and villages are listed below.

**Figure 22: Destination and Frequency of Buses from Amble**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Destination</th>
<th>Mon - Fri</th>
<th>Sat</th>
<th>Sun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acklington</td>
<td>Approx 1 per hour</td>
<td>Approx 1 per hour</td>
<td>Approx 1 per hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alnmouth</td>
<td>Approx 1 per hour</td>
<td>Approx 1 per hour</td>
<td>Approx 1 per hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alnwick</td>
<td>Approx 2 per hour</td>
<td>Approx 2 per hour</td>
<td>Approx 1 per hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashington</td>
<td>Approx 1 per hour</td>
<td>Approx 1 per hour</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guyzance</td>
<td>1 per day</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morpeth</td>
<td>Approx 1 per hour</td>
<td>Approx 1 per hour</td>
<td>Approx 1 per hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newcastle upon Tyne</td>
<td>Approx 1 per hour</td>
<td>Approx 1 per hour</td>
<td>Approx 1 per hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shilbottle</td>
<td>Approx 1 per hour</td>
<td>Approx 1 per hour</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warkworth</td>
<td>Approx 2 per hour</td>
<td>Approx 2 per hour</td>
<td>Approx 1 per hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widdrington</td>
<td>Approx 1 per hour</td>
<td>Approx 1 per hour</td>
<td>Approx 1 per hour</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Travel Search [http://www.carlberry.co.uk/index.htm](http://www.carlberry.co.uk/index.htm); North East Travel Line [http://jplanner.travelinenortheast.info](http://jplanner.travelinenortheast.info), July 2008

9.6 Shoppers travelling to town by bus

Only five respondents (4%) travelled into Amble town centre by bus on the day of the interview. Two of these said that they go to Amble at least once a week during the daytime (although it cannot be deduced how often they use a bus for these trips). Only one said that they go at least once a week in the evenings; the others said that they never go to Amble in the evenings.

All five of these respondents found it easy to travel into the town centre. Four of them found it very easy.

9.7 Train Connectivity

There is no train access to Amble.
9.8 Shoppers travelling to town by train
There is no train access to Amble therefore no shopper’s questionnaire respondents said that they travelled to Amble centre by train.

9.9 Perception of Public Transport Services
The attributes related to public transport were given a good/very good rating by between 43% and 45% of the respondents, with the highest of these ratings relating to the regularity of the bus/rail services (Figure 23).

**Figure 23: Percentage of respondents giving each rating for public transport related attributes**

(Excludes 'don't know' responses unless otherwise specified)

![Figure 23](image-url)

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires, June 2008

Base: 91 to 93 respondents depending on attribute (note: this excludes those respondents that gave a ‘don’t know’ response)
9.10 Perception of Accessibility

When asked how they would make the town centre better, only one person said that they would improve the accessibility. One person also said that there needs to be, “better wheelchair access”.

However, the quality of footpaths appears to be quite a problem in Amble town centre, with 20% of respondents saying that this was one of the main problems with the shopping experience. A few people also made a related comment when asked how they would make the town centre better:

- “Paving is bad”.
- “Paving stones need replacing in town centre”.
- “Paving stones/Beach Street near club needs repairing”.

9.11 Origin and method of travel of Shoppers Interviewed

As Figure 24 shows, most of the respondents from the Amble Shopper Survey live in the Alnwick District, with a large proportion living in or around Amble itself. In addition, some respondents came from the districts of Blyth Valley and Wansbeck, and most of the others came from elsewhere in Northumberland or Tyne & Wear.

Most of the respondents either walked into the town centre or travelled by car. The rest either travelled by bus or “other” method of transport.

The remaining few respondents were spread across the rest of the UK (Figure 25). Most of these travelled into Amble by car.
Figure 24: Visitors to Amble within Northumberland
(Excludes ‘don’t know’ responses unless otherwise specified)

Visitors to Amble within Northumberland and Tyne & Wear
(Shopper’s Survey)
- Home Towns

Visitors to Amble - Method of Transport
- Bus
- Car
- Walk
- Other

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires, June 2008
Figure 25: Visitors to Amble outside Northumberland (Excludes 'don't know' responses unless otherwise specified)

Visitors to Amble outside of Northumberland and Tyne & Wear (Shopper's Survey) - Home Towns

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires, June 2008
10.0 ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY OF TOWN

This section will consider various aspects relating to the environmental quality of the town centre. This includes any improvements made within the past 12 months mainly by the District Council and Town Council (where applicable) and shopper’s perceptions of the environmental quality and appearance of the town centre as a whole.

10.1 Review of Recent Improvements

The following improvements have happened over the past 12 months in Amble:

- The new community building ‘The Fourways 2’ has been completed which includes office accommodation and conferencing facilities.
- ‘Shop Front Scheme’ by Alnwick District Council is currently underway with one shop being developed and several others in the application and planning stage.
- New street furniture has recently been ordered and the planning approval has been received, this will link the main shopping area to the quayside via the town square.
- Several new areas have been planted up.

10.2 Shopper perception of the town

10.2.1 Pedestrianisation

Pedestrianisation was not specifically asked about in the survey. No comments were made on the subject either.

10.2.2 Signage, Street furniture and Open Spaces

Signage

One person said that signage and information was one of the main problems with the shopping experience in Amble town centre.
Street Furniture
Respondents were asked to rate street furniture as part of two different questions (Figure 26). The first question asked for a street furniture rating, and the second asked about the general state of the town centre with regards to street furniture.

The positive ratings for the two questions were fairly similar, with 48% of respondents giving a positive rating for the first question, and 50% for the second question. However, when asked about street furniture in relation to the general state of the town centre, a much greater proportion of respondents gave a negative rating (26% vs. 11%).

**Figure 26: Street furniture ratings**
(Excludes 'don't know' responses unless otherwise specified)

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires, June 2008

Base: 118 to 123 respondents depending on question (note: this excludes those respondents that gave a ‘don't know’ response)

Open Spaces
A large proportion of the respondents (91%) gave a positive rating for the parks and open spaces in Amble (Figure 27). Only 2% gave a poor or very poor response.
**Figure 27: Ratings given for parks and open spaces**  
(Excludes ‘don’t know’ responses unless otherwise specified)

![Pie chart showing ratings for parks and open spaces]

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires, June 2008  
*Base: 64 respondents (note: this excludes those respondents that gave a ‘don’t know’ response)*

**10.2.3 Litter and Cleanliness**

Nearly one half of respondents (48%) gave a positive rating for the litter within Amble town centre, but nearly one quarter (23%) gave a negative rating (Figure 28). For the overall level of cleanliness, slightly fewer respondents (46%) gave a positive rating and slightly more gave a negative rating (28%).
### Figure 28: Ratings given for litter and overall cleanliness
(Excludes 'don't know' responses unless otherwise specified)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Litter</td>
<td>Very Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>OK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall level of cleanliness</td>
<td>Very Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>OK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very Good</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires, June 2008

Base: 122 respondents (litter & cleanliness); (note: this excludes those respondents that gave a ‘don’t know’ response)

One respondent also made a related comment in response to how they would make the town centre better: “less litter out of town”.

#### 10.2.4 General Appearance of the Town

Respondents were not particularly positive about the general state of the town centre. Only 39% gave a good or very good rating for the general state of the buildings and the shop frontage, and 36% / 42% gave a poor or very poor rating for these two attributes respectively. Graffiti / fly posting received a slightly better rating, with just over one half (52%) of respondents giving a positive rating, and 18% giving a negative rating (Figure 29).
Figure 29: Ratings given for the appearance of the town
(Excludes ‘don’t know’ responses unless otherwise specified)

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires, June 2008

Base: 122 to 123 respondents; (note: this excludes those respondents that gave a ‘don’t know’ response)

A few comments were also given relating to this subject:

1. Ways to improve the retail offer:
   - “A new frontage”.
   - “Make street look better”.
   - “Needs an uplift”.
   - “Tidy place up”.

2. Ways to make the town centre better:
   - “Needs a general overhaul”.
   - “Tidy up”.
   - “Make shops look better”.

11.0 PERCEPTION OF SAFETY AND OCCURRENCE OF CRIME

High levels of crime in a centre will impact on the way people use it and may deter traders from locating there. This section will include an analysis of reported crimes which will be supplemented with information on perception or fear of crime from the Shopper Surveys. Consideration will also be given to any initiatives designed to address town centre-related crime.

11.1 Analysis of Reported Crimes

Looking at Figures 30 and 31, it is clear to see that the majority of crime in Amble in 2005 – 2007 occurred on Queen Street, and the main type of crime here was “rowdy and/ or nuisance behaviour”. There were also a significant number of cases of “rowdy and/ or nuisance behaviour” crimes recorded throughout the town centre including on Bridge Street, Coquet Street and Turner Street. There were a few cases of “other ASB” recorded on either end of Queen Street during this time, but crimes of this type have been found to be rare. Occurrences of all types of crime are more sparsely distributed.

Looking at the chart (Figure 31), the types of crime have been broken down further. The most frequent type of crime occurring in Amble Town Centre between 2005 and 2007 was rowdy and/ or nuisance behaviour of which there were 400 occurrences. The 2\textsuperscript{nd} most frequent type of crime was “other ASB” of which there were 89 occurrences.
Figure 30: Analysis of Reported Crimes
Figure 31: Crime and Anti Social Behaviour

Crime and Anti Social Behavior - Amble
2005 - 2007

![Bar chart showing crime and anti-social behavior categories and their occurrence from 2005 to 2007.](chart.png)

Source: Northumbria Police, December 2007
11.2 Perception or Fear of Crime

A high proportion of respondents (92%) felt that safety/security during the daytime was good or very good. No-one gave a poor rating. The opposite was true for safety/security during the night-times – only 10% gave a positive rating whereas 78% gave a negative rating (Figure 32).

Figure 32: Ratings given for safety/security
(Excludes 'don't know' responses unless otherwise specified)

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires, June 2008
Base : 113 respondents (daytime); 80 respondents (nighttime); (note: this excludes those respondents that gave a ‘don’t know’ response)

Two people gave safety/security related comments when asked what the main problems with the shopping experience in Amble were:

- “People causing problems eg teenage thugs”.
- “Kids at night”.


Another comment was also made when asked how the respondent would make the town centre better:

- “Get kids off the streets at night”.

As can be seen in section 9.2, a higher proportion of respondents felt that the safety/security of the parking facilities was poor/very poor than good/very good (41% vs. 34%).

### 11.3 Initiatives to Address Town Centre-Related Crime

According to the Alnwick Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CRDP) the following initiatives exist in the Alnwick District (September 2008):

- The Enough Campaign (North Northumberland wide but spreading countywide) a project to tackle alcohol misuse. It has three aspects public awareness through a poster campaign, support to licensees of public houses and enforcement. It was the forerunner of the Northumbria Police DVD campaign.

- Pub watch schemes in Alnwick town and Amble as well as Rothbury. An off watch scheme in the district to support Off Licence shops.

- Shop watch schemes in Alnwick town, Amble and Rothbury.

- Designated Public Place Orders in both Amble and Alnwick town. These allow the police to seize alcohol from people who are acting in an anti social manner in a public place.

- Cease24 is a North Northumberland scheme being spread countywide. It tackles domestic violence by providing a wide range of services to victims and by looking at how offending behaviour should be tackled.
The Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership runs a number of sub groups which tackle crime problems and anti social behaviour but in particular there is a problem solving group in Amble which is strongly partnership focussed.
12.0 CUSTOMER VIEWS

Shopper surveys will help authorities in monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of town centre improvements and in setting further priorities. In this section the shoppers’ surveys carried out in Amble Town Centre will be analysed to find out their regularity of visits, type of purchases made, opinions on and use of leisure and entertainment; and what improvements they think will improve the town centre in the future. Additionally, data purchased from Experian will enable investigation of Amble catchment area; spending patterns and retaining shopper spend within the town centre.

12.1 Regularity of visits

Nearly three quarters (73%) of respondents go to Amble town centre during the daytime at least once a week, with the most common frequencies of visit being every day or twice a week (both 31% of respondents).

Respondents visit the centre far less often during the evenings, with only 17% visiting at least once a week. 65% said that they never visit the town centre in the evenings (Figure 33).

Figure 33: Approximately how often are you in Amble Town Centre?
(Excludes 'don't know' responses unless otherwise specified)

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires, June 2008
Base: 122 respondents (daytime); 123 respondents (evening)
12.2 Expenditure/ Type of Purchases

Figure 34 shows the proportion of respondents that shop for different items solely in Amble town centre, and how many go further afield. Figure 35 gives more details about which shopping centres the respondents use.

As the tables show, respondents are most likely to do their food shopping in Alnwick or Amble. For top-up food shopping and shopping for other domestic items, Amble tends to be the preferred choice. However, for other non-food items, respondents are much more likely to shop elsewhere, particularly Newcastle and the Metro Centre.
Figure 34: Proportion of respondents shopping in Amble and other areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Main food shopping</th>
<th>Top-up food shopping</th>
<th>Other domestic (eg. Chemist, cosmetics, etc)</th>
<th>Clothes</th>
<th>Shoes</th>
<th>Electrical goods</th>
<th>Furniture/ carpets</th>
<th>DIY goods</th>
<th>CDs/ DVDs etc.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Amble</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amble only</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amble + local area⁵</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amble + internet/non-local/local mix</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-Amble</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local area (non-Amble)</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet or other</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixture of places (not Amble)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't buy</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>123</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires, June 2008

---

⁵ ‘Local area’ is defined as being one of the following: Alnwick, Morpeth, Berwick, Rothbury, Wooler, Ashington, Blyth, Cramlington, Newcastle, Silverlink, Metro Centre.
### Figure 35: Shopping centres used by respondents to purchase different items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Main food shopping</th>
<th>Top-up food shopping</th>
<th>Other domestic (eg. Chemist, cosmetics, etc)</th>
<th>Clothes</th>
<th>Shoes</th>
<th>Electrical goods</th>
<th>Furniture/ carpets</th>
<th>DIY goods</th>
<th>CDs/DVDs etc</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alnwick</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morpeth</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amble</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashington</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blyth</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cramlington</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newcastle</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silverlink</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metro Centre</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't buy</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Base</strong></td>
<td><strong>123</strong></td>
<td><strong>123</strong></td>
<td><strong>123</strong></td>
<td><strong>123</strong></td>
<td><strong>123</strong></td>
<td><strong>122</strong></td>
<td><strong>123</strong></td>
<td><strong>123</strong></td>
<td><strong>122</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires, June 2008

The majority of respondents (83%) planned to spend less than £25 in Amble on the day they were interviewed, with a further 7% expecting to spend between £25 and £100 (Figure 36).
Figure 36: How much do you plan to spend in Amble today?
(Excludes ‘don’t know’ responses unless otherwise specified)

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires, June 2008

Base: 123 respondents

12.3 The Catchment

According to the North East RSS, the region exhibits a polycentric settlement pattern based on two city-regions centered round Tyne & Wear and Tees Valley. A polycentric settlement pattern is one with many centres or nodes, albeit with different characteristics and scales, rather than one key centre dominating everywhere, where their functions are interconnected. Within the context of the RSS and Alnwick Local Development Framework, the town of Amble is defined as being a Rural Service Centre: a settlement that provides jobs, services and facilities for a wider rural hinterland. With the exception of Alnwick, the other settlements within the Alnwick district are Secondary Settlements: towns and villages that are smaller in scale or function than Rural Service Centres.
Figure 37: Amble Retail Catchment

The map (Figure 37) shows the catchment area for Amble town centre, as defined by Experian. The catchment, which measures the extent of the local consumer base, was determined by calculating the centre’s population and the number of retailers present and assigning a radius of 1 mile.
12.4 Spending Patterns

The Amble catchment area extends north towards Warkworth, West to North Togston, South to Radcliffe and in the East takes in the coastal town of Amble. Altogether, the catchment covers an area of 222.55 sq km, is home to almost 6,300 people and more than 2,700 households. Together, these households and residents spend an estimated £25.9 million per annum on retail goods and services, with 36.1% of expenditure on convenience retail goods (£9.3 million) and 63.9% on comparison retail (£16.5 million). This balance differs only slightly from the national (UK) average, which reports 36.7% of expenditure on convenience retail and 63.3% on comparison. Differences between the national and local position are clearly illustrated through the index which relates the proportion of each spend type in the Amble catchment to the proportion in the UK. An index of more than 100% indicates higher than average local spend and an index of less than 100 represents lower than average local spend.

Figure 38: Amble Catchment Summary Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amble Catchment Summary Profile</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amble Catchment</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007 Population</td>
<td>6,262.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007 Households</td>
<td>2,732.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>16,538,628.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Comparison</td>
<td>9,336,166.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Convenience</td>
<td>25,874,794.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Comparison per household</td>
<td>6,053.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Convenience per household</td>
<td>3,417.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Retail per household</td>
<td>9,471.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Experian, August 2008

Total retail expenditure per household per annum within the catchment stands at £9,471 with average comparison retail spend at £6,053 per annum and convenience spend at £3,417 per annum (Figure 38). All of these figures are below the national average, with total spend 90.8% of the UK figure.
Figure 39 provides a breakdown of comparison retail expenditure within the Amble catchment and in the UK. Clearly the largest expenditure type within comparison retail is Clothing Material & Garments, accounting for £3.7 million or 22.3% of total comparison expenditure within the catchment. Clothing is followed by Audio-visual, photographic and information processing equipment (£2.0 million or 12.3%) and Games, toys and hobbies; sport and camping; musical instruments (£1.8 million or 11.0%). The pattern of expenditure nationally is similar, but with some notable differences. Referring to the index, households in the Amble catchment spend more on Audio-visual, photographic and information processing equipment, Small electrical household appliances, Major Household Appliances and Recording Media as a proportion of total spend than the UK average. In contrast, they spend substantially less on Bicycles, Materials for maintenance and repair of the dwelling, Small tools and miscellaneous accessories and Major tools and equipment.

**Figure 39: Total Expenditure (in 2006 prices) Comparison**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2007 Total Expenditure (in 2006 prices) Comparison</th>
<th>Amble Catchment</th>
<th>UK</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Index</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>3,686,235.00</td>
<td>37,197,970,202.00</td>
<td>22.29%</td>
<td>21.64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing materials and garments</td>
<td>2,037,475.00</td>
<td>14,926,597,385.00</td>
<td>12.32%</td>
<td>8.68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio-visual, photographic and information processing equipment</td>
<td>1,825,305.00</td>
<td>18,951,364,780.00</td>
<td>11.04%</td>
<td>11.02%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Games, toys and hobbies; sport and camping; musical instruments</td>
<td>1,605,422.00</td>
<td>18,218,052,893.00</td>
<td>9.71%</td>
<td>10.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furniture and furnishings; carpets and other floor coverings</td>
<td>1,490,266.00</td>
<td>15,298,262,865.00</td>
<td>9.01%</td>
<td>8.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appliances for personal care</td>
<td>1,021,799.00</td>
<td>7,513,288,250.00</td>
<td>6.18%</td>
<td>4.37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major household appliances (electric or not)</td>
<td>608,144.00</td>
<td>4,457,482,024.00</td>
<td>3.68%</td>
<td>2.59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books and stationery</td>
<td>526,622.00</td>
<td>6,968,169,166.00</td>
<td>3.18%</td>
<td>4.05%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shoes and other footwear</td>
<td>513,926.00</td>
<td>5,348,647,704.00</td>
<td>3.11%</td>
<td>3.11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household textiles</td>
<td>473,646.00</td>
<td>5,378,572,610.00</td>
<td>2.86%</td>
<td>3.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials for maintenance and repair of the dwelling</td>
<td>439,926.00</td>
<td>6,826,571,834.00</td>
<td>2.66%</td>
<td>3.97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewellery, clocks and watches</td>
<td>419,451.00</td>
<td>4,533,353,900.00</td>
<td>2.54%</td>
<td>2.64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glassware, tableware and household utensils</td>
<td>358,539.00</td>
<td>4,753,009,610.00</td>
<td>2.17%</td>
<td>2.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical goods and other pharmaceutical products</td>
<td>303,044.00</td>
<td>3,904,354,994.00</td>
<td>1.83%</td>
<td>2.27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Therapeutic appliances and equipment</td>
<td>228,884.00</td>
<td>3,101,000,673.00</td>
<td>1.38%</td>
<td>1.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gardens, plants and flowers</td>
<td>225,896.00</td>
<td>3,402,000,385.00</td>
<td>1.37%</td>
<td>1.98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Expenditure</td>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td>UK Expenditure</td>
<td>% of UK Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small tools and miscellaneous accessories</td>
<td>202,202.00</td>
<td>1.22%</td>
<td>3,301,806,678.00</td>
<td>1.92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other personal effects</td>
<td>196,887.00</td>
<td>1.19%</td>
<td>2,276,336,174.00</td>
<td>1.32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pets and related products</td>
<td>191,149.00</td>
<td>1.16%</td>
<td>2,747,999,981.00</td>
<td>1.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small electrical household appliances</td>
<td>104,854.00</td>
<td>0.63%</td>
<td>748,364,529.00</td>
<td>0.44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10% of Non-Durable household goods</td>
<td>32,434.00</td>
<td>0.20%</td>
<td>357,185,476.00</td>
<td>0.21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bicycles</td>
<td>23,988.00</td>
<td>0.15%</td>
<td>1,345,908,674.00</td>
<td>0.78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major tools and equipment</td>
<td>22,534.00</td>
<td>0.14%</td>
<td>370,528,409.00</td>
<td>0.22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Comparison</td>
<td>16,638,628.00</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td>171,926,829,196.00</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Experian, August 2008

**Figure 40: Expenditure on Comparison Retail**

Expenditure on Comparison Retail: Items with an Index Less than the UK Average

Index (UK=100)

Source: Experian, August 2008
Figure 41: Expenditure on Comparison Retail

Expenditure on Comparison Retail: Items with an Index Greater than the UK Average

![Expenditure on Comparison Retail](image)

Source: Experian, August 2008

Figure 42 provides a breakdown of Convenience retail expenditure within the Amble catchment and in the UK. Clearly the largest expenditure type within comparison retail in the Amble catchment is Food and non-alcoholic beverages, accounting for £6.5 million or 69.3% of total comparison expenditure within the area. Food and non-alcoholic beverages is followed by Alcohol (£1.1 million or 12.0%) and Tobacco (£1.0 million or 10.8%). The pattern of expenditure nationally differs a little. Referring to the index, households in the Amble catchment spend more on Tobacco and less on Alcohol as a proportion of total spend.

Figure 42: 2007 Total Expenditure Convenience Retail

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2007 Total Expenditure (in 2006 prices) Convenience Retail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food and non-alcoholic beverages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol (off-trade)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tobacco</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspapers and periodicals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90% of Non-Durable household goods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Convenience</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Experian, August 2008
12.5 Retaining Shopper Spend

The information outlined in the previous section describes the extent and pattern of expenditure per annum of households living within the Experian-defined catchment area for Amble. What the information does not indicate, however, is how much of the expenditure is spent purchasing goods and services in Amble and how much leaks to neighbouring retail destinations. Experian have calculated:

- The proportion of the population within the Amble catchment that shops in Amble and the proportion that shop at other centres.
- The percentage of expenditure spent on goods and services in Amble and the extent to which spending leaks to other centres.

The figures in Figure 43 below provide a baseline assessment against which future reports will measure changes in performance. The figures do not currently provide a breakdown of leakage for comparison and convenience retail, although it is anticipated that retention will be substantially higher for the latter compared with the former.

With regards to population, Experian estimates that just under 7% of the resident population shop in Amble. In contrast, almost one third shop in Alnwick (31% or 1932) and just under one-fifth in Newcastle City Centre (18% or 1130). Other main destinations include Ashington (13% or 820) and the MetroCentre (12% or 735).

Figure 43: Population Leakage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population Leakage</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alnwick</td>
<td>30.86</td>
<td>1,932</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newcastle upon Tyne – Central</td>
<td>18.04</td>
<td>1,130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashington</td>
<td>13.10</td>
<td>820</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metro Centre</td>
<td>11.74</td>
<td>735</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Amble</strong></td>
<td><strong>6.96</strong></td>
<td><strong>436</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morpeth</td>
<td>5.39</td>
<td>338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Byth</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cramlington</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Shields - Silverlink Retail Park</td>
<td>2.03</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newcastle upon Tyne - Kingston Park Centre</td>
<td>1.34</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Shields</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The pattern with regards to spend is relatively similar (Figure 44). Experian estimates that just under 7% of retail spend by residents and households domiciled within the Amble catchment, representing almost £1.8 million per annum, is spent in the town. Almost £7.8 million of expenditure is lost to Alnwick (30%), with other notable leakage to Newcastle City Centre (£4.8 million or 18%) Ashington (£3.4 million or 13%) and the MetroCentre (£3.1 million or 12%). What is not clear from the figures, however, is the retail types that outlying centres are able to attract from the catchment area. This is something that InfoNet will be investigating further with Experian over the coming 12 months.

**Figure 44: Spend Leakage**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plan Name</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
<th>Spend (£)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alnwick</td>
<td>29.96</td>
<td>7,752,988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newcastle upon Tyne - Central</td>
<td>18.43</td>
<td>4,767,747</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashington</td>
<td>13.18</td>
<td>3,410,243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metro Centre</td>
<td>12.03</td>
<td>3,112,197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Amble</strong></td>
<td>6.83</td>
<td><strong>1,768,380</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morpeth</td>
<td>5.50</td>
<td>1,422,905</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blyth</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>1,003,364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cramlington</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>773,363</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Shields - Silverlink Retail Park</td>
<td>2.05</td>
<td>530,655</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newcastle upon Tyne - Kingston Park Centre</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>355,520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Shields</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>327,525</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wallsend</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>245,018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gateshead - Team Valley Retail World</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>147,938</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunderland</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>135,901</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berwick-upon-Tweed</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>67,926</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newcastle upon Tyne - Byker Shields Road</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>53,124</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The map below (Figure 45) shows the Amble catchment area and is colour coded to indicate the proportion of retail expenditure that is spent by the resident population in...
Amble. From the map, it can be seen that households located within the town of Amble and in settlements within close proximity to the town (Hauxley, Radcliffe and East Chevington) spend between 10-15% of their total retail expenditure in Amble. Propensity to shop in Amble diminishes as you travel further afield, dropping to less than 5% further up the coast in settlements such as Boulmer, Longhoughton, and Rennington and in Acklington, Felton, Newton on the Moor and Swarland to the West and South West of Amble town.

*Figure 45: Proportion of Retail Expenditure*

Source: Experian, August 2008
12.6 Opinions on and use of Leisure and Entertainment

Events attended
Nearly all of the respondents (91%) had attended at least one of the events mentioned in the survey. The most popular of these events was the Amble market which had been attended by 70% of the respondents at some point (Figure 46).

Figure 46: Have you ever attended any of these events?
(Excludes ‘don’t know’ responses unless otherwise specified)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Percentage of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amble market</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amble sea fayre festival</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alnwick Fair</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continental market</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christmas lights switch on</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alnwick Food Festival</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alnwick International Music Festival</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alnwick Tournament</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have not attended any</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires, June 2008
Base: 123 respondents

Eating and drinking
With the exception of pubs and clubs which received a positive rating from 73% of the respondents, the eating and drinking venues in Amble were not rated very highly. Only 28-37% of respondents gave a positive rating for each venue, and over one third gave a negative rating in each case. More than half of respondents (53%) gave a poor/very poor rating for restaurants/bistros (Figure 47).
Figure 47: How would you rate the following venues for eating and drinking in Amble?

(Excludes 'don't know' responses unless otherwise specified)

Source: Northumberland lnfonet Shopper Questionnaires, June 2008

Base: 110 to 116 respondents depending on type of venue (note: this excludes those respondents that gave a ‘don’t know’ response)

Arts and leisure facilities

All of the arts and leisure facilities in Amble were viewed very positively, with over 90% of respondents giving a good or very good rating in each case (Figure 48).
Figure 48: How would you rate the following arts and leisure facilities in Amble?
(Excludes 'don't know' responses unless otherwise specified)

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires, June 2008

Base: 34 to 70 (note: this excludes those respondents that gave a 'don't know' response)

When asked how they would rate Amble as a place to enjoy yourself, 70% of respondents gave a good or very good rating (57% gave a very good rating) (Figure 49).
Figure 49: How do you rate Amble as a place to enjoy yourself?
(Excludes 'don't know' responses unless otherwise specified)

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires, June 2008

Base: 115 (note: this excludes those respondents that gave a ‘don’t know’ response)

General
When respondents were asked how they would make the town centre better, 8% gave an answer relating to improving the leisure facilities. Two comments were also made on this subject:

- “Better shops & coffee shops”.
- “More café’s”.

21% of respondents said that they were in Amble town centre for leisure on the day of the interview.
12.7 The Future: what will improve the town as a place to shop or visit?

From the analysis of the Amble shopper survey, it appears that two key issues need to be addressed:

- The retail offer – respondents suggested that there was a need for an increased variety of shops, and also a supermarket.
- The parking facilities, in terms of the number of spaces, the cost, and the security.

Respondent’s views on parking have already been covered in sections 9.2 and 9.3. Opinions on the retail offer are covered in more detail below.

**Figure 50: How would you make this town centre better?**

(Excludes 'don't know' responses unless otherwise specified)

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires, June 2008

*Base: 123 respondents*
In addition to these two issues, the analysis has highlighted a number of areas which should be investigated further to determine whether these need to be addressed also:

- **Safety/security during the night-times**
  78% of respondents gave a poor/very poor rating for this, but only 2 people mentioned general safety/security as a problem (“kids at night”, “…teenage thugs”), and only 6% gave this as a response for how they would make the town centre better;

- **Traffic**
  25% of respondents said that this was a problem with the shopping experience, but none of them mentioned this when asked how they would make the town centre better;

- **Quality of footpaths**
  20% of respondents said that this was a problem, but only 3 respondents mentioned this when asked how they would make the town centre better;

- **General state of the town centre**
  Aspects relating to this were not rated particularly highly (see section 10.2(d)).

**Retail**

Almost two thirds of respondents (66%) gave a poor or very poor rating for Amble as a place to shop. Only 15% said that it was good or very good.

This rating is extremely low when compared with the ratings for Amble as a place to live, enjoy yourself and visit, in which over two thirds of respondents gave a positive rating in each case.

When asked whether respondents agreed with the statement ‘on the whole, Amble offers a wide choice of quality shops’, 59% agreed and 25% disagreed (23% strongly disagreed).

29% of respondents said that the limited offer or range of shops/goods were one of the main problems with the shopping experience in Amble town centre.
72% of the respondents said that Amble needed a better retail offer in order to make the town centre better. From the comments made in response to this question (see Appendix 2) respondents mainly desire a supermarket.

When asked what improvements they would like to see to the retail offer, over half of respondents (53%) said that they would like an increase in the variety of shops. More chain stores and more shops offering local produce were also popular responses (Figure 51).

**Figure 51: What improvements would you like to see to the retail offer in Amble?**

(Excludes 'don't know' responses unless otherwise specified)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Improvement</th>
<th>Percentage of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increased variety of shops</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More chain stores</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More shops offering local produce</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longer opening hours</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nothing</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires, June 2008

**Base: 123 respondents**

Respondents were also asked to give examples of suggested improvements or to specify their ‘other’ response to this question. The most popular of these responses was a supermarket, given by 50 out of the 86 respondents that answered the question. Clothes shops were also a common response (26 respondents mentioned these).
13.0 INVESTMENT

Redevelopment
The following developments are proposed for Amble Town Centre;

- The Duke of Northumberland’s plans for a supermarket outlet, together with more than 200 car parking spaces, a new access road and 49 houses, are currently lodged with Alnwick District Council. Northumberland Estates have resubmitted an application form to Alnwick District Council.
14.0 CONCLUSION

There are plans for a new supermarket, more than 200 car parking spaces, a new access road and 49 houses currently lodged with Alnwick District Council. These proposals, should therefore be taken into consideration when drawing conclusions about the health of the Town Centre.

In the Town Centre, 71% of the floorspace use was for retail (Figure 3). Further, shopper’s perceptions of the range of retail provision was somewhat positive with 59% agreeing or strongly agreeing to the statement “Amble offers a wide choice of quality shops”, compared to 25% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing (Figure 5).

Although there weren’t many verbatim responses to what shoppers would like to see improved with the shopping experience (Appendix 2) the responses included that more shops were needed and that the range and choice of shops needed to be improved. In particular, the lack of food shops and supermarket was mentioned. The verbatim responses to what shoppers would like to see improved with the retail offer (Appendix 2) also highlighted a particular need for a supermarket in Amble. However, responses in future surveys should alter with the development of a new supermarket (Section 13). Additionally, figure 6 highlighted that there were more comparison retail (clothing, household goods, furniture, DIY and electrical goods) than convenience (including food and groceries) or retail service. This may indicate that shoppers would like to see less comparison retail than convenience or service, or they would like more variation within that particular category.

There was 10% of vacant floorspace in Amble (see Figure 12). Figure 14 also shows that between 2007 and 2008, the amount of vacant floorspace had increased when looking at property flows. This was a result of more buildings changing from being occupied to vacant from 2007 to 2008, than vacant to occupied. There had been local and national interest for vacant properties in the Town Centre as recorded by Northumberland Property Search. However, this is not an exhaustive view of all enquiries made on properties within the town centre, just a snapshot.
Accessibility into the town was not a problem for the shoppers interviewed with 46% (of those travelling by car) finding it very or fairly easy (Figure 17) and only 25% finding it difficult; or very difficult. However, 39% of these shoppers felt that the parking in the town centre was either poor or very poor. Appendix 2 also shows that various shoppers commented on the lack of parking and the fact that there was no parking. Hopefully, the addition of more than 200 car parking spaces in the Town Centre will see a more positive response in the future. Amble also has adequate bus connectivity, which is shown in Figure 22 by the frequency and number of destinations reached from Amble. 4 of the 5 shoppers travelling into the town centre by bus also found it very easy to travel there (Figure 24). The other shopper found it easy to travel by bus. Additionally, Figure 23 shows that shopper’s overall perception of public transport with regards to quality, regularity and destinations was more positively skewed.

When looking at retaining shopper spend, 7% of Amble residents shopped in Amble. 31% of expenditure was lost to Alnwick, 18% was lost to Newcastle, 13% to Ashington, and a further 12% to the Metro Centre (Figure 45). However, the current regeneration programmes (especially the introduction of a new supermarket) may show that the percentage for Amble will increase in the next few years and there will be a reduction in leakage to surrounding centres.

The responses from shoppers coupled with the various aspects that make up a town centre, suggest that generally Amble was in reasonable health. Although there has been some negative responses from the shoppers’ surveys with regards to the retail offer in general, the implementation of the regeneration project in the town centre should show hopefully show some improvements in forthcoming years.
15.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The original intention was that town centre health checks would be carried out biennially and there are various recommendations that would ensure that the next report improves and builds upon this initial “baseline” report. In subsequent years comparisons will be able to be made within the same town over a period of time, and also between towns which have the similar roles or functions (e.g. market towns).

Section 3, Diversity of Uses, focused on the different uses of commercial properties. Using the data from Experian, an analysis of property use class was carried out, however this data was only based on the ground floor of the properties and did not take into consideration any businesses that were situated on the upper floors. In order to give a more accurate picture of the use class of the town centre, these other floors would have to be considered. Another area to look at next time would be the location and quantity of residential properties in the town.

Section 5, Retailer Demand, summarised the interest of vacant outlets in the town centre. In this report, the source of this data was Northumberland Property Search. This cannot be taken as an exhaustive source of this information, and it would be beneficial to work in partnership with the various estate agents within the County to gain a more reliable and accurate insight. Additionally, a substantial amount of enquirers from the Northumberland Property Search referred to out of town properties such as those situated on business parks or industrial estates and therefore were excluded for the purpose of this report.

Section 8, Pedestrian Flows, analysed the footfall counts that had taken place within the town centres alongside the shopper’s surveys. As they had taken place on a “normal” weekday, a market day (where applicable) and a Saturday, it was not possible to estimate a weekly footfall count without including a footfall on a Sunday. This is something that would have to be considered next time.

Section 9, Accessibility, gathered all of the destinations reached from Amble by bus. This information was drawn up into a table, however a map showing all of these
routes would have been even more useful and easier to present in the report, but unfortunately this was not available at the time of publishing.

Section 11, Perception of Safety and Occurrence of Crime, analysed the number of crimes that had taken place within the town centre between 2005 and 2007, and also the initiatives designed to address town centre-related crime. It will be interesting in the next report to investigate what impact these initiatives have had on the number of crimes reported in the town centre.

Section 13, Investment, looked at future proposals for the town centre. The perception of town centre shoppers should be reviewed when the report is next updated, in order to see if their opinions have been considered within future proposals for the area.
APPENDIX 1

Use Class Order

(www.planningportal.gov.uk)

The following classes of use for England are set out in the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 and its subsequent amendments.

- **A1 Shops** - Shops, retail warehouses, hairdressers, undertakers, travel and ticket agencies, post offices, pet shops, sandwich bars, showrooms, domestic hire shops, dry cleaners and funeral directors.
- **A2 Financial and professional services** - Banks, building societies, estate and employment agencies, professional and financial services and betting offices.
- **A3 Restaurants and cafés** - For the sale of food and drink for consumption on the premises - restaurants, snack bars and cafes.
- **A4 Drinking establishments** - Public houses, wine bars or other drinking establishments (but not a night clubs).
- **A5 Hot food takeaways** - For the sale of hot food for consumption off the premises.

- **B1 Business** - Offices, research and development, light industry appropriate in a residential area.
- **B2 General industrial**
- **B3-B7 Special Industrial Groups** - See 'Use Classes Schedule'.
- **B8 Storage or distribution** - This class includes open air storage.

- **C1 Hotels** - Hotels, boarding and guest houses where no significant element of care is provided.
- **C2 Residential institutions** - Residential care homes, hospitals, nursing homes, boarding schools, residential colleges and training centres.
- **C2A Secure Residential Institution** - Use for a provision of secure residential accommodation, including use as a prison, young offenders institution, detention centre, secure training centre, custody centre, short term holding centre, secure hospital, secure local authority accommodation or use as a military barracks.
- **C3 Dwellinghouses** - Family houses, or houses occupied by up to six residents living together as a single household, including a household where care is provided for residents.
- **D1 Non-residential institutions** - Clinics, health centres, crèches, day nurseries, day centres, schools, art galleries, museums, libraries, halls, places of worship, church halls, law court. Non residential education and training centres.

- **D2 Assembly and leisure** - Cinemas, music and concert halls, bingo and dance halls (but not night clubs), swimming baths, skating rinks, gymnasiums or sports arenas (except for motor sports, or where firearms are used).

- **Sui Generis** - Theatres, houses in multiple paying occupation, hostels providing no significant element of care, scrap yards. Petrol filling stations and shops selling and/or displaying motor vehicles. Retail warehouse clubs, nightclubs, launderettes, taxi businesses, amusement centres. Casinos.
APPENDIX 2
VERBATIM RESPONSES FOR SHOPPER’S SURVEY

Verbatim responses to ‘Q12 Can you tell me what, if anything, are the main problems with the shopping experience in Amble Town Centre?’

Parking
- Parking (4 responses)
- Parking can be difficult
- Parking is poor
- Limited parking (3 responses)
- Limited parking spaces
- Very little parking
- Lack of parking spaces
- No parking
- No parking spaces
- Nowhere to park

Retail
- Choice of shops (2 responses)
- Lack of shops
- Not enough shops
- Food shops needed
- No co-op
- No supermarket
- Prices too high

Other
- Lack of customers
- Too busy sometimes
- Depressing to come to
- Kids at night
- People causing problems eg teenage thugs
Verbatim responses to ‘Q17 What improvements would you like to see to the retail offer in Amble?’

Food shops
- Supermarket (7 responses)
- A supermarket (3 responses)
- A new supermarket
- Good supermarket.
- Cheaper supermarket
- Supermarket needed.
- Supermarkets eg Asda Sainsburys
- Sainsburys Asda
- Supermarket eg Asda
- Supermarket eg Sainsburys Asda
- Supermarket eg Sainsburys local or M&S simply food.
- Supermarket eg Sainsburys Tesco. extra.
- New supermarket eg Sainsburys/local Tesco(in the centre of t
- Sainsburys Bon marche
- More supermarkets eg. Sainsburys
- More local supermarkets in town
- Supermarkets, fish shop, butcher.
- More supermarkets & bakeries
- Food shops needed (2 responses)
- Food shops
- Food shop with competitive prices

Clothes & shoe shops
- Clothes shops. (2 responses)
- More clothes shops
- Clothes shops shoe shops
- More ladies clothes shops
- Womens clothes shop
• Ladies clothing shops eg Primark/Bon marche
• Next, Topshop, Miss Selfridge, Accessorize, Primark
• More fashion shops
• Fashion shops eg Next
• Littlewoods, next, Primark, BHS.
• More department stores eg Primark

Various types of shops mentioned
• Asda kids clothes ladies clothes
• Baby shops, childrens clothing, & female eg Next.
• Department store. generally more stores
• Department stores & a new supermarket in town
• Department stores bhs/simply food.
• Food shop. Wilkinson’s
• Food shops, supermarket, clothes
• Clothes shops for women. supermarkets, wet fish shop
• BHS Bon Marche Asda
• Bhs mens shops supermarket
• New shopping centre Asda
• Supermarket & cheaper shops
• Sainsburys local Next Principles Bon Marche
• Sports wear small supermarkets like Tesco local Sainsburys I
• New supermarket eg Morrisons more clothes shops
• New supermarket, BHS, department store eg Next.
• More supermarkets & ladies fashion stores
• More supermarkets eg Sainsburys mens shops
• More mens shops more supermarkets eg Asda
• Mens shops Asda/Sainsburys
• Supermarket ladies shop
• Supermarket, more gift shops, more womens clothing shops
• Supermarket, Woolworths, Superdrug
• Supermarket. womens clothes shops
• Supermarkets eg Asda womens clothes shops
• Supermarkets fashion shops eg Bon Marche.
• Tesco clothes shops
• Woolworths, computer shop, supermarket.
• More parking spaces. need more department stores

**General retail**

• Good range of quality shops
• Better access to shops
• Have more upmarket shops
• Just a variety of everything needed
• More of everything
• More quality shopping
• Main chain stores

**Appearance**

• A new frontage
• Make street look better
• Needs an uplift
• Tidy place up

**Parking**

• Better parking (2 responses)
• Better parking for disabled/able bodied
• More parking
Verbatim responses to ‘Q23 How would you make this town centre better?’

Supermarket / food shops
- A supermarket (4 responses)
- Supermarket (3 responses)
- A good supermarket
- New supermarket.
- Food shops/supermarket
- New supermarket. Asda
- Asda
- Supermarket Eg. Sainsburys local
- New Sainsburys

Other shops / cafes
- Better shops & coffee shops
- More Café’s
- Womens clothes shops Topshop/Dorothy Perkins Next

Appearance
- Needs a general overhall
- Tidy up
- Make shops look better
- Less litter out of town

Other
- Paving is bad/bus stop is in a disgusting state. Needs repairing
- Paving stones need replacing in town centre
- Paving stones/Beach Street near club needs repairing
- Better wheelchair access
- Get kids off the streets at night
The Northumberland Information Network

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<th>Working Paper Number/Name</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

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