

HECKMONDWIKE TOWN CENTRE ANNUAL STATEMENT OF KEY ECONOMIC INDICATORS SEPTEMBER 2004

INTRODUCTION

Since 1996, Planning Services of Kirklees M.C. has undertaken a programme of research into the health and vitality of shopping centres in the District. The annual monitoring of key performance indicators enables the role of individual town centres to be assessed, identifying the scope for change, renewal and diversification.

The first full audit for Heckmondwike town centre was published in November 1997. Changes that have taken place over the last 7 years have been examined in annual statements of key economic indicators, of which this is the seventh. The indicators of vitality and viability covered here are:

- Shop unit and floorspace occupancy,
- Vacancy rates,
- Pedestrian footfall,
- Retail development in the pipeline,
- Retailer demand, and
- Prime retail rents.

FLOORSPACE, SHOP UNITS AND VACANCY

A survey of occupancy updated in July 2004 recorded that Heckmondwike town centre provides a total of 11,347 sq.m. (122,094 sq.ft.) of net retail floorspace and 163 shop and service units. Figures 1 and 2 illustrate the changes in both retail floorspace and shop unit occupancy since 2000.

Figure 1: Heckmondwike shop unit statistics

	Convenience	Comparison ¹	Service	Vacant	TOTAL
2000	11 (6.7%)	75 (45.7%)	46 (28.0%)	32 (19.6%)	164 (100%)
2001	11 (6.7%)	82 (50.0%)	45 (27.4%)	26 (15.9%)	164 (100%)
2002	11 (6.7%)	80 (48.5%)	42 (25.4%)	32 (19.4%)	165 (100%)
2003	9 (5.6%)	74 (45.7%)	44 (27.1%)	35 (21.6%)	162 (100%)
2004	9 (5.5%)	73 (44.8%)	48 (29.5%)	33 (20.2%)	163 (100%)
% change 2003-04	0	-1.4	+9.1	-5.7	+0.6

There has been a decline in vacancy within the centre since the 2003 assessment in terms of both floorspace and shop units. This is partly due to the opening of one or two new retailers and a number of service uses. Service use occupancy has increased over the last few years and now accounts for nearly 30% of all units in the town centre.

¹ Including semi-retail uses e.g. travel agents, opticians.

Vacancy rates within the town centre remain well above the national average.

Figure 2: Heckmondwike floorspace statistics (sq.m. net)

	Convenience	Comparison	Vacant	TOTAL
2000	4,255 (41.5%)	4,562 (44.5%)	1,443 (14.0%)	10,260 (100%)
2001	5,068 (43.1%)	5,214 (44.4%)	1,469 (12.5%)	11,751 (100%)
2002	5,068 (42.7%)	5,264 (44.3%)	1,538 (13.0%)	11,870 (100%)
2003	4,896 (42.8%)	4,892 (42.8%)	1,641 (14.4%)	11,429 (100%)
2004	4,795 (42.2%)	4,968 (43.8%)	1,584 (14.0%)	11,347 (100%)
% change 2003-04	-2.1	+1.6	-3.5	-0.7

Figure 3 shows Heckmondwike's occupancy statistics in relation to nearby towns. The town continues to exhibit the highest proportion of convenience floorspace of the centres shown due to the presence of Morrisons. It also has the highest proportion of vacant units.

Figure 3: Comparisons² with nearby towns (sq.m. net)

	Heck'wike	Batley	Cleckheaton	Dewsbury	Holmfirth
Convenience	4,795 42.2%	6,145 25.3%	1,583 18.6%	10,051 23.1%	1,814 27.9%
Comparison	4,968 43.8%	16,226 66.9%	5,403 63.6%	29,345 67.4%	4,020 61.8%
Vacant	1,584 14.0%	1,893 7.8%	1,509 17.8%	4,120 9.5%	667 10.3%
Total retail floorspace	11,347 (100%)	24,265 (100%)	8,495 (100%)	43,516 (100%)	6,501 (100%)
Vacant units	33 20.2%	23 11.4%	23 13.4%	55 15.9%	7 4.5%
Total no. of units	163 (100%)	202 (100%)	171 (100%)	345 (100%)	157 (100%)

Below: Heckmondwike retailing on Northgate and Market Place



² Figures relate to the floorspace contained within the Town Centre Audit Study Boundary of each centre at the most recent published survey date.

PEDESTRIAN FOOTFALL

Since 1995, pedestrian footfall counts have been undertaken annually in Heckmondwike town centre to measure the volume and pattern of visitor/shopper movement. These assessments cover 7 locations including key access points into the town centre, the entrance to Morrisons and the pedestrian links from the foodstore to the rest of the town centre. Morning and afternoon hour-sample surveys are undertaken on two weekdays (market day and non-market day) and a Saturday. Figure 4 gives the summer 2004 pedestrian count results and the changes recorded since 2002.

Figure 4: Heckmondwike pedestrian numbers 2003-04³

		2002	2003	2004	% change (03-04)
Market day	a.m.	1619	1812	1436	-20.8
	p.m.	1027	943	1093	+15.9
Non-market day	a.m.	1295	1307	1231	-5.8
	p.m.	810	1151	1169	+1.6
Saturday	a.m.	1488	1597	1830	+14.6
	p.m.	1239	1464	1229	-16.1
TOTAL (into town only)		7478	8274	7988	-3.5

Overall, Heckmondwike pedestrian numbers are 3.5% lower than those recorded 12 months ago, although numbers are greater than those recorded in 2002. Much of this decline occurred on both a Market day morning and Saturday afternoon. However, large increases in footfall occurred on Market day afternoon and Saturday morning.

Figure 5: The pattern of footfall 1997 – 2004

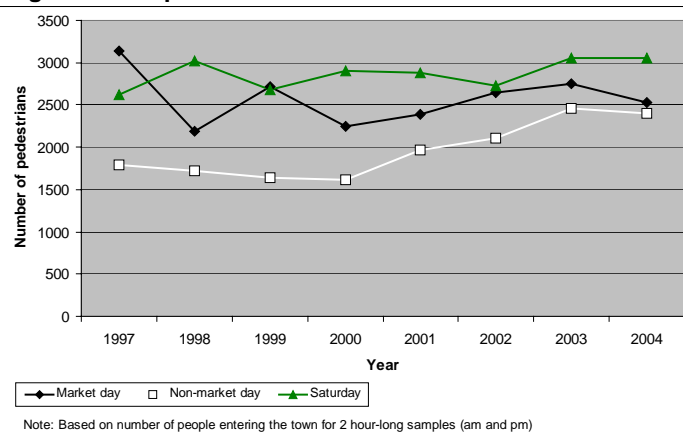
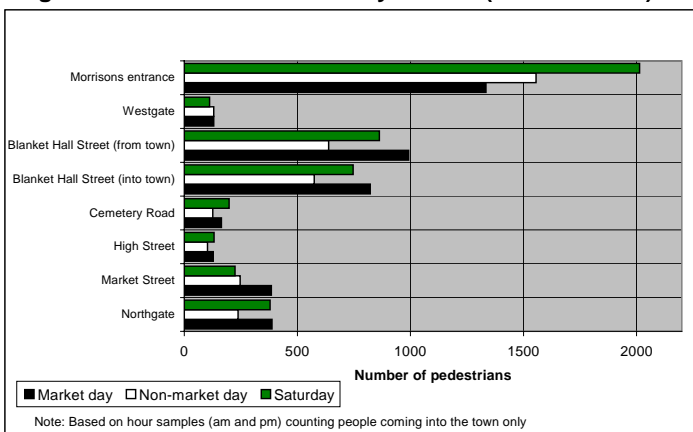


Figure 6: Pedestrian numbers by street⁴ (summer 2004)



³ Morning counts were conducted for 1 hour between 10:30 and 11:30. Afternoon counts were conducted for 1 hour between 2:30 and 3:30. Totals represent the number of people entering the town and exclude the Blanket Hall Street count points.

⁴ All count points record pedestrians coming INTO the town only, unless otherwise stated.

It is worth noting that, unlike previous counts, the Morrisons store had a lower footfall on market day than non-market day. The Morrisons car park was also used more on the non-market day count. This may be an anomaly. However, to recognise any change in the pattern of use of the town this count point will be closely monitored next year.

Overall, pedestrian numbers on a market day are now only slightly higher than those on a non-market day. This will be closely monitored over the next few years.

RETAIL DEVELOPMENT IN THE PIPELINE

With the exception of changes to shop fronts and minor refurbishment works, there has been little retail development in Heckmondwike during the last 12 months.

In terms of non-retail developments, general improvements to the town centre include the refurbishment of the clock in Market Place. The installation of CCTV camera coverage is proposed for later in 2004. There are also a number of schemes for residential conversion currently under construction or proposed within the centre.

Heckmondwike currently has a number of issues relating to streetscape and building quality. The Council, alongside local groups, will endeavour to examine potential improvements to attract more retailers to the town centre.

RETAILER DEMAND

An assessment of retailer demand, undertaken in August 2004, identified no registered retail requirements for representation in Heckmondwike. However, it is important to note that there may be retailers with a requirement for Heckmondwike who have not yet registered their interest.

Below: Retail unit and covered market in Heckmondwike



PRIME RETAIL RENTAL LEVELS

Prime retail rents have remained unchanged over the past 12 months. Morrisons shop units development continues to secure the highest rents in the town of approximately £237 - £269 per sq.m. (£22 - 25 per sq.ft.). Elsewhere in the town rents currently achieve a maximum of £204 per sq.m. (£19 per sq.ft.).

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