Health Check Assessments

01 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (March 2012) identifies a number of factors which are of relevance in delivering sustainable development, with one such factor being the need to ensure the vitality of town centres. Paragraph 23 of the NPPF indicates that local authorities should promote competitive town centre environments and set out policies for the management and growth of centres over the plan period. Paragraph 23 also requires local planning authorities to recognise that town centres are at the heart of their communities and to pursue policies that support their viability and vitality. It is also noted that competitive town centre environments should be promoted in order to enhance customer choice, provide a diverse retail offer and in order to reflect the individuality of town centres.

02 However, we note that the NPPF does not provide a list of indicators which can be used to assess the health of a centre. In this regard, the former Planning Policy Statement 4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth (PPS4) (December 2009) is the most recent national policy document to provide a comprehensive list of key town centre health indicators which should be monitored on a regular basis in order to judge the health of a centre and its performance over time.

03 Accordingly, in the absence of any particular guidance in the NPPF in respect of key indicators, those identified in PPS4 remain of some relevance in assessing the health of centres. The PPS4 performance indicators include the following.

- **Diversity of main town centre uses (by number, type and amount of floorspace):** the data on the diversity of uses in each of the six town centres was collated during WYG's town centre surveys in February and April 2013.
- **The amount of retail, leisure and office floorspace in edge-of-centre and out-of-centre locations:** consideration has been given to the scale of out-of-centre retail provision in the centres.
- **The potential capacity for growth or change:** our surveys of the centres have had particular regard to the proliferation of vacant land and premises and the opportunities which may exist for future growth.
- **Retailer representation and retailer demand:** information on the current strength of centres, retailer representation and retailer requirements has been derived from Venuescore's UK Shopping Venue Rankings and from other published sources.
- **Shopping rents – the average Zone A rents paid in centres:** Zone A rental data has been sourced from EGi, which is a widely recognised source of such data.

- **Proportion of vacant street level property:** vacant properties were identified during the undertaking of the town centre surveys.
- **Pedestrian flows:** from on-site observations.
- **Accessibility:** consideration of access to and around each centre is informed by our surveys and by the findings of the in-street visitor surveys.
- **State of town centre environmental quality:** consideration of the quality of the buildings and public realm in each of the town centres has also been informed by our 'on-the-ground' observations and by the findings of the in-street visitor survey.

04 The commentary below provides a detailed appraisal of available data relating to the centres' performance. The comprehensive appraisal provides full details of published data sources such as Venuescore and the Valuation Office Agency (VOA).

05 Table 1 provides a summary of the total number of units and floorspace within each centre. This is based on each of the six Experian Goad categories: convenience, comparison, retail services, leisure services, financial/business services and vacancies[1]. Huddersfield is the principal centre in the district and this is reflected by the centre having the largest number of units and floorspace. Holmfirth contains the least number of units and floorspace of the six town centres.

Table 1: Summary of the Centres (February/April 2013)

Centre	Total No. of Outlets	Total Amount of Floorspace (Sq.m)
Batley	128	25,780
Cleckheaton	142	16,180
Dewsbury	305	44,160
Heckmondwike	142	24,740
Holmfirth	121	12,990
Huddersfield	659	147,750

Source: WYG site visits of February and April 2013
Note: Figures are based on the town centre boundaries as defined by Experian Goad

06 Our health check assessments are based on the Experian Goad definitions of the centres (rather than any definition which may have previously been used by the Council for town centre auditing purposes) as this allows direct comparison with national average figures and previous work undertaken by WYG[2]. Experian Goad boundaries tend to be based primarily around a centre's retail offer and are relatively tightly focused.

[1] In terms of the categories used Experian Goad, 'retail services' include such uses as dry cleaners, opticians, post offices and travel agents; 'leisure services' include such uses as bars, cinemas, pubs and restaurants; and 'financial and business services' include such uses as banks and buildings societies, financial and legal services, and employment agencies
[2] North Kirklees Retail Assessment, WYG, 2007

Sub-Regional Retail Hierarchy

07 Table 2 illustrates the position of the principal centres within the hierarchy of centres based on the Venuescore's UK Shopping Venue Rankings (2011). The index ranks 2,291 retail venues within the UK (including town centres, stand-alone malls, retail warehouse parks and factory outlet centres) based on current retail provision. Towns and major shopping centres are rated using a scoring system which takes account of the presence in each location of multiple retailers – including anchor stores, fashion operators and non-fashion multiples. Venuescore allocates each centre within a tier, reflecting its level of retail provision. The eight tiers comprise (highest to lowest): 'Major City', 'Major Regional', 'Regional', 'Sub-Regional', 'Major District', 'District', 'Minor District' and 'Local'. The rankings in the table represent the position of the centres at the time of the most recent Rankings, from 2011-2012, as well as competing surrounding destinations. A more detailed tabulation of retail rankings data is also presented below which shows the historic performance of the centres in the preceding 2006 and 2010 Rankings.

Table 2: The Sub-Regional Shopping Hierarchy

Centre	Score	Grade	Rank 2011	Rank 2010	Rank 2006	Change '06 – '11
Leeds	500	Major City	6	6	6	-
Sheffield	272	Major Regional	35	34	28	- 7
Harrogate	239	Regional	48	57	73	+ 25
Huddersfield	**204**	**Regional**	**72**	**69**	**61**	**- 11**
Wakefield	196	Regional	82	133	130	+ 48
Bradford	179	Regional	99	93	101	+ 2
Halifax	128	Sub-Regional	187	194	186	- 1
Barnsley	128	Sub-Regional	187	178	177	- 10
Dewsbury	**61**	**District**	**475**	**441**	**460**	**- 15**
Birstall Retail Park, Batley	**54**	**District**	**527**	**1,013**	**1,173**	**+ 646**
Brighouse	41	Minor District	701	725	618	- 83
Batley	**28**	**Local**	**1,045**	**868**	**719**	**- 326**
The Rishworth Centre, Dewsbury	**27**	**Local**	**1,090**	**1,050**	**820**	**- 270**
Heckmondwike	**17**	**Local**	**1,650**	**1,623**	**1,528**	**- 122**
Junction 27 Retail Park, Batley	**15**	**Local**	**1,814**	**-**	**-**	**-**
Yorkshire Mill Village, Batley	**14**	**Local**	**1,915**	**1,623**	**1,715**	**- 200**
Cleckheaton	**12**	**Local**	**2,142**	**-**	**-**	**-**
Holmfirth	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**

Source: Venuescore (2011)

08 The Venuescore rankings do not correlate to any definition of centres which has previously been provided by national planning policy or practice guidance. The grade attributed to a centre is reflective of the presence and importance of the multiple retailers trading at each destination and therefore does not necessarily precisely reflect the expenditure attracted to a particular destination or its role and function in practice.

09 Huddersfield is classed as a Regional Centre by the Venuescore 2011-2012 retail rankings and is currently ranked 72nd of all retail destinations surveyed, placing it within the top 5% of UK shopping venues considered by Venuescore. Its ranking has declined by eleven places since 2006, when it was ranked 61st. Dewsbury is defined as a District Centre and its ranking has also declined in recent years, peaking at 441st in 2010 and subsequently declining to 475th position in 2011. The smaller centres of Batley, Cleckheaton and Heckmondwike are all defined as local retail destinations, whilst Holmfirth is not ranked by Venuescore due to its small scale and lack of multiple operators.

10 Venuescore also identified four retail parks in the local area, namely the Birstall Retail Park, the Rishworth Centre, the Junction 27 Retail Park and Yorkshire Mill Village. The Birstall Retail Park is identified as a district centre and has experienced a significant improvement in its retail ranking between 2006 and 2011, with an increase of 646 places. In contrast, the other three retail parks have all undergone a decline in their rankings. Birstall Shopping Park and Junction 27 Retail Park are located approximately 4.7km to the north of Batley town centre and the site visit in February 2013 identified that it accommodates numerous national operators, including Boots, Ikea and Next, with additional food uses including M&S Simply Food, Chiquito and Pizza Hut. Planning applications for the installation of mezzanine floors for several of the units have been approved by Kirklees Council in recent years.

11 Table 2 also indicates the strength of the retail offer in the competing locations which are in close proximity to the six town centres and it is evident that many of these other settlements are performing well and have a strong influence on shopping patterns within the Study Area. The catchment area of some of these destinations extends over Kirklees District, as a result of their large and comprehensive retail offer. In particular, the centres of Leeds, Harrogate and Wakefield have a strong retail provision, with Leeds ranked in the top 10 UK shopping destinations by Venuescore.

Shopping Rents

12 Table 3 identifies the changes in Zone A rents in Huddersfield and Dewsbury between 2004 and 2012, with the relevant data for Batley, Cleckheaton, Heckmondwike and Holmfirth not available. It is evident that Leeds has significantly higher Zone A rental figures than the other centres, reflecting its role as a major shopping destination in the local area. The Zone A rental values of Huddersfield and

Dewsbury reached respective peaks of £120 per sq.ft and £75 per sq.ft in 2008. Since 2008, and in line with the national figures, there has been a decline in the retail rental values as a result of the economic downturn.

Table 3: Prime Pitch Zone A Rents (£/sq. ft)

Centre	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Leeds	£270	£310	£310	£310	£310	£260	£270	£270	£270
Bradford	£140	£140	£140	£150	£150	£100	£95	£95	£95
Huddersfield	**£105**	**£105**	**£110**	**£110**	**£120**	**£100**	**£90**	**£90**	**£85**
Halifax	£90	£90	£95	£95	£100	£95	£95	£90	£90
Dewsbury	**£65**	**£65**	**£70**	**£70**	**£75**	**£40**	**£40**	**£40**	**£40**

Source: Estates Gazette (April 2013)

Vacancy Levels

13 Table 4 indicates the number of vacant units in each of the centres, with Dewsbury containing the greatest proportion of vacant units and floorspace. In contrast, only 3.3% of outlets and 2.2% of floorspace in Holmfirth is vacant (compared to national averages of 11.3% and 9.1%).

Table 4: Vacancy Levels in the Town Centres

Centre	No.	% of Outlets	Vacant Floorspace (Sq.m)	% of Floorspace
Batley	23	18.0%	2,460	9.5%
Cleckheaton	11	7.7%	650	4.0%
Dewsbury	82	26.9%	10,010	22.7%
Heckmondwike	19	13.4%	2,220	9.0%
Holmfirth	4	3.3%	280	2.2%
Huddersfield	92	14.0%	12,990	8.8%
Centre Average	39	13.9%	4,768	9.4%
UK Average	**-**	**11.3%**	**-**	**9.1%**

Source: Experian Goad Survey and Site Visit (February/April 2013), *UK Average Figure, Goad (April 2013)
Note: UK Average Figure (April 2013)

Huddersfield Town Centre

14 Huddersfield is located in the centre of the defined Study Area, approximately 14 km to the south west of Dewsbury and 10 km to the north of Holmfirth. It is identified as a Regional Centre by the Venuescore 2011-2012 retail rankings which places the centre in the top 5% of all UK shopping centres considered by Venuescore. The (now withdrawn) Core Strategy Submission document notes that the town centre has a sub-regional role because people travel there for shopping and entertainment from well beyond Huddersfield itself.

15 Experian Goad's survey of Huddersfield from October 2012 was updated by WYG during our visit to the centre in February 2013 in order to provide an up to date source for our analysis. Our record of the occupation of units and floorspace has been compared to UK national average data in order to identify any potential issues in respect of the composition of the retail and service offer. The survey of Huddersfield in February 2013 identified that there was a total of 659 units within Experian Goad's definition of the town centre, comprising a gross floorspace of 147,750 sq.m. We have utilised the town centre boundaries as identified by Experian Goad for our analysis in each of the centres in order to consider an extensive area and to allow direct a comparison with the national average figures (which are calculated using Experian Goad's assessment of the boundary of each centre).

16 The main shopping area in Huddersfield is concentrated along the pedestrianised routes of New Street and King Street. There are also several indoor shopping centres which accommodate a significant concentration of national operators, including the Piazza Shopping Centre, the Kingsgate Centre and the Packhorse Centre.

Diversity of Uses

17 Table 5 indicates the composition of Huddersfield town centre, based on the site visit by WYG in February 2013. It compares the proportion of units occupied by particular uses in Huddersfield with the national average.

Table 5: Diversity of Uses in Huddersfield Town Centre

	February 2008		August 2010		February 2013		
	No.	**Huddersfield**	**No.**	**Huddersfield**	**No.**	**Huddersfield**	**UK**
Convenience	36	5.5%	38	5.8%	46	7.0%	8.1%
Comparison	262	40.3%	235	36.1%	237	36.0%	33.0%
Retail Service	67	10.3%	69	10.6%	71	10.8%	13.6%
Leisure Service	132	20.3%	133	20.4%	145	22.0%	21.9%
Financial & Business	73	11.2%	69	10.6%	68	10.3%	11.0%
Vacant	80	12.3%	107	16.4%	92	14.0%	12.2%
Total	**650**	**100%**	**651**	**100%**	**659**	**100%**	**100%**

Source: Experian Goad February 2008, August 2010 and updated by WYG in February 2013
Note: The figures are based on the town centre boundaries as defined by Experian Goad. The data includes lower ground, ground, 1st and 2nd floor floorspace (where applicable) at Kingsgate and Byram Arcade

18 Table 6 sets out the amount of commercial, service and vacant floorspace in Huddersfield (expressed as gross floorspace in the below table and every subsequent table for each centre based on Experian Goad floorspace).

Table 6: Amount of Floorspace in Huddersfield Town Centre

	February 2008		August 2010		February 2013		
	Sq.m	Huddsfld	Sq.m	Huddsfld	Sq.m	Huddsfld	UK
Convenience	27,060	18.6%	28,020	19.2%	30,180	20.4%	14.4%
Comparison	65,220	44.7%	59,170	40.4%	58,710	39.7%	36.4%
Retail Service	5,520	3.8%	6,810	4.7%	5,890	4.0%	7.2%
Leisure Service	25,190	17.3%	24,160	16.5%	26,570	18.0%	22.7%
Fincl & Bsns	12,310	8.4%	11,590	7.9%	13,410	9.1%	8.3%
Vacant	10,450	7.2%	16,560	11.3%	12,990	8.8%	10.1%
Total	**145,750**	**100%**	**146,310**	**100%**	**147,750**	**100%**	**100%**

Source: Experian Goad February 2008, August 2010 and updated by WYG in February 2013
Note: The figures are based on the town centre boundaries as defined by Experian Goad. The data includes lower ground, ground, 1st and 2nd floor floorspace (where applicable) at Kingsgate and Byram Arcade

19 The above data indicates that there has been an increase of ten convenience stores in the centre between February 2008 and 2013. Convenience retail uses now occupy 7.0% of all units in the town centre, with the largest stores run by national operators including Sainsbury's (Wakefield Road and Market Street), Tesco (Viaduct Street) and Lidl (Manchester Road). There are a variety of businesses in the centre including nine bakers/confectioners, eight grocers/delis and five butchers. Huddersfield also accommodates two permanent indoor markets on Brook Street and Princess Alexandra Walk (Queensgate Market). There has also been an increase in the amount of convenience goods floorspace in the centre, with this sector now accounting for 20.4% of the total floorspace in Huddersfield. Since the previous Kirklees Retail Capacity Study reported, the Sainsbury's extension at Southgate opened in May 2009 (planning permission reference 2008/90410).

20 The number of comparison units has declined from 262 units in 2008 to 237 in 2013. In terms of retailer representation, there is a mixture of national multiple and local independent traders in Huddersfield. The largest national comparison retailers present in the town centre include the House of Fraser and TKMaxx stores in the Kingsgate Shopping Centre, Wilkinson on New Street and the BHS in the Piazza Shopping Centre. Whilst comparison goods retailers can be found throughout the town centre, the majority of these national multiple retailers are located within the indoor shopping centres and along King Street. Huddersfield town centre accommodates 25 of the top 27 comparison retailers, as defined by Experian Goad, with Debenhams and John Lewis being the two operators currently without representation. The retail parks to the north of the town centre (and outside of the Experian Goad defined centre boundary) also accommodate 20 comparison units, including Argos, Boots, DFS, Laura Ashley and Staples.

21 Retail services, which comprise such uses as hairdressers, dry cleaners and petrol filling stations, account for 10.8% of outlets (71 units) and 4.0% of floorspace (5,890 sq.m) in Huddersfield town

centre, which compares to respective national averages of 13.6% and 7.2%. 'Health and beauty' traders are particularly dominant in this sector, with a total of 45 such businesses, followed by opticians (ten) and travel agents (five). There are two Post Offices at New Street and Northumberland Street. The retail service units tend to operate from small units in the centre and comprise a variety of national and independent retailers, including Max Spielmann, Specsavers, Thomson travel agents and Toni & Guy. A Thomson holiday hypermarket is also located at Great Northern Retail Park.

22 The leisure services in the centre include uses such as restaurants, cafes, bookmakers and public houses. There is a good provision of leisure services in Huddersfield, with the most common type of units comprising take aways (34), cafes (31), bars and wine bars (22) and public houses (18). There are several national operators in the centre, including Greggs, Ladbrokes and Pizza Hut. The site visit by WYG in February 2013 indicated that whilst the leisure units are dispersed throughout the town centre, there is also a particular concentration on King Street, to the south of the Kingsgate Shopping Centre. There are also several leisure facilities outside of the town centre, including the Huddersfield Sports Centre on Pine Street and Odeon Cinema on Bradley Mills Road.

23 In terms of financial and business services in Huddersfield, the proportion of outlets occupied by such uses (10.3%) is slightly below the national average figure (11.0%), whilst the proportion of floorspace occupied by such uses (9.1%) is above the national average level (8.3%). There are a total of 20 property service units in the centre, as well as 19 retail banks (including Barclays, Halifax and Santander), 11 legal services and six financial services.

24 In addition to the retail and service provision on offer within the town centre, there are a number of non-retail uses, including 17 offices, nine government and municipal buildings, six medical services[3] and three advice centres[4]. The Huddersfield library and art gallery is located adjacent to the Piazza Shopping Centre.

Edge and Out of Centre Retail Provision

25 In addition to the commercial provision in Huddersfield town centre which has already been reviewed, there are also a number of units located in edge-of-centre and out-of-centre locations. The following section therefore summarises the distribution and scale of these facilities.

26 The NPPF defines that retail units at edge-of-centre locations are well connected and up to 300 metres of the Primary Shopping Area (PSA) of the town centre, whilst for all other main town centre uses these should be located within 300 metres of a town centre boundary. For office development, this

[3] The Experian Goad definition of medical centres comprises uses such as GPs' surgeries, dentists and chiropractors
[4] The Experian Goad definition of advice services includes Citizens' Advice, Connexions, Age Concern and so on

includes locations outside the town centre but within 500 metres of a public transport interchange. In determining whether a site falls within the definition of edge of centre, account should be taken of local circumstances. Out-of-centre locations are identified as being not in or on the edge of a centre but not necessarily outside the urban area.

27 There are several retail parks located outside of the Experian Goad defined town centre boundary which accommodate a number of retail and leisure operators, including the Ringway Centre and Great Northern Retail Park. These are reviewed in further detail in the following section.

28 The **Castlegate Retail Park** is located to the north west of the existing Viaduct Street Tesco foodstore, with the main access to the units via St. Johns Road and the Castlegate ring road. It comprises a Bathroom Stock Clearance store, Bathstore.com, Calder vets, Dominos take away, Hoults wine merchants, Laura Ashley and Swinton Insurance. There are 61 customer car parking spaces.

29 The **Gallagher Retail Park** is located next to Waterloo Local Centre, approximately 4 km to the east of Huddersfield town centre. The site currently accommodates five units, namely Aldi, Home Bargains, M&S Simply Food, McDonalds and Pets at Home. The Retail Park opened for trading in 2008 and appeared to be trading well on the day of the site visit, with the 226 car parking spaces on the site almost full.

30 The **Wakefield Road Retail Park** is located on both sides of the A629 (Wakefield Road), approximately 450m from the eastern edge of Huddersfield town centre. It is adjacent to Aspley Local Centre and comprises an Asda (former Netto), Greggs, Lidl and Iceland.

31 The **Great Northern Retail Park** on Leeds Road was built between 1997 and 1999 and comprises eleven large retail warehouse units, namely: Boots, Carpetright, Currys/PC World, a garden centre, Homebase, Mothercare, Next, Pets at Home, Sports Direct and the Thomson travel agents. In November 2012, a certificate of lawfulness was granted which enabled all of the units to be used for Class A1 purposes without restriction, including the sale of food and non-food goods (planning permission reference 2012/92849). The Phoenix Retail Park was completed in 2004 and is located opposite the Great Northern Retail Park. It comprises two units, with the site visit in February 2013 identifying that it accommodates DFS (at the former PC World unit), with the former Dreams beds store now vacant.

32 The **Leeds Road Retail Park** is located approximately 1.5km to the north east of Huddersfield town centre and comprises several bulky goods warehouse units, namely Argos, B&Q, Harveys, SCS,

Staples and Wren. The site visit in February 2013 identified that the remaining two units, the former Allied Carpets and Comet stores, are currently vacant.

33 **Huddersfield Retail Park** on Beck Road to the north of Huddersfield town centre comprises an Aldi foodstore, B&M Bargains, Dunelm Mill, Matalan, Poundstretcher and Wynsors shoe shop. A Halfords is also located on the opposite side of the A641.

Potential Capacity for Growth or Change

34 There have been several recent opportunities for new development in Huddersfield town centre, with four key planning permissions of particular relevance.

35 The existing Kingsgate Shopping Centre opened in March 2002, with outline planning permission (planning permission reference 2008/90016) for the second phase approved at appeal in 2008. It proposes a 2-storey extension to the existing Kingsgate Shopping Centre to provide an additional 11,154 sq.m of retail floorspace (Class A1 and A3). The development has not been implemented to date, with a three year extension to the consent obtained in November 2011 (planning permission reference 2011/91613).

36 An application for a £200m redevelopment of the Queensgate site which includes the market hall, multi-storey car park, former Co-operative store and buildings on New Street was submitted in 2008 (planning permission reference 2008/91902). The scheme would include a new library, art gallery and information centre, three-storey department store, 100 bed hotel, a new market hall, bars, restaurants and up to 900 parking spaces. The plans are currently on hold due to the requirement for additional private sector investment, though the application remains live.

37 Tesco was granted permission after appeal in February 2012 (planning permission reference 2009/93675) for a new foodstore on land at Southgate which would have a gross floor area of 11,187 sq.m and a net sales area of 6,860 sq.m (convenience goods sales area of 4,585 sq.m and a comparison goods sales area of 2,275 sq.m).

38 Asda submitted an application in 2009 for a new 4,552 sq.m net foodstore (planning application reference 2009/92381) on land to the south of the centre which is currently occupied by several industrial buildings and Queensgate Retail Park (comprising Majestic Wine, Pet Warehouse and a vacant unit). The application was withdrawn earlier this year prior to being determined.

Vacancy Levels

39 The site visit in February 2013 identified that the 92 vacant units in Huddersfield accounted for 12,990 sq.m of the total floorspace in the town centre. Whilst the rate of vacant outlets (14.0%) is slightly above the national average (12.2%), the proportion of vacant floorspace (8.8%) is below the UK average figure (10.1%). Although there has been a significant improvement in the level of vacancies since August 2010, there are still areas in the centre where vacancies are concentred, notably within the central and southern area of New Street and around Princess Alexandra Walk and Market Arcade. The largest vacant units are the former Club Society nightclub (30 Kirkgate), the former Bensons for Beds (Unit 2, Trinity Street Retail Park) and the former Marks & Spencer unit (17-19 The Piazza Shopping Centre). The former Foot Locker unit at 36 New Street (280 sq.m) is currently being marketed, with the agent reportedly seeking a rental value of £40,000 per annum, whilst the former Bensons for Beds unit (760 sq.m) is available for £70,000 per annum. The former Allied Carpets unit at Leeds Road Retail Park (929 sq.m) is being marketed for a value of £190,000 per annum.

Pedestrian Footfall and Accessibility

40 An assessment of the general pedestrian flows in the town centre was noted during the site visit to Huddersfield in February 2013. It was evident that the greatest levels of activity were located within the Kingsgate Shopping Centre and the pedestrianised areas of New Street, with lower levels recorded on more peripheral streets such as Westgate and John William Street. The annual town centre surveys by Kirklees Council also records the pedestrian footfall levels, with the most recent data sample of Huddersfield undertaken in April 2012. The figures indicate that overall there has been a slight decline in the number of pedestrians since the 2011 count; however, the Council report notes this can largely be attributed to the heavy rain experienced on one of the assessment days. In addition, there has been an average increase in the level of pedestrian levels on market days of 15.6% since 2011, whilst the level on Saturdays increased by an average of 2.4% which is testimony to Huddersfield's ongoing popularity as a shopping destination.

41 The main town centre car park within the Kingsgate Shopping Centre accommodates 630 spaces, with the Alfred Street car park, to the south of the Queensgate Market also comprising approximately 600 spaces. Additional parking is located at the bus station on Upperhead Road (450 spaces), above and adjacent to the Tesco store on Unna Way (400 spaces), on Albion Street (260 spaces), above the Sainsbury's supermarket on Dundas Street (210 spaces) and at the railway station (approximately 100 spaces). Off-street car parking is also available for customers of the numerous foodstores and retail parks, including the Lidl (70 spaces), Queensgate Retail Park (24 spaces) and Sainsbury's (550 spaces).

42 Huddersfield benefits from particularly good accessibility by public transport, with the train station at St George's Square and the bus station at Upperhead Row offering frequent services to the nearby centres of Manchester, Leeds and Bradford. A Metro bus is also operated in Huddersfield and it offers free journeys throughout the town centre.

Environmental Quality and Occurrence of Crime

43 The overall environmental quality of Huddersfield is good, with the historic centre creating an attractive shopping environment for visitors to the area. As the majority of the town centre is designated as a conservation area, the Council recognises that any new development proposals there should be designed to a high standard which both enhances and preserves the area. It was noted that the overall environmental quality of the centre on the day of the site visit was good, with little evidence of litter, vandalism or graffiti.

Dewsbury Town Centre

44 Dewsbury is located in the north of the defined Study Area, with Huddersfield located approximately 14 km to the south west and Wakefield 10 km to the east. It is identified as a District Centre by the Venuescore 2011-2012 retail rankings which places the centre in the top 20% of all UK shopping venues considered by Venuescore. The Core Strategy Submission document notes that Dewsbury is ranked as a 'Large Town Centre' as it provides a wide range of shops and services.

45 Experian Goad's survey of Dewsbury from June 2012 was updated by WYG during our visit to the centre in February 2013 in order to provide an up to date source for our analysis. Our record of the occupation of units and floorspace has been compared to UK national average data in order to identify any potential issues in respect of the composition of the retail and service offer. The survey of Dewsbury in February 2013 identified that there was a total of 305 units, comprising a gross floorspace of 44,160 sq.m. It should be noted for the purposes of this analysis and in order to enable comparisons between the national average figures, WYG have adopted the Experian Goad defined town centre boundary.

46 The main shopping area in Dewsbury is concentrated within the pedestrianised section of Market Place, Foundry Street and the Princess of Wales Precinct. The Rishworth Centre Retail Park is also located to the south of Vicarage Road, with the pedestrian crossings acting to encourage linked trips to be undertaken between the two shopping destinations.

Diversity of Uses

47 Table 7 sets out the composition of the stock of commercial properties in Dewsbury town centre in February 2013 alongside the national average benchmark.

Table 7: Diversity of Uses in Dewsbury Town Centre

	March 2007			February 2013		
	No.	Dewsbury	UK	No.	Dewsbury	UK
Convenience	21	6.9%	8.5%	15	4.9%	8.0%
Comparison	123	40.3%	36.8%	85	27.9%	33.0%
Retail Service	36	11.8%	12.7%	37	12.1%	13.6%
Leisure Service	38	12.5%	20.7%	47	15.4%	21.9%
Financial & Business Service	44	14.4%	11.6%	39	12.8%	11.0%
Vacant	43	14.1%	9.5%	82	26.9%	12.2%
Total	**305**	**100%**	**100%**	**305**	**100%**	**100%**

Source: Experian Goad and updated by WYG in March 2007 and February 2013
Note: The figures are based on the town centre boundaries as defined by Experian Goad

48 Table 8 illustrates the amount and proportion of floorspace dedicated to various uses within the town centre.

Table 8: Amount of Floorspace in Dewsbury Town Centre

	March 2007			February 2013		
	Sq.m	Dewsbury	UK	Sq.m	Dewsbury	UK
Convenience	4,530	9.9%	13.6%	6,020	13.6%	14.4%
Comparison	17,920	39.2%	39.3%	12,240	27.7%	36.4%
Retail Service	3,960	8.7%	7.0%	4,120	9.3%	7.2%
Leisure Service	5,280	11.6%	22.3%	5,750	13.0%	22.7%
Financial & Business Service	6,500	14.2%	9.2%	6,020	13.6%	8.3%
Vacant	7,490	16.4%	7.8%	10,010	22.7%	10.1%
Total	**45,680**	**100%**	**100%**	**44,160**	**100%**	**100%**

Source: Experian Goad and updated by WYG in March 2007 and February 2013
Note: The figures are based on the town centre boundaries as defined by Experian Goad

49 The site visit in February 2013 identified that the 15 convenience stores in Dewsbury account for 6,020 sq.m of the total floorspace in the town centre. In comparison to the national average, there is a shortfall in both the proportion of convenience outlets and floorspace. However, the Rishworth Centre (outside the Experian Goad defined town centre boundary) does accommodate large Asda and Sainsbury's foodstores. Since March 2007, the number of convenience units has decreased by six stores, whilst the amount of floorspace has increased by 1,490 sq.m, (with several medium-sized operators, including Global Groceries and Heron Foods, taking space in the town). Dewsbury also accommodates an open market on Foundry Street which sells a variety of goods, though for the purposes of this analysis it has been classified as a convenience goods facility.

50 The comparison sector accounts for 27.9% of the outlets and 27.7% of the floorspace in Dewsbury town centre. The largest units include Wilkinson, Boots and Peacocks. Since 2007 there has been a significant reduction in the amount of comparison goods outlets and floorspace, with several national operators no longer located in the centre, including Marks and Spencer, H Samuel and Dorothy Perkins. The Rishworth Centre does accommodate a number of multiple retailers, including Currys, Matalan, Next and Poundstretcher.

51 There is a good provision of retail service outlets in the centre, with the 37 units accounting for 4,120 sq.m of floorspace in Dewsbury. The health and beauty sector occupies 22 such units, with other retail service uses including travel agents (four), opticians (four), vehicle repairs (two), along with a Post Office on Wakefield Old Road.

52 Dewsbury is currently under-provided for in terms of the proportion of leisure services, despite there being an increase in the number of units (by nine) and the amount of floorspace (by 470 sq.m) since March 2007. There are five national leisure operators in the centre, namely Coral, Ladbrokes, McDonalds, Qicksilver and William Hill.

53 In terms of the proportion of units occupied by financial and business services in Dewsbury, the outlets figure (12.8%) is marginally above the national average (11.0%), whilst the floorspace occupied by such uses in the town centre (13.6%) is also above the national average level (8.3%). The site visit in February 2013 identified that many of the national high street banks and building societies are present, including Barclays, Halifax and Santander. In addition, there is a good provision of other outlets, including several financial, property and legal services.

54 Dewsbury also accommodates a number of other key buildings in the town centre, including 15 offices, six government and municipal buildings and five religious institutions.

Edge and Out of Centre Retail Provision

55 The **Rishworth Centre** is located to the south of the Experian Goad defined town centre boundary and comprises a number of convenience, comparison and service outlets, as well as several vacant units. The Asda and Sainsbury's are located to the west and east of the retail park, with the large foodstores both appearing to be trading well on the day of the site visit. In May 2012, planning permission for an extension of time for the implementation of a mezzanine floor (planning permission reference 2012/90049) within the Asda was granted. The existing store comprises a gross floor area of 6,177 sq.m and a net retail floor area of 3,992 sq.m, whilst the proposed mezzanine floor will increase the

retail floor area to 5,186 sq.m. A Farmfoods outlet also adjoins the B&Q store and opened for trading in 2005.

56 The retail park also accommodates 13 comparison outlets, namely: B&Q, Carpet Right, Clarks, Currys, Dreams (former Comet), Halfords, Matalan, Next, Pets at Home, Poundstretcher, Store Twenty One, Sue Ryder (former Topps Tiles) and Wickes. There are also two leisure service units, a KFC and Mecca Bingo. There are four vacant units in the retail park, including the former Netto, JJB Sports, United Carpets and Glyn Web electrical goods stores. There are also several non-retail units, including a Job Centre, library, leisure centre and church.

Potential Capacity for Growth or Change

57 The site visit of Dewsbury in February 2013 identified that the former Safeway foodstore site on Bradford Road remains undeveloped.

58 In April 2008, permission was granted for the development of Pioneer House on Halifax Road to form 95 apartments (planning permission reference 2007/93754), with several more recent applications in 2012 enabling repairs to the building and the installation of new window glazing. Units 26-32 Westgate are also currently being refurbished.

Vacancy Levels

59 The site visit in February 2013 found that the 82 vacant units in Dewsbury accounted for 10,010 sq.m of the total floorspace in the town centre. The rate of vacant outlets (26.9%) and the proportion of total floorspace (22.7%) are both significantly above the respective national average figures of 12.2% and 10.1%. Since March 2007, there has also been an increase in the level of vacancies by 39 units and 2,520 sq.m. The largest vacant units are the office building at Wakefield Old Road (which provides 1,030 sq.m of gross floorspace) and 47-51 Daisy Hill (540 sq.m). It should be noted that 16 of the units are currently in the process of being refurbished and that the former Safeway foodstore site at Bradford Road remains undeveloped.

Pedestrian Footfall and Accessibility

60 An assessment of the general pedestrian flows in the town centre was undertaken during our site visit of February 2013. The greatest levels of activity were located within the pedestrianised areas of Market Place and Foundry Street, with Northgate and Westgate also noted as having high levels of pedestrian footfall. The annual town centre surveys by the Council also record the pedestrian footfall levels, with the most recent data from October 2011. The figures indicate that between 2010 and 2011 there was a minor decline in the footfall levels by 1.5%, although it should be noted that the Council report states that the weather conditions during the Wednesday and Saturday of the survey

were particularly poor. However, the report states that whilst there has been a downward trend in terms of footfall levels on market days and Saturdays, no reduction in footfall has been noted on non-market days.

61 The main town centre car parks in Dewsbury are located at Cliffe Street (500 spaces), the railway station (90 spaces), the Lidl supermarket (90 spaces), Whitehall Way (36 spaces), Wakefield Old Road (23 spaces) and Crackenedge Lane (20 spaces). The Rishworth Centre also accommodates several car parks, with the Asda (600 spaces) and Sainsbury's (530 spaces) the largest.

62 Dewsbury train station to the west of the town centre and the bus station on South Street both offer frequent services to the key centres in the District and wider area. A Metro bus is also operated in Dewsbury which offers free journeys throughout the town centre.

Environmental Quality and Occurrence of Crime

63 Dewsbury is an attractive town centre, with the majority of the historic core within the inner ring road designated as being a Conservation Area. There are also 57 nationally listed buildings within the Area which have architectural or historic interest. The high proportion of vacant units does, however, detract from the overall quality of Dewsbury and makes certain areas of the centre appear run down and neglected.

Batley Town Centre

64 Batley is located in the north of the defined Study Area, approximately 15 km to the north east of Huddersfield and 14 km to the south west of Leeds city centre. It is identified as a Local Centre by the Venuescore 2011 – 2012 retail rankings which places it in the top 45% of all UK shopping venues considered by Venuescore. The Core Strategy Submission document notes that Batley (alongside Dewsbury) is ranked as a 'Large Town Centre' as it provides a wide range of shops and services.

65 Experian Goad's survey of Batley from July 2012 was updated by WYG during our visit to the centre in February 2013 in order to provide an up to date source for our analysis. Our record of the occupation of units and floorspace has been compared to UK national average data in order to identify any potential issues in respect of the composition of the retail and service offer. The survey of Batley in February 2013 identified that there was a total of 128 units, comprising a gross floorspace of 25,780 sq.m.

66 Commercial Street and Branch Road are the key commercial streets in Batley town centre, with the indoor Batley Shopping Centre also accommodating several national operators. An outdoor market is held every Friday on Market Place, opposite the Town Hall on Commercial Street.

Diversity of Uses

67 Table 9 sets out the composition of the stock of commercial properties in Batley town centre in February 2013 alongside the national average benchmark.

Table 9: Diversity of Uses in Batley Town Centre

	March 2007			February 2013		
	No.	Batley	UK	No.	Batley	UK
Convenience	14	10.9%	8.5%	13	10.2%	8.0%
Comparison	41	31.8%	36.8%	31	24.2%	33.0%
Retail Service	23	17.8%	12.7%	27	21.1%	13.6%
Leisure Service	25	19.4%	20.7%	21	16.4%	21.9%
Financial & Business Service	13	10.1%	11.6%	13	10.2%	11.0%
Vacant	13	10.1%	9.5%	23	18.0%	12.2%
Total	**129**	**100%**	**100%**	**128**	**100%**	**100%**

Source: Experian Goad and updated by WYG in March 2007 and February 2013
Note: The figures are based on the town centre boundaries as defined by Experian Goad

68 Table 10 indicates the amount of commercial, service and vacant floorspace in Batley town centre.

Table 10: Amount of Floorspace in Batley Town Centre

	March 2007			February 2013		
	Sq.m	Batley	UK	Sq.m	Batley	UK
Convenience	11,550	47.8%	13.6%	12,860	49.9%	14.4%
Comparison	4,390	18.2%	39.3%	3,800	14.7%	36.4%
Retail Service	1,740	7.2%	7.0%	2,010	7.8%	7.2%
Leisure Service	2,730	11.3%	22.3%	2,840	11.0%	22.7%
Financial & Business Service	1,800	7.5%	9.2%	1,810	7.0%	8.3%
Vacant	1,960	8.1%	7.8%	2,460	9.5%	10.1%
Total	**24,170**	**100%**	**100%**	**25,780**	**100%**	**100%**

Source: Experian Goad and updated by WYG in March 2007 and February 2013
Note: The figures are based on the town centre boundaries as defined by Experian Goad

69 There is a good provision of convenience units in Batley, with the 13 stores comprising a total floorspace of 12,860 sq.m[5]. The Tesco Extra store on Bradford Road is by far the largest store, but other national operators in the town include Asda, Iceland and Fulton Foods within the Batley Shopping Centre, Aldi on Branch Road and Greggs on Commercial Street. The Batley Shopping Centre

[5] It should be noted that Experian Goad considers large food superstores such as the Tesco Extra store at Bradford Road to be 'convenience stores' and categorises all such floorspace as 'convenience' despite the fact that a significant proportion of such stores' trading area will in practice be dedicated to comparison goods

opened in 1991/1992, whilst the Tesco Extra store opened for trading in 2003. An outdoor market is held every Friday on Market Square and sells a variety of food and non-food goods.

70 The proportion of comparison outlets in the centre is below the national average level and since March 2007 there has been a reduction of 10 units and 590 sq.m of floorspace dedicated to comparison goods sales. The key changes include the former Superdrug store at 64 Commercial Street which is now Fulton Foods and Shoe Fayre at 80 Commercial Street which is now vacant. Despite this, there is still a reasonable variety of national comparison operators in Batley, including Boots, Co-op Pharmacy and O2. The Mill, which is a discount retail warehouse accommodating a variety of clothing, furniture and gift stores over four floors, is located on Bradford Road, to the east of the Experian Goad defined town centre boundary. Several national operators are accommodated at The Mill, including Antler and Edinburgh Woollen Mill, as well as four restaurants.

71 The 27 retail service units occupy 21.1% of outlets and 7.8% of the floorspace in Batley town centre, compared to the respective national average figures of 13.6% and 7.2%. The sector includes 15 health and beauty salons, four opticians, three travel agents, two petrol filling stations and a Post Office on Commercial Street. There are several key national retail service operators in the centre, including Specsavers and Thomas Cook.

72 In terms of the level of leisure services in Batley, there is a shortfall both in terms of the proportion of units and the amount of floorspace compared to the national average. However, the site visit in February 2013 identified that there was a good variety of national and independent leisure operators in the centre, including 12 take aways, three pubs, three betting offices (Coral, Ladbrokes and William Hill), a restaurant, café and amusements arcade.

73 Batley accommodates a total of 13 financial and business service outlets, including five retail banks (Barclays, Halifax, Lloyds TSB, Santander and Yorkshire Bank), four financial services and a building society.

74 In addition to the commercial offer as outlined above, Batley town centre also accommodates a library, taxi firm and two medical facilities.

Edge and Out of Centre Retail Provision

75 **The Mill** is a discount retail warehouse which accommodates a variety of clothing, furniture and gift stores over four floors. There are several national operators at The Mill, including Antler, Edinburgh Woollen Mill and Poundstretcher, as well as four restaurants. It is located on Bradford Road, to the east of the Experian Goad defined town centre boundary.

76 **Birstall Shopping Park** is located approximately 5 km to the north of Batley, close to Junction 27 of the M62. It accommodates a number of national operators, including Argos, Boots, DFS, GAP, Ikea, M&S Simply Food (former Comet) and a Showcase Cinema.

Vacancy Levels

77 The proportion of vacant outlets (18.0%) is above the national average (12.2%), with the 23 vacancies which were recorded in February 2013 concentrated within the Batley Shopping Centre (10 units) and Commercial Street (nine units). Since March 207, there has been an increase both in terms of the number of vacancies (by 10) and the amount of vacant floorspace (by 500 sq.m). In addition, since the previous Experian Goad survey in July 2012, there has been four new vacant units (including the former Shoe Zone and Home Discounts stores in the Batley Shopping Centre on Commercial Street), whilst one former vacancy has now re-let (by Fulton Foods). Several of the units in Batley are being actively marketed, including 27 Commercial Street (110 sq.m) which is available to let for £14,00 per annum and 82 Batley Shopping Centre/Commercial Street (200 sq.m) which is available to let for £32,500 per annum.

Pedestrian Footfall and Accessibility

78 An assessment of the general flow of pedestrian traffic in the town centre was undertaken during the site visit to Batley in February 2013. It was evident that the greatest levels of activity were located within the Batley Shopping Centre and the Tesco Extra store, with the Mill shopping centre also appearing to be trading well. The annual town centre surveys by Kirklees Council also records the pedestrian footfall levels, with the most recent data sample of Batley undertaken in October 2011. The figures indicate that since 2010, there has been a clear decline in the number of pedestrians visiting the centre on a non-market day (by 16.1%), whilst there was an increase in the footfall rate of 23.0% recorded on Saturday afternoon. Overall, the Council report notes that since 2010, there has been an overall decline in pedestrian levels by 3.2%. The greatest levels of pedestrian movement were recorded at the Tesco Extra store, with high levels also noted on Bradford Road and St James Street.

79 Batley railway station is located to the south east of the Experian Goad defined town centre boundary, within walking distance of the main commercial units. The bus station off Bradford Road was opened in 2005 and provides regular services to the nearby centres of Bradford, Huddersfield and Leeds. There is a good supply of free car parking in the town centre, with the principal facilities including Bradford Road (190 spaces), Wellington Street (120 spaces), Hick Lane (80 spaces), Henrietta Street (40 spaces), Market Place (22 spaces) and Cross Street (20 spaces). In addition, off-street parking facilities are available to customers of the main stores in the centre, including the Aldi (100 spaces) and Tesco (612 spaces) stores, and at The Mill.

Environmental Quality and Occurrence of Crime

80 The Batley Conservation Area is concentrated around Commercial Street, Hick Lane and Market Place, with the boundary excluding the Batley Shopping Centre and the Tesco Extra store. The environmental quality of Batley is good, though the high level of vacancies in the Shopping Centre and along certain sections of Commercial Street does detract from this overall condition. The peripheral areas are of a poorer quality, notably in the business and industrial areas to the south of Wellington Street.

Cleckheaton Town Centre

81 Cleckheaton is located in the northern part of the defined Study Area, approximately 13 km to the north of Huddersfield and 6 km to the west of Batley. It is identified as a Local Centre by the Venuescore 2011 – 2012 retail rankings, with the Core Strategy Submission document identifying Cleckheaton as a 'Small Town Centre'.

82 Experian Goad's survey of Cleckheaton from December 2010 was updated by WYG during our visit to the centre in April 2013 in order to provide an up to date source for our analysis. Our record of the occupation of units and floorspace has been compared to UK national average data in order to identify any potential issues in respect of the composition of the retail and service offer. The survey of Cleckheaton in April 2013 identified that there was a total of 142 units, comprising a gross floorspace of 16,180 sq.m.

83 The main shopping offer of Cleckheaton is focused around Northgate and Bradford Road, with Cheapside and Albion Street also accommodating a number of retail operators.

Diversity of Uses

84 Table 11 sets out the composition of the stock of commercial properties in Cleckheaton town centre in April 2013 alongside the national average benchmark.

Table 11: Diversity of Uses in Cleckheaton Town Centre

	December 2010			April 2013		
	No.	Cleckheaton	UK	No.	Cleckheaton	UK
Convenience	10	7.1%	8.7%	10	7.0%	8.0%
Comparison	42	29.8%	33.4%	47	33.1%	33.0%
Retail Service	28	19.9%	13.2%	23	16.2%	13.6%
Leisure Service	25	17.7%	21.7%	27	19.0%	21.9%
Financial & Business Service	26	18.4%	11.0%	24	16.9%	11.0%
Vacant	10	7.1%	11.7%	11	7.7%	12.2%
Total	**141**	**100%**	**100%**	**142**	**100%**	**100%**

Source: Experian Goad December 2010 and updated by WYG in April 2013
Note: The figures are based on the town centre boundaries as defined by Experian Goad

85 Table 12 indicates the amount of commercial, service and vacant floorspace in Cleckheaton town centre.

Table 12: Amount of Floorspace in Cleckheaton Town Centre

	December 2010			April 2013		
	Sq.m	Cleckheaton	UK	Sq.m	Cleckheaton	UK
Convenience	3,370	20.8%	14.4%	3,370	20.8%	14.4%
Comparison	4,210	26.0%	36.9%	4,420	27.3%	36.4%
Retail Service	2,340	14.5%	7.0%	2,140	13.2%	7.2%
Leisure Service	2,810	17.4%	22.8%	3,020	18.7%	22.7%
Financial & Business Service	2,770	17.1%	8.5%	2,580	15.9%	8.3%
Vacant	670	4.1%	9.8%	650	4.0%	10.1%
Total	**16,170**	**100%**	**100%**	**16,180**	**100%**	**100%**

Source: Experian Goad December 2010 and updated by WYG in April 2013
Note: The figures are based on the town centre boundaries as defined by Experian Goad

86 The site visit in April 2013 identified that the 10 convenience stores in Cleckheaton account for 7.0% of the units and 20.8% (equating to a total of 3,370 sq.m) of the floorspace in the town centre. There is a good provision of facilities, including the Tesco store on Northgate, three bakers (including Greggs), two butchers, Fulton Foods, a greengrocer and health foods shop. The indoor market building on Horncastle Street is open from Monday to Saturday and accommodates a variety of stalls, though for the purposes of our analysis the whole structure is classed as a convenience unit.

87 The number and amount of comparison units and floorspace has increased slightly from December 2010, with the largest units being occupied by Wynsors World of Shoes at Horncastle Street and Inches DIY store at Market Street. The other national comparison retailers occupying space in

Cleckheaton comprise Hallmark cards and Rowlands Pharmacy, and the Age UK, Oxfam and the RSPCA charity shops.

88 Whilst our assessment identifies a slight decline in the retail service sector since 2010, the sector remains strong in Cleckheaton, with both the proportion of outlets and floorspace figures remaining above the respective national averages. The health and beauty sector accounts for more than half of such units, with the centre also accommodating three opticians, two travel agents, a dry cleaners, Tesco filling station, Blockbuster, photo studio and a Post Office on Greenside.

89 The leisure services in the centre, as defined by Experian Goad, include uses such as restaurants, cafes, bookmakers and public houses. There is a good provision of leisure services in Cleckheaton, with the most common type of units comprising take aways (10), public houses and cafes (5), casinos/betting offices (3) and restaurants (2). The Bet Fred and William Hill units are the only national operators in the centre.

90 In terms of financial and business services in Cleckheaton, the proportion of outlets occupied by such uses (16.9%) above the national average figure (11.0%), whilst the proportion of floorspace occupied by such uses (15.9%) is also higher than the national average level (8.3%). There is a good variety of service outlets in the centre, including six retail banks (Barclays, Halifax, HSBC, Lloyds TSB, NatWest and Yorkshire Bank), five property services, four legal services and two building societies.

91 In addition to the retail services on offer within the town, there are a number of non-commercial uses, including five offices and the Town Hall on Bradford Road.

Potential Capacity for Growth or Change

92 In April 2010, planning permission was granted for the erection of a replacement 6,750 sq.m gross Tesco foodstore (with a net sales floorspace of 3,533 sq.m), 11 retail units (814 sq.m), a petrol station, car parking and associated works (planning permission reference 2009/91958). Since, then, two discharge of conditions applications have been submitted (planning permission reference 2012/92276 and 2012/92759). Two non-material amendment applications to the original consent were also submitted in January (planning permission reference 2013/90138) and February 2013 (planning permission reference 2013/90463) and relate to access and landscaping changes to the original scheme.

93 An outline application with all matters reserved for the erection of a mixed-use development on land at Horncastle Street and Northgate was approved in April 2010 (planning permission reference 2009/92638), with the illustrative layout indicating that the scheme has potential to accommodate a

discount supermarket with a gross floor area of approximately 1,500 sq.m. In December 2012, an application to extend the time for implementing the original application was granted (planning permission reference 2012/93101).

Vacancy Levels

94 Our survey of the centre in April 2013 identified that both the proportion of outlets (7.7%) and the amount of vacant floorspace (4.0%) in the centre are below the respective national average figures of 12.2% and 10.1%. The 11 vacant units account for only 650 sq.m of the total floorspace in Cleckheaton. The largest vacancies comprise the former Printing.com unit on Bradford Road and Unit 2 Cheapside which is being actively marketed by the agent for £8,000 per annum.

Pedestrian Footfall and Accessibility

95 An assessment of the general flow of pedestrian traffic in the town centre was undertaken during the site visit to Cleckheaton in April 2013. The greatest levels of activity were noted as being along Northgate and close to the Tesco foodstore on Railway Street. The annual town centre surveys undertaken by the Council record pedestrian footfall levels, with the most recent available data being from June 2012. The figures indicate that between 2011 and 2012 there was an overall improvement in pedestrian footfall (by 2.7%), with a significant increase identified on the Tuesday survey (with footfall being up 23.0% on the Tuesday compared to 12 months previously). Overall, the report concludes that since 2007/2008 there has been an overall decline in the footfall levels, though the more recent figures from 2011/2012 indicate a more positive upward trend.

96 There is a good supply of off-street car parking spaces in Cleckheaton town centre, with the principal facilities comprising the Bradford Road car park (approximately 200 spaces), Crown Street car park (100 spaces) and Town Hall car park (54 spaces). The Tesco foodstore on Northgate also accommodates approximately 200 car parking spaces.

Environmental Quality and Occurrence of Crime

97 We consider the overall environmental quality of Cleckheaton to be good, with little evidence of litter, graffiti or vandalism. An area of vacant land at Horncastle Street currently has a detrimental impact on the attractiveness of this part of the town, but the aforementioned planning permission provides for the redevelopment of this site for a foodstore use. The low level of boarded-up vacant shops which would also appear to suggest that the centre is performing satisfactorily.

Heckmondwike Town Centre

98 Heckmondwike is located in the north of the defined Study Area, approximately 12 km to the north of Huddersfield and 5 km to the north west of Dewsbury. It is identified as a Local Centre by the

Venuescore 2011-2012 retail rankings which places the centre in the top 75% of all UK shopping venues considered by Venuescore. The Core Strategy Submission document identifies that Heckmondwike is a 'Small Town Centre'.

99 Experian Goad's survey of Heckmondwike from October 2011 was updated by WYG during our visit to the centre in April 2013 in order to provide an up to date source for our analysis. Our record of the occupation of units and floorspace has been compared to UK national average data in order to identify any potential issues in respect of the composition of the retail and service offer. The survey of Heckmondwike in April 2013 identified that there was a total of 142 units, comprising a gross floorspace of 24,740 sq.m. It should be noted that for the purposes of this analysis and in order to enable comparisons between the national average figures, WYG have adopted the Experian Goad defined town centre boundary.

100 The main shopping area in Heckmondwike is concentrated along Westgate, Northgate and Market Street, with the key national operators in the centre including Morrisons, Lidl and Superdrug.

Diversity of Uses

101 Table 13 sets out the composition of the stock of commercial properties in Heckmondwike town centre in April 2013 alongside the national average benchmark.

Table 13: Diversity of Uses in Heckmondwike Town Centre

	October 2011			April 2013		
	No.	Heckmondwike	UK	No.	Heckmondwike	UK
Convenience	8	5.8%	8.2%	10	7.0%	8.0%
Comparison	31	22.3%	33.3%	29	20.4%	33.0%
Retail Service	29	20.9%	13.3%	34	23.9%	13.6%
Leisure Service	30	21.6%	21.8%	32	22.5%	21.9%
Financial & Business Service	18	12.9%	10.9%	18	12.7%	11.0%
Vacant	23	16.5%	12.1%	19	13.4%	12.2%
Total	**139**	**100%**	**100%**	**142**	**100%**	**100%**

Source: Experian Goad October 2011 and updated by WYG in April 2013
Note: The figures are based on the town centre boundaries as defined by Experian Goad

102 Table 14 indicates the amount of commercial, service and vacant floorspace in Heckmondwike town centre.

Table 14: Amount of Floorspace in Heckmondwike Town Centre

	October 2011			April 2013		
	Sq.m	Heckmondwike	UK	Sq.m	Heckmondwike	UK
Convenience	8,290	33.9%	14.3%	8,410	34.0%	14.4%
Comparison	4,960	20.3%	36.9%	5,130	20.7%	36.4%
Retail Service	2,570	10.5%	7.1%	2,940	11.9%	7.2%
Leisure Service	4,140	17.0%	22.7%	4,250	17.2%	22.7%
F'ncl & B'nss Service	1,760	7.2%	8.4%	1,790	7.2%	8.3%
Vacant	2,700	11.1%	10.0%	2,220	9.0%	10.1%
Total	**24,420**	**100%**	**100%**	**24,740**	**100%**	**100%**

Source: Experian Goad October 2011 and updated by WYG in April 2013
Note: The figures are based on the town centre boundaries as defined by Experian Goad

103 There is a good provision of convenience stores in Heckmondwike, with the ten outlets providing a total gross floorspace of 8,410 sq.m. The Morrisons at Union Street and the Lidl unit at the Northgate Retail Centre are the largest foodstores in the town, with additional convenience provision including Fulton Foods and four bakers/confectioners (including Greggs). The indoor market on Blanket Hall Street operates every Tuesday and Saturday.

104 Since October 2011, there has been a reduction in the total number of comparison outlets by two units, whilst the amount of comparison goods floorspace has actually increased by 170 sq.m. The comparison goods sector accounts for only 20.4% of total outlets and 20.7% of the floorspace in Heckmondwike, with both figures well below the national averages of 33.0% and 36.4%. The largest units in the centre comprise Store Twenty One at Market Street and the Poundstretcher at the Northgate Retail Centre, with other national operators represented in the town including Co-op Pharmacy, Peacocks and Superdrug.

105 The retail service sector is well represented in Heckmondwike, with an additional five units and 370 sq.m of floorspace being dedicated to the sector since October 2011, including four new health and beauty salons. The majority of retail service outlets are operated by local independents, though there are also several national businesses, including Co-op Travel and the Post Office.

106 The 32 leisure service units in Heckmondwike account for 22.5% of total outlets and 17.2% of the total floorspace. The fast food sector is well represented in the town centre with 17 outlets, and there are also five cafes, three public houses, two restaurants, two casinos/betting offices, two clubs and one amusements arcade. The four national leisure operators present comprise Domino's Pizza, McDonald's, Pizza Hut and William Hill.

107 In terms of financial and business services in Heckmondwike, the proportion of units put to such a use (12.7%) is above the national average (11.0%), whilst the floorspace occupied by such uses in the town centre (7.2%) is slightly below the national average level (8.3%). Our survey of April 2013 identified a good variety of services including five retail banks (Halifax, HSBC, NatWest, Santander and Yorkshire Bank), four financial services, three estate agents and two employment agencies.

Potential Capacity for Growth or Change

108 In October 2012, an application to extend the time limit for implementing a previous permission (planning permission reference 2009/91883) on land at Northgate was granted (planning permission reference 2012/92547). The original outline application for the erection of a library and information centre, new four stand bus station and associated highway works was approved in 2009.

Vacancy Levels

109 The site visit in April 2013 identified that the 19 vacant units in Heckmondwike together account for 2,220 sq.m of the total gross floorspace of the town centre. Whilst the proportion of vacant units (13.4%) is marginally above the national average rate of 12.2%, the proportion of vacant floorspace (9.0%) is below the average (10.1%). Since October 2011, the vacancy rates in Heckmondwike have improved, with an additional four units and 480 sq.m now in active use. The largest vacancies are the former Royal Mail sorting office on Oldfield Lane which closed in August 2012 and the former Queen Hotel on Westgate. Unit 109 Market Street has remained vacant since October 2011, with the agent seeking a rental value of £13,500 per annum, whilst 11-13 Westgate is being marketed for £140,000.

Pedestrian Footfall and Accessibility

110 An assessment of the general pedestrian flows in the town centre was undertaken during the site visit to Heckmondwike in April 2013. The greatest levels of activity were recorded as being at Northgate Retail Centre, along Market Street and at the Morrisons foodstore. The annual town centre surveys undertaken by the Council record pedestrian activity and, in the case of Heckmondwike, find that pedestrian activity in the town centre has generally improved over the last 10 years. However, the most recently available data, from 2011, indicates that there has been a decline of 7% in pedestrian footfall when compared with the previous year, with a particular loss of pedestrian traffic across weekday afternoons.

111 There are five main town centre car parks in Heckmondwike, namely the Northgate Retail Centre (approximately 200 spaces), Market Place (30 spaces), Kaye Street (28 spaces) and High Street (21 spaces). A customer car park with approximately 520 spaces is also located adjacent to the Morrisons foodstore on Union Street.

Environmental Quality and Occurrence of Crime

112 The overall environmental quality of Heckmondwike is good, though there are several poorly maintained buildings which result in pockets of the town centre appearing to be run down. Our survey of the centre has identified that ten of the units which were recorded as being vacant in April 2013 were also vacant in October 2011, suggesting that parts of the commercial stock may be unattractive to new businesses taking space or seeking to take space in the town.

Holmfirth Town Centre

113 Holmfirth is located in the south of the defined Study Area, approximately 24 km to the west of Barnsley and 10 km to the south of Huddersfield. Due to its small scale and lack of national operators, Holmfirth is not identified by the Venuescore 2011-2012 retail rankings. The Core Strategy Submission document identified Holmfirth as a 'Small Town Centre' and notes that whilst it has '**...the greatest level of service provision in south Kirklees, comparable with the smaller north Kirklees towns…its potential for growth is severely constrained by its valley location.**'

Experian Goad's survey of Holmfirth from February 2011 was updated by WYG during our visit to the centre in February 2013 in order to provide an up to date source for our analysis. Our record of the occupation of units and floorspace has been compared to UK national average data in order to identify any potential issues in respect of the composition of the retail and service offer. The survey of Holmfirth in February 2013 identified there to be a total of 121 units, comprising a gross floorspace of 12,990 sq.m.

114 Huddersfield Road, Victoria Street and Hollowgate are the key shopping areas in Holmfirth, with the largest foodstore in the centre, the Co-operative Food located on Market Street to the north of the town. Holmfirth is a popular tourist destination, in part due to its role as a filming destination for the TV series Last of the Summer Wine.

Diversity of Uses

115 Table 13 sets out the composition of the stock of commercial properties in Holmfirth town centre in February 2013 alongside the national average benchmark.

Table 15: Diversity of Uses in Holmfirth Town Centre

	February 2011			February 2013		
	No.	Holmfirth	UK	No.	Holmfirth	UK
Convenience	12	9.9%	8.7%	11	9.1%	8.0%
Comparison	43	35.5%	33.4%	49	40.5%	33.0%
Retail Service	14	11.6%	13.2%	13	10.7%	13.6%
Leisure Service	32	26.4%	21.7%	32	26.4%	21.9%
Financial & Business Service	11	11.6%	11.0%	12	9.9%	11.0%
Vacant	6	5.0%	11.7%	4	3.3%	12.2%
Total	**121**	**100%**	**100%**	**121**	**100%**	**100%**

Source: Experian Goad February 2011 and updated by WYG in February 2013
Note: The figures are based on the town centre boundaries as defined by Experian Goad

116 Table 16 shows the proportion of commercial floorspace in Holmfirth, in comparison with the national average.

Table 16: Amount of Floorspace in Holmfirth Town Centre

	February 2011			February 2013		
	Sq.m	Holmfirth	UK	Sq.m	Holmfirth	UK
Convenience	2,940	22.6%	14.4%	2,910	22.4%	14.4%
Comparison	3,490	26.9%	36.9%	3,960	30.5%	36.4%
Retail Service	1,090	8.4%	7.0%	1,040	8.0%	7.2%
Leisure Service	3,770	29.0%	22.8%	3,680	28.3%	22.7%
Financial & Business Service	1,230	9.5%	8.5%	1,120	8.6%	8.3%
Vacant	470	3.6%	9.8%	280	2.2%	10.1%
Total	**12,990**	**100%**	**100%**	**12,990**	**100%**	**100%**

Source: Experian Goad February 2011 and updated by WYG in February 2013
Note: The figures are based on the town centre boundaries as defined by Experian Goad

117 There are a reasonable number of convenience units in Holmfirth, with the sector occupying 9.1% of all stores in the centre and 22.4% of the floorspace (both of which are above the national average figures). The town is anchored by the Co-operative Food supermarket on Market Street which appeared to be trading well on the day of the site visit in February 2013. The other convenience units in the centre are operated by small local independent traders, including four bakers/confectioners, a butcher, green grocer and health foods shop. The indoor market on Huddersfield Road accommodates twice-weekly events on a Thursday (the general market) and Saturday (the craft and food market), with a farmers market held there once a month.

118 The comparison sector is well represented in the town and since February 2011, there has been an increase both in the number and amount of units and floorspace. The majority of the stores are run by independent traders, though there are two national operators, namely the Age UK and Oxfam charity shops. There is a good range of comparison outlets, including seven crafts/gift shops, six ladies clothing units, six charity shops and three jewellers. The largest concentration of comparison goods floorspace in Holmfirth is at Riverside Shopping Centre and Holmfirth Mills, the latter of which sells a variety of household goods and furnishings. Several of the units in Riverside Shopping Centre are currently vacant and we are informed that the whole building was under offer in February 2013.

119 Retail services in Holmfirth account for 10.7% of the outlets (13 units) and 8.0% of the floorspace (1,040 sq.m) in the centre, which compares to respective national averages of 13.6% and 7.2%. The majority of the units are operated by independent traders, with the exception of the Post Office, Thomas Cook and the two Co-op Travel outlets. The eight health and beauty salons are concentrated around Hollowgate and Huddersfield Road.

120 There is an above average proportion of well-established leisure service outlets and floorspace in the town centre, reflecting its status as an active and popular tourist destination. The sector comprises 10 cafes, eight restaurants, four take aways, two bars and hotels, a betting office and the Picturedrome music venue.

121 In terms of financial and business services in Holmfirth, the proportion of outlets occupied by such uses (9.9%) is below the national average figure (11.0%), whilst the proportion of floorspace occupied by such uses (8.6%) is marginally above the national average level (8.3%). The 12 units in the centre comprise five estate agents, four retail banks (including Barclays, HSBC and Lloyds TSB), one building society, one financial service and one legal service.

122 In addition to the retail service on offer within the town centre, there are a number of non-retail uses, including three medical services, a tourist and information centre on Huddersfield Road and a library.

Potential Capacity for Growth or Change

123 There are limited opportunities for major new development within Holmfirth town centre due to a number of constraints, including the steep sided valley location of the town, the small scale nature of the existing commercial units and the conservation area designation. Outside of the main shopping area, there have been two recent foodstore planning applications. In March 2012, planning permission was granted for a new Lidl foodstore at Riverholme Works on Huddersfield Road (planning permission reference 2011/92600) with a gross floorspace of 1,518 sq.m and a maximum net sales area of 1,063 sq.m. The scheme is currently being constructed. An application for a Tesco foodstore at the former

Midlothian Garage on New Mill Road (planning permission reference 2011/93163) with a gross floorspace of 3,539 sq.m and a net retail area of 2,150 sq.m was refused at committee in July 2012. An appeal was lodged in January 2013, but has not been determined at the time of reporting.

Vacancy Levels

124 The level of vacancies in Holmfirth is significantly below the national average, with the four vacant units accounting for just 3.3% of all outlets and 2.2% of the total floorspace in the town centre. The largest vacancy is 59 Huddersfield Road (120 sq.m) which was available to let in February 2013 for £13,000 per annum.

Pedestrian Footfall and Accessibility

125 An assessment of the general pedestrian flows in the town centre was noted during the site visit to Holmfirth in February 2013. The greatest levels of activity were recorded as being on Victoria Street, Huddersfield Road and Hollowgate, as reflected in the 2011 footfall survey which was undertaken by Kirklees Council. The data also indicates that there has been a decline in the pedestrian levels between 2010 and 2011 of 12.2% and this reflects the overall situation since 2003.

126 Holmfirth bus station is located on Market Walk, in the centre of the town. There are six main town centre off-street car parks, namely on Huddersfield Road (30 spaces), Towngate (27 spaces), Station Road (26 spaces), Holmfirth Library (23 spaces) and Bridge Lane (17 spaces), with additional customer car parking available for a charge at the Co-operative Food store on Market Street (140 spaces).

Environmental Quality and Occurrence of Crime

127 Holmfirth is an attractive and historic town, with the conservation area designation ensuring that the high environmental quality of the centre is retained. Its role as a tourist destination also attracts visitors to the local area and this makes Holmfirth particularly vibrant during the peak season, particularly as it offers coach parking.

Conclusion

128 WYG's analysis of the vitality and viability of the six town centres in Kirklees has been provided in the previous section. The analysis by WYG has confirmed that most of the centres generally appear to be trading well, with the health check indicators identifying that the vacancy levels in Cleckheaton and Holmfirth are well below the national average figures. Huddersfield remains the principal centre in the district, with the emerging redevelopment proposals for the expansion of the town a positive indicator. In contrast, Dewsbury is showing several signs of decline, with the high vacancy rate and closure of

several national businesses indicating that there has been a decline in consumer and retailer confidence.