WOOLER TOWN CENTRE HEALTH CHECK REPORT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 35% of the floorspace in Wooler was for retail.
- Shopper's perceptions of the range of retail provision was fairly positive – 43% thought that Wooler 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 8% vacant floorspace in Wooler.
- 96% of shoppers interviewed found it very easy or fairly easy to travel into Wooler town centre by car.
- 52% gave a good or very good rating for the availability of car parking spaces in Wooler.
- Wooler also has fairly good bus connectivity by the frequency and number of destinations reached from Wooler.
- Over 70% of respondents rated the quality and the regularity of the bus/rail services and the destinations served by public transport in Wooler as good or very good.
- 20% of Wooler residents shopped in Wooler. 56% of expenditure was lost to Berwick-upon-Tweed, 6% to Alnwick and 4% to Kelso.

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 Wooler 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 Wooler’s Town Centre Boundary

Throughout this report there are two different boundaries for Wooler 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 Wooler Town Centre in relation to the District Council boundary is 71,006.93 m².

Figure 1: Boundary for Wooler Town Centre (District Council)
2.2 Wooler’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 Northumberland County Council): Gateway to the Cheviot hills, Wooler is a small market town situated on the edge of the Northumberland National Park. Just 10 miles from the Scottish border, Wooler is 15 miles away from Alnwick and 47 miles away from Newcastle.
Wooler has an ageing population, and indeed has one of the lowest number of young people anywhere in the region. The town is linear, with the main street running parallel with the A697. Both have ribbon developments, and there are several “gap” sites which have occurred over the years. There are aspirations to create a “gateway” visitors’ centre or similar attraction on a derelict site just west of the A697 at its junction with South Road.

2.3 History and Development of Wooler

Wooler is a stone-built market town, situated above Wooler Water in the foothills of the Cheviots. It is located half-way between Alnwick and Berwick-upon-Tweed, 14 miles south of the Scottish Borders. Wooler is situated on the edge of the Northumberland National Park, and is known as the Gateway to the Cheviots.

The name ‘Wooler’ may come from old-English, with a couple of possible derivations of the name. The first derivation suggests that it comes from ‘wella’ meaning well or spring and ‘ofer’ meaning ridge or hill. A second suggestion is that it comes from ‘wulfa’ (a name) and ‘ora’ (hillside or slope).

Numerous pieces of evidence have been found suggesting that people were in the Wooler area as early as prehistoric times. Evidence of settlement has been dated back to the Bronze Age, with further evidence from the Iron Age and the Roman period.

In the Medieval period, it is believed that a castle was built (12th Century), later replaced by Wooler Tower in the 16th century. Wooler was also granted a licence in 1199 to hold a market every Thursday, though markets for corn, wool and livestock were not evident until centuries later. Weekly corn markets, and bi-annual markets for sheep, horses and cattle were established by 1821. Wooler livestock market still remains.
When peace came to the area in the 18th century, farming and agriculture became the key industries. Wool from the Cheviot sheep was shipped out to other parts of the UK and abroad, and dye, woollen and corn mills were established. Public services such as schools, churches, and a workhouse were also developed to deal with the increase in population, and the town became one of the wealthiest in Northumberland. Towards the end of the century, Wooler was also seen as a health resort and was used by invalids looking for a cure during the summer months.

During the late 18th century, the main road to Morpeth was turnpiked, with numerous inns set up along the road. Then in 1887, a railway link between Alnwick and Coldstream was completed, both of which caused the town to prosper further. However, passenger numbers dropped after the First World War, and the line was closed to passengers in 1930.

Due to a fire in 1863 which almost destroyed the town, Wooler today consists of mainly 19th century stone buildings. It has a population of around 1,850¹, and has industries based around agriculture and tourism.

There are numerous things to see and do in and around Wooler, including Wooler Common, the Fenton Centre, Chillingham Castle, Etal castle, Heatherslaw Mill and light railway, and various walks incorporating various archaeological and battle sites. The Glendale Show (a major agricultural show), and the Glendale Festival both take place each summer.

Glendale was inspiration for the children’s television series, Postman Pat.

¹ 1,857 according to the 2001 census
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 Wooler Town Centre and also the opinions of shoppers surveyed on the range of retail provision in Wooler.

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 approximately one third (35%) of the floorspace in Wooler Town Centre are classed as shops. Drinking establishments account for 11% of the floorspace in Wooler, with financial and professional services, residential institutions and non-residential institutions each occupying 7%.

Figure 3: Floorspace by Use Class

Source: Experian
Figure 4: Building Use class for Wooler Town Centre

Source: Experian, August 2008
The map (Figure 4) shows that the majority of shops within the town centre are situated on High Street which is the main street. Financial and professional services are situated on High Street, Glendale Road and the Market Place. Restaurants are largely situated on the edge of the town centre – in the Market Place and on Peth Head.

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

3.2 Events
There are a number of events that take place throughout the year. Northumberland Wildlife Trust hold a number of Nature Walks, the walks start off at the Fenton Centre throughout July, August and September. The Glendale Festival takes place every year, the event has music, flower festival, a car boot sale, a craft and food fair and also includes entertainment for children. The ‘Fare Fair’ is held at The Fenton Centre, this is a showcase event for local producers and will be held on 24th August and 5th October. The Glendale Show will take place on 25th August at the Wooler Showground this features ‘The Bolddog Lings Motorcycle Display Team’, sheepdog and duck display, dog show and a fell race. St Cuthbert’s Outdoor Activity Festival is a guided walk from Wooler to St Cuthbert’s cave on 6th September.

3.3 Satisfaction with the range of provision – retail

Question 14 in the Wooler Shopper Questionnaire asked:

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

The level of agreement with this statement was considerably higher than the level of disagreement (43% vs. 21% of respondents) (Figure 5). Just over one third of respondents (36%) neither agreed nor disagreed.
Figure 5: How would you rate “On the whole, Wooler offers a wide choice of quality shops”?

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

Source: Shopper Surveys

Base: 90 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 - Wooler

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

Source: Experian, August 2008

Figure 6 shows that in Wooler town centre, the majority of businesses are comparison retail (15 independent, 1 multiple chain). The category which has the 2nd highest amount of businesses is leisure services: 12 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 Wooler 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 Wooler 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.” 2

6.1 Zone A Rental Information

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

Figure 7 shows the zone A rental information from the Valuation Office. The values relate to the 2005 Rating List, which are based on a valuation date of 1 April 2003. The properties have been banded by intervals of £100, as we cannot publish the exact figure for each building. This will also make it easier to identify trends when analysing the data on the map.
There are some properties which are shown as “unknown” on Figure 8. These premises could be retail in nature but are not valued on a zoned approach. The reason for this is that zoning is generally not used in various circumstances including:

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

**Figure 7: Valuation Office Zone A rental prices for Wooler Town Centre**

*Source: Valuation Office 2003*
Figure 7 shows that the Zone A rental information is unknown for approximately half of the properties in Wooler Town Centre. All of the properties for which this information is known, are valued at £0 - £99 per m², and are largely situated on High Street.

6.2 Yield

Yield “is the ratio of rental income to capital value and is expressed in terms of the open market rent of a property as percentage of the capital value.” ² 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.”³

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

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

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

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

² www.voa.gov.uk
³ www.voa.gov.uk
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 Wooler listed as vacant on the Northumberland Property Database, there was no available rental
information for Wooler. 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**

![Bar chart showing average rental prices for commercial property in Northumberland Town Centres](chart)

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 Wooler town centre between 2007 and 2008 in terms of both primary activity type and type of change (i.e. change in occupier, occupied to vacant, vacant to occupied).

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

7.1 Vacancy Rates of Premises

Figure 10 shows that the only streets within Wooler Town Centre with vacant premises are Glendale Road and High Street with 25% and 12% of premises vacant, respectively.

Similarly, when looking at vacancy rates in terms of floorspace, Glendale Road and High Street had the highest amount of floorspace but with 26% and 25% of floorspace free respectively.

Figure 11 shows that in Wooler Town Centre, there were 92% of occupied premises and 8% of vacant premises overall.
Figure 10: Vacancy Rates of Premises

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Road</th>
<th>Vacant (number of buildings)?</th>
<th>Vacant (floorspace sqm)?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GLENDALE ROAD</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>1 26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIGH STREET</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>2 25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHEVIOT STREET</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHURCH STREET</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MARKET PLACE</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAGDEPOOL PLACE</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PETH HEAD</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAMSEYS LANE</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RYECROFT WAY</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Experian, August 2008

Figure 11: Is a Property Vacant

Is Property Vacant? (Wooler Town Centre)

- 92% yes
- 8% no

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 Wooler 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 Wooler 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 Saturday in Wooler town centre is around 500, although this will obviously vary depending on the time of year. The data suggests that the footfall on a Thursday is slightly higher, and Friday’s footfall is slightly lower.

Figure 12: Estimated daily footfall in Wooler Town Centre

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
<th>Saturday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Farmfoods Butchers</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good Life Shop</td>
<td>276</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>522</td>
<td>468</td>
<td>504</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Northumberland Footfall Counts, November 2008

4 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 Wooler 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

54% of respondents travelled into Wooler by car on the day of the interview. 83% of these said that they go into Wooler 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 36% 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)

![Frequency of visit chart](chart.png)

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires, November 2008

Base: 48 for daytime; 47 for evening

Nearly all (96%) of the respondents that travelled by car found it fairly easy or very easy to travel into Wooler town centre. Only 2% found it fairly or very difficult (Figure 14).
Figure 14: How easy/difficult do you feel it is to travel into Wooler town centre (those respondents that travelled by car)

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

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires

Base: 49

9.2 Access to car parking

Over half of respondents said that the availability of public/disabled parking spaces was good or very good. The safety/security of the parking facilities was rated a little higher (two thirds of respondents gave a positive rating). Only one or two people gave a negative rating for each attribute (Figure 15).
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: 40 to 71 respondents depending on question (note: this excludes those respondents that gave a ‘don’t know’ response)

One respondent said that one of the main problems with the shopping experience in Wooler was that there was “sometimes illegal parking”.

9.3 Cost of parking
57% of respondents rated the cost of parking as good or very good. Only 3% gave it a poor/very poor rating (Figure 16).

Figure 16: Percentage of respondents giving each rating for the cost of parking
(Excludes ‘don’t know’ responses unless otherwise specified)
9.4 Wooler’s Car parks

Figures 17 and 18 show the location of car parks within and surrounding Wooler 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>Wooler Bus Station, High Street, Wooler, Northumberland, NE716</td>
<td>£0.50</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>In short/medium stay areas, permit holders must also display a parking disk showing their arrival time. Permits are valid in the Berwick-upon-Tweed Borough and also in Alnwick and in Castle Morpeth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Padgepool Place, Wooler, NE71 6BL</td>
<td>Free</td>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Church Street, Wooler</td>
<td>Free</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Ramsey Lane, Wooler, NE71 6NR</td>
<td>Free</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Northumberland County Council and Transport Direct
9.5 Bus Connectivity

The direct connections linking Wooler 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>Alnwick</td>
<td>Approximately 1 per hour</td>
<td>7 per day</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ancroft</td>
<td>6 per day</td>
<td>5 per day</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berwick Upon Tweed</td>
<td>Approximately 1 per hour</td>
<td></td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bowsden</td>
<td>5 per day</td>
<td>4 per day</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapel Lands</td>
<td>4 per day</td>
<td>5 per day</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chatton</td>
<td>5 per day</td>
<td>3 per day</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chillingham</td>
<td>4 per day</td>
<td>3 per day</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Destination and Frequency of Buses from Wooler</td>
<td>Source: Travel Search (<a href="http://www.carlberry.co.uk/index.htm">http://www.carlberry.co.uk/index.htm</a>), North East Travel Line (<a href="http://jplanner.travelinenortheast.info">http://jplanner.travelinenortheast.info</a>)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doddington</td>
<td>6 per day 5 per day None</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eglingham</td>
<td>3 per day 3 per day None</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glanton</td>
<td>Approximately 1 per hour 6 per day None</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lowick</td>
<td>6 per day 5 per day None</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Powburn</td>
<td>Approximately 1 per hour 6 per day None</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scremerston</td>
<td>5 per day 5 per day None</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whittingham</td>
<td>Approximately 1 per hour 6 per day None</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wooperton</td>
<td>Approximately 1 per hour 6 per day None</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9.6 Shoppers travelling to town by bus
No-one travelled into Wooler by bus on the day of the interview.

9.7 Train Connectivity
There is no train access to Wooler.

9.8 Shoppers travelling to town by train
No respondents travelled into Wooler by train on the day of the interview.

9.9 Perception of Public Transport Services
Over 70% of respondents rated the quality and the regularity of the bus/rail services and the destinations served by public transport as good or very good. Only 2% gave a negative rating (Figure 20).
Figure 20: Percentage of respondents giving each rating for public transport related attributes
(Excludes 'don't know' responses unless otherwise specified)

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires
Base: 61 to 64 respondents depending on attribute (note: this excludes those respondents that gave a 'don't know' response)

9.10 Perception of Accessibility
One person mentioned ‘quality of footpaths’ as being one of the main problems with the shopping experience in Wooler. Another said that ‘road safety’ was a problem.

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

A large proportion of the respondents that live in or around Wooler travelled in by car or walked. The majority remainder of these respondents along with those that lived further away travelled by car.
The remaining couple of respondents were from North Yorkshire. They travelled into Wooler by car (Figure 22).

**Figure 21: Visitors to Wooler within Northumberland and Tyne and Wear**  
(Excludes 'don't know' responses unless otherwise specified)

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires
Figure 22: Visitors to Wooler outside Northumberland and Tyne and Wear
(Excludes 'don't know' responses unless otherwise specified)

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

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires
10.0 ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY OF TOWN

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

10.1 Review of Recent Improvements

The following improvements have happened recently in Wooler:

- Projecting shop signs
- Some shops are involved with the ‘Shop Front Improvement Scheme’ (Figure 23)
- New Gateway Signage on the A697
- Improved planting throughout town resulting in a silver award for 'Britain in Bloom'
- Butler Court, with 15 new affordable homes and social housing.
- A new health centre, and several shop refurbishments – particularly the former Co-op store which is now a thriving retail business.
- A number of new businesses have become established in the main street, including cafes, a women’s outdoor clothing shop and a computer retailer.
Figure 23: Before and After – Car Park and Shop Fronts in Wooler Town Centre
10.2 Shopper perception of the town

10.2.1 Pedestrianisation
Views on pedestrianisation were not specifically asked about in the survey, and no-one mentioned anything relating to this subject.

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 24).

The responses to the two questions were considerably different, although neither received particularly good ratings. Only 3% rated the street furniture as good or very good, whereas 59% gave it a negative rating. For the general state of the street furniture, 30% of respondents gave a positive rating, and 43% gave a negative rating.
Figure 24: Street furniture ratings
(Excludes ‘don’t know’ responses unless otherwise specified)

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires

Base: 70 respondents (street furniture); 83 respondents (general state of street furniture) (note: this excludes those respondents that gave a ‘don’t know’ response)

Two comments asking for “more seating in the summer” were also made in response to how the respondents would make the town centre better.

Open Spaces
59% of the respondents gave a positive rating for the parks and open spaces in Wooler. 10% gave a negative rating (Figure 25).
**Figure 25: Ratings given for parks and open spaces**
(Excludes 'don't know' responses unless otherwise specified)

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

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires, November 2008
Base: 81 respondents (note: this excludes those respondents that gave a 'don't know' response)

**10.2.3 Litter and Cleanliness**
Litter and the overall level of cleanliness were perceived to be good, with a positive rating from over 86% of respondents in both cases and no negative responses (Figure 26).
Figure 26: Ratings given for litter and overall cleanliness
(Excludes 'don't know' responses unless otherwise specified)

![Bar chart showing ratings for litter and overall cleanliness](image)

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires, November 2008

Base: 89 respondents (litter); 90 responses (cleanliness); (note: this excludes those respondents that gave a ‘don’t know’ response)

10.2.4 General Appearance of the Town

The general appearance of the town was rated quite highly by the respondents. The graffiti/fly posting and the general state of the buildings received positive ratings from 92% and 90% of respondents respectively. Shop frontage was given a positive rating from 81% of the respondents (Figure 27).
Figure 27: Ratings given for the appearance of the town
(Excludes ‘don’t know’ responses unless otherwise specified)

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires
Base: 88 to 90 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 28: Analysis of Reported Crimes

Source: Northumbria Police
Figure 29: Crime and Anti Social Behaviour

Looking at Figure 28, it is clear to see that the majority of crime and anti social behaviour in Wooler in 2005 – 2007 occurred on High Street and the main type of crime here was “rowdy and/ or nuisance” of which there were 96 occurrences during this time. There were also a significant number of cases of other types of crime distributed fairly evenly throughout the rest of the town centre.

Looking at the chart (Figure 29), the types of crime have been broken down further. The most frequent type of crime occurring in Wooler Town Centre between 2005 and 2007 was criminal damage of which there were 20 occurrences. The 2nd most frequent type of crime was “criminal damage to vehicles” of which there were 15 occurrences.
11.2 Perception or Fear of Crime

None of the respondents mentioned safety and security when asked about the main problems in Wooler and about how to make the town centre better.

Respondents were asked to rate safety/security during the daytime and the night-time. 95% gave a good or very good rating for the daytime, and only 1% a poor or very poor rating. For the night-time, the ratings were surprisingly similar, with 91% giving a positive rating and only 3% a negative rating (Figure 30).

As can be seen in section 9.2, 67% of respondents felt that the safety/security of the parking facilities was good/very good, and 2% thought they were poor or very poor.

Figure 30: Ratings given for safety/security
(Excludes ‘don’t know’ responses unless otherwise specified)

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires, November 2008

Base : 88 respondents (daytime); 67 respondents (nighttime); (note: this excludes those respondents that gave a ‘don’t know’ response)
11.3 Initiatives to Address Town Centre-Related Crime

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

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

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

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

12.1 Regularity of visits

91% of respondents go to Wooler town centre during the daytime at least once a week, with the most common frequency of visit being every day (66%).

Respondents visit the town centre less often during the evenings, but nearly half (47%) still said that they visit the town at least once a week. Only 17% said that they never visit the town centre during the evening (Figure 31).

Figure 31: Approximately how often are you in Wooler Town Centre?

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

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires, November 2008

Base: 89 respondents (daytime) and 86 respondents (evening)
12.2 Expenditure/ Type of Purchases

Figure 32 shows the proportion of respondents that shop for different items solely in Wooler town centre, and how many go further afield. Figure 33 gives more details about which shopping centres the respondents use.

As can be seen from the tables, Wooler tends to be used mainly for doing top-up food shopping. For other domestic shopping, respondents tend to use Wooler plus other shopping centres. For main food shopping, Wooler is used by 29% of respondents, but Alnwick, Newcastle and Berwick are also commonly used. For all other purchases, the most commonly used shopping centres are Newcastle, Alnwick, the Metro Centre and Berwick.
Figure 32: Proportion of respondents shopping in Wooler 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>Wooler</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wooler only</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wooler + local area(^5)</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wooler + 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-Wooler</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local area (not Wooler)</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixture of places (not Wooler)</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>Don't buy</strong></td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Base</strong></td>
<td>90</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires, November 2008

\(^5\) ‘Local area’ is defined as being one of the following: Wooler, Berwick, Alnwick, Newcastle, Metro Centre, Edinburgh, Galashiels, Kelso, Morpeth, Other Scotland, Other Northumberland
### Figure 33: 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>Wooler</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berwick</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alnwick</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newcastle</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metro Centre</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edinburgh</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morpeth</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>Other</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't Buy</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Base</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires, November 2008

54% of respondents planned to spend less than £25 in Wooler on the day they were interviewed, with a further 18% expecting to spend between £25 and £100. 18% said that they did not plan to spend any money (Figure 34).
Figure 34: How much do you plan to spend in Wooler today?
(Excludes ‘don’t know’ responses unless otherwise specified)

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires

Base: 90 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 35: Wooler Retail Catchment

The map (Figure 35) shows the catchment area for Wooler 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

Wooler town is the only settlement of note within the catchment; the rest of the catchment is home to isolated properties and small hamlets. Altogether, the catchment covers an area of 471.06 sq km, and is home to just over 1,900 people and just less than 900 households. Collectively, these households and residents spend an estimated £7.9 million per annum on retail goods and services, with 37.1%
of expenditure on convenience retail goods (£2.9 million) and 62.9% on comparison retail (£4.97 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 Wooler 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 36: Wooler Catchment Summary Profile**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wooler Catchment Summary Profile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007 Population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,909</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60,796,178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>99.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007 Households</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>893</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26,018,847</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Comparison</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4,967,381.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>171,926,829,196.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>99.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Convenience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,933,392.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>99,464,696,627.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Retail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7,901,023.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>271,391,525,823.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Experian

Total retail expenditure per household per annum within the catchment stands at £8,848, with average comparison retail spend at £5,563 per annum and convenience spend at £3,285 per annum (Figure 37). Whilst total comparison spend per household is just below the UK average, with an index of 99.25, total convenience spend per household in the catchment was just above the UK average, with an index of 101.30.

Figure 37 below provides a breakdown of Comparison retail expenditure within the Wooler catchment and in the UK. Clearly the largest expenditure type within comparison retail is Clothing Material & Garments, accounting for £1.05 million or 21.2% of total Comparison Expenditure within the catchment. Clothing is followed by Audio-visual, photographic and information processing equipment (£605,000 or
12.2%) and Furniture and furnishings; carpets and other floor coverings (£530,000 or 10.7%). The pattern of expenditure nationally is similar, but with some notable differences. Referring to the index, households in Wooler 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 37: 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>10,405.00</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>357,185,476.00</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>100.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appliances for personal care</td>
<td>451,683.00</td>
<td>9.09</td>
<td>15,298,262,865.00</td>
<td>8.90</td>
<td>101.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio-visual, photographic and information processing equipment</td>
<td>604,901.00</td>
<td>12.18</td>
<td>14,926,597,385.00</td>
<td>8.68</td>
<td>139.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bicycles</td>
<td>7,934.00</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>1,345,908,674.00</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>20.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books and stationery</td>
<td>175,565.00</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>6,968,169,166.00</td>
<td>4.05</td>
<td>86.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing materials and garments</td>
<td>1,053,343.00</td>
<td>21.20</td>
<td>37,197,970,202.00</td>
<td>21.64</td>
<td>97.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furniture and furnishings; carpets and other floor coverings</td>
<td>530,386.00</td>
<td>10.68</td>
<td>18,218,052,893.00</td>
<td>10.60</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Games, toys and hobbies; sport and camping; musical instruments</td>
<td>480,313.00</td>
<td>9.67</td>
<td>18,951,364,780.00</td>
<td>11.02</td>
<td>87.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gardens, plants and flowers</td>
<td>81,521.00</td>
<td>1.64</td>
<td>3,402,000,385.00</td>
<td>1.98</td>
<td>82.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glassware, tableware and household utensils</td>
<td>125,641.00</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>4,753,009,610.00</td>
<td>2.76</td>
<td>90.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household textiles</td>
<td>173,680.00</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>5,378,572,610.00</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>110.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewellery, clocks and watches</td>
<td>128,905.00</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>4,533,353,900.00</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>97.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major household appliances (electric or not)</td>
<td>172,171.00</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>4,457,482,024.00</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>132.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major tools and equipment</td>
<td>7,264.00</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>370,528,409.00</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>67.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials for maintenance and repair of the dwelling</td>
<td>131,077.00</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>6,826,571,834.00</td>
<td>3.97</td>
<td>65.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical goods and other pharmaceutical products</td>
<td>112,641.00</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>3,904,354,994.00</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>99.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other personal effects</td>
<td>54,802.00</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>2,276,336,174.00</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td>82.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pets and related products</td>
<td>51,302.00</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>2,747,999,981.00</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>64.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recording media</td>
<td>294,264.00</td>
<td>5.92</td>
<td>7,513,288,250.00</td>
<td>4.37</td>
<td>134.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shoes and other footwear</td>
<td>148,862.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>5,348,647,704.00</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>95.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small electrical household appliances</td>
<td>35,462.00</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>748,364,529.00</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>162.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small tools and miscellaneous accessories</td>
<td>66,197.00</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>3,301,806,678.00</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>68.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Therapeutic appliances and equipment</td>
<td>69,312.00</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>3,101,000,673.00</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>76.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Comparison</td>
<td>4,967,631.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>171,926,829,196.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>99.25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Experian
Figure 38: Expenditure on Comparison Retail

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

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

Index (UK=100)

Source: Experian

Figure 39: Expenditure on Comparison Retail

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

- Small electrical household appliances
- Audio-visual, photographic and information processing equipment
- Recording media
- Major household appliances (electric or not)
- Household textiles
- Appliances for personal care
- 10% of Non-Durable household goods
- Furniture and furnishings; carpets and other floor coverings

Index (UK=100)

Source: Experian
Figure 40 provides a breakdown of Convenience retail expenditure within the Wooler catchment and in the UK. Clearly the largest expenditure type within convenience retail in Wooler is Food and non-alcoholic beverages, accounting for £2.1 million or 70.6% of total Comparison Expenditure within the area. Food and non-alcoholic beverages is followed by Alcohol (£340,000 or 11.6%) and Tobacco (£275,000 or 9.4%). The pattern of expenditure nationally differs a little, especially with regards to the national spend on Newspapers and periodicals; referring to the index, households in Wooler spend proportionately more on Newspapers and periodicals, and less on Alcohol.

### Figure 40: 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>93,640.00</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>3,214,575,062.00</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>100.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol (off-trade)</td>
<td>339,407.00</td>
<td>11.57</td>
<td>12,313,767,021.00</td>
<td>12.38</td>
<td>94.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food and non-alcoholic beverages</td>
<td>2,071,694.00</td>
<td>70.62</td>
<td>70,035,886,128.00</td>
<td>70.41</td>
<td>101.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspapers and periodicals</td>
<td>153,752.00</td>
<td>5.24</td>
<td>4,451,576,478.00</td>
<td>4.48</td>
<td>118.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tobacco</td>
<td>274,900.00</td>
<td>9.37</td>
<td>9,448,891,938.00</td>
<td>9.50</td>
<td>99.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Convenience</td>
<td>2,933,392.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>99,464,696,627.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>101.30</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 Wooler. What the information does not indicate, however, is how much of the expenditure is spent purchasing goods and services in Wooler 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 Wooler catchment that shops in Wooler and the proportion that shop at other centres.
- The percentage of expenditure spent on goods and services in Wooler and the extent to which spending leaks to other centres.
The data in figures 41 and 42 provide a baseline assessment against which future reports will measure changes in performance. The figures do not currently provide a breakdown of leakage for comparison and convenience retail, although it is anticipated that retention will be substantially higher for the latter compared with the former.

With regards to population (Figure 41), Experian estimates that just under 20% of the resident population shop in Wooler (378 or 19.9%). The major shopping destination for people in the catchment area is Berwick-upon-Tweed (1,089 or 55.7%); nowhere else registers more than 6%.

**Figure 41: Population Leakage**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plan Name</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
<th>Population (no.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Berwick-upon-Tweed</td>
<td>55.69</td>
<td>1063</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wooler</strong></td>
<td><strong>19.79</strong></td>
<td><strong>378</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alnwick</td>
<td>5.77</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelso</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newcastle upon Tyne - Central</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Galashiels</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edinburgh - Princes Street</td>
<td>2.36</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jedburgh</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metro Centre</td>
<td>1.48</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belford</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawick</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edinburgh - Kinnaird Park</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morpeth</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seahouses</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashington</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Experian*

The pattern with regards to spend is almost exactly the same (Figure 42). Experian estimates that 19.9% of retail spend by residents and households domiciled within the Wooler catchment, representing £1.6 million per annum, is spent in the town.

However, just under £4.4 million of expenditure is lost to Berwick-upon-Tweed (55.7%), with all other destinations pulling just under £2.0 million (24.5%) away from Wooler but no one destination managing to take more than 5.75% of the overall total. 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 42: Spend Leakage**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plan Name</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
<th>Spend (£)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Berwick-upon-Tweed</td>
<td>55.66</td>
<td>4,397,835</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wooler</strong></td>
<td>19.89</td>
<td><strong>1,571,245</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alnwick</td>
<td>5.74</td>
<td>453,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelso</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>286,738</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newcastle upon Tyne - Central</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>278,969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Galashiels</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>248,173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edinburgh - Princes Street</td>
<td>2.36</td>
<td>186,441</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jedburgh</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>123,121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metro Centre</td>
<td>1.48</td>
<td>116,712</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belford</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>99,380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawick</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>58,835</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edinburgh - Kinnaird Park</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>45,931</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morpeth</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>27,494</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seahouses</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>4,587</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Experian*

Figure 43 shows the Wooler catchment area and is colour coded to indicate the proportion of retail expenditure that is spent by the resident population in Wooler. From the map, it can be seen that households located within Wooler and in the surrounding hinterland spend 40-50% of their total retail expenditure in Wooler, and 20-30% in areas to the East between Wooler and Belford. Furthermore Wooler also attracts those from the North, reaching over the Scottish border at Coldstream.
Figure 43: Proportion of Retail Expenditure

Source: Experian

12.6 Opinions on and use of Leisure and Entertainment

6% of respondents said that they were in Wooler town centre for leisure on the day of the interview.

Events attended

88% of the respondents had attended at least one of the events asked about in the questionnaire. The most well attended event was the Glendale Show (84%) (Figure 44).
Figure 44: 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>Glendale Festival</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wooler Carnival</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glendale Show</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continental Market</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have not attended any</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires, November 2008
Base: 90 respondents

Eating and drinking
The ratings for the eating and drinking venues in Wooler differed considerably by the type of venue. The coffee shops, restaurants/bistros and pubs/clubs were all rated fairly well (66%, 59% and 49% positive ratings respectively).

However, the takeaways and sandwich shops were rated very poorly. Only 20% and 16% of respondents gave positive ratings for these respective venues and 25%/28% gave negative ratings (Figure 45).
Figure 45: How would you rate the following venues for eating and drinking in Wooler?

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

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires, November 2008

Base: 57 to 90 respondents depending on type of venue (note: this excludes those respondents that gave a ‘don’t know’ response)

Arts and leisure facilities

The Cheviot Centre received the highest ratings of all the arts and leisure facilities asked about in the questionnaire (87% of respondents gave positive ratings). The lowest rating was given for Glendale Hall (46% positive ratings and 18% negative ratings) (Figure 46).
Figure 46: How would you rate the following arts and leisure facilities in Wooler?

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

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires

Base: 78 to 82 depending on facility (note: this excludes those respondents that gave a ‘don’t know’ response)

When asked how they would rate Wooler as a place to enjoy themselves, less than half (42%) of respondents gave a good or very good rating. 10% gave a poor or very poor rating (Figure 47).
Figure 47: How do you rate Wooler as a place to enjoy yourself?  
(Excludes ‘don’t know’ responses unless otherwise specified)

![Pie chart showing ratings of Wooler as a place to enjoy yourself]

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires, November 2008

Base: 90 (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, 29% gave an answer relating to improving the leisure facilities.

12.7 The Future: what will improve the town as a place to shop or visit?
Figures 48 and 49 suggest that in order to improve the town as a place to shop or visit, there are two issues that need to be addressed:

- **The retail offer**
  This is covered in more detail below.

- **The leisure facilities**
  29% of respondents said that the leisure facilities need to be improved in order to make the town centre better.
In addition, the analysis has shown that there are a further two issues that respondents feel quite negative about:

- **The street furniture**
  59% of respondents rated the street furniture as poor or very poor, and 43% gave a negative rating for the general state of the street furniture.

- **Takeaways and sandwich shops**
  Over one quarter of respondents rated these types of eating venue as poor or very poor. Less than one quarter gave a positive rating.

**Figure 48: How would you make this town centre better?**
(Excludes ‘don’t know’ responses unless otherwise specified)

![Bar chart showing responses]

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires

*Base: 89 respondents*
Figure 49: What are the main problems with the shopping experience in Wooler town centre?

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires

*Base: 90 respondents*

Retail

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

- 48% of respondents said that one of the main problems with the shopping experience in Wooler town centre was the limited offer or range of shops/goods.
- 60% of respondents said that, in order to make the town centre better, the retail offer should be improved.
- When asked to rate Wooler as a place to shop, only 23% gave a positive rating whereas 26% gave a negative rating.
- 21% of respondents disagreed that Wooler offers a wide choice of quality shops. 43% agreed.
- As section 12.2 shows, the majority of respondents choose to shop away from Wooler for most items.
- A number of comments were made about Wooler being expensive. These comments can be found in Appendix 2, but include: “Co-op very expensive”, “overpriced”, “too expensive”.

Respondents were also asked about the types of improvement that they would like to see to the retail offer in Wooler town centre. Just over one third (39%) of respondents said that they would like an increase in the variety of shops, and just under one third (31%) said that they would like more shops offering local produce (Figure 50).

**Figure 50: What improvements would you like to see to the retail offer in Wooler?**

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

![Bar chart showing responses to what improvements respondents would like to see to the retail offer in Wooler.](chart.png)

Source: Northumberland Infonet Shopper Questionnaires

*Base: 90 respondents*
13.0 INVESTMENT

The following developments are proposed for Wooler Town Centre;

- Glendale Gateway Trust are trying to procure two sites in Wooler from the local authority and aim to use one of the sites to develop new sports facilities and the other to develop as an affordable housing site.
- The Trust are also keen to further develop the retail infrastructure of the Market Town to bring in new businesses and stimulate employment opportunities.
**14.0 CONCLUSION**

There are currently various developments proposed in Wooler Town Centre. Whilst some of the regeneration is residential properties and sports facilities, Glendale Gateway Trust are also keen to further develop the retail infrastructure which is likely to have an impact on the town centre. These proposed developments should therefore be taken into consideration when drawing conclusions about the health of the Town Centre.

In the Town Centre, 35% of the floorspace use was for retail (Figure 3). However, despite this relatively low percentage of retail floorspace in comparison with some of Northumberland’s other town centres, shopper’s perceptions of the range of retail provision were considerably high with 43% agreeing or strongly agreeing to the statement “Wooler offers a wide choice of quality shops”, compared to 21% 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, such as Newcastle, 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 Wooler.

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 Wooler.
There was 8% of vacant floorspace in Wooler (see Figure 11). 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 shoppers interviewed with 96% (of those travelling by car) finding it very or fairly easy (Figure 14). Further, 52% of these shoppers felt that the parking in the town centre was good and 45% felt it was OK (Figure 18). Wooler also has fairly good bus connectivity, which is shown in Figures 19 respectively by the frequency and number of destinations reached from Wooler. There is no train access to Wooler though. No shoppers travelled to Wooler by public transport on the day of the shoppers’ interviews, with the majority either travelling by car (54% of respondents) or walking (38% of respondents). However when asked their overall perception of the quality, regularity and destinations served by public transport in the shoppers’ interviews, respondents were positive. Over 70% of respondents rated the quality and the regularity of the bus/rail services and the destinations served by public transport as good or very good.

When looking at retaining shopper spend, just 20% of Wooler residents shopped in Wooler. The majority of expenditure (56%) was lost to Berwick-upon-Tweed (Figure 42). This is most likely because it is the largest town in Wooler’s vicinity with a wider range of shops and services. More specifically, figure 33 shows that shoppers survey respondents were most likely to stay in Wooler for top-up food shopping (81% of respondents) and other domestic products (59% of respondents), but travel to Berwick-upon-Tweed for items such as electrical or DIY goods (20% and 15% respectively). Figure 42 also showed that just 6% of expenditure was lost to Alnwick, however, Figure 33 shows that based on shoppers survey responses, shoppers were more likely to visit Alnwick than Wooler or Berwick-upon-Tweed for main food shopping, clothes, furniture/ carpets and CDs/ DVDs.

The responses from shoppers coupled with the various aspects that make up a town centre, suggest that generally Wooler was in reasonable health. Although there have been some negative responses from the shoppers’ surveys with regards to the retail offer in general, hopefully the Glendale Gateway Trust will be successful in
developing the retail infrastructure and attracting new businesses which should show some improvements in forthcoming years.
15.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

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

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

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

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

Section 9, Accessibility, gathered all of the destinations reached from Wooler 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 Wooler Town Centre?

• Co-op is expensive
• Co-op very expensive
• Expensive
• Quite expensive (2 responses)
• Too expensive
• Overpriced
• Prices
• Sometimes Illegal Parking

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

Clothes and shoes
• Clothes (2 responses)
• Clothes and Kidswear
• Clothes shops
• Clothing
• Designer Shop
• Dorothy Perkins, Wallis, River Island, Next
• Mens Clothing
• Decent shoe shops with decent prices
• Nice shoe shops
• Shoe Shop
• Shoe shops
• Clothes and shoes
Food shops

- Food - Deli
- Food shops, Fresh Fish
- Food Stores
- Greengrocer
- M & S food
- M & S Food
- M & S Simply Food
- Specialist Foods
- Wider variety of food shops

Mixture of shops

- M & S Food, clothes, Kids clothes
- More quality chain stores, specialist Food shops
- Shoe Shops and a Deli
- HMV and Clothes
- Fishmongers, Greengrocer and Kids wear
- Clothing and shoes, childrens wear and gifts
- Clothes and Music
- Clothes, shoes, babywear and gifts
- Clothes/Kids, Store/Music

Other

- Specialist electrical shops - fat chance!
- Music Shop
- M & S
- Book Exchange neeed
- Cheaper Prices
- Nice as it is
- Quality shops but not a wide variety
Verbatim responses to ‘Q23 How would you make this town centre better?’

- More seating in the summer
- More seats in the summer
- Lower prices
- Wouldn't like to change it very much
- Don't know of any others
The Corporate Research Unit

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