The Northumberland InfoNet is the Corporate Research Unit of Northumberland County Council. It is part of the Policy & Partnerships Service (in the Performance Directorate); it supports the Corporate Policy Team, other sections of the council and the NSP.
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 41% of the floorspace in Belford was for retail.
- Shopper’s perceptions of the range of retail provision was fairly divided – 45% thought that Belford offered a wide choice of shops and 46% thought otherwise.
- Shoppers would like to see improvements with more choice and variety was needed, specifically food shops.
- There was more comparison retail (clothing, household goods, furniture, DIY and electrical goods) than convenience retail.
- There was 16% vacant floorspace in Belford.
- 97% of shoppers interviewed found it very easy or fairly easy to travel into Belford town centre by car.
- 70% gave a good or very good rating for the availability of car parking spaces in Belford.
- Belford also has adequate bus connectivity by the frequency and number of destinations reached from Belford.
- Less than half of respondents rated the quality and the regularity of the bus/rail services and the destinations served by public transport in Belford as good or very good.
- 9% of Belford residents shopped in Belford. 28% of expenditure was lost to Berwick-upon-Tweed, 28% to Alnwick and 17% to Seahouses.

Recommendations

- The town centre should be monitored over a number of years to track changes.
- Comparisons can also be made with towns which have similar functions.
- Use class data will take all floors (from which businesses operate) within town centre buildings into consideration, as opposed to solely the ground floor.
- Investigate the location and quantity residential properties within the town centre.
• Work in partnership with local estate agents to gain further insight on property enquiries received.

• Align footfall counts across all town centres to enable fair comparisons. Additionally, footfalls to take place on Sunday to enable a weekly footfall to be estimated.

• A map to show all bus and train routes would prove useful in the analysis process.

• Investigate impact of crime initiatives on shopper’s perception of crime and safety within the town centre.

• Investigate impact of future proposals for Belford on shopper’s overall perception of the town centre.
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 Berwick-upon-Tweed, Amble, Ashington, Bedlington, Belford, Berwick-upon-Tweed upon Tweed, Blyth, Cramlington, Haltwhistle, Hexham, Morpeth, Newbiggin, Ponteland, Prudhoe, Rothbury, Seahouses, Seaton Delaval 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 Belford’s Town Centre Boundary

Throughout this report there are two different boundaries for Belford Town Centre that will be used depending on the section: the town centre boundary as defined by the former Berwick-upon-Tweed Borough Council (Figure 1), and the boundary as defined by Experian (a source of data used in this report) (Figure 2).

The area of Belford Town Centre in relation to the District Council boundary is 104320.90 m².
Figure 1: Boundary for Belford Town Centre (District Council)

Source: Berwick-upon-Tweed Borough Council
2.2 Belford’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”.

Source: Experian
Belford is a small market town, 49 miles north of Newcastle, and 15 miles south of Berwick-upon-Tweed. The town is dominated by an historic square, complete with market cross, which symbolises the town’s long history and heritage as a trading centre for Northumberland and the Scottish Borders. Over the years, the town has lost a number of retailers, and there have been some shop premises closed for lengthy periods.

2.3 History and Development of Belford

Belford is a quiet village in North Northumberland, lying midway between Alnwick and Berwick-upon-Tweed. It is believed that its name comes from Anglo-Saxon times, meaning the ‘river ford of Beola’.

Evidence of people in the area dates back to the Mesolithic times, with further items discovered from the Bronze Age. However, the Iron Age is the first period from which evidence of settlement has been found.

Some of the buildings in Belford contain evidence from the medieval era. These include the West Hall site, where a Norman motte & bailey fortress used to stand. This has been replaced by a 19th century farmhouse, but the well and parts of the moat can still be seen. St Mary’s Church, despite being heavily renovated, contains parts of what is believed to be a Norman church. In addition, the market square contains a cross dating back to medieval times.

In the 18th century, the key industry in Belford was agriculture, and in 1741, the town was given a licence to hold biennial fairs and a weekly market. This market is no longer held. Two years later, Abraham Dixon inherited land in Belford, and began to invest in the town, with Belford Hall (now luxury apartments) being one of his main accomplishments.

Belford was also heavily influenced by the Great North Road from London to Edinburgh on which it was an important coaching stop, with the Bluebell Hotel (18th century) once a thriving coaching inn. The mail coach 'Royal William' passed through Belford each day until 1847, when a railway station was opened at Belford.
(Newcastle to Berwick railway). Trains ran for over 100 years before the station was finally closed to passengers in 1968. Over the past few years, there have been calls to re-open a station at Belford.

These days, the population of Belford has grown to around 1,055 (2001 census), and due to a bypass completed in the 1980’s, the A1 no longer passes through the town.

There are numerous things to see and do in Belford. There is a carnival in July, a continental market each August, and the Belford Show in September. Belford also has a craft gallery, containing crafts, paintings and prints by Northumbrian artists and makers, a 9-hole golf course and a riding centre.

Nearby, there is St Cuthbert’s Cave, where St Cuthbert’s body is said to have been taken in 875 during the monk’s flight from the Vikings. Budle Bay Bird Sanctuary and the Fenham Flats (both nature reserves) are also close by, as is Chillingham Castle.

A team of Belford Community First Responders has recently been set-up to support the ambulance service by deploying volunteer first-aiders to emergencies.
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 Belford Town Centre and also the opinions of shoppers surveyed on the range of retail provision in Belford.

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 under half (41%) of the floorspace in Belford Town Centre are classed as shops. Hotels account for 29% of the floorspace in Belford, with drinking establishments occupying 9%.

Figure 3: Floorspace by Use Class

Source: Experian
The map (Figure 4) shows that the majority of shops within the town centre are clustered around High Street which is the main street. The hotels are clustered around the Market Place.

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 happen throughout the year. An open day will be held at Belford Hall from Saturday 12th September till Sunday 13th September, this gives free access to discover hidden architectural treasures and enjoy a tour, various events and activities which bring to life local history and culture. An exhibition of paintings by Chris Mayger will take place in Belford Craft Gallery from Sunday 12th July till the Monday 27th July. Admission to both of these events is free.

3.3 Satisfaction with the range of provision – retail

Question 14 in the Belford Shopper Questionnaire asked:

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

The level of agreement with this statement was almost equal to the level of disagreement (46% vs. 47% of respondents) (Figure 5).

Figure 5: How would you rate “On the whole, Belford offers a wide choice of quality shops”?  

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

Source: Shopper Surveys

Base: 79 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 - Belford

![Multiple Chain and Independent Businesses by Category - Belford](image)

Source: Experian

Figure 6 shows that in Belford town centre, the majority of businesses are comparison retail (7 independent) and leisure services (6 independent, 1 multiple chain). The categories which has the 3rd highest amount of businesses are
convenience retail premises (1 independent, 1 multiple chain) and retail service (1 independent, 1 multiple chain).
5.0 RETAILER DEMAND

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).

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

There were no enquiries for properties in Belford Town Centre recorded on Northumberland Property Database between April 2007 and March 2008. The only enquiries recorded were for properties on Belford Industrial Estate which is an out of town employment site. However, it must be noted that this data is based solely on one source (Northumberland Property Database) and other sources may provide further insight.

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 Belford 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 7 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.
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 7: Valuation Office Zone A rental prices for Belford Town Centre**
Figure 7 shows that the Zone A rental information is unknown for a large number of properties in Belford. All of the properties for which this information is known, are valued at £0 - £99 per m², and are largely situated on High 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.”¹ 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.”²

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

¹ www.voa.gov.uk
² www.voa.gov.uk

In Northumberland, this data is only available for 5 towns: Berwick-upon-Tweed, Ashington, Berwick-upon-Tweed upon Tweed, Blyth and Hexham. There is therefore no available data for Belford, however Figure 8 shows the average yield for Northumberland, the North East of England, and England.
Figure 8: Shopping Centre Yields – Northumberland

Figure 8 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.

Source: Valuation Office (www.voa.gov.uk), July 2008
6.3 Average Rental Rate

The average monthly rental rates for vacant commercial property in Northumberland are based solely on properties that were vacant between 1st January 2006 and 31st December 2007 and do not take the rental prices of buildings that were occupied throughout this period into consideration. As there were no properties in Belford listed as vacant on the Northumberland Property Database, there was no available rental information for Belford. However, Figure 9 shows the average rental prices for 12 of Northumberland’s town centres. Ashington has the highest rent at £217.04 per square metre and Haltwhistle has the lowest rent at £38.17 per square metre.

Figure 9: Average rental prices for commercial property in Northumberland Town Centres

A comparison on average rental prices for commercial property in Northumberland Town Centres per sqm

Source: Northumberland Property Database, December 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. 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 Belford 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 the majority of the commercial property in the town centre is situated on the ground floor.

7.1 Vacancy Rates of Premises

Figure 10 shows that the only street within Belford Town Centre with vacant premises is High Street. When looking at number of vacant buildings, there were 29% of vacant premises on High Street. However, when looking at vacancy rates in terms of floorspace, High Street had 30% of its total floorspace vacant.

Figure 11 shows that in Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Centre, there were 84% of occupied premises and 16% of vacant premises overall.

Figure 10: 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>Rank - vacancy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHURCH STREET</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIGH STREET</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MARKET PLACE</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NORTH BANK</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEST STREET</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Experian
Figure 11: Is a Property Vacant

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Is Property Vacant? (Belford Town Centre)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Experian

7.2 Changes in Town Centre Occupiers 2007 – 2008 (Property Flows)

Information about changes in town centre occupiers between 2007 – 2008 is not currently available for Belford town centre, as the GOAD plan from which the data is taken, was only created by Experian in 2008 when the work was commissioned by Northumberland Information Network.
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 Belford Town Centre in November 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 Thursday 6th November, Friday 7th November and Saturday 8th November 2008. They were carried out by interviewers at two “access points” within the town centre (see Figure 12). 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 Belford town centre is around 380, although this will obviously vary depending on the time of year. The data suggests that the footfall on a weekday is lower (around 310 for a Friday and 260 for a Thursday).

Figure 12: Estimated daily footfall in Belford Town Centre

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
<th>Saturday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Co-op</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shearer &amp; Sons, Border Stoves</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>378</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Northumberland Footfall Counts

3 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 Belford 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

38% of respondents travelled into Belford by car on the day of the interview (Figure 13). 37% of these said that they go into Belford 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 7% in the evenings.

Figure 13: Frequency of visit to the town centre by those respondents travelling in by car

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

Nearly all (97%) of the respondents that travelled by car found it fairly easy or very easy to travel into Belford town centre. Only one person found it fairly difficult (Figure 14).
Figure 14: How easy/difficult do you feel it is to travel into Belford town centre (those respondents that travelled by car)

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

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires

Base: 30 respondents

9.2 Access to car parking

The availability of public parking spaces was rated quite highly (Figure 15), with 70% of respondents giving a good or very good rating. The safety/security of the parking facilities was rated lower (55% gave a positive rating).

The availability of disabled parking spaces was not rated very highly, with nearly half (46%) of respondents giving a poor or very poor rating, and only 38% giving a good or very good rating.
Figure 15: Percentage of respondents giving each rating for parking related attributes

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

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires
Base: 52 to 77 respondents depending on question (note: this excludes those respondents that gave a ‘don't know’ response)

9.3 Cost of parking

Over half (55%) of respondents rated the cost of parking as very good. A further 8% said that it was good. However, one quarter of respondents gave the cost of parking a poor or very poor rating (Figure 16).
Figure 16: Percentage of respondents giving each rating for the cost of parking
(Excludes ‘don’t know’ responses unless otherwise specified)

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires

Base: 73 respondents (note: this excludes those respondents that gave a ‘don’t know’ response)

9.4 Belford’s Car parks
There are no official car parks within or surrounding Belford Town Centre.

9.5 Bus Connectivity
The direct connections linking Belford to surrounding towns and villages are listed below.

Figure 17: Destination and Frequency of Buses from Belford

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Destination</th>
<th>Mon – Fri</th>
<th>Sat</th>
<th>Sun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alnwick</td>
<td>Approx 2 per 2 hours</td>
<td>Approx 2 per 2 hours</td>
<td>9 per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bamburgh</td>
<td>Approx 1 per 2 hours</td>
<td>Approx 1 per 2 hours</td>
<td>4 per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beadnell</td>
<td>Approx 1 per 2 hours</td>
<td>Approx 1 per 2 hours</td>
<td>4 per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beal</td>
<td>Approx 2 per hour</td>
<td>Approx 2 per hour</td>
<td>5 per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berwick Upon Tweed</td>
<td>Approx 2 per hour</td>
<td>Approx 2 per hour</td>
<td>5 per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craster</td>
<td>Approx 1 per 2 hours</td>
<td>Approx 1 per 2 hours</td>
<td>4 per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denwick</td>
<td>1 per day</td>
<td>1 per day</td>
<td>1 per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embleton</td>
<td>Approx 1 per 2 hours</td>
<td>Approx 1 per 2 hours</td>
<td>4 per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felton</td>
<td>Approx 2 per 2 hours</td>
<td>Approx 2 per 2 hours</td>
<td>7 per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haggerston</td>
<td>At least 1 per hour</td>
<td>At least 1 per hour</td>
<td>5 per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Frequency 1</td>
<td>Frequency 2</td>
<td>Frequency 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Howick</td>
<td>1 per day</td>
<td>1 per day</td>
<td>1 per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longhoughton Spa</td>
<td>Approx 1 per 2 hours</td>
<td>Approx 1 per 2 hours</td>
<td>4 per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morpeth</td>
<td>Approx 2 per 2 hours</td>
<td>Approx 2 per 2 hours</td>
<td>9 per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newcastle upon Tyne</td>
<td>Approx 2 per 2 hours</td>
<td>Approx 2 per 2 hours</td>
<td>Approx 1 per 2 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scremerston</td>
<td>At least 1 per hour</td>
<td>At least 1 per hour</td>
<td>6 per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seahouses</td>
<td>At least 1 per 2 hours</td>
<td>At least 1 per 2 hours</td>
<td>4 per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shilbottle</td>
<td>At least 1 per 2 hours</td>
<td>At least 1 per 2 hours</td>
<td>4 per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warenmill</td>
<td>At least 1 per 2 hours</td>
<td>At least 1 per 2 hours</td>
<td>4 per day</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)

9.6 Shoppers travelling to town by bus

Only one person travelled into Belford by bus on the day of the interview. This person went to Belford only occasionally – less than once a month during the daytime, and never in the evenings. They found it fairly easy to travel into the town centre.

9.7 Train Connectivity

There is no train access to Belford.

9.8 Shoppers travelling to town by train

No respondents travelled into Belford by train on the day of the interview.

9.9 Perception of Public Transport Services

Between 37% and 42% of respondents gave a positive rating for the public transport related attributes, with the destinations served by public transport receiving the lowest rating (Figure 18).
Figure 18: Percentage of respondents giving each rating for public transport related attributes
(Excludes 'don't know' responses unless otherwise specified)

9.10 Perception of Accessibility
5% of respondents mentioned the quality of footpaths as being one of the main problems with the shopping experience in Belford town centre.

9.11 Origin and method of travel of Shoppers Interviewed
As Figure 19 shows, most of the respondents from the Belford Shopper Survey live in the former Berwick-upon-Tweed District, with a large proportion living in or around Belford itself. In addition, some respondents came from the Alnwick area, and most of the others came from elsewhere in Northumberland or Tyne & Wear.

A large proportion of the respondents that live in or around Berwick-upon-Tweed travelled in by walking. The majority remainder of these respondents along with those that lived further away travelled by car.

The remaining few respondents were from all over England and Scotland. Most of these travelled into Belford by car (Figure 20).
Figure 19: Visitors to Belford within Northumberland and Tyne and Wear
(Excludes 'don't know' responses unless otherwise specified)

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

Visitors to Belford
- Method of Transport
  - Bus
  - Car
  - Walk

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires
Figure 20: Visitors to Belford outside Northumberland and Tyne and Wear
(Excludes ‘don’t know’ responses unless otherwise specified)

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

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires
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
There have been no recent improvements in Belford Town Centre.

10.2 Shopper perception of the town

10.2.1 Pedestrianisation
Views on pedestrianisation were not specifically asked about in the survey, and no comments were made on the subject.

10.2.2 Signage, Street furniture and Open Spaces

Signage
One person said that signage and information was one of the main problems in Belford.

Street Furniture
Respondents were asked to rate street furniture as part of two different questions (Figure 21). 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 responses to the two questions were quite different, with the respondents more positive about the first question. 68% gave a positive rating when asked generally about the street furniture in the town centre, whereas 53% gave a positive response when asked about the general state of the street furniture.
**Figure 21: Street furniture ratings**

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Street furniture</td>
<td>Very Poor: 13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Poor: 17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>OK: 17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Good: 51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very Good: 31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General state of town centre</td>
<td>Very Poor: 24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Poor: 23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>OK: 22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Good: 31%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires

**Base: 74 to 76 respondents depending on question (note: this excludes those respondents that gave a ‘don’t know’ response)**

**Open Spaces**

Just over one half (52%) of respondents gave a positive rating for the parks and open spaces in Belford. 36% gave a negative response (Figure 22).
Figure 22: Ratings given for parks and open spaces
(Excludes ‘don’t know’ responses unless otherwise specified)

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires
Base: 42 respondents (note: this excludes those respondents that gave a ‘don’t know’ response)

10.2.3 Litter and Cleanliness
The litter and the overall level of cleanliness in Belford town centre each received a positive rating from just over one half of respondents. 17% gave a negative rating (Figure 23).
Figure 23: Ratings given for litter and overall cleanliness
(Excludes ‘don’t know’ responses unless otherwise specified)

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires
Base: 76 respondents (litter); 76 responses (cleanliness); (note: this excludes those respondents that gave a ‘don’t know’ response)

One respondent said that in order to make the town centre better, it was necessary to pay “attention to the litter and tidiness in the village”.

10.2.4 General Appearance of the Town
Respondents felt quite positive about the appearance of the town, with over 60% giving a positive rating for the graffiti/fly posting, the shop frontage and the general state of the buildings. The last of these attributes was given the highest rating (75% gave a good/very good rating, and only 5% gave a poor/very poor rating) (Figure 24).
Figure 24: Ratings given for the appearance of the town
(Excludes ‘don’t know’ responses unless otherwise specified)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Graffiti/fly posting</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General state of buildings</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General state of buildings</td>
<td>OK</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General state of buildings</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General state of buildings</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shop frontage</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shop frontage</td>
<td>OK</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shop frontage</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shop frontage</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires
Base: 73 to 77 respondents; (note: this excludes those respondents that gave a ‘don’t know’ response)

Several respondents were concerned about the number of empty shops in the town centre:

- “Empty shops”.
- “Don’t leave shops empty”.
- “…empty shops need looking at”.
- “Don't let shops stand empty”.
- “Empty shops make place look a mess”.
- “Lots of empty shops - doesn't look very good”.
- “Lots of empty shops need sorting”.
- “Need to look after boarded up or empty shops”.

A further related comment was also made: “Empty flats need sorting out - shop fronts need renovating”.

NORTHUMBERLAND INFONET
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

Figure 25: Analysis of Reported Crimes

Source: Northumbria Police
Looking at Figure 25, it is clear to see that the majority of crime in Belford in 2005 – 2007 occurred on High Street and the main type of crime and anti social behaviour here was “rowdy and/ or nuisance” of which there were 71 occurrences.

Looking at the chart (Figure 26), the types of crime have been broken down further. The most frequent type of crime occurring in Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Centre between 2005 and 2007 was criminal damage of which there were 11 occurrences. The 2nd most frequent type of crime was “violence/offences against the person” of which there were 10 occurrences.
11.2 Perception or Fear of Crime

No respondents mentioned safety/security as being one of the main problems with the shopping experience in Belford town centre.

Respondents were asked to rate safety/security during the daytime and the nighttime (Figure 27). Nearly three quarters of respondents (73%) gave a good or very good rating for the daytime, and 15% a poor or very poor rating. For the night-time, the ratings were surprisingly similar, with 71% giving a positive rating and 13% a negative rating.

As can be seen in section 9.2, 55% of respondents felt that the safety/security of the parking facilities was good/very good, whereas 35% thought they were poor or very poor.

Figure 27: Ratings given for safety/security
(Excludes ‘don’t know’ responses unless otherwise specified)

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires
Base: 71 respondents (daytime); 63 respondents (nighttime); (note: this excludes those respondents that gave a ‘don’t know’ response)
11.3 Initiatives to Address Town Centre-Related Crime

According to the Berwick-upon-Tweed Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CRDP) the following initiatives exist in the Berwick-upon-Tweed District (September 2008):

- Berwick-upon-Tweed Borough CDRP has developed a labelling scheme to tackle the sale of alcohol to persons under the age of 18. Can identify offending premises through use of special barcodes on the labels. The Project is called “Bar None”, currently in the pilot phase and is trialling with Off License premises.

- Headteachers from: Berwick-upon-Tweed High School; Berwick-upon-Tweed Middle; Tweedmouth Middle; Belford Middle; Glendale Middle, Wooler; and Seahouses Middle have been invited to a series of meetings in order to explore:
  - Engaging in local community issues
  - Exploring the options to create safer and greener communities
  - Developing a preventative approach that includes support, effective communication and publicity in order to address community issues in a pro-social manner
  - Encouraging local individual and collective responsibility and accountability in the communities we serve and live in.
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 Belford 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 Belford catchment area; spending patterns and retaining shopper spend within the town centre.

12.1 Regularity of visits

74% of respondents go to Belford town centre during the daytime at least once a week. Over half (53%) visit the town every day.

Respondents visit the town centre far less often during the evenings, with only 26% visiting at least once a week. 46% said that they never visit the town centre during the evening (Figure 28).

Figure 28: Approximately how often are you in Belford Town Centre?
(Excludes 'don't know' responses unless otherwise specified)

![Graph showing visit frequency](image)

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires

Base: 78 respondents (daytime) and 78 respondents (evening)
12.2 Expenditure/ Type of Purchases

Figure 29 shows the proportion of respondents that shop for different items solely in Belford town centre, and how many go further afield. Figure 30 gives more details about which shopping centres the respondents use.

For main food shopping, very few of the respondents choose to shop in Belford, preferring to go to Berwick (54%) or Alnwick (30%) instead. Other domestic item shopping is similar. For top-up food shopping, they are much more likely to stay in Belford. For all other items, it is very unlikely that the respondents will do their shopping in Belford. Newcastle is a popular choice for most other items, as are Berwick, Alnwick and the Metro Centre.
### Figure 29: Proportion of respondents shopping in Belford 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>Belford</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belford only</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belford + local area</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belford + non-local/local mix</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-Belford</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 (not Belford)</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixture of places (not Belford)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Don't buy</strong></td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Base</strong></td>
<td>79</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires

---

4 ‘Local area’ is defined as being one of the following: Berwick, Wooler, Alnwick, Newcastle, Metro Centre, Edinburgh, Galashiels, Kelso, Morpeth, Other Scotland, Other Northumberland
Figure 30: 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>Belford</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berwick</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alnwick</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newcastle</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metro Centre</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edinburgh</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Galashiels</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morpeth</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northumberland</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't buy</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Base</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires

More than three quarters (76%) of respondents planned to spend less than £25 in Belford on the day they were interviewed. 16% said that they did not plan to spend any money (Figure 31).
Figure 31: How much do you plan to spend in Belford today?
(Excludes ‘don’t know’ responses unless otherwise specified)

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires
Base: 79 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. Berwick upon Tweed was the main town in the Berwick upon Tweed Borough and is described in the RSS as a Rural Service Centre: a settlement that provides jobs, services and facilities for a wider rural hinterland. The district contained a number of other local or secondary centres, including Belford, Seahouses and Wooler. These settlements act as key service centres for the rural areas but are smaller in scale or function than Berwick upon Tweed.
Figure 32: Belford Retail Catchment

The map (Figure 32) shows the catchment area for Belford 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 2 miles.

Source: Experian
12.4 Spending Patterns

In addition to Belford town, the catchment embraces a number of other similar sized settlements to the North of Belford, (Easington, Detchant and Middleton), and Waren Mill to the East, all of which are situated along the major roads running through the catchment. Altogether, the catchment covers an area of 177.60 sq km, and is home to almost 1,550 people and 725 households. Collectively, these households and residents spend an estimated £7.2 million per annum on retail goods and services, with 35.6% of expenditure on convenience retail goods (£2.5 million) and 64.4% on comparison retail (£4.6 million). This balance differs slightly from the national (UK) average, which reports 36.6% of expenditure on convenience retail and 63.4% on comparison. The difference between the national and local position is illustrated through the index which relates the proportion of each spend type in the Belford 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 33: Belford Catchment Summary Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Belford Catchment Summary Profile</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>UK</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Index</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007 Population</td>
<td>1545.00</td>
<td></td>
<td>60,796,178.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007 Households</td>
<td>723.00</td>
<td></td>
<td>26,018,847.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Comparison</td>
<td>4,682,517.00</td>
<td>64.4%</td>
<td>171,926,829,196.00</td>
<td>63.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Convenience</td>
<td>2,588,808.00</td>
<td>35.6%</td>
<td>99,464,696,627.00</td>
<td>36.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Retail</td>
<td>7,271,325.00</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>271,391,525,823.00</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Experian

Total retail expenditure per household per annum within the catchment stands at £10,057, with average comparison retail spend at £6,476 per annum and convenience spend at £3,581 per annum (Figure 33). Whilst total comparison spend per household is above the UK average, with an index of 101.7, total convenience
spend per household in the catchment was below the UK average, with an index of 97.1.

Figure 34 provides a breakdown of Comparison retail expenditure within the Belford catchment and in the UK. Clearly the largest expenditure type within comparison retail is Clothing Material & Garments, accounting for £998,000 or 21.3% of total Comparison Expenditure within the catchment. Clothing is followed by Audio-visual, photographic and information processing equipment (£568,500 or 12.1%) and Furniture and furnishings; carpets and other floor coverings (£491,000 or 10.5%). The pattern of expenditure nationally is similar, but with some notable differences. Referring to the index, households in Belford spend substantially more on Audio-visual, photographic and information processing equipment, Recording Media, and Major Household Appliances as a proportion of total spend than the UK average. In contrast, they spend substantially less on Appliances for personal care, and Games, toys and hobbies; sport and camping; musical instruments.
### Figure 34: Total Expenditure (in 2006 prices) Comparison

#### 2007 Total Expenditure (in 2006 prices) Comparison

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Totals</th>
<th>Belford Catchment</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>UK</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Index</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10% of Non-Durable household goods</td>
<td>8,867.00</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>357,185,476.00</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>92.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appliances for personal care</td>
<td>351,379.00</td>
<td>7.50</td>
<td>15,298,262,865.00</td>
<td>8.90</td>
<td>85.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio-visual, photographic and information processing equipment</td>
<td>568,518.00</td>
<td>12.14</td>
<td>14,926,597,385.00</td>
<td>8.68</td>
<td>142.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bicycles</td>
<td>7,118.00</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>1,345,908,674.00</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>19.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books and stationery</td>
<td>164,196.00</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>6,968,169,166.00</td>
<td>4.05</td>
<td>87.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing materials and garments</td>
<td>998,012.00</td>
<td>21.31</td>
<td>37,197,970,202.00</td>
<td>21.64</td>
<td>100.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furniture and furnishings; carpets and other floor coverings</td>
<td>491,157.00</td>
<td>10.49</td>
<td>18,218,052,893.00</td>
<td>10.60</td>
<td>100.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Games, toys and hobbies; sport and camping; musical instruments</td>
<td>461,397.00</td>
<td>9.85</td>
<td>18,951,364,780.00</td>
<td>11.02</td>
<td>90.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gardens, plants and flowers</td>
<td>83,261.00</td>
<td>1.78</td>
<td>3,402,000,385.00</td>
<td>1.98</td>
<td>91.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glassware, tableware and household utensils</td>
<td>133,392.00</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>4,753,009,610.00</td>
<td>2.76</td>
<td>104.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household textiles</td>
<td>182,256.00</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>5,378,572,610.00</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>126.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewellery, clocks and watches</td>
<td>101,748.00</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>4,533,353,900.00</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>83.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major household appliances (electric or not)</td>
<td>176,773.00</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>4,457,482,024.00</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>148.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major tools and equipment</td>
<td>8,357.00</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>370,528,409.00</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>84.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials for maintenance and repair of the dwelling</td>
<td>144,722.00</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>6,826,571,834.00</td>
<td>3.97</td>
<td>79.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical goods and other pharmaceutical products</td>
<td>79,266.00</td>
<td>1.69</td>
<td>3,904,354,994.00</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>75.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other personal effects</td>
<td>47,399.00</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>2,276,336,174.00</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td>77.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pets and related products</td>
<td>69,071.00</td>
<td>1.48</td>
<td>2,747,999,981.00</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>93.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recording media</td>
<td>306,642.00</td>
<td>6.55</td>
<td>7,513,288,250.00</td>
<td>4.37</td>
<td>152.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shoes and other footwear</td>
<td>129,950.00</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>5,348,647,704.00</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>90.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small electrical household appliances</td>
<td>34,383.00</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>748,364,529.00</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>171.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small tools and miscellaneous accessories</td>
<td>66,982.00</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>3,301,806,678.00</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>75.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Therapeutic appliances and equipment</td>
<td>67,670.00</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>3,101,000,673.00</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>81.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Comparison</td>
<td>4,682,517.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>171,926,829,196.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>101.65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Experian
Figure 35: Expenditure on Comparison Retail

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

Source: Experian

Figure 36: Expenditure on Comparison Retail

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

Source: Experian

Figure 37 provides a breakdown of Convenience retail expenditure within the Belford catchment and in the UK. Clearly the largest expenditure type within convenience retail in Belford is Food and non-alcoholic beverages, accounting for £1.8 million or...
71.2% of total Comparison Expenditure within the area. Food and non-alcoholic beverages is followed by Alcohol (£343,500 or 13.2%) and Tobacco (£194,000 or 7.5%). The pattern of expenditure nationally differs a little. Referring to the index, households in Belford spend proportionately more on Alcohol, and Newspapers and periodicals, and less on Tobacco.

**Figure 37: 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>90% of Non-Durable household goods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol (off-trade)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food and non-alcoholic beverages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspapers and periodicals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tobacco</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Convenience</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Experian

**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 Belford. What the information does not indicate, however, is how much of the expenditure is spent purchasing goods and services in Belford and how much leaks to neighbouring retail destinations. Based on the Where Britain Shops Survey, Experian have calculated:

- The proportion of the population within the Belford catchment that shops in Belford and the proportion that shop at other centres.

- The percentage of expenditure spent on goods and services in Belford and the extent to which spending leaks to other centres.

The data in figures 38 and 39 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 (Figure 38), Experian estimates that less than 9% of the resident population shop in Belford (133 or 8.6%). The major shopping destinations for people in the catchment area are Berwick-upon-Tweed (436 or 28.2%), Alnwick (435 or 28.2%) and Seahouses (269 or 17.4%), with even Newcastle upon Tyne attracting nearly as many shoppers from Belford as Belford itself (126 or 8.2%).

Figure 38: Population Leakage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plan Name</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
<th>Population (no.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Berwick-upon-Tweed</td>
<td>28.19</td>
<td>436</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alnwick</td>
<td>28.18</td>
<td>435</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seahouses</td>
<td>17.43</td>
<td>269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Belford</strong></td>
<td><strong>8.58</strong></td>
<td><strong>133</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newcastle upon Tyne - Central</td>
<td>8.17</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metro Centre</td>
<td>4.29</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wooler</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morpeth</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashington</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Experian

The pattern with regards to spend is relatively similar (Figure 39). Experian estimates that only 8.6% of retail spend by residents and households domiciled within the Belford catchment, representing £622,600 per annum, is spent in the town.

More than £4.0 million of expenditure is lost to Berwick-upon-Tweed and Alnwick (56.4%), with other notable leakage to Seahouses (£1.25 million or 17.2%) and Newcastle (£595,000 or 8.2%). 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 39: Spend Leakage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plan Name</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
<th>Spend (£)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Berwick-upon-Tweed</td>
<td>28.22</td>
<td>2,051,929</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alnwick</td>
<td>28.18</td>
<td>2,049,214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seahouses</td>
<td>17.24</td>
<td>1,253,534</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belford</td>
<td>8.56</td>
<td>622,614</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newcastle upon Tyne - Central</td>
<td>8.18</td>
<td>595,033</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metro Centre</td>
<td>4.30</td>
<td>312,397</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wooler</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>267,414</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morpeth</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>77,424</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashington</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>41,764</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Experian

Figure 40 shows the Belford catchment area and is colour coded to indicate the proportion of retail expenditure that is spent by the resident population in Belford. From the map, it can be seen that households located within Belford and in the surrounding hinterland spend only 10-15% of their total retail expenditure in Belford. Propensity to shop in Belford drops to 5-10% of expenditure adjacent parts of the catchment covering Bamburgh and approaches to Wooler, and only up to 5% in Seahouses and surrounding land.
12.6 Opinions on and use of Leisure and Entertainment

14% of respondents said that they were in Belford town centre for leisure on the day of the interview.

Events attended
Over three quarters (78%) of the respondents had attended at least one of the events asked about in the survey. The event most well attended by the respondents was the continental market, closely followed by the Christmas Market and the Belford Show. (Figure 41).
**Figure 41: 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>Christmas Market</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Years Eve</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fireworks</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continental Market</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belford Show</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have not attended</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires

*Base: 77 respondents*

**Eating and drinking**

The different types of eating and drinking venues received vastly different ratings. The highest ratings were given for the pubs and clubs and the coffee shops, which received positive ratings from 64% and 51% of respondents respectively. The sandwich shops and the takeaways received the lowest ratings, with only 5% and 11% of respondents giving a positive rating respectively. Three quarters of the respondents said that the sandwich shops were ‘very poor’ (Figure 42).
Figure 42: How would you rate the following venues for eating and drinking in Belford?

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

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires

Base: 55 to 71 respondents depending on type of venue (note: this excludes those respondents that gave a ‘don’t know’ response)

Three people made the comment that they would like more takeaways.

Arts and leisure facilities

The Bell View Resource Centre and the Old Bank Building both received over 60% of positive ratings from the respondents. The parks and open spaces were rated slightly lower with 52% of positive ratings, and the youth facilities received the lowest positive rating (46%) (Figure 43).
Figure 43: How would you rate the following arts and leisure facilities in Belford? (Excludes ‘don’t know’ responses unless otherwise specified)

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires

Base: 35 to 59 depending on facility (note: this excludes those respondents that gave a ‘don’t know’ response)

When asked how they would rate Belford as a place to enjoy themselves, nearly half (49%) said it was ‘very poor’. Only 21% rated it as good or very good (Figure 44).
Figure 44: How do you rate Belford as a place to enjoy yourself?  
(Excludes ‘don’t know’ responses unless otherwise specified)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Poor</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OK</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires  
Base: 70 (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, 26% gave an answer relating to improving the leisure facilities. A few suggestions were also made on this subject:

- “Baths/Leisure pursuit/cinema/community centre/...”.
- “Need leisure centre...” (2 responses).
- “New leisure centre - bowling centre...”.
- “Need more facilities for older people/proper community centre...”.

12.7 The Future: what will improve the town as a place to shop or visit?

The analysis of the Belford shopper survey suggests that in order to improve the town as a place to shop or visit, the retail offer needs to be improved. Further analysis of this is shown below.
In addition to the retail offer, there are a few issues that appear to be of concern to the respondents. It is therefore recommended that the following are examined in more detail to determine if they can be improved:

- Availability of disabled parking spaces (46% of respondents that rated this aspect said that it was poor or very poor).
- Sandwich shops and takeaways (75% and 56% of respondents respectively rated these as ‘very poor’).
- Leisure facilities (26% of respondents said that improving the leisure facilities would make the town centre better).
- Empty shops (a number of comments were made relating to this and how it affects the appearance of the town).

**Figure 45: How would you make this town centre better?**

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Improvement</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Better retail offer</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved leisure facilities</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved parking</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nothing</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires

*Base: 77 respondents*
Figure 46: What are the main problems with the shopping experience in Belford town centre?

![Bar chart showing percentage of respondents]

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires

Base: 78 respondents

Retail offer
Throughout the survey, respondents have been quite negative about the retail offer in Belford as can be seen in the points below:

- 85% of respondents said that one of the main problems with the shopping experience in Belford town centre was the limited offer or range of shops/goods.

- Belford is generally only used for top-up food shopping. For all other types of shopping, respondents choose to shop elsewhere such as Newcastle, Berwick, Alnwick or the Metro Centre.

- 61% of respondents said that Belford was a poor or very poor place to shop. Only 24% rated it as good or very good.

- In order to make the town better, 71% of respondents said that it needed a better retail offer. A number of the ‘other’ responses given also mentioned retail.
Respondents had mixed views on whether Belford offers a wide choice of quality shops. 41% strongly agreed with the statement, and 43% strongly disagreed.

Respondents were also asked about the types of improvement that they would like to see to the retail offer in Belford town centre. 61% said that they would like an increased variety of shops, and 38% would like more shops offering local produce.

A list of the ‘other’ responses, together with some examples of shops that the respondents would like, is given in Appendix 2. Many of these related to more food/grocery shops. This type of shop was also mentioned by numerous respondents when asked how they would make the town centre better.

Figure 47: What improvements would you like to see to the retail offer in Belford?

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

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires

Base: 79 respondents
13.0 INVESTMENT

The following developments are proposed for Belford Town Centre;

- More positively, the most significant developments in the town have been the creation of the Bell View Community Resource Centre with sheltered housing on the site of a former workhouse.

- New housing, including affordable social housing on the western edge of the town.

- The expansion of the golf course from 9 to 18 holes which is currently underway.

- Finally, the golf club also has planning permission for a hotel although this has not yet been developed.
14.0 CONCLUSION

In the Town Centre, 41% of the floorspace use was for retail (Figure 3). Further, shopper’s perceptions of the range of retail provision was fairly divided with 47% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing to the statement “Belford offers a wide choice of quality shops”, compared to 46% agreeing or strongly agreeing (Figure 5).

The verbatim responses to what shoppers would like to see improved with the retail offer (Appendix 2) highlighted that more food shops were high on their priorities so that they didn’t have to travel further afield for this type of shopping. Additionally, figure 6 highlighted that there were more comparison retail (clothing, household goods, furniture, DIY and electrical goods) than convenience 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. Further, within the comparison category, the majority of the businesses were independent as opposed to multiple chain such as high street shops which were also suggested when asking shoppers what would improve the retail offer (Appendix 2).

There was 16% of vacant floorspace in Belford (see Figure 11). Appendix 2 also shows the responses given for “How would you make this town centre better?”, of which several shopper survey respondents mentioned reducing the number of empty shops in Belford to improve the appearance of the town. There had been no interest for vacant properties in the Town Centre as recorded by Northumberland Property Search, only for properties on Belford Industrial Estate – an out of town employment site. 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 majority of the shoppers interviewed with 97% (of those travelling by car) finding it very or fairly easy (Figure 13). Further, 70% of these shoppers felt that the availability of parking in the town centre was either good or very good (Figure 14). Belford also has adequate bus connectivity, which is shown in Figure 17 by the frequency and number of destinations reached from Belford. Only 1 shopper travelled into the town centre by
bus on the day of the interview and although they were a very infrequent visitor to Belford, they found it fairly easy to travel there by bus. These figures are supported by Figure 18 which shows the shopper’s overall perception of the quality, regularity and destinations served by public transport. Even though less than half gave a positive response for public transport related attributes, approximately half of shoppers thought they were ok and less than 10% gave a negative rating for each aspect. Further, the lowest rating was given for destinations served by public transport.

When looking at retaining shopper spend, just 9% of Belford residents shopped in Belford. 28% of expenditure was lost to Berwick-upon-Tweed, 28% was lost to Alnwick, and 17% was lost to Seahouses (Figure 39). Comparing this leakage figure to other town centres in Northumberland shows that the leakage from Belford is a lot higher than the others. This may be to do with its size and choice of shops and services compared to other town centres in Northumberland. However, Figure 30 shows that 68% of Belford residents stayed in Belford for their top-up shopping as opposed to travelling elsewhere.

The responses from shoppers combined with the various aspects that make up a town centre, suggest that Belford was in adequate health. As mentioned, the high leakage could be due to shoppers’ perceptions of the choice of existing shops, and focusing on this aspect in the future could improve this. However, at the time of this report there were no plans to invest in the retail sector of Belford.
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 Belford 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 Belford Town Centre?’

- Empty shops
- Something for kids

Verbatim responses to ‘Q17 What improvements would you like to see to the retail offer in Belford?’

Suggested examples of improvements

- Competitor Supermarket
- Supermarket
- Supermarket
- Desperately need new grocery shop
- Need a new grocery shop
- Need a new grocery store
- Reopen the Spar shop or some other grocery shop
- More food shops eg: Aldi, Londis, Netto
- Another food store - eg Londis, Premium
- More speciality shops eg: deli and local produce shops
- Butcher/deli/raggy dolls
- Takeaways
- Clothes shops - banks
- Don't leave shops empty
- More tourist attractions

Suggested examples of shops

- Another food shop
• Deli and butchers
• Food shops
• Need more small food shops eg: local produce
• Bakers/butchers/clothes/gifts
• Bank -food shops
• More takeaways and more grocery shops
• Shopping/clothes
• Supermarket - variety of shops
• More local shops - groceries/craft shops
• Small boutique shops deli/baker/butcher/chemist
• More independant shops
• More speciality shops eg; craft
• Speciality shops - convenience stores
• Raggy dolls clothes
• CVlothing shops for girls
• Clothes shops for teenagers
• Music shops - clothes shops (2 responses)
• Clothers/cards/gifts
• Clothers/shoes/dvd's/cd's
• Clothes/gifts cards
• Card and fancy goods
• More shops for tourists
• More in general
• Need everything here - clothes/food
• Nothing here - need everything
• Anything - there's nothing here!
• Just have shops - we have to be used?
Verbatim responses to ‘Q23 How would you make this town centre better?’

Food stores / convenience shops
- Need more grocery shops - co-op is too expensive
- Need more grocery shops - Co-op only store and it's expensive
- Need more grocery shops
- Need more grocery stores
- Need more small food shops
- Need more small grocery stores
- Need more small shops - grocer/butcher/wet fish shop
- New grocery shop
- Need a new grocery store
- More grocery shops eg; Lidl/Aldi
- Better quality food stores
- Food shop
- Supermarket
- Need a convenience store - prices high at the co-op
- More speciality small shops eg: Deli, butchers
- More specialised shops eg: deli and butcher
- Lots more small shops -especially more convenience stores
- Small convenience stores

Other
- Need lots of small shops
- Need more craft shops
- Takeaways

Mixture of shops / leisure
- Speciality shops plus new grocery store
- Baths/Leisure pursuit/cinema/community centre/more grocery shops
- Need leisure centre - more grocery shops
• Need leisure centre and more shops
• New leisure centre - bowling centre - convenience store
• Need more facilities for older people/proper community centre - more small grocery shops
• Need more grocery shops - and empty shops need looking at

Appearance of town
• Attention to the litter and tidiness in the village
• Don't let shops stand empty
• Empty flats need sorting out - shop fronts need renovating
• Empty shops make place look a mess
• Lots of empty shops - doesn't look very good
• Lots of empty shops need sorting
• Need to look after boarded up or empty shops
The Northumberland InfoNet

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