SEAHOUSES TOWN CENTRE HEALTH CHECK REPORT

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

- 45% of the floorspace in Seahouses was for retail.
- Shopper’s perceptions of the range of retail provision were fairly positive – 45% thought that Seahouses offered a wide choice of shops.
- Shoppers would like to see improvements with more choice and variety was needed, specifically clothes and food shops.
- There was more comparison retail (clothing, household goods, furniture, DIY and electrical goods) than convenience retail.
- There was 6% vacant floorspace in Seahouses.
- 94% of shoppers interviewed found it very easy or fairly easy to travel into Seahouses town centre by car.
- 52% gave a poor or very poor rating for the availability of car parking spaces in Seahouses.
- Seahouses also has fairly good bus connectivity by the frequency and number of destinations reached from Seahouses.
- Just over half of respondents rated the quality and the regularity of the bus/rail services and the destinations served by public transport in Seahouses as good or very good.
- 27% of Seahouses residents shopped in Seahouses. 37% of expenditure was lost to Alnwick, 12% to Berwick-upon-Tweed and 11% to Newcastle upon Tyne.

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 Seahouses on shopper’s overall perception of the town centre.
1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Why Measure Town Centre Performance?

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

More generally, the UK Government is committed to:

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

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

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

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

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

1.2 What should we measure?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

• Perception of safety and occurrence of crime: should include views and information on safety and security, and where appropriate, information for monitoring the evening and night-time economy.

• State of the town centre environmental quality: should include information on problems (such as air pollution, noise, clutter, litter and graffiti) and positive factors (such as trees, landscaping and open spaces).
In response to the monitoring requirements set out above, the InfoNet has developed the Northumberland Town Centre Performance System, which is designed to assess the vitality and viability of rural market towns and larger centres within the former coalfield areas. The system uses intelligence from the InfoNet Organisation Database; the Northumberland Property Data Service (NPDS) database; the County Public Transport Team; and from the Community Safety Analysis function maintained for the 6 Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRP’s) in the County. This is complemented by additional primary research designed to capture footfall estimates and shopper perception of town centres. The Service is also designed to complement the Retail Distinctiveness work undertaken for One North East and the Northumberland Strategic Partnership by Millers Consulting; and the Retail Distinctiveness Toolkit that has been developed for use by Town Centre Partnerships and Managers.

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

2.1 Seahouses’s Town Centre Boundary

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

The area of Seahouses Town Centre in relation to the District Council boundary is 48,647.61 m².
Figure 1: Boundary for Seahouses Town Centre (District Council)

Source: Berwick-upon-Tweed Borough Council
Figure 2: Boundary for Seahouses Town Centre (Experian)

Source: Experian
2.2 Seahouses’ 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 Northumberland County Council): Seahouses is a small harbour town, and a bustling holiday resort in the summer months. The local population of around 1,800 is vastly out-numbered in the holiday season, with visitors attracted to the many caravan parks and holiday cottages nearby. Seahouses serves as the local service centre for a wide rural area, providing schools, shops, library and health centre

2.3 History and Development of Seahouses

Seahouses lies on the edge of the North Sea in mid-Northumberland, approximately 8 miles south-east of Belford, and 15 miles north of Alnwick. It is the largest settlement in the Northumberland Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Seahouses was originally the ‘sea houses’ part of North Sunderland. However, it has grown over the years and is now the dominant settlement. The key feature of the town is the harbour (1780’s) which was originally built for exporting lime - a key industry at the time. Mines to the west and north of the town provided the coal for burning the lime. In 1859, a lifeboat station was established, which is still in use today.

The lime kilns were closed in 1860, which coincided with the growth of the fishing industry. Herring fishing and curing became increasingly important and in the 1880’s, the harbour was expanded to cater for the growing fishing trade. However, in the 20th century, the fishing industry declined, and many of the former fishing boats moved to tourism, offering visitors the opportunity to explore the Farne Islands located 3 miles offshore. Seahouses has become known as the ‘Gateway to the Farne Islands’.
Visitor numbers increased further when Seahouses became the north east terminus of the North Sunderland Railway in 1898, linking up with the East Coast Main Line at Chathill. The line closed in 1951.

Today, tourism is the main industry in Seahouses, with the number of visitors estimated to treble the 'population' (around 1,800 in the North Sunderland ward according to the 2001 Census) during the summer months. As well as trips to the Farne islands, Seahouses is also well known for it's fish & chips, and it's Coxon's ice cream. There is a wide range of shops and services in the town, many of which are aimed at tourists. Seahouses is also home to Seahouses Golf Club, and the Seafield Ocean Club, which contains a pool, a fitness suite and a health and beauty suite. In addition, a crazy golf course is located near the harbour. An outdoor market is held every Friday in one of the car parks.

Seahouses Festival has been running since 1999. This year, the theme will be the natural environment of the area. In August 2008, Seahouses was the start point for the Great North Bike Ride in which 1,800 cyclists took part.
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 Seahouses Town Centre and also the opinions of shoppers surveyed on the range of retail provision in Seahouses.

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

Figure 3 shows that just under half (45%) of the floorspace in Seahouses Town Centre are classed as shops. Drinking establishments account for 18% of the floorspace in Seahouses, with hot food takeaways occupying 10%.

**Figure 3: Floorspace by Use Class**

(source: Experian, August 2008)
Figure 4: Building Use class for Seahouses Town Centre

Building Use Class for Seahouses

Source: Experian, August 2008
The map (Figure 4) shows that the majority of shops within the town centre are clustered around the centre of Main Street which is the main street. Hotels, hot food takeaways and businesses are largely situated on the edge of the town centre, whereas restaurants and cafes are more evenly distributed through the town.

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

3.2 Events

There are a number of events that take place in Seahouses throughout the year. St Cuthbert’s Outdoor Activity Festival on 5th September which is a themed Boat Trip starting at Seahouses Harbour to the Farne islands, 3hrs (includes 1 hour landing). The Seahouses Festival is held from 19th- 21st June, the festival is a community based event celebrating the diversity and distinctiveness of life on the Northumberland Coast. The event will include music, art and film and takes place in various areas around the town, Main Stage on Harbour Hill, Methodist Church on Main Street, Seafield Gardens by crazy golf and at The Olde Ship Hotel, Harbour Hill. A Whale, Dolphin and Seabird cruise is a 4 hour cruise in the North Sea off the Northumberland coast, the cruise has several experienced guides on board.

3.3 Satisfaction with the range of provision – retail

Question 14 in the Seahouses Shopper Questionnaire asked:

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

The level of agreement with this statement was considerably higher than the level of disagreement (45% vs. 20% of respondents) (Figure 5).
Figure 5: How would you rate “On the whole, Seahouses offers a wide choice of quality shops”?

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

Source: Shopper Surveys, November 2008

Base: 56 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 - Seahouses**

![Multiple Chain and Independent Businesses by Category - Seahouses](source)

Figure 6 shows that in Seahouses town centre, the majority of businesses are comparison retail (14 independent, 3 multiple chain). The category which has the 2\textsuperscript{nd} highest amount of businesses is leisure services: 14 of which are independent. There are 7 convenience retail premises and 4 retail service in total.
5.0 RETAILER DEMAND

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

There were no enquiries for properties in Seahouses Town Centre recorded on Northumberland Property Database between April 2007 and March 2008. However, it must be noted that this data is based solely on one source (Northumberland Property Database) and other sources may provide further insight.
5.2 A Review of New Town Centre Occupiers

6.0 RETAIL RENTS AND YIELDS

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

6.1 Zone A Rental Information

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

Figure 7 shows the zone A rental information from the Valuation Office. The values relate to the 2005 Rating List, which are based on a valuation date of 1 April 2003. The properties have been banded by intervals of £100, as we cannot publish the exact figure for each building. This will also make it easier to identify trends when analysing the data on the map.
There are some properties which are shown as “unknown” on Figure 7. These premises could be retail in nature but are not valued on a zoned approach. The reason for this is that zoning is generally not used in various circumstances including:

- Larger retail properties (i.e. shops with a NIA (net internal area) greater than 1500m²).
- Where the retail areas are spread over several floors, again resulting in the Zone A being only a small fraction of the total.
- Larger shops may not have ‘traditional’ shop fronts, such that the zoning approach is not appropriate.
- The ‘market’ does not typically zone larger shops when letting and the VOA tries to follow the market in its analysis and valuation.
Figure 7: Valuation Office Zone A rental prices for Seahouses Town Centre

Valuation Office Zone A rental prices for Seahouses Town Centre

Source: Valuation Office
Figure 7 shows that all of the properties for which Zone A rental information is known in Seahouses, are valued at £100 - £199 per m², and are largely situated on Main Street.

6.2 Yield

Yield “is the ratio of rental income to capital value and is expressed in terms of the open market rent of a property as percentage of the capital value.” ¹ It “provide a consistent basis for understanding how the property market assesses the comparative attractiveness of shop investments in different locations across the country... low yields indicate that a town is considered to be attractive and as a result be more likely to attract investment than a town with high yields.”²

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

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

In Northumberland, this data is only available for 5 towns: Berwick-upon-Tweed, Ashington, Berwick-upon-Tweed upon Tweed, Blyth and Hexham.

There is therefore no available data for Seahouses, however Figure 8 shows the average yield for Northumberland, the North East of England, and England.

¹ www.voa.gov.uk
² www.voa.gov.uk
The graph (Figure 8) shows that since April 2001, the average yield for Northumberland has generally been higher than the average for the North East of England and England. The biggest difference in yield between Northumberland and the rest of the North East was by 0.86 in January 2005. Similarly for Northumberland and the rest of England in January 2005 it was 1.20. This indicates that based on yield, it has been derived that there is more of a “risk” associated with setting up business in Northumberland compared to the rest of the North East and England. The latest result, however, in July 2007, showed that this gap had decreased. The average yield for Northumberland was 7.05; the average yield for the North East was 7.02; and the average yield for England was 6.70.

6.3 Average Rental Rate

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

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

Source: Northumberland Property Database, December 2007
7.0 VACANCY RATES

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

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

7.1 Vacancy Rates of Premises

Figure 10 shows that the street within Seahouses Town Centre with the most vacant premises is Seafield Road with 14% of premises vacant. Main Street was ranked 2nd when looking at number of vacant buildings with 5%. Similarly, when looking at vacancy rates in terms of floorspace, Seafield Road and Main Street had the highest amount of floorspace but with 10% and 2% of floorspace free respectively.

Figure 11 shows that in Seahouses Town Centre, there were 94% of occupied premises and 6% of vacant premises overall.
Figure 10: Vacancy Rates of Premises

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Road</th>
<th>Vacant (number of buildings)?</th>
<th>Rank - vacancy</th>
<th>Vacant (floorspace sqm)?</th>
<th>Rank - vacancy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SEAFIELD ROAD</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAIN STREET</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KING STREET</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Experian, August 2008

Figure 11: Is a Property Vacant

Is Property Vacant? (Seahouses Town Centre)

94% no

6% yes

Source: Experian, August 2008

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

Information about changes in town centre occupiers between 2007 – 2008 is not currently available for Seahouses town centre, as the GOAD plan from which the data is taken, was only created by Experian in 2008 when the work was commissioned by Northumberland Information Network.
8.0 PEDESTRIAN FLOWS

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

8.1 Footfall methodology

Footfall counts were taken for 10 minutes of each hour between 9am and 5pm on Thursday 13th November, Friday 14th November and Saturday 15th November 2008. They were carried out by interviewers at two “access points” within the town centre (see Figure 12). These counts were used to give estimates of hourly and daily pedestrian rates.

8.2 Estimates of footfall

It is estimated that the footfall for a typical (out of tourist season) Saturday in Seahouses town centre is around 440, although this will obviously vary depending on the time of year. The data suggests that the footfall on a Thursday is considerably higher (around 600) and slightly lower on a Friday, despite being Market Day.

Figure 12: Estimated daily footfall in Seahouses Town Centre

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday (Market Day)</th>
<th>Saturday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northumbrian Hamper, Main Street</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-op, Main Street</td>
<td>420</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>420</td>
<td>444</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Northumberland Footfall Counts

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

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

9.1 Shoppers travelling to town by car

17 respondents (30%) travelled into Seahouses by car on the day of the interview. 41% of these said that they go into Seahouses 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 6% in the evenings (Figure 13).

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

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

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires

Base: 17 for daytime; 17 for evening
All but one of these respondents found it very easy or fairly easy to travel into the centre (65% very easy; 29% fairly easy). The other respondent found it neither easy nor difficult (Figure 14).

**Figure 14: How easy/difficult do you feel it is to travel into Seahouses town centre (those respondents that travelled by car)**
(Excludes 'don't know' responses unless otherwise specified)

![Pie chart showing travel difficulty](chart)

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires
Base: 17

### 9.2 Access to car parking

The availability of parking spaces in Seahouses was not rated very highly (Figure 15). Only 26% and 24% of respondents gave a good or very good rating for public parking spaces and disabled parking spaces respectively. For the latter, nearly half (47%) of the respondents that rated this aspect gave it a ‘very poor’ rating.

The safety/security of parking facilities was rated considerably better with nearly half of respondents rating it as good or very good. Nearly all of these were ‘very good’ ratings. However, 30% still gave a ‘very poor’ rating.
Figure 15: Percentage of respondents giving each rating for parking related attributes

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

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires, November 2008

Base: 34 to 47 respondents depending on question (note: this excludes those respondents that gave a ‘don’t know’ response)

Parking was mentioned by a few people when asked what the main problems were with the shopping experience in Seahouses town centre:

- “Parking” (2 responses).
- “Lack of parking”.

More related comments were also made when asked what improvements the respondent would like to see to the retail offer in Seahouses:

- “Able to park outside shops - you have to pay to shop at the co-op”.
- “Be able to park outside the CO-OP”.
- “Better parking” (2 responses).
- “Do something about the parking outside of the shops”.

One quarter of respondents said that, in order to make the town centre better, they would improve the parking. A comment was also made: “stop people parking on double yellow lines”
9.3 Cost of parking
The cost of parking in Seahouses was not rated very highly. Only 28% of respondents gave a positive rating, whereas 35% gave a negative rating (Figure 16).

Figure 16: Percentage of respondents giving each rating for the cost of parking
(Excludes 'don't know' responses unless otherwise specified)

![Percentage of respondents giving each rating for the cost of parking](image)

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires
Base: 43 respondents (note: this excludes those respondents that gave a 'don't know' response)

9.4 Seahouses’s Car parks
Figures 17 and 18 show the location of car parks within and surrounding Seahouses Town Centre.
### Figure 17: Location of Car Parks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Car Park</th>
<th>Cost of Parking</th>
<th>Type of Car Park</th>
<th>Spaces</th>
<th>Long/Short Stay</th>
<th>Disabled Spaces</th>
<th>Coach Parking</th>
<th>Additional Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Old Station Yard</td>
<td>£0.50</td>
<td>Surface Car Park</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>short stay</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>The Parking Partnership - Joint permit with Berwick-upon-Tweed District Council and Castle Morpeth Borough Council, permits are valid in the Berwick-upon-Tweed-upon-Tweed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Seafield Road</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Source: Northumberland County Council and Transport Direct</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 18: Location of Car Parks

Seahouses Town Centre - Car parks

Legend
- Seahouses Town Centre
- Car parks

Source: Brerwick District Council, Transport Direct
9.5 Bus Connectivity

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

Figure 19: Destination and Frequency of Buses from Seahouses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Destination</th>
<th>Mon - Fri</th>
<th>Sat</th>
<th>Sun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alnwick</td>
<td>Approx 2 in 2 hours</td>
<td>9 per day</td>
<td>7 per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bamburgh</td>
<td>Approx 1 per hour</td>
<td>Approx 1 per hour</td>
<td>5 per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beadnell</td>
<td>Approx 2 in 2 hours</td>
<td>Approx 2 in 2 hours</td>
<td>7 per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beal</td>
<td>7 per day</td>
<td>Approx 1 per hour</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belford</td>
<td>Approx 1 per hour</td>
<td>Approx 1 per hour</td>
<td>2 per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berwick Upon Tweed</td>
<td>Approx 1 per hour</td>
<td>Approx 1 per hour</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budle</td>
<td>Approx 1 per hour</td>
<td>Approx 1 per hour</td>
<td>2 per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craster</td>
<td>Approx 2 in 2 hours</td>
<td>Approx 2 in 2 hours</td>
<td>7 per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denwick</td>
<td>3 per day</td>
<td>2 per day</td>
<td>4 per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embleton</td>
<td>Approx 2 in 2 hours</td>
<td>Approx 2 in 2 hours</td>
<td>7 per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haggerston</td>
<td>Approx 1 per hour</td>
<td>Approx 1 per hour</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Howick</td>
<td>2 per day</td>
<td>2 per day</td>
<td>4 per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longhoughton Spa</td>
<td>Approx 1 per 2 hours</td>
<td>Approx 1 per 2 hours</td>
<td>7 per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newcastle upon Tyne</td>
<td>5 per day</td>
<td>5 per day</td>
<td>3 per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scremerston</td>
<td>Approx 1 per hour</td>
<td>Approx 1 per hour</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warenmill</td>
<td>Approx 1 per hour</td>
<td>Approx 1 per hour</td>
<td>2 per day</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

9.6 Shoppers travelling to town by bus

Only 4 respondents (7%) travelled into Seahouses town centre by bus on the day of the interview. All of these said that they travel into the town centre either less than once a month or for a one-off visit during the daytime, and less than once a month or never during the evenings.
All of these respondents found it very easy to travel into the centre.

9.7 Train Connectivity
There is no train access to Seahouses.

9.8 Shoppers travelling to town by train
There is no train access to Seahouses.

9.9 Perception of Public Transport Services
Just over half of the respondents gave a positive rating for the quality of bus/rail services, the regularity of bus/rail services and the destinations served by public transport. Less than 13% gave a negative rating for each aspect (Figure 20).

Figure 20: Percentage of respondents giving each rating for public transport related attributes
(Excludes ‘don't know’ responses unless otherwise specified)

![Public Transport Rating Chart]

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires, November 2008
Base: 41 to 42 respondents depending on attribute (note: this excludes those respondents that gave a ‘don’t know’ response)

9.10 Perception of Accessibility
13% of respondents said that road safety was one of the main problems in Seahouses. The quality of footpaths was also seen to be a problem by one person. In addition, a comment made was that there are “no crossings”.
When asked how they would make the town centre better, one person said that the accessibility needs to be improved. Another person said that there needed to be a “child crossing”.

A further comment made was that there should be “safer roads for shoppers”.

### 9.11 Origin and method of travel of Shoppers Interviewed

As Figure 21 shows, most of the respondents from the Seahouses Shopper Survey live in the former Berwick-upon-Tweed District, with a large proportion living in or around Seahouses itself. The remaining respondents came elsewhere in Northumberland or Tyne & Wear.

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

The remaining few respondents were from the north of England and Scotland. Most of these travelled into Seahouses by car (Figure 22).
Figure 21: Visitors to Seahouses within Northumberland and Tyne and Wear
(Excludes 'don't know' responses unless otherwise specified)

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

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

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires
Figure 22: Visitors to Seahouses outside Northumberland
(Excludes ‘don’t know’ responses unless otherwise specified)

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

Visitors to Seahouses - Method of Transport

- Blue
- Purple
- Pink
- Orange

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires
10.0 ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY OF TOWN

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

10.1 Review of Recent Improvements

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

- A new apartment block on the seafront.
- Replacement of the Viking amusement centre.
- A new café pavilion on seafront.
- A new swimming pool and small leisure centre at the caravan park in the town.

10.2 Shopper perception of the town

10.2.1 Pedestrianisation

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

10.2.2 Signage, Street furniture and Open Spaces

Signage

None of the respondents made any comments about signage.

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 (Figure 23).
Ratings for both questions were fairly similar, with both questions receiving positive ratings from over 60% of respondents. The general state of the street furniture received a slightly lower rating than the street furniture itself.

**Figure 23: Street furniture ratings**

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

![Street furniture ratings](chart)

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires, November 2008

*Base* : 52 respondents for both question (note: this excludes those respondents that gave a ‘don't know’ response)

**Open Spaces**

Nearly half (49%) of the respondents didn’t feel able to rate the parks and open spaces in Seahouses. Of the ones that did, 39% gave a good or very good rating, and 32% a poor or very poor rating (Figure 24).

**Figure 24: Ratings given for parks and open spaces**

(Excludes 'don't know' responses unless otherwise specified)
10.2.3 Litter and Cleanliness

Around 60% of respondents gave a good or very good rating for the litter in Seahouses and the overall level of cleanliness (Figure 25).

Figure 25: Ratings given for litter and overall cleanliness
(Excludes ‘don’t know’ responses unless otherwise specified)
Base: 51 respondents (litter); 52 responses (cleanliness); (note: this excludes those respondents that gave a ‘don’t know’ response)

Two related comments were also noted:
- “Need bins for dog faeces”.
- “More bins”.
- “Cleaner streets…”.

10.2.4 General Appearance of the Town

Over half of respondents gave a positive rating for the general state of the town with regard to graffiti/fly posting, the general state of the buildings and the shop frontage.

The aspect receiving the highest proportion of positive ratings and the lowest proportion of negative ratings was the general state of the buildings (63% and 8% respectively).

Two respondents said that, to improve the retail offer and to make the town centre better, the shop frontage should be renovated. One of these also said that it needs “modernising”. Another respondent made the comment, “get rid of new apartments near the sea front as they look monstrous” (Figure 26).
Figure 26: Ratings given for the appearance of the town
(Excludes ‘don’t know’ responses unless otherwise specified)

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires

Base: 47 to 52 respondents; (note: this excludes those respondents that gave a ‘don’t know’ response)
11.0 PERCEPTION OF SAFETY AND OCCURRENCE OF CRIME

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

Figure 27: Analysis of Reported Crimes

Source: Northumbria Police
Figure 28: Crime and Anti Social Behaviour

Looking at Figure 27, it is clear to see that the majority of crime in Seahouses in 2005 – 2007 occurred on Main Street and the main type of crime or anti social behaviour here was “rowdy and/ or nuisance” of which there were 61 occurrences in total within the town centre.

Looking at the chart (Figure 28), the types of crime have been broken down further. The most frequent type of crime occurring in Seahouses Town Centre between 2005 and 2007 was criminal damage of which there were 24 occurrences. The 2nd most frequent type of crime was “violence/offences against the person” of which there were 15 occurrences.
11.2 Perception or Fear of Crime

Two people (4%) said that the safety/security should be improved in order to make the town centre better.

Respondents were also asked to rate safety/security during the daytime and the night-time. The ratings were very positive for both daytime and night-time (over 93% of respondents in each case rated it as good or very good) (Figure 29).

Figure 29: Ratings given for safety/security
(Excludes ‘don’t know’ responses unless otherwise specified)

![Figure 29: Ratings given for safety/security](chart)

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires

Base : 41 respondents (daytime); 29 respondents (nighttime); (note: this excludes those respondents that gave a ‘don’t know’ response)

As can be seen in section 9.2, 49% of respondents felt that the safety/security of the parking facilities was good/very good, and 30% thought it was poor or very poor.

11.3 Initiatives to Address Town Centre-Related Crime

According to the Berwick-upon-Tweed Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CRDP) the following initiatives exist in the Berwick-upon-Tweed District (September 2008):
• Berwick-upon-Tweed Borough CDRP has developed a labelling scheme to tackle the sale of alcohol to persons under the age of 18. Can identify offending premises through use of special barcodes on the labels. The Project is called “Bar None”, currently in the pilot phase and is trialling with Off License premises.

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

Shopper surveys will help authorities in monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of town centre improvements and in setting further priorities. In this section the shoppers’ surveys carried out in Seahouses 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 Seahouses catchment area; spending patterns and retaining shopper spend within the town centre.

12.1 Regularity of visits

64% of respondents go to Seahouses town centre during the daytime at least once a week, with the most common frequency of visit being every day (30%).

Respondents visit the town centre far less often during the evenings, with only 11% visiting at least once a week. 59% said that they never visit the town centre during the evening (Figure 30).

**Figure 30: Approximately how often are you in Seahouses Town Centre?**

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Daytime</th>
<th>Evening</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Every Day</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a Week</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twice a Week</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a Month</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than once a month</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One-off visit</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires

*Base: 56 respondents (daytime) and 56 respondents (evening)*
12.2 Expenditure/ Type of Purchases

Figure 31 shows the proportion of respondents that shop for different items solely in Seahouses town centre, and how many go further afield. Figure 32 gives more details about which shopping centres the respondents use.

As can be seen from the tables, Seahouses tends to be used by the respondents mainly for top-up food shopping, and to a lesser extent, other domestic shopping. For other items, the respondents are more likely to shop elsewhere, particularly in Berwick. Other commonly used shopping centres are Newcastle, the Metro Centre and Alnwick.
Figure 31: Proportion of respondents shopping in Seahouses and other areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Main food shopping</th>
<th>Top-up food shopping</th>
<th>Other domestic (eg. chemist, cosmetics, etc)</th>
<th>Clothes</th>
<th>Shoes</th>
<th>Electrical goods</th>
<th>Furniture/ carpets</th>
<th>DIY goods</th>
<th>CDs/DVDs etc.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Seahouses</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seahouses only</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seahouses + local area&lt;sup&gt;4&lt;/sup&gt;</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>Seahouses + non-local/local mix</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-Seahouses</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local area&lt;sup&gt;2&lt;/sup&gt; (not Seahouses)</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixture of places (not Seahouses)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Don't buy</strong></td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Base</strong></td>
<td>56</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires, November 2008

<sup>4</sup> ‘Local area’ is defined as being one of the following: Berwick, Wooler, Alnwick, Newcastle, Metro Centre, Edinburgh, Galashiels, Kelso, Morpeth, Other Scotland, Other Northumberland
Figure 32: Shopping centres used by respondents to purchase different items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Main food shopping</th>
<th>Top-up food shopping</th>
<th>Other domestic (eg. chemist, cosmetics, etc)</th>
<th>Clothes</th>
<th>Shoes</th>
<th>Electrical goods</th>
<th>Furniture/ carpets</th>
<th>DIY goods</th>
<th>CDs/ DVDs etc</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seahouses</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berwick</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alnwick</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newcastle</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metro Centre</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morpeth</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't buy</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Base</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires November 2008

Two thirds (67%) of respondents planned to spend less than £25 in Seahouses on the day they were interviewed, with a further 9% expecting to spend between £25 and £100. 22% said that they did not plan to spend any money (Figure 33).
Figure 33: How much do you plan to spend in Seahouses today?
(Excludes ‘don’t know’ responses unless otherwise specified)

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires
Base: 54 respondents

12.3 The Catchment

According to the North East RSS, the region exhibits a polycentric settlement pattern based on two city-regions centered round Tyne & Wear and Tees Valley. A polycentric settlement pattern is one with many centres or nodes, albeit with different characteristics and scales, rather than one key centre dominating everywhere, where their functions are interconnected. Berwick upon Tweed was the main town in the Berwick upon Tweed Borough and is described in the RSS as a Rural Service Centre: a settlement that provides jobs, services and facilities for a wider rural hinterland. The district contained a number of other local or secondary centres, including Belford, Seahouses and Wooler. These settlements act as key service centres for the rural areas but are smaller in scale or function than Berwick upon Tweed.
Figure 34: Seahouses Retail Catchment

The map (Figure 34) shows the catchment area for Seahouses town centre, as defined by Experian. The catchment, which measures the extent of the local consumer base, was determined by calculating the centre’s population and the number of retailers present and assigning a radius of 2 miles.
12.4 Spending Patterns

In addition to Seahouses town, the catchment embraces two smaller sized settlements surrounding Seahouses; Shoreston to the North West and Beadnell to the South. Altogether, the catchment covers an area of 103.52 sq km, and is home to almost 2,300 people and 1,150 households. Collectively, these households and residents spend an estimated £9.75 million per annum on retail goods and services, with 37.0% of expenditure on convenience retail goods (£3.6 million) and 63.0% on comparison retail (£6.1 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 Seahouses 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 35: Seahouses Catchment Summary Profile

| Seahouses Catchment Summary Profile | | | | |
|------------------------------------|---|---|---|
| Totals                             | Seahouses Catchment | % | UK | % | Index |
| 2007 Population                    | 2,262 | | 60,796,178 |
| 2007 Households                    | 1,119 | | 26,018,847 |
| Total Comparison                   | 6,144,843.00 | 63.0% | 171,926,829,196.00 | 63.4% | 99.51 |
| Total Convenience                  | 3,602,622.00 | 37.0% | 99,464,696,627.00 | 36.6% | 100.85 |
| Total Retail                       | 9,747,466.00 | 100.0% | 271,391,525,823.00 | 100.0% | 100.00 |

Source: Experian

Total retail expenditure per household per annum within the catchment stands at £8,711, with average comparison retail spend at £5,491 per annum and convenience spend at £3,220 per annum (Figure 36). Whilst total comparison spend per household is just below the UK average, with an index of 99.51, total convenience spend per household in the catchment was just above the UK average, with an index of 100.85.
Figures 37 and 38 provide a breakdown of Comparison retail expenditure within the Seahouses catchment and in the UK. Clearly the largest expenditure type within comparison retail is Clothing Material & Garments, accounting for £1.3 million or 20.8% of total Comparison Expenditure within the catchment. Clothing is followed by Audio-visual, photographic and information processing equipment (£720,000 or 11.7%) and Furniture and furnishings; carpets and other floor coverings (£647,600 or 10.5%). The pattern of expenditure nationally is similar, but with some notable differences. Referring to the index, households in Seahouses spend substantially more on Audio-visual, photographic and information processing equipment and Recording Media as a proportion of total spend than the UK average. In contrast, they spend substantially less on Games, toys and hobbies; sport and camping; musical instruments, and Materials for maintenance and repair of the dwelling.

Figure 36: Total Expenditure (in 2006 prices) Comparison

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2007 Total Expenditure (in 2006 prices) Comparison</th>
<th>Target</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Base</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Index</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10% of Non-Durable household goods</td>
<td>12,754.00</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>357,185,476.00</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>99.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appliances for personal care</td>
<td>560,779.00</td>
<td>9.13</td>
<td>15,298,262,865.00</td>
<td>8.90</td>
<td>102.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio-visual, photographic and information processing equipment</td>
<td>720,196.00</td>
<td>11.72</td>
<td>14,926,597,385.00</td>
<td>8.68</td>
<td>134.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bicycles</td>
<td>7,784.00</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>1,345,908,674.00</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>16.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books and stationery</td>
<td>235,768.00</td>
<td>3.84</td>
<td>6,968,169,166.00</td>
<td>4.05</td>
<td>94.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing materials and garments</td>
<td>1,278,921.00</td>
<td>20.81</td>
<td>37,197,970,202.00</td>
<td>21.64</td>
<td>95.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furniture and furnishings; carpets and other floor coverings</td>
<td>647,618.00</td>
<td>10.54</td>
<td>18,218,052,893.00</td>
<td>10.60</td>
<td>98.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Games, toys and hobbies; sport and camping; musical instruments</td>
<td>567,094.00</td>
<td>9.23</td>
<td>18,951,364,780.00</td>
<td>11.02</td>
<td>83.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gardens, plants and flowers</td>
<td>112,327.00</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td>3,402,000,385.00</td>
<td>1.98</td>
<td>91.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glassware, tableware and household utensils</td>
<td>150,180.00</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>4,753,009,610.00</td>
<td>2.76</td>
<td>87.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household textiles</td>
<td>246,543.00</td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>5,378,572,610.00</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>127.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewellery, clocks and watches</td>
<td>144,009.00</td>
<td>2.34</td>
<td>4,533,353,900.00</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>88.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major household appliances (electric or not)</td>
<td>216,801.00</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>4,457,482,024.00</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>135.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major tools and equipment</td>
<td>9,413.00</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>370,528,409.00</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>70.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials for maintenance and repair of the dwelling</td>
<td>166,642.00</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>6,826,571,834.00</td>
<td>3.97</td>
<td>67.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical goods and other pharmaceutical products</td>
<td>145,932.00</td>
<td>2.37</td>
<td>3,904,354,994.00</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>104.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other personal effects</td>
<td>72,321.00</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>2,276,336,174.00</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td>88.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pets and related products</td>
<td>66,995.00</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>2,747,999,981.00</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>67.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recording media</td>
<td>372,399.00</td>
<td>6.06</td>
<td>7,513,288,250.00</td>
<td>4.37</td>
<td>138.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shoes and other footwear</td>
<td>186,477.00</td>
<td>3.03</td>
<td>5,348,647,704.00</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>97.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small electrical household appliances</td>
<td>47,253.00</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>748,364,529.00</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>175.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small tools and miscellaneous accessories</td>
<td>88,431.00</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>3,301,806,678.00</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>74.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Therapeutic appliances and equipment</td>
<td>88,207.00</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>3,101,000,673.00</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>79.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Comparison</td>
<td>6,144,843.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>171,926,829,196.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>99.51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Experian
Figure 37: Expenditure on Comparison Retail

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

- Pets and related products
- 10% of Non-Durable household goods
- Gardens, plants and flowers
- Games, toys and hobbies; sport and camping; musical instruments
- Shoes and other footwear
- Books and stationery
- Appliances for personal care
- Major tools and equipment
- Jewellery, clocks and watches
- Therapeutic appliances and equipment
- Materials for maintenance and repair of the dwelling
- Other personal effects
- Medical goods and other pharmaceutical products
- Small tools and miscellaneous accessories
- Bicycles

Index (UK=100)

Source: Experian

Figure 38: Expenditure on Comparison Retail

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

- Small electrical household appliances
- Recording media
- Major household appliances (electric or not)
- Audio-visual, photographic and information processing equipment
- Household textiles
- Glassware, tableware and household utensils
- Furniture and furnishings; carpets and other floor coverings
- Clothing materials and garments

Index (UK=100)

Source: Experian

Figure 39 provides a breakdown of Convenience retail expenditure within the Seahouses catchment and in the UK. Clearly the largest expenditure type within convenience retail in Seahouses is Food and non-alcoholic beverages, accounting
for £2.5 million or 71.7% of total Comparison Expenditure within the area. Food and non-alcoholic beverages is followed by Alcohol (£430,000 or 11.9%) and Tobacco (£261,300 or 7.3%). The pattern of expenditure nationally differs a little, especially with regards to the national spend on Tobacco. Referring to the index, households in Seahouses spend proportionately more on Newspapers and periodicals, and less on Tobacco.

**Figure 39: 2007 Total Expenditure Convenience Retail**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2007 Total Expenditure (in 2006 prices) Convenience</th>
<th>Target</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Base</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Index</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90% of Non-Durable household goods</td>
<td>114,781.00</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>3,214,575,062.00</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>99.4146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol (off-trade)</td>
<td>429,914.00</td>
<td>11.93</td>
<td>12,313,767,021.00</td>
<td>12.38</td>
<td>97.2064</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food and non-alcoholic beverages</td>
<td>2,582,648.00</td>
<td>71.69</td>
<td>70,035,886,128.00</td>
<td>70.41</td>
<td>102.6713</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspapers and periodicals</td>
<td>213,963.00</td>
<td>5.94</td>
<td>4,451,576,478.00</td>
<td>4.48</td>
<td>133.8226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tobacco</td>
<td>261,317.00</td>
<td>7.25</td>
<td>9,448,891,938.00</td>
<td>9.50</td>
<td>77.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Convenience</td>
<td>3,602,622.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>99,464,696,627.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>100.845</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Experian

### 12.5 Retaining Shopper Spend

The information outlined in the previous section describes the extent and pattern of expenditure per annum of households living within the Experian-defined catchment area for Seahouses. What the information does not indicate, however, is how much of the expenditure is spent purchasing goods and services in Seahouses 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 Seahouses catchment that shops in Seahouses and the proportion that shop at other centres.
- The percentage of expenditure spent on goods and services in Seahouses and the extent to which spending leaks to other centres.

The data in figures 40 and 41 provide a baseline assessment against which future reports will measure changes in performance. The figures do not currently provide a breakdown of leakage for comparison and convenience retail, although it is
anticipated that retention will be substantially higher for the latter compared with the former.

With regards to population, Experian estimates that more than 27% of the resident population shop in Seahouses (625 or 27.6%). The other major shopping destinations for people in the catchment area are predominantly Alnwick (828 or 36.6%), Berwick-upon-Tweed (283 or 12.5%) and Newcastle upon Tyne Centre (239 or 10.6%).

**Figure 40: Population Leakage**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plan Name</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
<th>Population (no.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alnwick</td>
<td>36.61</td>
<td>828</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seahouses</td>
<td>27.64</td>
<td>625</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berwick-upon-Tweed</td>
<td>12.51</td>
<td>283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newcastle upon Tyne - Central</td>
<td>10.56</td>
<td>239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metro Centre</td>
<td>5.55</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belford</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morpeth</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashington</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wooler</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cramlington</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Shields - Silverlink Retail Park</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newcastle upon Tyne - Kingston Park Centre</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amble</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Shields</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Experian

The pattern with regards to spend is relatively similar (Figure 46). Experian estimates that 27.1% of retail spend by residents and households domiciled within the Seahouses catchment, representing £2.6 million per annum, is spent in the town.

More than £3.6 million of expenditure is lost to Alnwick (37.1%), with other notable leakage to Berwick-upon-Tweed (£1.2 million or 12.3%) and Newcastle (£1.0 or 10.7%). What is not clear from the figures, however, is the retail types that outlying centres are able to attract from the catchment area. This is something that InfoNet will be investigating further with Experian over the coming 12 months.
Figure 41: Spend Leakage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plan Name</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
<th>Spend (£)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alnwick</td>
<td>37.12</td>
<td>3,618,467.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seahouses</td>
<td><strong>27.10</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,641,503.13</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berwick-upon-Tweed</td>
<td>12.33</td>
<td>1,201,545.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newcastle upon Tyne - Central</td>
<td>10.68</td>
<td>1,040,659.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metro Centre</td>
<td>5.62</td>
<td>548,146.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belford</td>
<td>3.03</td>
<td>295,158.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morpeth</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td>135,350.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashington</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>73,479.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wooler</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>54,673.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cramlington</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>33,669.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Shields - Silverlink Retail Park</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>29,182.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newcastle upon Tyne - Kingston Park Centre</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>26,731.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amble</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>26,556.22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Experian

Figure 42 shows the Seahouses catchment area and is colour coded to indicate the proportion of retail expenditure that is spent by the resident population in Seahouses. From the map, it can be seen that households located within Seahouses and in the surrounding hinterland spend 30-40% of their total retail expenditure in Seahouses. Propensity to shop in Seahouses drops to 10-15% of expenditure in adjacent parts of the catchment to the south and west of Seahouses.
12.6 Opinions on and use of Leisure and Entertainment

27% of respondents said that they were in Seahouses town centre for leisure on the day of the interview.

Events attended

Nearly two thirds (63%) of the respondents had attended at least one of the events asked about in the questionnaire. The most well attended event was the Seahouses Lifeboat Fete (Figure 43).
Figure 43: Have you ever attended any of these events?
(Excludes ‘don't know’ responses unless otherwise specified)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Percentage of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Christmas Lights Switch On</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seahouses Lifeboat Fete</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seahouses Festival</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have not attended any</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires, November 2008
Base: 54 respondents

Eating and drinking
The eating and drinking venues in Seahouses were rated highly by the respondents. Over two thirds gave a positive rating for each type of venue.

The best rated venues were the takeaways and the pubs/clubs. These received a good or very good rating from over 90% of respondents. The lowest ratings were given for the sandwich shops (67% positive and 17% negative ratings) (Figure 44).
Figure 44: How would you rate the following venues for eating and drinking in Seahouses?

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

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires

Base: 48 to 54 respondents depending on type of venue (note: this excludes those respondents that gave a ‘don’t know’ response)

Arts and leisure facilities

Most of the arts and leisure facilities in Seahouses were rated very highly, with the best rating given for Seahouses Library (all respondents said that it was good or very good).

However, the parks and open spaces were not rated very highly. Only 39% of respondents gave a positive rating and 32% gave a negative rating (Figure 45).
Figure 45: How would you rate the following arts and leisure facilities in Seahouses?

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

```
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facility</th>
<th>Very Good</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>OK</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Very Poor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sports Centre</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golf Club</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crazy Golf</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parks &amp; open spaces</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seahouses Library</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires, November 2008

Base: 17 to 30 depending on facility (note: this excludes those respondents that gave a ‘don’t know’ response)

When asked how they would rate Seahouses as a place to enjoy themselves, 56% of respondents gave a good or very good rating and 20% gave a poor or very poor rating (Figure 46).
Figure 46: How do you rate Seahouses as a place to enjoy yourself?

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

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires

Base: 45 (note: this excludes those respondents that gave a ‘don’t know’ response)

General

When respondents were asked how they would make the town centre better, 9% gave an answer relating to improving the leisure facilities. Two comments were also made on this subject:

- “We need a football pitch”.
- “A new bowling alley…”.

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

Figures 47 and 48, together with the rest of the analysis of the Seahouses shopper survey, suggest that in order to improve the town as a place to shop or visit, two key issues need to be addressed:

- The retail offer
  
  This is covered in more detail below.
• **The parking facilities (availability and cost)**

25% of respondents said that the parking needed to be improved in order to make the town centre better, 16% said that illegal parking was one of the main problems with the shopping experience, and 47%/62% rated the availability of public/disabled parking spaces as poor or very poor. 35% gave a poor or very poor rating for the cost of parking. See sections 9.2.2 and 9.2.3 for more details.

In addition, respondents were not very positive about the parks and open spaces in Seahouses. It is therefore suggested that this is also examined in more detail to determine the reasons.

**Figure 47: How would you make this town centre better?**

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

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires

*Base: 56 respondents*
Figure 48: What are the main problems with the shopping experience in Seahouses town centre?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>% of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Limited offer or range of Shops/Goods</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illegal Parking</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Road Safety</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traffic</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of footpaths</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires

Base: 55 respondents

Retail

Throughout the survey, respondents have not been particularly positive about the retail offer in Seahouses as can be seen in the points below.

- When asked to rate Seahouses as a place to shop, only 21% gave a positive rating whereas 46% gave a negative rating.
- 24% of respondents said that one of the main problems with the shopping experience in Seahouses town centre was the limited offer or range of shops/goods.
- 23% of respondents said that, in order to improve the town centre, the retail offer should be improved.
- 20% of respondents disagreed that Seahouses offers a wide choice of quality shops. 45% agreed.
- As section 12.2 shows, the majority of respondents choose to shop away from Seahouses for most items.
Respondents were also asked about the types of improvement that they would like to see to the retail offer in Seahouses town centre. The two most popular responses were to have an increased variety of shops and to have more shops offering local produce (both given by 20% of respondents). 38% said that they would not want any improvements (Figure 49).

A list of the ‘other’ responses to this question, together with some examples of shops that the respondents would like, is given in Appendix 2. Most of these either related to parking or food shops.

**Figure 49: What improvements would you like to see to the retail offer in Seahouses?**

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

```
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of Respondents</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Increased variety of shops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20%</td>
<td>More shops offering local produce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27%</td>
<td>More chain stores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2%</td>
<td>Don't know</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38%</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0%</td>
<td>Nothing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
```

*Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires*

*Base: 56 respondents*
13.0 INVESTMENT

The following developments are proposed for Seahouses Town Centre;

- A new heritage trail which will pass through the centre of Seahouses, passing the harbour, tourism information centre, and main car park.

- New signage around the town, where possible installing new design fingerposts.

- Install a new town centre map and provide new furniture to the entrance to the main car park at Seahouses and along the main street.

- Planning permission has been granted to Persimmon Homes for 42 houses, but this scheme appears to have been delayed until the property market improves.
14.0 CONCLUSION

Seahouses is currently undergoing various improvements in the Town Centre. Whilst the majority of the improvements are related to improved navigation around the Town Centre such as new signage and maps, they should still be taken into consideration when drawing conclusions about visitors’ perceptions of the town centre and ultimately the health of the Town Centre.

In the Town Centre, 45% of the floorspace use was for retail (Figure 3). Further, shopper’s perceptions of the range of retail provision was somewhat positive with 45% agreeing or strongly agreeing to the statement “Seahouses offers a wide choice of quality shops”, compared to 20% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing (Figure 5).

The verbatim responses to what shoppers would like to see improved with the retail offer (Appendix 2) highlighted that more clothes shops and more choice of clothes shops were high on their priorities so that they didn’t have to travel further afield, for this type of shopping. A better choice of food shops was also mentioned by respondents as something they would like to see improved in Seahouses.

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. Also, it may be why shoppers would like to see more choice in food shops in the town centre. Further, within the comparison category, the majority of the businesses were independent as opposed to multiple chain such as high street shops which were also suggested when asking shoppers what would improve the retail offer (Appendix 2). However, this high proportion of independent shops is also a key feature of market towns such as Seahouses.

There was 6% of vacant floorspace in Seahouses (see Figure 11). Figure 13 also shows that between 2007 and 2008, the amount of vacant floorspace had reduced
when looking at property flows. There had been no 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 majority of the shoppers interviewed with 94% (of those travelling by car) finding it very or fairly easy (Figure 14). However, 47% of these shoppers felt that the parking in the town centre was either poor or very poor (Figure 15). Appendix 2 also shows that parking was mentioned several times when asked what the main problems were with the shopping experience and what improvements respondents would like to see to the retail offer in Seahouses, notably better parking. Seahouses also has good bus connectivity, which is shown in Figures 19 respectively by the frequency and number of destinations reached from Seahouses. Even though only 7% of respondents travelled to Seahouses by bus on the day of the survey and all visited the Town Centre very infrequently, all found it very easy to travel there. These figures are supported by Figure 20 which shows the shopper’s overall perception of the quality, regularity and destinations served by public transport. Here, just over half gave a positive response for public transport related attributes, and less than 13% gave a negative rating for each aspect.

When looking at retaining shopper spend, just 27% of Seahouses residents shopped in Seahouses. The majority of expenditure (37%) was lost to Alnwick (Figure 41). This is most likely because it is the largest town in Seahouses’ vicinity with a wider range of shops and services. More specifically, figure 32 shows that shoppers survey respondents were most likely to stay in Seahouses for top-up food shopping (63% of respondents) and other domestic products (39% of respondents), but travel to Alnwick for other categories of items. Figure 41 also showed that just 12% of expenditure was lost to Berwick-upon-Tweed, however, Figure 32 shows that based on shoppers survey responses, shoppers were more likely to visit Berwick-upon-Tweed than Seahouses or Alnwick for all categories of purchases other than top-up food shopping and other domestic items.
The responses from shoppers coupled with the various aspects that make up a town centre, suggest that generally Seahouses was in reasonable health. Although there has been some negative responses from the shoppers’ surveys with regards to the retail offer and parking in general, hopefully this should improve by the time future health checks are carried out.
15.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

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

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

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

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

Section 9, Accessibility, gathered all of the destinations reached from Seahouses 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, laundrettes, 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 Seahouses Town Centre?’

- Cost of parking (2 responses)
- Lack of parking
- Parking (2 responses)
- Road safety
- No Crossings
- Lots of shops dated
- Need more grocery and clothes shops
- Supermarket too expensive
- Needs bins for dog fecease

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

Suggested examples of improvements

- Able to park outside shops - you have to pay to shop at the co-op
- Be able to park outside the CO-OP
- Better parking (2 responses)
- Do something about the parking outside of the shops
- Supermarket (3 responses)
- More fruit and veg shops
- More grocery stores
- New grocery store
- Need an Aldi or Netto
- Bigger range of clothes shops especially for children
- More shops for young one
• Grocery shops and men and women's clothing and a woolworths
• More food and clothes shops
• Shoe Shop, more food shops
• Shops need to be kept open longer, more food and freezer shops
• Roads repairs and more small grocery and clothing shops
• Renovate shop frontage, needs modernising
• Safer roads for shoppers

**Suggested examples of shops**

• More food shops
• More shops like raggy dolls
Verbatim responses to ‘Q23 How would you make this town centre better?’

**Shops**
- Supermarket (3 responses)
- More grocery shops (2 responses)
- more grocery shops eg Aldi or Netto
- Need more grocery shops
- New grocery shops
- Aldi or Netto
- needs more small shops, fruit and veg, fish(wet), local produce

**Other**
- Better roads and surfaces all over town
- Stop people parking on double yellow lines
- Child crossing
- get rid of new apartments near the sea front as they look monstrous
- More bins
- We need a football pitch

**Mixture**
- A new bowling alley and new convenience stores
- cleaner streets and more small store (grocery)
- Renovate shop frontage, more grocery shops
- Roads need resurfacing and a better grocery shop
The Corporate Research Unit

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<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>N/A</th>
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