4) Cycling
Similar to the 1999 Town Centre Audit, the shoppers survey did not identify anyone visiting the town by bicycle. The topography of the area and heavy traffic on the main radial routes are seen as deterrents to cycling. Nevertheless, new cycle routes are being introduced with the aim of encouraging this mode of transport.

Cross Street car park

5) Car Parking
Batley town centre exhibits a car parking ratio of 80 spaces per '000 sq.m. of occupied retail floorspace (including the new Tesco car park). This represents an increase on the 76 spaces per '000 sq.m. recorded in 1999. The car park ratio compares very well with many other towns in West Yorkshire.

Public car parking – there are approximately 447 public off street car park places in the town centre study area, many of which are located to the south and west of Commercial Street.

Private car parking – There are some 1,361 privately owned shoppers car parking spaces within the study area including those at the Mill Discount Department Store, Netto, Iceland, Aldi and the new Tesco supermarket on Bradford Road.

The business questionnaire survey revealed that 40% of respondents considered the availability of car parking within the town as a serious problem. The main difficulties identified were the location of car parks (19% of respondents), parking restrictions (19%), the inability to use Market Place (14%) and car park security issues (14%). However, the shoppers questionnaire survey revealed that, of those who used a car to access the town centre, 89% had no problem in finding a place to park. A number of the businesses that responded to the questionnaire survey commented they would like to see more long-stay parking in convenient locations within the town centre for employees.

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BATLEY TOWN CENTRE AUDIT 2004

FACT SHEET 2: RETAIL CATCHMENT AREA, TURNOVER AND ACCESSIBILITY

Introduction

This document, produced by Kirklees MC's Planning Service, is designed to provide supplementary information on catchment area, turnover and accessibility to accompany the 2004 Town Centre Audit for Batley (in A1 folded form). This is one of a series of Fact Sheets that contain detailed analysis of the indicators of town centre performance presented in the main publication.

The extent of Batley's trade area

The extent of Batley's catchment for both convenience and comparison goods shopping is shown in the 2004 Town Centre Audit. The trade areas defined are based on data obtained through (i) an extensive householder survey undertaken in May 2003, and (ii) a shoppers questionnaire survey undertaken in Batley town centre during July and August 2003.

By comparing the trade areas derived with those presented in the 1999 Town Centre Audit, it can be seen that there have been a number of changes in terms of the geographical area covered. The convenience goods trade area has slightly contracted in size to the extent that it now excludes part of Birkenshaw. Similarly, Batley's comparison goods trade area has also contracted over the same 5-year period, and now excludes Birkenshaw, Gomersal and part of Birstall.

It is important to note that this is a pre Tesco redevelopment picture. Post Tesco will reveal a more extensive catchment for convenience goods trade. This will be examined in more detail during the autumn of 2004 when it is proposed to undertake a shoppers questionnaire survey. Nevertheless, based on the results of previous questionnaire surveys, Batley's convenience goods trade area is likely to grow to 100,000 people following the opening of the new Tesco store.

Batley does not have a uniform influence over its trade area and this is clearly illustrated in Figures 1 and 2. These show the relative strength of the town in terms of percentage draw from individual postcode districts in Kirklees for both convenience and comparison goods expenditure.

Figure 1 shows the level of market penetration that Batley town centre achieves in terms of convenience goods trade. The town's trade draw throughout its convenience goods catchment has progressively weakened since 1997. Batley retains 37% of residents' expenditure from postcode WF17 (the town's immediate local area). This has fallen from 42% in just 2 years. Similarly, Batley's trade draw has weakened in postcodes BD11, BD12 and WF13, although a slight strengthening of its draw has been recorded in WF15 and WF16.

Batley loses 35% of the convenience goods expenditure generated by residents of WF17 to the nearby town centres of Dewsbury, Heckmondwike and Morley. A further 11% goes to the White Rose Centre. The presence of major foodstore operators in each of these centres (Asda, Safeway and Sainsburys in Dewsbury, Morrisons in Heckmondwike, Asda and Morrisons in Morley and Sainsburys in the White Rose Centre) explains the level of expenditure loss.

Figure 1: Convenience goods trade draw by postcode district 2003

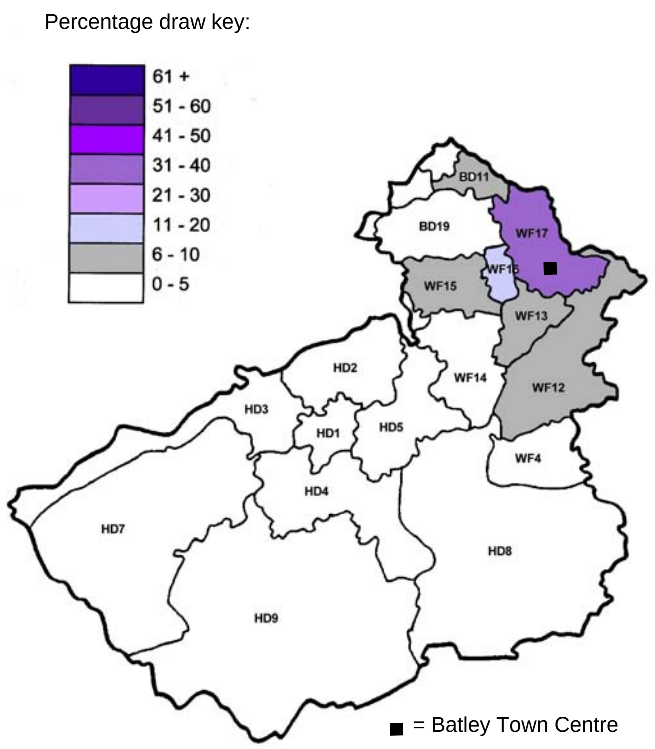
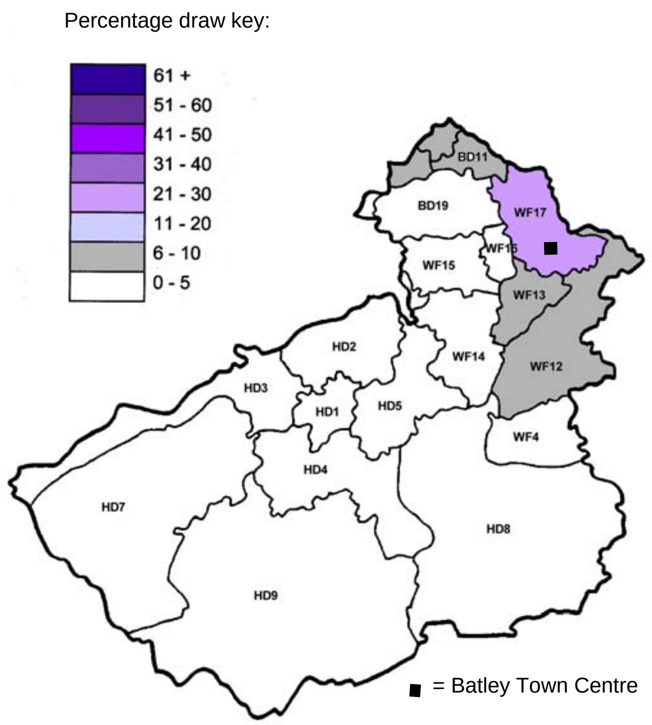


Figure 2 shows Batley town centre's comparison goods trade draw from postcode districts in north Kirklees. Market penetration has weakened over the last 5 years to the extent that postcodes WF13, WF16 and WF17 each record a decline, although the scale of decline is not significant. Nevertheless, it is clear that a large proportion of the comparison goods expenditure that is generated by residents within Batley's catchment area is spent elsewhere. In fact, Batley loses nearly 60% of this expenditure to just 4 shopping centres/facilities – Leeds (9%), White Rose (16%), Dewsbury (18%) and Birstall retail warehouse park (17%).

To a lesser extent, competition for trade from the Batley catchment area is also generated by Wakefield, Bradford and Huddersfield town centres. Furthermore, even distant facilities such as Meadowhall and Trafford Centre have an impact (albeit limited) upon Batley.

The shoppers questionnaire survey (undertaken prior to the opening of Tesco) revealed dissatisfaction with the choice and variety of shops in Batley town centre (see Fact Sheet 5). It revealed the popularity of Leeds, Dewsbury and White Rose for the purchase of clothing/footwear and personal goods, and the popularity of Dewsbury and Birstall Retail Warehouse Park for the purchas of 'bulky goods' such as furniture, carpets and electrical goods. Notwithstanding the above, the questionnaire survey did reveal a strong loyalty to Batley in respect of convenience goods shopping.

Figure 2: Comparison goods trade draw by postcode district 2003



The above all indicate that Batley does not have exclusive access to its catchment area as it must compete for trade with other centres lying both within and outside the Heavy Woollen District. This part of Kirklees exhibits a complex pattern of overlapping catchments, which means there will always be considerable opportunity for other shopping centres to draw trade away from Batley which might otherwise benefit its town centre.

The business questionnaire survey revealed that 60% of respondents considered 'out-of-town' competition to be a major threat to business performance, and indeed the health and vitality of the town centre as a whole. The White Rose Centre, Birstall Retail Warehouse Park and the Bradford Road corridor were highlighted by many as being of particular concern.

Turnover and expenditure retention

Expenditure retention (or market penetration) is the volume of turnover that is drawn into a centre from its trade area, expressed as a percentage of the total expenditure that can be generated by its resident population.

It is important to note that approximately 5% of Batley's pre Tesco convenience goods turnover is derived from beyond the catchment area defined. With regard to comparison goods trade, approximately 3% of the traditional town centre's turnover is derived from beyond the catchment area defined, although this increases to 30% in repect of the turnover of the Mill Discount Department Store.

In terms of trade retention, the town achieved an overall penetration rate of 29.9% for convenience goods turnover during 2003. This meant that 70% of expenditure was being captured by other competing foodstores and shopping centres. However, early indications are that since the opening of the new Tesco Extra store, Batley's catchment area has started to increase in size, and importantly, the town's trade draw, particularly from its immediate area has strengthened. In other words, many people who had previously travelled out of the area to shop at foodstores in Dewsbury, Heckmondwike and Morley are now returning to shop in Batley.

It is anticipated that convenience goods turnover of Batley town centre will increase by some 40% to £47.63 million during 2004. The new Tesco store will largely impact upon competing foodstores in nearby towns such as Asda, Sainsburys and Safeway in Dewsbury, Morrisons in Heckmondwike, the Tesco store in Cleckheaton, and Morrisons and Asda in Morley.

The pedestrian footfall count records a significant increase in shopper numbers in the town centre since Tesco's opening, particularly on Commercial Street (see Fact Sheet 1). However, the delay in constructing the footbridge, stairs and lift to directly link the new store with the shopping core has impacted on town centre traders. Until the link is established, the town centre will not fully benefit from having a new Tesco store trading so close to its core.

The Tesco redevelopment (including the refurbishment of Alfreds Way) will significantly enhance in both quantitative and qualitative terms the town's retail offer. However, key to success will be ensuring that the store does not operate independently of the town centre, but becomes an important part of a diverse range of services and facilities that is Batley town centre.

Figure 3: Turnover and retention level (2003)

Turnover		
	Convenience goods	Comparison goods
Retail floorspace (net sq.m.)	4,450	15,769
Turnover of town centre [1]	£33,090,000	£41,650,000
Proportion of town centre turnover generated from within catchment area [2]	£31,435,000	£36,698,000
Retention level		
Population within trade area	82,100	68,100
Consumer expenditure within trade area [3]	£104,789,000	£121,116,000
Retention level [4]	29.9%	30.3%

Despite the presence of the Mill Discount Department Store, Batley retained just 30.3% of comparison goods expenditure. In other words, nearly 70% of the expenditure generated by local residents was spent elsewhere.

The Mill Discount Department Store, although located on a site that adjoins the traditional town centre, is nevertheless an important part of Batley town centre's retail facilities. The mill complex focuses on the sale of clothes, furniture and household furnishings which have always been particular weaknesses in the comparison offer of the town centre. The Mill is a popular visitor attraction that draws in people from a wide area (between 30% and 35% of the Mills turnover is derived from beyond Batley's comparison goods trade area). However, strong competition from further afield has significantly constrained its growth. A recent change in ownership is likely to see new ideas being introduced to re-establish its competitive 'edge'.

[1] 2003 turnover is based on the Batley business questionnaire survey, CIG Retail Rankings, company accounts and company annual reports
[2] Based on 2003 Kirklees householder survey and on Batley shoppers questionnaire survey 2003. The town centre attracts 5% of its convenience goods turnover from outside its catchment area. 5% of the traditional town centre's comparison goods turnover is also derived from outside the defined catchment area. However, with regard to the Mill Discount Department Store, between 30% and 35% of its turnover is taken from outside of this area.
[3] This has been calculated from MapInfo Data, at 1998 prices. The national per capita expenditure figures have then been adjusted to take into account (i) local variations in expenditure, and (ii) special forms of trading (7.6% for comparison goods, and 0.9% for convenience goods). The adjustment is based on an assessment of socio-economic status using 2003 household income data from CACI.
[4] The volume of turnover that is drawn into Batley town centre from its trade area, expressed as a percentage of the maximum potential consumer expenditure that can be generated by its resident catchment population.

The construction of the new Tesco store and the change in ownership of the Mill Discount Department Store will most certainly raise the profile of Batley town centre. This is likely to generate further interest from retail companies wishing in particular to benefit from the increased footfall created by the new Tesco store.


Batley open market

Asian Community: A large proportion of Batley's catchment population are of Asian origin (20.5% of the town's convenience goods trade area, and 23.6% of its comparison goods trade area). In terms of available expenditure, this equates to some £21.5 million of convenience goods and £28.6 million of comparison goods expenditure.

Whilst a proportion of this convenience goods expenditure is retained locally (although not all of it by the traditional town centre), Dewsbury does draw significant convenience trade from the Batley area. Furthermore, a large proportion of comparison goods expenditure generated by the Asian community is going to shopping facilities further afield such as Bradford, Leeds and Leicester. Within the Heavy Woollen District, Dewsbury is a particularly strong retail attraction for Asian shoppers.

Ethnicity exerts a strong influence on shoppers where customer contact and a greater understanding of ethnic customs are required (for example, clothes, fabrics, jewellery). It is least important for shops selling newspapers, sweets and tobacco products because contact with customers is only fleeting, little knowledge of ethnic customs is required and the goods purchased are relativley inexpensive, so there is no valid reason to travel any distance to purchase. The establishment of an Asian trading centre within the town centre study area was proposed about 5 years ago, as a means of recapturing this lost trade. However to date, no firm progress has been made.

Accessibility

Batley is located between the M1 and M62 motorways, and is centrally placed within the West Yorkshire conurbation. However, there is no motorway junction local to the town. Many major roads bypass Batley, although the A652 Dewsbury to Bradford road bisects the area, and acts as a spine road for most traffic passing through the town.

The shoppers questionnaire survey revealed that, of those interviewed, 56% travelled into Batley by car, 25% walked into the town, and 15% used the bus. Compared to a similar exercise undertaken in 1999, there is a clear increase in the use of the private car to access the town centre.

1) Public Transport

a) Buses – The shoppers survey revealed a decline in use of public transport to access the town since 1999. Batley's bus station in St James Street occupies an open and uninviting place. Although given a facelift 10 years ago, it remains visually unattractive. The function of the bus station has changed over the years, and the facility is no longer used as a changing stage for connecting services or as a bus terminus. However, improvements are proposed. Planning permission has recently been granted for the redevelopment of the bus station site to provide a 6 bay bus station with an undercover waiting area and a retail unit. Development will significantly improve the appearance of this part of the town centre.


Poor quality Batley bus station – a development opportunity

b) Trains – Although the main Trans-Pennine railway line runs through Batley, services on this route do not stop there. There are however, 2-3 trains per hour to Huddersfield and Leeds at peak times. The train station is isolated from the town centre, located on the edge of the old Commercial Quarter. The station itself was the subject of major refurbishment works a few years ago.

2) Walking
Approximately 7,500 people live within easy walking distance of the town centre. Significantly, 25% of respondents to the shoppers questionnaire survey had walked into town from the Cross Bank, Clerk Green, Soothill and Upper Batley areas. However, factors such as topography, heavy traffic and a lack of segregated pedestrian routes continue to deter people from walking to the town centre.

Commercial Street continues to take a high volume of delivery and shopping traffic due to a lack of alternative routes through the centre. As a result, this area remains an area of conflict between vehicles and pedestrians, although a number of highway improvements have been undertaken over the last 5 years.

3) Taxis
There are 5 taxi ranks in Batley town centre, which can accommodate 34 taxis.