

HEXHAM TOWN CENTRE HEALTH CHECK REPORT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

Recommendations

- The town centre should be monitored over a number of years to track changes.
- Comparisons can also be made with towns which have similar functions.
- Use class data will take all floors (from which businesses operate) within town centre buildings into consideration, as opposed to solely the ground floor.
- Investigate the location and quantity residential properties within the town centre.

- Work in partnership with local estate agents to gain further insight on property enquiries received.
- Align footfall counts across all town centres to enable fair comparisons. Additionally, footfalls to take place on Sunday to enable a weekly footfall to be estimated.
- A map to show all bus and train routes would prove useful in the analysis process.
- Investigate impact of crime initiatives on shopper's perception of crime and safety within the town centre.
- Investigate impact of future proposals for Hexham on shopper's overall perception of the town centre.