Town Centres Team – Planning Services

HECKMONDWIKE TOWN CENTRE
ANNUAL STATEMENT OF KEY ECONOMIC INDICATORS
SEPTEMBER 2002

INTRODUCTION

Since 1996, Planning Services of Kirklees M.C. has carried out a series of town centre audits to monitor the health and performance of shopping centres in the District. The time series data enables the role of individual town centres to be assessed, identifying the scope for change, renewal and diversification.

The first full audit for Heckmondwike town centre was published in November 1997. Changes that have taken place over the last 5 years have been examined in annual statements of key economic indicators, of which this is the fifth.

The indicators of vitality and viability covered here are:
- retail occupancy in terms of floorspace and shop units,
- vacancy rates,
- pedestrian footfall,
- retail development in the pipeline,
- retailer demand, and
- prime retail rents.

RETAIL FLOORSPACE, SHOP UNITS AND VACANCY

A survey of occupancy updated in August 2002 recorded that Heckmondwike town centre provides a total of 11,870 sq.m. (127,721 sq.ft.) of net retail floorspace. The following tables illustrate the changes in both retail floorspace and shop unit occupancy since 1997.

Retail floorspace in Heckmondwike town centre (sq.m)

	Convenience	Comparison[1]	Vacant	TOTAL
1997	4,203 (32.1%)	6,836 (52.2%)	2,068 (15.7%)	**13,108 (100%)**
1998	4,151 (32.3%)	7,134 (55.5%)	1,571 (12.2%)	**12,856 (100%)**
1999	4,270 (33.6%)	6,444 (50.7%)	1,990 (15.7%)	**12,704 (100%)**
2000	4,255 (41.5%)	4,562 (44.5%)	1,443 (14.0%)	**10,260 (100%)**
2001	5,068 (43.1%)	5,214 (44.4%)	1,469 (12.5%)	**11,751 (100%)**
2002	5,068 (42.7%)	5,264 (44.3%)	1,538 (13%)	**11,870 (100%)**
% change 2001 – 02	0	+1	+4.7	**+1**

The last 12 months has seen a marginal increase (1%) in the total amount of retail floorspace in Heckmondwike town centre. This compares to the 14.5% increase recorded over the previous 12 months which occurred as a result of the Northgate redevelopment providing 7 new retail units. An increase in shop unit vacancy has been observed. However, vacancy within the town's primary shopping area remains unchanged at 8.3%. Slight decreases have been recorded in the number of comparison goods and service uses although the full occupation of the Northgate development is likely to further change the balance of these units in the town.

[1] Comparison goods figures include A1 semi-retail uses such as opticians, travel agents etc.

Shop units in Heckmondwike town centre

	Convenience	Comparison	Service	Vacant	TOTAL
1997	12 (6.8%)	80 (45.5%)	44 (25.0%)	40 (22.7%)	**176 (100%)**
1998	11 (6.4%)	89 (51.4%)	41 (23.7%)	32 (18.5%)	**173 (100%)**
1999	10 (6.0%)	81 (48.5%)	45 (26.9%)	31 (18.6%)	**167 (100%)**
2000	11 (6.7%)	75 (45.7%)	46 (28.0%)	32 (19.6%)	**164 (100%)**
2001	11 (6.7%)	82 (50.0%)	45 (27.4%)	26 (15.9%)	**164 (100%)**
2002	11 (6.7%)	80 (48.5%)	42 (25.4%)	32 (19.4%)	**165 (100%)**
% change 2001 – 02	0	-2.4	-6.7	+23.1	**+0.6**

Floorspace comparisons[2] (sq.m. net)

	Heck'wike	Cleckheaton	Batley	Dewsbury	Holmfirth
Conv	5,068 (42.7%)	1,691 (19.9%)	4,690 (20.6%)	7,346 (17.8%)	1,834 (26.8%)
Comp	5,264 (44.3%)	5,940 (69.9%)	15,636 (68.7%)	28,551 (69.3%)	4,096 (59.9%)
Vacant	1,538 (13%)	862 (10.2%)	2,422 (10.7%)	5,296 (12.9%)	913 (13.3%)
Total retail flsp	11,870 (100%)	8,493 (100%)	22,748 (100%)	41,193 (100%)	6,843 (100%)
No. vacant units	32 (19.4%)	18 (10.3%)	24 (11.5%)	70 (20.0%)	13 (8.1%)
Total no. of units	165 (100%)	174 (100%)	209 (100%)	350 (100%)	160 (100%)

[2] Floorspace relates to that contained within each town's respective study area boundary as defined by the Kirklees Town Centre Audit Programme.

PEDESTRIAN FOOTFALL

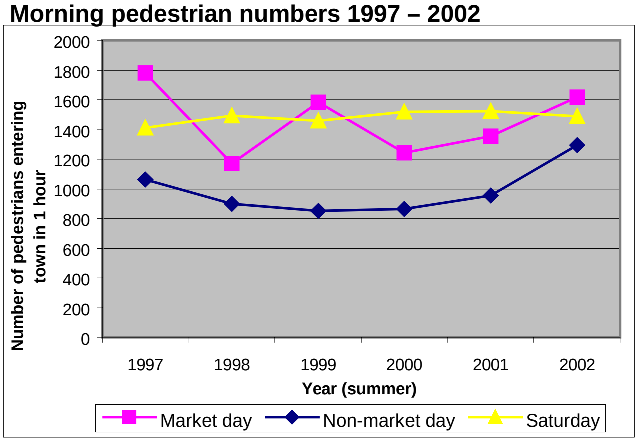
Pedestrian footfall counts have been undertaken annually in Heckmondwike town centre since 1995 on a market day, non-market day and Saturday. Hour sample counts have been conducted from 10:30am and from 2:30pm at 7 locations, including key entrance points to the town centre, the access to Morrisons foodstore and the pedestrian links between the supermarket and the town centre. The table below gives the summer 2002 pedestrian count results.

Heckmondwike pedestrian footfall 2002 [3]

Survey location	9th July Market day Some rain		12th July Non-market day Bright/warm		6th July Saturday Dry/cloudy	
	a.m	p.m	a.m	p.m	a.m	p.m
1. Northgate	295	147	204	94	445	179
2. Market Street	132	82	67	43	91	77
3. High Street	74	52	48	27	58	40
4. Cemetery Rd	90	28	74	40	122	96
5a. Blanket Hall St (into town)	593	315	241	206	194	140
5b. Blanket Hall St (out of town)	761	445	288	271	222	172
6. Westgate	52	28	34	14	98	56
7. Morrisons entr.	976	690	868	592	674	791
TOTAL into town	**1619**	**1027**	**1295**	**810**	**1488**	**1239**

Generally speaking, the morning and afternoon sample graphs illustrate relatively static levels of pedestrian numbers recorded in Heckmondwike town centre since 1998. Noticeable trends over the past 12 months include morning footfall increases for both market day and non-market day and a decrease in afternoon footfall on a Saturday and non-market day. After significant pedestrian footfall increases on Northgate in 2000-1, numbers have stabilised, although Saturday morning footfall has greatly increased at this location. Again, this is due to the increased popularity of this area as a result of redevelopment which has introduced Lidl, McDonalds, Brunswick Warehouse and Poundstretcher.

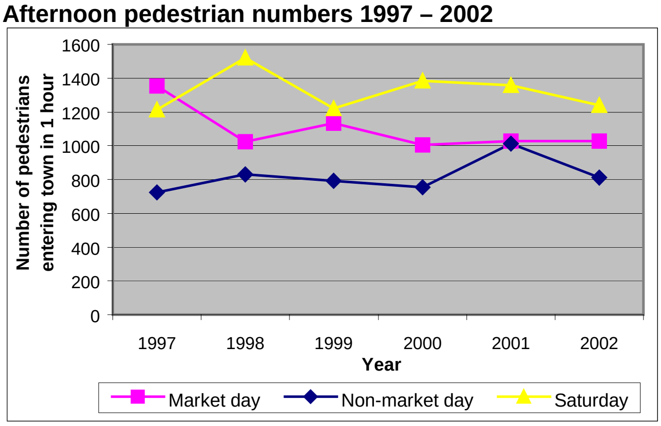
Morning pedestrian numbers 1997 – 2002



Blanket Hall Street and the pedestrian links which connect the town centre to Morrisons continue to attract the highest number of pedestrians. There has been a weekday increase in pedestrians entering the Morrisons foodstore over the past 12 months, despite a decrease in weekend footfall to the store. This coincides with a decrease in Saturday footfall at many other locations within the town, with the exception of Northgate which saw a large increase, especially in Saturday morning footfall.

Both the open and covered markets continue to be important to Heckmondwike in terms of attracting people to the town. Evidence for this is shown by the higher levels of pedestrian numbers on a market day compared to a non-market day.

Afternoon pedestrian numbers 1997 – 2002



RETAILER DEMAND

An assessment of retailer demand was undertaken in June 2002. This identified that the position has not changed over the past 12 months as there is still only 1 outstanding requirement for representation in the town centre. This is from a leisure operator with a need for gross unit floorspace of 370 sq.m. (4,000 sq.ft.) for use as a public house.

RETAIL DEVELOPMENT IN THE PIPELINE

There has been no significant retail development over the past 12 months. Prior to this, completions included the construction of 4 new units at the Morrisons development providing 229 sq.m. (2,460 sq.ft) of gross floorspace (early 2000). Retail units and a fast food outlet have also been accommodated on Northgate (2001).

PRIME RETAIL RENTAL LEVELS

Prime retail rents have remained constant over the past 12 months with the Morrisons shop units development securing the highest rents in the town of approximately £237 - £269 per sq.m. (£22 - 25 per sq.ft.). Elsewhere in the town rents currently achieve a maximum of £204 per sq.m. (£19 per sq.ft.). Once fully occupied, the Northgate redevelopment may impact on the pattern of rents. This will continue to be monitored in future annual statements.

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[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. All count points (except 5b) record pedestrians coming INTO the town only. Totals represent the number of people entering the town and exclude the pedestrian link between Morrisons and the town (count points 5a and 5b). Non-market day is also half day closing for some shops.