Town Centres Team, Planning Services

DEWSBURY TOWN CENTRE

ANNUAL STATEMENT OF KEY ECONOMIC INDICATORS NOVEMBER 2005

Introduction

Planning Services Town Centres Team facilitates a programme which monitors the health and vitality of Town Centres in the Kirklees District.

Analysis of the performance data collected allows the role of individual town centres to be assessed, identifying scope for change, renewal and diversification.

Since 1997, yearly statements have been produced which assess 7 key indicators of health and vitality for Dewsbury Town Centre. These are:

- Shop unit and floorspace occupancy;
- Vacancy rates;
- Pedestrian footfall;
- Development Information;
- Retailer demand;
- Prime retail rental levels;
- Prime retail yields.

Floorspace, Shop Units and Vacancy

A survey of shop unit occupancy undertaken during October 2005 revealed that within the Dewsbury town centre study area (map 2, page 7) there were 348 shop units, which provide a total of 42,905 sq.m. (461,657 sq.ft.) of net retail floorspace.

Overall, the centre has seen an increase of 2.4% in the number of shop units since the 2004 audit with retail floorspace recording a decline of 2.2% as illustrated in figure 1.

Convenience goods retailing has seen an increase of 15% in the number of shop units during the last 12 months, due in part to the opening of Farmfoods on Aldams Road. However, a loss of 16.7% was recorded for retail sales floorspace due to the closure of the Safeway store on Bradford Road earlier this year.

There has been an increase in vacancy both in terms of shop units and floorspace as result of the loss of a number of comparison goods retailers and service uses. However, the centre has seen the arrival of the clothing retailer, Burtons in the primary shopping area with Dorothy Perkins moving to larger premises previously occupied by Etam.

Four new shop units have been established within the ground floor of Yorkshire House. They have so far been occupied by two café/takeaway facilities and a variety store. A further two new units have now opened on the Aldams Road site formerly occupied by Perrys Motor company. These developments have increased the total number of shop units in the town.

Figure 1: Dewsbury shop unit/floorspace statistics

	2004		2005		% change 04-05	
	Sales fl'space '000 sq.m	Shop units	Sales fl'space '000 sq.m	Shop units	Sales fl'space '000 sq.m	Shop units
Convenience (food)	10.01 (22.8%)	20 (5.9%)	8.34 (19.4%)	23 (6.6%)	-16.7	+15.0
Comparison[1] (non-food)	30.84 (70.3%)	189 (55.6%)	31.28 (72.9%)	188 (54.0%)	+1.4	-
Service	N/A	79 (23.2%)	N/A	79 (22.7%)	N/A	-
Vacant	3.04 (6.9%)	52 (15.3%)	3.29 (7.7%)	58 (16.7%)	+8.0	+11.5
TOTAL	43.89 (100%)	340 (100%)	42.91 (100%)	348 (100%)	-2.2	+2.4

Figure 2 illustrates a comparison of the nature of business use within the study area to the national average.

Representation of convenience goods retail floorspace has fallen below the national average within the last 12 months due to the closure of Safeway.

The centre exhibits a higher than average representation of furniture/carpet retailers both in terms of shop units and retail floorspace which has been strengthened further by the opening of Carpet Right since the beginning of the year.

Carpet Right and Farm foods, Aldams Road.

The percentage of retail floorspace taken up by DIY/hardware retailers within the study boundary remains well above the national average. This is due to a number of national multiple retailers occupying sizeable units on the retail warehouse park, south of the ringroad.

Pedestrian Footfall

Counts of the number of pedestrians using Dewsbury town centre have been undertaken since 1997 to monitor the volume and pattern of movement of shoppers and visitors.

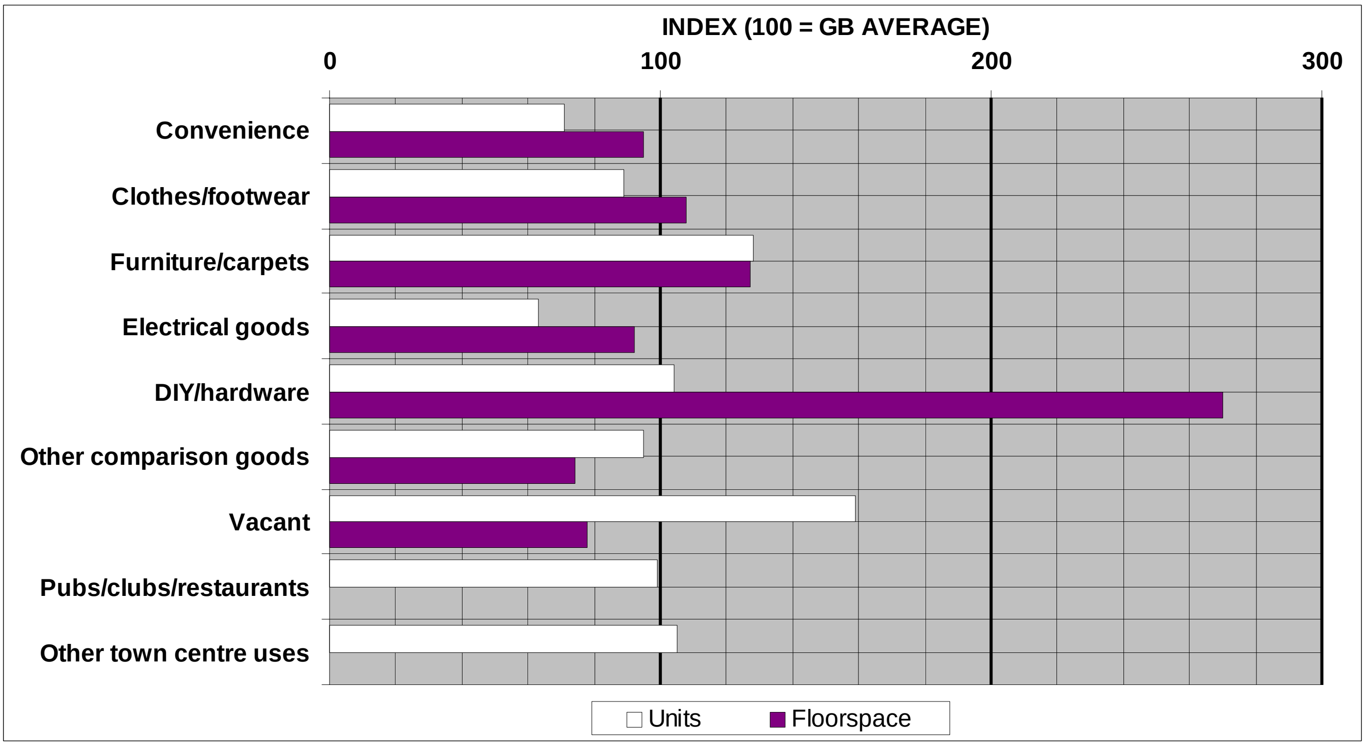
Primary and secondary shopping frontages and important pedestrian links are covered on market day, non-market day and Saturday using ten count points which are shown on map 1, page 3.

In the spring of 2005, Dewsbury town centre pedestrian numbers have seen an overall reduction of 5.13% compared to the 2004 assessment as shown in figure 3.

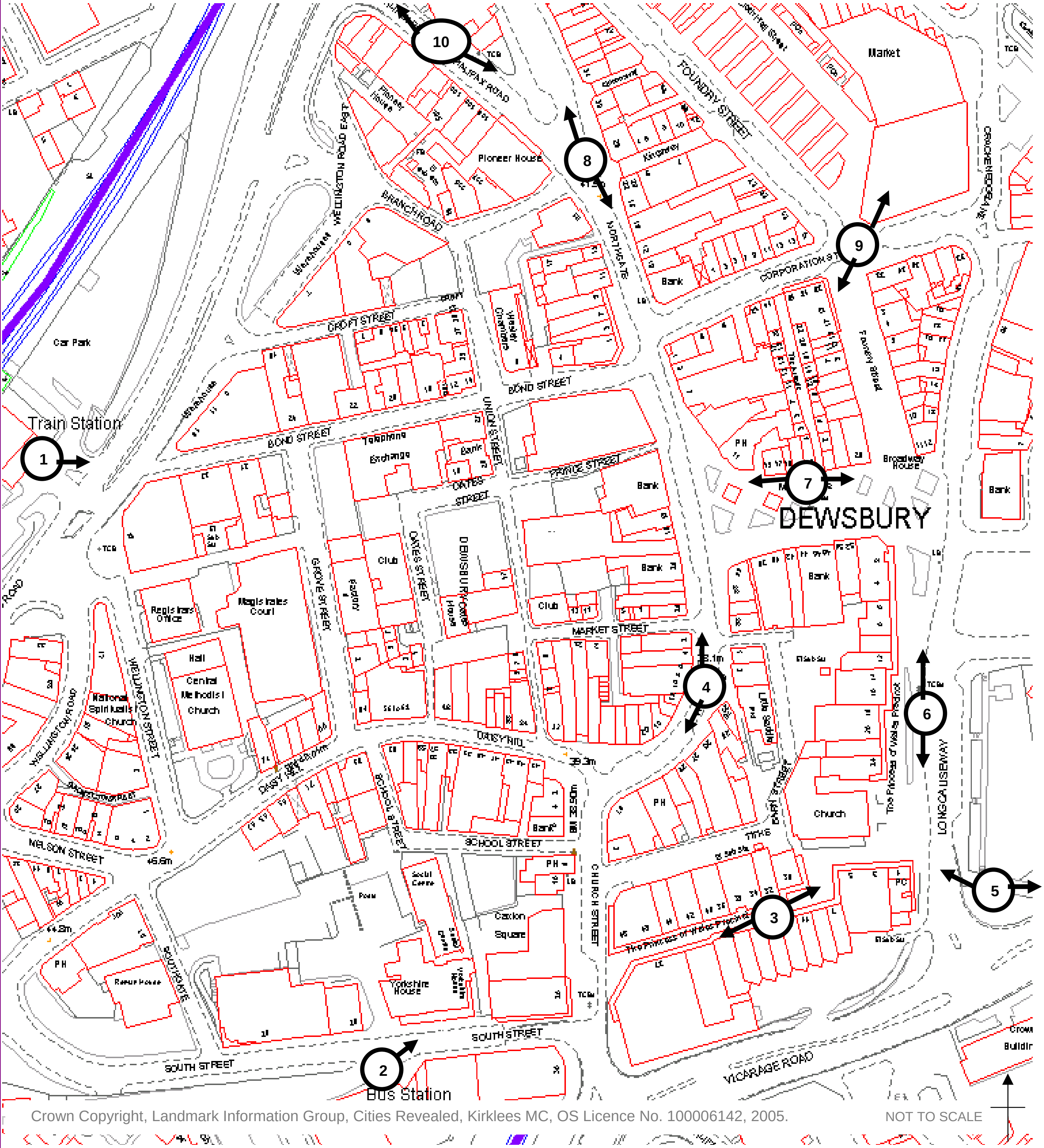
On each of the days surveyed, a decrease in pedestrian numbers was recorded in the morning with non-market day and Saturday showing a significant decrease.

Autumn monitoring undertaken annually in October recorded an increase in visitor numbers of 4.6% on non-market day in the morning and 7.6% in the afternoon suggesting that the decrease in spring counts may be an anomaly. However, Saturday morning in October recorded a decrease similar to the spring counts.

Figure 2: Comparison with national averages[2]



Map 1: Pedestrian count points



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Key to map:

Study boundary — **Count point and direction**

1	Train station	6	Longcauseway
2	Bus station	7	Market Place
3	Princess of Wales Precinct	8	Northgate
4	Westgate	9	Foundry Street /Corporation Street
5	Subway	10	Halifax Road

Figure 3: Comparison of pedestrian numbers spring 2004 to spring 2005

		2004	2005	% change
Market Day	a.m.	16905	15965	-5.56
	p.m.	10232	10072	-1.56
Non-Market Day	a.m.	7437	6200	-16.63
	p.m.	5268	5805	10.19
Saturday	a.m.	19745	17328	-12.24
	p.m.	14015	14454	3.13
TOTAL		**73602**	**69824**	**- 5.13**

An assessment of pedestrian footfall over time is illustrated in figure 4 and shows that visitor numbers have remained fairly constant since the first assessment of spring pedestrian counts in 1999.

The market continues to draw visitors to the town centre as illustrated by the consistently higher pedestrian footfall recorded on market day than non-market day. In addition, on market day the highest volume of pedestrians were recorded at the junction of Corporation Street and Foundry Street near the main entrance to the market.

Results for the street counts are given in figure 5 and provide a yearly 'snapshot' of the volume of pedestrians and their pattern of movement within the centre.

The Prince of Wales Precinct, Longcauseway, Market Place and Foundry Street remain the principle areas of pedestrian activity particularly on market day and Saturday.

Market Place

Figure 4: Pedestrian footfall Spring 1999 – Spring 2005

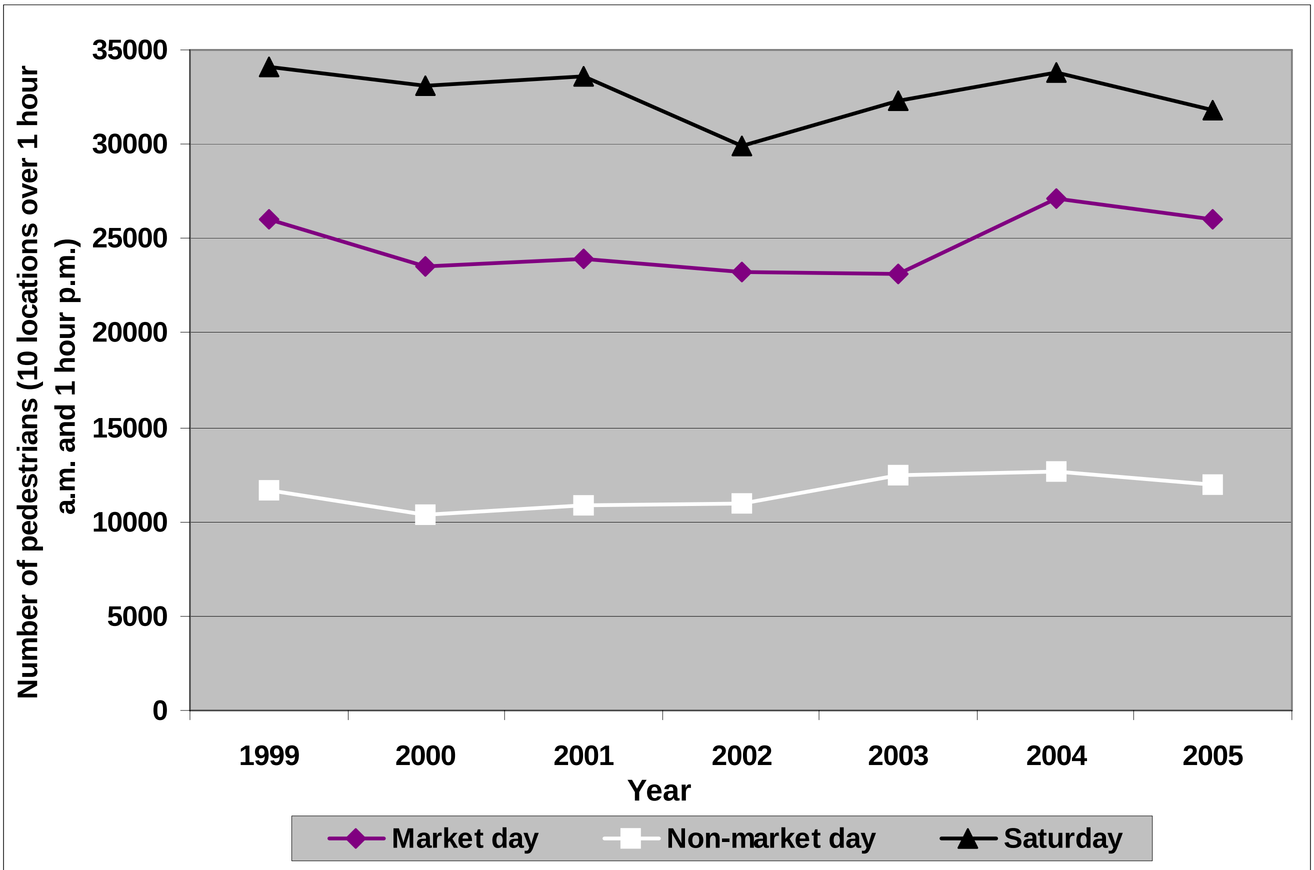


Figure 5: Spring pedestrian counts, Morning and Afternoon samples*

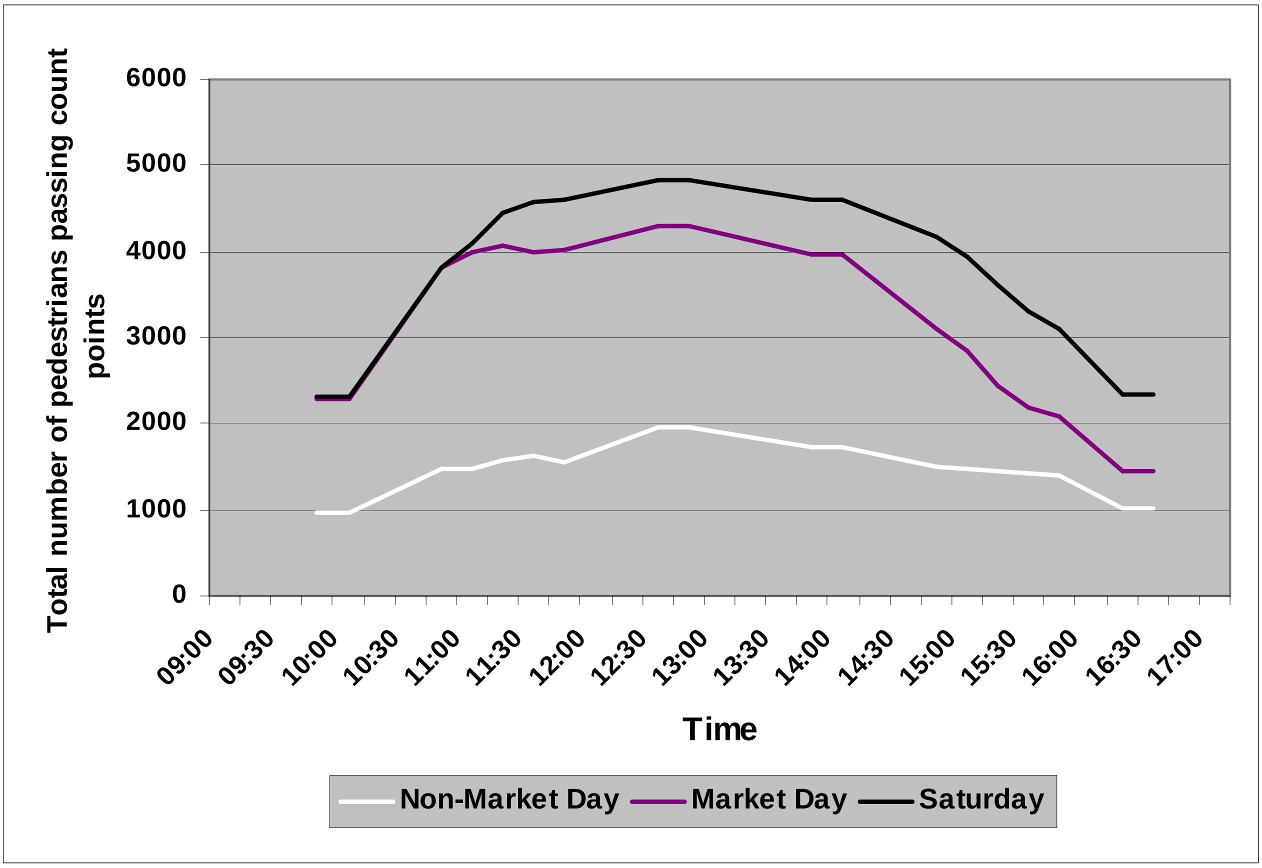
Date	18th May 05 Market Day (Wednesday)		19th May 2005 Non-Market Day (Thursday)		21st May 2005 Saturday	
Weather	Cool, Sunny		Mild, Bright		Sunny, Dry	
Time	a.m.	p.m.	a.m.	p.m.	a.m.	p.m.
1. Train Station (Out)	84	69	55	69	106	88
2. Bus Station (Out)	1021	522	449	321	927	546
3. Prince of Wales Precinct	1922	1360	941	1095	1725	1327
4. Westgate	1369	1369	709	719	1946	1818
5. RWP Subway	1817	854	754	562	1709	1483
6. Longcauseway	2547	1514	1076	1090	3077	2587
7. Market Place	2428	1522	1123	909	2134	2004
8. Northgate	880	514	423	463	1385	942
9. Foundary Street	3489	1942	502	386	3695	3411
10. Halifax Road	408	404	168	191	624	248
TOTAL	**15965**	**10072**	**6200**	**5805**	**17328**	**14454**

*Figures relate to hour long samples (10:30am – 11.30am and 2:30pm – 3:30pm)
Counts in both directions unless otherwise indicated.

A daily profile of pedestrian numbers for Spring 2005 is illustrated in figure 6 and shows a peak shopping period from approximately 12 o'clock to 2pm.

Visitor numbers steadily decline from approximately 2.15pm onwards on market day and Saturday with non-market day recording a gradual reduction in pedestrian numbers.

Figure 6: Profile of pedestrian volumes, 9am – 5pm (Spring Counts 2005)



Development Information

There have been a number of retail developments within the study area over the last 12 months.

Two new retail units on Aldams Road have been built and are occupied by Farmfoods and Carpet Right.

The national multiple retailer Next has taken a previously vacant unit on the retail warehouse park and the store is due to be opened in December.

The grocery retailer Lidl is currently building a new store on the site previously occupied by Safeway. There is a development opportunity on the reminder of the site.

Lidl, Bradford Road, under construction

The ground floor of Yorkshire House, South Street has been converted from office space into four units for retail and service use. Three out of the four units have been taken up by Caffé Chaá, Chicken Cottage and Pound Stop, which are new businesses to the town.

In the North West area of the town around Bond Street, Nelson Street and Wellington Road, a number of planning applications have been granted permission for change of use to residential.

Yorkshire House, South Street

Retailer Demand

A general assessment of demand for retail floorspace was undertaken during November 2005.

The number of companies expressing an interest in being represented in Dewsbury and their maximum floorspace requirement is shown in figure 7. This includes businesses which have registered an interest in out of centre locations incorporating established retail parks and/or out of town shopping centres.

As at November 2005, a total of 19 separate interests had been recorded, this is a decrease of 4 on the previous year. However, 2 registered interests from 2004 have been accommodated.

New companies interested in the town total 17, which require a maximum floorspace of 11,440 sq. m (123,099 sq.ft). Eight companies have expressed an interest in prime pitch town centre locations accounting for a maximum floorspace of 6,413 sq. m (69,003 sq. ft).

Figure 7: Retail / Leisure floorspace requirements 2005

Category	Number of registered interests	Maximum floorspace requirement sq.m. (sq.ft.)
Convenience	2	1,636 (17,600)
Clothing/ Footwear	2	2,323 (25,000)
Furniture/ Carpets	1	558 (6,000)
Electrical goods	2	558 (6,000)
Variety/ Department	5	6320 (68,000)
Specialist comparison	2	1208 (13,000)
Restaurants/ Pubs	2	622 (6,689)
Leisure/ Hotels	1	Unknown
Other	2	Unknown
Total	**19**	**13,224 (142,289)**

Further requirements may exist from other retailers who wish to relocate or establish themselves within the town centre but have not registered their interests.

This assessment does not address the demand for office accommodation from financial, professional or other commercial uses.

Prime Retail Rental Levels

During the 12 month period from May 2004 to May 2005, United Kingdom average prime zone A retail rents have increased on average by 4%, an improvement on the 3.1% growth rate achieved in the previous year.

In the Yorkshire and Humber region rental growth has slowed from 4.4% average in 2004 to 3.1% in 2005. An increase in prime zone A retail rents has been recorded in only a few shopping centres in the region with all other centres remaining static.

Prime zone A rents in Dewsbury town centre secure £700 per sq. m. and remain unchanged from 2004. Rental levels for selected towns as shown in figure 8 have also remained unchanged.

Figure 8: Prime Zone A retail rents for selected towns[3] per sq.m (£ per sq.ft)

	2002	2003	2004	2005
Dewsbury	538 (50)	538 (50)	700 (65)	700 (65)
Huddersfield	1,130 (105)	1,130 (105)	1,130 (105)	1,130 (105)
Wakefield	1,076 (100)	1,130 (105)	1,237 (115)	1,237 (115)
Halifax	915 (85)	915 (85)	969 (90)	969 (90)
Barnsley	1,238 (115)	1,291 (120)	1,291 (120)	1,291 (120)
Regional average[4]	1314 (112)	1,346 (125)	1,405 (131)	1,432 (133)
National average	1,131 (105)	1,165 (108)	1,201 (112)	1249 (116)

Prime Retail Yields

The 'all risk yield' for Dewsbury town centre remains unchanged at 8.0%. Investor confidence in the town centre's commercial property market has improved over the last 2 years. There continues to be strong retailer demand for representation in prime pitch locations as evidenced by the recent arrival of Burton into the Prince of Wales Precinct, and Dorothy Perkins securing larger premises.

Selected towns in the region have also recorded no changes since 2004 as shown in figure 9.

Figure 9: Prime Retail yields for selected towns[5] (%)

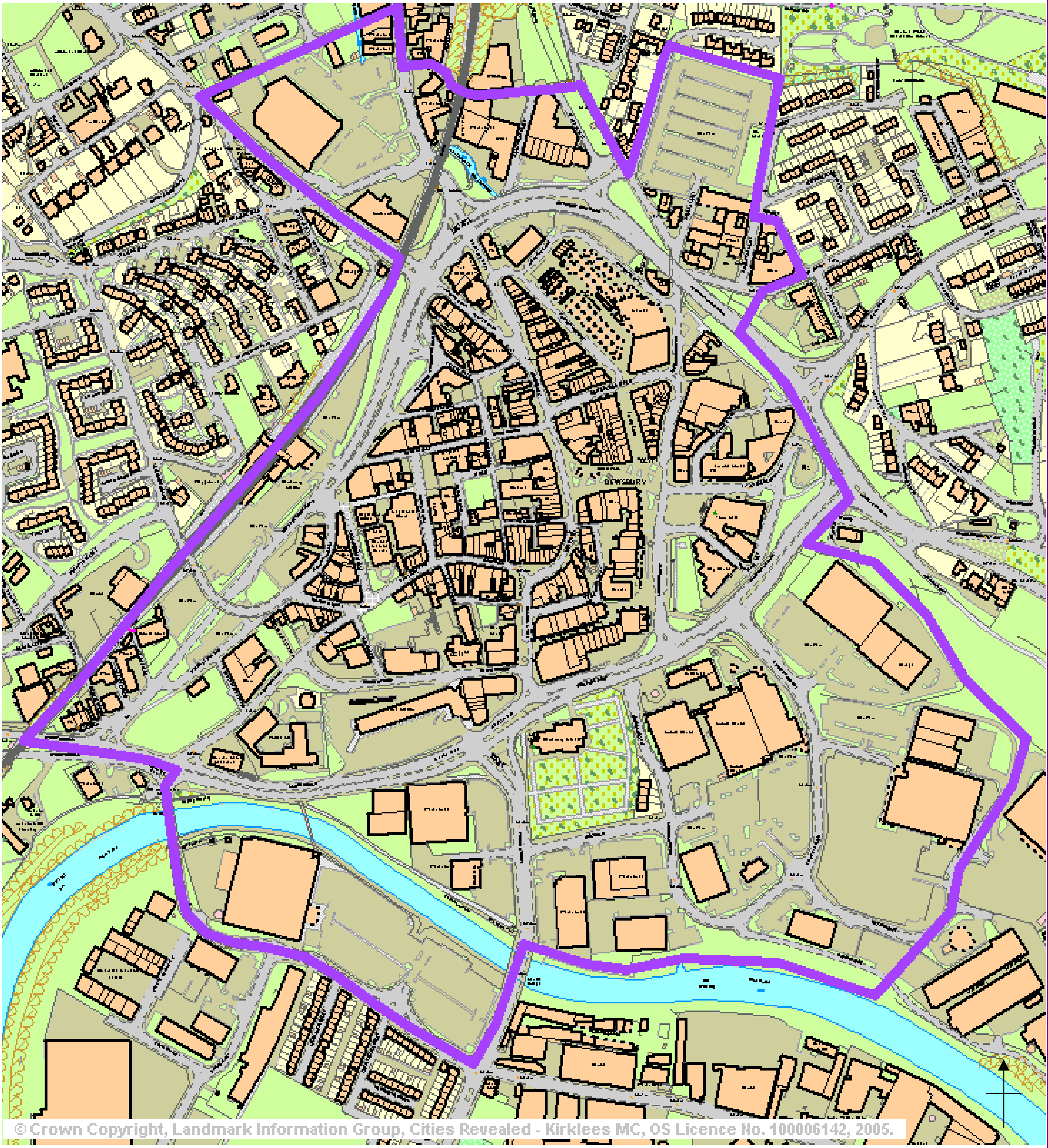
	2003	2004	2005
Dewsbury	10.0	8.0	8.0
Huddersfield	7.5	7.5	7.5
Wakefield	8.0	7.0	7.0
Halifax	9.0	8.0	8.0
Barnsley	7.25	7.25	7.25

Source: Valuation Office Property Market Report July 2005

The Prince of Wales Precinct

Notes:
[1] Comparison goods figures include A1 uses such as opticians and travel agents etc.
[2] Based on the UK average, 100 being the average proportion of floorspace or number of units for certain categories of use in a UK town, not including markets.
[3] These values relate to the zone A rent for a modern standard sized shop unit (6.1m frontage, 18.3m depth and 30sq.m. of storage or staff accommodation, and a full insuring and repairing lease). The assessment date is May of each year.
[4] Regional averages relate to Yorkshire and Humberside.
[5] 'All risk yields' are calculated by dividing the annual rent as though it had been received as a single sum at the year end, by the capital value or sale price of the property. This is a simple benchmark which the property market uses to assess the comparative attractiveness of different shopping centres. Values from April of each year.

Map 2: Dewsbury Town Centre Study Boundary



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