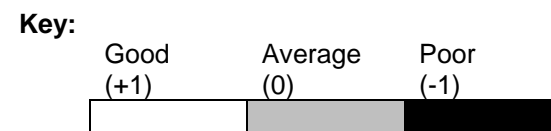


Figure 2: Environmental assessment: Full results

Indicator	Overall appearance	Cleanliness	Building condition	Street condition	Townscape	Traffic intrusion	Signage	Lighting	Street furniture	Planting	Weighted Score	1999 score	Change
Weighting	3	2.5	2	2	2.5	2	2	1.5	1.5	1			
Westgate											1.0	1.0	0
Prin. Wales Prec.											13.0	15.0	-2.0
Longcauseway											15.5	15.5	0
Wakefield Old Rd.											-1.0	3.5	-4.5
Crackenedge Lane											-1.5	-2.5	1.0
Church Street											0.5	-0.5	1.0
Corporation Street											5.0	9	-4.0
Foundry Street 1											3.5	4.5	-1.0
Foundry Street 2											13.0	12.5	0.5
Northgate											2.5	2	0.5
Market Place											15.5	15.5	0
Market Street											-5.0	-6	1.0
Union Street											-11.5	-12	0.5
Branch Road										*	-12.5	-10	-2.5
Croft Street										*	-8.0	-7.5	-0.5
Kingsway										*	4.5	3	1.5
The Arcade										*	13.0	12.5	0.5
Bradford Road											3.5	2	1.5
Daisy Hill											13.0	10	3
Nelson Street											4.5	4.5	0
Wellington Street											3.5	6	-2.5
Grove Street											10.0	11.5	-1.5
Bond Street											17.0	17	0
South Street											-9.0	-7	-2.0
Halifax Road											1.0	0	1.0
Wellington Road											3.5	1.5	2.0
Wellington Rd. east											5.0	5.0	0
Total score	6	3	8	6	11	-3	3	10	3	-1			
	Average Score										99.5	106	-6.5



*No score given
 Foundry Street 1 = North of Corporation Street (next to Market)
 Foundry Street 2 = South of Corporation Street

DEWSBURY TOWN CENTRE AUDIT 2001

FACT SHEET 6: ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

Introduction

This document, produced by Kirklees MC's Planning Service, is designed to provide supplementary information on environmental quality to accompany the 2001 Town Centre Audit for Dewsbury (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.

Environmental quality: methodology

The town centre audit for Dewsbury has involved a general assessment of its environmental strengths and weaknesses. The exercise covered 10 indicators of environmental quality and is based on a technique developed by URBED (the Urban and Economic Development Group). It updates the street by street environmental assessment undertaken as part of the 1997 and 1999 audits, reflecting in particular the changes that have taken place over the last 2 years.

27 streets in the town centre were assessed using the following indicators of environmental quality:

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| Appearance | Traffic Intrusion |
| Cleanliness | Signage |
| Building Condition | Lighting/security |
| Street condition | Street furniture |
| Townscape | Planting |

Each street was credited with a score of either +1 for good, 0 for average or -1 for poor, using a pro-forma for each of the 10 indicators. The scores were then totalled to give scores for each indicator, and for each street. The full results of this exercise are presented overleaf (Figure 2). These scores enable the town's environmental strengths to be identified, whilst also illustrating where problems exist. This is shown in the main audit publication.

When considering the overall environmental quality of the town it is important to recognise that some indicators are more important than others. To reflect this, the indicators were weighted, ranging from 3.0 for a street's overall appearance to 1.0 for planting. Weighted totals have been produced, along with weighted averages, because in some situations it is not possible to score all of the indicators for every street (for example, the narrowness of the shopping arcades of Kingsway and the Arcade preclude landscaping and effective planting). The relative performance of individual streets in the town centre is illustrated in the main audit publication.

The assessment of environmental quality is a subjective exercise and for this reason the results of the survey should be treated with caution. Nevertheless, it does provide a means of comparing the town centres performance over time to determine whether individual roads improve their score, or whether the town generally, can improve its rating on those indicators that are weak. This however, can only be done if the same indicators and the same weightings are used for subsequent environmental assessments.

Indicators of environmental quality

Over the last 2 years there has been little overall change in the assessment of environmental quality in Dewsbury town centre. There were significantly improved scores recorded in 1999 compared to the 1997 survey reflecting the on-going programme of improvements undertaken in the town by Dewsbury Partnership and Kirklees M.C. through Single Regeneration Budget funding. These improvements have now been through two years of wear and tear and some areas of the town centre are beginning to show some signs of this. Therefore, street condition, street furniture and planting have not scored as well in 2001 as they did in 1999.

Overall appearance: This score relates to the general impression of the street to the visitor or shopper and reflects a broad combination of environmental indicators ranging from building condition and townscape through to colour and activity. It is an important indicator and is accordingly given high weighting.

9 of the streets scored positively on this indicator, 1 more than in the 1999 audit and 2 more than in the 1997 audit. The streets that make up the town's principal retail axis recorded positive scores for overall appearance. Each exhibits a pedestrian friendly environment, quality streetscape and a constantly high level of pedestrian activity. Daisy Hill and Bond Street, although located on the periphery of the shopping core also secured positive ratings. They are both important pedestrian routes to and from the Railway Station, and have been the subject of property and streetscape improvements that have enhanced their townscape quality



Compared with the 1999 audit, Southgate was the only street to receive a lower score. 2 other streets recorded negative scores, Union Street and Branch Road. All of these are in peripheral locations and are dominated by on-street parking.

Cleanliness: The survey examined street cleaning, evidence of vandalism, cleanliness of buildings and litter in landscaped areas. The time and day of the week are important factors in assessing cleanliness, as scores are likely to be influenced by how busy the town is and the programme of street cleaning.

24 streets achieved either a 'good' or 'average' rating compared with 26 streets in the 1997 audit. As noted in the 1999 town centre audit,

the main shopping streets are generally kept free from litter. The main problem sites for litter tended to be enclosed areas, basement entrances, car parks and the edge of landscaped areas. Litter is often blown into such areas and the cleaning machines can not easily get into small enclosed spaces.

3 streets recorded a negative score - Kingsway, Croft Street and Branch Road all had high levels of litter. On Kingsway, the display of goods for sale outside the shops added to the general impression of untidiness.

Building condition: This indicator relates to the level of building maintenance and upkeep. Generally speaking, Dewsbury performed well on this indicator, with only 1 street Crackenedge Lane receiving a negative rating. 9 streets secured positive scores including the entire length of the principal retail axis. However, in 1999 11 streets had positive scores and therefore it would appear that some deterioration has occurred. Most streets (17) were attributed an average score for property condition, reflecting the fact that many still have buildings that are poorly maintained although these are scattered and do not form any grouping or concentration to warrant a negative score. Vacancy in secondary and peripheral shopping streets will need to be carefully monitored to ensure that property neglect does not become a major issue.

Street condition: This indicator relates to the quality and condition of street surfaces. Street improvements carried out through Dewsbury Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) Programme resulted in improved scores on seven streets in the 1999 audit. In all, 12 streets achieved positive scores for street condition in 1999 and only three streets had a negative rating. The 2001 exercise revealed that 11 streets were attributed positive scores, but 2 more negative scores were recorded (Market Street and Nelson Street). These changes generally relate to 2 years of heavy wear and tear.

Townscape: Dewsbury continues to record a very high score for townscape quality. In both the 1997 and 1999 audit exercises, the town's fine architectural heritage resulted in 14 streets being attributed positive scores. As would be expected there has been no change to this indicator in 2001.



The Town Hall clock dominates the skyline

The town has a fine architectural heritage, particularly in the Victorian warehouse quarter to the west of the town and the old shopping core to the north. Corporation Street, Foundry Street, Market Place, Northgate, Halifax Road, Bradford Road and Kingsway of the older shopping core, also feature buildings of high architectural and townscape quality. The Conservation Area boundary encompasses both the warehouse quarter and the old shopping core. Designated in March 1981 the Conservation Area contains approximately 280 pre-1939 buildings, 57 of which are

Listed as of architectural or historic interest. The Market Place accommodates a number of Listed Buildings many of which survive from Dewsbury's pre-industrial era. The Town Hall is a building of imposing presence. Its clock tower dominates the town. The townscape character of Dewsbury is also enhanced by the variety of public spaces.

Despite the more recent developments of Dewsbury town centre (Princess of Wales Precinct and the bus station) the main historic core remains largely intact. However, South Street is particularly blighted by modern development of a scale and townscape quality that contributes very little to the area.

Traffic intrusion: This indicator relates to the levels of pedestrian/vehicular conflict evident on each of the 27 streets, along with the physical and visual intrusion that occurs through vehicle movement, noise and car parking. This element of the environmental assessment generated particular concern in the 1997 audit, and continued to score poorly in the 1999 survey. In 2001 there were 9 streets with negative scores and only 6 streets with positive scores, however, there was an overall improvement compared with the previous surveys

Many parts of Dewsbury suffer from traffic intrusion to a greater or lesser extent. Problems are particularly evident on Westgate, Corporation Street, Church Street, Northgate and Crackenedge Lane. The negative rating for traffic intrusion is largely due to their importance within the town centre as transport routes, redirecting essential vehicular traffic away from the shopping core.

The negative environmental effects of traffic intrusion are largely unavoidable due to the need to maintain a level of vehicular access to shops and businesses for deliveries. However, time limits on access to pedestrian areas help to reduce the effects of vehicles on the environmental quality of the street scene during shopping hours.



South Street bus station and taxi rank

On street car parking, particularly within the Victorian warehouse quarter, has unfortunately reduced the environmental quality of a number of streets. However, it is generally accepted that cars have to be accommodated if towns are to compete effectively with other retail and leisure facilities. In the fight for shoppers, car parking is considered by many to be a key weapon.

Whilst traffic intrusion has been identified as an environmental problem in all the environmental assessments, the maintenance of an accessible town centre remains an important issue in economic terms.

Signage: This includes the quality, appearance and obtrusiveness of signs, shop fronts, and advertising hoardings. Unlike the previous audits the overall score for signage was positive in 2001. Only 4 streets recorded negative scores compared with 7 in 1999. There are still examples of

prominent unsympathetic and garish shop signs and poorly designed shop fronts, particularly in secondary and peripheral shopping locations. However, through the continuing use of planning enforcement action and the application of development control design standards improvements are gradually being achieved.

Lighting: The quality of lighting in the town centre improved significantly between 1997 and 1999, with the introduction of 'heritage lamps' in each streetscape improvement scheme. In 1999 16 streets had positive scores on this indicator compared with only 5 streets in 1997. This score has been maintained in 2001 and whilst there are still some areas of poor lighting overall the town scores reasonably well.

Street furniture: Similarly Dewsbury's score on this indicator improved dramatically between 1997 and 1999, largely as a result of investment through the 'Town Centre Revival Programme'. Name plates, direction signs, finger posts, visitor information boards and 'heritage lamps' of a consistent style and design were introduced. However, there has been a slight deterioration over the past two years due to wear and tear. 8 streets scored positively in 2001, and 5 were given a negative score.



Landscaping on Longcauseway

Planting: This relates to the quality of planting, its location and its appropriateness. Dewsbury's performance with regard to this indicator also improved considerably between 1997 and 1999. However, the overall score has fallen in 2001 with 7 streets now being considered as 'poor' for planting compared with 2 streets in 1999. This is still a reduction in the number of streets with a negative score compared to the 14 recorded in 1997, but indicates poor levels of maintenance.

Changes in environmental quality

In terms of the changes in scores awarded to individual streets since the 1999 assessment, 12 streets received a higher score in 2001 than in 1999 and 6 streets scored the same. Therefore, the overall picture is reasonably encouraging. Of those streets that scored badly most are in peripheral or secondary shopping locations in the town and show signs of low economic activity and investment such as a lack of building maintenance or problems of neglect. The main exceptions are Corporation Street and Princess of Wales Precinct. Corporation Street was judged to have declined in terms of cleanliness, building condition and street condition. Princess of Wales Precinct was worse in terms of street condition.

Figure 1 shows the general changes in the scores achieved for each environmental indicator between the 1999 and 2001 assessments.



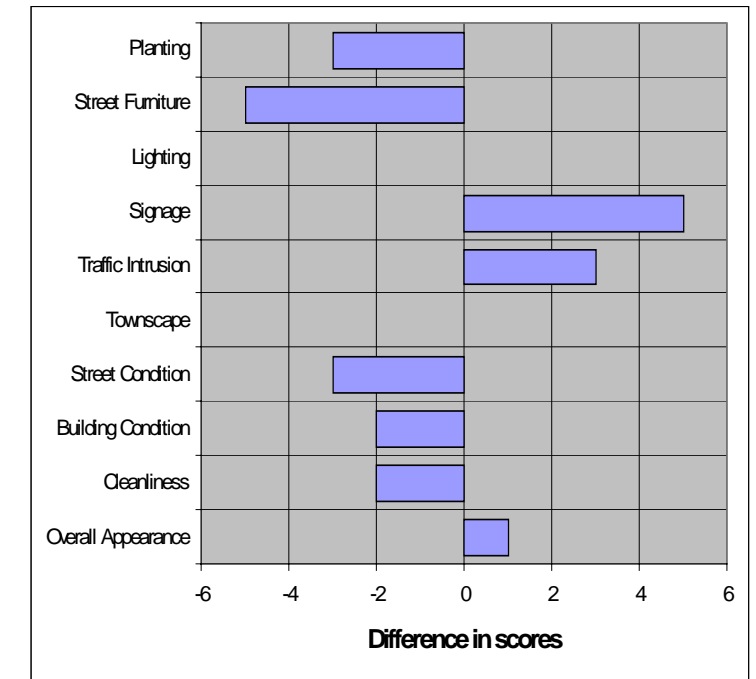
Market Place

The indicators relating to traffic intrusion, signage, and overall appearance recorded improvements compared to the 1999 assessment. The most significant progress has been made in respect of signage. This indicator would be subject to change as a result of new businesses taking over premises. The older poorer quality signs will gradually be replaced by newer better quality signage.

The indicators that have recorded a decline in their overall environmental scores are street furniture, planting, street condition, building condition and cleanliness. These are all subject to ageing over time and to levels of maintenance.

The SRB programme will end in 2003. Significant investment was put in place between 1997 and 1999 resulting in major benefits to the environmental quality of Dewsbury town centre as recorded in the 1999 audit. However, expenditure on environmental improvement projects in the town centre declined in 2001. Nevertheless, Dewsbury continues to record a high environmental quality.

Figure 1: Changes in indicator scores 1999-2001



Although every care and effort has been taken to ensure the accuracy of the data and statements contained in this publication, Planning Services does not accept responsibility for any errors or inaccuracies which may have occurred therein.