

CLECKHEATON TOWN CENTRE ANNUAL STATEMENT OF KEY ECONOMIC INDICATORS AUGUST 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 Cleckheaton town centre was published in August 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 June 2004 recorded that Cleckheaton town centre provides a total of 8,495sq.m. (91,409sq.ft.) of net retail floorspace and 171 shop or service units. Figure 1 illustrates the pattern of shop unit and floorspace occupancy for 2004 compared to 2003, with percentage changes over 12 months given in Figure 2.

Figure 1: Cleckheaton floorspace/shop unit statistics

	2003		2004	
	Sales fl'space sq.m.	Shop units	Sales fl'space sq.m.	Shop units
Convenience (food)	1,629 (20.0%)	16 (9.4%)	1,583 (18.6%)	15 (8.8%)
Comparison (non-food)	5,315 (65.3%)	91 (53.5%)	5,403 (63.6%)	87 (50.9%)
Service	N/A	46 (27.1%)	N/A	46 (26.9%)
Vacant	1,196 (14.7%)	17 (10.0%)	1,509 (17.8%)	23 (13.4%)
TOTAL	8,140 (100%)	170 (100%)	8,495 (100%)	171 (100%)

Figure 2: Percentage changes 2003-04

	Floorspace	Shop units
Convenience	-2.8	-6.25
Comparison	+1.7	-4.4
Service	N/A	0
Vacant	+26.2	+35.3

The most noticeable change observed is the increase in both floorspace and shop unit vacancy. Up until recently, unit vacancy in the town has been relatively static, remaining below the national average. However, 2004 has seen a level of increase that has taken the vacancy rate

above this 'benchmark' for the first time since 1998. Notwithstanding the above, it is important to note that there is very little evidence of long term vacancy in the town.

In terms of the proportion of vacant floorspace, the town has seen an increase of 26% in the last 12 months. However, there are a number of larger units on the periphery of the town centre which have over-weighted the true extent of this increase. The vacancy situation in the town will continue to be monitored.

Below: Views and buildings around the town centre



A further point to note is the number of occupancy changes recorded in the town centre over the last 12 months – 15% or 1 in 7 shop units. This is a higher level of occupancy change than is normally recorded in Cleckheaton.

Figure 3: Comparisons¹ with nearby towns (sq.m. net)

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

Figure 3 illustrates the make-up of Cleckheaton in comparison to other nearby towns. This shows that despite

¹ Figures relate to the floorspace contained within the Town Centre Audit Study Boundary of each centre at the most recent published survey date.

the recent changes in occupancy levels, Cleckheaton's unit vacancy rate remains below that of both Heckmondwike and Dewsbury.

PEDESTRIAN FOOTFALL

Since 1997, pedestrian footfall counts have been undertaken annually in Cleckheaton town centre to measure the volume and pattern of visitor/shopper movement. These assessments cover 7 locations including all access points into the town centre, the entrance to Tesco and the pedestrian link from the foodstore to Northgate. 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 the last assessment.

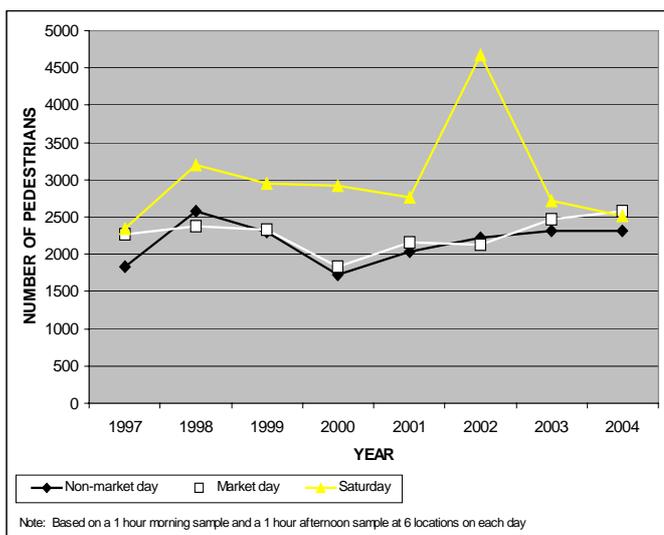
Figure 4: Cleckheaton pedestrian numbers 2003-04 ²

		2003	2004	% change
Market day	a.m.	1466	1504	+2.6
	p.m.	1007	1074	+6.7
Non-market day	a.m.	1253	1277	+1.9
	p.m.	1063	1043	-1.9
Saturday	a.m.	1603	1658	+3.4
	p.m.	1122	861	-23.3
TOTAL (into town only)		7514	7417	-1.3

The only significant observation during the 2004 assessment was a 23% drop in the numbers of people recorded in the town on a Saturday afternoon, which is consistent across the town centre. However, in real terms this only amounts to 250 people and may purely be an anomaly unique to that particular day. The pattern of pedestrian volumes will continue to be monitored.

Figure 5 shows the levels of footfall recorded on an annual basis since 1997. It can be seen that the numbers of pedestrians visiting the town has remained relatively static over the last 7 years. The sharp increase in Saturday numbers for 2002 was due to the influence of an England World Cup football match, which was played on the day of the assessment.

Figure 5: The pattern of footfall 1997 – 2004



The distribution of pedestrians around the town centre during the assessment is illustrated in Figure 6. On a street

by street basis, visitors to the town tend to be highest in numbers along Cheapside and the southern end of Northgate. Slightly lower volumes of movement were recorded in Central Arcade and along Albion Street.

Figure 6: Pedestrian numbers by street ³ (summer 2004)

Date	Tu 8 th June Market day Warm/ sunny		Fr 10 th June Non-m't day Warm/ showers		Sat 12 th June Cloudy/ warm	
	a.m.	p.m.	a.m.	p.m.	a.m.	p.m.
Survey location						
1. Tesco main ent	339	346	247	252	327	278
2. Pedestrian link	94	108	90	69	120	109
3. Cheapside	247	173	213	131	245	97
4. Northgate (N)	182	74	96	80	91	46
5. Albion Street	181	135	176	114	177	112
6. Northgate (S)	344	200	331	332	486	180
7. Central Arcade	211	146	214	134	332	148
TOTAL (into town)	1504	1074	1277	1043	1658	861

DEVELOPMENT IN THE PIPELINE

There has been little development activity in Cleckheaton town centre during the last 12 months. The proposed 5,650sq.m. foodstore on the site at Bradford Road/Horncastle Street still has a valid planning permission but has yet to be implemented. Outline permission exists for residential development on the former Savoy Cinema site which is currently landscaped and laid out as a public square.

Other developments programmed for the short to medium term include the refurbishment of the bus station (off Dewsbury Road) and the re-development of the covered market on Albion Street.

RETAILER DEMAND

An assessment of retailer demand was undertaken in August 2004. This revealed that 3 retailers have registered a requirement for representation in Cleckheaton. These would provide a total maximum floorspace of 1,100sq.m. (12,000sq.ft) trading in motor accessories, pet supplies and health/beauty products. Further demand may exist from companies who have not formally registered their interest.

PRIME RETAIL RENTAL LEVELS

The lack of a prime retail 'pitch' within the town centre of Cleckheaton creates difficulties in defining prime zone A rents for the town. Information received indicates that retail rents in Cleckheaton have not changed since the last publication and remain within the general range of £108 - £215 per sq.m. (£10-20 per sq.ft.).

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METROPOLITAN COUNCIL



² 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 pedestrian link count point.