



CLECKHEATON TOWN CENTRE ANNUAL STATEMENT OF KEY ECONOMIC INDICATORS SEPTEMBER 2003

INTRODUCTION

Since 1996, Planning Services of Kirklees M.C. has undertaken a programme of research into the health and vitality of shopping centres in the District. The annual monitoring of key performance indicators enables the role of individual town centres to be assessed, identifying the scope for change, renewal and diversification.

The first full audit for Cleckheaton town centre was published in August 1997. Changes that have taken place over the last 6 years have been examined in annual statements of key economic indicators, of which this is the sixth. The indicators of vitality and viability covered here are:

- Shop unit and floorspace occupancy,
- Vacancy rates,
- Pedestrian footfall,
- Retail development in the pipeline,
- Retailer demand, and
- Prime retail rents.

FLOORSPACE, SHOP UNITS AND VACANCY

A survey of occupancy updated in June 2003 recorded that Cleckheaton town centre provides a total of 8,140 sq.m. (87,583 sq.ft.) of net retail floorspace and 170 shop or service units. Figures 1 and 2 illustrate the changes in both retail floorspace and shop unit occupancy since 1999.

Figure 1: Cleckheaton shop unit statistics

	Convenience	Comparison ¹	Service	Vacant	TOTAL
1999	17 (10.1%)	90 (53.2%)	45 (26.6%)	17 (10.1%)	169 (100%)
2000	17 (10.0%)	89 (52.4%)	49 (28.8%)	15 (8.8%)	170 (100%)
2001	18 (10.5%)	92 (53.5%)	49 (28.5%)	13 (7.5%)	172 (100%)
2002	17 (9.8%)	94 (54.0%)	45 (25.9%)	18 (10.3%)	174 (100%)
2003	16 (9.4%)	91 (53.5%)	46 (27.1%)	17 (10.0%)	170 (100%)
% change 2002-03	-5.9	-3.2	+2.2	-5.6	-2.3

The most noticeable change in the pattern of occupancy within Cleckheaton town centre is the rise in vacant floorspace. This is attributable to the closure of the large motor cycle accessories unit on Dewsbury Road. By comparison, the shop unit vacancy rate has fallen to a position which now matches the national average. There

¹ Including semi-retail uses e.g. travel agents, opticians.

has been a slight fall in the total amount of retail floorspace in the town, coupled with a corresponding reduction in comparison goods retailing. This is largely due to the use of premises off Bradford Road for industrial purposes that had previously been occupied by a furniture retailer.

Figure 2: Cleckheaton floorspace statistics (sq.m. net)

	Convenience	Comparison	Vacant	TOTAL
1999	1,854 (23.0%)	5,391 (67.0%)	806 (10.0%)	8,051 (100%)
2000	1,854 (24.2%)	5,047 (66.0%)	748 (9.8%)	7,649 (100%)
2001	1,707 (21.9%)	5,588 (71.7%)	502 (6.4%)	7,797 (100%)
2002	1,694 (19.9%)	5,940 (69.9%)	862 (10.2%)	8,493 (100%)
2003	1,629 (20.0%)	5,315 (65.3%)	1,196 (14.7%)	8,140 (100%)
% change 2002-03	-3.7	-10.5	+38.7	-4.2

Figure 3 shows Cleckheaton's occupancy statistics in relation to those of nearby towns. Whilst the town has the highest vacancy rate (in terms of floorspace) of the towns shown it nevertheless has a very health proportion of comparison goods retailing for a town of its size.

Figure 3: Comparisons² with nearby towns (sq.m. net)

	Cleckheaton	Batley	Heck'wike	Dewsbury	Holmfirth
Convenience	1,629 20.0%	4,479 19.4%	4,896 42.8%	10,134 22.2%	1,834 26.8%
Comparison	5,315 65.3%	15,652 68.0%	4,892 42.8%	30,294 66.2%	4,096 59.9%
Vacant	1,196 14.7%	2,904 12.6%	1,641 14.4%	5,296 11.6%	913 13.3%
Total retail floorspace	8,140 (100%)	23,035 (100%)	11,429 (100%)	45,724 (100%)	6,843 (100%)
Vacant units	17 10.0%	30 14.0%	35 21.6%	70 20.0%	13 8.1%
Total no. of units	170 (100%)	214 (100%)	162 (100%)	351 (100%)	160 (100%)

PEDESTRIAN FOOTFALL

Since 1997, pedestrian footfall counts have been undertaken annually in Cleckheaton town centre to measure

² Figures relate to the floorspace contained within the Town Centre Audit Study Boundary of each centre at the most recent published survey date.

the volume and pattern of visitor/shopper movement. These assessments cover 7 locations including all access points into the town centre, the entrance to Tesco and the pedestrian link from the foodstore to Northgate. Morning and afternoon hour-sample surveys are undertaken on two weekdays (market day and non-market day) and a Saturday. Figure 4 gives the summer 2003 pedestrian count results and the changes recorded since the last assessment.

Figure 4: Cleckheaton pedestrian numbers 2002-03³

		2002	2003	% change
Market day	a.m.	1208	1466	+21.4
	p.m.	913	1007	+10.3
Non-market day	a.m.	1091	1253	+14.8
	p.m.	1122	1063	-5.3
Saturday	a.m.	2666	1603	-39.9
	p.m.	2007	1122	-44.1
TOTAL (into town only)		9007	7514	-16.6

The fall in overall pedestrian numbers during the last 12 months is largely due to the influence of an England World Cup football match on the 2002 Saturday counts. Figure 5 reveals the extent of this influence and illustrates that the town's pedestrian footfall numbers have actually remained relatively static since 1997.

Figure 5: The pattern of footfall 1997 – 2003

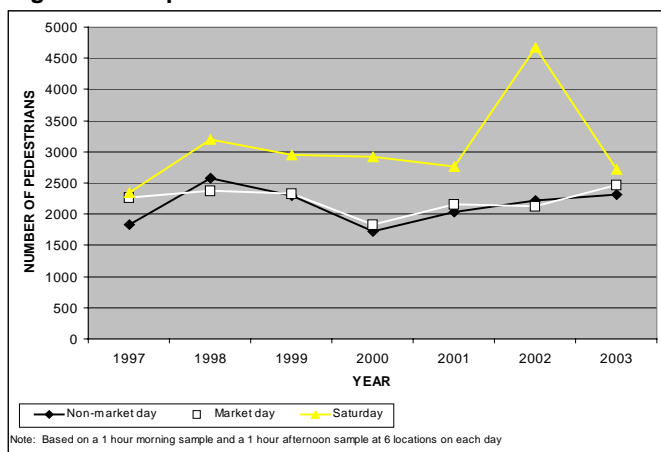


Figure 6: Pedestrian numbers by street⁴ (summer 2003)

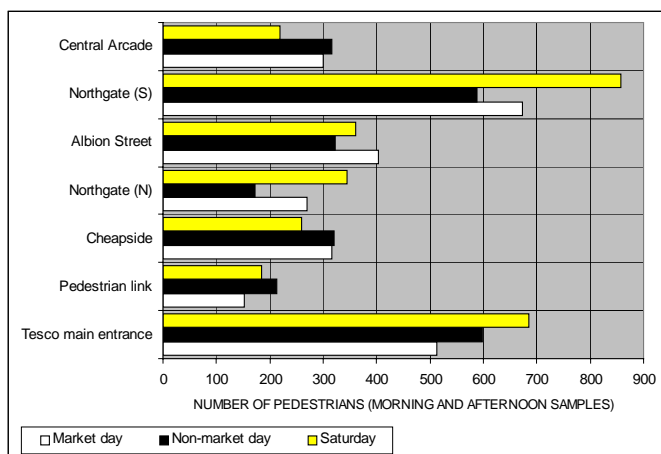


Figure 6 shows the distribution of pedestrian movement around the town, revealing that both the southern end of Northgate and the main entrance to Tesco attract the most movement. However, footfall in Cleckheaton continues to

³ Morning counts were conducted for 1 hour between 10:30 and 11:30. Afternoon counts were conducted for 1 hour between 2:30 and 3:30. Totals represent the number of people entering the town and exclude the pedestrian link count point.
⁴ All count points record pedestrians coming INTO the town only.

exhibit a fairly diffuse pattern of movement around the town centre and there continues to be little discernible difference between footfall levels in the town on a market day compared to a non-market day.

Below: Buildings in the town centre



RETAIL DEVELOPMENT IN THE PIPELINE

With the exception of changes to shop fronts and minor refurbishment works, there has been little retail development in Cleckheaton during the last 12 months. However, conditional outline planning permission was granted in March 2003 for a foodstore development (5,650sq.m.) at Bradford Road/Horncastle Street.

An outline permission for residential development on the ex-Savoy cinema site also remains unimplemented. However, the Spen Valley Civic Society has now landscaped this site as a public square.

RETAILER DEMAND

An assessment of retailer demand was undertaken in September 2003. This identified that there is only 1 registered requirement for representation in Cleckheaton town centre. This is from a motor vehicle accessories retailer wishing to secure a unit of 420 sq.m. (4,500 sq.ft). However, it is important to note that there may be other retailers who have a requirement for Cleckheaton but have not yet registered their interest.

PRIME RETAIL RENTAL LEVELS

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

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