

ALNWICK TOWN CENTRE HEALTH CHECK REPORT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 51% of the floorspace in Alnwick was for retail.
- Shopper's perceptions of the range of retail provision was somewhat negative - 40% did not think Alnwick offered a wide choice of shops.
- Shopper's felt that the range and choice of shops needed to be improved.
- There were more comparison retail (clothing, household goods, furniture, DIY and electrical goods) than convenience or retail service.
- There was 5% of vacant floorspace in Alnwick.
- The amount of vacant floorspace had reduced when looking at property flows. This was a result of more buildings changing from being vacant to occupied from 2007 to 2008, than occupied to vacant.
- 78% of shoppers interviewed found it easy to travel into the town centre by car.
- 49% of these shoppers felt that the parking in the town centre was either poor or very poor.
- 29 shoppers commented on the lack of parking and a further 9 said parking in general was a problem.
- Alnwick also has good bus connectivity by the frequency and number of destinations reached from Alnwick.
- 79% of shoppers interviewed found it easy to travel into the town centre by bus.
- Approximately one quarter of respondents rating the quality, regularity and destinations served by public transport negatively.
- 51% of Alnwick residents shopped in Alnwick. 12% of expenditure was lost to Newcastle and a further 7% to the Metro Centre.

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 Alnwick on shopper's overall perception of the town centre.