

ASHINGTON TOWN CENTRE HEALTH CHECK REPORT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 59% of the floorspace use in Ashington was for retail.
- Shopper's perceptions of the range of retail provision was somewhat negative - 52% did not think that Ashington offered a wide choice of shops.
- There were more comparison retail (clothing, household goods, furniture, DIY and electrical goods) than convenience or retail service.
- There was 7% of vacant floorspace in Ashington.
- Between 2007 and 2008, the amount of vacant floorspace had remained the same when looking at property flows.
- 74% of shoppers interviewed found it easy to travel into the town centre by car.
- Ashington also has good bus connectivity with a wide range of destinations reached.
- 25% of shoppers interviewed found it easy to travel into the town centre by bus.
- 21% of Ashington residents shopped in Newcastle and only 20% in Ashington.

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