Batley Town Centre Health check

2026

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Batley Town Centre

Batley is traditionally a market town, with a compact and walkable layout focused around Commercial Street and Market Place. The town centre contains a mix of retail, service, and community uses that meet day-to-day needs, with the Tesco, Asda and Aldi stores providing strong convenience anchors.

The open market operates mostly on Fridays from Market Place, opposite the Grade II Listed Batley Town Hall, which provides an important civic and architectural focal point. Other notable historic buildings include Batley Baths on Cambridge Street. Together, these heritage assets contribute to the town's distinct historic character.

The town centre offers a range of independent shops, cafes, and service outlets, complemented by some national retailers like Card Factory and Savers. Service uses such as hair and beauty salons, takeaways, and financial services are also represented, contributing to the Batley's community role. Batley Plaza is a key retail and leisure development which provides for a unique offer balanced towards local traders.

Figure 1 Batley's Tesco superstore is its largest



Figure 2 Batley Plaza opened in 2021 and



Figure 3The Grade II Listed Batley Town Hall is



Figure 4 Commercial Street comprises the main



Table 1 Batley Town Centre Floorspace Composition

GOAD Category	Floorspace at 2013 (sq.m)	Floorspace at 2013 (%)	Floorspace UK Average at 2013 (%)	Floorspace at 2025 (sq.m)	Floorspace at 2025 (%)	Floorspace UK Average at 2025 (%)
Comparison	3,800	14.7	36.4	2.683	9.3	28.7
Convenience	12,860	14.9	14.4	12,800	44.5	15.3
Financial & Business	1,810	7.0	8.3	558	1.9	6.1
Leisure	2,840	11.0	22.7	6,593	22.9	27.7
Retail Service	2,010	7.8	7.2	2,997	10.4	7.2
Vacant	2,460	9.5	10.1	3,109	10.8	14.5
Total	**25,780**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**28,739**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Source: Composition of town centre based on boundary as defined by Experian Goad and derived from Nexus Planning Survey of April 2025; 2013 data from WYG's Retail Capacity Study for Kirklees District (February 2014); UK Average from Experian Goad Report of May 2025.

Table 2 Batley Town Centre Unit Composition

GOAD Category	Units at 2013 (no.)	Units at 2013 (%)	Units UK Average at 2013 (%)	Units at 2025 (no.)	Units at 2025 (%)	Units UK Average at 2025 (%)
Comparison	31	24.2	33.0	30	18.0	26.1
Convenience	13	10.2	8.0	21	12.6	9.3
Financial & Business	13	10.2	11.0	7	4.2	7.9
Leisure	21	16.4	21.9	54	32.3	26.5
Retail Service	27	21.1	13.6	27	16.2	15.8
Vacant	23	18.0	12.2	28	16.8	14.1
Total	128	100.0	100.0	167	100.0	100.0

Uses

Batley town centre provides a strong convenience offer anchored by the Tesco and Asda supermarkets, both located within the defined centre. These are complemented by an Aldi discount food store and Iceland frozen foods retailer, which add variety and choice at the value or budget end of the market. In addition to the main supermarkets, a range of smaller independent convenience retailers, including bakers, confectioners and convenience stores, contribute to the everyday shopping provision. Overall, Batley performs well in meeting the main food shopping and top-up needs of its local population.

The town centre's comparison retail offer has contracted over recent years, reflecting the national trend of declining non-food retail in smaller centres. Floorspace in this category now accounts for 9.3% of the total, compared to 14.7% in 2013, and remains below the UK average of 28.7%. As might be expected for a centre of this size and role in the hierarchy, the non-food retail sector in Batley is dominated by smaller independent traders. That said, the town centre is able to support some national multiples, again concentrated at the budget end of the market, including Savers, Card Factory and Shelter.

Batley Plaza is an important retail and leisure development which opened in 2021 in the refurbished former Alfreds' Way and Batley Shopping Centre. The complex is almost exclusively let to traders from the local area of Batley and Dewsbury, and many are start-up businesses. A number of boutique-style independent clothing shops are concentrated within the Plaza, and it also provides for a variety of food and drink operators which contribute to Batley's evening economy.

Primarily as a result of the Plaza development, leisure uses in Batley have expanded significantly since 2013, rising over this period from 11.0% to 22.9% of total floorspace, and from 21 (16.4%) to 54 (32.3%) units, substantially above the current UK average of 26.5%. The majority of Batley's leisure operators fall within the food and beverage category, including cafés, hot food takeaways, public houses, and restaurants. Prominent operators include Wetherspoons, The Taproom Batley, Sibu Asian Restaurant and Roberto's Italian Restaurant, which help add vibrancy to the centre offer, particularly during lunchtime and evening periods.

In addition, Batley Market, located at Market Place opposite the Town Hall, continues to trade as an outdoor market, generally operating several days a week. The market provides a platform for small and local traders offering a mix of food and non-food goods. It adds local character and supports footfall within the traditional core of the town centre.

The proportion of retail service uses including hairdressers, barbers, beauty salons, and opticians has grown in Batley since 2013, now accounting for 10.4% of total floorspace, which is above the national average of 7.2%. These services are typically independent and contribute to the centre's day-to-day function and strong local identity. Their presence, alongside a number of community facilities, reinforces Batley's role as a service hub rather than a traditional shopping destination.

The town centre's financial and business services sector has contracted significantly since 2013. While the centre previously supported a number of banks and building societies, these have now closed. Remaining uses in this category include small-scale estate agents, accountants, and financial advisors, reflecting wider structural changes in the sector and the move towards digital provision.

Independent retailers form a key part of Batley's identity and contribute to its distinctive offer. Many cater to the town's diverse community, with specialist fashion, beauty, and food outlets that add local flavour and authenticity. Batley Health Centre and Batley Community Centre, both located on Upper Commercial Street just outside the main retail core, also help to sustain footfall and activity throughout the day.

Overall, Batley's town centre has evolved into a service- and leisure-oriented destination underpinned by strong convenience anchors and a diverse base of independent retailers. This combination gives the town centre a distinctive character.

Daytime/Evening Economy

Batley town centre functions primarily as a shopping and service destination that supports the day-to-day needs of local residents. The daytime economy is driven largely by the strong convenience provision within the centre, with Asda, Tesco, and Aldi acting as key anchors that help sustain steady levels of footfall throughout the day. These stores, together with the mix of independent retailers, service operators, and the outdoor market at Market Place, generate regular activity during trading hours. Most shops and services operate standard daytime hours between approximately 9am and 6pm, contributing to a consistent level of vitality during weekdays and weekends.

Although Batley performs well as a local shopping destination, the daytime offer is more functional than recreational, with relatively limited provision of family-friendly leisure activities or attractions. However, larger restaurants such as Sibu Asian Restaurant and Roberto's Italian Restaurant add quality and choice to the food and drink offer and encourage some extended activity into the evening.

The town centre's evening economy is modest but steady for a centre of its size and character. Evening activity is primarily focussed at Batley Plaza and along Commercial Street, where most of the town's pubs, bars, and restaurants are located. Notable operators include Wetherspoons and The Taproom Batley, alongside a number of smaller public houses, takeaways, and independent restaurants. Together, these contribute to a consistent level of footfall during the early evening and help to maintain vibrancy beyond traditional shopping hours.

While the evening economy remains relatively small in scale, it plays an important role in supporting social interaction and providing local entertainment opportunities. The presence of well-established restaurants and licensed premises provides a good foundation for Batley to develop a more diverse and family-friendly evening offer in future, which could help strengthen its role as a social and leisure destination.

Vacancies

Batley's floorspace vacancy rate has increased modestly since 2013 but remains below the national average, indicating a degree of resilience despite wider retail challenges. The proportion of vacant units, on the other hand, has decreased over the same period but remains above average. This finding indicates that most of Batley's vacancies are relatively small in scale.

Vacancies are predominantly located along Commercial Street, where the town's main concentration of retail and service activity occurs. Empty premises are generally spread across the length of the street rather than forming large clusters, which helps to limit their visual impact. Most units remain in reasonable condition, and shopfronts are largely well-maintained, meaning that vacancies have only a limited effect on the overall appearance and perceptions of the centre.

The most prominent long-term vacancy is the former Yorkshire Bank unit on Commercial Street, which has remained empty since 2016. While this property represents one of the more noticeable inactive frontages within the core shopping area, its location among active traders and steady daytime footfall helps to reduce the sense of inactivity.

Overall, Batley's vacancy levels are relatively contained and manageable for a centre of its scale. The pattern of occupation suggests continued local demand for smaller and more affordable units, particularly within the service and food sectors, providing a solid base for reoccupation opportunities in the future.

Opportunity Sites

While reoccupying and repurposing existing vacant floorspace in Batley is an important priority, the centre contains relatively few large unoccupied properties and is tightly bounded by established development, limiting scope for major new development within the core. Nonetheless, there are several promising regeneration and enhancement opportunities that, if pursued, could strengthen the centre's role and appeal.

The most significant opportunity comes from the Batley Blueprint, the town centre regeneration framework led by Kirklees Council. The Blueprint is set to transform Commercial Street (Western, Middle and Eastern), Brunswick Street, Market Place, and associated public realm improvements. The scheme includes proposals to calm traffic, improve pedestrian and cycling access, level parts of Market Place, introduce new public spaces, landscaping, and close or restrict certain vehicle routes to enhance connectivity and safety.

In terms of building-based opportunities, a recent planning permission has been approved to convert the upper floors of 9-10 Market Place (above the Chaiiwala café) into two residential flats, enabling reuse of vacant office space while retaining ground-floor commercial use. This kind of infill or upward redevelopment of underutilised space represents a modest but useful opportunity to increase activity and demand in the centre.

To date, no large-scale redevelopment schemes appear to be either proposed or identified in planning documents beyond the Blueprint.

Pedestrian Flows

Our site visit took place in April 2025, during a typical weekday. Overall, pedestrian activity in Batley town centre was steady throughout the day, reflecting the centre's role as a shopping and service destination that serves the local community. The highest levels of footfall were observed around the Tesco superstore and along Commercial Street, which a consistent flow of movement between them and nearby shops and services. Activity was also notable in and around the Batley Plaza, where most of the comparison goods stores are located.

Vehicular traffic through the centre was relatively light and did not appear to create any significant barriers to pedestrian movement. Commercial Street benefits from wide pavements and multiple crossing points, which help to support safe and convenient pedestrian circulation. Movement between the eastern and western parts of the centre felt natural and unobstructed, with clear sightlines and active frontages maintaining a sense of safety and permeability.

Accessibility

Batley town centre is easily accessible by a range of transport modes. It is located just off the A652 Bradford Road, which provides direct connections north to Birstall and south to Dewsbury,

with links to the wider A62 and M62 motorway network offering convenient access to Leeds and Huddersfield. The town centre is compact and enclosed by established residential neighbourhoods, meaning that most visitors can access it quickly and conveniently from surrounding areas.

Car accessibility is good, with several dedicated car parks serving the main foodstores and smaller surface car parks distributed across the centre. Asda, Tesco, and Lidl each provide large areas of customer parking, while on-street parking is available along Commercial Street and adjoining roads. Traffic levels are moderate, and vehicle movement does not appear to impede pedestrian circulation.

Public transport connections are also strong. The bus station on St James Street provides regular services to nearby centres including Dewsbury, Heckmondwike, Leeds, and Huddersfield. The railway station, located approximately a nine-minute walk to the north-west of the centre, offers direct links to Leeds and Huddersfield, enhancing regional connectivity.

Pedestrian accessibility within the centre is generally good. Crossing points are provided along Bradford Road, Commercial Street, and Market Place, supporting safe movement between key destinations. The streets are wide and level, and the topography of the town centre is relatively flat, which makes it accessible for visitors with pushchairs, wheelchairs, or limited mobility. The presence of wide pavements and clear sightlines contributes to a comfortable and walkable environment.

Cycle parking provision is limited, however, and there are few dedicated cycle lanes leading into or through the town centre. Enhancing cycling infrastructure could encourage more sustainable travel and improve local connectivity in line with the aims of the Batley Blueprint, which proposes measures to improve walking and cycling routes and create a safer, more attractive public realm.

Perception of Safety

Batley town centre feels safe and well-used throughout the day. During our visit, we observed steady levels of pedestrian activity, particularly around the Tesco, Asda, and Aldi stores, as well as along Commercial Street and Market Place, which benefit from good natural and passive surveillance. The town centre’s linear layout and wide, open streets contribute to a sense of visibility and comfort for pedestrians.

Street lighting is provided throughout the main routes, helping to maintain a feeling of safety into the evening. The general upkeep of the centre and the condition of shopfronts also support positive perceptions of the area. While we did not observe any CCTV cameras or police presence during the visit, the centre did not display signs of anti-social behaviour or neglect.

Activity levels in the early evening remain steady for a town centre of this size, supported by restaurants, cafés, and public houses at Batley Plaza and along Commercial Street. Although the number of late-opening operators is limited, the presence of these venues and nearby residential areas ensures that parts of the centre remain active and overlooked beyond typical trading hours. Overall, Batley gives the impression of a safe and welcoming town centre, with good natural surveillance and few areas of concern.

Environmental Quality

The overall environmental quality of Batley town centre is generally good and appropriate for a centre of its size and function. During our visit, the streets appeared clean and well-maintained, with little evidence of litter or graffiti. Bins were provided throughout the main shopping streets, and pavements were in a reasonable condition, contributing to a pleasant pedestrian environment.

Commercial Street, in particular, benefits from planters and street trees, which introduce greenery and soften the built environment. This planting adds visual interest, creates a more welcoming atmosphere, and enhances the overall sense of place. Batley Memorial Park, located just to the south-west of the centre, provides an attractive green space with seating and mature landscaping that offers opportunities for rest and recreation close to the main shopping area. Additional seating was also observed along Commercial Street, further supporting comfort and accessibility for visitors.

Looking ahead, the Batley Blueprint includes a series of proposed public realm improvements designed to strengthen the appearance and function of the town centre. These include enhanced paving, new landscaping, upgraded lighting, and improved pedestrian links, all of which aim to create a more attractive and cohesive environment.

Conclusions

In summary, Batley town centre performs well in serving its primary role as a shopping and service destination meeting the day-to-day needs of local residents. The centre's strong convenience provision, anchored by Asda and Tesco and supported by Aldi and Iceland, underpins steady footfall throughout the day and helps to maintain overall vitality and viability. This is supported by a diverse range of independent traders and retail service operators, which add local character and ensure that the town centre continues to function as a key community hub.

The leisure and evening economy has grown in recent years with the opening of Batley Plaza, and Commercial Street also provides for a number of restaurants, cafés, and public houses which all contribute to activity beyond typical trading hours. However, there remains scope to further broaden and strengthen the evening offer, particularly by encouraging more family-friendly and diverse leisure activities that extend dwell time into the evening.

Accessibility is a notable strength. The town centre benefits from good road connections via the A652 Bradford Road, regular bus services operating from the St James Street Bus Station, and a railway station within walking distance. Wide pavements, crossing points, and a generally flat topography create a pedestrian-friendly environment, while car parks and on-street parking provide convenient access for drivers.

The environmental quality of Batley is positive, with clean streets, greenery introduced through planters and street trees, and nearby open spaces such as Batley Memorial Park enhancing the sense of place. Public realm improvements proposed through the Batley Blueprint are set to further strengthen the appearance and functionality of the centre by upgrading paving, lighting, and landscaping.

Although floorspace vacancy levels have increased slightly since 2013, they remain below the national average and are largely dispersed across the centre, limiting any significant visual

impact. The former Yorkshire Bank unit on Commercial Street presents a prominent opportunity for reoccupation, while smaller voids indicate typical turnover rather than structural decline.

Overall, Batley is a reasonably vital and viable town centre with a strong convenience base, a growing service and leisure offer, and planned investment that will enhance its accessibility and attractiveness. Continued efforts to diversify uses, animate public spaces, and deliver the Blueprint's improvements will help consolidate its role as a thriving, community-focused centre.