



HOLMFIRTH TOWN CENTRE ANNUAL STATEMENT OF KEY ECONOMIC INDICATORS SEPTEMBER 2005

Introduction

The health and vitality of shopping centres in the Kirklees district is monitored through a yearly audit programme undertaken by the Town Centres Team of Planning Services. Analysis of the performance data recorded allows the role of individual town centres to be assessed, identifying the scope for change, renewal and diversification.

This document is the fifth annual publication which briefly examines 6 indicators of health and vitality for Holmfirth town centre. The indicators covered are:

- Shop unit and floorspace occupancy,
- Vacancy rates,
- Pedestrian footfall,
- Development information
- Retailer demand, and;
- Prime retail rental levels.

Floorspace, Shop Units and Vacancy

In August 2005, a survey of shop unit occupancy within the Holmfirth study area (shown in map 1, page 8) revealed that the centre provides a total of 6,368 sq.m (68,520 sq.ft.) of net retail floorspace, and 152 shop units.

Holmfirth has seen a number of small scale changes in occupancy during the last 12 months. The Co-op foodstore accounts for 71% of the convenience goods floorspace in the study boundary.

Overall, the centre has seen a decrease in the number of small shop units during the last 12 months, with a 2.0% decrease in sales floorspace as illustrated by figure 1. The number of vacant units in the centre has increased from 7 to 9, however, the majority of these units are located outside the main shopping area and the centre remains well below the national average for shop unit vacancy as shown in figure 2 overleaf.

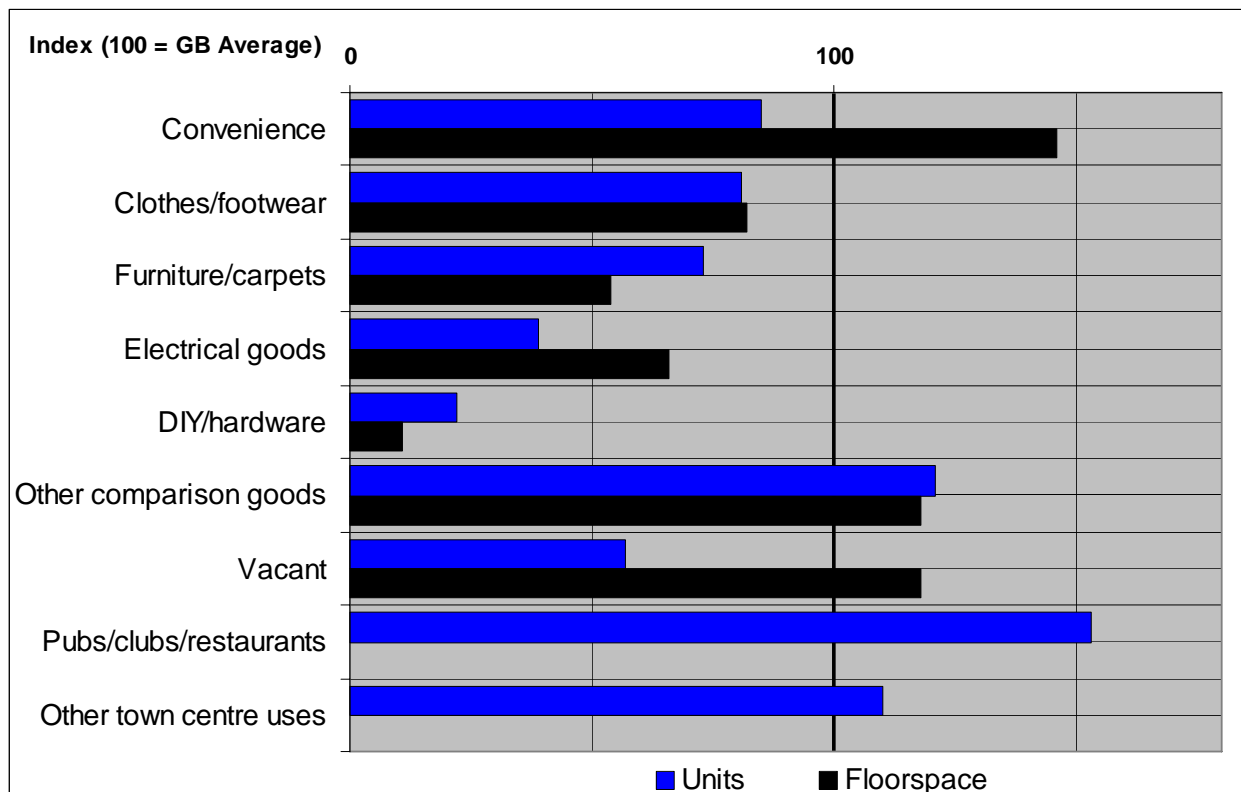


Comparison retailers on Huddersfield Road

Figure 1: Holmfirth shop unit / floorspace statistics

	2004		2005		% change 04-05	
	Sales fl'space '000 sq.m	Shop units	Sales fl'space '000 sq.m	Shop units	Sales fl'space '000 sq.m	Shop units
Convenience (food)	1,814 (27.9%)	12 (7.6%)	1687 (26.5%)	12 (7.9%)	-7.0%	0
Comparison¹ (non-food)	4,020 (61.8%)	89 (56.7%)	3954 (62.1%)	85 (55.9%)	-1.6%	-4.5%
Service	N/A	49 (31.2%)	N/A	46 (30.3%)	N/A	-6.1%
Vacant	667 (10.3%)	7 (4.5%)	727 (11.4%)	9 (5.9%)	+8.9%	+28.6%
TOTAL	6,501 (100%)	157 (100%)	6,368 (100%)	152 (100%)	-2.0%	-3.2%

Figure 2: Comparison with national averages²



The former Lodges building which has been vacant since the late 1990's accounts for 66% of vacant floorspace thus the centre remains above the national average. However, two previously vacant units in the shopping core, (the Victoria Street and Huddersfield Road area) have been occupied by comparison goods retailers.

The centre has an under representation of electrical goods and DIY/hardware retailers in comparison to the national average, however, there is a 'traditional' hardware store located in Victoria square which is adjacent to the main shopping area.



'Traditional' Hardware Store, Victoria Square

Holmfirth has been made famous by the BBC TV series 'Last of the Summer Wine' which is filmed in the centre and surrounding area. This may account for the strong representation of comparison goods retailers selling arts and crafts, gifts and antiques. In addition, the number of café's, pubs and restaurants is well above the national average.

Figure 3: Floorspace (sq.m.) and unit comparisons³

	Holmfirth	Cleckheaton	Heckmondwike
Convenience	1687 (26.5%)	1,950 (23.5%)	4,776 (42.0%)
Comparison¹	3954 (62.1%)	5,580 (67.5%)	5,091 (44.8%)
Vacant	727 (11.4%)	741 (9.0%)	1,508 (13.2%)
Total Retail Floorspace	6,368 (100%)	8,271 (100%)	11,375 (100%)
No. of Vacant Units	9 (5.9%)	12 (7.3%)	35 (21.8%)
Total No. of Units	152 (100%)	165 (100%)	160 (100%)

Pedestrian footfall

Counts of the number of people visiting Holmfirth town centre in spring and summer have been undertaken annually since 2001. Initially, eight count points were strategically placed at major thoroughfares around the centre to monitor the volume and pattern of pedestrian movement. A ninth count point was added in 2004 following the completion of a new footbridge between the Old Bridge Hotel and the Bus Station. The count points are shown on map 1, page 7.



Old Bridge Hotel

Results for hour long samples taken in spring and summer are shown in figure 4 with summer highlighted in a darker grey. These provide a 'snapshot' of pedestrian movement in and out of the tourist season.

Victoria Street recorded the highest pedestrian movement for three out of the four days surveyed in both March and August. The Cooper Lane junction with Huddersfield Road also recorded significant pedestrian movement over all the days surveyed.

Non-market day recorded the lowest footfall in the centre in spring with Market day recording the lowest footfall in summer. Overall, pedestrian numbers were 2.2% higher on Market day than non-market day.



Victoria Street

Figure 4: Pedestrian counts spring and summer 2005⁴

Day	Non-Market Day		Market Day		Saturday		Sunday	
Month	Mar	Aug	Mar	Aug	Mar	Aug	Mar	Aug
Weather	Snow	Dry/ warm	Cold/ dry	Sunny/ warm	Cold/ dry	Rain	Cold/ sunny	Dry
1. Co-op (in only)	306	344	322	437	663	512	508	370
2. Cooper Lane Jct.	390	661	433	827	1130	949	489	600
3. Upperthong Lane jct.	205	704	316	323	449	413	377	431
4. Victoria Street	662	979	790	872	965	1084	578	778
5. Hollowgate	333	547	413	515	768	516	603	927
6. Dunford Road	88	137	130	70	130	135	265	167
7. Towngate (in only)	47	77	61	82	76	133	83	127
8. Station Road	220	271	183	327	412	350	295	337
TOTAL	2251	3720	2648	3453	4593	4092	3198	3737
9. Footbridge (Old Bridge Hotel)	256	365	337	366	361	282	249	375

Saturday remains the most popular day for pedestrians/shoppers visiting the centre. The number of people arriving by bus is significantly higher in summer as identified by the Towngate count point which suggests that the increase in pedestrian footfall could be predominantly due to tourists arriving by coach.



Towngate

The centre experienced a lunchtime pedestrian footfall peak on all days surveyed in summer with the exception of Sunday which had a gradual rise throughout the day as illustrated by figure 5.

Figure 6 shows that Holmfirth sustains high pedestrian numbers during winter and summer periods. This indicates that the centre is not only an important summer tourist destination, but also plays an important role as a local shopping centre throughout the year. This is further evidenced by the consistently high numbers of people visiting the Co-op foodstore both on foot and by car.



Co-op, Crown Bottom

Figure 5: Daily Profile for summer 2005

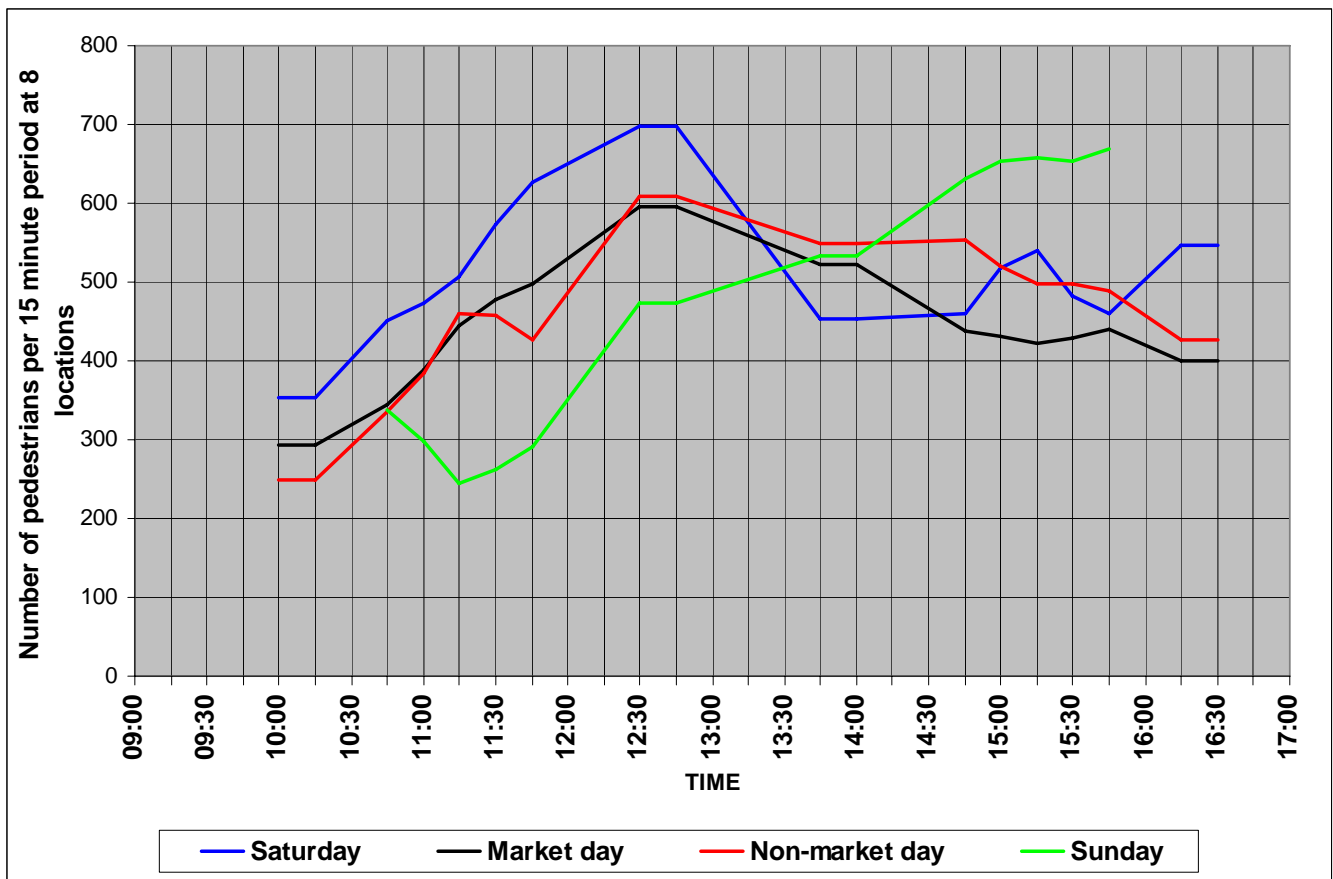
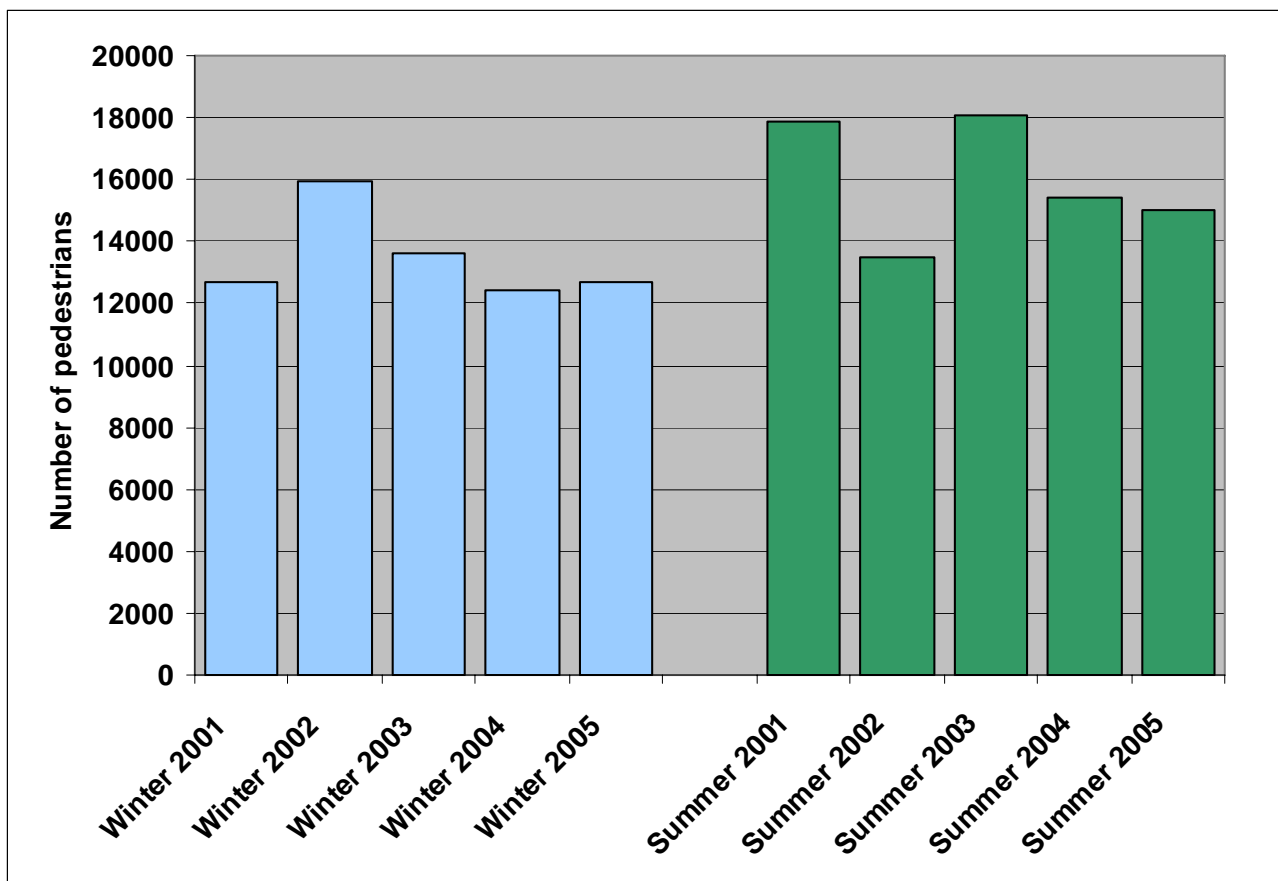


Figure 6: Pedestrian time series data 2001-2005



Development Information

Holmfirth town centre is located within a conservation area.

Over the last 12 months, retail development activity in the centre has continued to be small scale conversion/refurbishment schemes.

A number of proposals for the former Lodges building in Towngate have been put forward in recent years. The latest proposals are for a small shopping arcade with flats.

2005 has seen the completion of a range of environmental initiatives as part of the Local Public Service Agreement (LPSA).

Townscape improvements have been undertaken in Norridge Bottom, Huddersfield Road and Hollowgate as part of this programme of works.



Former Lodges Building, Towngate



Hollowgate

Retail Demand

A general assessment of demand for retail and leisure floorspace in Holmfirth was undertaken in September 2005. The number of companies who have expressed an interest in being represented in the town and their maximum floorspace requirements are shown in figure 7.

Two separate interests have been recorded, both of which would be new companies to the town requiring a maximum total floorspace of 372 sq.m. (4,000 sq ft).

Figure 7: Retail / leisure requirements 2005

Category	Number of registered interests	Maximum floorspace requirement sq.m. (sq.ft)
Specialist comparison	1	279 (3,000)
Personal retail services	1	93 (1,000)
TOTAL	2	372 (4,000)

Source: FOCUS Information Ltd and KMC

Further requirements may exist from other retailers who wish to relocate or establish themselves within the town centre but have not registered their interests. This assessment does not address the demand for office accommodation from financial, professional or other commercial uses.

Prime Retail Rental Levels

Due to the size of the town centre, the nature of occupancy and the few property transactions that have taken place, information on rental levels is difficult to obtain.

Retail rents within the shopping core, (the Victoria Street / Huddersfield Road area) are in the region of £129 - £194 per sq.m. (£12- £18 per sq.ft.). In peripheral shopping locations, rents of £54 per sq.m (£5 per sq.ft) can still be found.

Rents are very much influenced by the quality of accommodation provided and, in the case of premises outside the shopping core, by the proximity of specific "attractions" such as Nora Batty's steps.



Nora Batty's Steps



Towngate

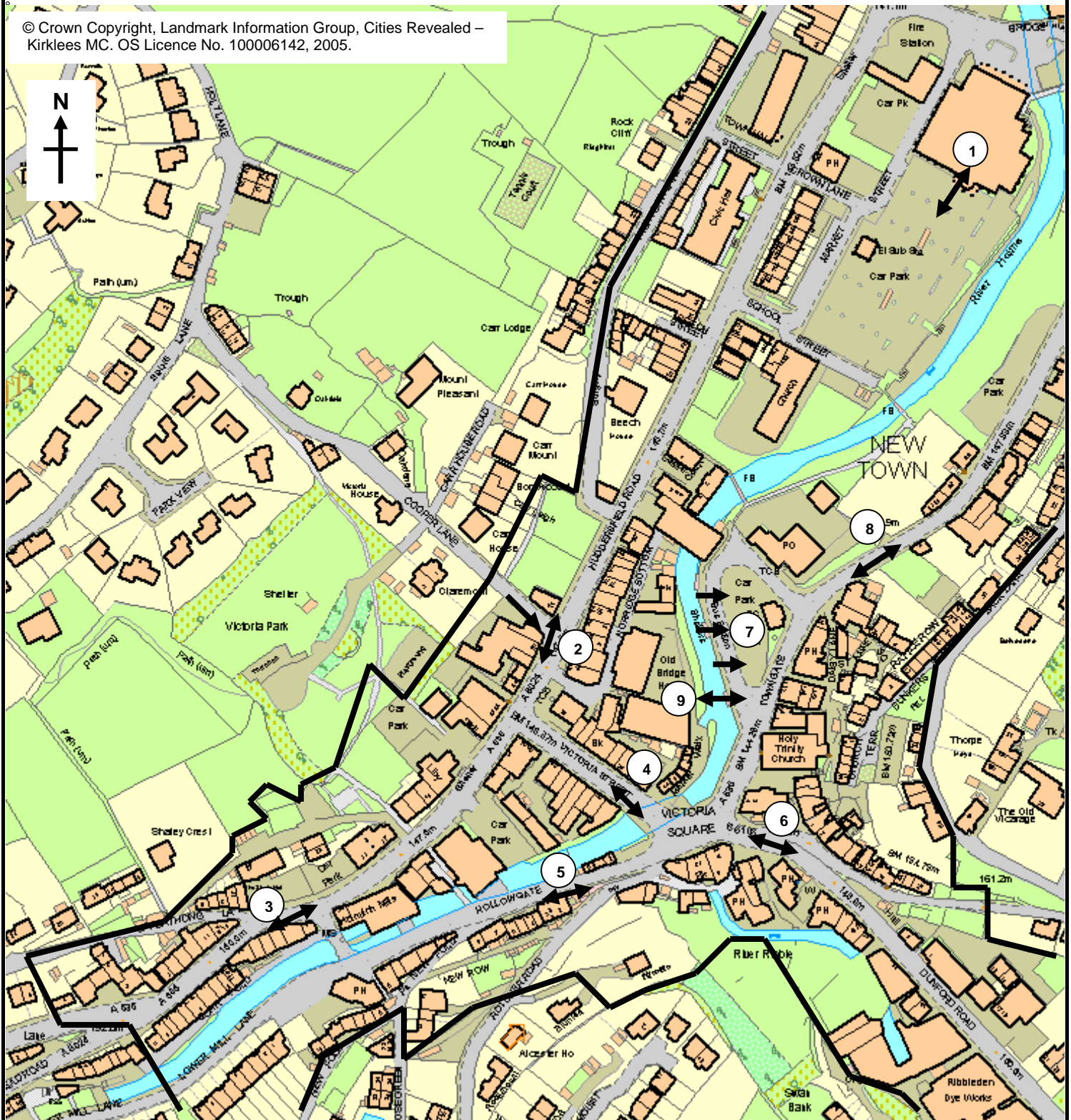
Notes:

- ¹ Comparison goods figures include A1 uses such as opticians and travel agents etc.
- ² Based on the UK average, 100 being the average proportion of floorspace or number of units for certain categories of use in a UK town, not including markets.
- ³ Figures relate to the floorspace contained within the Town Centre Audit Study Boundary of each centre at the most recent published survey date.
- ⁴ Hour counts are conducted for 1 hour in the morning (10.30-11.30) and 1 hour in the afternoon (2.30-3.30). Counts in all directions, unless otherwise stated.

Although every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the data and statements contained within this publication, Planning Services does not accept responsibility for any errors or inaccuracies which may have occurred therein.

Holmfirth Town Centre study area and pedestrian count points

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Not to Scale

KEY:



Position/direction of count



Study boundary

1. Co-op main entrance (in only)
2. Huddersfield Rd / Cooper Lane (3 ways)
3. Upperthong Lane / Huddersfield Rd (2 ways)
4. Victoria Street (2 ways)
5. Hollowgate (2 ways)
6. Dunford Road (2 ways)
7. Towngate (people entering town by bus)
8. Station Road (2 ways)
9. New Bridge (2 ways)



Norridge Bottom

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