HEXHAM TOWN CENTRE HEALTH CHECK REPORT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 59% of the floorspace use in Hexham was for retail.
- Shoppers felt generally the range and quality of shops need to be improved.
- There were more comparison retail (clothing, household goods, furniture, DIY and electrical goods) than convenience or retail service.
- There was 6% of vacant floorspace in Hexham.
- Between 2007 and 2008, the amount of vacant floorspace had reduced in the town centre.
- 87% of shoppers interviewed found it easy to travel into the town centre by car.
- 30% of shoppers felt that the main problem with the shopping experience in Hexham was parking.
- Shoppers felt generally that the location of parking and lack of parking was a problem.
- Hexham also has good bus and train connectivity with a wide range of destinations reached. 92% of shoppers interviewed found it easy to travel into the town centre by bus.
- Just under two thirds of shoppers gave a positive response when rating the quality, regularity and destinations served by public transport.
- 30% of Hexham residents shopped in Hexham. 26% of expenditure was lost to the Metro Centre and a further 24% to Newcastle.

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 Hexham 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 centers; 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 Hexham Town Centre Boundary

Throughout this report there are two different boundaries for Hexham Town Centre that will be used depending on the section: the town centre boundary as defined by Tynedale District Council (Figure 1), and the boundary as defined by Experian (from where a lot of data within this report has come) (Figure 2).

The area of Hexham Town Centre in relation to the District Council boundary is 137,640.98 m².

Figure 1: Boundary for Hexham Town Centre

Source: Tynedale District Council, July 2008
Figure 2: Boundary for Hexham Town Centre

Hexham Town Centre - Experian

Source: Experian, May 2008
2.2 Hexham’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 Tynedale District Council): The historic town of Hexham is the geographical, administrative and commercial centre of Tynedale. It has a range of shops and services including a department store and continues to have a traditional market day with a full size market. The tightly defined historic core means that some activities, including food and other retailing, have spread onto “edge-of centre” sites. The town centre is subject to some changes relating to possible closures outstanding planning permissions and other pressures for development. It is influenced by tourism and serves a wide rural area.

2.3 History and Development of Hexham

Hexham is the largest town in Tynedale, situated about 22 miles west of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, near to the North and South Tyne rivers.

Although there is evidence to suggest human occupation in the area from Neolithic times, the first recorded history of Hexham was in 674AD when St Wilfrid (the Bishop of York) founded the Church of St Andrew. The church was made into a cathedral in 681, and stood for nearly 200 years before being mostly destroyed by the Vikings in 875. The crypt and the Bishop’s chair survived and can still be seen.

There are a number of other historic buildings in the town. These include:

- the Old Gaol (mid-14th century), which was the oldest purpose-built gaol in England, and which now contains the Border history museum;
- the Moot Hall (15th century), probably built as defence from the Scots, and later used as a courthouse;
- the Shambles – a sheltered market area built for the butchers in 1766.
In the 17th century, Hexham was one of England’s leading centres for leatherwork. However, this industry declined, and the major industry these days is the Egger chipboard factory which uses timber from Kielder forest.

Hexham is a picturesque market town, with a population of around 12,000. It hosts a thriving Tuesday Market, which dates back to at least 1239AD. A farmers market also takes place twice a month in the town.

The centre of Hexham contains three parks, the earliest of which was opened to the public in the 18th century. Another park, Tyne Green Country Park, is located on the edge of Hexham. Three golf courses and a national hunt racecourse can also be found nearby.

Hexham was recently voted ‘Britain’s Favourite Market town’ by Country Life magazine.
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 Hexham Town Centre and also the opinions of shoppers surveyed on the range of retail provision in Hexham.

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 over half (59%) of the floorspace in Hexham Town Centre are classed as shops. Assembly and leisure accounts for 9% of the floorspace in Hexham, with non-residential institutions and financial and professional services occupying 7% and 6% of floorspace, respectively.

**Figure 3: Floorspace by Use Class**

![Floorspace by Use Class - Hexham Town Centre](image)

Source: Experian, May 2008
Figure 4: Building Use Class for Hexham Town Centre

Use Class of Buildings
- A1 - Shops
- A2 - Financial and professional services
- A3 - Restaurants and Cafes
- A4 - Drinking Establishments
- A5 - Hot food takeaways
- ASG (Su Geners)
- B1 - Business
- B2 - Storage or Distribution
- C1 - Hotels
- D1 - Non-residential Institutions
- D2 - Assembly and Leisure
- UC - Unclassified

Source: Experian, May 2008
The map (Figure 4) shows that the majority of shops within the town centre are clustered around Fore Street which runs through the hub of the town centre. The map also shows that there are also large shops situated outside of the town centre which could have an impact on the amount of shoppers going into the town centre. There are a number of financial and professional services situated along Battle Hill and Priestpopple which run perpendicular to Fore Street, whereas the businesses are also situated at the edge of the town centre on Market Street. There are a significant number of non residential institutions situated on Beaumont Street. On the edge of the town centre, the “assembly and leisure” building represents the Wentworth Leisure Centre. This has recently undergone a £10 million transformation which will hopefully prove to be a huge boost for that sector of Hexham’s economy. It was officially opened by the Princess Royal on October 20th 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 happen throughout the year in Hexham. The Market Place hosts the Hexham Farmers’ Market twice a month on a Saturday, as well as a Tuesday Market which occurs weekly. The Continental Market takes place twice a year at the Market Place and at Abbey Flags.

This year's Christmas Market, together with the award winning Farmers Market, will have a huge number of stalls ranging from locally produced goods, gifts, crafts, art and much more. There is the chance to enter home baking, with a Christmas cake, mince pie and shortbread competition. There will also be a Santa's reindeer in Hexham on the market day. There will be singing from local schools and choirs, and a varied programme of street entertainment and live music. There will be country dancing, a climbing wall, story telling, face painting, fairground rides, together with the chance to visit Santa in his grotto.

The Tyne Tour Canoe Rally is an annual event and takes place in November at Tyne Green. This is a canoeing event which normally happens over a weekend and is arranged by members of the Hexham Canoe Club and friends from other clubs in the northern region.

The Antiques Fair takes place at Wentworth Leisure Centre on a monthly basis, a high quality festival programme of music and the arts centred on the historic Hexham Abbey, appealing to and involving a broad range of audiences and developing new creative ideas.

Hexham Book Festival is a small and dynamic annual festival, based in the Queen's Hall, Hexham, and other local venues, which has grown from a ‘pilot’ day in 2006 to an annual weekend festival.

The Hexham Gathering is an annual event which brings top folk and traditional performers together with some of the brightest rising stars in the new generation of folk musicians. This event takes place in the Queens Hall and Town Centre.

Hexham Abbey Festival has a vibrant, exciting line up of outstanding artists, ten days of music, from classical to folk to jazz.
Hexham Carnival in Sele features live bands, fairgrounds, attractions, entertainment, dance, stalls and refreshments.

The Selefest event is a music and entertainment festival for young people and approximately 2000 people attend. Alongside the popular extreme sports, there will be a great programme of live bands on the Sele, plus Hang Trapeze Act with circus skills and stilt workshops, Terpsichore Dance, a graffiti display wall, get creative with your own piece of art plus a full programme of acoustic acts, 7.5 metre climbing wall and lots more.

3.3 Satisfaction with the range of provision – retail

Question 14 in the Hexham Shopper Questionnaire asked:

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

Respondents were not very positive about this statement, only 31% agreeing or strongly agreeing, and 43% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing (Figure 5).

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% respondents</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>d/k</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires, May 2008

*Base: 437 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

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

Source: Experian, May 2008

Figure 6 shows that in Hexham town centre, the majority of businesses are comparison retail (53 independent, 29 multiple chain). The category which has the 2nd highest amount of businesses is leisure services: 32 of which are independent
and 14 multiple chain. There are 21 convenience retail premises and 23 retail service in total.
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 Hexham Town Centre as recorded on the Northumberland Property Database (April 2007 – March 2008) were local (within Northumberland). Figure 7 also shows a record of local enquiries for properties on Haugh Lane; however this is an industrial estate outside of the town centre. Additionally, 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 Hexham Town Centre April 2007 – March 2008

Property Enquiries for Hexham Town Centre April 2007 - March 2008

Legend

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 Hexham Town Centre in comparison with the other town centres in Northumberland for which this information was available; the North East; and England.

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.

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 Hexham Town

Valuation Office Zone A rental prices for Hexham Town Centre

Source: Valuation Office, April 2003
Figure 8 shows that the two properties which have the highest zone A rent in Hexham at £500 - £599 per m², are both situated on Fore Street which is located at the hub of the town centre. Of the remaining properties on Fore Street with known zone A rent information, the average zone A rent is £400 - £499 per m². The bottom end of Fore Street meets Priestpopple and Battle Hill. On both of these streets the properties have zone A rental values of £300 - £399 per m² at the ends closest to the junction with Fore Street, and zone A rental values of £200 - £299 per m² at the end furthest from Fore Street and the town centre. At the edge of the town centre on Market Street, the zone A rent reduces to £100 - £199 per m², where this information is known.

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

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

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.

¹ www.voa.gov.uk
² www.voa.gov.uk
Figure 9 shows that in 2001 (April and October), the average yield for Hexham (8.5 in both months) was lower than the average for Northumberland (8.6 in both months), but higher than the average for the North East of England (8.22 in both months), and England (8.10 and 8.08 respectively). In 2002 (April and October), the average yield for Hexham remains the same as 2001 (8.5 in both months) however the average for Northumberland (8.25 in both months) had dropped to below the average for Hexham, and the yield averages for the North East (7.90 in both months), and England (7.61 and 7.55 respectively), remained lower than Hexham. This indicates that based on yield, it has been derived that there is more of a “risk” associated with setting up business in Hexham compared to the rest of Northumberland, the North East and England. For years 2003 (April) – 2005 (January), the yield for Northumberland increased to be higher than Hexham but Hexham’s yield remained lower than the North East and England. The most recent results of July 2007 showed Hexham with a yield of 7.5 which was higher than Northumberland (7.05), the North East (7.02), and England (6.70).
6.3 Average Rental Rate

The average monthly rental rate for vacant commercial property in Hexham town centre between 1st January 2006 and 31st December 2007 was £132.35 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, Hexham has the 5th highest average monthly rental rate in Northumberland for the 11 towns recorded here, with Ashington, Morpeth, Ponteland and Berwick all with a higher rate. However, it must be noted that these rental figures are based solely on properties that were vacant between 1st January 2006 and 31st 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 Hexham and other Northumberland Towns

![Graph showing average rental prices for commercial property between Hexham and other Northumberland Towns.](source)

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. 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 Hexham 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 11 shows that the street within Hexham Town Centre with the most vacant premises is Maiden’s Walk with 33% of premises vacant. Maiden’s Walk also has the highest vacancy rate in terms of floorspace, with 90% vacant. However, it must be noted that Maiden’s walk only comprises of 3 buildings, 1 of which was vacant and accounted for the majority of the floorspace in that street.

Alemouth Road has the 2nd highest percentage of vacant properties (25%). However, it only accounts for 17% of vacant floorspace (ranked 3rd). Eastgate and Hallgate Street had the 3rd (22%) and 4th (13%) highest amounts of vacant premises.

Figure 12 shows that in Hexham Town Centre, there were 94% of occupied premises and 6% 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>
<th>Rank - vacancy</th>
<th>Rank - vacancy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MAIDEN’S WALK</td>
<td>yes 33%</td>
<td>yes 90%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALEMOUTH ROAD</td>
<td>yes 25%</td>
<td>yes 17%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EASTGATE</td>
<td>yes 22%</td>
<td>yes 35%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HALLGATE</td>
<td>yes 13%</td>
<td>yes 3%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HALLSTILE BANK</td>
<td>yes 9%</td>
<td>yes 6%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BATTLE HILL</td>
<td>yes 8%</td>
<td>yes 8%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARGYLE TERRACE</td>
<td>no 0%</td>
<td>no 0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BEAUMONT STREET</td>
<td>no 0%</td>
<td>no 0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CATTLE MARKET</td>
<td>no 0%</td>
<td>no 0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FORE STREET</td>
<td>yes 6%</td>
<td>no 0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HAUGH LANE</td>
<td>no 0%</td>
<td>no 0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MARKET PLACE</td>
<td>no 0%</td>
<td>no 0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MARKET STREET</td>
<td>yes 9%</td>
<td>no 4%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEAL MARKET</td>
<td>no 0%</td>
<td>no 0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRIESTPOPPLE</td>
<td>yes 2%</td>
<td>no 1%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PUDDING MEWS</td>
<td>no 0%</td>
<td>no 0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST MARYS CHARE</td>
<td>yes 5%</td>
<td>no 4%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST MARYS WYND</td>
<td>no 0%</td>
<td>no 0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STATION ROAD</td>
<td>no 0%</td>
<td>no 0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE ROPERY</td>
<td>no 0%</td>
<td>no 0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>yes 6%</td>
<td>yes 10%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Experian, May 2008

Figure 12: Is a Property Vacant

Is Property Vacant? (Hexham Town Centre)

![Pie chart showing 94% yes and 6% no]

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

Figure 13 shows changes in Town Centre Occupiers in 2007 and 2008 within Hexham Town Centre. There have been a number of decreases in the number of Supermarkets from 4 in 2007 to 3 in 2008 and also in the number Off Licences from 2 in 2007 to 1 in 2008. However, there have been a number of increases such as the number of Hairdressing businesses increasing from 8 in 2007 to 9 in 2008, the number of Charity Shops have also increased from 8 in 2007 to 9 in 2008. There has also been an increase in the number of Cafes increasing from 5 in 2007 to 6 in 2008, the number of Estate Agents increasing from 7 in 2007 to 10 in 2008. The number of Gift Shops has also increased from 2 in 2007 to 3 in 2008.

**Figure 13: Changes in Primary Activity Type 2007-2008**

Figure 14 shows the type of changes in premises in Hexham Town Centre between 2007 and 2008. Just under half (48%) of the changes were a change in occupier. Almost a third (29%) of these changes were premises that were vacant in 2007 but were occupied in 2008. Only 23% of premises were occupied in 2007 but vacant in 2008, therefore a reduction of vacant premises is evident.
Figure 14: Type of Changes in Premises 2007-2008

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

- 48% change in occupier
- 29% occupied to vacant
- 23% vacant to occupied

Source: Experian, May 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 Hexham Town Centre in May 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 20th May, Wednesday 21st May and Saturday 24th May 2008. They were carried out by interviewers at six “access points” within the town centre (see Figure 15). These counts were then used to give estimates of hourly and daily pedestrian rates.

8.2 Estimates of footfall

It is estimated that the daily footfall for a typical Saturday in Hexham town centre is around 39,800, although this will obviously vary depending on the time of year. The footfall count suggests that this figure drops by around one third for a Market Day, and drops considerably further for a ‘normal’ weekday.
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.

---

### Figure 15: Estimated daily footfall in Hexham Town Centre

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location (see Figure 2)</th>
<th>Tuesday (Market day)</th>
<th>Wednesday (&quot;normal&quot; weekday)</th>
<th>Saturday (weekend)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tescos Carpark</td>
<td>1,836</td>
<td>1,386</td>
<td>5,286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market Place</td>
<td>5,580</td>
<td>1,962</td>
<td>8,040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourist Information Centre, Wentworth Car Park</td>
<td>1,626</td>
<td>1,422</td>
<td>5,160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priestpopple 1</td>
<td>6,180</td>
<td>4,152</td>
<td>7,266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beaumont Street</td>
<td>6,354</td>
<td>3,348</td>
<td>6,696</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priestpopple 2</td>
<td>4,194</td>
<td>3,210</td>
<td>7,392</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>25,770</strong></td>
<td><strong>15,480</strong></td>
<td><strong>39,840</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Northumberland Footfall Counts, May 2008*

---

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.
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 Hexham 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 and train connectivity.

9.1 Shoppers travelling to town by car

63% of respondents travelled into Hexham by car on the day of the interview. Nearly two thirds of these (62%) said that they go to Hexham 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 20% 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)

87% of the respondents that travelled by car found it fairly easy or very easy to travel into Hexham town centre. 7% found it fairly difficult or very difficult (Figure 17).
Figure 17: How easy/difficult do you feel it is to travel into Hexham town centre (those respondents that travelled by car)  
(Excludes ‘don’t know’ responses unless otherwise specified)

Source: Northumberland InfoNet Shopper Questionnaires, May 2008  
Base: 275

9.2 Access to car parking
The availability of car parking spaces was not rated very favourably, with less than half of respondents giving a positive rating for both general public and disabled parking spaces, and more than 30% giving a negative rating in each case.

The safety/security of the parking facilities was given a higher rating. 65% of respondents gave a good/very good rating, and only 9% gave a poor or very poor rating (Figure 18).
Figure 18: Percentage of respondents giving each rating for parking related attributes

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

Source: Northumberland InfoNet Shopper Questionnaires, May 2008

Base: 192 to 369 respondents depending on question (note: this excludes those respondents that gave a ‘don’t know’ response)

Although 68% of the responses regarding availability of parking spaces were “very good”, “good” or “OK”, 30% of the verbatim responses said that the main problem with the shopping experience in Hexham was the parking. (This was the most common problem mentioned). A similar proportion (31%) said that, in order to improve the town centre, the parking needed to be improved.

Various comments were also made relating to parking problems in Hexham and ways in which to make the town centre better. These are listed in full in Appendix 2, but an overview of the comments is given below:

1. The main problems with the town centre:
   - General parking related comments (28 responses).
   - Lack of parking spaces (27 responses).
   - Distance from car park to centre (6 responses).
• Lack of disabled or parent/child parking (3 responses).

2. Ways to make the town centre better:
• Park & ride / shuttle bus (11 responses).
• General parking comments (4 responses).
• More disabled / flat parking (3 responses).
• More parking spaces (2 responses).
• Access from bottom car park (2 responses).

9.3 Cost of parking
Just over half of the respondents (51%) gave a good or very good rating for the cost of parking, and 20% gave a poor/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 InfoNet Shopper Questionnaires, May 2008
Base : 352 respondents (note: this excludes those respondents that gave a ‘don’t know’ response)
A few comments were also given by the respondents relating to the cost of parking:

1. The main problems with the town centre:
   - “Parking charges expensive”.
   - “Too expensive to park”.

2. Ways to make the town centre better:
   - “Lower or no cost for parking”.
   - “More free parking”.

9.4 Hexham’s Car parks

Figures 20 and 21 show the location of car parks within and surrounding Hexham Town Centre. Any car parks listed in the table which are not shown on the map are therefore situated outside of the 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 Prospect House, Hallgate</td>
<td>Surface Car Park</td>
<td>Minimum Cost of Parking: £2.00</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>35 long</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Open to the public Saturdays and Sundays only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Swimming Pool, Gilesgate</td>
<td>Surface Car Park</td>
<td>Minimum Cost of Parking: £0.40</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7 short</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Gilesgate</td>
<td>Surface Car Park</td>
<td></td>
<td>49</td>
<td>13 long, 36 short</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Short Stay only except for 13 long stay bays at the back of the Car Park</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Wentworth Leisure Centre</td>
<td>Surface Car Park</td>
<td></td>
<td>704</td>
<td>704 long</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>9 (shared with HGVs)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Loosing Hill, Dene Avenue</td>
<td>Surface Car Park</td>
<td></td>
<td>123</td>
<td>123 long</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Hexham Station, Station Road</td>
<td>Surface Car Park</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Car park and bus interchange next to the station.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Tyne Green Road</td>
<td>Surface Car Park</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>350 long</td>
<td>all accessible</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Tyne Mills</td>
<td>Surface Car Park</td>
<td>Free</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>34 long</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Destination</th>
<th>Mon - Fri</th>
<th>Sat</th>
<th>Sun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acomb</td>
<td>Approx 2 per hour</td>
<td>Approx 2 per hour</td>
<td>5 per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allenheads</td>
<td>8 per day</td>
<td>6 per day</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alston</td>
<td>2 per day</td>
<td>2 per day</td>
<td>1 per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bardon Mill</td>
<td>1 per hour</td>
<td>1 per hour</td>
<td>4 per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beaufront</td>
<td>2 per day</td>
<td>2 per day</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bellingham</td>
<td>Approx 1 per hour</td>
<td>8 per day</td>
<td>1 per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belsay</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>2 per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birdoswald</td>
<td>4 per day</td>
<td>4 per day</td>
<td>4 per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blaydon On Tyne</td>
<td>2 per hour</td>
<td>2 per hour</td>
<td>1 per hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>1 per hour</td>
<td>1 per hour</td>
<td>4 per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brampton</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambo</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>1 per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlisle</td>
<td>Approx 1 per hour</td>
<td>Approx 1 per hour</td>
<td>Approx 1 per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colwell</td>
<td>6 per day</td>
<td>5 per day</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consett</td>
<td>4 per day</td>
<td>4 per day</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corbridge</td>
<td>Approx 4 per hour</td>
<td>Approx 4 per hour</td>
<td>Approx 2 per hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cragside House</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>1 per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cranecleugh</td>
<td>2 per day</td>
<td>1 per day</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crawcrook</td>
<td>2 per hour</td>
<td>2 per hour</td>
<td>1 per hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gateshead</td>
<td>Approx 2 per hour</td>
<td>Approx 2 per hour</td>
<td>1 per hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gilsland</td>
<td>7 per day</td>
<td>7 per day</td>
<td>4 per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenhead</td>
<td>Approx 2 per hour</td>
<td>Approx 1 per hour</td>
<td>Approx 1 per hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hallington</td>
<td>1 per day</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hartburn</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haydon Bridge</td>
<td>Approx 1 per hour</td>
<td>Approx 1 per hour</td>
<td>5 per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haltwhiste</td>
<td>Approx 2 per hour</td>
<td>Approx 2 per hour</td>
<td>9 per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heddon on the Wall</td>
<td>Approx 1 per hour</td>
<td>Approx 1 per hour</td>
<td>Approx 1 per hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housesteads</td>
<td>5 per day</td>
<td>5 per day</td>
<td>5 per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horsley</td>
<td>1 per hour</td>
<td>1 per hour</td>
<td>1 per hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kielder</td>
<td>2 per day</td>
<td>1 per day</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kipperlynn</td>
<td>1 per day</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowesgate</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>1 per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Langley</td>
<td>Approx 1 per hour</td>
<td>9 per day</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lemington</td>
<td>Approx 1 per hour</td>
<td>Approx 1 per hour</td>
<td>1 per hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mickley</td>
<td>2 per hour</td>
<td>2 per hour</td>
<td>1 per hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nenthead</td>
<td>1 per day</td>
<td>1 per day</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newbrough</td>
<td>1 per hour</td>
<td>1 per hour</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newcastle upon Tyne</td>
<td>Approx 3 per hour</td>
<td>Approx 3 per hour</td>
<td>Approx 2 per hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oakwood</td>
<td>3 per day</td>
<td>2 per day</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Otterburn</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>1 per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ovingham</td>
<td>2 per hour</td>
<td>2 per hour</td>
<td>1 per hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ovington</td>
<td>3 per day</td>
<td>3 per day</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ponteland</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>2 per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prudhoe</td>
<td>2 per hour</td>
<td>2 per hour</td>
<td>1 per hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raylees</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>1 per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riding Mill</td>
<td>2 per hour</td>
<td>2 per hour</td>
<td>1 per hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ryton</td>
<td>2 per hour</td>
<td>2 per hour</td>
<td>1 per hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scots Gap</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>1 per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Settlingstones</td>
<td>1 per day</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Frequency During Daytime</td>
<td>Frequency During Evening</td>
<td>Mode of Transport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shotley Bridge</td>
<td>4 per day</td>
<td>4 per day</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sleaford</td>
<td>5 per day</td>
<td>4 per day</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stannersburn</td>
<td>2 per day</td>
<td>1 per day</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stocksfield</td>
<td>2 per hour</td>
<td>2 pr hour</td>
<td>1 per hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Throckley</td>
<td>Approx 1 per hour</td>
<td>Approx 1 per hour</td>
<td>1 per hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vindolanda</td>
<td>5 per day</td>
<td>5 per day</td>
<td>5 per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wallington Hall</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>1 per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whitfield</td>
<td>2 per day</td>
<td>2 per day</td>
<td>1 per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whittonstall</td>
<td>4 per day</td>
<td>4 per day</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wylam</td>
<td>3 per day</td>
<td>3 per day</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Travel Search (http://www.carberry.co.uk/index.htm), North East Travel Line (http://jplanner.travelinenortheast.info), National Express East Coast (http://www.nationalexpresseastcoast.com), July 2008

9.6 Shoppers travelling to town by bus

14% of respondents travelled into Hexham town centre by bus on the day of the interview. Over two thirds of these (69%) said that they go to Hexham at least once a week during the daytime (although it cannot be deduced how often they use a bus for these trips). This figure dropped to 34% in the evenings (Figure 23).

**Figure 23: Frequency of visit to the town centre by those respondents travelling in by bus**

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

Source: Northumberland Shopper Questionnaires, May 2008

*Base: 61 for daytime; 44 for evening*
92% of respondents who travelled into the centre by bus found it easy or very easy. Only 1 respondent found it fairly difficult and none found it very difficult (figure 24).

Figure 24: How easy/difficult do you feel it is to travel into Hexham town centre (those respondents that travelled by bus)

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

Source: Northumberland Shopper Questionnaires, May 2008

Base: 61 respondents

9.7 Train Connectivity

Hexham has a railway station, managed by Northern rail service, covering the following local destinations. Trains from Newcastle and Carlisle link to railway lines covering a wider part of the UK.

Figure 25: Destination and Frequency of Trains from Hexham

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Destination</th>
<th>Mon - Fri</th>
<th>Sat</th>
<th>Sun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carlisle</td>
<td>Approx 1 per hour</td>
<td>Approx 1 per hour</td>
<td>Approx 1 per hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wetheral</td>
<td>7 per day</td>
<td>7 per day</td>
<td>6 per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brampton</td>
<td>7 per day</td>
<td>7 per day</td>
<td>6 per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bardon Mill</td>
<td>7 per day</td>
<td>7 per day</td>
<td>6 per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haydon Bridge</td>
<td>9 per day</td>
<td>9 per day</td>
<td>6 per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corbridge</td>
<td>Approx 1 per hour</td>
<td>Approx 1 per hour</td>
<td>Approx 1 per hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riding Mill</td>
<td>Approx 1 per hour</td>
<td>Approx 1 per hour</td>
<td>Approx 1 per hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stocksfield</td>
<td>Approx 1 per hour</td>
<td>Approx 1 per hour</td>
<td>Approx 1 per hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prudhoe</td>
<td>Approx 2 per hour</td>
<td>Approx 2 per hour</td>
<td>Approx 1 per hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Frequency Daytime</td>
<td>Frequency Nighttime</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wylam</td>
<td>Approx 1 per hour</td>
<td>Approx 1 per hour</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blaydon</td>
<td>3 per day</td>
<td>2 per day</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gateshead (Metro Centre)</td>
<td>Approx 2 per hour</td>
<td>Approx 2 per hour</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dunston</td>
<td>2 per day</td>
<td>2 per day</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newcastle</td>
<td>Approx 2 per hour</td>
<td>Approx 2 per hour</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunderland</td>
<td>Approx 2 per hour</td>
<td>Approx 2 per hour</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Travel Search (http://www.carlberry.co.uk/index.htm); North East Travel Line (http://jplanner.travelinenortheast.info); National Express East Coast (http://www.nationalexpresseastcoast.com), July 2008

9.8 Shoppers travelling to town by train

Five respondents (1%) travelled into Hexham by train on the day of the interview. All of these respondents found it fairly easy or very easy to travel into the centre.

The frequency of visit in the daytimes varied considerably for these respondents. For the night-times, 2 respondents did not answer the question, two said that it was a one-off visit, and 1 said that they went into Hexham less than once a week.

9.9 Perception of Public Transport Services

The attributes related to public transport were given a good/very good rating by between 62% and 64% of the respondents, with the highest of these ratings relating to the quality of the bus/rail services (figure 26).
Figure 26: Percentage of respondents giving each rating for public transport related attributes
(Excludes ‘don’t know’ responses unless otherwise specified)

Source: Northumberland InfoNet Shopper Questionnaire, May 2008

Base: 230 to 231 respondents depending on attribute (note: this excludes those respondents that gave a ‘don’t know’ response)

A few comments were made by the respondents regarding public transport. These are listed below:

1. The main problems with the town centre:
   - “Buses stop too early”.

2. Ways to make the town centre better:
   - “Better bus service”.
   - “Better local transport to villages especially in the evenings”.
   - “Cannot get on bus 3:30 to town”.
   - “Public transport”.

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%
0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

% respondents

The quality of bus/rail services
The regularity of bus/rail services
The destinations to and from Hexham served by public transport

Very Poor
Poor
OK
Good
Very Good

13% 15% 13%
51% 47% 49%
21% 21% 22%
11% 11% 12%
6% 4% 4%
9.10 Perception of Accessibility

8% of respondents said that improved accessibility was needed to make the town centre better. Numerous comments were also made relating to the ease with which shoppers can move about between different parts of the town. A large number of these mentioned the difficulties of getting from the car park to the town centre due to the steep hill, and suggested a shuttle bus or park and ride scheme.

1. The main problems with the town centre:
   - “Too many hills (2 responses)”.  
   - “The walk up the hill to the town centre”.  
   - “Steep banks from car park”.  
   - “Kerbs difficult to manoeuvre with buggy in places”.  
   - “Access to the town centre”.  
   - “Buses stop too early”.  
   - “Need shuttle bus”.  
   - “Easier access with pram”.  
   - “Access with buggys can be difficult”.  
   - “Not very good for the old & disabled”.

2. Ways to improve the retail offer:
   - “Better pedestrian access”.  
   - “Shuttle bus from car park”.

3. Ways to make the town centre better:
   - “Car park near bus station, park and ride”.  
   - “Park & ride from car park at bottom of hill”.  
   - “Park & ride”.  
   - “Use of park and ride schemes”.  
   - “Park & ride from car park at base of hill”.  
   - “Better parking in centre or shuttle bus from car park to centre park & ride”.  
   - “Shuttle bus from car park to centre”.  
   - “Shuttle bus from car park to town centre”.

NORTHUMBERLAND INFORMATION NETWORK
• “Shuttle bus to centre”.
• “Shuttle bus”.
• “A bus from car park to centre”.
• “Bus from car park to town”.
• “A shuttle bus from the car park for older people”.
• “Bus from the bottom car park up the hill for the disabled”.
• “Shuttle bus service. because live on a bank”.
• “Easier access from bottom car park”.
• “Long walk uphill from car park to town centre”.
• “Disabled access”.
• “More dropped kerbs for disabled scooters”.
• “Better bus service”.
• “Better local transport to villages especially in the evenings”.
• “Cannot get on bus 3:30 to town”.

9.11 Origin and method of travel of Shoppers Interviewed

As Figure 28 shows, the respondents from the Hexham Shopper Survey came from quite a wide area, although most are from the Tynedale district or from the Tyne & Wear region. The respondents that came from Hexham itself or the immediate surrounding area travelled into the town using either a car, a bus, or on foot. People living further afield mainly used a car or a bus, although a few used another form of transport.

A number of respondents also came from the Blyth, Wansbeck and Morpeth districts, and a few came from further north within Northumberland. A considerable number of respondents came from elsewhere in the North East, particularly County Durham (see Figure 29).

Several respondents came from further afield, from the south of England to the north of Scotland. This relates to Figure 27 in which it is shown that one third of the
respondents said that they were just visiting Hexham (rather than living, working or shopping there).

Figure 27: Do you live/ work in Hexham?
(Excludes 'don't know' responses unless otherwise specified)

Source: Northumberland InfoNet Shopper Questionnaire, May 2008
Figure 28: Visitors to Hexham within Northumberland and Tyne & Wear (Shopper’s Survey) - Home Towns

Visitors to Hexham within Northumberland
- Method of Transport

- Bus
- Car
- Other
- Hexham postcode Events

Source: Northumberland InfoNet Shopper Questionnaires, May 2008
Figure 29: Visitors to Hexham outside Northumberland

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

Visitors to Hexham - Method of Transport
- Bus
- Car
- Other

Source: Northumberland InfoNet Shopper Questionnaires, May 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 improvement has happened over the past 12 months in Hexham:

- Regular plantings carried out by the Town and District Council in the parks as well as the Hexham in Bloom project.

10.2 Shopper perception of the town

10.2.1 Pedestrianisation

Views on pedestrianisation were not specifically explored in the survey. However, when asked about suggested ways to make the town centre better, respondents made a few comments relating to this subject:

1. The main problems with the town centre:
   - “More pedestrian only place”.

2. Ways to improve the retail offer:
   - “Pedestrianised around market area”.

3. Ways to make the town centre better:
   - “Pedestrianise it (2 responses)".
   - “More pedestrianisation (2 responses)".
   - “More pedestrianised areas”.
   - “Pedestrianisation in market place”.
   - “Pedestrianise market”.


“Pedestrianised in market”.
“Completely pedestrianised”.
“Pedestrianise roads”.
“More pedestrian crossings or no car areas”.

10.2.2 Signage, Street furniture and Open Spaces

Signage
When asked what the main problems with the shopping experience in Hexham town centre were, 2% of respondents gave an answer relating to signage and information. No additional comments were made relating to this.

Street Furniture
Respondents were asked to rate street furniture as part of two different questions. 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 ratings for the two questions were fairly similar, with 71% of respondents giving a positive rating for the first question, and 78% for the second question. Less than 5% in each case gave a negative rating (Figure 30).
Figure 30: Street furniture ratings
(Excludes ‘don’t know’ responses unless otherwise specified)

![Street furniture ratings chart]

Source: Northumberland InfoNet Shopper Questionnaires, May 2008

Base: 383 to 409 respondents depending on question (note: this excludes those respondents that gave a ‘don’t know’ response)

When asked how they would make Hexham town centre better, a few respondents made comments relating to street furniture:

- “More seating”.
- “More seats”.
- “A few more benches to sit on”.
- “More control on advertising boards. remove plastic ones & have more elegant ones”.

Open Spaces

Most of the respondents (96%) gave a positive rating for the parks and open spaces in Hexham. Only 1% gave a poor or very poor response (Figure 31).
Figure 31: 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, May 2008
Base: 364 respondents (note: this excludes those respondents that gave a ‘don’t know’ response)

10.2.3 Litter and Cleanliness
The overall level of cleanliness in Hexham town centre was perceived to be quite good, with 81% of respondents giving a good or very good rating, and only 4% giving a poor or very poor rating. Litter within the town centre received a slightly lower rating (74% positive and 8% negative) (Figure 32).
**Figure 32: Ratings given for litter and overall cleanliness**
(Excludes ‘don’t know’ responses unless otherwise specified)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Litter</th>
<th>Overall level of cleanliness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Poor</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OK</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Northumberland InfoNet Shopper Questionnaires, May 2008

Base: 424 respondents (litter); 432 responses (cleanliness); (note: this excludes those respondents that gave a ‘don’t know’ response)

When asked how the respondents would make the town centre better, one response was given relating to litter and cleanliness:

- “Stop smoking in streets - around seating areas littered with cigs”.

**10.2.4 General Appearance of the Town**

Respondents were generally positive about the general state of the town centre, with 80% giving a positive rating for graffiti/fly posting and shop frontage, and 83% giving a positive rate for the general state of the buildings (Figure 33).
Figure 33: Ratings given for the appearance of the town
(Excludes ‘don’t know’ responses unless otherwise specified)

Source: Northumberland InfoNet Shopper Questionnaires, May 2008
Base: 407 to 426 respondents; (note: this excludes those respondents that gave a ‘don’t know’ response)

A number of comments relating to the appearance of the town centre were made. These are listed below:

1. The main problems with the town centre:
   - “Burger van eyesore in front of abbey”.

2. Ways to improve the retail offer:
   - “Outside appearance could be smart”.

3. Ways to make the town centre better:
   - “Clean it up”.
   - “Clean the area up”.
   - “General clean & tidy up”.

Graffiti/fly posting
General state of buildings
Shop frontage

Very Poor
Poor
OK
Good
Very Good
• “Flower baskets”.
• “Get rid of abbey burger van”.
• “Improve shop fronts”.
• “Maintain towns character”.
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

The map (Figure 34) shows the distribution of “rowdy and/or nuisance” evenly distributed throughout Hexham town centre. Occurrences of “all crime” are more concentrated in the middle of the town centre surrounded by Beaumont Street, Hallgate, Battle Hill and Priestpopple. “Other ASB” occurrences in 2005-2007 have been more evenly spread throughout the town centre, however there is a lower frequency of this type of crime compared to “rowdy and/or nuisance” and “all crime”.

Looking at the chart (Figure 35), the types of crime have been broken down further. The most frequent type of crime occurring in Hexham Town Centre between 2005 and 2007 was rowdy and/or nuisance of which there were 513 occurrences. The 2nd most frequent type of crime was “violence/offences against the person” of which there were 202 occurrences.
Figure 34: Analysis of Reported Crimes

Source: Northumbria Police, December 2007
Figure 35: Crime and Anti Social Behaviour

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. Although this figure dropped slightly for night-time safety/security, it was still very positive (80% gave a good or very good rating) (Figure 36).

**Figure 36: Ratings given for safety/security**

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Safety &amp; Security – Daytime</th>
<th>Safety &amp; Security – Nighttime</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Poor</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OK</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Northumberland InfoNet Shopper Questionnaires, May 2008

Base : 279 respondents (nighttime); 421 respondents (daytime); (note: this excludes those respondents that gave a ‘don’t know’ response)

Two suggestions of ways to make the town centre better that related to safety or security were made:

- “Cut down on anti social behaviour”.
- “Stop youths on streets-ban groups of them”.

As can be seen in Figure 18, 65% of respondents felt that the safety/security of the parking facilities was good/very good.
11.3 Initiatives to Address Town Centre-Related Crime

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

- There is a community engagement initiative which is particularly aimed at residential areas immediately surrounding the town centre which involves a high visibility walkabout by community safety, community wardens, Milecastle Housing and police to identify and tackle issues on estates either observed by the teams or disclosed by residents e.g. litter /fly tipping, graffiti, vandalism, disorder and crime issues.
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 Hexham 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 Hexham’s catchment area; spending patterns and retaining shopper spend within the town centre.

12.1 Regularity of visits

70% of respondents go to Hexham town centre during the daytime at least once a week, with the most common frequency of visit being every day (31%).

Respondents visit the centre far less often during the evenings, with only 28% visiting at least once a week (Figure 37).

Figure 37: Approximately how often are you in Hexham Town Centre?
(Excludes ‘don’t know’ responses unless otherwise specified)

Source: Northumberland InfoNet Shopper Questionnaires, May 2008
Base: 436 respondents (daytime); 320 respondents (evening)
12.2 Expenditure/ Type of Purchases

Figure 38 shows the proportion of respondents that shop for different items solely in Hexham town centre, and how many go further afield. Figure 39 gives more details about which shopping centres the respondents use.

As the tables show, respondents are most likely to do their food shopping and other domestic shopping in Hexham, but for other non-food items they are more likely to travel further afield. The most popular places for respondents to shop, other than in Hexham, are Newcastle and the Metro Centre.

Figure 38: Proportion of respondents shopping in Hexham and other areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Main 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>Hexham</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hexham only</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hexham + local area(^4)</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hexham + internet/non-local/local mix</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-Hexham</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local area (not Hexham)</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^4\) ‘Local area’ is defined as being one of the following: Corbridge, Belingham, Carlisle, Haltwhistle, Prudhoe, Newcastle, Metro Centre.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Internet or other</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Domestic</th>
<th>Clothes</th>
<th>Shoes</th>
<th>Electrical goods</th>
<th>Furniture/ carpets</th>
<th>DIY goods</th>
<th>CDs/ DVDs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixture of places (not Hexham)</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t buy</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>Total</td>
<td>429</td>
<td>429</td>
<td>435</td>
<td>435</td>
<td>429</td>
<td>422</td>
<td>415</td>
<td>400</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Northumberland Shopper Questionnaires, May 2008

**Figure 39: Could you indicate where you go to purchase the following items?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Food</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Domestic</th>
<th>Clothes</th>
<th>Shoes</th>
<th>Electrical goods</th>
<th>Furniture/ carpets</th>
<th>DIY goods</th>
<th>CDs/ DVDs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hexham</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corbridge</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bellingham</td>
<td>1%</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>Carlisle</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haltwhistle</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</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>Prudhoe</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newcastle</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metro Centre</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Base</td>
<td>429</td>
<td>429</td>
<td>435</td>
<td>435</td>
<td>429</td>
<td>422</td>
<td>415</td>
<td>400</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Northumberland Shopper Questionnaires, May 2008
Half of the respondents planned to spend less than £25 in Hexham on the day they were interviewed, with a further third expecting to spend between £25 and £100 (Figure 40).

**Figure 40: How much do you plan to spend in Hexham today?**
(Excludes ‘don’t know’ responses unless otherwise specified)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% respondents</th>
<th>Less than £25</th>
<th>£25 - £100</th>
<th>£100 plus</th>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Source: Northumberland Shopper Questionnaires, May 2008</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Base: 436 respondents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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. Hexham, (along with Prudhoe and Haltwhistle) is the main town in the Tynedale district 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 contains a number of other local or secondary centres, including Allendale, Bellingham, Corbridge and Haydon Bridge. These settlements act as key service centres for the rural areas but are smaller in scale or function than Hexham, Prudhoe and Haltwhistle.
The map (Figure 41) shows the catchment area for Hexham, as defined by Experian. The catchment, which measures the extent of the local consumer base, is based on the Where Britain Shops survey carried out by Experian. Where Britain Shops is an ongoing survey that generates responses from around 1.6 million households per annum. The survey provides detailed knowledge of consumers preferred shopping
destinations, covering in-town and out of down locations. The retail catchment area is based on the following theory.

“Where Britain Shops utilises a gravity model called the Shopper Flow Model that calculates the probability of someone living in a specific postal sector shopping in a particular retail area. This probability is determined by the relative travel times to each centre and a retail areas relative pulling power.

The Shopper Flow Model is the key building block used to determine the shopper catchments of a retail centre and includes a measure of the quality, quantity and mix of the shops within a centre using a combination of several variables that include:

- The rank of retail centres based on shopper (weighted) population
- A rank of centres based on likely annual expenditure on comparison goods
- A retail centre’s primary, secondary and tertiary catchments
- Presence of anchor, premier and key retailers plus others
- A tourism score
- Workforce importance

The Shopper Flow Model allocates demand from where people live to where they shop; describing both the comparison goods spend by each retail centre and the ranking of that shopping centre. This allows leakage statistics to be calculated and the impacts of new or re-developed shopping centres to be measured including the larger retail parks, shopping malls and out of town retail centres that are important to multiple retailers and comparison shopping in general.

The Shopper Flow Model is regulated by millions of shopper responses from Lifestyle surveys which ask people where they shop for different types of goods. The model is re-evaluated each year in the light of retail supply and demand changes and is tuned to improve and more accurately represent the picture of British shopping year on year. Use of the model over the years has identified how successfully it works.”

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5 “Goad Town Centre Shopper Report - Interpretation and Methodology 2008” Experian
12.4 Spending Patterns

In addition to Hexham, the catchment embraces a large part of the Tynedale district, extending from Bardon Mill in the west to Corbridge in the east; and from Wark in the North into the Derwentside district in Co Durham in the south. Altogether, the catchment covers an area of 2,837.17 km² and is home to approximately 29,000 people and 12,600 households. Collectively, these households and residents spend an estimated £135.1 million per annum on retail goods and services, with 35.1% of expenditure on convenience retail goods (£47.4 million) and 64.9% on comparison retail (£87.7 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 Hexham 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 42: Hexham Catchment Summary Profile**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hexham 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>29,080.00</td>
<td>60,796,178.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007 Households</td>
<td>12,617.00</td>
<td>26,018,847.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Comparison</td>
<td>87,708,855.00</td>
<td>171,926,829,196.00</td>
<td>63.4%</td>
<td>102.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Convenience</td>
<td>47,385,485.00</td>
<td>99,464,696,627.00</td>
<td>36.6%</td>
<td>95.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Retail</td>
<td>135,094,341.00</td>
<td>271,391,525,823.00</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Comparison per household</td>
<td>6,951.64</td>
<td>6,607.78</td>
<td>105.20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Convenience per household</td>
<td>3,755.69</td>
<td>3,822.79</td>
<td>98.24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Retail per household</td>
<td>10,707.33</td>
<td>10,430.57</td>
<td>102.65</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Experian, August 2008
Total retail expenditure per household per annum within the catchment stands at £10,707, with average comparison retail spend at £6,952 per annum and convenience spend at £3,756 per annum. Total retail spend per household and total comparison spend per household in the catchment are both above the UK average, with indices of 102.65 and 105.20, respectively. In contrast, spending per household on convenience retail is slightly below the national average, with an index of 98.24.

Figure 43 provides a breakdown of Comparison retail expenditure within the Hexham catchment and in the UK. Clearly the largest expenditure type within comparison retail is Clothing Material & Garments, accounting for £19.3 million or 22% of total Comparison Expenditure within the catchment. Clothing is followed by Audio-visual, photographic and information processing equipment (£10.3 million or 11.7%) and Furniture and furnishings; carpets and other floor coverings (£8.9 million or 10.1%).

The pattern of expenditure nationally is similar, but with some notable differences. Referring to the index, households in Hexham spend more on Small electrical household appliances, Major Household Appliances, Audio-visual, photographic and information processing equipment, Recording Media and Household Textiles 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 Pets & Related Products.
### Figure 43: Total Expenditure (in 2006 prices) Comparison

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goods Description</th>
<th>Hexham 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>164,981.00</td>
<td>0.19%</td>
<td>357,185,476.00</td>
<td>0.21%</td>
<td>90.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appliances for personal care</td>
<td>7,406,605.00</td>
<td>8.44%</td>
<td>15,298,262,865.00</td>
<td>8.90%</td>
<td>94.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio-visual, photographic and information processing equipment</td>
<td>10,287,796.00</td>
<td>11.73%</td>
<td>14,926,597,385.00</td>
<td>8.68%</td>
<td>135.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bicycles</td>
<td>98,115.00</td>
<td>0.11%</td>
<td>1,345,908,674.00</td>
<td>0.78%</td>
<td>14.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books and stationery</td>
<td>3,357,491.00</td>
<td>3.83%</td>
<td>6,968,169,166.00</td>
<td>4.05%</td>
<td>94.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing materials and garments</td>
<td>19,259,080.00</td>
<td>21.96%</td>
<td>37,197,970,202.00</td>
<td>21.64%</td>
<td>101.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furniture and furnishings; carpets and other floor coverings</td>
<td>8,865,465.00</td>
<td>10.11%</td>
<td>18,218,052,893.00</td>
<td>10.60%</td>
<td>95.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Games, toys and hobbies; sport and camping; musical instruments</td>
<td>8,241,536.00</td>
<td>9.40%</td>
<td>18,951,364,780.00</td>
<td>11.02%</td>
<td>85.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gardens, plants and flowers</td>
<td>1,547,206.00</td>
<td>1.76%</td>
<td>3,402,000,385.00</td>
<td>1.98%</td>
<td>89.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glassware, tableware and household utensils</td>
<td>2,325,479.00</td>
<td>2.65%</td>
<td>4,753,009,610.00</td>
<td>2.76%</td>
<td>95.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household textiles</td>
<td>3,284,399.00</td>
<td>3.74%</td>
<td>5,378,572,610.00</td>
<td>3.13%</td>
<td>119.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewellery, clocks and watches</td>
<td>2,184,701.00</td>
<td>2.49%</td>
<td>4,533,353,900.00</td>
<td>2.64%</td>
<td>94.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major household appliances (electric or not)</td>
<td>3,369,646.00</td>
<td>3.84%</td>
<td>4,457,482,024.00</td>
<td>2.59%</td>
<td>148.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major tools and equipment</td>
<td>148,698.00</td>
<td>0.17%</td>
<td>370,528,409.00</td>
<td>0.22%</td>
<td>83.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials for maintenance and repair of the dwelling</td>
<td>2,535,785.00</td>
<td>2.89%</td>
<td>6,826,571,834.00</td>
<td>3.97%</td>
<td>72.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical goods and other pharmaceutical products</td>
<td>1,705,097.00</td>
<td>1.94%</td>
<td>3,904,354,994.00</td>
<td>2.27%</td>
<td>85.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other personal effects</td>
<td>969,015.00</td>
<td>1.10%</td>
<td>2,276,336,174.00</td>
<td>1.32%</td>
<td>83.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pets and related products</td>
<td>1,088,023.00</td>
<td>1.24%</td>
<td>2,747,999,981.00</td>
<td>1.60%</td>
<td>77.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>2008 Value</td>
<td>% Increase</td>
<td>2007 Value</td>
<td>% Increase</td>
<td>Comparison</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recording media</td>
<td>5,106,331.00</td>
<td>5.82%</td>
<td>7,513,288,250.00</td>
<td>4.37%</td>
<td>133.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shoes and other footwear</td>
<td>2,444,785.00</td>
<td>2.79%</td>
<td>5,348,647,704.00</td>
<td>3.11%</td>
<td>89.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small electrical household appliances</td>
<td>638,372.00</td>
<td>0.73%</td>
<td>748,364,529.00</td>
<td>0.44%</td>
<td>167.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small tools and miscellaneous accessories</td>
<td>1,250,909.00</td>
<td>1.43%</td>
<td>3,301,806,678.00</td>
<td>1.92%</td>
<td>74.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Therapeutic appliances and equipment</td>
<td>1,429,341.00</td>
<td>1.63%</td>
<td>3,101,000,673.00</td>
<td>1.80%</td>
<td>90.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Comparison</td>
<td>87,708,855.00</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td>171,926,829,196.00</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Experian, August 2008
Figure 44: Expenditure on Comparison Retail

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

Source: Experian, August 2008

Figure 45: Expenditure on Comparison Retail

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

Source: Experian, August 2008

Figure 46 provides a breakdown of Convenience retail expenditure within the Hexham catchment and in the UK. Clearly the largest expenditure type within comparison retail in Hexham is Food and non-alcoholic beverages, accounting for £34.2 million or 72.1% of total Comparison Expenditure within the area. Food and
non-alcoholic beverages is followed by Alcohol (£6.2 million or 13.1%) and Tobacco (£3.1 million or 6.6%). The pattern of expenditure nationally differs a little. Referring to the index, households in Hexham spend proportionately more on Newspapers and Periodicals and Alcohol and substantially less on Tobacco.

**Figure 46: 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>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, 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 Hexham. What the information does not indicate is how much of the expenditure is spent purchasing goods and services in Hexham 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 Hexham catchment that shops in Hexham and the proportion that shop at other centres.
- The percentage of expenditure spent on goods and services in Hexham and the extent to which spending leaks to other centres.
The figures in the table 46 and 47 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.

### Figure 47: Population Leakage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Retail Centre</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hexham</td>
<td>29.63</td>
<td>8616</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metro Centre</td>
<td>26.06</td>
<td>7577</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newcastle upon Tyne - Central</td>
<td>24.12</td>
<td>7015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlisle</td>
<td>6.44</td>
<td>1873</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haltwhistle</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>782</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newcastle upon Tyne - Kingston Park Centre</td>
<td>1.69</td>
<td>490</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gateshead - Team Valley Retail World</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>429</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stanhope</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>391</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consett</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunderland</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penrith</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gateshead</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Shields - Silverlink Retail Park</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chester-le-Street</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wallsend</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newcastle upon Tyne - Byker Shields</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middleton-in-Teesdale</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Durham</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cramlington</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bishop Auckland</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prudhoe</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Shields</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morpeth</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jedburgh</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barnard Castle</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawick</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crook</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darlington</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashington</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stanley</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appleby-in-Westmorland</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ponteland</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alnwick</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blyth</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Experian, August 2008
With regards to population, Experian estimates that just under one-third of the resident population shop in Hexham (8,616 or 29.6%). Other notable shopping destinations for households in the catchment area are the MetroCentre (7,577 or 26.0%), Newcastle City Centre (7,015 or 24.1%) and Carlisle (1,873 or 6.4%).

**Figure 48: Spend Leakage**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Retail Centre</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
<th>Spend (£)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hexham</td>
<td>29.54</td>
<td>39,901,817</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metro Centre</td>
<td>26.43</td>
<td>35,710,632</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newcastle upon Tyne - Central</td>
<td>24.21</td>
<td>32,712,463</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlisle</td>
<td>6.10</td>
<td>8,240,650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haltwhistle</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>3,386,753</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newcastle upon Tyne - Kingston Park Centre</td>
<td>1.70</td>
<td>2,301,595</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gateshead - Team Valley Retail World</td>
<td>1.49</td>
<td>2,015,406</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stanhope</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>1,848,067</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consett</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>1,290,579</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunderland</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>903,975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gateshead</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>875,278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penrith</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>824,701</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>734,946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Shields - Silverlink Retail Park</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>591,713</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chester-le-Street</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>531,538</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wallsend</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>499,870</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newcastle upon Tyne - Byker Shields</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>487,512</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middleton-in-Teesdale</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>348,513</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cramlington</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>320,252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Durham</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>294,643</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prudhoe</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>274,966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bishop Auckland</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>265,553</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Shields</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>157,547</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morpeth</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>134,076</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barnard Castle</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>62,486</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jedburgh</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>58,144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crook</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>48,225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darlington</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>45,515</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawick</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>44,001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stanley</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>40,962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashington</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>40,360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appleby-in-Westmorland</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>39,880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ponteland</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>29,880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alnwick</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>19,408</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blyth</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>12,433</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Experian, August 2008
The pattern with regards to spend is relatively similar. Experian estimates that around 30% of retail spend by residents and households domiciled within the Hexham catchment, representing £39.9 million per annum, is spent in the town.

More than £35 million of expenditure is lost to the MetroCentre (26%), with other notable leakage to Newcastle City Centre (£32.7 million or 24%) and Carlisle (£8.2 million or 6%). 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.

The map (Figure 49) shows the Hexham catchment area and is colour coded to indicate the proportion of retail expenditure that is spent by the resident population in Hexham. From the map, it can be seen that households located within Hexham and in the adjacent hinterland spend over 50% and between 40-50% of their total retail expenditure in Hexham, respectively. Propensity to shop in Hexham diminishes as you travel further afield, dropping to between 15 and 20% in Haltwhistle and West Woodburn and to between 5 and 10% in Otterburn.

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Figure 49: Proportion of Retail Expenditure

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

Events attended
All of the respondents that answered this question (4 did not answer) said that they had attended at least one of the events. The most common event attended was Selefest (62% of respondents mentioned this). The weekly market and the Hexham Carnival were also very popular (Figure 50).

Figure 50: Have you ever attended any of these events?
(Excludes 'don't know' responses unless otherwise specified)

Source: Northumberland Shopper Questionnaires, May 2008
Base: 433 respondents
Eating and drinking

The eating and drinking venues in Hexham were generally rated quite highly by the respondents. Coffee shops in particular were thought highly of, with 90% of respondents giving a good or very good rating, and only 1% a poor rating (Figure 51).

Sandwich shops, restaurants and takeaways were all given positive ratings from 78-82% of respondents. Pubs and clubs were perceived to be not quite as good, with a positive rating from 68% of respondents, and a negative rating from 9%.

Figure 51: How would you rate the following venues for eating and drinking in Hexham?

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

Source: Northumberland InfoNet Shopper Questionnaires, May 2008

Base: 240 to 381 respondents depending on type of venue (note: this excludes those respondent’s that gave a ‘don’t know’ response)
**Arts and leisure facilities**

The arts and leisure facilities in Hexham were rated very highly. For each facility, over three quarters of the respondents gave a good/very good rating, and fewer than 6% gave a poor/very poor rating.

The parks and open spaces were rated the best, with 96% giving a positive rating. The forum cinema had the lowest rating, but still had 75% giving a good/very good rating (Figure 52).

**Figure 52: How would you rate the following arts and leisure facilities in Hexham?**

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

![Bar chart showing the ratings for different facilities in Hexham.](chart.png)

Source: Northumberland InfoNet Shopper Questionnaires, May 2008

*Base: 205 to 364 respondents, depending on venue (note: this excludes those respondent’s that gave a ‘don’t know’ response)*
General

When asked how they would rate Hexham as a place to enjoy yourself, 74% of respondents gave a good or very good response. Nearly one third of these were ‘very good’ responses’ (Figure 53).

Figure 53: How do you rate Hexham as a place to enjoy yourself?
(Excludes ‘don’t know’ responses unless otherwise specified)

Source: Northumberland InfoNet Shopper Questionnaires, May 2008
Base: 428 (note: this excludes those respondents that gave a ‘don’t know’ response)

When respondents were asked how they would make the town centre better, 5% gave an answer relating to improving the leisure facilities. A few comments were also made on this subject:

- “More family orientated-more childrens activites-pubs with childrens play areas & family rooms”.
- “Pavement cafes for families”.
- “Family meal areas for a nice day outside”.
- “Small restaurants to accommodate children”.
- “Decent pizza restaurant and wine bar”.
- “More street cafes”.


• “More for young people to do - its boring here”.
• “Need a cheap bunker hotel for the tourists”.
• “Bowling alley”.

A few related comments were also made in response to the question ‘what improvements would you like to see to the retail offer in Hexham?’:
• “Eating places”.
• “Mcdonalds”.
• “Less indian restaurants”.
• “Not so many café”.

14% of respondents said that they were in Hexham 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 Hexham shopper survey, it appears that in order to improve the town as a place to shop or visit, two issues need to be addressed:

- the retail offer;
- parking, and in particular, getting from the car park to the town centre.

Respondent’s views on parking have already been covered in sections 9.2.2 and 9.2.3. Opinions on the retail offer are covered in more detail below.

**Figure 54: How would you make this town centre better?**

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

In addition to these two issues, it should be noted that ‘traffic’ was given as a main problem with the shopping experience in Hexham by 17% of the respondents, and also that the lack of pedestrian crossings was mentioned by quite a few people. It is therefore recommended that these areas are investigated further.
Retail

21% of respondents said that the shops were one of the main problems with the shopping experience in Hexham town centre. Comments made which related to this suggested that the lack of choice was a key issue, together with a lack of particular types of shop. Five respondents also thought that there were too many charity shops.

Just over half (55%) of respondents gave a good or very good rating for Hexham as a place to shop. 14% gave a negative rating. This rating is quite low compared with the ratings for Hexham as a place to live, enjoy yourself and visit in which over 70% of respondents in each case gave a positive rating.

When asked whether respondents agreed with the statement ‘on the whole, Hexham offers a wide choice of quality shops’, 43% disagreed and only 31% agreed.

41% of the respondents that gave an answer suggested that Hexham needed a better retail offer in order to make the town centre better. From the comments made (see Appendix 2) respondents mainly desire more clothing/shoe shops (59% of the comments made mentioned this).

When asked what improvements they would like to see to the retail offer, 38% of respondents said that they would like an increase in the variety of shops, 22% said ‘fewer charity shops’, 18% said they would like more chain stores, and 15% said they would like more shops offering local produce.
13.0 INVESTMENT

Redevelopment
The following developments are proposed for Hexham Town Centre;

- The proposals for pedestrianisation of the Market Place are on hold at present. This would offer the opportunity to bring events to the town on a regular basis helping to support the viability of all trades in the town centre in coming years.

- There will be further retail development adjacent to Marks and Spencer.

- The Bus Station is expected to relocate to part of the original Hexham Auction Mart and associated land at the Ropery, Abbey Press.

- The redevelopment of the old swimming pool Wentworth Leisure centre was completed in late Summer 2008. The project lead by Tynedale Council includes a six lane 25m pool, a smaller studio pool, fun splash areas, a large fitness gym and cafe. The project also includes improvements and repairs to the existing sports centre and the re-provision of the outdoor changing facilities. The pool also has 200 spectator seats enabling the town to host swimming galas. The pool development has been designed by GLR Architects and the main contractor is Sir Robert McAlpine. Hall and Partners managed the project and other companies that were involved with the design are Building Services Partnership Limited, Furness Partnership, Press and Starkey and Sheerwater Limited.
**14.0 CONCLUSION**

Hexham is currently undergoing a programme of redevelopment which must be taken into consideration when drawing conclusions about the health of the Town Centre.

In the Town Centre, 59% of the floorspace use was for retail (Figure 3). However, despite this high percentage of the amount of retail floorspace, shopper’s perceptions of the range of retail provision was somewhat negative with 43% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing to the statement “Hexham offers a wide choice of quality shops”, compared to 31% agreeing or strongly agreeing (Figure 5).

Appendix 2 showing the verbatim responses to what shoppers would like to see improved with the shopping experience shows that they feel more choice, fewer charity shops and more clothing shops are all needed. When asked what improvements to the retail offer were needed (Appendix 2), similar responses were given, with almost all of them linked to improvements with the variety of shops. 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.

Since July 2005, the yield for Hexham has been higher than the average for Northumberland. It stayed at 8 between January 2004 and July 2006 and then dropped to 7.5 in January and July 2007, when the last figures were recorded. Only when the next data is published by the Valuation Office, will we be able to monitor any possible trends to see whether the yield for Hexham will continue to decrease and therefore making Hexham a more attractive place to set up business, possibly as a result of the planned regeneration projects. This yield is supported by the response given by interviewed shoppers for their opinion on general appearance of the town which was very positive (Figure 31).

There was 6% of vacant floorspace in Hexham (see Figure 12). Figure 13 also shows that between 2007 and 2008, the amount of vacant floorspace had reduced when
looking at property flows. This was a result of more buildings changing from being vacant to occupied from 2007 to 2008, than occupied to vacant. There had been local 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 87% (of those travelling by car) finding it very or fairly easy (Figure 17) and 68% of the responses regarding availability of parking spaces were “very good”, “good” or “OK”. However, 30% of shoppers felt that the main problem with the shopping experience in Hexham was parking and 31% said that the parking needed to be improved in order to improve the town centre. Appendix 2 also shows that the specific parking problems shoppers commented on was the lack of parking and the location of the car parks being too far away from the shopping centre (see Figure 20 and 21 for locations) and at the foot of a steep hill leading to the centre. The steep gradient of the town and the problems associated with it for pedestrians was also commented on (Appendix 2), especially by those who needed to use pushchairs, the elderly and the disabled. Hexham also has good bus and train connectivity, which is shown in Figures 22 and 24 respectively, by the frequency and number of destinations reached from Hexham. This is important as 15% of shoppers on the days of the shopper’s survey had travelled by bus and train. 92% of shoppers travelling into the town centre by bus also found it very or fairly easy to travel there (Figure 24). Additionally, Figure 26 shows that just under two thirds of shoppers gave a positive response when rating the quality, regularity and destinations served by public transport.

When looking at retaining shopper spend, just 30% of Hexham residents shopped in Hexham. 26% of expenditure was lost to the Metro Centre and a further 24% to Newcastle (Figure 45). However, the current regeneration programmes may show that the percentage for Hexham 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 Hexham was in reasonable health. Although there
have been some negative responses from the shoppers’ surveys with regards to the variety retail offer in general, the implementation of the various regeneration projects should show hopefully show some improvements in forthcoming years.
15.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The town centre health checks are scheduled to 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 Hexham 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 Hexham Town Centre?

Parking

- parking (20 responses)
- not enough parking (2 responses)
- getting parked can be a problem
- at busy times sometimes can’t get parked
- lack of parking
- lack of parking & quality shops
- lack of parking in centre
- lack of parking spaces
- limited parking spaces
- car spaces are limited
- more parking
- no parking
- no parking spaces
- not enough car park spaces
- parking facilities
- parking-not enough spaces some days
- parking & lack of it
- parking difficult
- parking facilities
- parking is a nightmare
- parking is difficult
- parking not enough spaces
- poor parking
- parking on Saturday and Bank Holiday weekends
- parking spaces
- parking spaces limited
- parking the car. lack of spaces
- poor parking facilities
- too little parking
- distance from car park to centre
- distance from car park to town centre
- distance from car park to town centre is uphill
- bottom car park is too far from town centre
- more parking near centre
- more parking spaces in town centre
- parking-too far away
- parking in the town centre & the lack of it
- parking is a long way from centre up a steep hill
• parking lack of it in town centre
• lack of disabled parking (2 responses)
• no parent child parking
• parking-lack of oit bike can't do too hilly & nowhere to leave it.
• parking charges expensive
• parking in general. too expensive to park

Shops
• choice of shops (2 responses)
• lack of choice of ladies/kids shops
• lack of choice of shops (2 responses)
• lack of selection of shops
• lack of variety in shops
• limited range of shops especially mens
• lack of shops
• lack of shops & no parking in centre
• no decent shops
• not a good variety of clothes shops
• not a lot of choice with shops
• not enough branded shops
• not enough shops (3 responses)
• not enough shops, too many charity shops.
• not enough variety of shops
• not good variety of shops especially childrens clothes
• not much variety of shops
• shops lack selection (2 responses)
• shortage of quality shops, department stores
• m & s
• not enough dept stores
• poor selection of major shops
• no big stores
• more fashion shops needed
• needs more clothes shops
• be her clothes shops
• shortage of clothes shops
• better shops for teenagers
• more younger shops
• not enough young shops
• shops lack selection for young people
• not enough mens shops
• womens clothes shop. diy shop
• more small independent shoplike in corbridge
• too many charity shops (3 responses)
• we need less charity shops
• expensive shops
• shops not open long enough
• close tesco

Pedestrian areas / crossings
• more pedestrian only place
• no crossings
• no zebra crossing at market place
• crossing road at abbey market
• crossing roads
• proper crossing places on roads
• lack of pedestrian crossings
• lack of pedestrian crossings
• proper pedestrian crossings

Accessibility
• too many hills (2 responses)
• the walk up the hill to the town centre
• steep banks from car park
• kerbs difficult to manoeuvre with buggy in places
• easier access with pram
• access with buggys can be difficult
• access to the town centre
• not very good for the old & disabled

Other
• lack of public toilets (2 responses)
• buses stop to early
• need shuttle bus
• busy with cars
• it gets too busy
• tesco roundabout
• lots of construction going on at the moment
• cheaper eating place
• would like robbs pulled down & rebuilt
• burger van eyesore in front of abbey

Don't know
• dk (5 responses)
• d/k
Nothing

- none (56 responses)
- nothing (23 responses)
- no (3 responses)
- no it’s fine
- no ok
- ok
Verbatim responses to ‘Q17 What improvements would you like to see to the retail offer in Hexham?’

**Clothes / shoes**

- clothes (4 responses)
- decent clothes shops
- cheap clothing stores, primark
- clothes mothercare mens shoes
- clothes shops shoe shops childrens shoes
- clothes shops young fashion shops
- clothes store shoes
- clothing shops shoe shops & m& s
- good quality clothing shops
- just more choice for clothes
- more clothes shops
- more clothes shops and childrens clothes and childrens things in general
- more clothing shops. i.e. topshop
- bigger names eg debenhams & next
- more clothes shops - men and women. childrens clothing
- more mens & womens clothes shops
- bigger selection of ladies clothing stores
- greater variety of shops quality ladieswear
- ladies clothes shops
- ladies clothing, shoes
- ladies shop
- ladieswear. quality shops.
- more ladies clothing shops
- more ladies shops, young trendy stores, shoe shops
- more quality ladies clothing shops
- more quality ladies wear shop
- men's clothing (3 responses)
- more mens shops (2 responses)
- mens stores
- more quality menswear
- more mens clothing
- more young mens stores
- top shop clothes for men
- childrens clothing (9 responses)
- better childrens clothes shops
• childrens clothes shops.
  primark
• childrens ware. more ladies and mens fashion
• clothing shoes childrens clothes
• kids clothing, quality fashion - ladies
• more childrens clothing shops
• more clothes & shoe & more childrens clothes shops
• teen / childrens clothing. boys especially
• young clothing
• fashion outlets-childrens clothes stores
• fashion shops
• fashion/accessory shops
• dress shops
• lads fashion, girls fashion
• more designer shops
• more fashion shops
• more fashion shops for young people
• quality dress shops, fashion shops
• upmarket clothes shops
• upmarket shops - fashion e.g. next
• young fashion clothes
• young trendier stores - new look, river island
• more individual clothes shops
• more individual clothes shops more shoe shops
• more individual shops. clothes and shoe shops
• smaller fashion outlets-not chains
• bhs
• department stores (8 responses)
• department stores, m&s (3 responses)
• m&s, debenhams
• m&s (3 responses)
• marks & spencer & next
• more department stores
• clothes next
• new look, rebel rebel
• next top man
• topshop, miss selfridge
• quality chain stores
• shoe shops
• shoe shops, topshop, new look
• better shoe shops
• dune shoes
• more catering for the tall person
Various shop types mentioned

- childrens clothes diy electrical goods
- clothing shops and eating placed
- diy store like B & Q. more banks
- good diy/hardware. affordable childrens clothes.
- improve clothing, less indian restaurants
- more childrens shops, next, diy shop
- more clothes shops good electrical shops diy shops
- more clothing and shoes, furniture and household
- mcdonalds and river island
- dept store, more shoe shops, not so many cafe
- specialist shoe shops, music shops, more variety generally, more independent shops
- sports shops
- too many charity shops
- toy shops
- wallpaper & kids clothes

DIY / hardware shops

- diy shops (3 responses)
- hardware shops (2 responses)
- more diy shops (2 responses)
- habodashery and iron monger. pedestrianised around market area

Other types of shops / general shops

- a big electrical store
- delicatessen. small independant shops like corbridge
- delicatessen
- dry cleaners
- bigger market
- get rid of tesco’s
- independent shops like corbridge
- individual quality shops
- individual shops (2 responses)
- individual type of shops
- keep to small shops
- less shoe shops & hairdressers
- less chain stores more independent ones
• mid range of country & active clothes sport
• more bigger high street stores and more smaller higher quality shops
• more charity shops
• more choice all round
• more choice food shops
• more choice for adults & children
• more choice for everyone
• more food stores
• more food shops-more bakers/butchers
• more food stores in town centre & toilets
• more for men & women
• more high quality gift shops
• more support for individual shops & more choice
• mothercare childrens clothes
• music shop
• music shops mens shops
• music store body shop
• small individual shops
• smaller individual shops
• rupuabic g star raw
• shops for young people

Non-shop related
• better pedestrian access
• outside appearance could be smart
• parking next?
• preferred it the way it used to be
• proper crossings for pedestrians
• shuttle bus from car park

Don’t know / nothing
• none (16 responses)
• nothing (4 responses)
• it’s fine (2 responses)
• no it’s fine
• dk
Verbatim responses to ‘Q23 How would you make this town centre better?’

Retail Offer

- any variety of shops is better than now
- better quality shops
- better shopping.
  - debenhams, m& s
- bigger market
- clothes shops (3 responses)
- clothes shops especially baby clothes
- diy shops (4 responses)
- diy stores. more clothes shops
- department store (4 responses)
- department store
  - debenhams
- department stores m & s
- delicatessen
- mens clothes
- more big chains clothes shops
- m&s
- m&s, chain stores
- m&s, shopping centre
- get rid of charity shops.
  - more big named shops.
- fashion stores (2 responses)
- fewer charity shops, quality dept store, nice grocers fruit and veg.
- fewer charity shops.
- more chain stores
- more childrens shops & not too expensive ones
- more choice (3 responses)
- more choice of shops
- more clothes & shoe shops, more childrens clothes department stores
- more clothes shops (2 responses)
- more clothes shops shoe shops childrens shoes
- more clothes shops.
- more department stores
  - more quality shops
- more dept stores, m&s
- more designer & mens clothing
- more designer shops
- more designer shops, more shoe shops, more dept stores
- more fashion shops
- more fashion stores
• more DIY shops and garden centres
• more individual clothes shops
• more individual clothes shops. more shoe shops
• more ladies fashion
• more market days
• more quality shops (2 responses)
• more shops fashion
• more specialised shops-not Tesco Waitrose etc. less chains
• music shop
• next, M&S
• more young shops
• next, more shops altogether
• to have M&S in area
• shoe shops
• variety of shops, especially clothes.
• general stores with lots of different departments
• more independent ones
• get rid of charity shops

Accessibility / pedestrian areas
• a bus from car park to centre
• a shuttle bus from the car park for older people
• better bus service
• better local transport to villages especially in the evenings
• bus from the bottom car park up the hill for the disabled.
• cannot get on bus 3:30 to town
• more pedestrian crossings or no car areas
• more pedestrianisation
• more pedestrianisation & crossings
• more safe pedestrian crossing
• pedestrian crossings near market
• pedestrianisation in market place.
• pedestrianise it - pavement cafes for families
• pedestrianise it
• pedestrianise market
• safer crossings
• more traffic free areas
• more traffic free zones
• better pedestrian crossings
• completely pedestrianised
• crossing near the abbey
• more seating
more seats and less charity shops

Parking

- better parking
- better parking.
- car park near bus station, park and ride
- more parking spaces
- park & ride from car park at bottom of hill
- park & ride.
- park & ride from car park at base of hill.
- shuttle bus from car park to centre
- shuttle bus from car park to town centre
- shuttle bus to centre
- shuttle bus
- easier access from bottom car aprk
- long walk uphill from car park to town centre
- more car parking spaces
- more disabled parking
- more disabled parking & disabled access
- more dropped kerbs for disabled scooters
- more flat parking
- lower or no cost for parking

Leisure

- bowling alley
- decent pizza restaurant and wine bar
- more street cafes
- family meal areas for a nice day outside
- more for young people to do - its boring here
- more family orientated-more childrens activites-pubs with childrens play areas & family rooms

Appearance / cleanliness

- clean it up
- clean the area up
- general clean & tidy up
- flower baskets
• get rid of abbey burger van
• improve shop fronts
• keep the empty shops full, always empty for too long. that’s when they close down. it always seems to take ages for someone to rent & refurbish again

Various things mentioned
• better parking in centre or shuttle bus from car park to centre park & ride
• bus from car park to town. more individual shops, clothes and shoes
• clothes shops small restaurants to accommodate children
• more mens shops, parking issues. too many visitors in residents parking spaces
• more mens shops. cut down on anti social behaviour
• more money spent on furniture, pedestrianise roads, parking, use of park and ride schemes
• more free parking. maintain towns character.
• more pedestrianised areas. improve shops.
• mothercare more childrens shops. pedestrianised in market.
• don't close hall style bank & improve the parking at wentworth end. need a cheap bunker hotel for the tourists.
• laura ashley monsoon. more crossing places on road
• more choice. clean it up

Traffic
• traffic coming into town centre
• road into hexham from bypass
• one way traffic system
• less traffic in centre
• less traffic in town centre
• less traffic in centre especially market place
Other

- affordable housing
- change it back to the old way
- dhs
- making a read or showing
- more control on advertising boards. remove plastic ones & have more elegant ones
- public toilets
- more toilet facilities
- longer opening hours & sunday opening
- more housing
- nearer to the town centre
- shuttle bus service. because live on a bank
- people themselves to look after it more
- public transport
- stop smoking in streets - around seating areas littered with cigs
- stop youths on streets-ban groups of them
- the fore street being covered in

Nothing / don't know

- none (26 responses)
- nothing (14 responses)
- no it's fine
- fine as it is
- no
- it's ok
- don’t know (20 repsonses)
The Northumberland Information Network

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